



Stats
have
Faces

Handout 7

Bible study

Good ideas are common—what's uncommon are people who'll work hard enough to bring them about.

Ashleigh Brilliant

Phobia quiz icebreaker

Can you identify the following phobias?

1. Alektorophobia
2. Ephebiphobia
3. Chiclephobia
4. Arachibutyrophobia
5. Ablutophobia
6. Omphalophobia
7. Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia
8. Chronophobia
9. Arithmophobia
10. Phobophobia

Reflecting on the scriptures

Discerning what God is up to in our neighbourhoods is not so much about skills or knowledge as about learning to hear God together and discovering how we might join with what the Spirit is already doing in our community.

The *Stats have Faces* process has been about listening. This Bible study will provide another way of hearing the voice of God about how we are called to engage with our community.

Handout 7 // Bible study

Luke 10:1-12 is about mission and tells the story of the sending of the 70 into the towns and villages where Jesus himself would go. Ask someone to read this passage.

After this the Lord appointed 70 others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you". But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near. I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town".

- As the passage was read, where did your mind stop?
- What questions do you have about the text?
- Would you prefer to be a "labourer in the harvest" or a "lamb in the midst of wolves"?
- What is the basic message the 70 are asked to share? How different is that from other messages the church might choose to share?
- What insights about the process of connecting with your community did you gain from this story?
- Reflecting on the statistics and information you have collected, how do you think this story is relevant to the people in your community?

Looking forward

It has been said that an idea that is developed and put into action is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea.

We know that *Stats have Faces* and that we cannot solve all of the problems in our community. The last part of the process is to discern together how we respond to the information before us, and how we set our priorities.

- Consider what God may be asking you and your congregation to do in the community in response to the needs and opportunities which have been identified through the *Stats have Faces* process.
- Put together a list of ways you and your congregation might join with what the Spirit is already doing.
- Rate each suggestion from 1 to 5 with one being the lowest priority and five being the highest.
- Note which items are short-term "quick wins" and which are longer term priorities.

Planning to Share

Discuss how to share your experience, reflections and priority suggestions with your congregation.

Prayer

Writer Eugene Peterson gives a great paraphrase of John 1:14.

... and the word became flesh and moved into the neighbourhood.

Consider those words in silence for a few minutes then give thanks for the insights God has given about your community and church through the *Stats have Faces* process. Ask God to bless the action your congregation will take to respond to the journey you have taken together.



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