



'We are a community that helps one another a lot...if people face a problem, we do not allow them to suffer alone.' Esther Saizi, Malawi

Building Kingdom community

Values have the power to transform.

This bible study is one of a series of four, designed to help your small group put your faith into action.

The focus of this study is on the way kingdom values like dignity, equality, justice and love have the power to transform lives and communities, and how we can put these values into action.

It includes:

- Brief notes on two Bible passages: Matthew 13:31-35 and Matthew 5:1-10

- Prayers to open and close your session
- [A Faith in Action video](#) featuring Rev'd Rosemarie Mallet
- Questions to help your group consider how to put their faith into action
- Suggestions to help your group think about their next steps

NOTE: We advise downloading the suggested resources in advance to show the group



Notes on the Readings

Matthew 13:31-35: The central theme of Jesus' teaching was the coming Kingdom of God. He spoke both of a time when the Son of Man would come on the clouds of heaven to fully establish God's rule and of the ways that the kingdom grows now in our midst as people listen to his teaching and begin to follow him. In both of these short parables Jesus explains that the kingdom grows from small and unlikely beginnings and in the parable of the mustard seed he gives us a glimpse of the kingdom community as a place of welcome, shelter and diversity.

Matthew 5:1-10: The Beatitudes are part of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount. The context is important. Jesus was speaking to crowds who were deeply unhappy with the present state of affairs. Most were poor, some were hungry, many felt a deep sense of injustice directed toward the Romans and their puppets who ruled Judea and Galilee and the rich who benefited from their plight.

They knew their need of God (poor in spirit) and were humble (meek) before God, they mourned for the present state of the world and longed for the righteousness, that is justice, of God's kingdom. But they were not passive, with a single minded (pure heart) commitment they demonstrated that God's kingdom was growing amongst them by working for peace, justice and mercy even when they faced persecution for doing so.

Opening Prayer

Gracious God,
Please teach us by your word
and empower us by your Spirit.
Make us more like Jesus,
That our mouths may speak his truth
and our deeds accomplish his will.
Make us agents of your kingdom,
which is growing now amongst us
and will one day come in glory
and with great power.
Amen.

Introduction

Jesus came to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was at hand. One day he said it would come in its fulness when the Son of Man comes on the clouds of heaven, but even now it is here, in our midst growing in small ways and in the most unlikely of places. Perhaps sometimes we focus on the future dimension of the Kingdom so much that we forget that Jesus taught us to pray that the Kingdom should come, and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Our readings today focus on the present aspects of the Kingdom, on the way the kingdom grows and the kinds of people and actions that show that it is growing amongst us.

Reading

Read Matthew 13:31-35, pause for a few moments and then discuss the questions:

- Why do you think Jesus uses the illustration of yeast? What do you think it implies about the possible transformation of society?



- What do you think the picture of a tree where the birds of the air make their nests says about the nature of God's kingdom?
- Where do you see glimpses of God's Kingdom growing here on earth?

Making connections

Read Matthew 5:1-10, pause for a moment, then watch Rev'd Rosemarie Mallett's Faith in Action video. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus depicts his followers as people who mourn for the broken state of the world, and who long for justice, mercy and peace. Rosemarie is working to transform the community on the Angell Town estate. With gun and knife crime initiatives she is working to bring peace and helping to build a community in which all people, but especially children, can achieve their God given potential.

- Take some time to think about your church and community – where do you see signs of God's Kingdom growing?
- What problems do you see? Can you think of ways that you/your church can act as agents of the Kingdom – yeast working through dough, or a place of refuge for the birds of the air?

Next Steps

Rosemarie Mallet works for the transformation of her community by equipping children to achieve their potential. Christian Aid works with partners around the world who equip communities to bring about change. From having the tools to harvest a

crop in the midst of drought to knowing how to protect the community when disasters strike, people are transforming their own lives.

Perhaps Rosemarie's video has inspired you to get more involved in your local community. If so, what are the needs? How might you and your church might be able to help? And how might these local needs relate what's happening around the world?

Take a few moments to pray for one another and for the actions that you have decided to take following this study, then have someone say the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer

Great god who lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things,
Thank you for the coming Kingdom and the Kingdom come right now.
We thank you for the work of Rosemarie Mallet in bringing peace.
We pray that you would make us the agents of your kingdom,
Show us how to put faith into action.
Grant us the courage to stand for mercy, love and justice.
May we begin to glimpse what it means for your kingdom to come, on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen.

We love hearing how our supporters are putting their faith into action. If you have a story you would like to share, please email us at campaigns@christian-aid.org or give us a call on 01925 573 769

