

MISSION:
~~IM~~POSSIBLE

WEEK THREE

Sightedness





The Diocese of Toronto seeks to become shaped for mission and faithful to God's call to serve all in a post-Christendom context. This Mission Possible course has been provided as a resource to parishes to help people begin to think about who God is, what is the mission of God and how does church need to be shaped to respond to that call.

I strongly commend the program to you as it has been developed by Jenny and Stephen, both of whom know what it means to serve in inherited churches that seek to be shaped for mission. My hope is that this course will begin a fruitful and lasting conversation on what it means to be missional in your own context.

Yours faithfully,

The Most Reverend Colin R. Johnson
Archbishop of Toronto
Metropolitan of Ontario



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada



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Homework exercise

Listen closely this week to what your non-churchy friends are saying. Identify where God is at work in their lives, and what they may be yearning for. Come back next week prepared to tell a story of a friend's question or comment and where you thought God might be stirring in that friend's life.



Closing prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for raising Jesus from the dead and for your continued work in our world, drawing the whole world to yourself. Give us that new sight, eyes to see where you are working around us. Show us how you are moving in the lives of our family members, our friends, those we work and play with. We thank and praise you, confident that you go before us. Amen.

Next week....

Leader: See you next week when we will begin to look at where God is at work in the world, at work outside of our church buildings.
How are we called to respond?

God's mission awaits if you choose to accept it.



What are they longing for?

FOUR

Mid-40s double-income couple, with three teenage children.

*I feel like we are not really married anymore...
just co-parents, friends living in the same
house...we get along all right but...*



What's God doing here?

FIVE

Early 60s man.

*Hard to believe I am about to retire,
where have the years gone?...Not so
sure I want to think about what I have
accomplished or not over those years.*



God is at work in people's lives even if they haven't seen it yet. We are called to learn to "see" God at work, to see God's fingerprints over people's lives. Only when we have "seen" can we discern how we are called to respond.

Leader's Note

Give the group five minutes to think through their case study and then have them share with the whole group.

A Note for Leaders....

Week three...you might just make it through!

Our hope for this week is that participants will begin to understand the transforming nature of "seeing" God at work. We begin with the physical resurrection of Jesus and the impact that "seeing" the risen Lord had on the first disciples. We then attempt to show how to "see" God still at work in the lives of those around us. "Seeing" God at work is transforming.

Recap of last week

What are the three R's?

1) _____

Leader: Restoration

2) _____

Leader: Recovery

3) _____

Leader: Redemption

What is the mission of God (*missio Dei*)?

Leader: God's mission is to bring humanity and creation back into right relationship with God.

Homework collection time!

(Encourage people to talk and share their experiences from this past week.)

In your groups share **your** experiences this past week of

Restoration
Recovery
Redemption.



This week....

This week we are going to look at the issue of “sightedness.” How do we “see” where God is at work in our own lives and in the lives of others?

And to start, we are going to look at the resurrection and the impact that “seeing” the risen Jesus had on the first disciples.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the cornerstone of Christian faith because it authenticates all that Jesus said about himself and his life and ministry.

Seeing is believing....

Only when the first disciples saw that Jesus had risen did they believe.

What is it that they are seeking?

ONE

Young engaged couple. They are in their late 20s, university educated, come to church at Christmas.

We don't go to church, but want to get married in the church. We want to do it right and get off to the right start.



What's stirring in his life?

TWO

Mid-30s, hands-on father of two who works long hours.

I have helped out in the past with Habitat for Humanity builds and I run a couple of marathons a year to raise money for breast cancer research... it killed my mum. I want to help out, you know.



Is God working here?

THREE

Young single mum, on maternity leave.

*I am so fed up being at home with the baby...I am going insane, tired all the time. Just not enough company for the day, even **with** Facebook.*



So if **we** were to be transformed by the risen Jesus, what would **we** see?
Where would **we** see God at work in the world?

To answer these questions, we are now going to look at some brief case studies.

We are going to try to “see” where God is at work in the lives of these people.

We are going to be “divine detectives,” learning to recognize God at work.

Background to case studies

These are real things that we have heard people in our neighbourhoods say. These people do not attend church. Break into teams and each of you take one case study. As you read what they said assume that God **is** at work in their lives. People often may not use spiritual or religious language. Ask yourself though, “What is the spiritual yearning behind these words?” and “Where is God moving in their lives?”

Be a divine detective....



We are going to read now one of those eyewitness records of the resurrection from the Gospel of John.

Leader's Notes

We've chosen the resurrection account from the Gospel of John for two reasons: the response of John and the response of Mary. John's response is to “see” the empty tomb and then believe. The very absence of Jesus' body was enough for him. And then he returned home.

Mary's experience was different: she encountered the risen Jesus. She not only saw and believed, but she experienced Jesus and then told others.

The main point here is that when John and Mary “saw,” they believed and were then moved to tangible action.

As you read, underline every time you find “see” or “saw.”

John 20:1–10

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and **saw** that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and **saw** the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He **saw** the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head,

not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he **saw** and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Discuss

Which people in the story “saw”? What did they see?
What was the effect of seeing on these people?

**Now read further and again underline the words
“seen” and “saw.”**

John 20:11–18

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she **saw** two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and **saw** Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have **seen** the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Discuss

What did Mary see?
What did she then do once she had “seen”?

In these eyewitness accounts of the resurrection, “seeing” has a transformative effect on the first disciples—it moved them to action. It can be the same with us.

Seeing can be believing.

If you have time, you can then look at the story of Saul in Acts 9:1–19...simply another example that demonstrates how transformative “seeing” can be.

Saul of Tarsus was blinded on the road to Damascus having had an encounter with the risen Jesus. After he was healed by Ananias, the scales fell from his eyes, his sight was restored and he became a new person...Paul.

Leader’s Notes

In this next section we are encouraging participants to “see” the presence of God in the lives of others.

There are five case studies; depending on the size of your group, divide them up accordingly.

Allow five minutes or so for each group to discuss their case study, then have them come back together and share with the large group.

It is our hope that participants will see how God is wanting to bring healing and wholeness in the lives of those around us; that work of restoration, recovery and redemption.