

Imagine a World with More

A video and preaching
resource



**A RESOURCE AND GIFT FROM
DISCIPLES MISSION FUND**



Imagine a World with More

Series Introduction

Imagine a world with more. More compassion. More hope. More justice. More of God's limitless love, ignited in our communities.

The church is in a season of imagining anew how we do ministry, worship, care for one another and connect with our communities in impactful ways. We are imagining what it means to be God's people, to study scripture, to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ in this new world. Often our communities get caught in a vision of scarcity—what if there is not enough? What if we are not enough?

Instead the Imagine a World with More... series invites communities to ask—what if we imagined a world with MORE? What if we imagined a world in which God's love was limitless? A world where there was more hope, more love, more connection? What would our communities look like? How would they feel? Who would be changed in a world with more? What would be transformed? Imagine a World with More... invites the church to see God's love as the limitless and abundant force in our world, or the world we want to create.

In her 2022 State of the Church address Rev. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens shared, "God's imagination is so limitless that we are called to continually move the stake. We can't think of anything beyond what God can accomplish. And if we don't believe that, I always say, if we don't believe that God can do exceedingly and abundantly as Ephesians tells us, all that we can ask or think, we might as well hang it up right now. 1 Corinthians 1 tells us that God's foolishness is wiser than human weakness and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. A later part of that verse in the King James says that God uses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."



Series Introduction (con't)

Imagine a World with More... is a resource to explore what our world might look like with more of the church in it. More of the church's expansive love. More of the church's radical hope. More of the church's deep compassion and commitment to justice. And not just the more of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) but more of your community doing what it does best and revealing God's limitless love in your community. It's an invitation to imagine what God is doing and what God could do in each of our communities.

Included in this resource you will find six scriptures and sermon starters to help you shape a sermon series around Imagine a World with More... You may use all six weeks or choose three to four weeks that connect with your community's ministry context. This resource would work well as an introduction or companion to a visioning or discernment process in the life of the church.

There is also a video you may use to introduce and promote your series and instructions on how to customize it to include your church's branding. If you or your ministry team need help with customization, you may reach out to our office at for additional assistance.

We invite you to share how you use this resource by tagging us on social media or using the hashtags #ccdofc and #ImagineMore. You can find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

This ministry resource is brought to you by Disciples Mission Fund. Learn more about how Disciples Mission Fund works or how your congregation can be a part of Disciples Mission Fund by visiting www.disciplesmissionfund.org.



Week 1

Imagine a World with More #Compassion

Scripture - Matthew 25:31-44

"...I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me."

Something to think about...

This passage from Matthew makes it clear that righteousness is inextricably tied with how we treat each other - so much so that caring for a neighbor in need is caring for Jesus himself. When we image a world with more compassion, what does that world look like? How would we relate to one another differently? Where can we see glimpses of a world with more compassion now? If we take this passage seriously, what does it mean about how we practice our faith?

Consider this...

What does your congregation need to hear this week? Are there people in your church who have been caring for others so relentlessly that they haven't been able to care for themselves? How might this passage speak to them? What about people who are themselves hungry, tired, estranged, or imprisoned? What does this scripture say to them?

Disciples at work...

Week of Compassion is the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). When disaster strikes, Week of Compassion is there, helping Disciples respond to the needs of neighbors around the world. Visit <http://www.weekofcompassion.org/stories> to find stories of recent responses from this vital ministry.



Imagine a World with More #Compassion

In your own context...

Highlight the work your congregation is already doing to care compassionately for your neighbors. Use this opportunity invite to invite a community partner to speak to your congregation about the needs in your community. Are there ways your congregation could grow in its compassionate response? Is there something your congregation is in the process of imagining that might deepen compassion in your community?

For all ages and abilities...

The tangible details of this passage open up the possibilities for making it accessible. Invite people to remember a time when they felt hungry, thirsty, or lonely. Who made them feel better? A multi-sensory prayer station could feature cups of cold water, pieces of clothing to try on, or notecards to be sent to inmates in a local prison.



Week 2

Imagine a World with More #Community

Scripture - Acts 2:42-47

“The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers.”

Something to think about...

Much of our culture is built around individualism; we value working hard and doing things for ourselves. The witness of scripture provides a counter narrative, in which the good of the community is prioritized above the good of the individual. The early church imagined a world where God’s limitless love shaped the way we gathered, care for one another and structured ourselves to share resources. How might imagining our current world the way the early church imagined God’s world change our perspective? If we take this passage seriously, what does it mean about how we practice our faith?

Consider this...

What does your congregation need to hear this week? What are the characteristics of a church community, as defined by this passage from Acts? In what ways does your congregation reflect this picture of the early church? In what ways does it differ? Based on the passage, how might we imagine a world with more of the community God imagines?

Disciples at work...

Disciples Home Missions provides resources for communities of all kinds from communities supporting immigrants, to communities building sustainable children’s ministries, to congregations like yours. Explore www.discipleshomemissions.org to find Bible studies, resources for creation care, ideas for multi-generational ministry, and much more.



Imagine a World with More #Community

In your own context...

Highlight some of the ways your congregation lives in community, even in a culture that emphasizes the individual. Celebrate the ways you care for each other, and challenge your congregation to grow deeper in their relationships with one another. Also consider, however, the caution that building community within the church might actually keep you from serving the community beyond the church. How might your congregation keep from becoming too inwardly focused? What need in the larger community might your congregation imagine engaging to expand God's limitless love in the world? How might the wider community benefit from your congregation's resources and way of imagining God?

For all ages and abilities...

Invite people to consider what communities they are a part of: church, school, neighborhood, family, social groups, volunteer organizations, etc. What do we each receive from the communities we participate in? What do we give? A multisensory prayer station could include pieces of yarn that participants are invited to tie together to symbolize the connectedness of community.



Week 3

Imagine a World with More #Hope

Scripture - Hebrews 10:23-25

“Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.”

Something to think about...

Hope in the Christian tradition is not wishful thinking; it is confident expectation rooted in the promises of God. Hope is an act of imagination. We imagine what could be in the midst of what is. This passage from Hebrews grounds our hope in the context of the history of our tradition and the support of our community. How might your congregation be a space of active hope? How might a world with more hope impact our communities and the people in them? If we take this passage seriously, what does it mean about how we practice our faith?

Consider this...

What does your congregation need to hear this week? Have there been times in the life of the church when despair was threatening to take over? How did the church respond? Are there people in your congregation who are going through a season when hope is particularly difficult to find? How could your community walk alongside them and give them hope?

Disciples at work...

Through the work of Global Ministries, Disciples mission co-workers accompany our partners around the world. At www.globalministries.org, you'll find stories of hope-giving work, like [this reflection from a mission co-worker who served in Morocco](#), where tens of thousands of people are migrating through the area on their way to safer homes.



Imagine a World with More #Hope

In your own context...

In what ways does your congregation practice hope? Think about the liturgy you use as you worship each week. What words, songs, or symbols capture the hope of the gospel? How does your congregation regularly reaffirm the promises God has made to us?

For all ages and abilities...

The image of a garden can offer a concrete way to explore the concept of hope. Gardeners plant their seeds in early spring with the confidence that they will grow tall and healthy by summer. Where does that hope come from? A multisensory prayer station could include cups of soil and packets of flower seeds for participants to plant.



Week 4

Imagine a World with More #Justice

Scripture - Isaiah 58: 6-9

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?”

Something to think about...

The prophet Isaiah is painting a vision of a world in which everything is turned upside down. This reading calls us to imagine a complete overturning of our current systems and structures, so that all injustice ends and all human needs are met. It invites us to imagine a world in which everything God promises could be true. If we take this passage seriously, what does it mean about how we practice our faith?

Consider this...

What does your congregation need to hear this week? Christian communities are often deeply invested in meeting the immediate needs of their neighbors through ministries like food pantries and homeless shelters. This is good! But the witness of scripture call us to go deeper, and to examine the systems and structures that have created issues of hunger and homelessness in the first place. What structures are at play in your community? What role has systemic racism and other systemic injustice played in keeping your neighbors from having enough?



Imagine a World with More #Justice

Disciples at work...

Disciples are doing the work of justice in many ways. For many years, our mission priority to be an antiracist, pro-reconciling church has guided the work we do across the whole denomination. Revisit the [Facing Brokenness: Being Brave Together](#) series created as part of a larger collaboration across the Disciples Justice Ministries or sign up for the [Disciples Justice Ministries newsletter](#) to stay up to date on various justice efforts across the life of the church.

In your own context...

Your congregation is probably already engaged in some form of community service. Encourage your congregation to ask questions about why that service is needed in your community. Ask questions to learn more about the systems and structures in play. And ask a much more difficult question: are there ways in which your congregation might actually be contributing to the problems in your community?

For all ages and abilities...

For concrete thinkers, explain justice by talking about shoes: everybody needs shoes, but we don't all need the same size. In a just world, we'd all have shoes that are just the right size for us, but the reality is that many of us have far more shoes than we need, and others don't have any at all. A multisensory prayer station could include a world map with pins to locate areas where Disciples are at work doing justice in the world.



Week 5

Imagine a World with More #Beauty

Scripture - Psalm 19:1-4

"The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork."

Something to think about...

The opening verses of Psalm 19 proclaim that all of creation is singing God's praises. Even without words, the beauty of creation carries the message of God's love. It is easy to look at creation and see God's beauty, but what about the messier places in our world and life? Where might God's beauty be waiting to surprise us? If we take this passage seriously, what does it mean about how we practice our faith?

Consider this...

What does your congregation need to hear this week? In the midst of our busy lives and with the bad news of the world swirling around us, it's easy to overlook the beauty that is sometimes right in front of us. Are there ways you can make space for people in your church to experience the beauty of God this week?

Disciples at work...

Green Chalice is a ministry that supports local congregations in their efforts to embrace creation care, and provides opportunities for climate advocacy. Explore the work of [Green Chalice](#), and consider how your congregation can celebrate and protect the beauty of God's creation.



Imagine a World with More #Beauty

In your own context...

Where does your congregation celebrate beauty? How are art and music used in your worship or elsewhere in your life together? What do you do that nurtures delight? Perhaps there are artists in your congregation who could be invited to share their gifts to help you create something beautiful together. Is there a space in your community that your congregation might nurture beauty?

For all ages and abilities...

Invite people to reflect on something beautiful they saw or witnessed in the past week. Provide images of outdoor scenes or artwork and invite conversation about the nature of beauty. A multisensory prayer station could include art supplies like paper, crayons, markers, and paint.



Week 6

Imagine a World with More #Resurrection

Scripture - 1 Peter 1:3-9

“By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...”

Something to think about...

The good news that God’s love is more powerful even than death is the crux of the Christian story. In the opening section of this letter, the author explains that we are given new life through the resurrection of Jesus. Readers are invited to imagine the power of the resurrection as the people of God. If we take this passage seriously, what does it mean about how we practice our faith?

Consider this...

What does your congregation need to hear this week? The promise of new life through resurrection only comes after the pain of death. Are there things your congregation needs to let die so that new life can flourish? Are there people in your congregation who are actively grieving the recent death of loved ones? How might you talk about the resurrection with them?

Disciples at work...

New Church Ministry works with regions to support newly forming Disciples congregations to train, equip, assist, and multiply new church leaders across the United States and Canada through programs such as coaching, New Church Hacks, Hopeful Economics podcast and Water the Plants. Explore the stories and resources [New Church Ministry](#) has created for new and established church leaders that are fostering resurrection across the church.



Imagine a World with More #Resurrection

In your own context...

New life can sometimes be hard to see. Can you point to a moment in your congregation's history when it felt like it was dying? Can you then point to the new life that is happening now? What might your congregation need to grieve? What can you celebrate?

For all ages and abilities...

Invite people to consider what they need to let go of so that something new can grow. A multisensory prayer station could include a basket of "resurrection rocks." Participants could take one with them as a reminder of the empty tomb and the promise of new life.



Learn more about Disciples Mission Fund

A ministry of The Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

About

Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) brings the whole Church together, connecting us to the life-giving and life-saving work we have been called to do. It also simplifies giving for congregations and individuals, providing a way to support the entire Church at once. DMF-funded regional and general ministries offer opportunities for Disciples to serve as missionaries, attend college or seminary, advocate for the least of these, and so much more.

Video

You can learn more about how Disciples Mission Fund works and how it creates impact across the life of the church by checking out a short video. This video also makes a great resource for your congregation to talk about Disciples Mission Fund and its impact in your region and around the world.



Connect

If you would like to learn more or arrange for someone to come and speak to your congregation about the ministry impact of Disciples Mission Fund email news@disciples.org.

