Full Circle: Care

Christian Basics – Evangelism Emphasis

Scope and Sequence

Students will learn to care deeply for those in need and take steps to help the physical, emotional, and relational needs of others.

Lesson Objective

**People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.**

Sticky

Statement

Luke 5:17-20, 24-25; 1 Corinthians 13:2-7

Key Verse

1. A PowerPoint is available for this lesson.

Checklist

a. Prayer, Care, Share slide (Lesson Content)

b. 1 Corinthians 13:2-7 slide (Lesson Content)

c. The Hope Line [www.thehopeline.com/ebooks](http://www.thehopeline.com/ebooks) slide (Connection)

1. Bibles (Lesson Content)
2. Tower building supplies: paper cups, straws, construction paper, masking tape (Hook)
3. Prize: bag of candy (Hook)
4. Whiteboard or flip chart and markers (Lesson Content and Connection)
5. Projection equipment (Lesson Content)

Full Circle: Make Disciples Who Make Disciples – Dare 2 Share – Used by permission of Dare 2 Share. The content has been adapted for Word of Life Fellowship.

Resources

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Lesson Overview

1. **Prayer**: Jesus often went off to be alone to spend time in prayer.
2. **Care**: He cared deeply for those in need – helping and healing people’s physical, emotional, and relational needs.
3. **Share**: Prayer and Care laid the foundation and helped people open up so that He could more effectively Share His message – out loud, with words.

God calls us to extend His agape love to others, in His name and through His power at work within us.

**People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.**

Hook

Teacher’s Note: *Divide your students into groups of 4-5 if possible. Give each group the following building supplies: ten paper cups, five straws, four sheets of construction paper, a 12” strip of masking tape (wound around a pen). Allow 3-5 minutes for this to take place. Playing some music in the background while the building goes on will provide a good atmosphere. The point of the game: Tower building generally works better if you start with a good foundation. Give a prize to the team with the tallest tower.*

Each team must work together to build the tallest free-standing tower they can with the supplies given. “Free-standing” means you can’t tape your tower to another object like a table, floor, or wall. You have about three minutes to build your tower. Ready, set, go.

Teacher’s Note: *Be sure to praise each group after the building is complete. Ask the following questions and allow the students to respond appropriately.*

● Raise your hand if you helped build a tower! What worked well?

● What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

● Did you build the tallest tower you could? Why or why not?

● Were there any general building principles that seemed to be common among those teams with the taller towers?

The point of this game was to help you understand that tower building generally works better if you start with a good foundation. In the same way, Gospel conversations generally work better if you build a good relational foundation with someone before you bring the Gospel up. Whether you lay that relational foundation in three minutes, three weeks, or three months, the Prayer and Care elements of the Cause Circle help provide that foundation.

Let’s open with a word of prayer and we will discuss the second part of the Cause Circle: Care. *[Open in prayer.]*

Lesson Content

To review, these past couple weeks we’ve been talking about “The Cause” and how Jesus is calling us to share His Gospel message with those who don’t know Him, so they can be reconnected to God. We’ve been talking about how Jesus modeled a “Prayer, Care, Share” approach when engaging with people about His message.

In Jesus’ life and ministry, the “Prayer, Care, Share” elements are broken down like this:

1. **Prayer**: Jesus often went off to be alone to spend time in prayer.
2. **Care**: He cared deeply for those in need – helping and healing people’s physical, emotional, and relational needs.
3. **Share**: Prayer and Care laid the foundation and helped people open up so that He could more effectively share His message – out loud, with words.

Last week we zeroed in on Prayer. This week, we’re focusing in on Care.

What are a few examples of stories about Jesus that come to mind that demonstrate how central love and care were in His life and ministry? *[Allow the students to respond. Possible answers: healing the sick, feeding the hungry, forgiving sins, dying on the cross, crying over Jerusalem, etc.]*

Stories about how Jesus demonstrated His care for people are all over the Gospels. Jesus didn’t just talk about caring for others, He actually did it. And one of the most radical things about how He loved and cared for people was that He wasn’t afraid to love the “losers,” the bad, the bullied, and the broken.

His care extended to those who were marginalized by the “popular and powerful” crowd. In fact, that was one of Jesus’ biggest frustrations with the “popular and powerful” Jewish people of that day. They were being mean. They were creating their own religious rules that put up barriers that kept ordinary people from connecting with God. They were using those rules to be harshly judgmental, and to bully and exclude people.

If you recall, we’ve been using the account in Luke 5 about Jesus healing the paralyzed man as a snapshot of how He modeled the Cause Circle of “Prayer, Care, and Share.” I want to re-read just a few verses from that passage today. As I read them, be thinking about how you see Care being demonstrated in this part of the story. *[Read Luke 5:17-20, 24-25.]*

How do you see Care being demonstrated here? *[Allow the students to answer.]* What do you imagine it would be like to live your life as a paralyzed person back in Jesus’ day? *[Allow the students to answer. Things to consider: no wheelchair access, no medical care, no government safety net for the disabled, no way to earn a living, etc.]*

So, this man was pretty desperate. It would have taken a sizeable commitment to be his friend, given all his neediness. It’s kind of amazing, really, given how high-maintenance he obviously was, that he even had these friends in this story who cared about him enough to go to all this effort to get him to Jesus. But these men demonstrated remarkable care for the paralyzed man.

Jesus demonstrated care by healing the guy. Throughout the Gospels we see this pattern over and over: Jesus didn’t just “preach” at the people who came to Him with their hurts and heavy loads; He cared for them. They weren’t “projects,” they were people. He cared for them as a whole person.

Maybe you’ve heard the old saying: **People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care**. They are wise words for us as we seek to introduce others to Jesus. One of the great passages in the Bible about how to love others well is found in 1 Corinthians 13. It may be a familiar passage to many of you, but this time I want us to take a fresh look at it by reading it completely.

Teacher’s Note: *Consider reading this passage in a paraphrased edition of the Bible.*

Before we read this together with our own Cause Circle in mind, let me explain something about the word “love.” In the English language we have just one word for love, but in Greek, which is the original language of the New Testament, there are three different words for love depending on what type of love you’re talking about. The Greek word *agape,* describes the love of God. This is the kind of love that Jesus demonstrated for us when He came and sacrificed His life by dying on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. *Agape* love is distinctly different from romantic or sexual love (eros) or brotherly love (philia). This passage in 1 Corinthians 13 is describing *agape* love.

As we read each segment of this passage, we’re going to pause and summarize it in our own words.

Teacher’s Note: *Use the presentation slides to project the verses. Note your students’ brief summations on a flip chart or whiteboard as you go through the passage line by line.*

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| --- | --- |
| 1 Corinthians 13:2-7 |  |
| PARAPHRASED | POSSIBLE SUMMARY IDEAS |
| *“If I speak God’s Word with power revealing all His mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, ‘Jump,’ and it jumps, but I don’t love, I’m nothing.”* | We must share God’s truth with love. |
| *“If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don’t love, I’ve gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I’m bankrupt without love.”* | Living the Christian life without love equals spiritual bankruptcy. |
| LOVE IS… | LOVE IS… |
| *Love never gives up.* | Patient |
| *Love cares more for others than for self.* | Kind/Generous |
| *Love doesn’t want what it doesn’t have.* | Content |
| *Love doesn’t strut,* | Modest |
| *Doesn’t have a swelled head,* | Humble |
| *Doesn’t force itself on others,* | Polite/Respectful |
| *Isn’t always “me first,”* | Considerate |
| *Doesn’t fly off the handle,* | Even-tempered |
| *Doesn’t keep score of the sins of others,* | Forgiving |
| *Doesn’t revel when others grovel,* | Gracious/Grace-giving |
| *Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,* | Truthful/Truth-speaking |
| *Puts up with anything,* | Unswerving/Undeterred |
| *Trusts God always,* | Faithful |
| *Always looks for the best,* | Positive |
| *Never looks back,* | Hopeful |
| *But keeps going to the end.* | Enduring |

God calls us to extend His agape love to others, in His name and through His power at work within us. This is a big calling. We’re here to be salt and light for the sake of Jesus and His kingdom. We’re here to live out the love of God by “being God with skin on” to the people around us. People don’t care how much you know “about” God, if you don’t care about them as individuals. This is the idea of 1 Corinthians 13:2. *[Re-read 1 Corinthians 13:2.]*

The act of showing someone the *agape* love of God can wear a lot of different faces. It can happen across three minutes, three weeks, or three years. Whatever the length of your relationship with someone, demonstrating care can happen in loads of different, creative ways.

Connection

So, let’s get really practical for a few minutes now and do some brainstorming about what this can look like in our own lives as we think about the people in our own Cause Circle we’re seeking to care for with the love of Christ.

Teacher’s Note: *Use a new page of your flip chart or a clean section of your whiteboard to record a list of your students’ responses to the following question. Several possible answers are listed below to help get the ideas flowing, if necessary.*

What are some examples of ways we could demonstrate care for others this week? *[Possible answers: time, help, listening ears, gifts, notes, acts of kindness, standing up if someone’s being bullied, sitting with someone at lunch, offering to pray, etc.]*

Quite honestly, sometimes you may have friends who are struggling with things that are really heavy. If they’re hurting, meet them in their place of need and seek to bring them to the Healer.

I want to pass along a website you can go to that has several helpful, free eBooks about some of the tough issues that students face –like depression, bullying, self-harm, suicide, addiction, relationship problems and more. The website is [www.thehopeline.com/ebooks](http://www.thehopeline.com/ebooks).

Teacher’s Note: *Be sure to display this website on the PowerPoint slide so students have a chance to copy it down or put it into their handheld device.*

If you go to [www.thehopeline.com/ebooks](http://www.thehopeline.com/ebooks), you’ll find eBooks for teens on about two dozen different topics that might help you come alongside a friend who is struggling. These eBooks each have a section in the back that specifically talks about how you can come alongside of a friend who is struggling with that issue.

I also want you to know that you can always come to me for help with a friend, if you ever run into a serious problem that requires adult help. For your information: TheHopeLine also offers a free 24/7 hotline anyone can call for help.

Choice

Will you step up and do something this week that shows you care? **People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care**. If you will make a point to care for someone in your Cause Circle, will you take a moment to ask God to direct you to the right person in your Cause Circle who you can best care for this week?

Next Steps

If you are up for it, here’s the challenge for this coming week: take one or two of these ideas we just brainstormed (or come up with your own) and use it to reach out to the person in your Cause Circle who is most “paralyzed” (most hurting) right now. Consider that the person in your Cause Circle may be “paralyzed” by anxiety, depression, addiction, emotional pain, relationship struggles or whatever. By the way, this is a “report back” assignment, so come back next week ready to share with your small group about what you did and what happened.

Finally, before we move into small groups, I want to take a moment and speak specifically to any of you here who may have realized that you’ve never actually experienced the kind of unconditional *agape* love of God that we’ve been talking about today. The really great news is that God’s unconditional love is freely available, just for the asking.

You see, God made us to be with Him. He loves us deeply and purely. Unfortunately, we humans rejected that perfect relationship with God and we sinned –we turned away from Him. Our sin created a chasm between us and our holy, perfect God. The Bible makes it clear that our sins can’t be removed by the good things we do. It’s only Jesus’ death and resurrection that paid the price and made it possible for us to get back into a restored relationship with God. Now, everyone who trusts in Him alone can receive the free gift of eternal life that begins here and now and lasts for all eternity.

If you’ve never put your trust in Christ, I invite you to pray this prayer of thanksgiving silently along with me. So, with every head bowed and every eye closed, let’s pray:

Dear God, I know that my sins have broken my relationship with You and that nothing I could do could ever change that. But right now, I believe that Jesus died in my place and rose again from the dead. I trust in Him to forgive me for my sins. Through faith in Him, I am entering an eternal relationship with You. Thank You for this free gift and for defeating death through your work on the cross! In Jesus’ name, amen.

Teacher’s Note: *Invite anyone who trusted Christ to come see you or a small group leader after the meeting, so you can follow up with them*.

Small Group Discussion Questions

**1. Who was the person in your Cause Circle that you feel you should make a point to care for this week?** (*Place an empty chair in the center of your small group. Just like you did two weeks ago, tell your group to visualize one of their unreached friends sitting in that chair. Today, however, ask them to imagine the “paralyzed” friend sitting in that chair. Ask them to consider some of the personal struggles and challenges that are weighing them down. Whatever their load looks like, ask them to just picture them sitting there alone trying to carry it all by themselves.)*

**2. Place a second empty chair in the middle of the small group and ask each student to imagine themselves sitting down in that second chair, right next to their friend.** (*Ask them to consider the following: “Has God put you in their life for a reason?” Ask them to answer that question quietly to themselves.)*

**3. Ask the students to close their eyes and answer this question to themselves: “What might it look like for you to come alongside of your friend and demonstrate God’s *agape* love as you seek to care for them?”** *(After a few moments of silence, close in prayer for these friends and for the courage and compassion to reach out to them in Jesus’ name with week. Send your students a couple texts during the coming week to remind them to come to youth group with a story of how they demonstrated care for someone in their Cause Circle. Let them know you are praying for them.*