



October 2017

Gaining Community through Loss

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Nehemiah 2:1-10

FOCUS MINISTRY

Racial reconciliation

fellowship!

“From Flood to Friendship.”

Fall 2017

http://issuu.com/fellowship/docs/sept-nov_fellowship?e=1254077/52686358

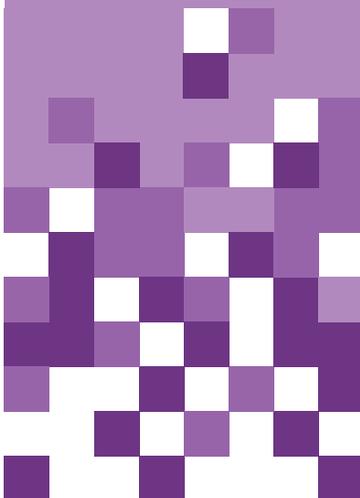
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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In August of 2016 an historic flood covered the sanctuary of Greater Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church with 6 feet of water. Reverend S.C. Dixon of Greater Mount Olive and Pastor Mike Massar of University Baptist Church of Baton Rouge partnered rebuild the flooded church building.

Over time the congregations came to see one another as friends and not just partners. This friendship, allowed them to be equals, humans helping humans, with affection for one another. It was this affection that helped them to move past talking about action to taking action toward working together.

- **ENGAGE:** Students will spend some time considering what it means to be in need.
- **EQUIP:** Students will study Nehemiah 2:1-10 and the beginning of the rebuilding of Jerusalem to gain a perspective of reconciliation leading to rebuilding.
- **EXTEND:** Students will learn how friendship leads to lasting change.
- **MISSION PROJECT:** Students will look for problems that affect the entire community and ask who they can partner with.





Gaining Community through Loss

LEARNING GOAL

Students will engage with the concept of racial reconciliation and what that can look like practically in their community.

GETTING READY

1. Read the article “From Flood to Fellowship” on pp. 25-27 in the Fall 2017 issue of *fellowship!*
2. Browse reconciliation curriculum such as https://issuu.com/cbfnc/docs/cbfnc_racial_reconciliation_curricu or <https://www.cbf.net/racial-reconciliation-resources/>
3. Read and study Nehemiah 2:1-10. Look into the history of the Babylonian exile.
4. Have Bibles for all students.
5. Read up on the work of the New Baptist Covenant.
6. Define the National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA).

ENGAGE

Opening Discussion: “Loss”

1. Ask the students to imagine the loss of the flood: “If you could take only one possession with you, what would it be and why?”
2. Extend this thought to the church. What if your church lost its building: what would the bare minimum of church be? What would you need to make church be church without a building?
3. Ask: “What is the hardest thing about collaborating?”
4. Discuss: “What is one thing this church is good at helping with? What is one thing this church needs help with?”

EQUIP

1. Read Nehemiah 2:1-10. Nehemiah is very vulnerable to King Artaxerxes, in not only allowing his sadness to show, but by answering the king honestly.
2. Give some background: The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and relocated many of the brightest and best of the Israelites to Babylon. In this era of the Babylonian Exile, Artaxerxes and Nehemiah are the second generation. Artaxerxes did not attack Israel, and Nehemiah had grown up in Babylon.
3. Ask: “Why do you think Artaxerxes was moved by Nehemiah’s story?”
4. Vulnerability: what do you think of when you hear the word? Are there any positive attributes of vulnerability?
5. Nehemiah was vulnerable to Artaxerxes by showing his emotion and Artaxerxes was vulnerable to Nehemiah by allowing him to go to Jerusalem.
6. Discuss: In what ways did the Greater Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church and University Baptist Church need to be vulnerable with one another?



EXTEND

The beginning of the article quotes Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. saying, “We must face the sad fact that at eleven o’clock on Sunday morning... we stand in the most segregated hour of America.”

1. What did Rev. King mean by this?
2. Ask students what church segregation looks like in their community. Why is this so?
3. Discuss: In the article, Rev. Dixon says, “We’ve gotten to know each other as brothers and sisters in Christ...” What are the obstacles to knowing other congregations as brothers and sisters in Christ?
4. Close the session praying for unity in the community.

MISSION PROJECT

1. Ascertain a need that affects the entire community. Identify a partner to work with that need.
2. Rev. Massar said, “We don’t have the corner on the market on what to do about all this, but we’re going to offer what we have.” What does this group of students have to offer? Research Asset Based Community Assessment and how this could help the group.
3. Pray for friendship with another congregation. What are some steps to making friends with a congregation of a different culture or race?
4. What is a need that this congregation has? How can being vulnerable about this need form community with another congregation?
5. Racial reconciliation can create a long congregation. What is one, tangible step to move past only talking and toward the action of reconciliation?

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