

RETURN ON INVITATIONS

THIS IS WHO WE ARE – 2017 – PART 5

START TALKING. WITH AN ICEBREAKER QUESTION:

- You can find some on page 6 [here](#).
- Describe an invitation that you have sent out. Wedding, graduation, birthday celebration of yourself, or your child, etc.

START THINKING. ASK QUESTIONS THAT WILL GET YOUR GROUP THINKING.

- What would seem to be the most expensive thing about farming?
- What would frustrate a farmer the most?

START SHARING. CHOOSE THE QUESTIONS THAT WILL CREATE OPENNESS.

- Read Jesus' parable in Mark 4:1-20. Yes, it's long. You can do it! Leader: it is printed out on page 2 of this sheet. Make a copy for each participant.
- Why do you think Jesus used parables/stories to teach?
- What was the invitation that started your church experience? How do you feel about the person who invited you?
- Look at Mark 4:18-19. What is the worst lawn you have ever had to mow?
- What is one of the best returns on investment have you ever received? Was it 30x or more?
- What kind of soil have you been? What kind of soil are you now? What will it take for you to become good soil? Be courageous.
- What excuses have you used to not invite someone to church?
- Think of someone who deeply love who desperately needs an invitation to a local church from a strong believer that they already respect. What would you tell that believer if they are hesitating to invite your loved one?
- We were challenged to sow seed generously, intentionally, expectantly, and emotionally. Which area is easiest for you? Why do you think that is?
- Have you ever baptized someone? If so, share your story.

START PRAYING. BE BOLD, AND PRAY WITH POWER.

- Jesus, give me a heart for the harvest Jesus and courage to believe that you can use the seed I can plant. I want my life to matter eternally. Amen.

START DOING. COMMIT TO A STEP AND LIVE IT OUT THIS WEEK.

- If you hear one of the three nots, Not in Church, Not Going Well, Not Prepared For, invite them.

Mark 4:1-20 (NIV)

¹ Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge.

² He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said:

³ "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.

⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.

⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.

⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

⁹ Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

¹⁰ When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables.

¹¹ He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables

¹² so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

¹³ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"

¹⁴ The farmer sows the word.

¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy.

¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;

¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop-- thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."