



A CHURCH FOR THE BROKEN: Do I have to have it “all together”? Facilitator’s Guide

COMMUNITY

🎯 OVERVIEW:

Community with other Christ-followers is vital. It's a lifeline that fuels us, encourages us, and challenges us to live out the mission God gave us. Community keeps us in the fold of what God is doing. But what about people who don't have community? People who are isolated, alone, and at the end of their rope? You and I are part of the answer to their isolation. We carry the church beyond the walls of Sunday and into the places where people need it most. We carry the church into hospitals, locker rooms, hallways, and waiting rooms. And even though we don't have it all together or know the right words to say, God uses us to bring others into his care.

? OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What are some words that describe what people are thinking, feeling, or doing in an emergency room?
- What are some words that describe what people are thinking, feeling, or doing when they go to church on Sunday?

💬 WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT:

DFTBA—have you seen that before? It means, “Don't forget to be awesome.” But what happens when you do forget to be awesome, and you really mess something up? One of the most reassuring things about the Bible is that Jesus, on a consistent basis, uses broken people, people who have really messed up. We all make mistakes from time to time—even life-changing, world-is-ending, things-will-never-be-the-same mistakes. That's why we need other Christ-followers to help us along. Oscar Wilde once said, “Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.”¹ All of us—everyone—is broken and goes through rough patches. Even people who seem like saints have been there, too. The church takes care of people when they're going through those rough patches. Jesus said it this way: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners,” (Mark 2:17).

The church isn't some fashion show or TV sitcom that exists to show off perfect people. It's not a spa, where healthy people can go to be pampered. No, the church is a hospital, a place where broken, hurt, and sick people can receive care. Or think of the church as a locker room, a place where people talk strategy, get their ankles taped up, ice their joints, and motivate each other. Too many people see church as a place where they have to pretend to have it all together or a place that should cater to their every desire. That's not the way it should be. To become a rooted disciple of Jesus, you need to be part of a church community. And that means admitting your own brokenness and pain and agreeing to help others who are broken and hurting. Sometimes you'll be the one who needs that hospital or locker room experience. Other times you'll be the one helping others.

You're going to read two scenes from Peter's life. You know Peter—he was one of Jesus' closest friends in the world. In the first scene he's at an absolute low point, denying that he even knows Jesus when Jesus needs him most. In the next, Jesus has already died and risen again. He forgives Peter and reinstates him as the future leader of the church, despite the fact that Peter did some pretty terrible things.





Read: John 18:12–27; 21:15–17

LEADER’S NOTE: Peter is one of Jesus’ 12 disciples and could be described as bold, vocal, and eager. He often put his foot in his mouth, but he also took amazing steps of faith (Matt. 14). Jesus gave Peter a great responsibility and honor even though Peter denied him. This is a great example for us as Christ-followers of God’s grace and redemption. Over and over again, God redeems broken and messed up people and sets them on his great mission, even though we don’t deserve it.

Discuss:

- In the second scene, why do you think Jesus asks Peter the same question three times?
- Would you want someone like Peter, who broke down when things got really tough, to be your leader? Why do you think Jesus still wanted him to lead the church?
- How have you supported other Christ-followers who needed help?
- How have you been supported by other Christ-followers when you were at a low point?



A SECOND LOOK:

Galatians 6:2 says we should “bear one another’s burdens.” Have you ever complained because your church isn’t doing something the way you want it to be done? Maybe the music isn’t what you’d normally listen to. Maybe the sermons feel too long. But before you complain too loudly, remember that the church isn’t a spa, designed to cater to your every need. Rather than dwelling on all the ways church would be better for you, think about how you could bear the burdens of others who need help—even if it’s just putting up with a long sermon, because it’s meaningful to someone else who is hurting.

Lisa Fenn worked for ESPN and interviewed some of the greatest athletes of all time—guys like Michael Jordan. But one story that she covered meant more to her than all the rest. It wasn’t about some big star. It was the story of Leroy Sutton and Dartanyon Crockett, two young men from Cleveland. Dartanyon is homeless and legally blind. Leroy Sutton, his friend, was hit by a train at the age of eleven and lost his legs. Now, Dartanyon literally carries Leroy around on his back. Lisa Fenn puts it this way: “The one with no legs, being carried by the one who could not see.”² They helped each other through some unbelievably difficult times, one walking, the other navigating. Their friendship is an example of what the church should be: needy, imperfect people helping each other out and moving toward Christ.

Discuss:

- What do you think life would be like for Leroy and Dartanyon if each focused only on their own needs?
- Imagine your leg is broken, but you pretend it’s just fine. How is that image similar to churches filled with people who seem to have everything together?
- How might pretending things are fine actually make things worse?
- What are some of the reasons people ignore others who need support rather than inviting them to be part of a community?



✓ **LIVE IT OUT: *Compassion Survey***

We saw from Peter that God can use anyone to lead in the church, to reach out and support others who need Jesus and need community. We are each bent toward helping others in a specific way. Most people have a unique passion to fix something that breaks their heart or puts a knot in their stomach. They see a circumstance that's hard to ignore and find fulfillment in doing something about it. Take a few minutes to complete this compassion survey, to see where God might want you to reach out and support someone.

DIRECTIONS: If you are like most people, there are probably a few things/issues that break your heart. This survey will help you identify your God-given passions to serve others.

What brings tears to your eyes?

What makes you say, "I wish someone would do something about that?"

If you had a million dollars, how would you use it to help others?

What things are wrong, unjust, or unfair in this world that ought to be made right?

What news stories upset you the most because someone is hurting or in need?

If you waved a magic wand, how would you make this world a better place?

What experiences has God used to comfort you that you could use to comfort others?

In the box below, summarize what you think may be your burdens.

I think my top three compassion areas are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



LEADER’S NOTE: After students take this compassion survey, have them share their answers in groups of two or three.

Discuss:

- What do you think God wants you to do with the things that break your heart?
- How can you respond this week to one of your top three compassion areas?



APPLY IT:

Write down one way you are going to apply what you now know about the church as a place where we can reach out and support others. Think of something you can do this week to reach out and help carry someone else’s burden.

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

LEADER’S NOTE: Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It’s one thing to say, “I’m going to trust God more.” The truth is, our students won’t really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It’s another thing to say, “Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I’m going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I’m going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust.” Challenge your students to answer the questions under the “Be Specific” section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.



THINK ABOUT IT:

“Our community consists solely in what Christ has done to both of us.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer³

“The only measure of our love for God is our everyday fellowship with other human beings, regardless of color, race, culture, nationality, or social and economic class.” – Andrew Murray⁴

***Any reference within this piece to Internet addresses of websites not under the administration of LeaderTreks is not to be taken as an endorsement of these websites by LeaderTreks; neither does LeaderTreks vouch for their content.

¹ Oscar Wilde, “A Woman of No Importance,” *The Plays of Oscar Wilde, Vol. 1* (London: J.W.Luce, 1905), 59.

² Lisa M. Fenn, “Carry On: Why I Stayed,” *ESPN.Com*, August 15, 2016, accessed July 13, 2017, http://www.espn.com/espn/otl/story/_/id/9454322/why-stayed.

³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: Prayerbook of the Bible*, trans. Daniel W. Bloesch and James H. Burtness (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 34.

⁴ Andrew Murray, “Humility,” quoted in Errol A. Gibbs and Phipp A. Grey, *Five Foundations of Human Development: A Proposal for Our Survival in the Twenty-First Century and the New Millennium* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2011), 178.