

2026-09-20 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide

Based on the Sermon: "Sent Out — Partnership With Christ"

Before You Begin

Open your time together with a brief prayer, asking God to make the truths of this passage real to each person in the room. Encourage group members to bring their Bibles and to be honest and open in their responses.

Overview

This sermon draws from Matthew 10 and Luke 10 to explore what it means to be sent out by Jesus — not as polished religious professionals, but as ordinary people in genuine partnership with God. The message challenges believers to move beyond passive faith and to embrace the reality that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit actually dwell within them, equipping them to live and witness with boldness and authenticity.

Key Passage

Read aloud together before discussion:

Matthew 10:1, 5-20, 26-31 — Jesus sends out the twelve with authority and honest warnings about what lies ahead

Luke 10:17-21 — The seventy-two return with joy after being sent out

John 14:6-20 — Jesus teaches about the indwelling presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Take a few minutes for each person to read silently or take turns reading sections aloud.

Key Takeaways

Use these points to frame your discussion before diving into questions:

1. Jesus sends us out honestly, not with false promises. He told the disciples they would face rejection, conflict, and hardship. He did not promise an easy road. Knowing this ahead of time should prepare us rather than discourage us.

2. Witnessing is about being real, not being polished. The sermon emphasized that effective witness often comes through authenticity — admitting struggles, sharing personal experience, and meeting people where they are rather than delivering a rehearsed presentation.

3. God dwells in us, not just beside us. John 14 makes clear that the relationship Jesus offers is not a distant one. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit desire to dwell within every believer. This changes how we understand the Christian life from obligation to partnership.

4. Our greatest mission is helping others move from hell-bound to heaven-bound. The sermon pointed out that when the seventy-two returned rejoicing over casting out demons, Jesus redirected their focus — the greater miracle is that names are written in heaven. Our witness has eternal stakes.

5. Weakness in the Christian life often comes from living as if God is absent. Many believers struggle because they have not fully grasped that God is already in them, ready to work through them. Surrender, not self-effort, is the key.

Discussion Questions

Work through these questions at a pace that fits your group. You do not need to cover every question in one sitting.

Opening Questions — Getting Honest

The sermon opened with a story about the Restaurant of Mistaken Orders, a restaurant staffed entirely by people with memory loss. The point was that God uses people in their weakness, not just in their strength. Where in your own life have you seen God use what you considered a limitation or

weakness?

The pastor said, "God has given us every one of our abilities as well as our inabilities." Does that idea challenge you or comfort you? Why?

Have you ever had a negative experience with church that made it harder to talk about faith with others? How did you handle it?

Going Deeper — Into the Text

In Matthew 10, Jesus sent the disciples out with authority but also with very sobering warnings — rejection, conflict, family division, and persecution. Why do you think Jesus chose to be so upfront about the difficulty rather than focusing only on the excitement of the mission?

Jesus told the disciples to be "shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). In your own words, what does that balance look like in everyday life? Can you think of a situation where you needed both qualities at the same time?

Luke 10:17-20 records the seventy-two returning with joy because even the demons submitted to them in Jesus' name. Jesus affirmed that but redirected their celebration toward the fact that their names were written in heaven. What does that tell us about where our confidence and joy as believers should be rooted?

In John 14:20, Jesus said, "I am in the Father, you are in me, and I am in you." What does this verse mean to you personally? Is this a truth you live with daily, or does it feel more like a theological idea than a present reality?

The sermon suggested that many believers live as though they "go to God every once in a while" rather than recognizing that God is already dwelling within them. Do you relate to that? What do you think causes that disconnect?

Personal Reflection — Getting Practical

The pastor shared that his approach to witnessing was not a rehearsed script but rather meeting people where they are and sharing what Jesus has done in his own life. Think about your own story. What has Jesus done for you that you could genuinely share with someone who does not know him?

The sermon pointed out that admitting you still struggle with sin can actually open doors with people outside the church, because it breaks down the assumption that Christians think they are better than everyone else. Does that idea feel freeing or uncomfortable to you? Why?

Is there someone in your life — a family member, coworker, or neighbor — whom you have been hesitant to talk to about faith? What is the specific fear or hesitation that holds you back?

The pastor asked, "What have you done to make a difference?" Not as a guilt-producing question, but as an honest challenge. How would you answer that question right now?

Practical Applications

Choose one or two of these to commit to as a group or individually before your next meeting:

1. Identify one person. Think of one person in your life who does not know Christ. Write their name down. Commit to praying for them by name every day this week and ask God to open a natural door for conversation.
2. Share your story. Practice telling your own faith story in two to three minutes — not a theological argument, but simply what your life was like before Christ, how you came to faith, and what difference it has made. Share it with your small group this week as a way of getting comfortable saying it out loud.
3. Spend time in John 14-17. Read these chapters slowly this week, paying attention to every time Jesus talks about being "in" the Father, or the Spirit

being "in" the believer. Write down what stands out and bring your observations to share with the group next time.

4. Unlock a closed room. The sermon mentioned that many believers have areas of their lives they have kept locked away from God. Spend time in prayer this week asking God to reveal any area you have not fully surrendered. You do not have to share the details with the group, but come prepared to share what that experience of surrender was like.

5. Go two by two. Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs. Consider partnering with one other person from your group this week for a specific act of outreach — whether that is visiting someone who is sick, inviting a neighbor to church, or simply having a meal with someone who is far from faith.

Closing Reflection

Before closing in prayer, give each person in the group a moment to answer this question:

"Based on what we discussed today, what is one thing you want to be different in how you live out your faith this week?"

Allow brief, honest answers. Do not pressure anyone to share more than they are comfortable with.

Closing Prayer

Close by praying together, asking God to make the truth of John 14:20 real to every person in the room — that He is not distant, not occasional, and not just available in a crisis, but genuinely dwelling within each believer, ready to work through ordinary lives for extraordinary purposes.

For Further Study

Matthew 10:1-42 — The full commissioning of the twelve

Luke 10:1-24 — The sending of the seventy-two and their return

John 14:1-31 — Jesus teaches about the indwelling presence of God

John 15:1-17 — The vine and the branches, a further picture of the same union

Acts 1:8 — The promise of the Spirit's power for witness

James 4:2-3 — A look at why some prayers go unanswered