

WordOne Bible Study

The Kingdom of God is Near

by James and Lynn Kroonblawd

Text: Mark 1:14-20 for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will understand Jesus has brought the kingdom of God near to them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

A globe or world map

If possible, information on several countries, states, cities and towns from a local travel agent (pictures, brochures, cost of living, etc.)

Pins or tape

Bible atlas, Bible encyclopedia or Bible dictionary

Reproduce the "If Money Were No Object" chart (below)

PREPARATION

Before participants arrive, place information on different locations and several maps of different states and countries on tables in your meeting area. Post a world map on a bulletin board, or place a globe in a central location.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

1. As participants arrive ask, "If money were no object, where would you like to live?" use the maps and information provided to help you decide. Using the materials provided, mark your dream location on the world map or globe.
2. Form small groups of 6-8 by grouping those who would live nearest each other (example: those east of the Mississippi River). The person who would like to live furthest north in your small group is the leader. The task of the leader is to allow all members of the group an opportunity to participate while keeping the discussion moving.
3. Complete the following chart individually to show the type of community in which you would prefer to live (mark an x under either column).

If money were no object, I would live near...					
	(Yes)	(No)		(Yes)	(No)
a beach	___	___	a crack house	___	___
a farm	___	___	a freeway	___	___
a small town	___	___	a toxic waste site	___	___
a mountain	___	___	a quality school	___	___
a cemetery	___	___	a basketball stadium	___	___
a foreign country	___	___	a forest	___	___
a landfill	___	___	a church	___	___
a downtown	___	___	a hospital	___	___
a river	___	___	a shopping mall	___	___

4. Beginning with the leader, ask each person to share three choices from the "Yes" column and three from the "No" column from the activity above. When all have had an opportunity to participate, finish the sentences below.
 - a. The thing I like most about where I live now is...

- b. The thing I like least about where I live now is...

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Read Mark 1:14-20.
 - a. From these verses, where did Jesus begin His ministry?
 - b. Use a Bible atlas, Bible encyclopedia or Bible dictionary to discover how this community was similar or different from your community.
2. Mark 1:14-15 shows Jesus' choice to live near people. Name the people who live near you and respond to the following statements.
 - a. Which is more important, where you live or the people who live near you? Why?
 - b. The thing I like most about the people living near me...
 - c. I have negative attitudes about the people living near me when...
3. At the right time, God sent His Son to bring the kingdom of God near to you.
 - a. Share a time when you felt God was near.
 - b. Share a time when you felt God was far away from you.
4. Discuss:
 - a. What frightens you when you hear Jesus say, "The kingdom of God is near; repent and believe the good news"?
 - b. What brings you joy when you hear these words?
5. Read Mark 1:16-20. If Jesus' words, "Come, follow me," were said to you...
 - a. How might your response affect where you live?
 - b. How might your response affect the people near you?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

In five minutes, complete as many endings to the words, "Through this study I learned..."

CLOSING

Pray this prayer together in your small group: Lord Jesus, thank You for coming near to me and bringing me into Your kingdom.

Originally published in Discovery Bible Studies 19, 1996.

Updated for youthESource in January 2014