



TEACHING PLAN

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To engage Arkansas Baptists in the personal significance of the Great Commission, exploring how the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and ministry efforts provide avenues for obedience.

GENERAL PREPARATION

- Become familiar with the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering Planning Guide.
- Visit absc.org/dixiejackson and watch the video examples of other Arkansas Baptists who have actively engaged in state missions.
- Consider the amount of time available for your lesson, and choose the adaptation that best fits your time frame.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

- Read the Teacher Devotional.
- Read Matthew 28:18–20 and the lesson material. Spend some time in personal commitment to an active response before you lead your class to respond.

TEACHER DEVOTIONAL

We can all probably point back to a teacher who strongly impacted our lives. When he or she taught, we *wanted* to learn. A hunger wedged itself into our hearts and minds, stirring something in us that would stick with us for years to come. Even now, years later, we can still feel a bit of the stirring.

Now, it is our turn. We have the opportunity to engage others in the same way our beloved teacher did, following the example of spiritual heroes like Peter:

“I want to stir up your sincere understanding by way of reminder, so that you recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles.” 2 Peter 3:1b–2 (CSB)

This is what we seek to accomplish as teachers, stirring a sincere understanding so others may recall what has been written in God’s Word.

The first step is to recognize what we believe about God’s Word. Jesus commanded, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19–20)

Ponder those words. What do they really mean, practically, in your life? How do you live out that command? What can you share with your class members that will help them catch the passion behind those simple words?

Stop now and ask the Holy Spirit to motivate you and create a passion in you for this command. Ask how this is supposed to flesh out in your own heart and mind so you will not just be teaching a lesson, but sharing a passion. Ask the Lord to work through you to ignite a fire in the hearts of others. May we all truly sense the urgency to go, give, and pray with passion.

TIME ADAPTATIONS

15-MINUTE LESSON

For a brief Sunday school welcome time, a short devotional, or an abbreviated lesson time frame, use the lesson material to talk through the Great Commission and how it intersects with what Arkansas Baptists can accomplish through Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering.

30–60 MINUTE LESSON

Use one or more of the following options to expand the lesson:

- Visit absc.org/promotional-campaigns/dixie-jackson-arkansas-missions to find video interviews connected to each of the five focal ministries. Show them during class time.
- Consider utilizing the testimony of someone from your church or association who has actively engaged in missions efforts supported by the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering.
- Add two **Stop and Commit** prayer times during the lesson.
 - After “The Great Commission and Christians,” divide into groups of two or three and pray for one another to be freshly awakened to what the Lord wants to accomplish through you.
 - After “The Great Commission and the Lost,” break into your groups again and pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to the spiritual condition of the people you

come in contact with every day, provide opportunities for conversation, and give you wisdom to know how to engage the lost around you.

LESSON MATERIAL

INTRODUCTION

When we think of world missions in generic terms, it can be easy to avoid any sense of urgency. But when we put the reality of individuals into the equation, something changes.

In his book *Gospel*, pastor J.D. Greear shares how he came face to face with the realization that at least 2.25 billion people live in our world with “little to no access to the gospel (sic).” He goes on to share how this realization impacted him:

As the weightiness of 2.25 billion people lost without God pressed in on my soul, I felt like I was suffocating. I just sat there, speechless.

It didn’t seem right to be going on about my life, pursuing my dreams, waiting on God to tell me what to do. We know what He wants us to do.¹

As of July 1, 2017, the United States Census Bureau estimates that 3,004,279 people live in Arkansas.² As Arkansans, we make up a portion of that number, as do people we know, people we meet in passing at the grocery store, and those we encounter through work or other social engagement.

Of those 3,004,279 people, every last one needs to be impacted by the Great Commission.

THE MESSAGE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

When we quote the Great Commission, we usually begin with verse 19. But, by backing up a verse, we see one additional reminder.

Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18–20

The message of the Great Commission is twofold. First, authority is packed into this command. Jesus begins by letting His disciples know that God has bestowed on Him all authority. Then He closes by reminding them that His presence will never leave them. All power has been granted to His disciples, and the “to the end of the age” part extends that covering to us, as well!

Sandwiched between those promises, we find the command

to go and make disciples through baptism and instruction. When we remember the “bread” of this passage—that we have access to the authority of Christ Himself—the message of the command becomes encouraging instead of overwhelming.

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND CHRISTIANS

But we must start with ourselves. Look around the room. You and everyone around you need the impact of the Great Commission.

(Have a class member read Acts 2:42–47 aloud.)

The Gospel powerfully permeated the hearts of the early Christians, even as they went about their daily lives. In the same way, the first step toward impacting Arkansas with the truth of the Gospel is to open our own hearts to this permeation. We know what God wants us to do. We need this powerful truth to fill us with the urgency to go do it!

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE LOST

As our own hearts become permeated, our eyes will be opened to the condition of souls around us.

(Have a class member read Acts 17:16–17 aloud.)

The Holy Spirit showed Paul how to lay groundwork and build relationships that would open doors for the message of the Gospel. The same thing is happening in Arkansas, as we see in the stories being shared this week. But the number of lost souls counted among those three million Arkansans remains far too high. We can never go, give, or pray too much!

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND ACTIVE RESPONSE

This is where our active response comes into play. None among us is exempt from the Great Commission. None is too old or too young. We cannot leave the going, giving, and praying to others. We have to look to ourselves. To the lost, the message of the Gospel says, “Come!” But to us, it says, “You know God’s will. Now, go and act on it!”

For Arkansans, the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering makes that action easy. Ministries already exist, and all we have to do is join them through prayer, financial giving, and active participation wherever possible.

What is your response to the Great Commission today? What is your response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Will you pray? Will you give? Will you go?

Stop and Commit: Separate into groups of two or three and pray for one another to be open and willing to respond to

Christ's command, starting with how to participate in ministry and missions happening right where you are. After a couple of minutes, have someone voice a closing prayer.

¹Greear, J.D. *Gospel* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 147.

²"QuickFacts: Arkansas," United States Census Bureau, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/AR/PST045217>.

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