

The logo features the words "INVEST" and "INVITE" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font. A stylized, red ampersand (&) is positioned between the two words, connecting them. The entire logo is centered on a light green background that has a subtle, darker green gradient.

TRANSFORMED BY LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR

Read Luke 19:1-10: Missional Desire

Head: These questions help us understand Scripture

1. God the Father often puts people in Jesus' path. Who is the first one to speak in the narrative?
2. We can also see that Jesus initiates having a social occasion with him (staying over at his home. Jesus was a travelling missionary).
3. Jesus is eating with someone who is a social outcast. Zacchaeus is not getting a lot of invites from religious people or rabbis to dinner. The religious people and rabbis considered themselves "better" and part of a different social class. If Jesus is reaching out to people that are "different" how much easier should it be for us to reach out to people like us!
4. Zacchaeus, after receiving the love, kindness, and presence of Jesus is changed without a command! Remember that it is love that transforms lives!
5. You can see that Zacchaeus turns over his life to the Lord in repentance. This is ultimately the agenda of God in using us for outreach. He grants

people repentance for the forgiveness of sins (see the Transformed evangelism lesson).

6. Jesus says in 19:10, that He came to seek and save the lost. When Jesus says, "lost" what does he mean? What happens if people die "lost" from God?

Heart: These questions help us wrestle with our beliefs for our lives

7. Are you able to initiate conversations with people you do not know? Share skills and tips with one another.
8. How can you make time for people who are living without the grace and truth of Jesus?
9. How do you build trust with your friends?
10. How do you get from relationship to spiritual conversations?

Hands: These questions help us do something after hearing the Word

11. What networks of people do you currently have regular access to? Or, what networks of people could you begin to have regular access to?

Missional Action

12. Every couple or family unit has a "neighborhood" that they are reaching out to on a regular basis. E.g. Andrew & Daisy will reach out to school community for dinners and friendship. Dinner is one idea among many for connecting.
13. Multiple couples reach out to the same "neighborhood." E.g. We all will reach out to a school community.
14. Have a social gathering (instead of normal life group) where you invite people over every 2-3 months. You can invite people at St. John's who are not in a group, people who no longer attend St. John's or people that you are reaching out to in your "neighborhood." The goal is friendship. Over time, you may feel that they are ripe for an invitation to worship or an invitation into your life group.
15. Duos/Trios or Same Gender Group Time Check-In at life group: Choose some questions from the sermon-based study guides or Finke coasters that you will ask each other to check-in and pray for each other during the life group gathering. This time is not meant to stump one another or put each other on the spot, but to pray for and encourage one another with our missional desire and plan. If you feel that people are losing their missional habits, do not abandon the questions. Instead, talk about how missional habits can be re-gained again.

Testimonial from a Life Group

Our life group was on mission to a maternity home for women and children coming out of abuse. Our group did some work around their house/yard - cleaning, replacing light bulbs, mowing the grass, etc. We also helped them sort the food and clothing donations they received from other churches. It was quickly apparent that all the support they got only went as far as the front door or mailbox (e.g. food, clothing, and financial donations), but no one else was building relationships with these women and children. Over time, as our community went inside their home and sorted the donations, the women who lived in the home began helping us. Naturally, conversations would occur and relationships were built. And, hands down, the best thing we did was bring a meal with us when we went there to serve. After doing work around the house for the afternoon we would all sit down and eat together. Again, conversations and relationships and trust. This was our mission. It started as one day a month. But even the other weeks when we gathered at my house for life group we were still praying for them, discussing how we could better serve them, and studying Scripture with one ear to God's Word and the other ear towards the women and children we were serving.

As our community grew in relationship with them and earned their trust, we were invited to help them outside planned life group events. My wife would give some of the women a ride to the doctor or store so that they didn't have to walk or take the bus while 8 months pregnant. And over time, I started leading Bible studies with them. At that point, discipleship, community, and mission, all started to blend together. During Holy Week, I got to walk them through the passion narrative. I still vividly remember when we got to the part where Jesus cried out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." At that point, one woman said, "So wait, He was praying for the people that were killing Him to be forgiven? All of a sudden, this room full of women who had suffered horrendous abuses at the hands of abusive boyfriends, pimps, and drug dealers started bawling at this understanding of God's love. And then singing! It was amazing! And it was all about relationships!"

A Word About Space & Growing Life Groups

1. Remember as you consider how many people you can fit in your home at life group that not everyone attends weekly due to illnesses or travel. Try and pack as many people as possible into your homes so that your life groups do not become closed off and you lose your missional plan. If your group truly is too large, please identify an apprentice in your group and let me know who they are so that we can train them to either take your life group or send them out to plant another group. That way, we always have space for everyone.
2. Jesus loved all people. We must have a heart for all people regardless if they are a tough "fit" for our groups.

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3. You can strategically add people to your group by letting them know that the goal is to grow as followers of Christ and share the group guidelines in your sermon-based study guide during their first gathering with your life group. That way, people are not coming and going each week, but they are strategically added.