

Winterfest 2014 Post-Event Lesson -4 "Build Your Kingdom Here"

Before the lesson:

1. Say a prayer for your students and for your words. Make this lesson your own. Feel free to use the material that best suits your group. Pick and choose. Mix and match.
2. Go over these notes and make them your own. Use what works for you. You may not want to use all of this material. Adapt this plan (edit, add, subtract) to make it fit your situation.
3. You will want to preview the music video on you tube by "Rend Collective Experiment." The song is called, "**Build Your Kingdom Here.**" Click this link to watch:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbdJXKqVgtg>
Provide a copy of the lyrics for each student or project the lyrics so they can be easily seen.
4. Before class, get enough index cards and pens or pencils for each student. Also print a copy of the Lord's Prayer for the group recitation exercise at the end of the class session. Students will also be able to take it with them as a reminder.

To begin the class, watch the music video by "Rend Collective Experiment" called "Build Your Kingdom Here." After watching the video (4:39 in length), share the lyrics with the class and work through the discussion questions. You can do this in one large group or you can break the discussion down into smaller groups if you have good group leaders. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbdJXKqVgtg>

"Build Your Kingdom Here" by Rend Collective Experiment

Come set Your rule and reign
In our hearts again
Increase in us we pray
Unveil why we're made
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope
Like wildfire in our very souls
Holy Spirit come invade us now
We are Your Church
We need Your power
In us

We seek Your kingdom first
We hunger and we thirst
Refuse to waste our lives
For You're our joy and prize
To see the captive hearts released
The hurt; the sick; the poor at peace
We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause
We are Your church
We pray revive
This Earth

Build Your kingdom here
Let the darkness fear
Show Your mighty hand
Heal our streets and land
Set Your church on fire
Win this nation back
Change the atmosphere
Build Your kingdom here
We pray

Unleash Your kingdom's power
Reaching the near and far
No force of hell can stop
Your beauty changing hearts
You made us for much more than this
Awake the kingdom seed in us
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ
We are Your church
We are the hope
On Earth

Discussion Questions:

1. Which lyric really sticks out to you?
 2. Which lyric is most convicting?
 3. What do you think the band is trying to say in this song? What's their main point?
 4. What happens when the Spirit of God isn't in the church? What does that look like?
 5. What are some of the things the band suggests are ways we can work with God to establish His Kingdom here? Are we doing these things?
 6. What do we need to do to "change the atmosphere?"
 7. Is the church "the hope on earth?" Why or why not?
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Read **Ephesians 4:11-13** (NRSV)

"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

Paul says that through the gifts shared by others, the church should be and would be equipped, built up, unified and matured in Christ.

To begin the next exercise, give each student an index card and instruct each student write the following on the card: “I wish the church _____.”

Have them fill in the blank, then share their thoughts with a small group of 3-5 people close by.

After the small groups have had time to share, gather the large group back together and invite students to share what they felt like were some of the best thoughts they heard. Instruct them that this is not intended to be a session where we bash the church, but a time for dreaming and a time for articulating the ideal. As the leader of the dialogue, make sure to not let it degenerate into a negative exercise, keeping a positive thrust it.

Dan Kimball is an author and pastor from California who has interviewed a wide spectrum of non-Christian people in their teens, twenties and thirties on their impressions of Christianity and the church. His findings are recorded in his book, *“They Like Jesus But Not The Church.”*

Kimball’s findings are included in a list, “What They Wish Church Were Like.” That list is shown below with the hope that you will investigate and discuss each point with your group. Use these thoughts as discussion starters. For each item in the list, ask your group two questions:

1. Is this something the church should be about? Why or why not?
2. Is this something our church is addressing? If not, what could we be doing to address it?

WHAT THEY WISH THE CHURCH WERE LIKE

1. I wish church were not just a sermon or a lecture but a discussion.
2. I wish the church would respect my intelligence.
3. I wish the church weren’t about the church building.
4. I wish the church were less programmed and allowed time to think and pray.
5. I wish the church were a loving place.
6. I wish the church cared for the poor and the environment.
7. I wish the church taught more about Jesus.

If you would prefer, you could use David Kinnaman’s work instead of Dan Kimball’s. You can find a full discussion of the topic in Kinnaman’s book “You Lost Me.” Kinnaman also interviewed many non-Christians and was able to identify six themes that capture the overall phenomenon of *disconnection* that many young people feel between themselves and the church. Here are the broad reasons they offer for dropping out. They find the church to be:

1. Overprotective.

The impulses toward creativity and cultural engagement are some of the defining characteristics of the Mosaic generation that are most obvious. They want to reimagine, re-create, rethink, and they want to be entrepreneurs, innovators, starters. To Mosais, creative expression is of inestimable value. The church is seen as a creativity killer where risk taking and being involved in culture are anathema. *How can the church peel back the tamper-resistant safety seal, making space for imaginative risk taking and creative self-expression, traits that are so valued within the next generation?*

2. Shallow.

Among Mosais, the most common perception of churches is that they are boring. Easy platitudes, proof texting, and formulaic slogans have anesthetized many young adults, leaving them with no idea of the gravity and power of following Christ. Few young Christians can coherently connect their faith with their gifts, abilities, and passions. In other words, the Christianity they received does not give them a sense of calling. *How can the church nurture a deep, holistic faith in Christ that encompasses every area of life?*

3. Anti-science.

Many young Christians have come to the conclusion that faith and science are incompatible. Yet they see the mostly helpful role science plays in the world they inhabit – in medicine, personal technology, travel, care of the natural world, and other areas. What's more, science seems accessible in a way that the church does not; science appears to welcome questions and skepticism, while matters of faith seem impenetrable. *How can the Christian community help the next generation interact with science positively and prophetically?*

4. Repressive.

Religious rules – particularly sexual mores – feel stifling to the individual mindset of young adults. Consequently they perceive the church as repressive. Sexuality creates deep challenges for the faith development of young people. *How can the church contextualize its approach to sexuality and culture within a broader vision of restored relationships?*

5. Exclusive.

Although there are limits to what this generation will accept and whom they will embrace, they have been shaped by a culture that esteems open-mindedness, tolerance, and acceptance. Thus Christianity's claims to exclusivity are a hard sell. They want to find areas of common ground, even if that means glossing over real differences. *How can the Christian community link the singular nature of Christ with the radical ways in which he pursued and included outsiders?*

6. Doubtless.

Young Christians (and former Christians too) say the church is not a place that allows them to express doubts. They do not feel safe admitting that faith doesn't always make sense. In addition, many feel that the church's response to doubt is trivial and fact focused, as if people can be talked out of doubting. *How can the Christian community help this generation face their doubts squarely and integrate their questions into a robust life of faith?*

Go over each of the Six Perceptions that Kinnaman found from his surveys. Ask your group:

- Is this perception accurate? Why or why not?
- Is this something our church is addressing? If not, what could we be doing to address it?

Once we begin to understand the problems the next generation is experiencing with the church and Christianity, our next task is to determine what we can do to help. Are there things we can do to change our thinking and practice? Are there things we can do to change the world's perception of the church? Are we missing a movement of God? Can we alter our methods, yet stay true to Jesus and His message?

At Winterfest, the speakers said that the church:

- Is a People, not a Place. It is an identity that guides our life and mission.
- Gives us a Purpose in Life. We are to encourage, love, serve, represent and reflect Jesus.
- Provides Roots and Real Relationships.
- Provides Community and Accountability.
- Provides a Place for me in the Body.
- Gives me a Role to fulfill.
- Gathers to collectively Praise, Worship and Remember Jesus.

Now that we are back home and have had time to reflect on these things, how do you feel about these seven statements about the church? Are they accurate?

Which of these points stands out most to you? Do you remember how a speaker presented each point and how it was illustrated?

How do you think our church does with each point?

Whose responsibility is it to make it better?

What is one thing I can do to make the church better?

Conclude with a Recitation of the Lord Prayer. Before beginning the recitation, (this one from the KJV) have the group pay special attention to the line that says, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Explain that the kingdom of God reigns in the hearts of men and women and extends outward from there. If we want the kingdom of God to reign out "there" (point outward), we must be sure to first allow it to reign in "here" (point inward).

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

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Unveil why we're made
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope
Like wildfire in our very souls
Holy Spirit come invade us now
We are Your Church
We need Your power
In us

We seek Your kingdom first
We hunger and we thirst
Refuse to waste our lives
For You're our joy and prize
To see the captive hearts released
The hurt; the sick; the poor at peace
We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause
We are Your church
We pray revive
This Earth

Build Your kingdom here
Let the darkness fear
Show Your mighty hand
Heal our streets and land
Set Your church on fire
Win this nation back
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