

Every
Person
a
Missionary:

Igniting
the Passion
Within

The Bible Study



Join the EPAM “ning” site (kind of like FaceBook with a focus!) and then invite everybody you know to join it, too! Email dburru@ikysynod.org and ask for an invitation. Remember: Membership on the EPAM “ning” site is by INVITATION ONLY. Once you are signed up, you have to invite all your friends. Otherwise, they can't join!!! Once you're all on the site, get involved. Tell your stories! Jump into the conversation. Explore. Let this site be an encouragement to you as you begin discovering what EPAM means in your own life.

Visit <http://www.augsburgfortress.com> and get a copy of the brand new book “Reclaiming the V Word: Renewing Life From Its Vocational Core” (Dave Daubert & Tana Kjos, Augsburg Fortress, 2009) and read it on your own or with a group of friends. This book gets at the heart of what EPAM is all about. It'll help lay a good foundation for EPAM in your life and in your congregation.

EPAM is not a “program.” It is a way of life. The EPAM materials, website, books, events, and whatever YOU dream up to do in your part of the IKY synod will encourage and help you as you join in God's mission. But EPAM, finally, is about what each one of us does to be useful to God wherever we live, work, worship, serve, play, learn, and serve. EPAM is about what God is up to in and through you.

Ready? Set? Go!

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An Introduction

God is up to something in this world...and you are invited to be a part of it!

One famous theologian (yes, there really ARE some of those!) once said that God's mission is like a moving train. It's already left the station! God is on the loose, engaged in a loving mission to bless, save, heal, forgive, reconcile, and set free the whole creation. That's what God is up to right now, right here, in the midst of our everyday lives. All we have to do is jump on board! That's what it means to be a "missionary." And that's what EPAM is all about.

EPAM is about "jumping on board" with what God is up to in all the places we live, work, worship, play, learn, and serve. The materials you'll find in this little booklet are all designed to help you begin to do this in a more intentional way, everyday.

These materials will help you (re)connect to God's purpose for your life and (re)commit to being a part of God's loving mission in the world, everyday, everywhere you find yourself, in everything you do.

A Look at the Bible Study

This six-session study explores what it means for each of us to be set free, through Christ, to participate in God's loving mission to save, bless, reconcile, heal and set free the whole world. By engaging together in meaningful (and fun!) discussions rooted in what you hear God saying to you through the Biblical story, you will learn to see exciting new possibilities for living passionately in the communities in which you live, rest, play, work, learn and worship.

Each session has four sections:

Ready

Begin by preparing yourselves as individuals and as a group to be open and present for the time you are together.

Set

Spend time reflecting on the theme for each session in small groups, using Scripture to focus your discussion.

Go

Set goals and commitments to take your learnings with you out into the mission field.

Creating The Space For Learning

We suggest that the responsibility for facilitating each session of Every Person a Missionary: Igniting the Passion Within be shared amongst up to six people. These studies are designed to be led by anyone. There is no experience necessary. All you need is trust--trust in yourself, trust in the wisdom of the group, and trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in your midst. You are not there

to have the answers and are not expected to be an expert. As facilitator, your task is to create the space for learning and we have three tips to help you do just that:

Have fun!

Even though we are adults, we all want to have fun. In fact, our brains crave it. How many of us take time out of our busy schedules to attend an event hoping it will be intense or worse, dull? The best learning happens when people feel engaged, enthusiastic and are having a good time. We have built in activities that should create a sense of playfulness, but you should feel free to add whatever touches you wish to help people relax and find joy in their time together. Remember, "The joy of the lord is my strength." Nehemiah 8:10

Set the Stage

If at all possible, try to use a space that has room to move around freely. Each of the sessions includes both large group and small group activities. Having space to get up and move into separate spaces creates a feeling of openness. It also gets the blood flowing which is critical for our brains to process large amounts of information.

Try to avoid a classroom-style set-up. As we said earlier, the knowledge will come from amongst the group, not from someone standing at the front of the room. It is therefore important to convey this in the way the furniture is arranged.

If it is not possible to host the sessions in someone's home (because of issues of accessibility or space), try to re-create the sense of hospitality you naturally create in your home in whatever space you find yourself. Maybe there's a great place in your neighborhood--a restaurant, quiet lounge or a coffee shop. Make the room comfortable and inviting by draping tables with cloths, adding plants or other decorations to the tables or the center of the circle. Put the coffee on or share a glass of wine and ask someone to bring a light snack to share.

Trust Your Wisdom

Adults are often apprehensive about participating in Bible study. They can feel ill-equipped to get involved in conversations about the Bible, incorrectly assuming that the only ones qualified to speak are those with theological degrees. No one wants to look dumb. The reality is, no one knows all the answers and the best studies often leave us with more questions than answers because the wisdom of the group adds to our knowledge, perspective and understanding. It is important to convey this message at the start of every session, reminding participants that they are the experts because each of them has lived a unique life and brings a unique perspective to the conversations at hand. We have even been explicit about naming, at the end of each session, that there should be questions raised and it is up to the individual to seek out the answers. You, as the facilitator, are off the hook! These gatherings are opportunities to encounter the living God, who is met in the other (not just the paid staff of our congregations!).

Every Person a Missionary: Igniting the Passion Within

Objectives

To study examples in Scripture in which God invites us to participate in what God is up to in the world.

To identify examples in our own communities where God is on the loose.

To find meaningful ways to become engaged in what God is up to in our everyday lives by daring to name it when we see it and jumping in to help.

Outline

1. The Biggest Mirror Ever
Genesis 1: 26-31
2. The First Head-Hunter
Luke 1: 26-38
3. Playing With Fire
Acts 2:1-22
4. Cross-Border Activity
Acts 10
5. Just Do It
Mark 6:30-44, and Mark 8:1-21
6. Getting Your Daily Fruit Intake
Galatians 5:16-23

Session 1 The Biggest Mirror Ever

Text: Genesis 1:26-31

The Gist

As the story goes, after God brought into being everything from light and darkness to the ant and the whale, God created humankind. Together we will explore what this means for us today, in this place, at this time.

In this session we will:

- Get to know each other a little better
- Learn what God's first act of creation has to do with mission
- Get in touch with our creative side (don't be scared!)

What we will need:

- 8 1/2 X 11 blank sheets of paper (any color)
- Pens and/or markers

Ready

Opening Prayer

Creator God, in the beginning you created the heavens and the earth. Into the formless void you breathed life and you saw that it was good. Into us you fashioned your image and you saw that it too was good. Help us to reflect you in this fractured world, living out our call to be co-creators of your kingdom.

Activity: Tell & Show: Part 1

1. Ask each participant to take a blank 8" X 11" sheet of paper and write "I Am..." as the heading. Then ask everyone to complete the statement in five different ways. (See example below.) Complete a sheet for yourself as well.

I Am....

-a nurse

-a father of four children

-a student

-great under pressure

-a dancer

-a Beatles fan

-feeling a bit silly

2. Once everyone has completed their sheets, ask each person to hold it in front of them so it can be read by others as they walk around the room.

3. The rest of the exercise is done in silence. Each participant is to walk around the room reading each other's list and engaging in non-verbal communication with three people for at least thirty seconds each, gathering as many other clues as possible.

4. After circulating for ten minutes ask for the sheets to be hung on the wall. Ask each person to write his/her name on the bottom of the sheet. Have everyone return to their seats and take turns telling the group about one of the people they learned more about. (Introduce each person only once.)

Set

Talking About the Text

Ask someone to read Genesis 1:26-31 aloud.

What is God doing in this story?

What do you hear God saying to you (personally) through this story?

Unlike anything else God created, we were created in God's image. What does that mean?

What are the facets of God's image?

What does it mean to have dominion over all that God created? What doesn't it mean?

What do you think is the most marvelous thing God created and why?

What do you hear God calling you to do through this story?

Sharing About Ourselves

1. Name one thing you have created in the last 24 hours (e.g. a conversation, a meal, a blog, a home-repair project, a new outfit, a website, a meeting, a piece of art).
2. What is the most creative thing you have ever done?
3. What is the biggest barrier to your creativity?

Go

Each of us, fashioned in the likeness of our creator, is uniquely made for a creative purpose---in other words---we are to create. But, what are we meant to create? That may be the most important question we can discern for ourselves.

In subsequent studies we will explore examples of how God has used the most unlikely people in the most unlikely of ways and circumstances to be co-creators in what God is up to in the world.

In your journal, spend some time considering everything you have learned in this session and answer the following:

1. What questions do I have as a result of today's discussion? Jot down two or three.
2. In each of these questions, what is the key concept?
3. How can I find the answer to these questions? Select one specific approach for each question.

Then, choose one of the following to do over the coming days:

Session 2 The Original Head-Hunter

Text: Luke 1: 26-38

The Gist

There is no logical reason for how and through whom God chooses to do God's work. Today we will reflect on the story of how Mary was chosen to give birth to and mother God's son, Jesus. Mary had anything but a robust resume to qualify her for the job. We will also consider the invitation Mary's crazy story extends to each of us.

In this session we will:

- Get to know each other a little better.
- Explore how Mary's story connects to our call to mission.
- Consider what courage means for each of us.

What we will need:

- A flip chart or whiteboard and markers to record the results (optional)
- A fun "magic wand" of some kind to pass around.

Ready

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you chose a peasant girl from Galilee to be the vessel of your in-breaking and to raise the savior of the world. That's a pretty tall order. Each day you choose us, in spite of our weaknesses and failings, to be the bearers of your hope and co-creators of your kingdom. That's a pretty tall order as well. Help us to believe we are worthy and capable of answering your call. In the name of the one who made it possible for us, we pray. Amen.

Regroup

Spend a few minutes following-up from last session's "Go" activities.

Activity: One Wish

Invite the group to imagine they are a room full of wizards (or fairy godmothers if they prefer). Give the "magic wand" to the first person with instructions to give his or her name (if necessary) and the one thing they would change right now if the magic wand was real, and then pass it along to the next person. Don't be shy. Name anything under the sun. You might just try to avoid the obvious--world peace.

Set

Talking About the Text

Ask someone to read Luke 1: 26-38 aloud.

What is God doing in this story?

What do you hear God saying to you (personally) through this story?

Why do you think the author mentions that Joseph is "of the house of David?"

What does the fact that Mary's lineage is not mentioned imply?

In spite of her much-understood fear, Mary's response to being told she is going to bear a son, and that she is expected to raise this child who "...will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High..." (32), is to say, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Discuss what your reaction in this situation might have been if you were Mary. Why do you think Mary reacted the way she did?

What do you hear God calling you to do through this story?

Sharing About Ourselves

Share a time in your life when you had a nagging feeling you should do something (not something bad) that had some risk involved. What did you do? If you can't think of a time, consider when a friend or family member was in that situation. What advice did you give?

Have you ever not done something because you were afraid you'd fail? Discuss.

Do you believe you are doing what God is calling you to do in at least one area of your life right now? If so, what makes you think so? If not, why not?

Who is the most courageous person you know and why?

Go

Unfortunately, we don't have a magic wand to instantly change the things we don't like in our world or to erase the mistakes we've made. But—and it's a big but!—we do have the assurance that, wherever we are, God is there also, doing God-stuff—that we can, regardless of how inadequate we feel, get involved in.

In your journal, spend some time considering everything you have learned in this session and answer the following:

1. What questions do I have as a result of today's discussion? Jot down two or three.
2. In each of these questions, what is the key concept?
3. How can I find the answer to these questions? Select one specific approach for each question.

Then, choose one of the following to do over the coming days:

Option 1—Door Number 2

Before the next session, spend some time writing in your journal about the path you have taken in your life so far and the decisions you made to get where you are. Can you think of a definitive action that steered you to where you are today? Is it a series of events? Are you happy with where you are at this point in the journey? If not, is there a choice you could make that would put you back on track? If you have landed where you believe you are meant to be consider how you could help someone else get back on track and then go do it.

Session 3 *Playing With Fire*

Text: Acts 2:1-21

The Gist

The Book of Acts is filled with all kinds of experiences inspired by the Spirit. The first Pentecost event is but one of them. In this session we will reflect on how God is still at work in the world and in our lives through the power of the Spirit, making it possible for each one of us to be involved in what God is up to.

In this session we will:

- Get to know each other a little better.
- Consider the radical message of the Pentecost event for each of us.
- Take some steps outside of our comfort zone.

What we will need:

- A table
- Enough pennies for one per person (be sure to include pennies from a number of different production years)

Ready

Opening Prayer

God of our waking and our sleeping, our work and our dreams, help us to be ever-mindful of your presence among us as we approach each new day as your people in this hurting world.

Regroup

Spend a few minutes following-up from last session's Go activities.

Activity—Penny Time Machine

Have each person in the group choose a penny from the table and name one thing that was going on in their lives in the year the penny was made. If the penny is outside of their lifespan you can expand it to include things going on in the world at large. Ask them to consider where God was in the event they identified. Don't spend a lot of time on this. It is intended to be a fun thought-provoker, but will tend to drag if not kept moving.

Set

Talking About the Text

Ask someone to read Acts 2:1-21 aloud.

What is God doing in this story?

What do you hear God saying to you (personally) through this story?

Imagine you are one of the Jewish spectators as the disciples move out of the house and into the streets speaking all of the different languages (including your own). What would you think this experience meant?

Although the tongues of fire touch down on only those disciples gathered in the house, the immediate result of this experience is that the bearers are blessed with languages they had never been able to speak before—languages that are only useful in conveying messages to people they were unable to communicate with previously. Why do you think this is the definitive Pentecostal act?

What do you hear God call you to do through this story?

Sharing About Ourselves

Think of a time in your life when you felt misunderstood. Describe the situation and what you did in response.

Have you ever tried talking to somebody who speaks a different “language” from you (this could be someone from another country, another generation, another profession, etc.)? What motivated you to work at it until you were understood? In other words, why did it matter to you? What did you have to do to be understood and to understand?

Describe the last “God” conversation you had (outside of this Bible study!). Who was it with? How did it get started? How did it go? Where did your words come from?

What do you think the biggest challenge for the church is today in communicating the Gospel message out there? Given that we are the Church, how might this group be a part of overcoming that obstacle?

Go

The Pentecost event is a dangerously subversive moment in the life of the church—and indeed the world. The imbuing of “all flesh” with the Holy Spirit meant, and continues to mean, that no one is exempt and no one has the final claim on where God is and through whom God acts. It is a liberating event. If we accept this reality we are free to put down whatever it is we are holding onto so tightly (our traditions, beliefs, habits), thinking we are “protecting the faith.” This event tells us we don’t have anything in our hands that anyone else out there doesn’t also have in their hands, so there is no point guarding it so tightly.

The task for us is to step out of our comfort zone (i.e., our church, our neighborhood, our friendship circle) and get out there and learn another language (figuratively or literally if you prefer). The Pentecost event invites (challenges) us to meet our neighbors where they live--on their terms, and to seek ways to get involved with what God is doing through them.

In your journal, spend some time considering everything you have learned in this session and answer the following:

1. What questions do I have as a result of today’s discussion? Jot down two or three.
2. In each of these questions, what is the key concept?
3. How can I find the answer to these questions? Select one specific approach for each question.

Session 4 Cross-Border Activity

Text: Acts 10

The Gist

Faithful, passionate and impetuous Peter is also a keeper of Jewish law. In spite of Peter's tendency in the Gospels to blunder around, he works to follow the rules. In this chapter of Acts we see God turn the rules upside down and Peter's response.

In this session we will:

- Get to know each other a little better
- Explore what "rules" may be keeping us from fully experiencing communion with others.
- Ask ourselves "what 'rules' am I wrestling with that are keeping me from getting involved with what God is doing out there?"

What we will need:

- Food---and lots of of it (Don't forget dessert!). This session is a pot-luck feast. People are encouraged to bring their favorite dishes to share--no matter how exotic. Just be sure to have on hand a list of ingredients for those with allergies.

Ready

Activity

God set a feast before Peter saying "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." Tonight we feast together. We share our favorite foods and, unless an allergy or intolerance prevents us, we partake in everything we have been offered. This night is about stepping out of our comfort zones, daring to take risks. Tonight is about celebrating God's radical abundance and the audacity of God's love for each and every one of us. So, let's feast.

Opening Prayer and Grace

God of us all, every day you work in and through us to tear down the walls that divide us. Every day, in our blindness and our fear, we stumble around picking up the pieces and rebuilding those walls, sometimes higher than before. As we share the feast you have set before us and study your Word together, may our minds be made open to the radical abundance of your love and may we be set on fire with your Holy Spirit, ready to share your abundant love with each person we encounter. This we ask in the name of your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sing Together

Be present at our table, Lord
Be here and everywhere adored
Thy people bless and grant that we
May feast in Paradise with Thee. Amen.

Regroup

Spend a few minutes following-up from last session's "Go" activities.

Set

The text study for this session will take place in the context of the meal. Find creative ways to punctuate the general conversation of the evening with the questions below.

Talking About the Text

Ask someone to read Acts 10 aloud.

What is God doing in this story?

What do you hear God saying to you (personally) through this story?

Who do you think was more out of his comfort zone, Cornelius or Peter? Why?

What gifts did each of them receive by stepping out of his comfort zone?

What would they have missed out on if they'd stayed where they were comfortable?

What do you hear God calling you to do through this story?

Once dessert has been served, continue the conversation with the following:

Sharing About Ourselves

Do you tend to be a "rule-keeper" or a "rule-breaker?" Both approaches to life have pros and cons. How has your natural approach to life gotten you where you want to go? How has it held you back?

In what ways do you shut out the Holy Spirit in the name of keeping "rules"?

In what ways does our congregation wrestle with the Holy Spirit and the rules?

What was your favorite dish tonight and why?

What was the best part about this evening?

Go

Before you do the dishes, in your journal, spend some time considering everything you have learned in this session and answer the following questions:

What questions do I have as a result of today's discussion? Jot down two or three.

In each of these questions, what is the key concept?

How can I find the answer to these questions? Select one specific approach for each question.

Then, choose one of the following to do over the coming days (if choosing option 2 this can be done over the coming months):

Session 5 Just Do It

Texts: Mark 6:30-44, and Mark 8:1-21

The Gist

The feeding of the multitude stories are great examples in missing the point. In each of the texts we will study together how Jesus words teach the disciples to see what they already have for the sake of doing what matters.

In this session we will:

- Get to know each other a little better.
- Take stock of what we have and what we can do with it.
- Find people in our context who need what we have.

What we will need:

- Multiple pads of post-it notes
- Large paper on a wall/stand
- Pens/markers/pencils

Ready

Opening Prayer

God of abundance, you have blessed us with many gifts. For all sorts of reasons we sometimes keep our gifts hidden or those gifts are hidden from us. Help us to, with grateful hearts, be open to the possibilities you have instilled in each of us so that we might use what you have given us to be a part of what you are already up to.

Regroup

Spend a few minutes following-up from last session's Go activities.

Activity

Each person take a set of post-its. On each post-it write down 1 gift/asset you have; use as many post-its as possible.

One at a time add your gifts/assets to the large piece of paper hanging on the wall.

Discuss together what you see. Begin to play. Move the sticky notes around! How can assets/gifts be grouped? Are there similar assets/gifts? Are there complimentary assets/gifts?

There are likely an abundance of assets/gifts on the large paper! Offer a prayer of thanksgiving! Now: Brainstorm how those assets can be used in your congregation and/or your community.

Set

Talking About the Text

Ask someone to read Mark 6:30-44, and Mark 8:1-21 aloud.

What is God doing in this story?

What do you hear God saying to you (personally) through this story?

What is the disciples' response when Jesus remarks that the people are hungry in each text?

Why do you think Jesus is frustrated with the disciples?

What happens when Jesus uses what the disciples have?

What do you hear God calling you to do through this story?

Sharing About Ourselves

Can you identify a time in your life when you were aware that God was using your gifts? How did you know?

Share a time when you focused more on what you didn't have than what you did? What did this accomplish?

Consider together what would have happened if, in the example you just gave in the question above if you had thought, "What do I have to bring to this situation?"

Go

In your journal, spend some time considering everything you have learned in this session and answer the following questions:

What questions do I have as a result of today's discussion? Jot down two or three.

In each of these questions, what is the key concept?

How can I find the answer to these questions? Select one specific approach for each question.

Then, choose one of the following to do over the coming days:

Option 1--Who Wants to be a Writer?

This is your chance to rewrite the Gospels. Read the stories of the feeding of the multitudes in each of the Gospels. Now, write your own enacted parable with an eye to the central question, "What is your lunch?" In other words, what do you have to offer and what prevents you from sharing? It's often easiest to write about ourselves but you may also choose to create a fictional character. Share your story at the next Bible study (Maybe you can even get it published!)

Option 2--Better than Starbucks

Sometimes, it's a simple cup of coffee and a friendly smile that people most crave. Along with a few friends, take an extra-large thermos of coffee, paper cups, cream (don't skimp!) and sugar out to a street corner in one of the more stressed neighborhoods in your community. Set up a card table with all of the fixings on it. Put an "open for business" smile on your face and wait to see who shows up for a free cup of coffee and a chat. Yup, it's that easy!

Session 6

Getting Your Daily Fruit Intake

Text: Galatians 5:13-23

The Gist

In Christ we are set free from sin and death in order to participate in God's loving mission to save and bless the world. In other words, we are set free to love and serve! The Holy Spirit is at work inspiring the activities of God's people every day in myriad ways. We can invite the Spirit to guide and lead us daily as we seek ways to take part in what God is up to. This is something that takes practice. In today's session we will begin to build-in some of those habit-making ideas and activities to make it a little easier.

In this session we will:

- Get to know each other a little better.
- Better understand how our freedom in Christ empowers us to do the unexpected.
- Explore what it would take to say "yes" to allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our lives.

What we will need:

- White construction paper
- Enough colored markers for everyone to have access to several colors.

Ready

Opening Prayer

God of all that is good, as we come to the end of our time together help us to bring forward into this time and this place, all that we have shared together over the last six (weeks/months). May we be present to each other and attentive to all that you will offer to us in our conversations. May we go from here awake to your presence among us. All this we ask in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Regroup

Spend a few minutes following-up from last session's "Go" activities.

Activity---I've Always wanted a Tattoo

How often have you been surprised to find out that someone you know, whom you would never have imagined, has always wanted a tattoo, or better still, that they have one! Despite how common they are in our society today, there is still a prevailing sense that they are taboo and make the bearer a little "edgy." The idea of them can push some of us to the edge of our comfort zones. So, let's go there!

Pass the construction paper and markers around. Explain that everyone is going to have the opportunity to design the tattoo they've secretly always

wanted. Allow 10-15 minutes (encourage creativity and invite them to think big!) If they haven't always dreamed of having a tattoo invite them to think about an image that they would have framed for their office or featured on their computer desktop.

Once everyone is finished invite them to, in turn, show their tattoo to the group and explain why they chose it and where on their body it would go.

Set

Talking About the Text

Ask someone to read Galatians 5:13-23 aloud.

What is God doing in this story?

What is God saying to you (personally) through this story?

What does it mean that we are not "subject to the law" if we are led by the Holy Spirit?

This is a tough text with some pretty harsh words for believers. In a text that professes freedom from the law it seems pretty clear about the do's and don't's. Why do you think this is?

What is freedom? What is freedom in Christ?

What do you hear God telling you to do through this story?

Sharing About Ourselves

Think about the last three days. Briefly verbally sketch out the generalities of your life over those days (where you were, what you were doing). As you think through the activities that have made up your life, where do you see the fruit of the Spirit evident in what you were up to?

Can you name one unlikely place or person in which the fruit of the Spirit were evident?

What might each of us do to "tune in" to the fruit of the Spirit that surround us every day. As a group, come up with some concrete ways that you could begin to perk up your Spirit antennae.

Go

In your journal, spend some time considering everything you have learned in this session and answer the following questions:

1. What questions do I have as a result of today's discussion? Jot down two or three.
2. In each of these questions, what is the key concept?
3. How can I find the answer to these questions? Select one specific approach for each question.

Then, choose one of the following to do over the coming days:

