

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Called As We Are

January 19 & 20, 2019

We are called **as** we are and called to be **who** we are. This is both a gift of grace and a great challenge. The truth is, most of us don't know who we really are. We define ourselves by our roles, jobs or history, but our true self is something deeper than these. In addition, God calls us in the particularities of our life stage and our developmental tasks.

SCRIPTURE TEXT : PSALM 139

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Our relationship with God is from the beginning. God creates each person, knows us inside and out and loves us. The words of this Psalm are similarly powerful for those of us who are well beyond our days of birth. To recall our own humble beginnings, and God's intimate involvement in that dawning, is to bring us to pray with the Psalmist, *O Lord, you have searched me and known me* (vs. 1). God calls us to live in the world just as we are, with all our great attributes and our imperfections. God's call is not generic, but is specific to your time in life. Each one of us has a unique and particular calling. Because God calls each one of us by name. You have been given this life, and can discover God's call as you are. God created each of us, regardless of our context, to be his children, but we can only live out our callings within our time and place.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How have you come to understand your own particularities and how do you feel called to be in the world using what you have been given?
- What does Psalm 139 reveal about you and your value to God?
- What did you enjoy doing in your childhood that you continue to enjoy now? And do you see it as part of your call? Why or why not?
- Knowing that God created you to be in this world at this time, where do you see yourself sharing your call?

APPLICATION: This week, consider how God uniquely created you and lean into what makes you who you are. How does your unique situation and particularities work into a calling in your daily life?

*Additional Resource: The Stories We Live by Kathleen Cahalan**

**This sermon series is based on concepts from Cahalan's book. This week's sermon and study guide following along with Ch. 3.*

CALLED

Called As We Are

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-14

Sandy Rothschiller

Last month I attended the Gustavus Adolphus College Christmas Concert with my husband. That evening I happened to be sitting by a widow whose husband was a professor years ago at Gustavus. She has attended the concert every year since her husband's death. We had such a nice time chatting before the concert. One of my favorite parts of the concert is when the audience gets to join with the choir in singing Christmas carols. When it came time to stand and sing "Angels from the Realms of Glory" I sang my heart out. When the song was finished the sweet woman sitting next to me said, with a huge smile, "I liked the key you were singing in." To which I responded, "Well, I actually don't know how to sing." She then touched my arm so softly and smiled and said, "I know." More on that story in a bit.

Today our worship series on Calling continues with "Called As We Are." You see, God creates us each unique with specific gifts and talents to share God's love in the world. Each one of us is a special creation of God's own image. Let's look at our text from Psalm 139. I will be reading a version of Psalm 139 translated by Pastor Leslie Brandt.

*O God, You know me inside and out,
through and through.
Everything I do,
every thought that flits through my mind,
every step I take,
every plan I make,
every word I speak,
You know, even before these things happen.
You know my past;
You know my future.*

*Your surrounding presence covers my every move.
Your knowledge of me sometimes comforts me,
sometimes frightens me;
but always it is far beyond my comprehension.*

*You were present at my very conception.
You guided the molding of my unformed members
within the body of my mother.
Nothing about me, from beginning to end,
was hid from Your eyes.
How frightfully, fantastically wonderful it all is!*

You are wonderfully and marvelously made. You are unique and there is no other person on earth who is exactly like you! You are unique in this world.

It is in our uniqueness that God calls each one of us to use what we have been given, what we have learned and what we have experienced to share God's love with world. As Pastor Jeff has said in the last weeks that our call is far greater than our jobs, God calls us with all our particular gifts and talents in all parts of our lives.

Let me ask you this... what is your calling? What makes your calling specific, unique? I want you to think about it, but first let me help you to see what it may look like. Because your calling is unique to your gifts, talents and relationships. Let me explain. Here are some of the specific ways I am called to share God's love in the world. It looks like this: I am a wife, a mother, a mother-in-law, a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a niece, a cousin, a best friend, a friend, a pastor, a colleague, a neighbor, a writer, a speaker, a facilitator, a reader, a walker...

Your calling is the intersection of passion, purpose, gifts, talents and identities of who you are and using those things to share God's love in this world. Your calling isn't hard to figure out! It isn't rocket science. It is taking what you have been given and what you enjoy doing and using it to love others. Whatever you're passionate about and decide to pursue in life, embrace that gut instinct that knows when you are being true to yourself and do something, however big or small, to make a difference to the world in your own unique way. God is constantly calling you to use what you have been given. So how do you go about identifying God's call?

There are many ways we can go about living into our calling. One way is through listening to other people. God uses others to speak callings to us. Let me tell you about Mary. Mary is in my small group here at Prince of Peace. She told us that she had decided to retire from her career as a lawyer and was looking for

volunteer work. Mary shared her passions of helping others and her desire to continue using her Spanish. It just so happened that our Mission Outpost at Prince of Peace needed more hosts who knew Spanish. We suggested she meet with Mission Outpost to see how she could fit. She fit like a glove and has been volunteering there, using her gifts, following her calling.

Another way of listening to God's call is to take time listening to your own inner calling. God also speaks to us through the joy we experience in reaching out to others. I heard this story a few weeks ago of a man following his inner call to reach out to another.

While visiting relatives in Utah for the holidays, Perryn Miller, an 8 year old boy, started getting headaches, and a trip to the emergency room revealed a brain tumor. He was admitted and had immediate surgery. His parents were thankful and relieved when Perryn made it out of surgery, but nothing was quite right until Frank showed up. Frank is the Miller family's 8-month-old German Shepherd.

Frank, the dog, had been left behind in North Carolina, that is until the family's story hit social media. That's when a former trucker named Bob Reynolds, who didn't even know the Millers, decided to pick up Frank and drive 2,300 miles in 52 hours to deliver him.

"I never questioned why I was doing it or anything like that. I just knew something had to be done and that I could do it," he said.

So how will Frank get home? Reynolds has already volunteered to make the trip all over again.

Each one of us has life experiences, gifts, part of ourselves that we are called to share with and for others. When we feel that internal call, something like Bob Reynolds felt, "I never questioned why I was doing it or anything like that, I just knew something had to be done and I could do it..." And that is following God's call. When who we are and all that we have in our life experience meets the needs of others. We can be assured that God calls us just as we are.

God calls us from birth to the end of our days in various and multiple ways.

I'd like to share with you the story of a gentleman who discovered a new calling at age 93. Dave served in WWII when he was in his 20's. When Dave returned to the US from active duty he never spoke much about the war. When Dave turned 93 last year he felt the call

to speak to the next generation about what it was like to be in the war. Listen to how Dave has followed a call at age 94 and a half plus 20 days. (video)

Here is the good news about your calling. It is right before you. It is something you enjoy and it is a way to share the good news of Jesus with the world. It happens as you reach out and share what you have been given.

Now back to the lovely widow that I had the great privilege of sitting next to at the Gustavus Christmas concert. She told she could never sing either, so when the next song came for us to sing, we sang our little hearts out together, smiling. And as I was leaving the concert, she handed me this piece of paper. I used my gifts, not with singing, because I didn't get the gift of a beautiful voice, but I got to share the gift of community with a wonderful widow. See, God called me to use my joy of engaging with seniors that very night.

How is God calling you to use all that you are?

CALLED

Called As We Are

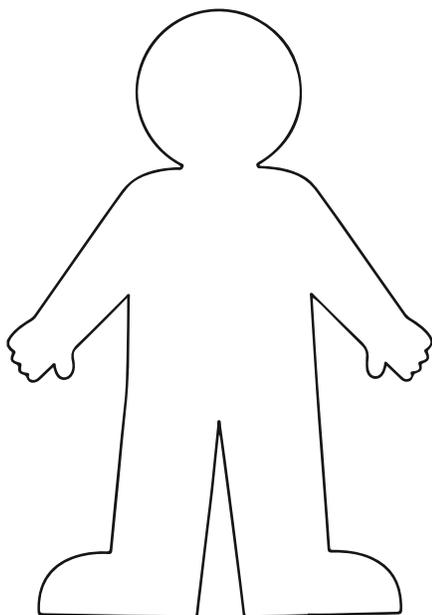
Isaiah 43:1, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-14



Today we'll be reminded that we are all called...just as we are...to share God's love with the world.

CALLED JUST AS YOU ARE

You are unique...made in God's image to be YOU. Decorate the picture below to look like YOU!



CALLED TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE

We are called to use our passions, gifts, talents and our uniqueness to share God's love with the world. Find the following words in the puzzle below...

CALLED	PASSIONS	GIFTS	TALENTS	UNIQUENESS	SHARE	GOD'S LOVE			
U	N	I	Q	U	E	N	E	S	S
P	A	S	N	J	W	U	T	G	E
S	A	Q	T	T	G	A	Y	O	R
G	N	S	N	F	L	P	G	D	A
A	X	F	S	E	I	F	N	S	H
G	V	R	N	I	R	G	N	L	S
D	P	T	M	M	O	L	M	O	R
R	S	O	H	I	W	N	W	V	Z
D	E	L	L	A	C	O	S	E	J
Z	D	U	W	I	V	W	M	C	S

FOR THE RIDE HOME

PRESCHOOL

Today we're talking about how we are called to use our passions, gifts, talents, uniqueness, experiences and relationships to share God's love with the world. This week help your preschooler identify what makes them unique. Lift up their gifts, passions, and talents. Help them see that they've been made in God's image. Read pgs. 326-327 in the Spark Story Bible tonight at bedtime and talk about how everyone can know and share God's love.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Today we're talking about how we are called to know and share God's love just as we are. God made us who we are...with our gifts, talents, passions and uniqueness...and we can use those things to let others know all about God's love for the world. What are you good at? What do you love? Where do you spend your time? What are the things you do? All of those things make up who you are...and you can use those things to answer the call to share God's love! Make a list of ways God can use you this week and just see what God does!

PRAY TOGETHER...

Dear Lord, thank you for making me, me. Thank you that I'm made in your image...unique and amazing. Help me to share your love with others. Amen.