

THE NEXT 50 YEARS – PART III

ABOUT THIS WEEK

This week, your group will continue discussing *The Next 50 Years* series by considering the last three of six vision statements for St. Mark and what it means for them and for the church.

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles 29–Day Prayer Devotional for *The Next 50 Years* Pen and paper

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: Last meeting we talked about three of the six vision statements for St. Mark and considered what they meant for ourselves and for the church in the next 50 years. Today we'll look at the last three vision statements. But first, an icebreaker—

WHICH MOVIE ABOUT THE FUTURE IS YOUR FAVORITE?

BACK TO THE FUTURE

TERMINATOR 2

BLADE RUNNER

BILL & TED'S

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

PLANET OF THE APES

AVATAR

ALIEN

OTHER

After the icebreaker, say: Well, it's not just science fiction that can look to the future, so can the people of St. Mark!

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

After a discussion, say: But before we get into today's discussion, let's pray.

Host, lead the group in prayer.

A CHURCH AS DIVERSE AS THE CITY WE SERVE (5-7 MIN)

After the prayer, say: The fourth vision statement we're looking at is to "be a church as diverse as the city we serve".

CAN SOMEONE READ REVELATION 7:9-12 ALOUD FOR US?

WHY DO YOU THINK DIVERSITY IN A CHURCH MAKES SUCH A STRONG IMPRESSION ON OUTSIDERS?

WHAT STEPS DO YOU THINK ST. MARK CAN TAKE TO BECOME AS DIVERSE AS THE CITY WE SERVE?

LET'S GET A BIT MORE PERSONAL – WHAT STEPS DO YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE TO HAVE MORE DIVERSITY IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS?**A CHURCH THAT GROWS SMALLER AS WE GROW LARGER (5-7 MIN)**

After a discussion, say: Our next vision statement is to “be a church that grows smaller as we grow larger.” It’s a vision to stay personable even as we grow over 400 people in worship.

CAN SOMEONE READ ROMANS 12:10-16 ALOUD FOR US? AS THEY READ, LISTEN FOR THE COMMANDS IN THIS SECTION.**WHICH OF THE COMMANDS WE JUST HEARD ARE EASIER TO DO IN A SMALL GROUP IN A HOME THAN ON A SUNDAY MORNING AT CHURCH?****NOW FLIP IT – WHICH OF THE COMMANDS WE JUST HEARD ARE EASIER TO DO IN A LARGE GROUP ON SUNDAY MORNING THAN IN A SMALL GROUP IN A HOME?**

After a discussion, say: Obviously we’ve made a point that it’s easier to live out the “one another” commands in a Small Group in a home than it is in a big church building. Let’s ask one more question, then:

IS THERE ANYONE AT ST. MARK WE KNOW WHO ISN'T ALREADY IN A SMALL GROUP THAT WE COULD INVITE TO BE A PART OF THIS SMALL GROUP?**A CHURCH WITH AN INVITING CULTURE (5 MIN)**

After a discussion, say: Finally, our sixth vision statement for our discussion is to “be a church with an inviting culture.” Most churches would say they’re welcoming, but we want to be able to say we’re an inviting church because of how intentionally we reach out to those who don’t yet know the hope of Jesus.

CAN SOMEONE READ LUKE 15:3-7 ALOUD FOR US?**WHO IS SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW THE HOPE OF JESUS THAT YOU ARE INVITING TO COME TO A SUNDAY MORNING AT ST. MARK?****WHAT WILL ST. MARK LOOK LIKE IF WE FULLY LIVE OUT THIS VISION STATEMENT IN THE NEXT 50 YEARS?****CLOSING (5-7 MIN)****TO CLOSE, WHICH OF THE THREE VISION STATEMENTS WE DISCUSSED TODAY NEEDS YOUR ATTENTION THE MOST AND WHY?**

After a discussion, say: There are a lot of steps to take if we’re going to fulfill these vision statements, both for ourselves personally and for our church. But all we can focus on today is our next steps.

Our first next step for *The Next 50 Years* is to keep praying the daily prayers for our campaign using the *29-Day Prayer Devotional*. And to start our closing prayer tonight, I’ll read today’s entry.

The second step is to come to the **Early Commitment Dinner on September 26th**. You can RSVP at www.stmark.net/rsvp

And then the third step is to make your pledge on **Commitment Sunday on October 6th**.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS?

Host, write down your group's prayer requests.

Next, close out the group in prayer by praying the date's prayer in "The Next 50 Years 29-Day Prayer Devotional".

Then, close your group by praying for your group's other prayer requests.