

## SESSION 6

### GO! DISCERNMENT AND WHAT'S NEXT

#### Supplies Needed

For the Who Is My Neighbor? Exercise, provide each participant with a blank piece of paper and a pen or pencil.

#### Introduction

Welcome to Session 6 of *Embracing Evangelism*. In this sixth and final session, we work on Go! Discernment and What's Next and practice ways of going into the world to bless and be blessed by others. *Offer your own prayer here, or use one of the following:*

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen.

Creator God, thank you for all we have learned together during these sessions. Help us to open our hearts and minds to what you would have us learn today, as a group and as individuals, as we discern what is next as we prepare to GO where your Holy Spirit will lead us. Amen.

#### Begin the Video

*Watch video from start to 21:11. Note these highlights for yourself:*

Jesus was always inviting people to come follow him and to go. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

He knew it was a risk and that it wouldn't make people popular or successful. He knew it might feel awkward and uncomfortable, but he knew it was worth it. Jesus invited them into an ever-deepening relationship with God. And then he invited them to carry that love into the world, so people everywhere could fall in love with God and follow his way of love, forgiveness, hope, and healing.

Lots of Episcopal churches are comfortable with service and compassion for others. However, sharing our faith, being vulnerable, and going public about faith are harder and riskier. Thankfully, the followers of Jesus can take risks together.

Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple once said, “The Church is the only society that does not exist for its members.” Jesus never intended for God's love to stop at the doors of a beautiful temple or upper room. He was out, among people, and he brought disciples with him to share in words and deeds the life-changing love of God. He's still pulling us out, beyond what we know and who we know.

- *If your group is doing the Exploratory Exercise: Watch until 21:11, which is the end of the explanation of the Exploratory Exercise. Pause the video and lead your group in the exercise and the post-exercise discussion.*
- *If your group is not doing the Exploratory Exercise: Continue watching the video to witness the masterclass group as they try out the exercise.*

## Exploratory Exercise: Who Is My Neighbor?

For this exercise, each participant will need a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.

Ask each participant to draw four concentric circles on a piece of paper.

### Explore the Circles

- **Innermost Circle:** Get to know JERUSALEM (your closest neighbors, family, friends). Whom has God placed around you? Especially call to mind people in your closer circle who are not part of a faith community but seem to yearn for MORE.
  - Family
  - Friends
  - Acquaintances
  - Work/School colleagues
  - Volunteer groups
  - Social groups
  - Civic affiliations
  - Hobbies/Special interests
- **Second Circle:** Get to know JUDEA (the neighborhood/physical community around your church or your own home).
  - Where and among what people has God placed you and your church?
  - Is it a residential area? Commercial? Mixed?
  - What are the civic centers or businesses around your church?
  - Are there schools or other faith centers?
  - What is God up to in the neighborhood?
  - Who lives or regularly inhabits the area near or surrounding the church and your own home?
- **Third Circle:** Get to know SAMARIA (the margins of your community: groups, cultures, and generations with whom you do not have relationship, or from whom you or your church have been alienated).
  - Where are the social, racial, or economic rifts or divides in your community?
  - What groups are most separated or alienated from your church?
  - Through what unlikely groups might God speak, teach, or bless you with their gifts?
  - Who on your margins is waiting to hear good news? What might that good news be?
  - How could you find out what “good news” sounds like to them?
  - Whom are you connected with, and whom can you connect with, in your SAMARIA
- *(Optional)* **Outermost Circle:** Explore the ENDS OF THE EARTH (the many places and groups that are truly outside your own experience and familiarity – far physically or far because of experiences and attitudes).
  - How could you open yourself to even see these new groups?
  - How could you learn and share with them?
  - What challenges might you face if you seek to connect with and get to know one another?  
*Note:* You might not have a solid picture of who is in this outer circle. The point here may be exploring your willingness to go with Jesus beyond your imagining.

As you notice who and what is in each of these concentric circles, ask:

- What is God up to in their midst?
- How can you build relationship with the people and communities you are discovering?
- What are their needs and longings? How can you bless and love them?
- What are your needs and longings? How could they bless you?
- If Jesus met this person or group, what would he do?

Let's resume the video and see how the *Embracing Evangelism* participants did.

### **Resume the Video**

*Watch from 21:12 to 42:05. At that point, pause the video for discussion.*

### **Discussion & Reflection Questions**

*Use the following reflection questions to guide your discussion. Depending on time, you might choose one or two on which to focus. Encourage participants to reflect on the remaining questions later themselves.*

- Look back at your concentric circles. Who is in your circles?
- Is there a particular group or community you are most yearning to connect with? How can you bless and love them? How could they bless you?
- If Jesus met this person or group, what would he do?
- How could you follow his footsteps?

### **Finish the Video**

#### **Close with Prayer**

*Participants gather in a circle.*

One by one, around the circle, we will offer our prayer to God.

- The first time around, we will offer a word thanking God for one important experience in this time of learning and practicing together.
- The second time around, you are invited to commit to God one step you will take – a person you will talk to, a place you will go, a story of God's goodness you will share, etc.
- This final time, please ask for God's help in whatever way you need for this next step as you prepare to Go.

We conclude our time together praying the prayer that Jesus taught us, in the words and language of our hearts. *All say the Lord's Prayer together.*

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

*Thank you for participating in Embracing Evangelism. For additional Episcopal Evangelism resources, please visit [episcopalchurch.org/evangelism](http://episcopalchurch.org/evangelism).*