

THE CHURCH CONTINUED...

**Tight-Knit Community****A Note to the Parents/Teachers**

One of our desires as a church is to be formed as a tight-knit community, caring for one another and sharing each other's burdens. This love for one another is how Jesus says people will know we are his disciples, and it's the life we want to invite others into. We need the Spirit's power to love this way, the way Jesus loves. Pray for the Spirit to give this to our community.

- **Big Idea:** We over Me - Jesus brings us out of thinking only of ME and calls us into a community of WE.

Starter**Evidence of Grace**

- Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discuss:

- Have your parents or teacher ever told you, "You are only thinking of yourself"? Or "The world doesn't revolve around you"?
- What do you think they are talking about when they say that to you?

Sing Together

Lesson - from Acts 2:42-47

If we are honest, most of the time we do things, say things, and think things that revolve around what is best for ME. We just got done with Christmas and there might have been a time when you thought to yourself, *"This isn't fair. Why did my friend or sibling get this present and I didn't?"* Or maybe you thought to yourself, *"This is all I get?"*

So much of what we do or say or think is filtered through a lens of ME. How does this benefit me? How do this make me better than so-and-so? How do I compare to my friends or siblings? Why can't I have that? Why can't I have what my friends have?

This lens of ME tends to distort how we see the world and relationships around us in two different ways. First, if we only see and hear through the lens of me then we view relationships only how they will benefit me. It's not that we don't love our family and friends, but when we see these relationship through the ME lens, then everything is ok as long as they meet MY needs, do what I want, or only as long as they make me happy and fulfill my needs. This way of seeing the world can be lonely, disappointing, and frustrating because our world revolves around us.

Second, if we only see and hear through the lens of ME then we think that we don't need anyone to help or that we aren't allowed to ask for help when life gets hard. If my world revolves around me, then when life gets hard we put all of the pressure on ourselves to fix whatever went wrong. We think that we have to be the one to fix, repair, make right, or solve everything that is broken. We were never meant to carry this burden or responsibility to fix everything that is broken. We are not Jesus.

When we do ask for help, we also might find that our friends or family may not be as eager to help us because in the past we have only thought of ourselves and haven't thought about their needs or loved them well. You see when we tend to live a life of ME then we tend to push everyone else away whether we mean to or not.

Me separates us from community. ME separates us from WE. We were not created for a life of ME. We were created for a life of WE.

At the very beginning of creation when God first made the heavens, the earth, the animals, and the man, He said that everything was good! The only thing that God said was not good, was that the man was all alone. He needed another person. He needed community. He needed a WE.

In Acts 2:42-47, we read about a community of people that thought more about the WE than they did about ME. It says that they intentionally set aside time every day to meet together to learn about Jesus, to eat together, to pray together, and to see if anyone needed anything that they might be able to give. This means that they did life together. They shared whatever they had if someone else needed something. The WE of community was more important than just ME, the individual. This was so crazy that the people that weren't a part of this community saw it and wanted to be a part of it. They saw how these people lived and they desperately wanted in.

The unique thing about this community wasn't that they just thought about others or shared everything that they had. The reason WHY they lived in community like this was because of JESUS. They loved Jesus so much, learned how he lived on earth, and wanted to live like Jesus did. Jesus was the center of this church community. At the heart of the WE is Jesus — not ME.

Now, this doesn't mean we can never think of ourselves and take care of ourselves. It doesn't mean we never think of ME and only think of WE. What it does mean is that we should think of ME in the context of WE. Because Jesus has freed us to live in community with others, instead of only asking the question, "What do I need," we now ask the question, "What do I need, so that I can love others more fully?"

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- What do your relationships look like with your parents, siblings, or friends when you only think of ME?
- How would those relationships look different if you thought more about WE than ME?
- If a lot of the time we think more about ME than WE, how do you think this shapes how you view your relationship with Jesus?
- What would it look like to think more about WE than ME?
- What would it look like to see ME as a part of WE?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshiping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshiping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others in a way that points them to Jesus and your Kingdom. May our hearts be filled with love for you and for others in response to what you have done in and through your Son Jesus and the Story you have invited us to now participate in. Help me to think of my community this week and how I can love them well so that they might know you more.

Craft:

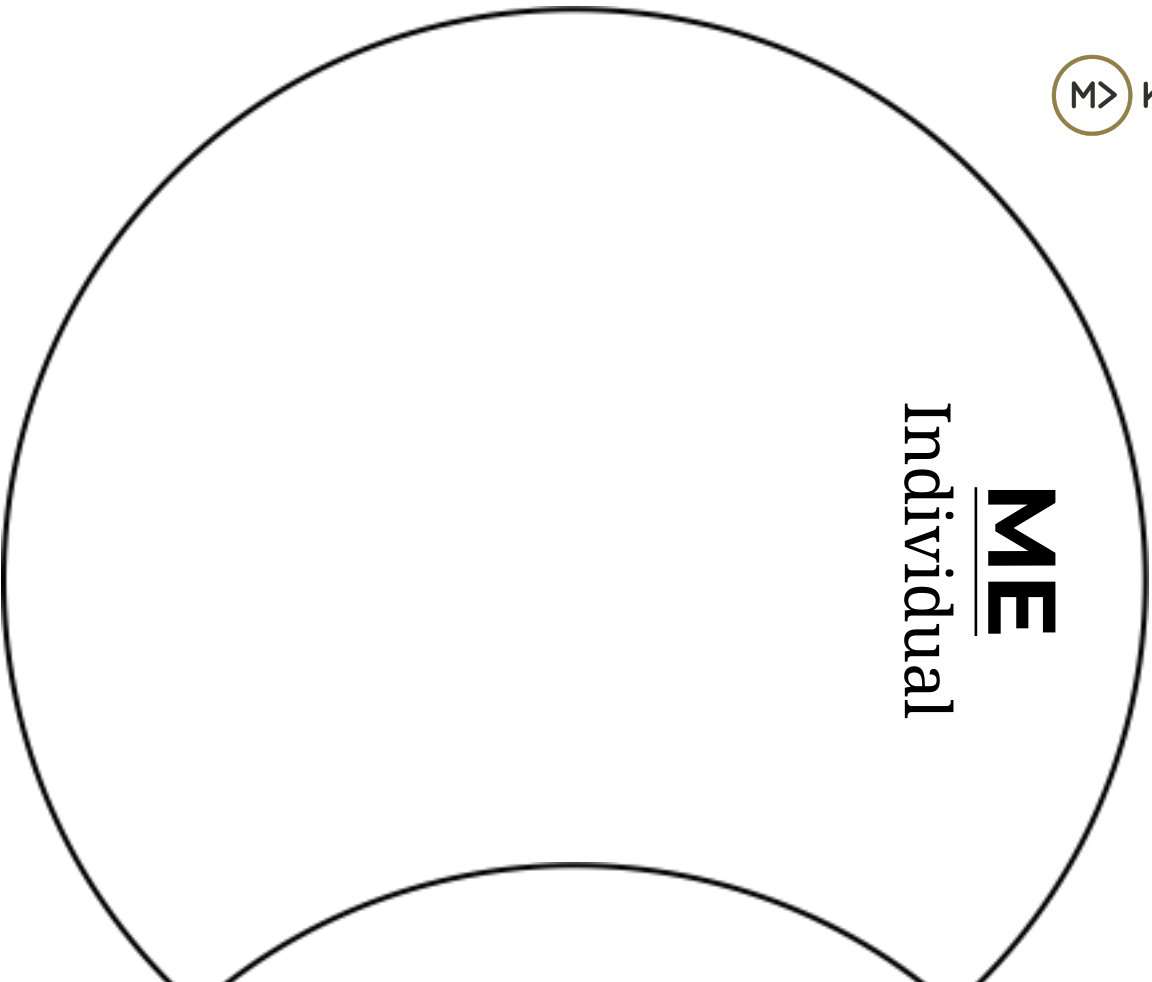
Use the following page to lead the kids through an activity of discernment

- Me: What are some things you are good at doing? What are things you love doing? What are gifts that God has given you? What are things that you have (toys, books, bikes, etc.)?
- We: What are the different communities that you belong to? (Family, school, church, maybe work for youth, gaming groups)
- How can you use what God has given you to bless the community He has placed you in?

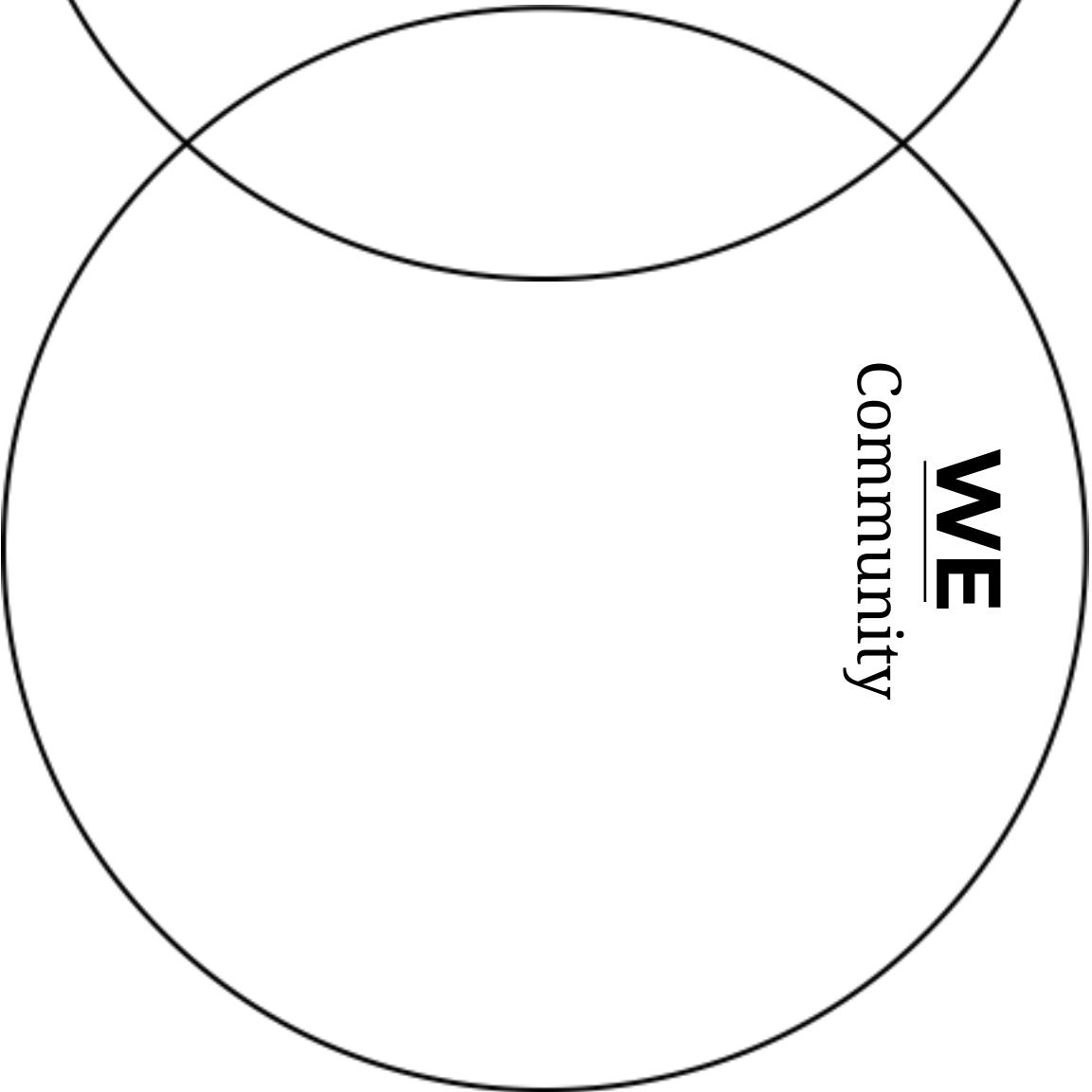
BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the **Speak** rhythm.

As you go to school, to the store with your parent, to your sports game or after-school activity, or even in your own home, think about who you might be able to speak the good news that the kingdom of God has come to earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.



ME
Individual



WE
Community