

THE NEXT 50 YEARS – PART I

ABOUT THIS WEEK

This week, your group will start the season of Small Groups with a discussion on *The Next 50 Years* series and ask the essential questions needed to make a pledge.

ITEMS NEEDED

- Bibles Pens Small Group Agreement Contact List

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- Pray for your group Read through Discussion Guide Refreshments (optional)
 Clean meeting area Clean bathroom Crack front door

OPENING (10-12 MIN)

Briefly welcome everyone and say: First off, welcome to our Small Group! This will be our group for the next several months. I'm excited to get to know everyone in our group better.

As a part of our launch, we're going to pass around two things. One, our contact list to verify that we have everyone's information correct. And two, a sheet called the *Small Group Expectations* just so we're clear on some ground rules for our group. I'll read it, and then we'll each sign it.

Host, read the Small Group Covenant, then pass it around with a pen and the Contact List. Then, say: As you sign the Small Group Expectations, let's get started with an icebreaker like we'll do each week. This week's question is simple though.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME AND WHEN DID YOU START GOING TO ST. MARK?

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

After a discussion, say: Well, once again, thank you all for being here. Before we get into today's discussion, let's pray.

Host, lead the group in prayer.

THE NEXT 50 YEARS (15 MIN)

After the prayer say: As you've likely heard, we're in a series and a campaign called *The Next 50 Years* where we're honoring the legacy of those who built our sanctuary 50 years ago by leaving a legacy of our own. There are two goals of this campaign—to update our campus and to make room to grow. So, first question—

WHICH PART OF OUR CAMPUS DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE UPDATED THE MOST?

After a discussion, say: Now, let's flip the question by taking on the perspective of others.

WHICH PART OF OUR CAMPUS DO YOU THINK THE NEXT GENERATION NEED US TO UPDATE THE MOST?

WHICH PART OF OUR CAMPUS DO YOU THINK VISITORS NEED US TO UPDATE THE MOST?

After a discussion, say: For over a year, the leadership of the church and school have been asking these same questions as they met with architects, held open forums, and been in prayer together. As a result, they've created a priority list of projects that includes updating and expanding the lobby, adding seats to the balcony, updating our multipurpose room for both Youth and Family Ministry and Our World for Children, adding ADA compliant bathrooms, lowering the top step of the altar, and repaving and expanding our parking lot.

To accomplish all of this, St. Mark is asking every household to make a three-year pledge above and beyond their regular tithes and offerings to help us reach the \$2million required for *The Next 50 Years* projects. Although we won't be talking about our own individual commitments in our Small Group, there are some concepts we can all talk about as we listen to God's guidance for our personal pledge.

THE WIDOW'S MITE (10-15 MIN)

CAN SOMEONE READ LUKE 21:1-4 ALOUD FOR US?

After the reading, ask: Let's unpack a few principles in this.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MOTIVATES THE RICH IN THE STORY TO GIVE AS THEY DO?

WHAT DO YOU THINK MOTIVATES THE WIDOW IN THE STORY TO GIVE AS SHE DOES?

FINALLY, WHAT DOES THIS READING SUGGEST JESUS MEASURES IN OUR GIVING?

After a discussion, say: This reading obviously makes us start to think about our own gift to the capital campaign. But before we make our pledges on **Commitment Sunday on October 6th**, Pastor Chris is asking each of us in the church to spend the next few weeks praying, "God, what do you want me to give to *The Next 50 Years*?" And then, to simply give what he asks. Nothing more, nothing less. As we close our group today, we'll pray that prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

Say: Speaking of prayer, we close out each Small Group with prayer requests and prayer.

LET'S START OUR PRAYER REQUESTS BY ASKING—WHAT'S YOUR PRAYER FOR ST. MARK IN 50 YEARS?

After writing down people's answers, ask:

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS?

Host, after taking prayer requests, close out the group in prayer by praying

- "God, would show each of us what you want us to give to *The Next 50 Years*?"
- Then, pray your group's prayers for St. Mark in 50 years.
- Finally, pray any other prayer requests.