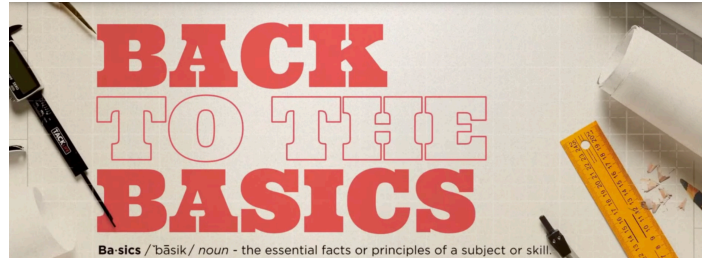


Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series description:

The story of Acts is the story of the church, the Spirit drawing diverse people together around a common purpose and a common mission. Acts is the roots of our church, the origins of our faith. Join us as we go back to the basics as we explore the shared practices, leadership, mission, and spirit that defined the earliest followers of Christ. May they be simple guidelines and inspiration for us today.

Message description:

The book of Acts begins with the Ascension of Christ, the promise of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus leaving the disciples to continue his work and mission. There is a way that we could read the rest of the book of Acts after this extraordinary start that is legendary with its healings, miracles, and conversions. And while we might expect Acts to end in a story of triumph, with Christians coming to power and thousands flocking to Jesus, **the story ends with Paul still in prison and waiting for his day in court.** The story of Acts ends with two simple stories of hospitality, welcome, and love: of strangers showing Paul and his fellow travelers unusual kindness and hospitality. **This is the shared mission;** to cultivate communities around the value of Christ that are working toward justice that as we wait for the redemption of the world, we practice hospitality, love, and welcome. Even in uncertain times, God continues working through faithful people who welcome others with hope and grace.

Scripture: Acts 27-28

Questions based on this week's teaching:

1. The ending of Acts is surprisingly ordinary rather than triumphant. Why do you think Luke chose to end the story with hospitality and faithfulness instead of victory or success? What does that teach us about the mission of the church?
2. The people of Malta showed "unusual kindness" to strangers who arrived in weakness and need. When have you experienced or witnessed radical hospitality in your own life? How did it impact you?
3. Willie James Jennings describes the common life of Christian community as a place "where the struggle for justice meets radical hospitality." What might that look like practically in our church, neighborhoods, or relationships today?
4. Paul continued welcoming and serving others even while imprisoned and waiting for justice. What challenges or fears most often keep us from practicing hospitality, generosity, or love in difficult seasons?
5. The Spirit has been poured out and now we continue the story. What does it look like for us personally and as a church community to continue the mission of Jesus in our current moment?