

## **“Good News in our community, 3”**

### **Notes for care groups to go with the talk on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2010**

#### **Read Mark 6: 30-44**

The apostles gathered around Jesus and told him about all the things they had done and taught. Crowds of people were coming and going so that Jesus and his followers did not even have time to eat. He said to them, “Come away by yourselves, and we will go to a lonely place to get some rest.

So they went in a boat by themselves to a lonely place. But many people saw them leave and recognised them. So from all the towns they ran to the place where Jesus was going, and they got there before him. When he arrived he saw a great crowd waiting. He felt sorry for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things. When it was late in the day, his followers came to him and said, “No one lives in this place, and it is already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the countryside and towns around here to buy themselves something to eat.” But Jesus answered, “You give them something to eat”. They said to him, “We would have to work a month to earn enough money to buy that much bread!” Jesus asked them, “How many loaves of bread do you have? Go and see.”

When they found out they said, “Five loaves and two fish.”

Then Jesus told his followers to have the people sit in groups on the green grass. So they sat in groups of 50 or 100. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he thanked God for the food. He divided the bread and gave it to his followers for them to give to the people. Then he divided the two fish among them all. All the people ate and were satisfied. The followers filled twelve baskets with the left-over pieces of bread and fish. There were 5000 men who ate.

#### **As a group brainstorm:**

1. Who are the main players in this story?
2. What specific actions did they do?
3. What was the need in this story? What were the resources?
4. List the steps that Jesus took to perform the miracle
5. In this story, what did Jesus focus on? What did the disciples focus on?
6. How were the resources used to meet the need identified?
7. Why do you think Jesus used those steps?
8. How could he have performed this miracle differently? Why did he not do it differently?
9. What does this passage tell us about the way we should facilitate the church and the community to meet their needs?
10. What would a miracle look like for our community? Think about the resources we have to put into God’s hands

#### **Jesus’ Actions**

- Challenged the disciples to feed the people
- Blessed the bread
- Directed that people be in groups
- Directed that the disciples collect the food left over

### **Other points you could draw out:**

- The ability of the disciples to solve the problem – “You feed them”
- The resources locally available “What do you have? Go and check”
- The limitless power of God - he gave thanks to God
- The importance of even the smallest resources, not to be wasted but to be appreciated

### **The disciples' actions**

- Identified the need - the people were hungry
- Identified the resources – two fish and five loaves
- Arranged the people into groups
- Served the people with food
- Collected the remains

### **The disciples focused on:**

- The desolation of the site
- Their poverty – no food and not enough money to buy it
- The magnitude of the need - too many people for what they had
- The seriousness of the problem - “the people are hungry and its getting late”
- Shifting the burden to the people - “Send them away that they may go look for food”

It's important for us to think about and celebrate what we have, what God has given us. We may feel poor in some ways, but we are incredibly rich in other ways.

### **What do you appreciate about OTCC and the wider community in Old Town?**

Here are some options of exercises you could do to help answer this question:

#### **1. Collage:**

Provide a selection of old magazines and newspapers for the group to look through. Ask people to cut out suitable pictures which reflect the things they appreciate about OTCC and the wider community in Old Town, and create a collage. Ask each person to share why they chose their picture(s) with the rest of the group. Write your reflections around the pictures on the collage.

- What are the common themes?
- What could we build on?
- What areas give us most energy?

## **2. Story telling:**

Ask people to share their memories in the form of a story. Encourage everyone to speak. Stories stay in peoples memories whereas hard facts are often forgotten.

Think of an object which can be passed from story teller to story teller, such as a wooden spoon, a candle, a pebble etc.. While they are holding the object nobody else can speak.

You could get people to begin with:

1. My best moment in this community was...
2. I am proud of our church because...
3. The person I most admire in the community is...
4. The best day with our church was...
5. I feel safe when...
6. The funniest thing that happened to me in church was...

## **3. Picture**

- Draw a picture representing the church and brainstorm all the things the church does. Then draw pictures representing these things around the picture of the church.
- Discuss what areas you think the church does best with the community, and why.
- Discuss where the gaps are and what might be done about them.
- Write up your findings and keep them for reference (and please send a copy to Stephen)

## **Some prayer suggestions:**

Heavenly Father,

We come to you, bringing what we have for you to use in our community. We pray that you will use our gifts and resources for the good of those around us. We also bring you our hurts, our worries, our anger, our weaknesses and ask you to transform them for your glory. Amen

Dear Lord,

Thank you that you rejoice with us over our community. We invite you to come along with us into our neighbourhood, to celebrate the achievements of those who live there and to share their pain. Please use your transforming power to help us help those in need and to love them as you love us. Amen

Father,

We thank you for all the things we have to be proud of in our community. Please remind us, Lord, that you have promised to provide us with everything we need, which leaves us free to share generously with those around us. Amen

**If care group leaders would like to give Stephen feedback from using these materials it would be appreciated and could feed into Session 4.**