

Series: Five Ways Weird

Session Title: Community

Date and Time: _____

Number of Students: _____

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Markers for every student
- ☐ Three large pieces of chart paper or newsprint
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Double-sided copies of pages A1-2
- ☐ DVD copy of *Pearl Harbour*
- ☐ Overhead projector
- ☐ Overhead copies of pages A1-2
- ☐ Overhead pens

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Identify that the quality of our community is part of the content of our message to the world.
- Begin to identify what is odd about Christian personal relationships.
- Begin to identify what is odd about our collective or corporate relationships.
- Learn that Jesus identified 'our love' as the number one identity marker for Christians.

Pastoral Objectives:

Preparation

Before the lesson begins, you will need to tape up three large pieces of newsprint or chart paper. Title them as follows: a) What I Want in a Best Friend, b) What I Want in a Husband/Wife, c)

What I Want in a Community. Draw a line to divide the paper into two sections; the top section should be two thirds of the area and the bottom section should be one third of the area. You will need this for Task One.

Lead In:

Show the climactic clip near the end of *Pearl Harbour* where the two planes carrying Josh Hartnett and Ben Affleck's characters crash into China. Show through until the credits roll. Before showing the clip, ask the students to identify three relational strands that make this scene so powerful. Another way to say this is to ask: "What three different relationships make this scene so powerful?" They will probably say something like: a) the relationship between Affleck's character and Hartnett's character as best friends, b) the relationship between Hartnett's character and Kate Beckinsale's character as husband and wife, and c) the relationship between Affleck and Beckinsale's characters as former lovers. They might also comment on the new relationship of parent and child with Hartnett's son. It doesn't matter what they choose as long as they are relationships.

Consider transitioning into the tasks by saying something like this:

In almost every Hollywood movie, relationships make up most of the drama and most of the meaning. Why is that? Why is it that in every movie, one, two, or even three major relationship crises make up the driving force of the plot? Why? Because as human beings we are fundamentally relational creatures. To belong to another human being is one of the deepest needs of our species. To be a part of a community that blesses you and has a place for you is one of the most powerful needs of the human soul. The problem is that relationships are really hard! As often as not they become our sources of deepest pain and total brokenness. Many people in our world live in total alienation because they cannot figure out how to acquire the community they so desperately desire.

Jesus said something pretty radical. He said that the quality of our Christian community would be our primary witness to the world. That's right. Not sign boards saying John 3:16 at football games. Not pamphlets given out on street corners. Christian community is to be the cornerstone of our witness to the world. In John 13:35 Jesus says, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Do you want people to know that you are a Christian? Do you want them to look at your life and notice the difference? Then you had better do something noteworthy. Just not smoking or swearing will not get noticed. Lot's of people don't smoke for hygiene reasons. It isn't really noteworthy or interesting. You'll have to do something better than that. Love will get you noticed. If we can figure out this whole community thing we will not need to get in people's faces; they'll get in ours! They will demand that we tell them how we figured out human community because they will be desperate to have what we have. Want to be weird? Live in loving community.

Task One Instructions:

Taped up around the room are three large pieces of newsprint. The first one is titled, “What I Want in a Best Friend”. The second is titled, “What I Want in a Husband/Wife”. The third is titled, “What I Want in a Community”. Each piece of paper is divided into a two thirds top section and a one thirds bottom section. Tell the students that in a minute they are going to visit all three stations and write on the papers. In the top section they will write criteria that make a best friend, spouse, or community, such as good listener, sense of humour, challenges me in my faith. Students should put their comments on the top two thirds of the paper above the dividing line. Also, students should not put comments such as, “I want a husband with hot abs!” While it is okay to have some basic physical criteria in mind, those things are of far less important than other qualities. They will focus on the non-physical for this exercise. Set a time limit of approximately ten minutes and release them to it.

After the students have completed the exercise go around the room and do two things. Choose three volunteers from the large group. Send one volunteer to each piece of paper and have them take their marker with them. Give them these instructions: “Have a look at the answers that everyone wrote on the paper. Decide what the top two or three characteristics are for the category that you are looking at.” Have the students share their decision. It isn’t very important that they be accurate; they are merely scanning and summarizing. Now ask them to scribe as the other students offer answers to this question: “What qualities do you *need* in each relationship?” You might introduce this part of the activity by saying: “Now of course shopping for a best friend, a husband/wife or community is not like buying peanut butter; you can’t operate on personal preference alone. Jerry Seinfeld made a TV show out of the disasters that come when you date according to a long list of personal preferences! Sometimes what you *want* is not the most important thing.” Have the scribes write down the group’s answer(s) on the bottom third of the page. Then ask the students if the answers were the same or different. The volunteers can now sit down.

Task Two Instructions:

Tell the students to split up into groups of four to six. When they are in their groups, hand out pens and double-sided copies of pages A1-2. Have the students follow the instructions on either side of the page. It should take them twenty to twenty-five minutes to complete the handout.

Finish this task with feedback. Turn on the overhead projector revealing the copy of page A1. Give out a bunch of overhead markers to the students and send them to the overhead to fill in the answers. You can do this during the task or after. They shouldn’t write their names on their answers and it doesn’t matter which question they answer. When every line is filled in, have the students sit down and look at the class’ answers. Do they agree with them all or disagree with some? Have them change the answers on the overhead until they are all reasonably correct. You should also monitor the answers, passively at first, and at the end step in to ensure that they are good answers. When everyone is satisfied with the answers, replace the overhead with the second one (page A2) and repeat the feedback process. If you are running out of time, have them shout out the answers and you can write them on the overhead.



Remember, feedback is the real test of a lesson. You can monitor the student's work, clarify and correct if needed, and make sure that they are moving in the right direction. Without feedback, lessons can turn into pointless busy-work. Don't skip this important step.

Conclusion:

Bring the discussion to an end and close the lesson. Time permitting, you could also pray for your community and/or requests that exist from people's relationships.