



Wiii Before Mi

Wiiik One

Small Group Lesson

West Side Christian Church





Wiiik One: Wiii Before Mi

Before you begin please take a look at this helpful information:

- This lesson is designed to take between 1 and 1 ½ hours.
- Pay attention to the text boxes. They provide cautions and suggestions to help make your job easier and to help the lesson flow more smoothly.
- Looking at the study ahead of time and giving some thought for how to tailor it to your group will likely result in a better experience for you and your group.
- Be careful to watch your time. Don't skip the "icebreaker" to hurry to the study. But don't spend so much time on the activity that you have to rush the study, either. They're designed to complement each other.
- This wiiik's study portion has been scripted for you to help you manage your time. You may paraphrase from this script, but be careful not to deviate from the heart and the intent of the study.

Introducing the Lesson:

■ Spend 5-10 minutes in "intentional mingling". The group stands up in one room and group members seek out people who they don't know, or who they know less about than the others. The goal is to learn as much as possible about as many people as possible... and retain that information. They may want to ask about where they grew up, what they do for a living, their favorite anything, their family. Different people will likely be asking different questions. Be creative, have fun, and get to know one another better.

If new to the small group, encourage people to share more trivial kinds of things, rather than feeling like they have to share deep personal parts of their story. Remind them that this is a "getting to know you" kind of thing, not a "getting to know everything about you" kind of thing. Even in established groups, you don't want this to get too heavy. And, we all need to be careful of those people who share too much information. Keep it light, but meaningful. **No note taking is allowed.*

■ Then go around the room doing "reverse introductions". Typically "Bob" would introduce himself. However, here "Bob" is introduced by people in the group. Group members randomly chime in with interesting or informative facts about "Bob" that they just learned (or that they knew before). When Bob has been sufficiently introduced, move on to the next person. Continue this until everyone in the group has been introduced.

**Be careful to manage your time with this. Too much time on one person could limit the amount of time for others, possibly leaving some people feeling neglected. Also, you want to leave sufficient time for the discussion. In a group of 10, only 3 minutes spent on each person will take 30 minutes.*



Discussion:

The icebreaker transitions into the discussion for the evening based on this leading question:

During the introductions, were you more concerned about hearing about other people, or were you more focused on what would be said of you and what you would be saying?

**This week is a direct attack on people's egos. Often times, we need that ego check to keep us on the right path. Small groups have the opportunity to make this confrontation (self vs. selfless) into a turning point in someone's faith. But, it takes a certain way of asking to pull off this "clincher" question. Framing the question in the right way makes it thought provoking and sparks lots of reflection; the wrong tone or posture makes it seem standoffish and condescending. So, be careful how you ask this question!*

Think back to this week's worship service. How did that service challenge your thinking about community and individualism? Was there something in the sermon that hit you? Maybe a particular song or some other element of the service that spoke to you?

Study:

Eddie's sermon this week focused on 1 Corinthians 13 – often referred to as "The Love Chapter". But let's take a look at what Paul wrote to the Corinthian church immediately before this treatise on love:

Excerpts from 1 Corinthians 12 (The Message translation)

"We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which Jesus has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain – his Spirit – where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves – labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free – are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together...

But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a part of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster. No part is important all on its own...

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part."

We're in this together!



Let's also take a look at what Paul wrote to the church at Philippi regarding this subject of humble love:

*“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...**”*

Notice how Paul goes on to give a brief description of Jesus, kind of like what we did at the beginning of our time together tonight.

...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. — Philippians 2:1-11

Application:

Ask the following questions:

- 1) What would West Side Christian Church look like if we all operated from this attitude?**
- 2) How would your life be different if you and those around you looked out for the interests of others, considering them worthy of being served by you?**
- 3) What actions will you take this week to put Wiii before Mi, to humbly put others before yourself?**

*This is the crux of the lesson. This is where we answer the question “so what?” in response to the sermon and the study.



Wrap Up:

Read to the group:

We need to have an individual awareness. But we must balance that with a community consciousness. Both are necessary and vital to our spiritual health. Our individuality is only fully realized within the body of Christ. We are at our fullest potential when we are connected with the body of Christ. And that means we need to get past our “self-focus” to see where we fit in the body. This is a Wiii focus. We’re reminded that we as individuals really do matter to God, but that he desires for us to go beyond self and experience the power of community. We all have different gifts and strengths and abilities and personalities (we’ll look more closely at this later in the series), and so it takes all of us working together to impact this world. We need people who are wired up differently than us to speak into our lives and help us along in the journey of faith. And they need us to help them along in their journey, too.

**It is OK to paraphrase this, as long as you clearly communicate the message. Personalization is good, but you’ll want to give some thought as to how you can best communicate this information to your group.*

Prayer:

Spend some time praying specifically for your group to place Wiii before Mi this week.