

DIXIE JACKSON ARKANSAS MISSIONS OFFERING

ADULT LESSON PLAN

PRAYER

- Ask God to give you wisdom to understand our theme passage, **Ephesians 3:20–21**; if this passage is familiar to you, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you something timely and new.
- Whether you're meeting in person or online, managing a group study brings special challenges right now. Pray for wisdom, patience and creativity when you prepare the lesson and conduct the meeting.
- Ask God for guidance as you decide how you're going to respond to the 2020 Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer.
- Pray for each person in your group; if possible, pray for them by name:
 - That they'll commit to engage with the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads them.
 - That God's power and promises will come alive for them through the stories shared in our missions spotlights.
 - That they'll be inspired to join in where God is working through Arkansas Baptists to share Christ in our state.

PREP

- Read our theme passage, Ephesians 3:20–21. In these two brief verses, Paul tells us something *huge* about God's power. If you read this passage in context, you'll find that Paul has a lot of important things to say about who God is and how much He loves us. The book of Ephesians is only six chapters long; to see the bigger picture, read it in one sitting as if it's a newsletter emailed from a missionary who's visited your church. Encourage your group to

do the same. You might choose a translation like *The Message* or *The Living Bible*.

- Explore the 2020 Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer resources you'll find at absc.org/dixiejackson. Learn about this year's spotlight ministries.
 - **If you're meeting in person**, share the ministry videos during your time together.
 - **If you're meeting online**, share the link so everyone can watch the videos ahead of time. A screen-share feature on your platform will allow you to view them during your meeting, but if your time is limited, encouraging everyone to watch them beforehand might be the better option.
- Reach out to the folks in your group a week or two before you meet. You could send a group text or email, or write a brief post on your church's Facebook page.
 - Let everyone know you look forward to seeing them.
 - Share something about the theme passage or the ministry spotlights that is encouraging to you.
 - **If you're meeting online**, make sure everyone has the meeting link and instructions about how to join.

DJ

PLAN

According to Ephesians, the very same power that brought Jesus out of a sealed tomb is at work in everyone who believes in Him. Doesn't that blow your mind? God's power is bigger than we can imagine, able to do more than we'd ever dream to ask. Arkansas Baptists are seeing this truth at work all over our state through ministries supported by the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer.

Your goals for group time—Encourage folks:

- To consider what it means for ourselves, our state and our world that God can do *Immeasurably More* than we ask or think.
- To trust God's power and get involved wherever He's working, beginning with the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer.

Use this lesson plan word for word or simply as a guide—however it offers you the best support as you lead. For instance, the discussion questions are only meant to help you start a conversation. Don't feel pressured to cover all of them. Do what works for the time and format available. **If you're meeting in person,** you might focus on one or two within each section. **If you're meeting online,** it could be helpful to build a little more structure into the discussion by sending the questions to your group ahead of time. Are there three or four people you can think of who would be comfortable sharing? Assign them each a question, and ask them to come prepared to answer it as a way of kicking off the conversation.

- **Begin your group time with a prayer.**
- **Introduce the theme for the 2020 Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer, *Immeasurably More*.**

You could say: It's easy to believe that God parted a sea for Moses and the Israelites. Saved Noah and his family from a world-wide flood. Took down a giant for David. Multiplied a child's lunch in order to feed thousands of hungry people. But do we really believe He would do the same for us, especially during a moment when

there's so much fear and uncertainty in the world? According to Paul, we can be sure of it. And remember, Paul was a guy who knew from experience the supernatural lengths God will go to in order to glorify Himself and reveal Himself to His people.

So what does Paul want us to know about God's power?

- **Read Ephesians 3:20–21 to the group:**

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." —*New International Version*

- **Introduce the 2020 Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering ministry videos.**

You could say: When Paul wrote Ephesians, he was living alone under house arrest. His circumstances were bleak, but his message remained clear and strong: Our loving God is sovereign, and nothing is outside His power.

So maybe Paul is uniquely qualified to remind us right now that God can do immeasurably more than we ask or think. If we feel spread out, disconnected and even isolated, Paul reminds us of our unity in Christ. Honoring and celebrating our unity energizes us to care about students who don't know Jesus, new churches finding their footing, neighbors around our state who need help in the wake of a natural disaster and inmates who want to be missionaries exactly where they are.

- **If you're meeting in person,** share the 2020 Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering ministry videos. **If you're meeting online,** ask if everyone was able to view the videos ahead of time. Remind them that the videos are available at absc.org/dixiejackson.
- **Based on your format and the time available to you, use these questions to lead a group discussion about God's power to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine.**

You could say: God is making Himself known all the time, all around us, continually reaching out to those who don't know Him. From Genesis to Revelation, that's basically the story of the whole Bible! In each of the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering ministry videos, we see examples of how He's at work right now

all around our state—providing resources, growing relationships and clearing barriers in remarkable ways, all for the purpose of sharing the light and love of Jesus.

So what can these stories teach us about God's power to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine?

1. **Before Wei Lun Tay had ever heard of Baptist Collegiate Ministries, God was making a way for BCM to change Wei Lun's life.** Think about how carefully God wove together the network of Christian friends who would introduce Wei Lun to Jesus through the BCM. What does that tell you about God's love for us? About His attention to detail? Is it easy or hard for you to imagine that God sees you and provides for you just as attentively? When you reflect on your life, do you see circumstances where God was making a way for you that you couldn't see at the time? What was the result? How did this shape your walk with Jesus? You might know people who are struggling right now to trust God's provision in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. How might your testimony encourage them?
2. **God gave Jordan Bowen, Kent Wiles, and Pranay Borde a very specific vision for ministry that appeared to come with very complicated challenges.** But when God calls us to a task, He always gives us the means to carry it out—just as He did for the guys who planted Oasis Church. Has there ever been a time when God put a ministry opportunity in front of you, but you weren't at all sure how you'd be able to meet it? How did you respond? Can you remember a time when God took care of a need in your life in such a way that His provision was the only explanation? Have you ever been surprised by God's power or generosity? If so, what did that experience teach you about God that you might not have learned any other way?
3. **One of the most effective ways we can be witnesses for Christ is by helping people in need.** The Vicks and Anthony families of Jonesboro's Journey Church would certainly agree. Disaster Relief volunteers could probably share tons of stories of how they've seen lives impacted by the

Gospel in the midst of destruction. Why do you think serving others in times of crisis offers such a clear picture of God's heart? Lots of Arkansans are struggling right now with crises of different kinds as we adjust to life changes brought on by the coronavirus. Are there people around you who are facing job loss? Childcare challenges? Hunger? Loneliness? Is the Lord nudging you to help? These circumstances can seem overwhelming; what are some specific ways you're praying for God to intervene by doing immeasurably more than you might even imagine?

4. **Paul begins his letter to the Ephesian church with strong, beautiful imagery meant to drive home the fact that God is sovereign.** Nothing, no one, is more powerful than God is, and nothing can stop Him from accomplishing His purposes. Certainly not the walls of a prison cell, as Robert Rockett would tell you. Just as God made a way for Robert to pursue a degree in Christian ministries while serving a prison life sentence, He will give us whatever we need to grow in our relationship with Him and to share His love with others. We only have to ask. Is there anything in your life right now that's preventing you from serving Him? From joining in where you see Him already at work? What do you need from Him in order to meet the ministry opportunities you see around you? How can others in the group pray for you?
- **Wrap up your group time with some closing thoughts and prayer.**

You could say: The Bible promises us that God has in His hand *right now* everything we need to live out our calling as apprentices of Jesus. In fact, as Paul says in Ephesians, God wants to do immeasurably more through us than we could ask or imagine. We just have to trust, and ask.

Here's a great way to start: Think about the opportunities we have to make an impact for Christ by joining together with Arkansas Baptists all over our state, first by giving to the 2020 Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and then by praying for and engaging with the ministries it supports. There are also times when God calls each of us to serve Him by reaching out to people in need who

cross our paths. Know that we can answer that call with confidence, counting on God to do immeasurably more through us—on behalf of His Kingdom—than we can ask or imagine!

Let's commit to pray for each other through the Week of Prayer. Let's ask God to help each of us know for certain where and how He's calling us to serve Him, and how He wants us to engage with the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering. Will you do that?

Before we dismiss, I'll say a closing prayer.