

a 6-week journey
exploring our core values



service - worship - invitation - transformation - connection - hope



WELCOME!



HOW TO DO THE JOURNEY

The SWITCH Journey is a six-week experience exploring the values of Prince of Peace.

Each week follows the same three-part rhythm:

WORSHIP ON THE WEEKEND

Each Journey week begins here. In worship, you'll be introduced to a new value, will be provoked by art and music, encouraged by preaching to live out our values, and will join others in giving praise to God. It's important. Be there!

GO TO YOUR JOURNEY GROUP

In this fun and relational environment, you'll share what you're learning, dig deeper into scripture and conversation, and strengthen relationships.

DO YOUR CHALLENGE

At the end of each Journey Group, you'll receive a challenge to live out the week's value. Do the challenge during the week and record what happens in the guide. You'll also see some family challenges and social media prompts (if that's your thing) to consider doing as a way to engage more fully as a community.

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Over time, we begin
to live passively.

For the next few weeks, we
will be taking a deeper look at
six key values that shape who
we are and who we are
becoming as a community of
disciples.

We want our lives and our
families to reflect the values
we see Jesus embody in
scripture.



WEEK 1



SERVICE

Our faith propels us
into lives of action
to love and serve
our neighbors
and the world.

Week 1 Scripture



Luke 9:28-43

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" -- not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. Just then a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And all were astounded at the greatness of God.

[illegible]

WEEK ONE

Journey Group Experience



service - worship - invitation - transformation - connection - hope

1 HOST, START READING OUT LOUD.

Hi, everyone. Welcome to week one of our Journey group. This journey group **is where we'll process much of the SWITCH Journey. You can expect this** group time to be filled with lots of conversation, questions, scripture reading and prayer. Each week we will also be given a challenge to live out our value for the week. The point of this time is to grow together and build relationships as we more fully uncover our central values. The group time **won't always feel perfect. It might take a little getting used to or someone** might talk too much or there could be awkward silences. But, in the end, **we're certain it'll be a good time. So, to start this thing off right, let's go** around the group, and everyone share your name and your favorite nickname from childhood. **Yes, that's right, your favorite nickname. After you have** shared your nickname, share one reason that you are willing to spend the next six weeks exploring our central values.

2 NEW READER = WHOEVER HAD THE FUNNIEST CHILDHOOD NICKNAME.

See, that wasn't so bad. Now that we all know each other a little bit better, it's time to set some ground rules. Over the next few weeks we will be encouraged to get pretty vulnerable with each other, so it's probably a good idea for everyone to be on the same page.

First of all, know that our host is simply a fellow learner, not a bible expert or professional guru. While our host can be our contact for finding more information, the discussion and learning in the group is everyone's responsibility.

Second, to help keep the group experience a safe, healthy way to grow, we have some ground rules.

THE GROUND RULES:

Be a great listener. Make eye contact. Don't interrupt.

Be real. Honesty is the best policy. Be your authentic self and trust each other.

Keep it confidential. Gossip is lame.

Share examples, not advice. Better to hear, "Oh, I experienced something like that once..." versus "Listen, here's what you need to do."

Show up. Honor the commitment you made to the group.

Unplug. This is a great opportunity to be present with others. Don't let phones be a distraction.

3 NEW READER:

To begin this journey, take some time to think about this past week of your life. **Outside of work and sleep, what activity consumed the majority of your time?** Maybe it was spent on the sidelines of youth sporting events, enjoying your favorite hobby, or watching funny YouTube clips. **Everyone take turns sharing.**

4 WHEN EVERYONE IS FINISHED, CONTINUE READING:

According to the Nielsen Ratings Group, the average American over the age of 18 watches 32 hours of live television a week. When you add in the time spent watching recorded shows or movies it is closer to 40 hours per week.

Let that sink in for a moment.

It's unlikely that anyone would say one of their core values is "watching television" or "consuming great media", but how we spend our time often says a lot about what our "lived" values are in life. Based on how people spend their time, one could easily make the claim that Americans value entertainment, socializing, and shopping above everything else. In 2014, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics released their findings from the American Time Use Survey, which reported that in stark contrast to watching television, only 7% of Americans spend time volunteering in civic or religious organizations. The study also reported that the 7% of people, who do volunteer, spend a daily average of 2 hours doing so, less than half the amount of time they spend watching television.

5 SPEND A FEW MINUTES DOING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITY:

For now, use the space below to write down your personal core values.

"Core Values are guiding principles or beliefs that influence behavior and action."

Now, use the space below to write down the top 3-4 activities that take up the majority of your free time. Be honest with yourself.

6 AFTER EVERYONE IS FINISHED, READ ALOUD:

It's really easy to fall into a pattern of living that takes our attention away from what matters most. Did you write down things like family, friendship, faith, and health when reflecting on your core values? Most people do. Even though these are often on the top of people's value lists, we all know too well how often these values are made secondary to things like work, consumerism, and unhealthy habits. Often this isn't intentional, but over time, we become lulled into passive living. When we live "passively" we make choices because of what's comfortable or routine, instead of being guided by our values. Have you experienced this reality? Do you ever feel like you are living passively?

7 Someone open a Bible and read Mark 10:35-45. This is an exchange between Jesus and two of his disciples whose values are not aligned with his mission for the moment. Here Jesus plainly lifts up one of his core values.

8 AFTER THE SCRIPTURE IS READ, SOMEONE ELSE CONTINUE READING:

In the passage, James and John request seats of honor next to Jesus. They want to be honored and glorified before Jesus and their fellow disciples. What do you think Jesus meant in verse 38 when he responds by saying ***"You don't know what you are asking?"***

9 KEEP READING:

Jesus understood himself to be a servant. It's safe to say that he valued service and understood that part of his calling was to cultivate servant-hearts within his followers. In verse 45, Jesus clearly states that this is why he came, to serve. The gospels are filled with stories of Jesus embodying the value of service. Can you name some stories or examples from scripture that highlight Jesus living out the value of service?

Can you think of a time when you were the recipient of a great act of service? How did it make you feel?

10 ONCE EVERYONE'S SHARED, HOST, BRING US HOME:

As disciples who are seeking to become more like Jesus, we value service not only as specific actions or deeds, but also as an orientation in life. We are **called to be “servants of all”**. We have a beautiful mission *to live & love like Jesus*. When we live out our daily lives with others in mind we begin to find all sorts of opportunities for us to embody the value of service. There are opportunities all around us, in our homes, relationships, workplaces, and neighborhoods to live & love like the servant Jesus.

We value SERVICE because...

Our faith propels us into lives of action to love and serve our neighbors and the world.

Any closing thoughts?

11 HOST, CLOSE OUR DISCUSSION IN PRAYER:

***If you need a guided prayer, use this one.**

God, we confess that often we find our lives and choices do not reflect the values of your kingdom. Forgive us for the sin of complacency and for ignoring our calling to be servants of all. Thank you for your grace, and help us this week to live & love like Jesus with hope, joy, and passion. Be with us as we embrace our service challenge this week. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

On the next page you will receive your SERVICE CHALLENGE for the week.



CHALLENGE:



SERVICE

SERVICE – ascribing value to another person, through actions and a display of love.

INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE

This week your challenge is to spend at least 30 minutes **serving others. Maybe it's a task at work that no one likes to do, such as cleaning out the office fridge, or spend your time serving at a local organization. Don't over-think what to do, just do it, and then record what happened below.**

WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?

WHO WAS SERVED?

WHAT HAPPENED?

This week, try the Service Challenge with your entire **family. Here's how:**

1. Write the name of everybody in your house on separate slips of paper.
2. Put the papers in a hat or jar and ask each family member to pull one out. (Shh, no telling!)
3. Find at least one way to surprise that person with an act of service this **week, whether it's making them a card, helping your sibling clean their room, or making dinner for the rest of the family one night.** Be creative. No act of service is too great and no act of service is too small.

FAMILY CHALLENGE

SOCIAL MEDIA

Try This: If you're into status updates, hashtags and whatnot, work those social media skills during this journey. It's an easy way to encourage others through your experience, be inspired by what others post, and see the **power values have when lived.** (It's also completely optional, so only do this if it sounds like fun.)

SHARE WITH TWO EASY STEPS:

Provide photographic evidence. Take a pic of what you are doing. Upload it to your favorite social media site, and **tag it.** Include the hashtag **#switchjourney** in your posts.

Follow us: facebook.com/popluther



WEEK 2



WORSHIP

We celebrate the
resurrection as a
gospel community.
Through Word and
Sacrament we live into
God's grace-filled
promise for the world.

Week 2 Scripture



Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

service - worship - invitation - transformation - connection - hope

WEEK TWO

Journey Group Experience



service - worship - invitation - transformation - connection - hope

1 HOST, READ OUT LOUD.

Welcome back, everyone. Before we jump into our discussion, we've got another icebreaker. What material object could you not imagine living without, and why?

2 NEW READER = WHOEVER SEEMED MOST CONCERNED ABOUT LIVING WITHOUT THEIR PHONE

Let's debrief our Service Challenges from last week. What did you do to live out the value of service? Describe what happened? (Bonus question – how did it make you feel to serve in an intentional way?) Anyone can start, but make sure everyone shares.

3 NEW READER.

The last time we met, we talked about how Jesus understood his identity as a servant – leader, and that as disciples of Christ we value service as a way of life. This week we will focus on why we value worship. Before we dig any deeper into the heart of worship, let's get the conversation going a little bit. What is your favorite worship song or hymn, and why? Anyone can start.

4 NEW READER = MOVE ONE TO THE RIGHT.

Worship is central to who we are as God's people. It has been the central witness of the Church throughout the centuries. Simply stated, we value worship because it reminds us of who God is, and how we are called to live in response.

5 NEW READER = ONE TO THE RIGHT AGAIN.

Someone grab a Bible and read Psalm 100.

6 AFTER THE SCRIPTURE IS READ, CONTINUE READING:

In some bibles, small descriptions appear underneath the psalm numbers. Your bibles might say “A psalm for giving thanks” or “A psalm for worship”. It’s safe to say that the psalms convey a wide array of emotions. From despair and agony, to joy and elation, the psalms are honest reflections of the human spirit directed towards God. The words of Psalm 100 are upbeat and joyful, pointing to the author’s love and reverence for God.

Take a minute to go around the group discuss the following:

Share one thing you love or feel passionate about. Then describe how that passion shows up in your schedule. For example, if you love **music, maybe you’re always going to concerts. Or if you’re passionate about sports, maybe you coach or hold season tickets to your favorite team.** Go around the room and say one thing you love, and how that shows up in your week.

7 AFTER DISCUSSION, CONTINUE READING:

The point with that conversation is probably obvious. When we love or **enjoy something, we love and enjoy spending time doing it.** It’s a natural response, not a heavy burden or something we have to do out of obligation. In the psalm we hear the call to, *“worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.”* The heart of worship is found in joining the community of believers in spending time giving thanks and praise to God. **However, it’s easy to lose sight of the true heart of giving praise and begin to view worship as empty ritual.**

This is how the prophet Isaiah describes it:

The Lord said, “These people come near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught my men...” Spend some time discussing your relationship with worship. **Can you think of a season in your life when you viewed worship more as a ritual of obligation than a relationship of love?**

8 WHEN PEOPLE ARE DONE SHARING, READ ALOUD:

Another trap we often fall into is thinking about worship solely based on what *“we get out of it”*. Our culture conditions us to think of ourselves as consumers, and as a result we assign value to things and people based on what they do for us. Think back to our icebreaker. **How many of the things that we mentioned we couldn’t live without were based on what they do for us?**

9 TAKE SOME TIME DOING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITY:

Use the space below to write down ways you or others have talked about worship in a “consumer” or “me” centered way.

10 AFTER A FEW MINUTES, CONTINUE READING:

Spend some time sharing what you wrote down and if people are comfortable, **share the phrase you find yourself saying/thinking most often.**

11 NEW READER.:

Worship is filled with rituals that are designed to remind us of our relationship with God, individually and communally. When we keep this relationship with God as the center of our focus during worship, our hearts stay reminded of what matters most. We value worship because we value God. Worship is our response to who God is, what God has done, and the promise of God’s spoken future.

We value WORSHIP because...

We celebrate the resurrection as a gospel community.

Through words and sacrament, we live into God’s grace-filled promise for the world.

12 HOST, BRING US HOME.

We also value worship because it is transformative. In worship we are **gathered into the Body of Christ, nourished with God’s word, meal, and blessing.** It is in worship that God feeds and equips us to go back into the world with a renewed sense of mission to live & love like Jesus. In the group, **share moments when you have felt transformed or moved by God’s Spirit.** Then close with this prayer.

God, we confess that often we think about worship in regards to what we receive over what praise we give to you. Forgive us for our self-centeredness and direct our attention to your divine and beautiful nature. Help us this week to worship you in Spirit and truth, through our song, prayer, and gifts. May our lives be an offering to you. Amen.

Turn to the next page to receive your WORSHIP CHALLENGE for the week.

CHALLENGE:



WORSHIP

INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE

Every week in worship we take part in the ancient practice of passing the peace. It is a moment when we greet those in community with the words Jesus spoke to his disciples in the resurrection, *"Peace be with you."*

This week your challenge is to take the element of passing the peace out of the sanctuary and to extend peace to someone **that needs to receive a word of grace.** Maybe it's a friend, family member, or neighbor.

TO WHOM DID YOU EXTEND PEACE?

HOW DID YOU EXTEND PEACE?

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU DID IT?

This week, try the Worship Challenge with your family.

Here's how:

Schedule a night this week for an intentional family dinner. During the meal, do the Faith 5 together:

- 1 - Everyone **share** their highs and lows of the day
- 2 - **Read** Psalm 98 together
- 3 - **Discuss** the reading together
- 4 - **Pray** for one another
- 5 - **Bless** each other (trace a sign of the cross on one another's foreheads and say *"The Peace of Christ be with you"*)

FAMILY CHALLENGE

SOCIAL MEDIA

Try This: In a world obsessed with selfies, post at least one unSelfie on your favorite social media site using the hashtags #unSelfie & #switchjourney.

What is an unSelfie you ask? It's simply an act of sharing something on social media that isn't about YOU.



WEEK 3



INVITATION

God welcomes everyone
into the body of Christ.
We respond by inviting all
into lives of discipleship.

Week 3 Scripture



Luke 14:15-24

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’ Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’”

[illegible]

WEEK THREE

Journey Group Experience



service - worship - invitation - transformation - connection - hope

1 HOST, READ OUT LOUD:

Hello Journey people, welcome to Week 3. We know what you are thinking. **You're thinking, "Can we pleeeeeease do an icebreaker?" The answer is YES.** Since we are talking about why we value *invitation* this week, everyone think of a time when you were invited to try something new that at first you did not want to do. **What were you invited to try or do?** Bonus for telling a story. Anyone can start. Oh, and double bonus if you actually ended up having a good time.

2 We'll come back to discussing invitation, but first; let's consider last week's worship challenge. How did it go extending peace? Describe what happened. Anyone can start, but make sure everyone has an opportunity to share.

3 NEW READER:

Last week, we talked about why we value worship, and the way in which worship shapes us into the Body of Christ. This week we turn our focus toward valuing invitation. Before we dig deeper into the spirit of invitation, **let's get the conversation rolling. When was the last time you were invited to something? When was the last time you sent out invitations?** Anyone can start.

4 NEW READER = MOVE ONE TO THE LEFT:

Looking within the Gospels we see that Jesus was an invitational leader. He invited people from all walks of life to come and follow in his mission of love. From young fishermen, to tax collectors, to rich young rulers and women fetching water at the local well, Jesus invited others into the life of discipleship.

Someone grab a bible and read **Luke 14:15-24.**

5 AFTER THE SCRIPTURE IS READ, CONTINUE READING:

In the parable, the feast represents the life of discipleship that God (the host) has prepared for us and continually invites us into. The messenger or servant who goes out to remind the guests of the invitation represents all the prophets, teachers, and friends who call us into lives of discipleship.

However, when it's time to RSVP to the party, all three of the guests make excuses as to why they cannot attend. Two of the excuses are material possessions (land, oxen) and one of the excuses is another relationship (spouse).

6 NEW READER:

A short time after Jesus tells this parable, he extends an invitation to a wealthy young ruler to come and be his disciple (**Luke 18**). This time, the invitation is extended with a challenge to first let go of his possessions and false sense of security. Unfortunately, like the guests in the parable of the **great feast**, this young man's **"things"** are also an excuse that gets in the way of an abundant life with Jesus.

It's easy to imagine Jesus getting discouraged when we read stories like these, however the parable of the great feast reminds us that God doesn't grow weary in inviting people into the kingdom life. After the original guests (in Luke 14) turn down the invitation, does the host cancel the party? What happened next?

7 AFTER DISCUSSION, CONTINUE WITH THE ACTIVITY BELOW:

Spend a few moments reflecting on the "messengers" God has sent into your life over the years who have extended the invitation into a deeper relationship and walk of faith. Use the space below to reflect.

People who have "shared the invitation" with me over the years:

How did they share the invitation?

8 AFTER THE ACTIVITY, CONTINUE READING:

Spend some time sharing what you wrote down or reflected upon, and if people have them, share a story or two.

We value INVITATION because...

God welcomes everyone into the Body of Christ. We respond by inviting all into lives of discipleship.

9 NEW READER:

Time and again we read stories in scripture that highlight God's heart and desire to invite all people into a deeper, more abundant life that is rooted and grounded in relationship. As followers of Christ who are continually invited, forgiven, and embraced by God, we are called to share this invitation with others.

Take some time to discuss - What are some natural and easy ways we can invite others into a deeper relationship with ourselves and God?

10 HOST, CLOSE US WITH A PRAYER.

God, we confess that we often forget about our calling to share the gospel invitation with others. Help us to see the people around us who we can extend an invitation to for the sake of building up an authentic friendship that is rooted and grounded in love. Thank you for never giving up on us. Amen.

On the next page, receive your INVITATION CHALLENGE for the week.

CHALLENGE:



INVITATION

INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE

This week your challenge is to take one small step towards strengthening a relationship with someone by **extending a simple invitation**. Maybe it's a neighbor you can invite to coffee, or a coworker to lunch. Are you the athletic type? Invite someone to join you on a jog or bike ride. Keep it simple!

TO WHOM DID YOU EXTEND AN INVITATION?

WHAT DID YOU INVITE THEM TO DO?

HOW DID IT GO?

This week, try the Invitation Challenge with your entire family. Here's how:


- 1 - Think of another family you've been meaning to get to know better.
- 2 - Set up a date to have them over for dinner.
- 3 - Enjoy!

FAMILY CHALLENGE

SOCIAL MEDIA

Try This: Share something on social media about Prince of Peace this week or share Easter worship times.

Follow us: facebook.com/popluther



The grace and peace of
God changes our lives,
forming us into
the image of Christ.

WEEK 4



TRANSFORMATION

Week 4 Scripture



Luke 8:26-39

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him **and shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me”**— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the **demon into the wilds.**) Jesus then asked him, **“What is your name?” He said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him.** They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, **“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.”** So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



WEEK FOUR

Journey Group Experience



service - worship - invitation - transformation - connection - hope

1 HOST, READ OUT LOUD:

Hey, everyone! Thanks for showing up and staying committed to this journey. This week we will be talking about transformation. To begin, **everyone take turns sharing what animal they wish they could transform into.**

2 HOST, KEEP READING:

Let's debrief our INVITATION CHALLENGES from last week. What was the invitation you extended? Describe what transpired.

3 NEW READER.

The life of discipleship is a life of transformation. As we continue to follow Jesus and live into the core values of our faith, we find our lives are changed. **It doesn't always happen over-night**, but the grace and peace of God changes our lives.

Transformation is often defined as *a dramatic change in form or appearance*. Another way to think about transformation is when a SWITCH occurs. As a verb, switch is defined as *to change the position, direction, or focus*. **Do you believe people can be transformed/changed? Why or why not?**

4 KEEP READING:

The following passage is from a letter written to early Christ followers about this process: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17*

And another passage from one of the prophets: *A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

Ezekiel 36:26-28

Let's react to these passages. How do the passages above speak about transformation? Who is responsible for the change?

5 NEW READER:

Desiring transformation in our lives is deeply human, and it is a good thing to work towards the change we desire to see within ourselves and in our world, but ultimately it is God who brings about the radical change we desire.

Scripture is filled with stories that bear witness to the transformative power of God's love. (Jacob, The Apostle Paul, Thomas the doubting disciple) Can you name other examples from scripture where transformation is evident?

6 REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

Can you think of any examples from your life where God transformed a relationship, situation or a person? (*Maybe even you*) Spend a few minutes sharing stories.

7 HOST, CONTINUE READING:

We are never “finished products”. No one has fully “arrived” as a completely mature follower of Christ. We all need God's grace and peace to continually transform our world, our community and our lives. We are going to close out our group time tonight with an extended time of prayer, asking God specifically to bring transformation where it is needed most.

We value TRANSFORMATION because...

The grace and peace of God changes our lives, forming us into the image of Christ.

8 SPEND SOME EXTENDED TIME IN PRAYER

To begin, we will start with about 5-7 minutes of individual prayer and reflection. Everyone should find a comfortable, quiet place to pray individually. Use this time to ask God to help reveal areas or relationships in your life that need transformation.

After the individual prayer time is finished, we will come back together as a group to lift up any specific prayer requests people have. Not everyone has to share something, but don't be afraid to be vulnerable.

Host, lead us in closing with this simple prayer:

God, you are the one who is capable of changing our lives to better reflect your character. Help us to become aware of the things that need to be transformed in our world, our community, and in our lives. Help us to more fully live & love like Jesus. Amen

On the next page, receive your TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGE for the week.

CHALLENGE:



TRANSFORMATION

INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE

This week your challenge is to spend extended time daily in prayer that is centered on transformation. Focus your prayer on the things in your life, in your relationships and around the world that need transformation.

This week, try the transformation challenge with your **family**. Here's how:

Have each family member share with another person in the family what it is they are asking God to transform in their lives. Then, pray for each other throughout the week.

Example:

Little Susie is asking God to transform her attitude around homework.

Dad is asking God to transform his anger at co-workers into peace.

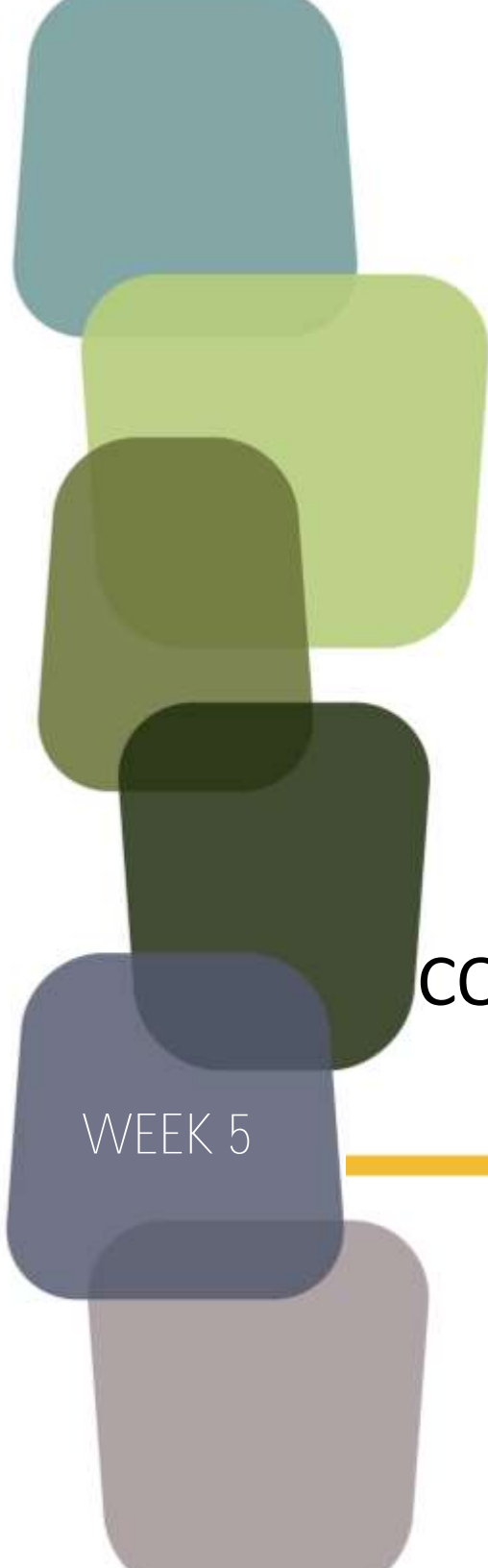
Have Susie pray for Dad's transformation at work, and Dad pray for Susie's transformation with her attitude.

FAMILY CHALLENGE

SOCIAL MEDIA

Try This: Share a prayer on social media this week for something that needs to be healed by God. It could be something in the world (hunger, terrorism, etc.), or it could be something personal.

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The depth of God's love
draws us to invest in
deeper relationships.

CONNECTION

WEEK 5



Week 5 Scripture



Luke 5:17-26

One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. Then some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. When he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, "Who is this who is speaking blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the one who was paralyzed—"I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home." Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God. Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

[illegible]

WEEK FIVE

Journey Group Experience



service - worship - invitation - transformation - connection - hope

1 HOST, READ OUT LOUD:

Hi everyone, welcome back! **Let's start with everyone sharing what they most loved or remember about their childhood best friend.** It could be a short story, a character trait, or the way they made you feel. Ready? Go.

2 HOST, KEEP READING:

Let's consider last week's transformation challenge. How did it go spending intentional time in prayer? Any stories of transformation to share? Anyone can start, but make sure everyone has an opportunity to share.

3 NEW READER:

This week, we're talking about what it means to value connection. It is often said nowadays that we are living in a "highly connected world" in which people are linked together in ways like never before. For example, with a few clicks of a mouse or swipes on a smartphone we can instantly be connected to news, weather, and people halfway around the world. Consider this: twelve years ago, Skype, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn did not exist. Today these platforms provide a method for billions of people to instantly communicate. **Can everyone think of an example when technology has helped you re-connect with an old friend? Share with the group.**

4 NEW READER = THE PERSON WHO HAS NO IDEA WHAT SNAP CHAT IS.

There are always two sides to a coin. Some could argue that social media and technology are actually hurting human relationships. We've all seen the couple at dinner who spend the night on their phones instead of talking with one another face to face, or the pack of teenagers riding the bus to school with their heads down texting instead of talking with each other. Recently a new word has been coined to highlight this reality:

Phubbing (verb) = The act of snubbing someone in a social setting by looking at your phone instead of paying attention.

We've all witnessed this before, and many of us have probably been the victim of *phubbing* or guilty of *phubbing* our loved ones.

5 NEW READER = THE PERSON WHO LAST TOUCHED THEIR CELL PHONE:

The point so far is not to debate the merits and pitfalls of social media, but to get us thinking about a more important question – *Are we cultivating relationships with others that are deep and meaningful?*

Jesus was a relational leader and the gospels show us that he lived his life in a way that cultivated deep and meaningful connections.

John 15:15-17 says:

“I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

6 NEW READER:

Jesus did not keep his disciples at arm’s length; instead he welcomed them into his life and called them friends. At times we reduce Christianity down to participating in church programs and attending worship services while losing sight that building authentic relationships with people is central to a life of faith. It is through authentic relationships where grace is shared and forgiveness is extended that we find the support we need to journey through life.

7 KEEP READING:

In a world filled with distractions it is easy to lose sight of relationships being primary. **Share some ways that you can keep relationships a top priority.**

8 AFTER DISCUSSING, DO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITY:

Jesus did life-on-life ministry. He took time to stop and personally connect with people. (Zaccheus, The Samaritan Woman, Thomas, etc.)

We value CONNECTION because...

The depth of God's love draws us to invest in deeper relationships.

Let's practice connecting on a more personal level. Find another person in the group that you don't know as well and spend the next 5 or so minutes sharing about your SWITCH Journey experience so far.

If you need some prompting, consider the following questions.

- Share something with the other person they probably don't know about you.
- How has your SWITCH Journey been so far?
- What value (Service, Worship, Invitation, Transformation, Connection, Hope) is easy for you to live into?
- What value is more difficult for you to live into?

9 HOST, BRING US HOME:

Connecting with others isn't always easy, but it's not rocket science. It just takes a little effort and intentionality. Before we go to the page and receive our CONNECTION CHALLENGE, let's close in prayer.

God,

Thank you for the endless ways you reach out to us. Thank you for being a God who desires an intimate relationship with your creation. Help us to connect with others in deep and meaningful ways. Show us the people around us that you are calling us to invest in, and may our hearts be open to new relationships and friends as we continue to live into your kingdom values. Amen.

On the next page, receive your CONNECTION CHALLENGE for the week.

CHALLENGE:



CONNECTION

INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE

This week your challenge is to send a handwritten letter to someone you need to re-connect with. That's right, get out the pen and paper and send some love in the mail. Maybe it's a friend you've lost touch with recently, or a family member that lives out of town, or maybe it's to your spouse or child.

This week, try the transformation challenge with your family. Here's how:


Schedule a "tech-free" night this week as a family and spend some time playing a good old-fashioned board game!

FAMILY CHALLENGE

SOCIAL MEDIA

Try This: Instead of just clicking "like" or uploading a photo of your cute puppy, focus this week on using social media to connect with old friends in a meaningful way. Send a message, comment on their page, etc.

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The resurrection
is real for us. Jesus has
overcome the power of
death and darkness.

We join him
in the restoration
of the world.

HOPE

WEEK 6



Week 6 Scripture



Luke 18:35-43

As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. **They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”** Then he **shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”** Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, **“Son of David, have mercy on me!”** Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, **“What do you want me to do for you?”** He said, **“Lord, let me see again.”** Jesus said to him, **“Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.”** Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

[illegible]

WEEK SIX

Journey Group Experience



service - worship - invitation - transformation - connection - hope

1 HOST, READ OUT LOUD:

Hello everyone, it's our last week! For tonight's icebreaker everyone share something they have appreciated about spending the last 6 weeks together. You know the drill by now; anyone can start, but make sure everyone shares.

Last week, everyone was challenged to write a letter to someone they needed to re-connect with. Everyone share two things:

Did you write your letter, and if so how did it feel to do so?

2 NEW READER:

Let's assume we all have certain perspectives, or lenses, that we see the world through. For example, if you are a new parent, you might have a safety-first lens because you don't want your child to get hurt. A healthcare worker?

Your lens might be focused on how to stay healthy and avoid getting sick.

New business owner? Your lens might be focused on how to spread every dollar the furthest. OK, spend a moment thinking about through which lens you most often view the world. Share with the group. Need help identifying your lens? Ask your spouse or a close friend in the group.

3 KEEP READING:

If there is a single lens Christians are called to view the world through, it is the lens of hope. In Romans 5:3-5 Paul writes: *And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

How does this passage describe the process of hope being produced in our lives?

Bonus question – Can you think of a time when hope was produced in this manner in your own life? Share as you are comfortable.

4 NEW READER:

Seeing the world through a lens of hope does not mean that Christians ignore suffering or hardship, rather, having hope is the very thing that enables us to persevere through our journey of faith. OK, imagine you start focusing with a **hope lens. Wherever you are or whomever you're with, you're looking for signs of hope.** What kind of things would you be looking for? Anyone can throw out ideas.

5 AFTER SHARING, CONTINUE READING:

Our ability to hope is not rooted and grounded in our own strength or skills, but in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Consider this passage from 1 Peter 1:3-6: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials.*

We value HOPE because...

The resurrection is real for us. Jesus has overcome the power of death and darkness. We join him in the restoration of the world.

6 NEW READER:

Hope is the value through which we view all of our other values:

Let's review our values...

Service Our faith propels us into lives of action to love and serve our neighbors and the world.

HOPE keeps us encouraged and grounded in our service to others, reminding us that our actions are mere reflections of the hope found in Christ.

Worship

We celebrate the resurrection as a gospel community. Through Word and **Sacrament we live into God's grace-filled promise** for the world.

HOPE in the mystery of our faith (Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again) is the center of our worship.

Invitation

God welcomes everyone into the body of Christ. We respond by inviting all into lives of discipleship.

HOPE in the gospel is what propels us to invite others into the life of discipleship.

Transformation

The grace and peace of God changes our lives, forming us into the image of Christ.

HOPE in God's ability to transform our lives gives us peace.

Connection

The depth of God's love draws us to invest in deeper relationships.

HOPE is the spirit that connects the gospel community.

7 ONE LAST ACTIVITY:

Over the last six weeks we've covered a lot of ground as we've explored our core values together. To close out our time together we are going to do one last activity before we receive our final CHALLENGE.

This activity is called **"Take Away, Leave Behind"**.

Spend some time thinking about what you are taking away from this journey that will help you live out our core values. For example, it could actually be one of our values, like "Hope" or "Connection", or it could be something else like "new friendships" or "better perspective". Whatever it is, write it in the space below.

I AM TAKING AWAY...

Then, spend a few moments thinking to yourself about what you want to leave behind as you move forward in life living out our core values. It might be something as simple as "Anxiety" or "Pessimism" or "an over-scheduled life". Once you have identified what you want to leave behind, write it in the space below.

I AM LEAVING BEHIND...

Once everyone has completed the activity, spend time going around the room sharing your reflections.

8 HOST - CLOSING PRAYER.

God, Thank you for this journey experience and the people in this room. Help us in our lifelong journey to follow you while living out our core values. Give us your spirit of hope and the clarity to see all the ways in which you are restoring the world with grace & peace. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Turn to the next page to receive your final CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE:



GRACE GROUPS

Your final challenge is this: now that this journey has come to a close, consider forming a GRACE GROUP.

Grace Groups are the “next step” in discipleship for the Prince of Peace community, and our hope is that everyone would find a Grace Group where they can grow in faith (UP), connect with others (IN) and serve the community (OUT).

Spend some time reading about Grace Groups (popluther.org/gracegroups). Then complete your challenge by answering two simple questions:

Am I willing to be a part of a Grace Group?

Am I willing to lead/host a Grace Group?

If your journey group wants to keep meeting as a Grace Group, put something on the calendar before everyone leaves. Also, consider if you have room to invite new people into the fun!

If your journey group is feeling called to transition into multiple Grace Groups with other people, that is wonderful too! The important thing is that we stay committed to the life of discipleship!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Try This: Last chance to share your journey with your closest friends and internet fans.

Take a group photograph of your journey group.

Post It with the hashtag #switchjourney

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