

TELLING THE NEXT GENERATION

COMMITTED TO THE WORD: A CASE STUDY IN OUTREACH

OPENING PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

Understanding *cultural diversity* . . .

Brief group work:

Describe the cultural diversity of your school/early childhood ministry (ECM).

Describe the cultural diversity of your community.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:
Reflect on the questions in Appendix 1 (page 5).

A CASE STUDY IN OUTREACH: JESUS AND THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

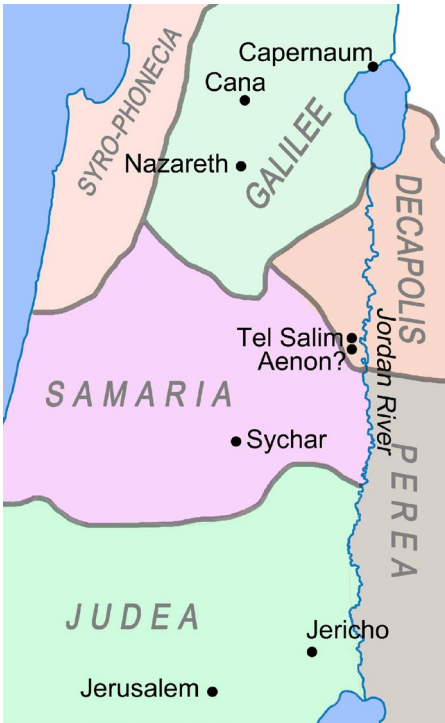
INTENTIONALITY

Some background notes to consider about Samaria:

John 4:1-42 – Appendix 2 (pg. 6)

Verse 4 states that Jesus *had to go through Samaria*. The original Greek says that *it was necessary for him to go through Samaria*. Look at the map. It wasn't necessary geographically for Jesus to go through Samaria in order to get from Judea to Galilee. In fact, most Jews wouldn't go through Samaria. What does John mean then that Jesus *had to go* this route?

What does that tell you about Jesus? What does that mean for our outreach?



Determine outreach lessons the disciples needed to learn from Jesus on this trip. Consider the whole story, but give special attention to verses 27-38.

Brief group work:

1. What issues of cultural diversity are challenges for your church and school/ECM in outreach?
2. Considering your answers, brainstorm ways that you could make your outreach to certain cultures or groups of people within your school/ECM or community intentional .

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Discuss in greater depth as a ministry team these points and others in Appendix 3 (page 8).

METHODOLOGY

Recall the greater cultural and historical context of that encounter at the well. If you were an average Israelite man on that day, what challenges would you anticipate in starting up a faith conversation with that Samaritan woman?

How would you describe Jesus' methodology in this outreach endeavor?

- What was his approach like?
- What was his starting point for conversation?
- How did he turn a regular conversation into a faith conversation?
- How did he lead the woman to think about what *really matters*?

Brief group work:

1. Create a list of regular, everyday conversation starting points with families in your school/ECM or community.
2. Now create a list of conversation transitions. How will you turn those regular, everyday conversations into faith conversations?
3. Identify specific times or occasions that present great opportunities for faith conversations with the families in your school/ECM or community.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Discuss these points in greater depth as a ministry team in Appendix 4 (page 9).

OPPORTUNITY

As with the disciples in this story, sometimes the biggest outreach obstacle to overcome is ourselves! Sinful pride, cultural bias, laziness, apathy, or downright ignorance can hinder and hamper our efforts. Sometimes Jesus needs to say to us: *Open your eyes and look at the fields!* (v. 35)

Personal reflection:

Identify personal struggles that have stood in the way of your outreach to others.

Identify possible solutions to these struggles.

Brief group work:

1. Make a list of outreach obstacles that exist within your church, school/ECM, or community.
2. Determine possible solutions to the obstacles identified.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Discuss these points in greater depth as a ministry team in Appendix 5 (page 10).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Share your favorite part of reviewing this story in John 4. What stands out? What hits home? What is something you will not forget?

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

As a ministry team, work on the S.W.O.T Analysis in Appendix 6 (page 11).

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Write down two or more takeaways from the Bible study.

CLOSING PRAYER

APPENDIX 1: Reflection and Discussion on Culture and Diversity

Personal reflection:

Agree or Disagree

A/D: Our school/ECM is culturally diverse.

A/D: Our school/ECM reflects the cultural diversity of our community.

A/D: Our church is very intentional with its outreach through our school/ECM.

A/D: Our church is very successful with its outreach efforts through our school/ECM.

A/D: Our church and school/ECM understand the ripe harvest field surrounding them.

A/D: Our school/ECM is as diverse as I would like it to be.

A/D: Our church reaches out through our school/ECM as much as I would like it to.

After responding to these statements, go back and spend time reflecting on *why* you answered as you did.

Share these personal reflections with your ministry team. Listen to each other. Consider differing opinions. Discuss how your ministry team can better unite in understanding and assessing the cultural diversity of your community and ministry.

APPENDIX 2: Bible Text

John 4:1-42

¹The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, ² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³ When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,

²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

³³ Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

³⁴ “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

APPENDIX 3: Outreach Intentionality

1. Identify Bible verses that support the necessity of reaching out to all people.
2. What issues of cultural diversity are challenges for your church and school/ECM in outreach?
3. Identify potential groups of people in your school/ECM or community that you could reach out to with better intentionality.
4. Considering your answers to #3, brainstorm ways that you could make intentional your outreach to certain cultures or groups of people within your school/ECM or community.
5. In your ministry who takes the lead in identifying prospects for outreach? Principal/ECM Director? Pastor? Teachers? School Board?
6. In your ministry, once a prospect is identified, how is that contact shared with the pastor and/or evangelism team?

APPENDIX 4: Outreach Methodology

Discuss what we can learn from Jesus about how he specifically shared Law and Gospel (sin and grace) with the Samaritan woman.

Law =

Gospel =

1. Identify Bible verses or accounts that give us encouragement or examples for having a planned method or strategy for outreach.
2. Discuss how different groups of people in your school/ECM or in your community might have different starting points for regular, everyday conversations.
3. Create a list of regular, everyday conversation starting points with families in your school/ECM or community.
4. Building off of #3, now create a list of conversation transitions. How will you turn those regular, everyday conversations into faith conversations?
5. Identify specific times or occasions that present great opportunities for faith conversations with the families in your school/ECM or community.

APPENDIX 5: Outreach Opportunity

1. Identify Bible verses that encourage us to see the harvest opportunities around us in the world.
2. Make a list of outreach obstacles that exist within your church, school/ECM, or community.
3. Determine possible solutions to the obstacles identified in #2.
4. Share perceived untouched opportunities for outreach in your community. Who could you reach that you have not yet?
5. Brainstorm ideas for reaching the people identified in #4.
6. Jesus is coming back and he is coming back soon! Reflect on how an End Times urgency will help you see the outreach opportunities in your school/ECM or community.

APPENDIX 6: S.W.O.T. Analysis

Consider the cultural diversity of your school/ECM and your surrounding community. Do a Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis of your ministry for reaching out through your school/ECM.

Ministry Strengths:

What are strengths of your church and school/ECM in reaching out to others?

Ministry Weaknesses:

What are weaknesses of your church and school/ECM in reaching out to others?

Ministry Opportunities:

What are your ministry opportunities? What people in your school/ECM or community could you make improvements in reaching out to? What opportunities for growth exist? Who are people that are willing or able to be a part of these outreach efforts?

Ministry Threats:

What challenges exist for these outreach efforts? What obstacles stand in the way of the opportunities? What situations in your context might make outreach difficult?

TELLING THE NEXT GENERATION

RELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Think about a relationship outside of your immediate family that is important to you.

- How did you meet?
- Why is this relationship important to you?
- What impact did this relationship have for you personally?

RELATIONSHIPS IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SETTINGS

Personal

- Between **God** and **me**.
- Between my **spouse** and **me**.
- Between my **family** and **me**.

Faculty/Staff and Key Leaders

- Between **principal/director** and **pastor/church leaders**.
- Between **teacher** and **pastor**.
- Between **principal/director** and **teachers** and other **teachers**.
- Between **church leadership** and **school/ECM leadership**.

Staff and Those We Serve

- Between **teachers** and **parents--** both **members** and **prospects**.
- Between **pastor** and **students** and **parents**.
- Between **teachers/principal/ECM director** and **students**.

Family Friendship

- Between **member** parents and **non-member** parents.
- Between **member** students and **non-member** students.
- Between **congregational members** and **unchurched/non-member school/ECM families**

Institutional

- Between **school/ECM** and **community** leaders.
- Between **church** and **school** and **ECM**.

ASSESSMENT OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SETTINGS

Which relationships need focus to create and strengthen a culture of outreach and invitation?

- As an individual, identify the three relationships that you believe need immediate improvement or attention.
- As a group, come to a consensus of three relationships that need improvement or attention.

Identify action steps to improve those relationships identified by your group that are key to culture of outreach and invitation.

1. Relationship to work on: _____

Action (s)

2. Relationship to work on: _____

Action (s)

3. Relationship to work on: _____

Action (s)

DEFINITIONS

Culture: The behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular group of people.

Outreach: Efforts to gain an audience for the gospel.

Evangelism: Giving people the gospel which is the power to work and strengthen faith in Jesus.

Harvest Strategy: Specific plan for our church and school/ECM:

- to build relationships with unchurched families whose children are enrolled in our school/ECM, and
- to connect those families with the ministry of the Word in our congregation.

VIDEO ACTIVITY - *Finding Our Voice* by Pastor Jon Schroeder
 (Lutheran Leadership Conference, January 2020)

Listen carefully for the intentional process to create a culture of outreach and invitation.

AS YOU WATCH

Consider and note the following.

- Who was involved in the plan?
- What was their role in the plan?
- What happens if one is missing?
- _____ months and _____ people were involved and had a role in the plan for Morgan and others.

LET'S REFLECT

Take a moment to reflect individually. Then discuss with your group.

- What's your one "ah-ha" from the video or your personal take-aways?
- Reflect on this statement: *Everyone has a role but not everyone has the same role or to the same degree.*

LET'S REPHRASE

Change the following statements to reflect a culture of outreach and invitation.

From...	To...
<i>It's the pastor's role.</i>	It's everyone's role. It's my role.
<i>I'm not an extrovert.</i>	
<i>I'm too busy with so many other church commitments.</i>	
<i>As the school/ECM leader, I have so many administrative tasks and don't have time to just talk with people.</i>	

<i>I don't know how to start a conversation with someone I don't know.</i>	
<i>Maybe next week...</i>	
<i>Let's talk about this at a meeting.</i>	
<i>I've always meant to....</i>	
<i>They might ask a question about God and I'll either say the wrong thing or won't know what to say.</i>	
<i>That's the usher/greeter's job.</i>	

LET'S APPLY

Consider the importance of a culture of outreach and invitation. What potential impact could this have:

- on your congregational members?
- on your families (both member and unchurched)?
- on the ministry in general?

LET'S SUMMARIZE

- What would have to change to overcome our current obstacles?
- What will happen if the obstacles aren't addressed?
- By God's grace, what could happen if those obstacles are addressed?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. A written and implemented _____ is critical.
One Savior, One Mission, One Synod, One Soul at a Time
2. _____ has a role in creating a culture of outreach and invitation.
The Word for all, to all, by all.
3. It needs _____.

TELLING THE NEXT GENERATION

HARVEST STRATEGIES

RELATIONSHIPS ARE AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO

John 13:34-35 *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

CULTURE OF OUTREACH AND INVITATION

- A. We strive to connect families with Jesus.
- B. We work together to build relationships with children and their families
- C. Everyone understands and embraces their role in the culture of outreach and invitation.

WHEN CREATING YOUR HARVEST STRATEGY, KEEP IN MIND—

Unity

1 Corinthians 12:12 *Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.*

- A. One ministry, one mission, many missionaries
- B. Everyone understands the mission of the school/early childhood ministry.
- C. Everyone is activated for the mission. (Culture of outreach and invitation)

Reflection: Consider your ministry. Name one area related to unity that you are doing well and one area that could use attention.

Quality

2 Corinthians 5:14 *For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.*

1 Corinthians 3:23 *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.*

How would you define quality in a school or ECM ministry?

Why is quality something for which we strive?

Staff

- Staff well trained for their role: Ministry and education.
- Ongoing spiritual and professional growth is part of what we do.
- Staff members care deeply about the children/students, families, and each other.

Program

- Your “unique”. What is your niche in the community of EC?
- Curriculum: spiritual and secular
- Families served: How is your program designed for those you seek to serve?

Facilities

- First impressions matter!
- The benefit of an outsider’s perspective
- Two “musts” for today’s parents: your building must be clean and safe.

Reflection: Name one area of quality (program/staff/facilities) that you are doing well and one area that needs attention.

Reflection: How can unity and quality help to advance your mission to reach out with the gospel?

PREPARING A WRITTEN HARVEST STRATEGY

Now comes a most important step – developing a written plan for using your school and/or ECM for outreach and for connecting people with the gospel. A guide has been prepared to assist with the development of a harvest strategy specific to your context of ministry. Refer to the document: ***Harvest Strategy Development*** on the following pages.

HARVEST STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Consider the following steps to create a harvest strategy specific to your ministry that seeks to build relationships with others and connect them with the Word and God's grace. The sample document from Faith Lutheran is referenced as an example. This is only intended as a sample. It is important that your document is created to reflect your ministry, your mission, and your context.

Harvest Strategy: A specific plan for our church and school/ECM:

- to build relationships with unchurched families whose children are enrolled in our school/ECM, and
- to connect those families with the ministry of the Word in our congregation.

Begin each step with prayer asking for the Lord's guidance and blessings on your efforts as a group and as individuals.

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:17-21

Step One: What is the unchanging “why” that guides this ministry?

Refer to: *Faith Lutheran Preschool Harvest Strategy Mission—Vision—Goal*

Mission Statement of our church and school/ECM: “Why does our school/ECM exist?”

Church:

School/ECM:

- Does everyone know it?
- Is it easily remembered by everyone?
- Is the emphasis on nurture and outreach?
- How is it communicated with all stakeholders?
- How is it used to guide and motivate the ministry?

Vision for the school/ECM

Where are we now and where do we want to be?

We will...

Goal for the school/ECM’s Harvest Strategy

The goal of our harvest strategy is to...

Step Two: Key Principles/Core Values: As an organization, what are the principles/core values that are at the heart of our ministry?

Refer to: *Faith Lutheran Preschool Harvest Strategy: Key Principles for the Harvest Strategies*

Key: Make these your own and be sure that they reflect your ministry and your mission. Your statements could start with the following for example:

- We are...
- We believe...
- We will...

Step Three: How will we carry out our mission, vision, goals, objectives?

Refer to: *Faith Lutheran Preschool Harvest Strategy Taxonomy of Outreach Experiences*

- What events and activities will we plan?
- What is the purpose and goal of each event? How does each event align with our mission and vision?
- How will we know? How will we assess each event to assure that it aligned with our mission and had an impact on those served? What are the measurements that will inform us of its effectiveness?
- What changes will we make for each event next time? Keep, modify, discontinue?

Step Four: What is my role in all of this?

- What roles are needed to carry out each of the identified activities?
- What are the gifts and strengths needed for each role?
- How will each role be filled, and each person know and understand their role?
- What is my role? (Where do you see yourself in this? Think about your own gifts, people/project, strengths)
- What are the agreed upon norms for each as we host others at events?

Refer to: *Faith Lutheran Preschool Parties with a Purpose*

Step Five: Your Harvest Strategy—Put it all together. This is a living document that can and should evolve over time to reflect your ministry, your mission, your opportunities, and your resources. Develop a plan that is clear, concise, measurable, consistently focusing on your mission.

Create a written document:

Write your plan

Share your plan

Implement your plan

Review your plan

Adapt your plan

Implement your plan...

Determine a timeline for your “**Next Steps**”.

Keep in mind:

- You know your situation.
- Your congregation needs to know your situation, the opportunities, their role.
- Consider a balance of what you want to do and what you can do considering the resources available to you. (But don't pray too small! cf. Ephesians 3:17-21)
- Find your niche and seize it.

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Isaiah 55:10-11

NEXT STEPS

The goal for your team is to take what you heard and discussed today and apply it to your ministry. This *Next Steps* document is a template to aid your team to carry on with the plans you began today.

The first step is to set the meeting times and plan your meeting schedule.

Today:

- As a group, commit to a time for your first meeting time.
- Meeting date and time: _____
- Designate a contact person who will share progress and questions with your presenter/advisor after each meeting.

Meeting One:

- Appendix 1: *Reflection and Discussion on Culture and Diversity* (page 5)
- Review goals set by your group at the workshop. Make sure that each goal has a person responsible and a time frame for completion or implementation of the goal.
- **Step One:** What is the unchanging “why” that guides this ministry? (page 20)
- Next meeting date and time (within _____ weeks): _____
- Send reflection and questions to tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net

Meeting Two:

- Review and update goals.
- Appendix 3: *Outreach Intentionality* (page 8)
- **Step Two:** Key Principles/Core Values (page 21)
- Next meeting date and time (within _____ weeks): _____
- Send reflection and questions to tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net

Meeting Three:

- Review goals for progress and any needed support.
- Appendix 4: *Outreach Methodology* (page 9)
- **Step Three:** How will we carry out our mission, vision, goals, objectives? (page 21)
- Next meeting date and time (within _____ weeks): _____
- Send reflection and questions to tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net

Meeting Four:

- Review goals for progress and any needed support.

- Appendix 5: *Outreach Opportunity* (page10)
- **Step Four:** What is my role in all of this? (page 22)
- Next meeting date and time (within _____ weeks): _____
- Send reflection and questions to tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net

Meeting Five:

- Review goals for progress and any needed support.
- Appendix 6: *S.W.O.T. Analysis* (page11)
- **Step Five:** Your Harvest Strategy (page 22)
- Next meeting date and time (within _____ weeks): _____
- Send reflection, questions, and a copy of your Harvest Strategy to tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net

Contact Us:

tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net