



PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

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BE THE CHURCH



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## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

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Cover Design: Keith Locke, The Inreach Group

Interior Design: Ingrid Tomassoni, Outreach, Inc.

Church Tools Development: Heidi Unruh, consultant, World Vision

Curriculum and Devotional Development: Nathalie Moberg, World Vision

# faith in ACT!ON

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# Don't Just Go To Church

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## BE THE CHURCH !

### What Does This Mean?

Too often, we get caught up in thinking of church as a place or event. Something with an address, a time frame, a boundary. In this sense we might ask, “Where do you go to church?” or “What time does church end?”

In a critical sense, what happens at the church building during worship services is the core of the church's existence. Worshipping God together is a primary reason for our creation and the first fruit of our salvation.

But in another vital sense, “the church” is more than a place, a weekly event or an institution. The church is *us*—the people of God in whom the risen Lord lives. And being the church means living out Jesus' teaching and example in our world today. This means showing love as Jesus did in practical ways to neighbors near and far. This means being “God with skin on” to those who are most vulnerable and least valued in the world's eyes. Being the church means putting our faith into action, so that the world can see the difference that knowing Christ makes.

The Faith in Action curriculum is a tool to help expand your insight and impact as you share God's love with others.

What can you expect from your Faith in Action experience?

### This Program Will:

- Educate you about local and global needs, about the biblical mandate for compassion and about how you can make a difference.
- Encourage you to apply the Bible's teachings in your life through tangible expressions of your faith.
- Energize your relationship with God as you reach beyond the walls of the church.





# SmallGroupDiscussions

FourSessions: **Detour**  
Lens  
Drop  
Party

# SessionOne: Detour

Open with prayer.

- **View Detour DVD SegmentOne:** *(Allow 3 min.)*

- **1. Group Discussion: Warm Up** *(Allow 10 min.)*

**Introduction:** *(Read aloud)* Let's face it. Most of us don't like interruptions. They slow us down. They gobble up our precious time. They may even force us to take a detour from our already crammed schedules. Yet as Christians, our spiritual journey calls us beyond managing our to-do lists and into a faith-in-action lifestyle that welcomes divine detours—those opportunities to demonstrate God's love to people in need. Today, we'll begin to see how we can make small adjustments to our lives so that we are prepared to take divine detours to care for others.

Q. What are two interruptions you dislike most and why?

Q. What will you always let yourself be interrupted for and why?

- **View Detour DVD SegmentTwo:** *(Allow 3 min.)*

- **2. Group Discussion: Focus on the Word** *(Allow 15 min.)*

**The story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25–37:**

*(Read aloud, then discuss)* Let's begin by dissecting the response of the Good Samaritan. As the story unfolds, this unlikely hero was ready to respond—and that response is as much about what he didn't do as about what he did. He didn't let his schedule dictate his response. He didn't weigh the personal consequences of helping. We are told he simply “went to him and bandaged his wounds ...” The world is full of people who need their “wounds” bandaged. How can we make ourselves available to take detours—to cross the road—to bandage others' wounds?

- Q. In verse 27, the expert in the law clearly knew what God required of him to inherit eternal life—love God, love your neighbor. Yet the expert in the law was testing Jesus and wanted his “neighbor” defined. Considering that the Jews in Jesus’ time despised Samaritans and even refused to speak to them, how do you think the crowd responded to the parable of the Good Samaritan? Who might you consider modern-day “Samaritans”—those shunned and ignored?
- Q. Re-read Luke 10:34–35. What did the Good Samaritan have that he shared with the man in need? What does his willingness to share whatever he had at his disposal say about Christ’s call on our lives?
- Q. Re-read Luke 10:25–29. Part of being equipped is having the right attitude toward helping others. What attitude did the lawyer who questioned Jesus have toward helping his “neighbor?” How was this different from the attitude and actions of the Samaritan?
- Q. The religious leaders in Jesus’ story were weighed down by regulations and the expectations of others, and these would have contributed to their decision to ignore the injured man. What are the personal “rules” and assumptions that weigh you down? How can you balance the things that “weigh you down” with Jesus’ call on us to care for others?

- **View Detour DVD Segment Three:** *(Allow 3 min.)*

- **3. Group Discussion: Run the Race** *(Allow 15 min.)*

*(Read aloud)* As Steve shared in the video, Jesus was intent on ministering to those God placed before him—and he calls us to do the same thing. The Good Samaritan, then, was a reflection of Jesus because he was ready to disadvantage himself to advantage others—even a stranger. He not only made himself available, the Good Samaritan also was ready to use whatever resources he had with him at the time to help another. Today, the story of the Good Samaritan is so lasting and universal that hospitals, churches, foundations, and even laws are named after the parable's hero. Yet even more moving is that every day across the United States and around the world, people make decisions about whether they will take detours—big and small—to care for those in need:

- A 17-year-old Omaha, Neb., boy was inspired to help the victims of the December 26, 2004 tsunami. He not only enlisted his Scout troop to collect school supplies to assist tsunami-affected children in returning to school, but also inspired his friends to write letters to encourage tsunami survivors.
- Dozens of church groups from across the United States devote a week each summer to living in Appalachia's Chestnut Ridge, a struggling West Virginian community that lost much of the little it had when coal mines closed decades ago. These church youth groups, men's groups and family groups come to encourage residents and help revive their communities. "God can really change you when you help others," said one participant of the Appalachia outreach. "You give, but in return you get even more back. It's amazing what happens within yourself when you give up your desires and just go."
- A woman in the grocery store checkout line in Auburn, Wash., noticed that the teenager ahead of her didn't have enough money to pay for his soda. She paid for the teenager's drink—leaving a lasting impression on the surprised youth.
- Two women in Chicago have joined forces to renovate houses for struggling families in the city's poor neighborhoods. Together, they fulfill their mission one family at a time, block by block, encouraging and inspiring

as they hammer and drill. “My work is about touching the people closest to me,” one of the women said.

The Good Samaritan’s story inspires us because he was quick to respond, willing to get involved and ready to sacrifice his time, energy and money for a stranger. This also is true of these modern Good Samaritans—they helped when they didn’t have to, and their kindnesses have had big returns in the lives of others. Let’s explore how we can integrate Jesus’ teaching about loving our neighbor into our own lives by not only being available and equipped, but alert to others’ needs.

Q. Share a kindness someone did for you that surprised you—an offering of his or her time, talent or treasure. How did that person’s generosity affect you?

Q. What about you is like the Good Samaritan? What about you is like the priest and Levite?

Q. Read John 20:21 and Luke 9:1–2. Where is Jesus sending his disciples? What is Jesus calling his followers to do? How do you think this calling relates to you and your lifestyle?

#### 4. Your Faith in Action Assignment: *(Allow 5 min.)*

- Try an experiment this week. How can you be available, equipped and alert to help just one person? Share one way you can help someone else. At our next group gathering, we will share how each of us was able to reach out this week to at least one “neighbor”—what you did, how it felt and what you learned.
- Spend some time this week assessing your ministry potential (and that of your family, if applicable) by reflecting on the **Ministry Opportunities Inventory** (p. 64). Please bring your completed assessment to our next session so we can share what we have discovered and plan our next steps of Faith in Action.

**Today**, we close with this insight from “The Contemporary Christian” by theologian John Stott:

*“Jesus sends us into the world, as the Father sent him into the world ... In other words our mission is to be modeled on his. Indeed, all authentic mission is incarnational mission... It means entering other peoples’ worlds as he entered ours, though without compromising our Christian convictions, values, or standards.”*

**Next session**, we’ll look at adjusting our personal “lens” to see the world more like Jesus saw it—so that we are better prepared to act on our faith the way Jesus did.

**Your FaithStep Devotional** this week will take you on a personal journey of study, reflection and discovery of how you can be ready to take God-ordained detours to care for others.

**Close with prayer.**

# SmallGroupDiscussion

FourSessions: **Detour**  
**Lens**  
Drop  
Party



## SessionTwo: Lens

Open with prayer.

**Introduction to Study:** *(Allow 5 min.)*

- *(Read aloud)* **Last session**, using the example of the Good Samaritan, we learned how we can be ready to take divine detours to care for others. Let's share briefly about our experiment last week of making ourselves available for service to another person.
- **Today:** How we view the world is critical to how effectively we put our faith in action. We all have a "lens"—assumptions, responses and judgments—that influences how we see the world and other people. As we walk as Christ's followers, how does our lens need adjusting so that we are fully available to put our faith in action? This is what we'll be exploring today.
- **View Lens DVD SegmentOne:** *(Allow 3 min.)*
  - **1. Group Discussion: Warm Up** *(Allow 10 min.)*

Q. What is one activity you enjoyed in the last week and why?

Q. What does what you enjoyed say about what you value?
- **View Lens DVD SegmentTwo:** *(Allow 3 min.)*
  - **2. Group Discussion: Focus on the Word** *(Allow 15 min.)*

*(Read Luke 4:14–21, then discuss)* Steve shared in the video that as Christ's followers, the lens we inherited, grew up with or adopted is now replaced with a Christ-focused lens that is outward-facing, alive and filtered through love. Let's look at those Christ was especially anointed to minister to—and whom we have the privilege to minister to, as well.

Q. Jesus' reading in the synagogue pointed to his purpose and focus. Re-read Luke 4:18–19, and this time identify the

people Jesus was especially anointed to care for. Why do you think these people were singled out? What does this say about God's "lens"?

Q. In modern terms, who are these people and what are society's attitudes toward them? Based on these verses, how are society's lens and God's lens different?

Q. Each of the actions Jesus points to in Luke 4:18–19 has a spiritual and physical response. In your Faith in Action Book of Luke, see the chart below Luke 4:14–30 on p. 1680 entitled "Jesus' Ministry." Read each task and its spiritual and physical dimensions. Considering each "task," why are both dimensions important? How do you think our ministry to others is more complete when we engage both spiritual and physical responses?

- **View Lens DVD Segment Three:** *(Allow 3 min.)*

- **3. Group Discussion:** Run the Race *(Allow 15 min.)*

**Activity:** What Lens Are You Looking Through?

John 15:16–17 says, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other."

On our life-long journey with God, we know he calls us to bear fruit by loving all people unconditionally. But we often put conditions on loving others by our assumptions—our lens—about the world. We've probably been looking through this lens for so long, we may not even know it's there.

**Break into groups of no more than four and tackle the following activity:** *(Read aloud)* Each month, in millions of homes across the United States, families cannot pay their basic bills. Twenty-nine million children in the United States

are growing up in low-income families. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, a family of four must earn \$40,000—twice the federal poverty level—before parents can provide their children with essentials like food, housing and health care. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, more than 880,000 people older than 25 earned at or below minimum wage in 2005.

Imagine you are the parents of two children: Sarah, 8, and Brett, 6. Both of you work full time, but you are still living just above the poverty line for a family of four. Together, you bring home only \$23,000 a year (a minimum-wage job pays \$10,712 a year).

Your combined salaries mean you have \$1,916 a month to pay your bills—and it's time to do that.

• **Your job is to decide which bills you will pay this month:**

- \$600 for rent on your two-bedroom apartment
- \$150 for utilities (electricity, gas, sewer, garbage, phone)—thankfully, it's summer ...
- \$100 for the ticket you received for not having car insurance
- \$120 for gas for the old Thunderbird that allows you to get to work
- \$500 for YMCA after-school childcare for two children so both parents can work
- \$400 for food
- \$50 for household items (toilet paper, laundry soap, cleaning supplies, stamps, over-the-counter medicines)
- \$440 for Sarah's emergency room visit after she fell down the stairs and needed X-rays and stitches—this is the discounted rate for families without health insurance
- \$65 for Brett's prescription allergy medicine
- \$50 for clothes (Brett needs new shoes, and Sarah's P.E. class requires her to have appropriate gym clothes)

Q. You are \$559 short of having enough to pay these basic bills. Which will you pay, and why? How does working through this exercise challenge any of your assumptions about people in need?

**Mark 1:40–42** says, “A man with leprosy came to him (Jesus) and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.”

Leprosy was considered a primary source of spiritual uncleanness, and lepers were believed to transfer spiritual impurity through touch. Yet out of compassion, Jesus touched this man and healed him. “Compassion” means “passion with”—caring enough to touch peoples’ lives and enter into their suffering. Compassion was Jesus’ lens, and it is at the heart of the gospel. Today, as Christ’s followers, we are privileged to share God’s compassion with the world.

Q. How does your lens need transformation into that of Christ? Take a few moments to write down three assumptions that keep you from demonstrating Christ-like compassion. Share one of these assumptions with your group. Discuss how you can begin to allow God to transform you by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2)—and adjust your vision to see through a lens of compassion.

- **4. Your Faith in Action Assignment:** *(Allow 10 min.)*

**Briefly share your insights from the Ministry Opportunities Inventory you did since our last gathering.**

**Your Assignment:** *(Read aloud)* Christ’s lens beckons us to adjust our focus, take an outward view, release our assumptions so that we may see people as Christ sees them, and be ready to respond by touching others’ lives. How can you continue to integrate growing compassion into your life by acting in faith to care for those in need? You can start with these assignments.

Follow through on what you discovered through your Ministry Opportunities Inventory, and plan a way your family will work together this week to demonstrate God’s love to others. If you are single, link up with a friend. At

our next gathering, we will share how each of us was able to reach out this week in at least one way—what you did, how it felt and what you learned.

- Spend some quiet time before the Lord this week, asking him for his focus, direction and sensitivity to see when he is calling you to put your faith in action and reach out to someone else.
- What’s happening in your community? Ask for volunteers to find out the answers to these questions and report back at your next gathering.
- How many people are living below the poverty line in your community? (*Check out: <http://quickfacts.census.gov>, [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org), other local Web sites or your local library.*)
- How many elderly people live in your community? (*Again, use Web sites or your local library.*)
- What other statistics in your community reflect needs? Be creative and see what you can find!
- (*Read aloud*) Jesus said, “Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these” (John 14:12). May we receive new sight to see that Jesus’ outward mission is our mission too!
- **Let’s close by reading together Luke 4:18–19, this time making it personal:** The Spirit of the Lord is on *us*, because he has anointed *us* to preach good news to the poor. He has sent *us* to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.
- **Next session**, we will explore how each of our efforts to reach out to others—big and small—have eternal impact by contributing to God’s kingdom.
- **Your faith-in-action devotional** this week will challenge you to further identify your personal “lens” and adjust your views to better align with God’s call to “Love your neighbor.”

**Close with prayer.**

# SmallGroupDiscussion

Detour  
Lens  
FourSessions: **Drop**  
Party

## Session Three: Drop

Open with prayer.

### Introduction to Study: *(Allow 5 min.)*

- *(Read aloud)* **Last session**, we had an “eye exam”—looking at how we view the world and others, and where we might be challenged to adjust our thinking as we become equipped to meet others’ needs. Let’s share briefly what we did last week to put our faith in action. Describe one way your caring action sharpened your faith. For example, did your action reaffirm your place in God’s plan? Did it make you more sensitive to God’s “divine promptings”? Did it help you to better see the world through Jesus’ eyes?
- **Today:** Among Mother Teresa’s inspiring quotes is this: “Good works are links that form a chain of love.” As each of us adds even a drop of caring for others, our efforts combine to bring a waterfall of results in God’s kingdom. Today, we’ll explore more in-depth our place in God’s global plan.
- **View Drop DVD SegmentOne:** *(Allow 3 min.)*
  - **1. Group Discussion: Warm Up** *(Allow 10 min.)*

Q. Share a time you did something small for someone you barely knew, or when a stranger did something kind for you. How did you feel about this experience?

Q. Have each participant name one barrier that stands in the way when one considers getting involved in others’ needs. Ask one participant to record the list of barriers, then list ways to overcome these impediments to Faith in Action.
- **View Drop DVD SegmentTwo:** *(Allow 3 min.)*
  - **2. Group Discussion: Focus on the Word** *(Allow 15 min.)*

**Luke 9:10–17:** *(Read aloud, then discuss)* It looked like the apostles were in over their heads. All they had to feed the

crowd was five small loaves of bread and two fish, which John 6:9 tells us were donated by a little boy. Jesus could have just multiplied the loaves and fish and moved on. But instead, he told his apostles, “You give them something to eat.” Jesus wanted his disciples to do the work.

Q. Put yourself in the disciples’ shoes. In the video, Steve noted some of the ways the disciples might have reacted when Jesus delegated the problem of the hungry crowd to them. What do you imagine was their response when the little boy approached them with his small offering of loaves and fish? How do you think their attitude changed after seeing what Jesus did with it?

Q. By trusting in Jesus, the disciples found the ability and courage to address a seemingly impossible situation. They put their Faith in Action and witnessed a miracle. In Luke 9:17, we see that not only did they have enough, there was food left over. Assuming Jesus did not miscalculate the amount needed, why do you think food was left over?

Q. What need do you feel drawn to address that you think is too big for you, but not for God? What steps of faith could you be empowered to take by trusting in and focusing on Jesus—not the size of the problem?

- **3. Small Group Activity: Small Is Big**

From the world’s view, feeding 5,000 people with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish is impossible. But Jesus’ view is different from the world’s view. In Jesus’ view, the weak are strong, the poor are rich, the leader is a servant—and often small is big. As Steve explained in the DVD, the daily journey of putting our faith into action means constantly adjusting our thinking and actions so that they’re more in line with Christ’s. *(continue)*



- Throughout scripture, God takes delight in using something small to accomplish something big. Break into three small groups with each group focusing on a different passage below. For each of the following Bible accounts:
  - Identify what was “small” and how God made it “big.”
  - What step of faith was essential to accomplish God’s will?
  - Explain why you think God chose to accomplish his will by using something small.

### **David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17:38–50**

- Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. “I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. “Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!” David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head.” As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

**The Big Catch: Luke 5:1–11** *(Please see the passage in your Faith in Action Book of Luke.)*

### **A Crippled Beggar Is Healed: Acts 3:1–4:3**

- One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled

from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.” The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day ... but many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

- **View Drop DVD SegmentThree:** *(Allow 3 min.)*

- **4. Group Discussion:** Run the Race *(Allow 15 min.)*

Luke 13:18–20: *(Read aloud, then discuss)* Jesus spoke often about “the kingdom of heaven” or “the kingdom of God.” God’s kingdom starts out small—like the mustard seed—but will eventually cover the whole earth *(see Faith in Action Study Bible notes for Luke 13:18–21)*. Jesus invites us to participate in what God is doing in growing his kingdom—a kingdom unparalleled on Earth. Just as God makes the smallest seed become one of the largest trees, he will use even our smallest offering to help bring transformation to our neighbors, communities and the world. *(continue)*

- Q. Describe a time when you, your family or your church did something “small” that God multiplied to bring significant returns for others.
- Q. Why do you think the all-powerful God of the universe chooses to use individuals like us to do his work—instead of doing it all himself?
- Q. As we look ahead to the church-wide service project, what are some of your hopes for this day of ministry? How do you dream that God might multiply your church’s offering of service?
- Q. What unchurched friends will you invite to serve with you? What might the impact be on them?
- Q. Last week, we challenged ourselves to begin seeing our communities differently by finding statistics that reveal local needs. Let’s share what we learned about our community since the last session.
- Q. In what ways can you see our group, our families or church reaching out to care for those in need here in our community?

#### 4. Your Faith in Action Assignment *(Allow 5 min.)*

**Mother Teresa, in her book *My Life for the Poor*, said:**

“The biggest disease today is not leprosy or cancer or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for, and deserted by everybody. The greatest evil is the lack of love and charity, the terrible indifference toward one’s neighbor who lives at the roadside; the victim of exploitation, corruption, poverty, and disease.

“It is easy to think of the poverty far away and forget very quickly. Today a great disease is that feeling of terrible loneliness, the feeling of being unwanted, having forgotten what human joy is, what the human feeling is of being wanted or loved. I think this is found in very well-to-do families also.

“We may not have people hungry for a plate of rice or for a piece of bread in New York City, but there is a tremendous hunger and a tremendous feeling of unwantedness everywhere. And that is really a very great poverty.”

(Taken from the Faith in Action Study Bible)

- **Your Assignment:**

**Next week**, you will participate in your church’s Faith in Action outreach. Begin planning now for what your group can do beyond the Faith in Action all-church event. How can you work together on a regular basis to address the needs you identified in your community? How will you begin?

**Next session**, we will have experienced our all-church Faith in Action outreach. Please remember to pray this week and prepare our hearts for God to move through our church-wide outreach next weekend. During our next session, we will share our experiences, reflect and continue to plan how we can participate in God’s work in the world by putting our faith in action.

**Your FaithStep Devotional** this week will provide you an additional opportunity to discover the potential impact your simplest acts of caring can have on individuals—and on God’s kingdom.

**Close with prayer.**



# SmallGroupDiscussion

Detour  
Lens  
Drop

FourSessions: **Party**

## Session Four: Party

Open with prayer.

**Introduction to Study:** *(Allow 2 min.)*

- *(Read aloud)* **Last session**, we examined how God takes small things and makes them big—the multiplying of the loaves and fishes, and the mustard seed. The last session also prepared you to participate in your church-wide Faith in Action outreach.
- **Today:** This is our debriefing session, when we will reflect and learn, not only from our weeks of study together, but from your outreach experiences as well.

• **View Party DVD Segment One:** *(Allow 3 min.)*

- **1. Group Discussion: Warm Up** *(Allow 15 min.)*

In the video, Steve urges us to find the “God-connections” in our recent church outreach. As you share, remember to look for what God accomplished through our efforts.

Q. Share one highlight and one challenge you experienced during your church service project.

Q. Where did you encounter God in your outreach experience?

Q. How did this experience change you personally?

• **View Party DVD Segment Two:** *(Allow 3 min.)*

- **2. Group Discussion: Focus on the Word** *(Allow 10 min.)*

**Luke 10:1–11 and 17–23:** *(Read aloud, then discuss)* Jesus’ message as he sent out his disciples was simple: Attend to needs and point people to God. The disciples obeyed, and when they returned, they were amazed at the outcome. Yet Jesus said the outcome was much greater than even the miracles they saw.

Q. In Luke 10:1–9, name the things Jesus equipped his disciples with. What can you think of that the disciples might have thought they needed, but Jesus did not give them? How can you apply this example to how we do ministry today?

Q. In Luke 10:17–19, what did the disciples report as their ministry success? What did Jesus say also was their success? What does this tell you about the impact of putting our faith in action?

Q. Re-read Luke 10:20–21. What does it mean to you personally that your name is “written in heaven,” that you are on God’s team? Drawing on this study and your ministry experiences, what gives you reason to rejoice?

● **View Party DVD Segment Three:** *(Allow 3 min.)*

● **3. Group Discussion:** Run the Race *(Allow 15 min.)*

In the video, Steve reminds us that we are to spur each other on toward acts of love and good deeds. This is our opportunity to brainstorm future faith-in-action activities. Let’s spend some time considering options for our group’s ongoing ministry work together.

**Here Are a Few Guidelines:**

- Begin by asking God for wisdom as you discern where he is leading your group to put your faith in action.
- Take a few minutes to assess your group’s interests and strengths as they relate to outreach. What special skills and resources do you bring to ministry? Do you want to work with children? Poor people? Elderly persons? Do you want to focus on the local community or support global ministry efforts?
- Think about your context for ministry. What needs have emerged from your research on the community, your



church's outreach or your familiarity with your own neighborhoods? What "divine detours" appear to be crossing your group's path?

- What do you want your outreach to look like? How often do you want to serve as a group? How far are you willing to travel? Do you have a need for childcare or do you want to serve together with your families? What other factors should be considered?
- Consider whether your group wants to focus on outreach opportunities that bring you directly in contact with people in need. Giving blood, for example, is a wonderful gift, but you won't have the opportunity to meet the recipient.
- The list of small group activity ideas provided in the small group leader's guide can help jump-start your brainstorming process. Choose an idea from the small group list, adapt a church-wide service activity for your group (*see p. 12 of The Faith in Action Leader's Guide*) or come up with an entirely new direction for ministry.
- As you discuss options, remember there are no "bad" ideas. Be creative!
- Once you have decided your outreach direction, appoint a group member to manage the process and delegate any details.

#### **4. Beyond This Study: Your Personal Faith in Action**

*(Allow 5 min.)*

*"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)*

Walking humbly with God means seeking to submit every area of our life to Christ, not just the time we spend at church or the resources we dedicate to church ministry. Our families, our jobs and our neighborhoods can become arenas for living out our faith. Volunteering for church-sponsored ministries is important, but God wants more from us: ourselves. As we offer God our hearts and our lives to use in transforming our world, God is at work transforming us!

How does a single act of caring for others become part of our faith journey? Choose an act (*see p. 66 for ideas*)...

then do it again ... then make it a habit by incorporating it in your personal schedule and household budget. Then repeat the process! May you be blessed as you use your time, talents, and treasures to bless others.

**Your Faith-in-Action devotional** this week will take you on a journey of celebration as we continue to participate in God's work in the world.

**Close with prayer.**

do all the good you can, in all the ways  
you can, to all the souls you can,  
in every place you can, at all the  
times you can, with all the zeal you can,  
as long as ever you can.

– John Wesley



FaithStepDevotional

FourSessions: Detour  
Lens  
Drop  
Party

## How to Use the FaithStep Devotional

One of the fruits of a life of faith in action is ongoing good works. These works sprout out of a life fertile with the love, hope and faithfulness that God places in the hearts of each of his followers. This 28-day FaithStep Devotional is designed to help you cooperate with God as he builds in you the strong foundation that is the springboard for your faith in action.

- This devotional is intended to be done in concert with the Faith in Action small group study. However, it also can be a valuable tool for use as an individual study.
- If you are doing this devotional alongside the small group study, begin your devotional on the first day (Sunday) of your church's Faith in Action campaign.
- Set aside at least 10 minutes for each devotion to allow ample time for reflection and prayer.
- The Faith in Action Study Bible (Zondervan) is another valuable companion tool to this study.

may you be blessed  
as you grow spiritually,  
and increasingly bless  
others by putting your  
faith in act!on

# FaithStepDevotional

This week, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your lifestyle and how God might be calling you to make adjustments so that you are better prepared to reflect his love to others.

SessionOne: **Detour**  
Lens  
Drop  
Party

# SessionOne: Detour

## Day 1: The Key to Heaven

**Luke 10:25–27** (*p. 1698 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- In these verses, Jesus summarized the intention of all of the Law. One word these commands have in common is “love.” Which of the two commands—love God, love your neighbor—comes most naturally to you? Which is the greatest challenge, and why?
- What step will you take today in your thoughts, attitude or actions to make yourself more available to love others in need?

*For Further Study: Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 5:43*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session One: Detour

## Day 2: Making Room

**Luke 2:6-7** (p. 1674 *Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Jesus came in the most humble of circumstances. This modest birth for the most exalted figure in history demonstrates that life's true value is found not in trimmings and trappings, but in life itself. Yet, it is often these distractions that keep us too busy to help others. What are some specific ways you can further simplify your life so that you are available to take "detours" for others?
  
- From the day Jesus was born, the world had "no room" for him. What practical steps can you take to make more room for the things of God in your life?

*For Further Study: "Is There Room in Your Inn" p. 1675 Book of Luke. What challenges or inspires you about the article?*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.



# SessionOne: Detour

## Day 3: Blessing Others

**Luke 3:11** (*p. 1678 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- John the Baptist was challenging those who wanted to be baptized not just to observe the ceremony of baptism, but to live it. “ ... Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire,” he told them. To which the crowd responded, “What should we do?” Luke 3:11 was John’s answer. Take some time to examine your heart regarding those material things that hold the greatest value for you.
  
- How is it difficult for you to share your “treasures on earth” with others? Write down three ways you can begin to hold the things you own loosely, so that you are ready to share them with those in need.

*For Further Study: Isaiah 58:7*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session One: Detour

## Day 4: Fishing Lesson

**Luke 5:10b–11** (*p. 1682 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Jesus had done a miracle for Peter by filling his net with fish, but Peter's first response was fear, not thankfulness. As you increase your commitment to put your faith in action, what fears do you face, and how do you think God can address those fears?
- Simon's fear quickly was replaced by action—he “left everything and followed him.” God also asks us to be ready to “leave everything”—that is, to make God and his commands our top priority. In what ways do you need to rearrange your priorities to be available to God and his work?

*For Further Study: Luke 5:27–28, Matthew 4:18–20*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionOne: Detour

## Day 5: Rich Toward God

**Luke 12:15** (*p. 1705 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Jesus cautions us to “watch out” lest we allow possessions to stand in the way of a truly abundant life. In your life, what specific forms of greed do you need to be on your guard against?
  
- In the Old Testament the grain the harvesters missed was intentionally left for those in need (*see Deuteronomy 24:19–22*). What resources do you have that you can share with others, rather than simply store up for yourself?

*For Further Study: Job 20:20, 1 Timothy 6:17–19*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session One: Detour

## Day 6: True Treasure

**Luke 12:32–34** (*p. 1706 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Yesterday, we examined what we do with our earthly treasures. Today's verses focus on what our real treasure is: God's kingdom. In these verses, Jesus called his followers to sell their possessions and give to the poor, thus freeing them from being controlled by their possessions and worrying about them. Such generosity God honors with indestructible "treasure in heaven"—the reward for service to him. When you have shared what you own with others, have you ever felt that you lost anything by giving something away? Or have you felt rewarded? How has that gesture freed you?
  
- Jesus calls us to give, but our culture often condones a selfish and greedy "me first" attitude. How does "me first" influence you, and what steps can you take to put others first?

*For Further Study: Matthew 6:20, Matthew 19:21, Acts 2:45, James 5:2*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionOne: Detour

## Day 7: Go and Do Likewise

**Luke 10:36–37** (*p. 1701 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Jesus concludes the parable of the Good Samaritan with a single command: “Go and do likewise”—in other words, take a detour to help others. Yet, Paul acknowledges in Romans 7:21 that “When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.” Doing good is not always easy—but Jesus simply says to do it. What in your life tempts you toward evil rather than good?
- In Romans 7:24–25, Paul questions how we can be delivered from our failure to do the good that God intends us to do. “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Take a moment to give thanks to God for delivering you from evil and freeing you to do good and show mercy to others.

*For Further Study: “Who Is Our Neighbor?” p. 1699 Book of Luke. What challenges you about being “neighborly to the unwanted,” and how can you address this challenge?*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# FaithStepDevotional

This week, you will focus on the lens you use to view the world and how that viewpoint aligns with God's perspective.

Detour  
SessionTwo: **Lens**  
Drop  
Party

# SessionTwo: Lens

## Day 1: Lens and Motive

**Luke 4:18–19** (*p. 1680 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Think honestly and deeply about what is motivating you to put your faith in action. For example, are you motivated by peer pressure and pride or love and compassion? How does Jesus' purpose statement compare with your own?
  
- If your purpose does not align with God's purpose, what steps can you take to develop a more Christ-like perspective on your role in life?

*For Further Study: "Jesus' Ministry" p. 1680 Book of Luke. What are examples of how Jesus' ministry addressed the spiritual and physical aspects of ministry? What do you think are the advantages to caring for others physically as well as spiritually?*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionTwo: Lens

## Day 2: Lens on Love

**Luke 6:27–29** (*p. 1685 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- As we increasingly put our faith in action, we may encounter challenging, and even discouraging, situations. Luke 6:27–29 provides insight into God’s perspective as he calls us to care for all people—even our “enemies.” Considering these verses, how is God’s attitude toward enemies different from ours?
  
- What challenges you most in these verses? Write down one specific situation you face that calls for a Christ-like response rather than your natural inclination.

*For Further Study: Matthew 5:44, Romans 12:20*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.



# SessionTwo: Lens

## Day 3: Lens on Values

**Luke 16:13–15** (*p. 1714 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Yesterday, we focused on the difference between God's lens and our lens. Through his Word, God challenges each of his followers to adapt a lens that does not change with temporal circumstances but keeps eternal values in view. Name two of our culture's values you think are fleeting and "detestable in God's sight."
- How do the values you identified above impact those who are poor or vulnerable? For example, the high value our culture places on materialism can affect how people who are poor are treated. Or the high value our culture places on power can leave the powerless feel worthless. Jesus teaches that we have to make choices. What specific choices can you make to help your life reflect God's values of caring for others, and not our culture's values that devalue others?

*For Further Study: 1 Samuel 16:7*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionTwo: Lens

## Day 4: Lens on Humility

**Luke 18:10–14** (*p. 1719 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Why is humility important to our work with people in need?
- Take a few moments to search your attitudes toward people in need. Do you feel as if you are “better” than they are? Do you see yourself as the “hero”? According to author Richard Foster, “Of all the classical spiritual disciplines, service is the most conducive to the growth of humility ... ” How do you think service to others deepens our humility?

*For Further Study: Luke 14:11, Matthew 23:11–12*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionTwo: Lens

## Day 5: Lens on Generosity

**Luke 6:30–31** (*p. 1685 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- The concept of stewardship directs us to acknowledge that everything we have belongs to God—we are only stewards (not owners) of the things we have. In what specific ways do you strive to be a steward of what God has given you?
- How does living out stewardship on a daily basis free you to be more generous with time and resources?

*For Further Study: “Love your Neighbor” p. 1700 Book of Luke. How do you bear Jesus inviting you to live in a radically new way? In what specific ways can you welcome needy strangers into your life?*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionTwo: Lens

## Day 6: Lens on Accepting Others

**Luke 6:36–37** (*p. 1686 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- God asks us to imitate him in extending mercy, but one concrete thing we are not to do in imitation of God is to judge others. God honors compassion, not judgment. Why do you think God tells us not to judge others?
  
- James 2:13 tells us that “Mercy triumphs over judgment!” How do you offer mercy to others? In what areas could you improve in putting aside judgment and instead offering mercy to others?

*For Further Study: Matthew 5:7, Matthew 7:1, Luke 6:41–42, Micah 6:8*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionTwo: Lens

## Day 7: Lens on Our Mission

**Luke 4:18–19** (*p. 1680 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

As we close this week, consider once again Jesus' mission in Luke 4:18–19. Since Jesus' mission also is our mission, what do these verses mean to you personally? What does it mean to you to:

- Preach good news to the poor?
- Proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind?
- Release the oppressed?

*For Further Study: Matthew 7:1, Matthew 5:7, Luke 6:41–42, Micah 6:8*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# FaithStepDevotional

This week, you will reflect on how consistent caring—small or large—can bring big returns in God's kingdom.

Detour  
Lens  
SessionThree: **Drop**  
Party

## Session Three: Drop

### Day 1: "You Give Them Something to Eat"

**Luke 9:12–17** (*p. 1694 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

#### Reflect:

- Jesus called on the disciples to help with the miraculous feeding of the multitude. It wasn't glamorous work, distributing the food and then collecting the leftovers. But the disciples did it willingly because they knew they were participating in God's work. What is your response when you're asked to do a seemingly small part of an outreach ministry, like cleaning up after an event? How are you inspired by the disciples' willingness to serve in any capacity?
- Notice that Jesus preceded his miracle with giving thanks to God. How can you practice thankfulness in the outreach ministry you do?

*For Further Study: Deuteronomy 10:12, Ephesians 6:7*

#### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session Three: Drop

## Day 2: Answering the Call

**Luke 4:42–43** (*p. 1682 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Jesus knew his mission, and he remained focused on that mission. As you reach out to help others, you may find the needs overwhelming. Just as Jesus chose not to do everything others demanded of him, you can't do everything either. But you are called to do what you can. Think of a time you were frustrated because too much was expected of you. What happened?
  
- As you consider Jesus' faithfulness in doing what he was sent to do, what can you learn about focusing on God's call on your life to care for others—without becoming ineffective by trying to do everything?

*For Further Study: John 4:34*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.



# Session Three: Drop

## Day 3: Giving What You Have

**Luke 21:3** (*p. 1726 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- The amount this widow gave was small, but it was huge in Jesus' eyes because she gave everything she could. In our service to God, he only asks us to give what we have—and let him do the rest. How does this truth reassure you as you put your faith in action?
- The humble poor have much to teach those who live with abundance. Giving is an antidote to greed, a sure way to protect our hearts against selfishness. What does sacrificial giving mean to you? How do you practice sacrificial giving?

*For Further Study: 2 Corinthians 9:6–12, 2 Corinthians 8:12, Luke 6:38*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session Three: Drop

## Day 4: Failing to Do Good

**Luke 16:19–25** (*p. 1715 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- God doesn't measure our works only by what we do, but also by what we don't do. The rich man ignored the beggar at his gate. Who might be "beggars" at your "gate"—people you know are in need but you choose not to notice?
  
- What does this story say about God's expectations of his followers? What does it mean to you personally?

*For Further Study: "Great Sins of Omission" p. 1716 Book of Luke. In what one way can you become more aware of sins of omission in your life?*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

## Session Three: Drop

### Day 5: Giving Thanks

**Luke 17:11–19** (*p. 1717 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

#### Reflect:

- The lepers had received the incredible gift of renewed health, but only one took the time to thank the Healer. As you put your faith in action, you may not always receive the response you might expect. Yet, you can keep caring for people, as Jesus did, because this is his work, not yours. What expectations might you need to leave in God's hands as you reach out to care for others?
- A spirit of thankfulness provides great fuel for helping others. As we acknowledge what God has done and continues to do for us, we are inspired to share these great gifts with others. What are two ways you can remember each day to thank God for all your blessings?

*For Further Study: Luke 19:1–10, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–17, Psalm 107:1*

#### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionThree: Drop

## Day 6: Passionate Service

**Luke 19:45–48** (*p. 1723 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- This is just one example of Jesus' passion for the things of God. God has placed specific passions in each of our lives, and those passions can be used to effectively serve others. Name one or two of your passions.
  
- How can you dedicate these passions to God, to be used in caring for others?

*For Further Study: "Hospitality" p. 1711 Book of Luke. How do you bear Jesus inviting you to "live in a radically new way"? In what specific ways can you welcome needy strangers into your life?*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# SessionThree: Drop

## Day 7: Ready for the Inconvenient

**Luke 9:10–11** (*p. 1694 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Jesus and his disciples were looking for some quiet time alone, but the needs followed them in the form of crowds of people. When you are involved in ministry, do you have an assumption that you will only care for others when it's convenient? What resources can you call on when you're asked to help, but it's not convenient?
- As the crowds arrived, Jesus set an example: He went beyond simply acknowledging the people, but spent the day powerfully teaching them, healing them and finally, feeding them. Sound exhausting? Ephesians 6:10 says we are to "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." Read Ephesians 6:10–18. How are you daily putting on God's armor, readying yourself to do his work in all circumstances?

*For Further Study: Mark 6:30–44, Ephesians 1:18–23,  
1 Corinthians 16:13*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# FaithStepDevotional

This week, as you continue the celebration of what God is doing as you put your Faith in Action, you will begin to make a plan for future personal outreach.

Detour  
Lens  
Drop

SessionFour: **Party**

# Session Four: Party

## Day 1: Celebrate God's Call

**Luke 10:9** (*p. 1698 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Today, we can celebrate God's call on our lives to bring healing to a hurting world. We have many opportunities to share God's power and love with those who need to know that "the kingdom of God is near," but we can miss these opportunities if we aren't prepared for them. Name one person or situation in need of God's wholeness, and consider how you can be an agent of God's healing works.
- We have the power of the Holy Spirit to help us put our faith in action. What does having access to God's power mean to you as you reach out to others?

*For Further Study: Matthew 10:7, Luke 9:1-6, 2 Timothy 1:7*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session Four: Party

## Day 2: Celebrate God's Power

**Luke 24:45–49** (*p. 1735 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- This is Jesus' final commission to his followers before his ascension into heaven—and it's a commission that still applies to us today. Just as the disciples were called to preach Christ's suffering, death and resurrection that bring forgiveness of sins, so we too have the privilege of sharing this truth with others. Name three people with whom you would like the opportunity to share God's love.
  
- When the apostles were sent out, they faced the unknown. How can focusing on the power of the Holy Spirit help you to step out in caring for others, even when we are facing new or unusual situations—the “unknown”?

*For Further Study: Acts 5:32, Matthew 28:19*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.



# Session Four: Party

## Day 3: Celebrate Servant Greatness

**Luke 22:24–27** (*p. 1728 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- This discussion took place at the last supper, where Jesus was sharing the key principles he wanted to see in the community he would soon leave. In what ways did Jesus demonstrate in his own life that the one who rules should be the one who serves?
- What positions of leadership do you hold (in family, workplace, church, etc.) and how can you practice servant leadership that reflects Christ?

*For Further Study: Matthew 20:24–28, Mark 9:35. Read “Extravagant Devotions” p. 1689 Book of Luke. What is “extravagant” about each of these examples, and in what practical ways can you apply these examples to your life?*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

## Session Four: Party

### Day 4: Celebrate Your Kingdom Place

**Luke 22:28–30** (*p. 1729 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

#### Reflect:

- The kingdom of God is referred to more than 30 times in the Gospel of Luke alone. The kingdom is the rule of God—both a present reality and a future hope. Just as Jesus gave his followers access to his kingdom, so do present-day disciples have a place in that kingdom. Why do you think Jesus connected the fact that the disciples had stood by him with the statement that he had provided them a place in his kingdom? How does this relate to your spiritual journey?
- How does knowing that we reside in God's eternal kingdom influence how you care for others now?

*For Further Study: Matthew 25:34, 2 Timothy 2:12*

#### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session Four: Party

## Day 5: Celebrate God's Blessings

**Luke 6:20–23** (*p. 1685 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- God's values often are not the world's values. As you work with people in need, what do these verses say about how God values those who are poor, hungry and needy?
- Jesus was speaking in these verses not only about physical poverty and hunger, but also about spiritual poverty and hunger. In Matthew 5:3, for example, we see the "poor in spirit" are those who live in contrast to people who are spiritually proud and self-sufficient. To be "blessed" is to experience the ultimate well-being and spiritual joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God. What can we learn about true blessedness from those who are materially poor but spiritually rich?

*For Further Study: Isaiah 55:1–2, Matthew 5:3–12*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session Four: Party

## Day 6: Celebrate Relationships

**Luke 5:29–31** (*p. 1683 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Jesus' life was a ministry of relationships, and we can celebrate that our lives are to be the same. Imagine if Jesus had not placed such a high priority on cultivating relationships—if he had not called a group of disciples, spent time interacting with crowds, stopped to answer people's questions or eaten dinner with tax collectors. How might this have changed the impact of his ministry?
- God's call on our lives is couched in right relationships with him, with others and with his creation. Name two ways you can begin today to nurture new relationships or strengthen existing relationships, particularly with the kinds of people Jesus chose to focus on in this passage.

*For Further Study: "Fanny Jackson Coppin" p. 1722 Book of Luke. How does Fanny Jackson Coppin's life demonstrate her commitment to relationships? Name two ways you can focus more on building relationships in your home, church and community.*

### Spend Time in Prayer:

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Session Four: Party

## Day 7: Celebrate the Journey

**Luke 10:23–24** (*p. 1698 Faith in Action Book of Luke*)

### Reflect:

- Many before Christ yearned to see the coming Messiah and the salvation he would bring. Today, we have forgiveness of sin and direct access to the almighty God of the universe through Christ. We have the Holy Spirit's power to fulfill God's mission in our lives. In what way do these realities inspire your daily faith journey?
- We are able to celebrate the journey because of all Christ has done for us. Christ's work in us, and our work in the world in Christ's name, is ongoing. As this devotional time ends, write a plan for how you will continue to celebrate God's gift of faith by putting your faith in action. What will you do? How often? When will you begin?

*For Further Study: 1 Peter 1:10–16*

### Spend time in prayer.

- What is God showing you personally through your devotion time today? Ask God to guide you in applying what you have learned.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of another person whom God may be challenging to put his or her Faith in Action.
- Pray for someone you know is in need.

# Appendices

Ministry Opportunities Inventory  
Servant Action Ideas and Resources

# Ministry Opportunities Inventory

“then said i, ‘here am i; send me.’”

Isaiah 6:8

This exercise will help you take inventory of what you or your family have to offer the Lord to use in ministry to those in need. You may not think you have much that could make a difference—but don’t forget the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes (John 6:5–14). This worksheet asks you to prayerfully think through the two “fishes” you can offer to Jesus to multiply in kingdom service.

If you are discovering ministry opportunities as a family, you can fill out the worksheet together as a group; or have each person complete it separately, then compare your lists and find areas of agreement! Share the results of this inventory next week in your Faith in Action small group.

## I. What do you have to offer?

*(Give two responses for each category)*

1. **Material** resources that you have that could be used to bless others (e.g., a salary, a home, a car):
  
2. **Activities** you enjoy that you could share with another person (e.g., playing sports, going to movies):
  
3. **Skills** you have that you could use in service to others (e.g., cooking, carpentry, organizing):
  
4. **Connections** you have with people or institutions who have special influence, skills or resources to offer people in need (e.g., employers, bankers, colleges):

## II. Who is your neighbor?

*(Give two responses for each category)*

1. **People** you know who need Jesus in their life in a new or deeper way (e.g., relatives, friends, co-workers):
  
2. **People** you've observed needing help in some way over the past year (e.g., child care, rides to work, friendship in a crisis):
  
3. **Service Organizations** you may be interested in connecting with (e.g., nursing home, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, pregnancy center):
  
4. **Social Issues** that you are especially concerned about (e.g., immigration, troubled teens, hunger)

## III. Reflection questions

1. **Who** are two **people** that God is inviting you to share Christ with in word and deed? (e.g., offering to pray with a friend in crisis, inviting a family member to church):
  
2. **What** are two specific **ways** that God is inviting you to use your resources, skills, interests and connections to bless others? (e.g., taking an at-risk youth to a ball game, bringing home-cooked goodies to nursing home residents, supporting a ministry caring for people in need): *(continue)*



3. **What** are two specific **concerns** that God is inviting you to keep in prayer? (e.g., immigration policy, the local pregnancy center, a co-worker who needs healing):



Share your worksheet with someone else in your congregation who will encourage you to follow through on these ministry opportunities.

## Servant Action Ideas for Individuals and Households

The following simple suggestions are intended to encourage you on the path to developing Faith in Action as a lifestyle. No doubt you can come up with (and may already be practicing) many other ideas—the opportunities are endless!

**But here are some simple ways to begin:**

- Write a note of appreciation and encouragement to someone dedicated to serving locally or internationally: the principal of your child's school, a missionary, the director of the local food bank, an AIDS caregiver, a foster care social worker ... Pray for this person as you write.
- When friends, neighbors or co-workers share news of their problems with you, write them down, then circle back in a day or two to let them know that you have been praying for them.
- Using a concordance or topical study Bible, read through all the verses in the Bible that relate to poverty and wealth, compassion, justice and God's concern for the vulnerable. Write down what the Lord is showing you through this study.
- Pray through the newspaper. After reading a news article, pause to pray for the people and concerns involved. If you're not sure what to pray, the Lord's Prayer will richly suffice. Close with silent meditation: "Lord, is there anything you are calling me to do in response to these prayers?"

- Leave a bigger-than-usual tip for a low-wage service worker.
- On your next shopping trip, purchase an extra set of groceries for the food bank, or donate the equivalent to a world hunger organization.
- Walk or bike somewhere you might otherwise have driven, and donate the gas money to cover the utility bills of a family in need.
- Instead of commercial brands, which often involve exploitative labor, purchase “fair trade” brands the next time you buy coffee or chocolate. (*see [www.fairtradefederation.org/memcof.html](http://www.fairtradefederation.org/memcof.html)*)
- Sign up for a newsletter that can help you become more aware of global needs and Christian responses, and share with others what you learn about how Christians can help. (*see [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org), [www.one.org](http://www.one.org), [www.esa-online.org](http://www.esa-online.org), [www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)*)
- Consider joining a child sponsorship program that provides kids in an impoverished country with food, clothing, health care and a Christian education. Some families sponsor one child in another country for each child in their household. (*[www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)*)
- Start each day for a week by reading Micah 6:8 and asking God, “What do you require of me today?” Then listen for God’s answer (*and do it!*).









## NOTES





## **Don't Go to Church**

### **BE THE CHURCH!**

Faith in Action is a courageous 4-week church-wide campaign that will transform your congregation, impact your community and help your church touch the world.

Your Participant's Kit includes this *Participant's Guide* and the *Faith in Action Study Bible Book of Luke*—everything you will need for your daily FaithStep devotions as well as your weekly small group sessions.

For more information on the Faith in Action church-wide campaign see your church's campaign director or pastor, or visit [PutYourFaithInAction.org](http://PutYourFaithInAction.org).

