

March 2010

Quarter At-A-Glance

Teachings on Community

This quarter's study explores the concept of community in the Old Testament book of Jonah and Ruth, as well as in the teachings of Jesus and the early church. It highlights the response of faithful people to God's call and how their Spirit-led mission inspires a new kind of relationship between God's followers.

UNIT • COMMUNITY WITH A MISSION

The four lessons in this unit examine community through the themes of mission, redemption, family, and survival as seen in the books of Jonah and Ruth.

Lesson 1: March 7, 2010 **Mission to the Community** **Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-9**

Jonah was unwilling to help a community that God wanted to save. When told of their impending destruction, the community of Nineveh mourned their sin and repented. The people acted individually and as a community. Fasting and applying ashes were a part of their sign of penitence.

Lesson 2: March 14, 2010 **A Community to Redeem** **Jonah 3: 10-4:5**

God responded positively to the repentance of the Ninevites. Because the people of Nineveh were the Israelites' enemies, Jonah responded to God's forgiveness of Nineveh with anger. He did not want to accept God's will. However, Jonah came to realize that God is sovereign (in control of things in the world) and God's way of dealing with others differs from ours. He also learned that God's steadfast love abounds to all.

Lesson 3: March 21, 2010 **Family as Community** **Ruth 1:1-9, 14b, 16**

Because he own community experienced famine, Elimelech and his family move to a foreign Community, Moab. But when Elimelech and his two sons died, for support, his wife Naomi decided to return to her original community, Judah. Ruth, her daughter-law, forsook her won native community of Moab to remain with her mother-in-law and moved to Judah as well. She also made a loving commitment to her mother-in-law and accepted Naomi's God as her God.

Lesson 4: March 28, 2010 **Acceptance in Community** **Ruth 2:5-12; 3:9-11**

Boaz admired Ruth's loyalty to Naomi and offered her work and protection in his household, clan, and community. Ruth asked why she should be favored in Boaz's household, acknowledging that she was a foreigner. Boaz revealed, by expressing care for her, his willingness to accept kinsman-redeemer responsibility for Ruth. Most of us long for acceptance in our communities. Ruth, who felt she was a foreigner in a strange land, took the initiative to let Boaz know that she was willing to be a part of the community.

UNIT 2 • TEACHINGS OF JESUS

This unit looks at four lessons that illustrate "Teachings of Jesus" in relationship to community. The themes deal with light, love, connectedness, and a feast.

Lesson 5: April 4, 2010 (Easter) **The Community Faces Pain and Joy** **John 16:16-24; 20:11-16**

Communities experience not only great pain and sorrow but also great relief and joy. Why should communities have hope? Jesus foretold His betrayal, death, and resurrection, and He taught that pain and sorrow will be replaced by relief and joy.

Lesson 6: April 11, 2010 **Love within the Community** **1 John 2:9-11, 15-17**

Hate is rampant in our world, and we see evidence of that daily. Is there another way to live? John reiterates Jesus' teaching about love and exhorts believers to walk in the light of love.

Lesson 7: April 18, 2010
Connecting in Community
Matthew 22:34-40

Jesus taught about God's Law saying that He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. When later asked by religious leaders which of the commandments was the greatest. Jesus replied by telling them the two greatest commandments are to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and will all your soul, and with all your mind" and to "love your neighbor as yourself."

Lesson 8: April 25, 2010
Inclusion in Community
Luke 14:15-24

Jesus told the parable of the great feast, noting in the parable how many people turned down the invitation to attend because the timing was inconvenient. People send flimsy regrets to invitations without realizing that what they missed could have been a fantastic, life-changing event. Who is offering a life-changing event today? God is inviting everyone, anyone, to a banquet of food for the soul, and we had better not miss it!

UNIT 3 • TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

The last five lessons draw on three teachings from Colossians and one each from Philemon and Jude that relates "Teachings of the Church" on community. In Colossians, the learners will study the faithfulness of the community and how the community was established and chosen. The letter to Philemon helps us look at welcoming in the community, and the letter of Jude examines a community at risk.

Lesson 9: May 2 2010
A Faithful Community
Colossians 1:1-14

Paul prayed that the Colossians would be made strong in the strength of Christ and Assured them of their salvation promised in Christ. There are people in communities of faith who lack the power to lead worthy lives. Where and how can we connect with God's strength and glorious power? Paul told the Colossians that their power as congregation of hope and faith had come to them by their acceptance of the Word of Truth, the Gospel.

and humility, forgiveness, love, the peace of Christ, thankfulness, and worship.

Lesson 12: May 23, 2010
At Home in the Community
Philemon 1:8-18

Paul wrote a letter to facilitate a new relationship between Philemon, a slave master, and Onesimus, his runaway slave. Some people need someone to stand up for them and to be in their corner when the going gets tough. Where are all the places one can turn for help? Paul reminded Philemon that because of their relationship in Christ, he was standing up for Onesimus.

Lesson 13: May 30, 2010
At Risk in the Community
Jude 1:3-7, 19-21, 14-25

Jude warned against the dangers of false teaching which leads to wrong thinking and behaving. He encouraged the faithful to extend mercy to those who are not faithful but cautions that they not be influenced by them. Some people, for whatever reason, cause problems within their communities. What can be done to resolve community problems?

Jude reminded readers to contend for the faith entrusted to them, and to hold tight to their belief in Jesus Christ.

Lesson 10: May 9, 2010
An Established Community
Colossians 2:1-10

Paul encouraged an approach to Christian living that is rooted in Christ. He warned the Colossians not to be deceived by human thoughts and philosophies that are not in accordance with Christ. Paul told the Colossians that knowledge and wisdom are in Christ Jesus and in the lives of those who are growing in Christ.

Lesson 11: May 16, 2010
A Chosen Community
Colossians 3:12-17

Paul discussed what it means to be chosen by God to be in community. He offered a strategy for day to day living. Sometimes people are confused about what it means to be chosen. What does it mean to be chosen by God? Paul taught that our calling includes kindness