

Shadow Christians

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Lesson Title: “We Are the Ministry Workforce” (pp. 167-179)

Session 12

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The main point of this lesson is: Shadow Christians make up the primary ministry workforce.

Focus on this goal: To help adults commit to identifying and fulfilling their ministry role within the church

Key Bible Passage: Luke 10:1-16

Before the Session

1. Consider all the jobs that happen before class begins in order for your group to meet. (Vacuuming/sweeping, paying electric bills, getting heat/air comfortable, arranging chairs, etc.) Write each on an index card. (Step 1)

2. Make copies of your church’s org chart, if accessible. (Step 2)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Say: For most of us, we show up at class time and enjoy our lessons and fellowship. But much goes on in the background in order for us to gather like this. Hold up each of the cards you prepared before class, one at a time. As you read each ask: Who handles this task? If most class members don’t know, that’s going to be great to exemplify this week’s main point. Take the opportunity to give credit to those workers, in and out of the room, who make your weekly time flow smoothly.

Read the main point of this lesson (p. 177).

Step 2. Org Chart

Use Day One content (p. 167) to present the basic idea of an organizational (org) chart. Hand out a copy of your church’s or sketch it briefly on a board. Point out that most people in a congregation know the “top-box” people (pastor and other ministerial staff, prominent volunteers), and their work is important. If you know who performs some lesser-known administrative duties, share those. (Those might include such things as entering contracts, considering legal ramifications, purchasing and maintaining insurances, etc.) Ask: What would happen if our church ran solely on the work of these top-box members? Give credit to those top-boxers for all they do, but help learners grasp that much work is done by others.

Step 3. Kingdom Inc.

Invite a volunteer to read Luke 10:1-16. Use the opening paragraphs from Day Two (pp. 168-169) to briefly discuss the org chart for Jesus’s earthly ministry.

Draw learners’ attention to the seventy-two disciples who were sent out and point out the key work these men did (p. 169): pray, trust, bless, reside, heal, witness, and warn.

Say: If you think about it, these are the same things we are called to do today (with the possible exception of “heal”). Choose a few of the “job description” items and share how you do those things in your daily ministry. Invite a few volunteers to do the same.

Step 4. Followers Are Vital

Read the scholarly definition of “leadership” from the opening paragraph of the Day Three (p. 170). As a group, break down the definition into bite-sized phrases and discuss: “influence relationship,” “leaders and followers,” “intend real changes,” and “mutual purposes.”

Stress that this is how leadership should work; not how it always works. Ask: What are some “mutual purposes” for a group of Christian leaders and followers?

Invite volunteers who have a personal ministry verse to share it with the group. Ask for a few volunteers to share how they lead in the church using skills they have adapted from their home, work, or community leadership responsibilities. Ask rhetorically: Would God give you interests and skills He wouldn’t expect you to use in ministering?

Step 5. That’s My Ministry

Invite a volunteer to read Ephesians 4:11-16. As a group, analyze how this passage portrays effective leaders, followers, and mutual purposes of a Christian group.

Use Day Four content (pp. 173-174) to help learners consider what it is that would lead them to say, “That’s my ministry.”

Ask who knows the name E. Y. Washam. Remind learners of the author’s story about Mr. Washam (or share a similar story that relates to your own life). Invite a volunteer to read the final paragraph of the Day Four (p. 174). Observe: God does His kingdom work through people like Mr. Washam, Rick, Sheila, and Ann—and He wants to do it through you! Ask: How would an author describe your ministry?

Step 6. Finding Your Spot

Invite a volunteer to read Colossians 4:17. Ask: Why did Paul want Archippus to “pay attention to the ministry”? Point out that shadow Christians aren’t called to be seasonal workers, but to settle in and stay for the long haul. Share a time from your ministry when you found yourself in a discouraging or challenging situation yet found the tenacity to stick with it.

Walk through the author’s steps for finding a ministry (Day Five, pp. 175-176).

As a group, brainstorm different ways to stay engaged and active in those things to which Christ has called us.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

If time permits, read Matthew 25:14-30. (If not, summarize the parable of the talents recorded in that passage.) Engage learners in discussing how this passage directly relates to their own personal call and ministry as shadow Christians. Ask: How are you handling the duties God has given you? Are you committed to serving as long as you can?

Close in prayer, asking for God’s Spirit to encourage, strengthen, and guide each of you in your ministries.

