

Bringing New Focus to Missions

Lessons 9-12

Adult Missions Education 2019-2020



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Let's Get Started!

Welcome to the 2019–2020 *Adult Missions Education*. You may notice changes, but you can be sure the current missions content should appeal to a wide range of ages in your congregation.

New: A Staggered Release of Lessons

This year, we are releasing Adult Missions Education lessons in a new way. Four lessons will be released in **March**, four in **July**, and four in **November**. With these releases will also come videos for most lessons. All lessons and videos will be available on the NMI website (www.nazarene.org/nmi) and may be downloaded for free.

Launching a New Learning Year

- Review this guide, noting upcoming topics and planning the lessons within your church calendar. Some options may require more than a month to initiate; keep this in mind as you plan.
- While the lessons are planned for approximately an hour, material can be used for shorter “missions moments” in worship services, Sunday school classes, small groups, and fellowship times.
- Consider your group. If they like to discuss, plan such times in the sessions. Some people learn while “doing.” Provide topic-sensitive activities, and your group will remember the information better.
- If you wish to use a video, plan for any technical equipment needed and test the audio and video in advance of your session.
- **Something New:** A number of lessons have intergenerational components or aspects of the topic designed specifically for youth and/or children. This is ideal for involving those age levels and letting them know they have roles in missions.

The Lessons

Most lessons follow the same format. Using the summary below, familiarize yourself with lesson components and their purposes.

- **Lesson Purpose:** Missions stories are inspiring and more memorable when listeners understand the importance behind them. Stating the purpose isn't necessary, but consider it in your planning.
- **Scripture:** The verses coordinate with the topic. These are sometimes used within the presentations. If not, please read them to the group. This helps your people associate scripture with missions.
- **Fast Facts:** These statistics about the lesson topic are, at times, worked into the presentation. For those times when they are not, use them to enrich the learning experience.
- **Lesson Information:** This may include an introduction, one or more missions stories, and sometimes additional material on the topic. Use as much of the Lesson Information as time allows.
- **Presentation Ideas:** There are three options to present the material. Feel free to create your own.
 - Option 1 is for groups that, due to space or lifestyle, prefer to stay seated during the session.
 - Option 2 is for groups that prefer moving around the room as they learn.
 - Option 3 is for groups that prefer in-depth discussion. You may add questions. Just keep the group on topic.
- **ACT ON IT:** These practical ideas for personal involvement pertain to the lesson topic. They are varied and can include prayer, giving, and participating in local or global projects that may turn into long-term ministries for your church.
- **Recipes:** Food is culture! In most lessons, we have included recipes from places mentioned in the material. Many were provided by Nazarenes who lived/live in that area. Because the recipes are global, measurements and temperatures may differ from where you live.
- **Resources:** This lists websites, videos, books, and additional articles on the lesson topic. If you are reading the PDF version of the guide, the web links are live, so you can go directly to the web page.
- **Handouts:** These are as varied as their topics. They may be puzzles, reader's theatre scripts, information reminders, and discussion tools. Most lessons have at least one, but feel free to create your own to coordinate with your presentation. When people take something home, they can think further about the topic, allowing God to speak.

New Video Supplements to the Lessons

- Again this year, we have created short videos to accompany most lessons. These videos may be used in the following ways:
 - Promote aspects of missions in your local church,
 - Announce an upcoming missions service,
 - Educate your people regarding the lesson topic, or
 - Sermon illustrations.

Additional Ideas to Enrich the Presentation

- In most options, we suggest that others assist you in the presentation. Involvement invests individuals in the topic and helps them remember and apply the concepts taught.
- Visit this website throughout the year for additional information about the lesson topics: Nazarene Missions International (www.nazarene.org/nmi).
- Many people may be unfamiliar with the locations mentioned in this guide. Help them by having a world map or a globe available.

Bringing New Focus to Missions

This year's theme is meant to help bring focus to our mission as a church, and to understand our individual and local church role(s) in carrying out that mission to God's glory. There are "focus" lessons this year on mission areas: old and new. We will meet missionaries: newly sent and retiring. Of course, within these lessons, we focus on our Top 5 Areas of Impact: Prayer, World Evangelism Fund, Alabaster, Engaging Children and Youth, and Links. Participation in each of these areas connects people to the larger Nazarene family. As the group progresses through the lesson content and learning activities, there should be a deeper clarity and an expanding appreciation for NMI and its purpose to "mobilize the church in missions." Both are relevant and imperative to the growth and maturing of the local church, increasing its significant reach around the world. Through stories and scriptures and missions principles, a vivid tapestry is woven with the threads of passion for the lost, sacrificial giving, and joy in serving the eternal purposes of God in missions.

This Year's Authors

For the 2019-2020 *Adult Missions Education* lessons, two wonderful writers present six lessons each:

Debbie Salter Goodwin

Debbie has served with her husband, Mark, for 40 years of pastoral ministry. Debbie is a freelance writer, speaker, and spiritual formation blogger living in Roswell, Georgia, USA.

Cheryl Crouch

Early in her marriage Cheryl served with her husband, Jeff, as a Nazarene missionary to Papua New Guinea. More recently, she has been a local and district NMI president. Cheryl is an active layperson, teacher, and writer living in Denton, Texas, USA.

Throughout the process of bringing these lessons together, we are seeking to "focus on missions" in order to be better equipped to work together in this great missions enterprise. We really do need each other. Our lives and work are enriched, because together with you, in Jesus' name, we are changing our world.

Lola Brickey
Global NMI Director

Persevering Prayer

by Debbie Salter Goodwin

LESSON PURPOSE

To encourage the global church to pray for missionaries in persevering ways that reproduce intercessors and empowers more people to follow the Great Commission any way God directs.

SCRIPTURE: We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, NIV)

FAST FACTS

- The population of Bangkok, capital of Thailand, is 8.3 million people.
- The World Meteorological Organization named Bangkok as the hottest city in the world. On average, Bangkok registers a higher temperature than other cities around the world.
- Bangkok has the longest name of any place in the world according to the Guinness World Book of Records: “Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Yuthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Piman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit.” Translated, it means: City of angels, great city of immortals, magnificent city of the nine gems, seat of the king, city of royal palaces, home of gods incarnate, erected by Visvakarman at Indra’s behest.
- Church of the Nazarene in Thailand (as of 2018, Nazarene Research Services)
 - Year Entered: 1989
 - Population in 2018: 66.6 million
 - Districts: 2
 - Churches: 31
 - Members: 1,616
 - Clergy
 - Elders: 11
 - Deacons: 2
 - Licensed Ministers: 13

LESSON INFORMATION

Prayer is the quickest way to empower any servant of God and provide a channel that God uses to meet needs about which you may not even know to pray. Prayer should be our first response to any need or crisis. Is it?

How can we be as generous with prayer as we are in sharing our resources through Faith Promise, Alabaster, deputation offerings, Compassionate Ministry collections, and the many other ways available for supporting missionaries? That’s the focus of this lesson. Be ready to stretch your faith muscles. Be ready

to fill the gap. God wants to raise up *persevering* prayer warriors who do not have to see the results to know that God answers.

The stories for this lesson come out of Thailand. Their interconnectedness offers a reminder that prayer has a reproductive process of its own. As you share the following stories, don’t miss the most important reminder: God called people to pray. How might you and others be those people who hear and respond to God’s invitation?

God Calling

The first principle we need to get clear is that the idea to pray for anyone or about anything comes from God. It is anything from a nudge, a whisper, an awareness to a pressing urgency or some cannot-be-ignored message. Since God is the only One who knows the worldwide needs, He dispatches the help. Why prayer is God's plan for delivering His help isn't the most important question. Why more people don't respond to His invitation is.

Perhaps we start at the wrong end to pray for missionaries. God is a missionary God. He is on a worldwide search and rescue mission. He considers every member of his family a recruit in His mission to save the world. Could it be that the more we connect with God's heart for His world, the more sensitive we might be to His call to pray?

While this kind of sensitivity is not difficult to cultivate, it doesn't come automatically. Look at social media posts, and it is easy to conclude that we might be more sensitive to the political chaos around us than we are about what is important to God's heart.

Praying God's Heart

E. Stanley Jones was a Methodist missionary to India. He was often called the Billy Graham of India. As he spoke with clarity and persuasion to masses of people, he gave himself first to prayer. What he learned he taught to others in retreats and published material. Perhaps looking at what drove him in prayer will help us in our mission to raise up more persevering prayer partners.

Prayer is not an occasional exercise to which you turn now and then; it is a life attitude.
—E. Stanley Jones, *How to Pray*

Here is a sample of what E. Stanley Jones taught about prayer:¹

1. Lord, teach me to pray. (p. 4)
2. The universe is an open universe . . . *open* to initiative and creative faith. (p. 4)
3. Prayer is not only the refuge of the weak; it is the reinforcement of the strong. (p. 4)
4. Prayer is not bending God to my will, but . . . bringing . . . my will into conformity with God's will. (p. 5)
5. Prayer is not an occasional exercise; . . . it is a life attitude. (p. 6)
6. Prayer is cooperation with God. (p. 6)
7. Prayer, . . . is . . . fundamentally surrender.
8. The essence of prayer is in right relationships with God. (p. 8)
9. Use [an] interruption [for prayer.] (p. 10)
10. Talk *with* God, not to Him. (p. 17)

¹ E. Stanley Jones, *How to Pray* [Kindle]. Ravenio Books, 2015, pp. 4–17. www.amazon.com

God is *aching* to answer *His* prayer for *His* people. Connect with that ache as God's partner for what He wants to provide.

If I had one gift, and only one gift, to make to the Christian Church, I would offer the gift of prayer.
Everything follows from prayer.

—E. Stanley Jones, *How to Pray*

As you review stories where prayer opened doors for answers, creative thinking, transformation, and multiplied the desire to pray; connect them to these principles from E. Stanley Jones.

Interruption or God Calling?

Lisa Lehman [LAY-muhn] only knew three words in Thai when she arrived at the Maetang [MEH-tayng] Tribal Children's Home for a three-month assignment to teach Bible-based English lessons to 65 children ages five to ten. When the church sanctuary where she had been gathering the youngest children was scheduled for a pastor's training class, Lisa had to find a new location. She decided on the basketball court. As the children gathered; she realized she didn't know how to tell them to wait until she returned from getting her teaching supplies. They had to follow her back to her room. It seemed pointless to go back to the basketball court. She decided that this was where she needed to teach.

She stood on a chair before 65 children who sat on the floor, filling every inch of the six- by eight-foot space. They were mesmerized for the 45-minute session even when the electricity took the lights out. Parents came and watched through the window. They saw their normally wiggly, easily distracted children, sitting still, and attentive. They were amazed.

"Wow," Lisa thought. She wasn't sure how that happened, until later that week when she received an email from her mother asking if everything was all right. She told Lisa that God woke her up around 4 am with an urgent nudge to pray for her daughter. It happened again at 6 am. Lisa calculated the time difference and realized her mother had been awakened at exactly the times when she needed to make a quick decision about how to adapt to unexpected changes.

"Wow," Lisa said again with new awareness about how God answers prayer. Her simple need had been covered by prayer, even when she didn't ask for it.

For Lisa's mom, it had been an interruption to sleep; but for Lisa, it became a big answer because of prayer.

When a Child Prays

Allidia was seven years old when she heard Lisa Lehman, missionary to Thailand, speak. God had called Lisa to become a missionary when she was seven years old, so Lisa always asked for seven-year-olds to raise their hands. It was a reminder to everyone that no one who can hear God is too young to answer His call. Allidia started praying for Thailand before she even knew where it was.

Fifteen years later, Field Strategy Coordinator, David Phillips, and his team evaluated needs in Bangkok. He knew that building projects made good Work and Witness experiences. However, building in southeast Asia was complicated. He was concerned about the low percentage of Christians in each of the countries that comprised their field. What they needed most of all was prayer. It would be the most proactive way to address their challenges. The team began to pray that God would call people to come to Bangkok and pray. He even posted it as a possible Work and Witness Team, even though he had never heard of a Work and Witness Prayer Team.

Within a few days, a family of four from Illinois, USA responded to the need. It was Allidia's family.

Unfortunately, shortly into making plans for them to come; David had to return to the United States for medical reasons. Planning for their first Work and Witness Prayer team fell to missionaries, Steve and Rebecca Barber and Lisa Lehman. By the time Allidia and her family arrived, the missionaries had mapped out prayer walks around the city. The family prayed for the District Assembly that would convene while they were there. They joined others in prayer times and prayed for challenges as they surfaced.

On one of the prayer walks, Allidia's family met the owners at an ice factory in the local community. The owners welcomed the people who came to pray. Working long hours at the ice factory and caring for their daughter with autism prevented them from attending church. To meet this need, young adults began discipleship lessons at the factory. In 2018, one of the family members from the ice factory accepted faith in Christ.

David Phillips reports that since the team came, they have seen an increase of prayer and evangelism in their churches. Conversions have increased as has church planting and pastoral training. What started with a prayer team continues to melt hearts where God can make a difference.

Today Allidia is 22, leads worship and youth at the Sherman Church of the Nazarene in Sherman, Illinois. She has led mission teams to inner-city Fort Worth, Texas, USA, and encountered intense times of spiritual warfare where she had to practice everything she had learned about prayer.

Jesus reminded us that we must never lose the optimism and innocence of a child's faith in God and prayer. When we do, we lose a measure of authenticity in our prayers. Allidia's story reminds us to teach children how to partner with God and pray for people they may never meet and worlds they may never see.

When Two or Three Gather

Rev. Tanongsak [tuh-NAWNG-sak] pastors the Bangkok First Church of the Nazarene. After a

Thailand District Family Camp in October 2014, Pastor Tanongsak and his wife felt convicted that they had neglected church prayer meetings for several years. They recommitted to a set-aside prayer time for the church on Thursday nights.

For the first few months, the gathering was small, only three to five people. But they did not give up. They knew prayer was the most powerful tool God asked them to use. Perseverance paid off. Within the next year, they began to grow. By 2016, they were averaging 15-20 people gathering to pray.

Some things can only come by prayer, Jesus taught. The people of Bangkok First believe that.

New Christians Encourage Prayer

Missionary Lisa Lehman shares this story in her own words:

The Oikios [OY-kaws] Church of the Nazarene is also located in Bangkok near the largest open university in Thailand. Pastor Panom [PAH-nohm] had invited four youths to join the worship band, wanting to connect them to the local church. One afternoon after a worship practice prayer time, one of the boys asked the pastor how he could know Jesus. As Pastor Panom answered his question, all four of the boys chose to pray in faith to receive Christ. That was a catalyst that encouraged the local congregation, primarily young adults, to become active Christlike disciple-makers. It required more prayer!

Persevering Prayer

Often, we think about prayer as if we are the ones who *decide* to pray. But prayer is God calling us. Prayer is our opportunity to respond. Sometimes we know why we have been called to pray. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes we hear about the answer. Sometimes we don't.

What if we checked in with God about how He needs us to pray as often as we check for messages on our phones? What would happen across the world if every missionary, pastor, church, every wayward person was covered by persevering prayer partners? What if we could become a church who understands what happens when we *pray without ceasing*? (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Persevering prayer isn't something we task ourselves to just by assigning specific times to pray or specific people for whom to pray. Persevering prayer is a 24/7 opening we give God. We are like volunteer firefighters involved in daily routines until God calls. Sometimes we can pray through our daily routines. Sometimes, we must stop and pray.

We need to put away the idea that persevering prayer is for the persevering few. We need to enlarge the circle of people who go the distance by listening for God's call. Nothing we ever do for missions or missionaries will ever match what God can do when we never stop praying.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Option 1—When Prayer Goes the Distance

Prepare

- Select the information you would like to use from **Fast Facts** to introduce Thailand and the capital city of Bangkok, where the stories for today's lesson originate.
- If you choose to use the **Bangkok Banner** to introduce Thailand, prepare the pages from **Handout 1** according to the introduction.
- Recruit three storytellers to share the stories from the **Lesson Information**. Prepare a copy of each story for the storytellers to review before your session.
- Make copies of the **Handout 2, How to Pray** using E. Stanley Jones's lessons on prayer.
- Optional: Arrange the technology you need to show **PowerPoint of How to Pray, Lessons on Prayer by E. Stanley Jones**.

Present

Introduce the lesson with these questions: **How do we keep on praying for missionaries we've never met in countries we've never visited? How do we persevere in prayer? Let's start with some prayer lessons from a missionary.**

- **Prayer Lessons from a Missionary**
 - Share the biographical information about E. Stanley from the **Lesson Information**.
 - Use the **Handout 2, How to Pray, Lessons from E. Stanley Jones**. Select a few questions for brief responses to highlight prayer principles from the stories.
 - Optional: Use the **PowerPoint, How to Pray, Lessons from E. Stanley Jones**.
- Use the **Bangkok Banner** suggested in **Handout 1** to introduce the country where these stories happened.
 - Follow instructions to create two banners. **Banner 1** is Bangkok's name in Thai. **Banner 2** is Bangkok's name translated.
 - Without mentioning where this country is, ask the volunteers you recruited to unroll the Thai name of Bangkok and its translation. Ask if anyone knows what capital city this might be? Tell the group it is Bangkok, the very crowded city in Thailand. Roll up the banners and put them away unless you have an easy way of leaving it where people can see them during the rest of the lesson.
 - Then, invite storytellers to present each of the stories they are prepared to share.
- **Interruption or God Calling?**

Ask: *What do you do when you are awake in the middle of the night?*

Invite the storyteller to share what happened when missionary Lisa Lehman's mother heard God, not as an interruption but as an invitation.
- **When a Child Prays**

Ask: *Do we place the same importance on a child's prayer as God does?*

Invite the storyteller to share this story. Be sure to include the story of how the prayer team found receptive people in an ice factory. Give the group a chance to share what this story emphasizes about prayer.
- **When Two or Three Gather**

Ask: *What would you do with a prayer meeting that didn't grow?*

Invite the storyteller to share this story. Give the group a chance to share what this story reminds us about prayer.
- **New Christians Encourage Prayer**

Ask: *How do new Christians encourage more prayer?*

Invite the storyteller to share this story. Give the group a chance to answer the opening question.
- **Close with a Directed Prayer**

A directed prayer gives a simple suggestion without discussion and asks people to pray for it in silence before going to the next prayer point.

Option 1—When Prayer Goes the Distance (Continued)

Here are some suggestions for directed prayer points based on today's lesson. Feel free to add or subtract to make this prayer time as personal and specific as possible for your group.

- Pray for the last missionary who spoke at your church and ask God to empower and encourage them according to their need.
- Pray that the children in your church will see prayer models that will teach them how to pray and that they will keep praying.
- Pray for the most recent tragedy in the world, that it gives missionaries a chance to share the compassion of Jesus.
- Pray that you will be more sensitive to God's invitation to pray anytime and any way.
- Pray for Thailand and the missionaries and local Christians who carry a deep burden for their cities and country.
- Ask God to invite you to pray more.

Option 2—Becoming God's Prayer Partner (for a group that likes activity)

Prepare

- Decide whether you will present **How to Pray, Lessons from E. Stanley Jones**, either by **PowerPoint** or by reproducing **Handout 2**.
- Reproduce copies of the stories you will use from the **Lesson Information**.
- Reproduce **Handout 4, Groups 1, 2, and 3 Questions**. Cut them apart so that facilitators have a copy of the questions that pertain to their group and brainstorming activity.
- Reproduce **Handout 3, Brainstorming Prayer Ideas**, one for each brainstorming team. Provide a pencil or pen for each group.
- Identify the three brainstorming groups and give people a chance to go to the group in which they are most interested. At each group station, be prepared to divide into smaller groups of 6 to 12 for the brainstorming activity.
- Recruit a facilitator for each group who asks the questions from **Handout 4**, appoints a recorder and keeps discussion going.

Present

Sometimes we treat praying for our missionaries as if it was more of a sprint than a marathon. Marathon runners need training and practice. If we become marathon prayer partners, we must train and practice as well.

Either use the **PowerPoint** of **How to Pray, Lessons from E. Stanley Jones** or **Handout 2, How to Pray, Lessons from E. Stanley Jones** to review lessons about prayer. Emphasize how the lessons help us persevere in prayer.

Share Allidia's story from **When a Child Prays** from **Lesson Information** and at least one other story that you believe will help stimulate the brainstorming activities in the small group activities. Then, explain the three brainstorming categories that will become the three groups. Small groups will brainstorm ideas about how to increase the prayer reach of your church as a part of our ongoing missions initiative.

Ask people to choose a group and point them to where each group meets. Give the groups 20 minutes to brainstorm ideas according to the instructions the facilitators from **Handout 4**. Ask the groups to be prepared to present a three-minute summary of their best ideas at the end.

Option 2—In Their Own Words (Continued)

- **Group one: Crisis Prayer Response Ideas**

Consider ideas for establishing ways to respond to world crises, national crises, and community crises with prayer.

- How would you identify a prayer team and/or prayer partners?
- How would you pray for these needs at church?
- How would you take prayer outside the walls of the church?
- How will you continue to emphasize connecting to God's heart and will?

- **Group two: Children Can Pray, too!**

Consider ideas for engaging more children in praying for missions and missionaries.

- How will you connect children to God's mission to the world?
- How could children hear from more missionaries?
- How will you make praying for missionaries a personal and child-friendly experience?
- Who needs to receive these ideas?
- What part could you play in making one or more of the ideas a reality?

- **Group three: Out of the Box Prayer**

Share what happened when a group went on a prayer walk in the story *When a Child Prays* from Lesson Information. Then, use this group time to brainstorm ideas that involve people in different ways to pray. (Ex: prayer and fasting, reminder prayer symbols, 24-hour prayer sign-up, etc.)

- How could you develop a Prayer Walk ministry group? (for families? small groups?)
- How could you develop a telephone call/text chain?
- How could you develop a variety of prayer events throughout the year?
- How might a Prayer Fair after church gather sign-ups for different kinds of prayer activities?
- What other ideas would work in your church?

After 20 minutes, ask the groups to come back together. Give each recorder a chance to give a three-minute summary, highlighting their top three ideas.

Before you end in prayer, ask participants to identify one of the **How to Pray** lessons they want to incorporate better in their life. Then, ask for other volunteers to pray sentence prayers that your group will become a persevering prayer team God will use to accomplish His mission in the world.

Option 3—Understanding Persevering Prayer (for a group that likes discussion)

Prepare

- Use **Handout 2** or **PowerPoint** version of *How to Pray*. Reproduce the **Handout** or make sure you have the technology ready for the **PowerPoint**.
- Make a copy of two to three of the most recent **Prayer Mobilization Line** prayer requests. (Visit this webpage for recent editions of the Prayer Mobilization Line.) Cut them apart so that you will have enough to divide among the small groups of two to three that will pray together at the end

Present

Use the **Handout 2**, **How to Pray** or the **PowerPoint** that shares lessons from E. Stanley Jones. Give a brief biography of E. Stanley Jones from **Praying God's Heart** from **Lesson Information**. Go through the ten lessons and use the questions for a brief discussion.

Work with the group to identify a definition for persevering prayer.

- Hint: to persevere—to persist in anything undertaken; maintain a purpose in spite of difficulty, obstacles, or discouragement; continue steadfastly. (Dictionary.com)
- Think of synonyms for the word *persevere* (e. g. persist, continue, keep going, not give up, be determined, follow something through, keep at it, be tenacious, stand firm).

Option 3—Understanding Persevering Prayer (Continued)

For the rest of the session, use any of the following questions to explore what it means to persevere in prayer in ways that cooperate with God and His mission.

- Is perseverance in prayer more about persistence or availability?
- What is the difference between focusing on what you want God to do and asking God what He wants you to do?
- Which drives our prayer the most: the degree of crisis or the degree of connection we have with the person who needs prayer? What should drive our prayer the most?
- How does God use perseverance and availability?
- E. Stanley Jones talks about using an interruption as an invitation to pray the interruption? What does that mean?
- Have you ever been aware that God was calling you to pray at a specific time? What was the result?
- What would you say to someone who said they never experienced a nudge from God to pray for anything?
- Does your church make sure children meet and hear missionaries when they visit? Why is that important?
- How do you teach children to recognize how God invites them to pray?
- What can we learn from children's prayers?
- How do you nurture anyone who demonstrates a sensitivity to, and desire for prayer?
- What ways could you make prayer a central part of the way you support God's mission to the world?
- What needs to grow stronger in your journey to become a persevering prayer partner with God?

Close your session by dividing into groups of two to three to pray.

- Ask God to help you learn what it means to be God's persevering prayer partner.
- Pray for Thailand and the dedicated missionaries and national leaders there.
- Pray for the needs shared in **The Prayer Mobilization Line**.

RESOURCES ("handy helps" for the leader)

- **Website**
 - www.worldscapitalcities.com/capital-facts-for-bangkok-thailand
 - www.bangkok.com/bangkoks-world-records.htm
 - Prayer Mobilization Line: www.bit.ly/PML-Archive
 - Southeast Asia Regional Website: www.asiapacificnazarene.org/fields/southeast-asia
 - Thai Recipes: www.thaitable.com/thai/recipe/satay
- **Videos**
 - See the video, *Persevering Prayer*, at www.nazarene.org/nmi/curriculum.
- **Books**
 - Jones, E. Stanley. *How to Pray* [Kindle]. Ravenio Books, 2015. www.amazon.com
- **PowerPoint**
 - See the PowerPoint presentation by clicking here.

ACT ON IT (practical ideas for personal involvement)

- What one or two lessons or ideas about prayer from today's lesson could you incorporate immediately? Do you need an accountability partner to help you persevere?
- Post a picture of your Links missionary on your missions bulletin board or some other prominent place. Make a prayer rope out of a flexible clothesline rope or something similar. Add a poster that asks people to pray and tie a knot on the rope. Add as many new ropes as necessary. At the end of the month, write the missionary and tell them how many knots of prayer were collected. Continue the practice.
- Do you have prayer cards from missionaries you have heard at your church or on the district? Duplicate them and recruit individuals and families to pray for that missionary for the rest of the year. Ask for reports occasionally at subsequent mission meetings. What has persistent prayer taught them?
- Did you learn a new idea or approach to prayer because of today's lesson? What steps could you take to make it a reality?

RECIPES

A Thai meal always includes something salty, sweet, sour, spicy. See if your group can identify these components in the recipes below.

Pork Satay

Ingredients:

- Bamboo skewers
- ½ cup (125 milliliters) coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons (12.6 grams) curry powder
- 1 pound (453.59 grams) boneless pork steak or cutlets
- 1 teaspoon (5.69 grams) salt
- 1 teaspoon (4.17 grams) sugar

Preparation:

1. Soak the bamboo skewers in water for at least 30 minutes to protect them from burning on the grill.
2. Mix coconut milk, curry powder, salt, and sugar for a marinade.
3. Cut pork in ¼ inch (.635 centimeter) thick strips of 2 to 3 inches (5–7.62 centimeters) for tasting size.
4. Skewer pork strips, threading them on skewers. For moister meat, squeeze as much meat on each skewer as possible, leaving room to cut sections apart for tasting size.
5. Marinate skewered pork for at least 30 minutes to an hour.
6. Grill skewered pork over medium (350 degrees F; 180 degrees C) to medium-high (400 degrees F; 200 degrees C) heat and cook without burning.
7. Use kitchen shears to cut through skewers into small tastes.

Serve with peanut dipping sauce.

(Recipes continue on next page)

(Recipes continued)

Peanut Sauce

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (187.5 milliliters) coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon (6.3 grams) red curry paste (available in most grocery stores with Asian cooking ingredients)
- 2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) fish sauce (can be replaced with 2 tablespoons [29 milliliters] soy sauce)
- 2-3 tablespoons (22.48–33.71 grams) chunky, peanut butter, fresh ground, if possible
- 3 tablespoons (35.93 grams) sugar

Preparation:

1. Pour coconut milk in a saucepan and heat on medium (350 degrees F; 180 degrees C).
2. Stir in curry paste, breaking it into small pieces and mix. When the red oil from paste starts collecting on the surface, add peanut butter and the rest of the ingredients. If it is too thick, thin with water.

Serve pork satay and dipping sauce with cucumber salad.

Cucumber Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 cucumber, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 1 sliced hot or medium hot pepper, *Optional*
- 2 thinly sliced shallots
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (47.91 grams) sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (80 milliliters) vinegar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (80 milliliters) water

Preparation:

3. Place all ingredients in a serving bowl.
4. Chill before serving.

The Longest Name in the World

Handout 1

Banner 1: Bangkok's name in Thai

Instructions: Cut apart each line as strips. Tape them together to make one long strip/banner. Roll it up. Recruit as many people as necessary to unroll and hold it high. Consider practicing once.

Krung Thep

Mahanakhon

Amon

Rattanakosin

Mahinthara

Yuthaya Mahadilok

Phop Nopparat

Ratchathani

Burirom

Udomratchaniwet

Mahasathan Amon

Piman Awatan

Sathit

Sakkathattiya

Witsanukam Prasit

The Longest Name in the World

Handout 1

Banner 2: English Translation of Bangkok's Name

Instructions: Cut apart each line as strips. Tape them together to make one long strip/banner. Roll it up. Recruit as many people as necessary to unroll and hold it high. Consider practicing once.

City of angels,

Great city of

Immortals,

Magnificent City

of the Nine Gems,

Seat of the King,

City of Royal

Palaces,

Home of Gods

Incarnate,

Erected by

Visvakarman at

Indra's Behest.

How to Pray

Lessons from E. Stanley Jones²

Handout 2 (Options 1, 2, and 3)

1. Lord, teach me to pray.

How could this question help you learn prayer lessons from Jesus?

2. The universe is an open universe . . . open to initiative and creative faith.

What does it mean that the universe is “open” to initiative and faith?

3. Prayer is not only the refuge of the weak; it is the reinforcement of the strong.

How does prayer make as big a difference for the weak as for the strong?

4. Prayer is not bending God to my will, but it is a bringing of my will into conformity with God’s will.

How does “bending God to my will” change what prayer was meant to accomplish?

5. Prayer is not an occasional exercise; it is a life attitude.

What does prayer look like when it is a life attitude?

6. Prayer is cooperation with God.

Why should cooperation with God be our goal in prayer?

7. Prayer is fundamentally surrender.

Why is surrender the only way to get God’s best?

8. The essence of prayer is in right relationship with God.

If prayer is about a relationship with God, what strengthens our prayer the best?

9. Use an interruption as an invitation to pray.

How do you pray an interruption?

10. Talk with God, not to Him.

What is the difference between talking with or talking to God?

² Adapted from E. Stanley Jones, *How to Pray*. Ravenio Books, 2015. Kindle: pp. 4-17

Brainstorming Group Questions

Handout 4 (Option 2)

Group one: Crisis Prayer Response Ideas

Consider ideas for establishing ways to respond to world crises, national crises, and community crises with prayer.

- How would you identify a prayer team and/or prayer partners?
- How would you pray for these needs at church?
- How would you take prayer outside the walls of the church?
- How will you continue to emphasize connecting to God's heart and will?

Group two: Children Can Pray, too!

Consider ideas for engaging more children in praying for missions and missionaries.

- How will you connect children to God's mission to the world?
- How could children hear from more missionaries?
- How will you make praying for missionaries a personal and child-friendly experience?
- Who needs to receive these ideas?
- What part could you play in making one or more of the ideas a reality?

Group three: Out of the Box Prayer

Share what happened when a group went on a prayer walk in the story **When a Child Prays** from **Lesson Information**. Then, use this group time to brainstorm different ways to get people praying. (Ex: prayer walks, prayer call alarms set on your phone, prayer and fasting, reminder prayer symbols, 24-hour prayer sign-up, etc.)

- How could you develop a Prayer Walk ministry group? (for families? small groups?)
- How could you develop a telephone call/text chain?
- How could you develop a variety of prayer events throughout the year?
- How might a Prayer Fair after church gather sign-ups for different kinds of prayer activities?
- What other ideas would work in your church?

10

Soul Searching

by Cheryl Crouch

LESSON PURPOSE

To consider how we can become participants in searching for the lost.

SCRIPTURE: “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:8-10)

FAST FACTS

- While more people adhere to Christianity than to any other single religion, the ratio of Christians to non-Christians in 2018 was 2,506,835,000 to 5,040,696,000 or roughly 1 Christian to 2 non-Christians. (Belief Systems in 2018) [Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary]
- The percentage of Christians to non-Christians in the 10/40 window is less than 1 in 10. (The Joshua Project)
- In 2018, we welcomed 146,988 believers into membership as new Nazarenes, 222,511 decisions were made to follow Christ, and 97,566 Nazarenes were baptized. (Annual report of the Board of General Superintendents to the 96th General Board, 24 February 2019.)
- Research in 2018 revealed that only 2/3 of Christians who have shared their faith agree that “Every Christian has a responsibility to share their faith.” (www.barna.com/research/sharing-faith-increasingly-optional-christians)
- The percentage of people who need to know Christ in order to spend eternity with God is 100%.

LESSON INFORMATION

Introduction

For those who have known Christ a long time, a dangerous lethargy can develop. We can forget what it means to be lost and as a result, lose the urgency to seek the lost. “Soul searching” has, therefore, two components: an inward searching of our own souls in order to discover if we have within us the drive to look outward and search for souls awaiting redemption.

1. Remembering:

As the sun set, the vans carrying our mission team pulled up to a large indoor market in India. “Be back in 45 minutes!” announced our leader. So much pressure! I had a bag of foreign currency, no knowledge of the language, and a list of requests from people back home – plus a desire to locate thoughtful trinkets for our district’s local NMI presidents.

Our leader instructed us to stay near our national guides. I understood why! The market consisted of a complex series of stalls on various floors. As we squeezed between people in the crowded aisles, we worked our way deeper and deeper until we must have been underground. At every turn, enthusiastic sales people urged us to purchase colorful clothes, intricate sculptures, or sparkling jewelry. I paused under a dangling lightbulb to inspect some tiny elephants carved from stone. The price was right – but could 100 of them survive the 13-hour flight in my suitcase? I decided to risk it. My team members chose saris and jewelry in adjacent stalls, so I knew I had time. But as the vendor wrapped the last elephant, I looked for my guide. He wasn’t there. Neither were any of my teammates.

My cell phone didn’t work here. I didn’t know the language. I had no idea how to connect with my team or find my way out of the labyrinth without them. I

envisioned them climbing onto the bus and realizing I'd been left behind. Even then, what could they possibly do? Unaware of my dilemma, shopkeepers continued to crowd me, offering prices "only for you, only today." There was nothing they could have shown me, at any price, that mattered. In that sea of hundreds or thousands of people, I felt terrifyingly alone. I was lost.

Heart pounding, I grabbed my bags of elephants and began to push through the people. A few turns later, I saw my team and our guide! Happily examining merchandise, they'd continued to move from stall to stall. Relief flooded my being as I re-joined them. I didn't make any more purchases; instead, I kept my focus on our guide. (And in case you wondered, most of the elephants made it home unbroken.)

We all have been lost. It is a horrible feeling, equaled in intensity only by the overwhelming joy of being found. If this is true in the human, physical sense, how much more is it true in the spiritual? Take time to reflect on how lost you were before Christ's love broke in and redeemed you! Let that memory compel you to seek others who have not yet met the Lord.

There is good news. Lostness is not God's plan. God's desire is that we be found. And as we see in the story of the prodigal son, God isn't passively waiting for us. He is searching for us! He comes running when we are still "a long way off"!

2. Researching & Reaching Out:

Beyond remembering your own salvation, what can you do to develop your sensitivity to the lost? Reading missionary stories is a good way to be reminded of the value of souls. Celebrating God's work in the world can stir your own desire to be part of that work! You might be surprised to discover the role He has for you to play.

Reaching out is also powerful. Young people from a Creative Access Area attend a school in the United States which is near one of our Nazarene churches. A handful of church members began to befriend these young people. As the group grew, an 80-year-old woman named Barbara became interested in helping. For most of her life, Barbara had been a faithful church attendee. But something new happened in Barbara. As she cooked for and played games with these young people from a very different culture, she began to love them. And as her love grew, so did a deep concern for their souls. Through tears, Barbara confessed, "I almost can't stand it. It hurts so much! I want them to know Christ so we'll be together in heaven." Barbara also shared, however, that she has never felt so alive. She said her life before this ministry seems pale in comparison to the energy she now has. Through the movement of the Holy Spirit, Barbara and her friends have led over 100 of these young people (so far!) to Christ. As the new converts complete their studies, they return to their home nation as ambassadors for the King of Kings!

3. Relationship:

As Barbara's story illustrates, it isn't enough to just find lost people! Many of us know where they are... and they are all around us. We must go a step further and invite them into a relationship. As we offer genuine friendship, it opens the way for introducing them to the "friend who sticks closer than a brother."

Sometimes, inviting one person into relationship with Christ can have surprising consequences. During 2018, missionary Karla Deuel [DOO-el] had an opportunity to receive training on reaching Muslims. There aren't many Muslims in the highlands of Papua New Guinea [PAH-pwah NOO GI-nee] where Karla and her husband Tim, serve, but during the last decade the faith has spread around the coast until there are about 30,000 Muslims in PNG. Even though the odds of Karla encountering a Muslim were slim, she felt God's promptings to be prepared. She went through the training and even purchased a book.

A week later, a Muslim imam (holy man) walked onto the Kudjip [KOOO-jip] mission station and asked if someone could tell him how to become a Christian. Karla took him through each prayer of denunciation in her new book, and he wept and held his hands above his head as he declared, "My shackles are falling off! I am being set free!" Within a week, he asked if he could show the *JESUS* film to the leader above him. With some hesitation, our Nazarene missionaries agreed. They prayed as this new believer, at great risk to himself, showed the film and shared his testimony. The leader and his entire family came to Christ! That man next showed the *JESUS* film to the leader above him, who also became a believer! This pattern continued until the top leader over all 30,000 Muslims in Papua New Guinea became a Christian. This imam received an email from leadership outside the country declaring Papua New Guinea a lost cause for the Muslim faith. Our PNG churches are preparing to receive many converts into their church families.

When you allow God to use you to search for souls, you are joining Him in His eternal purposes!

4. Roadblocks:

Be careful of prejudice and pride, which can blind you to those in need of salvation. As Dr. Gustavo [goo-STAH-voh] Crocker [KRAH-kuhr], general superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene, said: "The Good News is for everyone." As you search your soul, ask God to reveal anything that makes you consider someone unworthy. Let the reminder of your own desperate need of salvation serve as an impetus for loving "as He first loved us."

We can also be stymied by focusing on our own shortcomings. Thankfully, in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul reminds us we are part of a body. There are so many different roles to play within a church – prayer, outreach, welcoming, teaching, and even cleaning and mowing all contribute to creating an atmosphere where people experience a tiny glimpse of heaven here on earth. Stop focusing on what you aren't good at and instead do what you can!

In a similar way, through missions, we have many opportunities to see souls saved. Never forget that prayer and participation in the World Evangelism Fund connect us with the great work God is doing through the Church of the Nazarene – sending, praying, giving, and going.

Through remembering our own salvation, intentionally preparing and building relationships, and purposing to overcome road blocks, we can become true soul seekers who impact eternity!

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Option 1—It is lost!

Prepare

Make copies of the “Soul Searching Word Search” (in the handouts section at end of the lesson) for participants to complete before or after the lesson.

Also, prepare copies of the four sections of the lesson content for readers during the presentation.

Present

Opening attention-grabber: Come to the podium with a stack of papers. Begin to sift through them, as if you are searching for one particular sheet and cannot find it. Occasionally murmur, “Oh, dear!” and “I’m so sorry.” Expand your search by moving to the front row of seats and looking through any books and papers you find there. Finally, go to the back of the platform and pull a globe (or world map, if you do not have a globe) from behind a chair. Say, “Here it is! The world. It was lost.”

Transition: Say, “**During today’s lesson we will consider how we can become participants in searching for the lost.**”

Invite four strong readers, ideally of different age groups, to read the four sections of the lesson. Alternately, instead of having someone read the “**1. Remembering**” section, ask someone to share his or her own experience with being physically lost and how it felt to be found. Follow up with someone who is comfortable sharing about a time they were spiritually lost and how it felt to be found.

- After reading “**2. Researching & Reaching Out,**” make this year’s missions books available. Reading missionary stories is a great way to stir our souls for the lost. Point attendees to the “Stories” videos on the Nazarene Media Library (medialibrary.nazarene.org or www.nazarene.org/stories).
- After reading “**3. Relationship,**” encourage each attendee to think of one person who is lost, and to consider three action steps toward strengthening a relationship with that person.
- After reading “**4. Roadblocks,**” ask participants to consider which roadblocks are most likely to keep them from searching for souls: Pride? Prejudice? Shortcomings?
- Ask participants how being a part of NMI allows us to participate in soul searching. (Possible answers: prayer for missionaries, prayer for the lost, giving to World Evangelism Fund, mentoring future missionaries...)
- Say, “**I invite you to celebrate the hundreds of thousands of souls who have been redeemed – almost a quarter of a million in 2018 alone – largely because of the mission efforts of the Church of the Nazarene!**”
- Close with prayer that God will help us genuinely search our own souls, to see if we have within us the desire to search for souls. Ask God to grow that desire in each attendee.

LESSON OPTION: Compare searching for souls to panning for gold. Set up an area where children can practice “panning” with a pie pan, sand, and a tub of water.

Option 2—Egg Hunt! (for a group that likes activity)

Prepare

Invite young people to help you prepare this activity!

You will need candy and plastic Easter eggs. Be sure you have enough eggs for at least one per participant. Copy and cut apart the “Fast Facts,” scripture, and introduction. Tuck one fact or verse inside separate eggs in addition to the candy. In four eggs, place a number (1, 2, 3, or 4) in addition to the candy. These numbers will correspond to the four sections of the lesson.

Hint: put the facts, scripture, and numbers in the same color eggs and make these easier to find so no portions of the lesson are left out!

Hide the eggs inside or outside, depending on the weather and the members of your group.

Present

Open with, **“Remember hunting for Easter eggs? There were usually some eggs out in the open which were easy to spot – but there was a special thrill when you searched and found one which was well hidden. Today, it isn’t Easter, but we’re going to have an egg hunt!”**

Instruct participants where to search and (depending on how many eggs you’ve hidden) how many eggs they are allowed to collect. Consider asking children to find eggs for older attendees.

After the eggs have been found, gather in your meeting place. Invite those who found eggs with text to either come forward and read or pass them to a willing reader. (In advance, ask strong readers to be prepared to read.) Have them read in this order: Fast Facts, Scripture, Introduction.

Transition with: **“We enjoy the challenge of searching for eggs – partly because of the prize we hope to find. We search for souls because there is NO greater reward than seeing a lost soul come to Christ.”**

LESSON OPTION: Instead of hiding eggs, hide items that correspond to lesson points or hide coins to tie in with the scripture from Luke. Invite children to search for the items, and teens to read the sections of the lesson represented.

Option 3—Eternity in Time (for a group that likes discussion)

Prepare

Have a video projector set up, ready to show the Rope Illustration video.

Also, prepare copies of the four sections of the lesson content for readers during the presentation.

Present

Opening attention-grabber: show the Rope Illustration (graphic style) video (see link under resources.) This clip is a powerful 2-minute, 22-second reminder of eternity. Alternatively, reenact this illustration with your own long rope. Put a small piece of colored tape on one end of a long rope. Put the rope in a deep basket or container. Pull out the end with the tape and point to the colored section. Say, “This rope represents our existence, and this tiny colored portion stands for our time on earth.” Begin to pull rope from the basket slowly as you speak. Say, “The rest of this rope represents eternity. It goes on and on, and yet we spend so much of our energy focusing only on this short amount of time we live on earth.”

Transition: Say, **“Eternity is a long time. Where people spend eternity matters! During today’s lesson, we will consider how we can become participants in searching for the lost, so they may enjoy lives with Christ now and then spend eternity in heaven. We will begin by remembering.”**

- In advance, ask someone to share his or her own experience with being physically lost and how it felt to be found. If you know someone who has been lost while overseas, even better!
- Ask: **“Who else remembers being lost, or losing a child?”** Allow participants to share with the whole group, or in small groups.

(Continued on next page)

Option 3—Eternity in Time (Continued)

- Follow up with someone who is comfortable sharing about a time they were spiritually lost and how it felt to be found. Ask: **“Is there anyone else who is comfortable sharing about your salvation?”**
- Close this section by reading the final section of “Remembering” from “We have all been lost”... to “a long way off”!
- Ask, **“Beyond remembering your own salvation, what can you do to develop your sensitivity to the lost?”** (Possible answers: reading missions books and missions material, being intentional about getting to know and reaching out to others – even those who differ from us.)
- After reading **“2. Researching & Reaching Out,”** ask: **“Can you think of a time you read a book or story which increased your concern for people’s souls?”** Allow sharing. Then ask, **“Share about a time you got to know someone unlike you.”**
- After reading **“3. Relationship,”** about the Deuels’ ministry in Papua New Guinea, ask: **“How can leading one person to Christ impact many lives?”**
- After reading **“4. Roadblocks,”** say: **“The lesson author suggests pride, prejudice, or even worry over our own shortcomings can hold us back from searching for souls. In your opinion, which of these is most likely to get in the way?”** After discussion, ask, **“How does being a part of NMI allow us to participate in soul searching?”** (Possible answers: prayer for missionaries, prayer for the lost, giving to World Evangelism Fund, mentoring future missionaries...)
- Remind participants of the rope illustration, and how long eternity is. Say, **“I invite you to celebrate the hundreds of thousands of eternities - 222,511 in 2018 alone - which have been forever changed largely because of the mission efforts of the Church of the Nazarene!”**
- Close with prayer that God would help those present actively engage in connecting people with Christ by being fully engaged in NMI and by reaching out to those around them.

ACT ON IT (practical ideas for personal involvement)

1. Pray for Nazarene missionaries and Nazarenes everywhere, that God will help them actively seek opportunities to lead people to Christ.
2. Consider giving an extra gift to the World Evangelism Fund and pray that God will use it to usher many new believers into His Kingdom.
3. Brainstorm. Are there people nearby who are not like you? How can your church intentionally reach out and build relationships in order to show the love of Christ?

Soul Searching Word Search Solution

U	I	T	V	O	P	U	K	H	A	R	I	B	S	L
K	L	B	U	Y	Z	W	P	W	O	C	D	Q	K	M
H	D	J	H	O	T	G	O	F	Y	D	N	B	C	T
K	U	D	O	E	G	Z	E	R	J	O	H	C	O	T
W	Q	Q	W	R	B	N	C	H	I	Y	V	L	L	S
S	P	I	H	S	N	O	I	T	A	L	E	R	B	S
R	O	F	O	T	P	W	A	H	H	S	O	A	D	E
J	E	H	T	R	Z	V	A	W	C	Q	T	X	A	T
X	V	S	A	B	L	I	Z	Y	Y	A	J	D	O	E
C	A	Y	E	A	R	E	M	E	M	B	E	R	R	R
U	E	C	S	A	V	E	G	X	V	D	Z	R	B	N
R	L	D	Q	T	R	B	V	I	K	Z	Q	H	P	I
H	C	G	F	I	N	C	L	O	Y	B	S	B	Q	T
F	E	W	X	A	C	Z	H	O	W	B	R	W	J	Y
T	F	O	I	V	M	W	Q	R	Y	Q	W	N	T	G

RESOURCES (“handy helps” for the leader)

• Videos

- Church of the Nazarene. “From Darkness to Light.” *Stories*, Volume 1, 2018. This video tells the story of Yana (Central Asia) who lived apart from God until she overheard a conversation on a bus that changed the course of her life forever. www.nazarene.org/stories-archives
- Media Library. This is a link to the Nazarene Media site. Scroll down to “Stories” to find many excellent videos about missions. www.bit.ly/MediaLibrary-Stories
- Chan, Francis. “The Rope Illustration.” This video uses a rope to remind us about the length of eternity. Length: 2 minutes, 23 seconds. www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMbbVR88kd0
- See the video, *Soul Searching*, at www.nazarene.org/nmi/curriculum.

• Other Resources

- Bullivant, Stephen. “Europe’s Young Adults and Religion: Findings from the European Social Survey (2014-16) to inform the 2018 Synod of Bishops.” Published 22 March 2018. This study reveals how increasingly secular Europe is becoming. www.bit.ly/europe-young-people-report-pdf
- Barna Group. “Sharing Faith Is Increasingly Optional to Christians.” Posted 15 May 2018. Barna. This research shows that Christians are much less likely to share their faith than they were ten years ago. www.barna.com/research/sharing-faith-increasingly-optional-christians

RECIPES

Note: Because bananas grow in abundance on the Kudjip Mission Station in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (where Karla Deuel led the Muslim imam to Christ), this recipe is a favorite with missionaries serving there!

Banana Salad

Sauce

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons (32 grams) peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon (8 grams) flour
- 1 tablespoon (14 grams) butter
- 1 egg
- ½ cup (125 milliliters) hot water
- 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) vinegar
- 1 cup (198 grams) firmly packed brown sugar

Preparation:

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium saucepan.
2. Over medium-high heat, cook until thick and smooth, stirring often.
3. Cool and add to quartered or sliced bananas. (Dressing can be refrigerated in a covered container until ready to use.)

SOUL SEARCHING WORD SEARCH!

U I T V O P U K H A R I B S L
K L B U Y Z W P W O C D Q K M
H D J H O T G O F Y D N B C T
K U D O E G Z E R J O H C O T
W Q Q W R B N C H I Y V L L S
S P I H S N O I T A L E R B S
R O F O T P W A H H S O A D E
J E H T R Z V A W C Q T X A T
X V S A B L I Z Y Y A J D O E
C A Y E A R E M E M B E R R R
U E C S A V E G X V D Z R B N
R L D Q T R B V I K Z Q H P I
H C G F I N C L O Y B S B Q T
F E W X A C Z H O W B R W J Y
T F O I V M W Q R Y Q W N T G

ETERNITY

PRAYER

REACHING-OUT

RELATIONSHIPS

REMEMBER

RESEARCH

ROADBLOCKS

SALVATION

WEF



11

Moving from “If Only...” to “Nevertheless” by Cheryl Crouch

LESSON PURPOSE

That participants would refuse to allow excuses to hinder them from following God’s call.

SCRIPTURE: I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20, NIV)

FAST FACTS

- Percentage of currently serving Nazarene missionaries that are 65 years of age or older—1%
- Percentage of current Nazarene missionaries who are not from North America—40%

LESSON INFORMATION

Introduction

This lesson addresses the tension that exists between our desire to follow God’s call and our hesitation to follow, which comes from our awareness of our own shortcomings or other roadblocks.

“If only”

In Exodus 4, God calls Moses to a specific task, and Moses responds by listing his shortcomings.

Moses said to the LORD, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”

The LORD said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

Poor Moses. It is hard not to feel a little embarrassed for him during this encounter with the Almighty God. And yet, don’t we sometimes respond the same way? We question God’s call on our lives, responding with “if only” statements.

If only I had... (fill in the blank - more money, more time, wealthier connections)

or

If only I were... (fill in the blank - more talented, better educated, younger, older)

That’s how Moses responded, and God was not impressed. God reminded Moses to shift his focus off himself and onto the One Who made him. And Moses is not the only example in the Bible. Again, and again, scripture drives us to choose confidence in the God who calls, the God who has a great heart for the world He created.

As Holocaust prison camp survivor Corrie ten Boom said, “If you look at the world, you’ll be distressed. If you look within, you’ll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you’ll be at rest.”

So how do we stop living in the “if only” and live in the “nevertheless”? Paul discovered the secret. In the King James version, Galatians 2:20 reads, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Living in the “nevertheless” means we refuse to be held back or dragged down by whatever it is that is not right; we choose instead to look up to the One who IS right. We recognize that He is in us and lives through us.

“Nevertheless”

The story of Nazarene missions is filled with people who live in the “nevertheless.”

The **McPhersons** were not wealthy. Sam served as the custodian for his church, Susan was a nurse, and they had three young children. They felt God calling them to go on a Work & Witness trip to Samoa (formerly Western Samoa). Not long before the trip,

Sam required back surgery, which left him unable to travel, so the couple decided their 10-year-old daughter would take his place. With a husband who was disabled and unable to work, and three young children to provide for, the doubts began. If only Sam were in good health... If only Sam could work... How could Susan, on her own, make enough money for both the trip and the family's regular expenses?

Nevertheless, they turned from their questions to the One Who is the answer. God provided the funds. Susan said, "That trip was an eye-opener into missions and the ability of 'ordinary' people to help on the mission field. It is also where our 10-year-old received her call to missions."

Since that first trip, the McPhersons have taken 22 mission trips, many of them with their children (who are now grown and involved in ministry). Susan commented about living in the "nevertheless": "Since our first trip, I have never questioned how we are to afford to take a mission trip. I have trusted God to provide. Where God calls, God provides. It's just that simple."

Brookelyn was 14 when she went on her first international mission trip. Her heart soared! She loved serving cross-culturally. After the trip, though, she felt stymied and frustrated. She longed to be a missionary but could not see a way to answer the call. If only she were older... If only she had already finished college...

Nevertheless, she turned her eyes on the One Who placed the desire in her heart. He directed her to serve in the Spanish-speaking congregation of her local church. There, she worked with people from many nations. Still only 14 years of age with many years of schooling ahead, she was able to minister cross-culturally!

In 2017, the **Campbell-Whites** were called to serve in Southeast Asia. Their "if only" thoughts were many. If only our kids were a little older... If only we knew the language... If only the church we are leaving behind was stronger... If only we were better educated and prepared...

Nevertheless, they focused on the One Who made them. Ultimately, it came down to obeying. God enabled them to work through the challenges of uprooting their high schooler and leaving a son and daughter behind for college. God is helping them learn a new language and a new culture, and as they walk in obedience, He is blessing their work.

John was single when he applied to be a missionary for the Church of the Nazarene. He was initially told that the church would not send a single male to the field. It would have been easy, based on this rejection, to turn his back on God's call. If only the church had chosen him... If only they could see what he had to offer...

Nevertheless, he looked to the God who had called him. He worked faithfully until doors opened and ended up spending 38 years as a Nazarene missionary!

Wow! It is beautiful when people get over or around the hurdles and live in the "nevertheless." Often, however, we discover that right in the middle of our "nevertheless" scenarios, new "if only" thoughts arise. Missionaries who have overcome tremendous struggles to get to the field are often discouraged to find new struggles awaiting them. The NMI website encourages us:

Remember your missionaries throughout the year in prayer. Many face troubled times in the places in which they serve. They seek to be peacemakers and agents of transformation. They need your support through intercession.

The 2019 Prayer Guide for the World Week of Prayer suggests this prayer:

We praise you for the mission to which you have called the church, and for each who has answered a specific call to 'go and serve' in places, and among people, where grace is needed and where lives are broken. Breathe peace in the world, by your Holy Spirit, and through your faithful servants.

May God help our missionaries – and us! – to continually turn away from "if only" excuses and run boldly, through the power of God, into the power of "nevertheless!"

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Option 1—Refusing to be Held Back

Prepare

- Make a copy of the lesson material and divide it to distribute to different readers.
- Recruit guest readers. Ideally, choose a woman, a young married couple, a young teen, a middle-aged couple, and a man. Give each reader the portion of the lesson which he or she will read.
- Make copies of the **Moving from “If only” to “Nevertheless”** sheet (handout found at the end of the lesson).
- Choose a powerful closing video from the recommended options.

Present

- Introduce the lesson by reading the beginning of the “Nevertheless” section. Invite your recruits to read each of the scenarios – the young married couple will read about the McPhersons, the young teen will read about Brookelyn, the middle-aged couple will read about the Campbell-Whites, and the man will read about John. Close this portion of the lesson by reading the section about prayer.
- Distribute the **Moving from “If only” to “Nevertheless”** sheet (handout found at the end of the lesson). Ask participants to fill out the first half with reasons they have heard (or even used!) for being unable to follow God’s call. Next, have them trade papers with the person sitting next to them. Allow time for each person to create “Nevertheless” answers to the situations posed. For example, if someone writes, “If only... I had more money” his or her partner might counter with “Nevertheless... seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.” (Luke 12:31)
- After the group has finished the handouts, allow them to share a few answers with the larger group if they desire.
- Closing illustration: Show a video clip of a football team running through a banner or a runner breaking the string at the finish line of the race (see resources for examples). Point out that while the banner or string looks like an obstacle, it actually serves as a symbol of victory – of overcoming. Encourage your group to ask God to help them view perceived obstacles as something to push through in order to achieve victory.
- Conclude with prayer that God will help us move past whatever might hold us back from following His call.

Option 2—Me, Lord? (for a group that likes activity)

Prepare

- Recruit 3 actors for the dramatic reading from Exodus 4 (see handout at the end of the lesson).
- Copy the script for each actor.
- Recruit various readers to present the lesson information.
- Copy and divide the lesson material for each presenter.
- Set up a simple obstacle course. Label the starting point, “Choosing to obey,” and the ending point, “God’s will.” Place a few chairs or boxes in the way of the direct path.
- Choose children, teens, or energetic older participants who would be willing to try the obstacle course. This is a great opportunity to involve all age groups!
- Have a stack of paper, a few markers, and a stopwatch (one on a phone will work) available.

Present

- Open with the dramatic reading from Exodus 4 (see handout at the end of the lesson).
- Invite various readers to present the information from the “Nevertheless” section of the lesson.
- Follow the reading with the obstacle course.
- Provide paper and markers, and invite older participants (or any who cannot run) to label the obstacles with different “If only” obstacles mentioned in the lesson (age, finances, education, etc.) Choose your runners and assign each runner a “home church” – a group of those who won’t be running but will offer encouragement and support.

Option 2—Me, Lord? (Continued)

- Use a stopwatch or phone to time each runner.
- Tell “home church” groups to loudly cheer their runners! Extra-engaged team members might even remove a few roadblocks to help their runner succeed.
- Afterward, offer the winner a prize. Interview the runners about any frustrations caused by the roadblocks and how it felt to be cheered on by their team members.
- Give team members an opportunity to speak about how this activity reminds us that important roles in missions include both going and sending.
- Ask, **“How can we, as members of NMI, encourage missionaries who are encountering roadblocks either as they prepare to go or after they reach the field?”** (Suggestions: praying, communicating, giving.)
- Prayer: If any in your group feel called to missions, end by gathering around to lay hands on them and pray that they will live in the “nevertheless” of trusting and following God.

Option 3—Road map (for a group that likes discussion)

Prepare

- Gather materials appropriate for a road crew worker, such as a reflective vest, hard hat, and “Road Work Ahead” sign made from poster board (see handout at the end of the lesson).
- Recruit readers to help present lesson material. Give them copies in advance.
- Recruit discussion leaders if you plan to break into groups for discussion. Copy the questions (in the lesson below) for the discussion leaders.

Present

- Open with an attention-grabber: Enter dressed as a road crew worker with your “Road Work Ahead” sign made from poster board (see handout at the end of the lesson).
- Say, **“Isn’t it frustrating when you’re headed somewhere, and you run into road construction? You had your path planned out, but suddenly you find yourself maneuvering through a detour. Sometimes, this situation happens in life! We hear God’s call and start on the journey, only to be confronted by roadblocks. Others might erect the roadblocks, or they might arise from our own fears and concerns. Often, we express them as, ‘If only...’ Today we’re going to talk about how moving from ‘If only’ to ‘nevertheless’ is a roadmap to joy.”**
- Have someone read the opening **“If only”** section. After reading, either ask the following questions of the whole group or break into smaller groups (ideally of mixed ages) and assign a discussion leader for each group.
 - “If Only” Discussion questions –
 - Do you most closely identify with Moses (“who, me?!?!”) or Paul (“nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”) from these portions of scripture?
 - Have you ever felt like God called you to something specific? If so, what was it?
 - What were/are your “if only” thoughts?
- Have someone read the **“Nevertheless”** section. After reading, either ask the following questions of the whole group or break into smaller groups (ideally of mixed ages) and assign a discussion leader for each group.
 - “Nevertheless” Discussion questions –
 - Who have you known who let God be bigger than their circumstances? How did God use them?
 - How can you join what God is doing despite your circumstances – “nevertheless”?
- Close with prayer for our missionaries and for us, that we would move from “if only” to “nevertheless.”

ACT ON IT (practical ideas for personal involvement)

- **Pray:** If they have not already done so, encourage participants to sign up for the Prayer Mobilization Line at www.nazarene.org/nmi/prayer. This weekly email will remind them to pray for our missionaries as they face “if only” situations.
- **Support:** Identify anyone in your group who hears God’s call to missions. List action steps you can take to help this person (or these people) live in the “nevertheless.” If there are no people in your group, find out if there is someone from your area or district you can support.
- **Commit:** On a strip of paper, ask each member to write down an “if only” that is holding him or her back from fully following God’s call. Invite participants to rip up the sheet (or burn it, if you have a large pot you can safely drop the papers into, being cautious of flying embers) as a tangible symbol of moving into the “nevertheless.”

RESOURCES (“handy helps” for the leader)

- **Videos**
 - **Finish Line:** From the 1981 Hugh Hudson film Chariots of Fire with Ben Cross, this video shows the dramatic finish to the main character’s race. Published: 6 January, 2014. Length: 1 minute, 11 seconds. www.youtube.com/watch?v=pt3GvTVwVY0
 - **SCHS Football Team Runs Through Banner:** This video shows a high school football team running through a spirit banner. Published: 12 November, 2014. www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_sCDgaLwSI
 - **Campbell-Whites “If Only”:** In this fun, creative video the Campbell-Whites address some of their “if only” issues. While they have approved it for showing in churches, they ask that you not post on social media due to their links to Creative Access Areas. Length: 3 minutes, 10 seconds. www.bit.ly/Campbell-Whites-If-Only
 - See the video, *Moving from “If Only...” to “Nevertheless”*, at www.nazarene.org/nmi/curriculum.
- **Other Resources**
 - **Prayer Resources:** Resources to aid in your prayer for missionaries: www.nazarene.org/nmi/prayer

RECIPE

Have you ever craved fresh-from-the-oven homemade cookies, but been unable to make them because you do not have the ingredients on hand? These cookies only require three ingredients, so even if you did not plan ahead or go shopping, you should be able to enjoy fresh cookies “nevertheless”!

Nevertheless Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup (250 grams) peanut butter
- 1 cup (211 grams) sugar
- 1 egg

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. (180 degrees C.).
2. In a small mixing bowl, mix the ingredients.
3. Scoop about 2 tablespoons (30 grams) of batter at a time and roll each scoop into a ball.
4. Place balls on a cookie sheet and press gently with the flat of your hand or the bottom of a glass.
5. Bake cookies for 9 to 11 minutes
6. Cool for 5 minutes before eating.

A Dramatic Reading from Exodus 4

Characters: Moses, dressed in a robe and headscarf and holding a shepherd's staff

God: offstage

Narrator: Modern dress

Narrator: God called Moses to confront Pharaoh about letting His people go. Moses was... well, let's just say he thought of a few "if only" ideas for God.

Moses: Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.

God: Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.

Moses: Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.

Narrator: Then, the Lord's anger burned against Moses.

God: What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do.

Narrator: Thankfully, Moses eventually got his eyes off himself and his own shortcomings. Once he focused on the One who called him, God was able to do big things! Moses lived in the "nevertheless" and changed history.

How might God use you, if you move from the "if only" to the "nevertheless"?

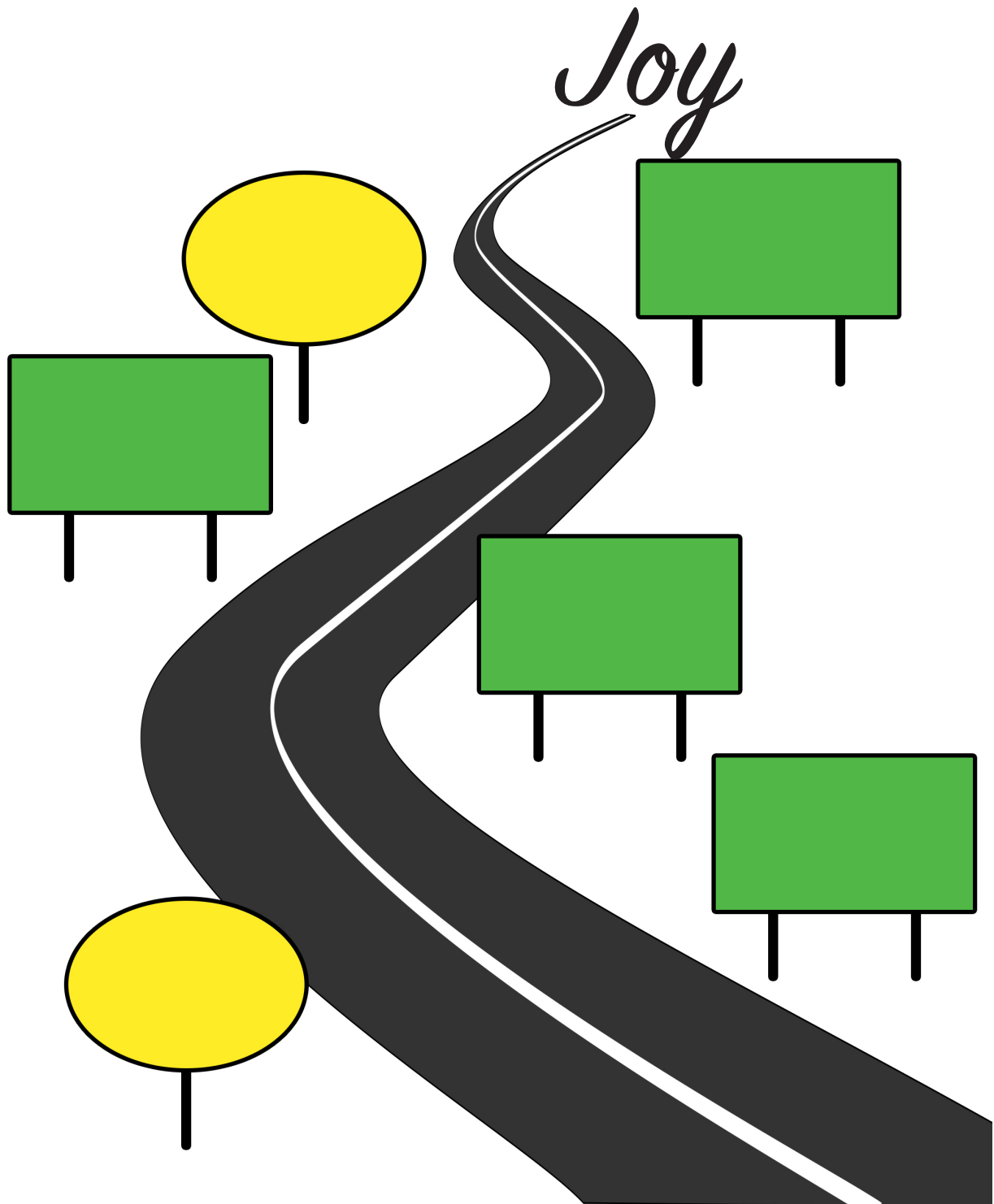


**ROAD
WORK
AHEAD**

“Nevertheless” – A Roadmap to Joy

Consider your own life – where you are and where you feel God wants you to be.
Use this visual aid to map out your journey.

- What are some roadblocks that have held you back in the past or are stopping you now?
Put those on the oval signs with the word “warning!” or “danger!”
- What words of encouragement do you hear from God?
Put those in the rectangular signs to encourage you to press on toward the goal.



Moving from “If only” to “Nevertheless”

Fold this sheet in half top to bottom, so that you can only see the “If only” side. Complete the “If only” statements with reasons that might keep someone from answering God’s call.

After you’ve filled out the first side, trade papers with someone in your group. Open the paper and complete the “Nevertheless” statements with ways God can work in spite of these reservations or shortcomings. Include scripture promises if some come to mind!

If only _____

Nevertheless _____

If only _____

Nevertheless _____

If only _____

Nevertheless _____

If only _____

Nevertheless _____

12

When Starting Over Is Not Failure

by Debbie Salter Goodwin

LESSON PURPOSE

To unpack the principle of new beginnings and redemptive hope as a result of being willing to start over.

SCRIPTURE: They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. (Isaiah 61:4 NIV)
Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. (Psalm 127:1 NIV)

FAST FACTS

Cuba

- It is a tradition in Cuba to burn dolls at New Year's Eve to symbolize the forgetting of bad times and look forward to a fresh start with the New Year.
- Cuba has one of the highest literacy rates in the world, with 99.8 percent of the population being literate.
- Cuba is the largest Caribbean island, both in size and population (11.1 million in 2018).
- Cuba is the only country in the world that has a dual currency system. The idea originally was that tourists would use CUC (Cuban Convertible Pesos) and Cubans would use CUP (Cuban National Pesos). Now, tourists and Cubans use both currencies interchangeably.
- Cuba has the highest doctor-to-patient ratio in the world. As a result, many Cuban doctors go to countries where medical aid is required.
- Church of the Nazarene in Cuba (2018)
 - Region: Mesoamerica
 - Year Entered: 1902
 - Districts: 2
 - Churches
 - Total: 113
 - Organized: 102
 - Total Members: 8,976
 - Clergy
 - Elders: 56
 - Licensed Ministers: 44

Lebanon

- The country underwent civil war between 1975 and 1990, due to fighting between two religious groups.
- Lebanon's parliament is equally divided among religious groups. It has 18 recognized sects and 128 seats. Their president must be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of Parliament a Shiite Muslim.
- In Lebanon, a piece of land can have two legal owners. The piece of land is owned by one, and the crop growing on the land is owned by the other. To buy a piece of land, a person would need to pay both parties to become the sole owner of the land.

(Continued on next page)

- Church of the Nazarene in Lebanon (2018)
 - Region: Eurasia
 - Year Entered: 1950
 - District: 1
 - Churches
 - Total: 4
 - Organized: 4
 - Total Members: 271
 - Clergy
 - Elders: 4
 - Deacons: 2
 - Licensed Ministers: 6
- Nazarene Evangelical School—Lebanon
 - Founded: 1966
 - The school seeks to shape minds with knowledge and hearts with love.
 - Its mission includes helping each student achieve:
 - Academic excellence in all subjects relating to the student’s level and capabilities.
 - Moral and spiritual development in the student’s relationship with God, self, others, and the environment.
 - Self-discipline in making the right choices in every aspect of life.
 - Classes for students (ages 3 through 15)

South Asia Nazarene Bible College

- Location: Bangalore, India
- Statistics (2018)
 - Total Enrollment: 2,512
 - Degrees Granted: 526

LESSON INFORMATION

Starting over is a challenging endeavor. Some connect it with failure. Some consider it disrespectful of those who pioneered whatever is up for re-assessment. Then, there are the unknowns of whether starting over is wasted energy better redirected toward something completely new.

Starting over in ministry is critical. Limited funds, limited personnel, and limited resources make decisions here very important. There are spiritual stakes. No one should undertake to start over without accountability and an enormous amount of dedicated prayer.

This lesson will look at times when starting again was necessary for some ministry or mission endeavor. Use the review to acknowledge what God can do when obedient people follow God in difficult times. Think not only of your own context and situation, but also of missionaries in various contexts, who are confronted with the need to re-evaluate situations and ministries,

and possibly have to start over. What challenges face them? How can you pray more effectively for them in those critical times of discernment and decision?

Cuba: About Starting and Starting Again

On the finger of land that looks like a broken bridge between Haiti and the eastern point of Mexico, Cuba sits in the Caribbean Sea. Missionary work in Cuba has had a stop and go history. The first Holiness missionaries came in 1902 but didn’t connect with the Church of the Nazarene until their sending church, The Pentecostal Mission Church, joined the Church of the Nazarene in 1914. In 1920, the Church of the Nazarene closed the work in Cuba, although one of the original missionaries, Miss Lillian Gardner, made the personal choice to stay with the Cuban people. The work was re-opened in 1945 with Rev. and Mrs. Lyle Prescott who would concentrate their efforts in Havana on the north

coast of Cuba. By the end of the next year, there were six new pastoral candidates.

In 1947 a tuberculosis patient, Aroyo [ah-ROH-yoh] Hondo [HOHN-doh], recovering in a sanatorium in Havana, received visits from some Nazarenes and eventually became a Christian. He went home and led his family and neighbors to Christ and became the pastor to a small but growing group.

When a 10-acre property went up for sale in 1950, several realized it was a perfect campus for a Bible school and district center. The Cuban Nazarenes enjoyed their first of many camp meetings there, and the school opened with five students. In the next seven years, three missionary couples arrived: the Ardee Coolidges, the Spurgeon Hendrixes, and the Howard Conrads. By 1957, there were 15 organized churches and 20 preaching points, with a total membership of 226 with 18 students in Bible school

Then, a significant regime change occurred, forcing the missionaries to leave Cuba. While Nazarene leadership was able to send representatives from time to time, they could not send missionaries. Dr. H. T. Reza [RE-sah], who held citizenship in Mexico, was one of the few able to visit and brought back encouraging news. "One of these days, things will change in Cuba, and the gospel will flow freely again like the waters of a strong river."¹

At first, it wasn't a strong river; it was more like a little stream. Four independent missionaries, one of whom had Nazarene ties, started a church in Barcoa [bahr-KOH-ah]. When they had to leave Cuba in 1959 because of the political tension, the church was left to Nazarenes. For the next 27 years, the government barred services in the church. But that didn't stop the people. They met in homes or buildings, sometimes walking 10 miles to get to church. In 1980, Nazarene pastor Amelio [ah-ME-lee-oh] Palermo [pah-LER-moh] decided to re-open the church in Barcoa.

What political repression tried to eradicate is growing again. By 2014 the Cuban District had grown from 35 churches with 3,421 members to 88 churches with 8,797 members with 23 church-type missions and 570 preaching points. It was time to divide the country into two districts: the East and West Districts. Two years later in 2016, Cuba celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Nazarene Seminary. Nothing shouted the sustainability of the battered country more. What God plants; God grows even when people must start over!

Lebanon: A Beginning of Transitions

Rev. Moses Hagopian [huh-GOH-pi-yuhn] was the first Nazarene voice in Lebanon. While assigned to Palestine, he held services in neighboring Lebanon. Understanding how tentative the government was, Syrian and Lebanese evangelicals united in 1945 as the Evangelical Community in Syria and Lebanon. Each country supplied a Nazarene representative who served on the board. While Nazarenes had been in Syria since 1920, there was no official Nazarene work in Lebanon. In 1948, the Palestinian War of Partition pushed Arab and Armenian Nazarenes out of Jerusalem and into Beirut, spawning a church of 35. A Nazarene pastor in Jerusalem, Rev. Samuel Krikorian [kri-KOH-ree-uhn], helped them purchase a 5-story building where Arabic and Armenian services were conducted. They called the church Ashrafieh [ASH-rah-fee-yah] Church of the Nazarene. They even started an elementary and secondary school, growing enrollment quickly to 300.

In 1954, Rev. and Mrs. Donald E. Reed became the first official Nazarene missionaries to Lebanon, followed by the Oliver Karkers in 1966, the Ivan Lathrops in 1967, and the Gordon Johnstons and Larry Buesses [BYOOS] in 1969.

Then, the seams came apart. Civil conflict forced missionaries to leave in 1975. The civil war severely damaged the building at Ashrafieh. The unrest required that the Lathrops and Buesses leave Lebanon to move to next-door Jordan.

What happened next was more of a transitional process which required new ways of overseeing the work in Lebanon. National leaders stepped up. Rev. Lathrop traveled multiple times to Lebanon from Jordan to give the support he could. Field Strategy Coordinator, Lindell [LIN-duhl] Browning, directed and encouraged as he could. Later in 2000, the Church of the Nazarene sent Rev. and Mrs. Bob Brunson. Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Coordinator for the Middle East, Rod Green, made Lebanon his center of operation for a while. He found that the Lebanese people didn't need supplies as much as they needed someone to listen to their stories. He organized training for lay leaders to help them learn how to be active listeners who could bring healing to people who had suffered so much loss.

Another Kind of Beginning

In 1985, Middle East missionaries recognized that they needed a new Bible training model for their pastors. No one had graduated from the Course of Study for ministers or been ordained for 20 years! The civil war in Lebanon and ongoing political tension in

1. J. Fred Parker, *Mission to the World: A History of Missions in the Church of the Nazarene through 1985* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1988), 452.

other parts of the Middle East made it necessary to close the Bible College in Beirut for 16 years! Something had to change.

After much thought and prayer, leaders decided to use Cyprus as a teaching center because it was the only neutral territory in the eastern part of the Mediterranean. They offered intense classes for four to six weeks each summer. It worked. Attendance grew. Newly ordained pastors were ready to take their places in different parts of the Middle East.

Today in Lebanon

Today, Lebanon has accepted its strategic place in accepting refugees from war-torn Syria. While there are only four churches in Lebanon, each has found a way to minister to the people around them. The Nazarene Evangelical School (Kindergarten through grade 9) in Beirut has been in an excellent place to help educate many of the refugee children and work with their families. One Lebanon church works to provide health care for refugees. Others participate in ministries that offer food. The Nazarenes in Lebanon probably don't see their work as something that started over. They see it more as God redirecting their vision to the needs around them. In 2018 Lebanon reported four churches with 241 members and average weekly worship attendance of 870. But no one has counted the number of people for whom they renewed hope, repaired broken spirits, and restored life and purpose.

Sunday School: Closed for a Good Reason

When "Pastor John" pastored in the United Kingdom, he encountered a church struggling to sustain Sunday school for children at the expense of classes for adults and youth. When the church began to grow, it only magnified the lack of a nurturing Sunday school experience for new believers of all ages. Pastor John called a board meeting and suggested closing Sunday School for six months in order to provide extensive training.

Training included best practice approaches and information about different learning styles. They decided to schedule Sunday school after morning worship. The pastor decided to facilitate a class for adults after worship, too. The sermon became the lesson each week. Everyone was excited about the new start.

Another part of the re-design was to bring everyone together for the last 20 minutes. Children would share what they learned, and the youth presented a skit about their lesson. Families now had talking points to engage their children during the week.

The new model thrived, quadrupling attendance during the first month. But it wasn't about the numbers; it was about the learning.

In Pastor John's own words, he learned that "It's okay to stop something that is no longer working and to start fresh with hearts and minds focused on the purposes of God."

India and a Closed Door

Nearing the turn of the century, leaders could no longer ignore the fact that the Bible College in India was failing. It was time to re-think what would serve the growing work in India and South Asia best.

First, leaders decided to close the Nazarene Bible College in India, where there were only three faculty and staff serving 11 students in one language. No one really wanted the closure. How would they meet the pressing needs for new pastors without a dedicated place to train them? It became a longer transition than anyone wanted. Six years later they were ready to open South Asia Nazarene Bible College located in Bangalore [BANG-guh-lohr], India. Faculty developed a robust educational system in the region. The first graduation sent 66 graduates from the Course of Study into ministry.

Today there are 120 faculty who teach a standardized Course of Study to over 2,500 students in 15 languages in five countries. Earlier concerns about a closure gave way to celebration!

Starting over can open doors to a whole new world of opportunities.

When Is It Time to Start Over?

That's the big question followed by how to know for sure. There are no real formulas; however, there are guiding principles. Here are a few principles and some questions to anchor thoughts about starting over.

1. Reflect on the past.

Why was it started to begin with? Is the purpose the same? Where is the decline or struggle coming from? (i.e., methodology, leadership, changing demographics, etc.)

2. Recall what worked.

Start-overs don't have to change everything. Critically evaluate what did work and what people helped make it work. Prepare to take into a new start what worked.

3. Resist over publicizing.

Start-overs can self-destruct with too much attention. As much as possible, keep the start-over among the people it affects the most and the leaders who are accountable for the results.

4. Reassess strengths.

Is it perseverance, compassion, creativity, dedication? Whatever the strengths, you will be able to build on them in a new beginning.

5. Re-establish goals.

Make short term goals because they will begin to set a successful trajectory. Make intermediate goals to keep you on track. Make long term goals, so you understand clearly your intended result.

6. Recruit leaders.

Who has the skills to see the vision through? A leader's goal without buy-in from the people who will fund it and staff it may be doomed to failure.

7. Review progress.

Continually assess where you are in your re-start and make as many mid-course adjustments as needed.

8. Rejoice over small successes.

Everybody needs a chance to celebrate: celebration brings unity, unity contributes to perseverance, and makes more celebrations possible.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Option 1—Start Over to Start New

Prepare

- Have a chalkboard or whiteboard available.
- Download, print, and cut the **When You Need to Start Over, Handout 1**, for each person in your group.
- Ask someone to read today's scripture.
- Recruit storytellers to share the stories from the **Lesson Information**. Encourage presenters to emphasize what impressed them the most.

Present

- At the beginning of your session, write the following scripture references on a chalkboard or whiteboard: Isaiah 61:4, Psalm 127:1. Intentionally misspell both books of the Bible. See how long it takes someone to notice your mistake. Then, erase everything you have written and say, **"I guess I'll just have to start over!"** Write them correctly this time. Then, explain to the group that "Starting Over" is the subject for today's lesson.
- Invite the recruited scripture reader to read today's scripture: Isaiah 61:4 and Psalm 127:1. Ask the group to identify three words that have to do with re-starting something (rebuild, restore, renew). Write them on the board. Refer to the scripture as often as you can as the group listens to starting over/starting new examples.
- Ask recruited storytellers to share the stories from the **Lesson Information**. Use any of the questions in Option 3 to discuss the reasons for, and results of, starting over or starting new.
- Hand out the list of **When You Need to Start Over, Handout 1**. Use any of the questions to clarify the meaning of a principle and how it might increase positive results from starting over or starting new.
- To close your time, ask the storytellers to be prepared to pray for the missionaries and the work from the story they shared.

Option 2—More than a Game (for a group that likes activity)

Prepare

- Prepare **Handout 2, National Flags**, by printing them in color and attaching them to dowel sticks.
- Provide two places where the two groups can meet. Either divide your room or identify nearby rooms. Even hall space would work.
- For **Group 1**
 - a box of children's building blocks
 - a tape measure
 - a table for building a structure.
- For **Group 2**
 - Reproduce game sheets from **Handout 4**, one game sheet for no more than six people to play.
 - Six game markers. Use buttons or borrow markers from a children's game.
 - Reproduce two pages of the **Move Cards** from **Handout 3** and one page of **Decision Cards** according to instructions.

- Use the spinner according to instructions on **Handout 5**
- Have the game sheets, markers, and cards in place on tables before the group begins.
- Make as many sets of supplies for distribution, so that no more than six play the game.

Present

Note: This is a good lesson to consider making it multi-generational. Both group activities lend themselves to any age.

- Present an overview of the stories from **Lesson Information**. Display the appropriate flag for each country as you tell the story. For each story, summarize the need for starting over or starting new. Then, explain briefly that sometimes it is necessary to discontinue something in order to be ready to come back stronger and with a different vision.
- Divide your group in half. Give each group 15 minutes for their group activity. Then, rotate groups.

Group 1: Build It Again

If your group has more than 12, divide into smaller groups of six to eight. Provide a box of children's building blocks and a table to work on for each group.

Ask the group(s) to use the blocks to build the tallest structure they can as quickly as they can. Instruct them to take turns placing blocks. If the structure topples, they must start again. Give them three minutes. Then repeat the activity and give them five minutes.

When time is called, review the exercise.

- Did you have to start over? Why?
- What did you learn from starting over?
- Did you "play it safe"? Did that help or hinder?
- Is it a failure to start over?

When time is called, switch groups.

Group 2: The Starting Over Game

- Prepare game supplies and have games set up for no more than six to play.
- Explain to the group that you are going to play the **Starting Over Game**. Instruct each person playing to select one of the roles from the Game Instructions. Go over instructions for playing the game. Allow 10 minutes to play the game. The player who makes it to Celebrate or is in the lead when time is called is the winner.

Optional: Instead of playing on a table, reproduce the game on the floor using 8½ x 11-inch sheets of paper or colored construction paper, marking appropriate squares with "Start," Start Over," "?" and "Celebrate!" **Move** and **Decision cards** in separate boxes from which to draw. Participants walk through the game, following instructions.

Process the game experience with these questions:

- Who had to start over the most? How did it feel?
- Whose Decision choice with the Decision cards sent them back instead of forward? What did a backward move mean?
- Is starting over a mark of failure?
- What happens if you talk about it from the perspective of starting new?

After 30 minutes, call both groups together. Invite everyone to stop by the "Build Your Own" refreshment table before coming together.

(Continued on next page)

Use any of the small group activity questions, questions for **Option 3** or any of your own questions to discuss factors and concerns about starting over or starting new. End your discussion time with the quote by Thomas Edison, who said, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” Sometimes starting over is the way to learn what works.

Close the session by asking for volunteers to pray for the following:

- Countries that experience political upheaval and complicate Nazarene Missions
- Struggling ministries and institutions and their leaders that they will make wise decisions

Option 3—Rebuild, Restore, Renew (for a group that likes discussion)

Prepare

- Recruit two presenters to summarize any of the stories from the **Lesson Information**.
- Recruit someone to read today’s scripture: Isaiah 61:4 and Psalm 127:1.
- Prepare **Handout 1, When You Need to Start Over** (one for each person).
- **Optional:** Consider playing the video of the Lebanon Nazarene Evangelical School (see **Resources** under **Video**) to show one of the ways Lebanon has rebounded. Arrange the technology you need to play the video.

Present

- Ask if anyone could share a starting-over experience with a job or project. Then ask these questions: What did it mean to your perspective? What helped move you forward? What did you learn about starting over? Transition to today’s lesson by saying, **Today, we’re going to look at times when starting over or starting new in missions was necessary.**
- Invite the one you recruited to read Isaiah 61:4 and Psalm 127:1. Challenge the group to keep these scriptures in mind as they discuss the possibilities involved when a group must start over or start new.
- Pass out **Handout 1, When You Need to Start Over**. Use any of the questions to clarify the principles and help guide discussion surrounding the starting over/starting new stories you will share. Invite the presenters to share the stories they have selected and follow with any of the following questions.

Optional: Tell the story of Lebanon and then play the video of how the Lebanon Nazarene Evangelical School is ministering today.

- What happened when missionaries were forced to leave, or something closed? Did it impact the work negatively or positively in the stories?
- How did starting over/starting new affect vision?
- Do you equate starting over with failure or opportunity? Explain your answer.
- What were some of the reasons for starting over/starting new?
- What is the difference between starting over after a forced closure and starting over by choice?
- There is always a loss in starting over. How does loss impact the experience? How should leaders address this loss?
- Which of the stories represent the repair, restore, renew actions from scripture?
- How should ministry partners apply Psalm 127:1 to a restart of any kind?
- Is success a sign of God’s approval?
- When is a start-over or start-new initiative unavoidable?
- Why is it important to identify small successes along the way in a start-over?
- How would you encourage a missionary who had to leave their assignment due to political upheaval?

Close the session by listening to the song, “In the Beginning” by Michael Card. The last stanza is about starting over. (See YouTube link in **Resources**.)

ACT ON IT (practical ideas for personal involvement)

- Consider making extra copies of the Starting Over game to share with families.
- Where is political tension threatening areas where there are Nazarene missionaries? See the 2019 Nazarene World Week of Prayer to see examples from each region where political challenges are prevalent. Pray for those countries and their leaders and find out if there are any ways you could encourage leaders.
- Encourage members to take one of the stories from today's lesson and pray for the ministries, the people who benefit from them, and the leaders and volunteers who work in them.
- Lebanon's story involved reaching out to refugees. Are there refugees in your community who need support? Research groups that are helping them and see where you could add your support.

RESOURCES ("handy helps" for the leader)

- **Websites**
 - Nazarene World Week of Prayer (2019) www.nazarene.org/nmi/prayer
- **Articles/Blogs**
 - Jetter, Paul. "Starting Over in Cuba." Posted: 2017. *Holiness Today*. www.holinesstoday.org/starting-over-in-cuba
 - Church of the Nazarene Mesoamerica. "Church of the Nazarene Celebrates 70 Years in Cuba." Posted: 23 June 2016. NCN News. (Shares pictures from the event.) www.nazarene.org/article/church-nazarene-celebrates-70-years-cuba
 - Church of the Nazarene Eurasia. "New Vision, Unity Leads to Church Plants in Lebanon,"
 - Posted: 11 December 2013. Eurasia Region website. www.eurasiaregion.org/new-vision-unity-leads-to-church-plants-in-lebanon
- **Books**
 - Crutcher, Tim, ed. *Building on God's Foundation: 50 Years of Alabaster*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1999.
- **Flags**
 - www.1-800flags.com
 - www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Cuba
 - www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Lebanon
 - www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Great_Britain
 - www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_India
- **Music**
 - Card, Michael. "In the Beginning." *The Creation*. Use this link to play the song on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCfSTqRzbR4>
- **Videos**
 - Eurasia Media. "A School with a Mission—Lebanon." This very informative four-minute video shares the story and ministry reach of The Lebanon Nazarene Evangelical School. vimeo.com/85333554.
 - See the video, *When Starting Over Is Not Failure*, at www.nazarene.org/nmi/curriculum.

RECIPES

Here's an idea for refreshments that goes with the theme of today's lesson. Choose one of the ideas for a Build-Your-Own snack to share with your group. Decorate with a flag from Cuba, Lebanon, Great Britain, and India. Consider a few building tools for the table, as well.

Make a sign that says:

Build Your Own

(and feel free to start over!)

Build Your Own Ice Cream Sundae

Make the following available:

- Vanilla Ice Cream
- Chocolate syrup
- Caramel syrup
- Chopped nuts
- Coconut
- Mini chocolate chips
- Maraschino Cherries

Or

Build Your Own Banana Pops

Make the following available:

- A bowl of bananas, peeled and sliced into 3-inch chunks.
- Soda straws to spear the banana and use as a handle
- Chocolate Syrup for dipping
- A selection of things to roll the dipped banana in:
 - Finely chopped nuts
 - Sprinkles
 - Toasted coconut
 - Crushed chocolate and vanilla cream sandwich cookies
- A bowl of mini marshmallows to start and end the banana pop.

Or

Build Your Own Popcorn Bowl

Make the following available:

- Large bowl of popped popcorn.
- Choice of Savories
 - Garlic powder
 - Curry powder
 - Cinnamon
 - Parmesan cheese
 - Sunflower seeds
 - Etc.
- Choice of Sweets
 - Coconut
 - Chopped nuts
 - Chocolate-covered chopped nuts
 - Brown sugar
 - Sprinkles
 - Etc.

Note: a spray-on butter will help make additives stick.

Option 1 and 3

(Handout 1)

When You Need to Start Over

They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

-Isaiah 61:4 NIV

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.

-Psalm 127:1 NIV

When you need to start over, remember these principles:

- 1. Reflect on the past.**
What was the purpose?
Is it the same?
Where is the decline or struggle coming from?
- 2. Recall what worked.**
What needs to change?
What doesn't?
- 3. Resist over-publicizing.**
Communicate with the people it affects and the leaders who are accountable for the results.
- 4. Reassess strengths.**
What strengths were influential from the beginning?
How can you build on them?
- 5. Re-establish goals.**
What are your short term, intermediate, and long term goals?
- 6. Recruit leaders.**
Who has the skills to see the vision through?
- 7. Review progress.**
Where are your ideas working?
What needs adjustment?
- 8. Rejoice small success.**
Celebration brings unity.
Unity contributes to perseverance.

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Option 2 National Flags (Handout 2)

Instructions: Enlarge these flags, print them in color, and attach a dowel rod and stick them in a block of Styrofoam or block of wood with appropriate holes drilled. Or use the links in **Resources** to download color images of flags or to purchase 2' X 3' flags.

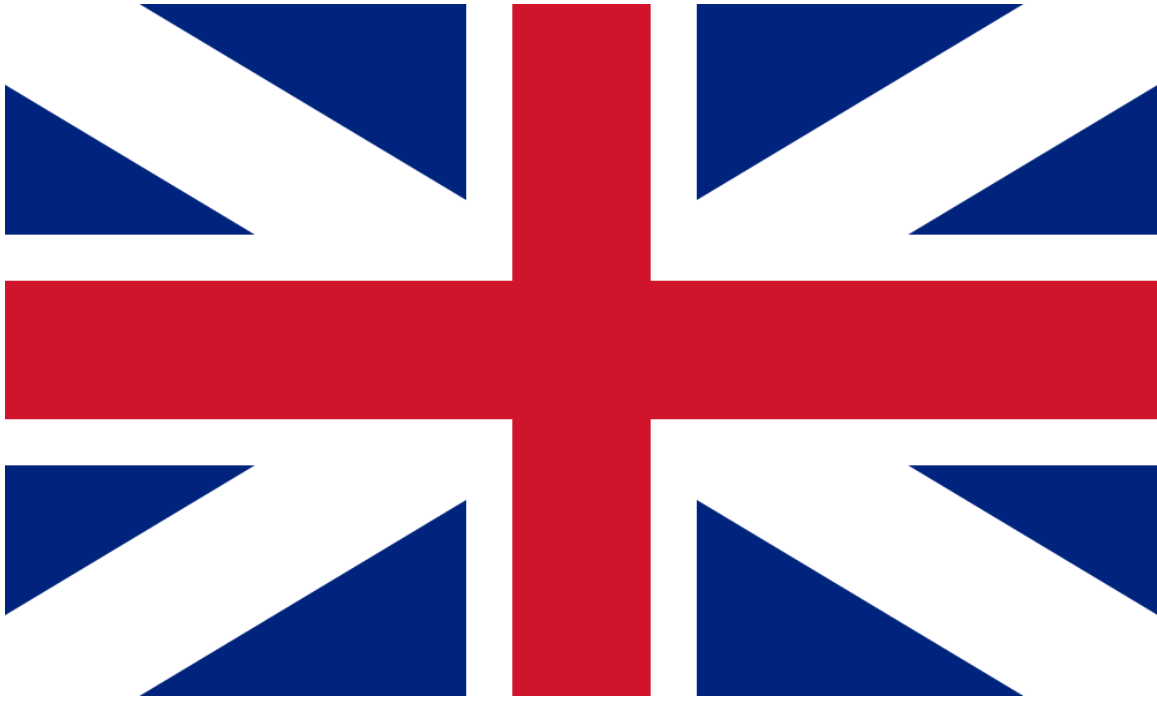
Flag of Cuba



Flag of Lebanon



Flag of Great Britian



Flag of India



Option 2

The Starting Over Game

(Handout 3)

Purpose:

This short game exposes players to the choices and unpredictable circumstances that might lead to starting over.

Supplies:

Either reproduce the game sheet on cardstock (if possible) for each group of six players or tape sheets of paper or construction paper to the floor, following the design of the game sheet, for a life-sized, interactive game.

When playing on the game sheet, provide buttons as playing tokens or borrow tokens from a children's game. When using the interactive version, players walk the game board as themselves.

Players:

The game is designed for six players, but you could play with duets for larger groups. Each player chooses one of the following responsibilities to oversee as they wind their way through choices and setbacks on the way to a celebration at the end.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| A mission church | A Bible school |
| A food ministry | A clinic |
| An elementary school | A hospital |

Playing the Game

- Players select a **Move** card to find out how many spaces they move forward or backward and why.
- When a player lands on a **?** space, the player takes a **Decision** card, reads the decision choices out loud and chooses. The player then uses the **Spinner** to identify how many spaces the player moves forward or backward.
- If a player lands on a **Start Over** space, the player must go back to Start.
- The first player to cross the **Celebrate** space, wins. (Any number of moves that moves a player past the **Celebrate** space is a win for the player.)
- Play until the first player moves past **Celebrate** or for a set amount of time. For a timed game, the player who is ahead is the winner.
- **Optional:** For a more interactive game, consider reproducing the game board on the floor using construction paper squares taped to the floor. Mark the appropriate squares with **Start, Start Over, ?, Celebrate**. Place **Move Cards** and **Decision Cards** in boxes that can be passed to the player who needs to draw a card. There is no need for playing tokens. The players walk the game board. Feel free to adapt the game board to the space you have.

After the game, discuss the game.

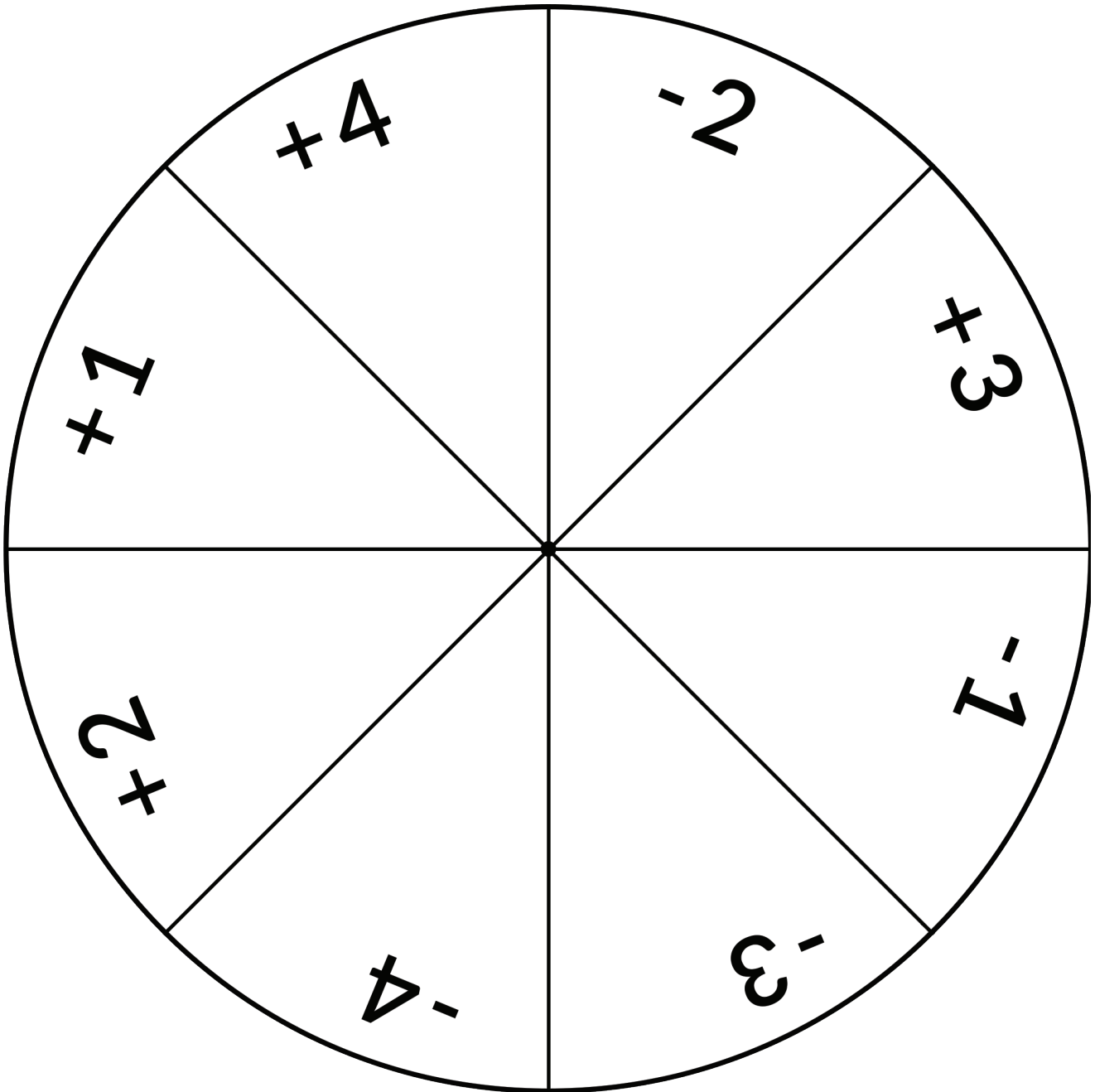
- Were all moves a result of a player's choice?
- What can someone learn from moving backward?
- Has anyone ever experienced a situation that felt like starting over? What did you learn?
- What advice would you give someone caught in a backward trajectory toward a goal?

Spinner Handout

Instructions:

Copy this page on cardstock. Cut out spinner and pointer. Use a brad to fasten the pointer to the circle.

When a player lands on the ?, the player takes a Decision card, reads it aloud and chooses an option. Then the player uses the spinner to see how many spaces to move their playing piece forward or backward.



Move Cards

Instructions:

Reproduce 2 sheets on colored cardstock, if possible. Cut apart and stack, print down, on the space marked: Move Cards. (Print page following game board and stack cards there.)

<p>You have funding for another year.</p> <p>Move Ahead 5 Spaces</p>	<p>A work and witness team arrived to help you.</p> <p>Move Ahead 3 Spaces</p>	<p>A new missionary arrives.</p> <p>Move Ahead 1 space</p>	<p>You shared the Gospel with a troubled individual who prayed to receive Christ.</p> <p>Move Ahead 5 Spaces</p>
<p>A box of donated supplies arrives.</p> <p>Move Ahead 4 Spaces</p>	<p>Someone came to faith in Jesus.</p> <p>Move Ahead 3 Spaces</p>	<p>Your end of the year budget is in the red.</p> <p>Move Back 4 Spaces</p>	<p>One of your Links' churches sends birthday greetings and some treats from home.</p> <p>Move Ahead 2 Spaces</p>
<p>Two missionaries are away on deputation and you have no replacements.</p> <p>Move Back 5 Spaces</p>	<p>Civil war erupted and you must stop outreach beyond your campus.</p> <p>Move Back 5 Spaces</p>	<p>At your last board meeting, leaders began to question how long you can hold the doors open.</p> <p>Move Back 5 Spaces</p>	<p>A Jesus Film team completes four presentations with many prospects to follow up.</p> <p>Move Ahead 5 Spaces</p>
<p>Declining attendance makes you question if you are meeting the right needs.</p> <p>Move Back 2 Spaces</p>	<p>You are short-staffed and can't keep your doors open.</p> <p>Return to Start</p>	<p>Your Field Strategy Coordinator wants to transfer you to another field.</p> <p>Return to Start</p>	<p>You finish training new staff and successfully transition them into new responsibilities.</p> <p>Move Ahead 4 Spaces</p>
<p>You had been given a year to become self-sustaining and did not make it.</p> <p>Return to Start</p>	<p>You are sick with Malaria.</p> <p>Move Back 3 Spaces</p>	<p>Your team has met a crucial goal.</p> <p>Move Ahead 4 Spaces</p>	<p>A critical team member has resigned.</p> <p>Move Back 2 Spaces</p>

Decision Cards

Instructions:

Reproduce 1 sheet on a different color of cardstock, if possible. Cut apart, shuffle, stack, and place, print down, on the space marked: ?. (Print page following game board and stack cards there.)

<p>Do you start a new service or plant a new preaching point?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>	<p>Do you add a new staff member or retrain an existing staff member?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>	<p>Do you redo the budget to include renovation or try to make it another year?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>
<p>Do you ask for a Work & Witness team to repaint or do it with existing staff?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>	<p>Do you focus on new ideas to reach people or do you focus on how to improve long-standing ministries?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>	<p>Do you take on the new preaching point or send a new Bible College graduate?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>
<p>Do you send your children to a boarding school or add homeschooling to your multiple responsibilities?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>	<p>Do you retire a plan that hasn't met goals or add more time and effort to reach the goals?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>	<p>You decided to postpone a decision about budget revisions.</p> <p>Lose one turn.</p>
<p>Do you retire this year or wait another year?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>	<p>Your home church asks for a project. Do you point them to scholarships or a building fund?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>	<p>Training isn't going well. Do you take over the training or continue trying to mentor the trainer?</p> <p>Find your move with the spinner.</p>

MOVE CARDS

DECISION CARDS