

WELCOME (10-15minutes)

Choose one of the following icebreakers:

(If you have first-time guests, begin with a round of introduction and warmly welcome the new visitors.)

I. Finding Your Happiness

- a) Cell Leader to give each person a card.
- b) Ask everyone to write his/her name on the card using a marker pen.
- c) Collect all the cards and put them on the floor of another area of the room.
- d) Lead everyone to the area where the cards are placed.
- e) Ask them to find the card with their respective names written on it.
- f) Put back all the card on the floor.
- g) Now ask each one to randomly collect a card and give it to the person whose name is written on it.

Processing question:

- i) Which is easier, between finding your own card or randomly finding card of others and give to the right person?
- ii) Ask everyone to share a lesson learnt from this activity
- iii) Assuming a card represents happiness, what can we learn from this activity?

Moral of the activity:

We often look for happiness all over the place, not knowing where it is. Our happiness lies in the happiness of other people. By helping others find their happiness, you will experience your own happiness too.

Materials Needed:

Cards and marker pens

II. Oh! I give up!

Ask each person to think and write down a situation in which he/she had given up on a piece of card. Do Not write his/her name on the card.

Examples include the following:

- I gave up waiting at a long taxi queue
 - I gave up waiting for a friend for dinner
 - I gave up trying to fix _____
 - I gave up dieting
 - I gave up saving money
 - I gave up holding on to a broken relationship
 - I gave up explaining _____ to _____
 - I gave up trying to be nice to _____
- a) Encourage everyone to write the situation which most people in the cell do not already know – the sillier (or the more unbelievable) the better.
 - b) Collect all the cards and shuffle the cards.
 - c) Have each person pick a card randomly and read aloud the card. The reader is to guess whose card he/she has picked up.
 - d) If the person guesses correctly, the guessed person can briefly explain what they wrote.

- e) If the person is not the correct one, then the reader has to make another guess who wrote the card. This carries on until the person guess the right one.
- f) The guessing continues until all cards are exhausted. Everyone will get to reveal the card they wrote and explain what they had written.

Transition to Worship:

Glad that we enjoyed this icebreaker. Let's remember and know that Our God is always faithful and His loving kindness lasts forever! When we are faced with any difficult situation, we may be tempted to give up and lose hope. However, we let's keep trusting and thanking God for His faithfulness and His loving kindness. Let's enter into a time of worship and praise unto our faithful God.

WORSHIP (15-20 minutes)

You may use the following suggested worship songs:

- 1) Blessed Assurance (G)
- 2) Forever Reign (E)
- 3) Great Are You Lord (D)
- 4) Resurrecting (G)

1 Corinthians 14:26

The Bible exhorts us in 1 Corinthians 14:26 "When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up."

Encourage everyone to engage with the Holy Spirit and by faith release a word of instruction or revelation, a tongue or interpretation.

Transition to Word:

Lord, open our eyes to see and our ears to hear from Your word. Let our hearts be opened to your teaching and help us make necessary changes in our lives so that we may become more and more like Christ. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen!

WORD (40-45minutes)

Memory verse of the week: 2 Chronicles 30:9b (NIVUK)

For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him.

Sermon Title: Never Gonna Give You Up

By DSP Daniel Khong

on 8 & 9 Dec 18

Matthew 1:23 (NLT)

²³ "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

John 1:1-4, 14 (NIVUK)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

¹⁴ 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.

Introduction

In two weeks' time, we will be celebrating Christmas. It would be great for us to get into the festive mood by exploring the real meaning of Christmas. Matt 1:23 sums up for us what Christmas is all about. It is a time that we remember and celebrate that God would come to Earth to be with us in the form of man through Jesus Christ His Son.

John 1:1-4, 14 is about the incarnation of God. Incarnation is defined as "The embodiment of God". As we celebrate Christmas, we are really celebrating the physical embodiment of God here on earth in the form of Jesus Christ. God made His dwelling among man not only in Spirit, but to live here on earth as a man. He lived like a man, ate like a man, worked like a man, suffered like a man, and died like a man.

Considering all that, we must then ask this question: Why would God bother to come to earth?
The answer is:

- 1) God refuses to give us up
- 2) God refuses to give up on us

Discovery and Understanding Questions: (15 minutes)

Q1. In what way does the scripture show us that God refuses to give up on us?

A1.

Luke 15:3-7 (NLT)

³So Jesus told them this story: ⁴"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. ⁶When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

Luke 15:8-10 (NLT)

⁸ "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say,

These two parables were told by Jesus to reflect and show the heart of God towards us. They tell us that God refuses to give us up. Both the shepherd and the lady could have given up on seeking the lost sheep and the lost coin. But they didn't. They did all they could to find that which was lost. Similarly, God loves us and would do everything just to find us. And He would do that through Jesus Christ.

Q2. How do we have the assurance that God refuses to give up on us regardless of what we have done?

A2. In the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-24, the father of the prodigal son really represents God. Just as the father was filled with love and compassion for his son, it shows us how God refuses to give up on us regardless of what we have done.

Luke 15:20 (NLT)

²⁰“So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.

When Jesus was on earth, He would look to the people and be filled with the same love and compassion.

Matthew 9:36 (NLT)

³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Even though we sin against God and break His heart, He still refuses to give up on us and sees so much hope in us that He was willing to die for us.

Romans 5:8 (NLT)

⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Application Questions: (30 minutes)

Break into smaller groups, share, pray and minister to one another.

- Q1.** Share a situation where you felt abandoned by others and how you experienced God’s love and compassion in refusing to let you go.
- Q2.** Discuss how you may share with your friends the meaning of Immanuel, God is with us, during this Christmas season?

Family Altar Time (F.A.T.)

(Cell Leader: Encourage your members to be faithful in keeping the weekly F.A.T. and refer them to this segment of the 4Ws for suggestions for their F.A.T. A possible time for the F.A.T. is after a meal together, say during the weekend.

Use any of the icebreakers in the WELCOME segment above and select worship songs that are meaningful to your family. If they are old enough, ask your children to select the songs and lead worship, and take this opportunity to teach them skills in waiting on God, praying, and leading with a servant’s heart and as a willing vessel for God.

After worship, you may wish to:

- 1) Discuss last Sunday’s Family Bible Study in the Living Life journal, or
- 2) Review your children’s take-home materials from GKidz, or
- 3) Review and discuss this week’s memory verse, or
- 4) **Question: What will you do if you lose something very precious and important at home, e.g., you lose your smartphone or wallet?**

[Let your family members answer this question spontaneously. In all likelihood they will spare no effort in searching for it, turn the whole house upside down and enlist family members to find it.]

Question: Have you ever been abandoned by your best friend or a close friend because of a mistake you committed? If so, how did you feel after being abandoned? If you have no such experiences, imagine how you would feel.

[Let your family members answer this question freely and honestly. In all likelihood they will have mixed feelings – anger, hurt, betrayal, rejection, dismissing the friend as not being a true friend, unvalued, guilt for having caused it by your own mistake, sense of having deserved it...etc]

Question: How would you feel if your friend stuck by you instead of abandoning you?

[Let your family members answer this question freely and honestly. In all likelihood they will feel happy, affirmed, grateful, relieved, appreciative...etc]

Now let's all read aloud together Matthew 1:23 and John 1:14 and Luke 19:10.

Christmas tells us that God who loves us deeply and dearly refused to give us up even when we have sinned against Him. Christmas commemorates the coming of God to live amongst us as a man (John 1:14), in the Person of Jesus. Christmas is the fulfillment of His promise through Isaiah the prophet (as quoted in Matthew 1:22-23). God did this in order to seek and save the lost, i.e., us (Luke 19:10), because we are all sinners condemned by our sins to an eternity of separation from God (Romans 6:23). But God is not willing to lose us, to have us separated from Him. God refuses to give us up to sin and death. So, God sent His one and only Son Jesus to be with us on the first Christmas in order to seek and save us from sin and death. This, rather than Santa Claus, Christmas trees or giving of gifts, is the true reason for celebrating Christmas – that God refused to give us up to sin and death but came as a man to seek and save us! If God does not give us up, then we should not give up seeking the salvation of our loved ones who do not yet know Jesus.

Question: What can we do to share this message of Christmas and who can we share with?

End by praying for those you plan to share with and for the Christmas parties and services over the next two weeks.

Transition to Works:

Holy Spirit, during this Christmas season, we pray for your anointing as we share the good news of God's love and compassion through Jesus Christ to our pre-believer friends. We commit our Christmas party preparations and planning to you. Amen.

WORKS (15-25 minutes)

1. 3x3 Prayer

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the strongholds that bind the people. Ask Him to set divine appointments for us to minister His power over them (words of knowledge, healing, helps, etc.). Pray for one another for boldness, courage and obedience to follow through.

2. Christmas Harvest 2018

Your Christmas Cell Harvest's planning and members' training should be well in place by now. Make a list of all your potential invitees and start a program of praying for each of them.

Train members to share short stories of God's goodness in their life as follows:

- i. Pray and identify moments where God had made a difference in their lives according to the weekly themes such as: 'Joyful', 'Wonderful', 'Grateful/Thankful', 'Fruitful', 'Purposeful', etc.
- ii. Write and share this thanksgiving during cell meetings to practice.
- iii. Find 1 person a week to share their Thanksgiving. As an option, have them share their thanksgiving at your year-end Christmas Party.

Refer to the Christmas Manual Appendix G – “Thanksgiving Sharing” for pointers on crafting out your thanksgiving.

(You can download the Christmas Harvest Manual at this link -

https://www.fcbc.org.sg/sites/default/files/christmas_party_2018_manual_english.pdf)

3. **Inviting Friends to our Services**

Continue to encourage one another to invite pre-believing friends to our weekend Services. Make time to listen to ‘The Voice of God’ for prophetic utterances that speak to our pre-believing friends’ circumstances as a prelude to inviting them. In addition, take some time to discuss, plan an activity and pray toward achieving the goal you have set as a cell.

4. **Consolidation of New Converts**

Consolidate those who have accepted Christ - contact them via phone calls; meet up with them over a meal; make house visits; introduce them to members of the cell and invite them to fellowship with the faith community during cell meetings and celebration Services. Make them feel belonged.

Introduce them to **LifeClass**. **LifeClass** is an exciting package of equipping that guides new believers through the foundations of their faith and leads them into a life-transforming encounter with Jesus. It does this through nine weeks of personal study, combined with fun and interactive classroom sessions of Bible teaching and an Encounter Weekend. It replaces the former Pre-Encounter Class, Encounter Weekend and Post Encounter. Please check out the Equipping page at our website or Mobile App. Visit <https://fcbc.org.sg/equipping/event-listing> for more details.

Announcements:

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