



Small Groups

Small Group Discussion Guide

Unexpected God

Missions Weekend

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God is never boring. Throughout history, God has used unexpected circumstances and unexpected people to accomplish His purposes. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are full of people who followed God into unexpected places, obeyed the Holy Spirit's promptings, and experienced the incredible joy of being part of God's story. Regardless of who you are and what your experiences have been, when you say "yes" to the Holy Spirit's promptings, God will use you in unanticipated ways for His glory.

Opening Question: How do you typically respond to unexpected events?

I. Unexpected God

Without a doubt, the greatest event in history accomplished by our unexpected God is the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What can be more shocking than a God who entered the world in human flesh, served people humbly, died on a cross, and was resurrected from the dead! Jesus also gave us a perfect example of how we ought to live. The disciples and believers in the early church, as recorded in Acts, continued Jesus' ministry by loving and serving people in unexpected ways.

John 1:14 (NIV) "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:14 (The Message) "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."

Luke 4:20-21 (NIV) "Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'"

Mark 10:45 (NIV) "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

1. Read the verses above which address three aspects of Jesus' life; his incarnation, his fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and his purpose on earth.
 - Which of these three aspects of Jesus' life (or perhaps a different characteristic) do you find most surprising about our God and why?
2. Brainstorm together a list of unexpected things Jesus did during his life and ministry on earth.
3. Think about your spiritual journey with God. What is one thing He has done in your life that has surprised you?

II. Unexpected Followers

The Bible is full of people who are both flawed and faithful. God seems to delight in using unexpected people to fulfill His plans and purposes. Hebrews 11 gives us a long list of Old Testament characters who obeyed God despite their weaknesses and difficult circumstances. Likewise, the New Testament tells amazing stories of Christ followers like Saul/Paul or Peter, who seemed unsuited to the tasks before them but God used them in miraculous ways to proclaim and spread the gospel.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (ESV) "Consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."

Matthew 25: 35-36, 40 (NLT) "For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'... And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

4. Describe a time when God called you to do something you didn't expect. How did you respond? What was the outcome?
5. What can we expect when we follow God into unexpected situations? What might we experience when we stretch beyond our comfort zone to obey Jesus?
6. What might hold us back from responding to the Holy Spirit's prompting to serve people by going into unexpected places or unpredictable situations?
7. Talk with the group about how you can serve this upcoming Christmas season at Calvary, either as an individual or as a group. Two outreach opportunities coming up: Star of Wonder on Dec 2nd or Disability Christmas Shoppe on Dec. 8th.
8. We joined Christians all over the world on this special "Persecuted Church" Sunday to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who serve the Lord in dangerous places around the world. Be sure to take some time to pray for Christians in places of religious oppression and terrible persecution.