

adult



Lesson 8 / January 20, 2019

Advancing the Gospel

By Crystal Green

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 8

Focus:

God can use any circumstance to further the Gospel.

Lesson 8

Bible Basis:

Philippians 1:12-21

Lesson 8

Memory Verse:

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.
—Philippians 1:12

Students will discuss how God uses any circumstance to advance the Gospel.

OPENING ACTIVITY: *Every Piece Is Important*

Ask your class to think about this question: How important is it to have every piece of a puzzle you are putting together? They might say that no piece is too large or too small. No piece is too awkward or rough. Every piece works together for the bigger picture. The picture is incomplete without each piece being in place.

Have a small puzzle (like a children's puzzle) available for your class to put together. As they put the puzzle together, ask them to examine each piece and how it fits perfectly together with the other pieces, no matter the shape or condition.

In this week's story we see how one pastor hopes to bring many "pieces" (in this case, many different people) together to further the Gospel.

OPENING STORY: [Make copies of the story for your students or read it aloud.]

PASTOR AIMS TO DRAW TRADITIONALISTS AND MILLENNIALS TO CHRIST

The Rev. Marvin McKenzie aims to draw all ages to Christ and doing that, he says, takes "out the box" thinking.

As the new pastor of Walker Temple AME Church in Los Angeles, McKenzie believes multiple generations will come to know the Lord if he incorporates that creative philosophy to spreading the Gospel.

"I want to grow the membership of the church by trying things that have never been done before," says McKenzie. "I think of the four men who brought their crippled friend before Jesus. These men were not able to bring their friend through the front door via traditional methods, so they had to be creative, and they tore a hole in the roof and lowered their friend before Jesus."

“I believe that today’s pastor must think like these four men and think outside the box,” he continues. “If we continue to do what has always been done, we will continue to get the same results.”

“My goal in this first year is a 20% growth in membership.”

While McKenzie’s goal may sound ambitious, especially considering that he is a first-time pastor, he is convinced it can be achieved by applying his ministry motto of “serving God with excellence.” And as a 39-year-old Gen Xer, he feels that he is in a good place to reach both younger millennials and older baby boomers and traditionalists.

Following the advice of his father in the ministry, Pastor Clyde W. Oden of Bethel AME-Oxnard, McKenzie says his first step will be to love the people and do everything with excellence “based on the example I saw in Dr. Oden.”

He also intends to build on the spiritual legacy left by Rev. Dr. Rosalynn Brookins, who was appointed pastor of Parks AME in Oakland. “Walker Temple is known for its dynamic and spirit-filled worship. When I preached my first sermon there, I preached as hard as I possibly could and for as long as I could,” he recalls.

“Afterwards, a few members asked me if all of my sermons would be so short. Although this made me smile, I saw that the members expect a mighty Word from God.”

Describing the ideal pastoral situation, he adds, “I want to be in a church where I know the names of each member and I’m able to sit and have private conversations. My greatest joy as a pastor comes in the moments when I’ve prayed with a person or counseled them during a crisis in their life. I want to always be able to have real relationships with the members of my church.”

Another focus of McKenzie’s is young people. He and his wife, Esthela, are the parents of Aniah, age 19; Justice, age 15; and Michelle, age 7. He says the Walker Temple congregation has agreed to dedicate 10 percent of the church’s income to youth activities.

“We believe in putting our money where our mouth is and making the investment in our youth. My children are members of Generation Y and Z, so I have a personal investment in reaching these generations. I understand the struggles that they face in this fast-paced world and so I first give them a voice and a safe place where they can express themselves,” says McKenzie.

Although this is his first pastoral appointment, McKenzie has lots of experience in the church. He served 10 years as a trustee and was the assistant pastor at Bethel AME-Oxnard for four years.

A veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, he also earned a bachelors degree in business management and a masters degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix, a masters of divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary, and a graduate certificate in Executive Leadership from Cornell University.

With God’s help, McKenzie says his background will be an asset and will assist in attracting others to the Lord. “People want a place where they can be encouraged and reminded that there is hope,” he insists. “People also want a place where they can receive life skills and support beyond spiritual matters.”

Now ask your students to form small groups to discuss their answers to these questions.

- **How is Rev. McKenzie hoping to advance the Gospel in new ways through his church?**
- **When have you seen God use unusual circumstances to advance the Gospel—perhaps even in the way He reached out to you?**
- **Is your church helping to advance the Gospel in different or unusual settings and circumstances? Explain your answer.**

(When you are finished with the questions, go on to Step 2 in your *Adult Teacher's Guide*.)

News Source:

<https://lasentinel.net/gen-x-pastor-aims-to-draw-traditionalists-and-millennials-to-christ.html>

adult



Lesson 8 / January 20, 2019

Advancing the Gospel

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 8

Focus:

God can use any circumstance to further the Gospel.

Lesson 8

Bible Basis:

Philippians 1:12-21

Lesson 8

Memory Verse:

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.
—Philippians 1:12

TO THE UTTERMOST PARTS, AND CLOSE TO HOME

When we receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, each of us becomes a witness of how He works to transform people's lives, and we can share what He has done for us, particularly in the places where we live and work. God wants the Good News to spread throughout the world, and He can use us—in any situation we are in—to advance His kingdom.

Ask your students to return to the groups they had in Step 1 to discuss their answers to these questions:

- **In what new and unusual areas could God be asking you or your church to further the Gospel (for example, in prisons, in area schools, in local businesses)?**
- **In what areas of your life could He especially use *you* to spread the Good News?**

End the class in prayer, thanking God for His gift of salvation and asking Him to show us new ways we can help to advance His kingdom in the world around us.

(We are not affiliated with and do not endorse any website or any other media listed on these pages. At the time of writing, our editors carefully review the referenced material and non-referenced web page content. However, due to the nature of the Internet, non-cited content on the website [including pop-ups, links, and ads] changes frequently and is beyond our control. Please review carefully before showing links in the classroom.)

THE BIBLE IN THE NEWS

What was the capital of Israel in the Old Testament?

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/what-was-the-capital-of-israel-in-the-old-testament.html>