

Surprise the World!

Week Two: Bless People

Read Chapter 3 from *Surprise the World* by Michael Frost

Get Connected: Share a time when you have been bowled over by kindness.

Bible Study:

You are invited to engage with scripture each week using an ancient practice called *lectio divina*. Read the scripture once. Allow a minute of silence following, and then each person answers the first question. Read the scripture aloud the second time, followed with a minute of silence, and then each person answers the second question. Read the scripture a third time, hold a minute of silence, and then answer the third question. It is most helpful that everyone have the scripture in front of them so they can underline phrases and make notes regarding the question. The other important practice to this form of engaging with the scripture is holy listening. Each person listens deeply to the other's response without interruption or dialogue. At the end of the three rounds, if the group would like to enter into dialogue and conversation with the scripture that is the appropriate time. A person can certainly pass answering a question at any time. Listen for what the Spirit seeks to share with you in this living encounter with the Word.

Romans 12: 3-6

I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, is pure grace, it's important that you not misrepresent yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

What is the word or phrase that captures your imagination?

What has God done for you?

What is God inviting you to do, change or be through this passage?

Video: Show week two with Rev. Cynthia Williams on bless.

Discuss:

- 1) How has blessing shown up in your life? What was the circumstance and the people, and what was about it that made you feel blessed?
- 2) Which types of blessing—words of affirmation, acts of kindness, gift giving—is most natural and comfortable for you?

- 3) What kinds of things might stop people from feeling blessed?
- 4) How can you become attentive to the needs, fears, hopes, and yearnings of your neighbors in order to truly bless them?
- 5) We are blessed to be a blessing. How has God blessed you, and what is your sense of gratitude in your life? Are there ways you have found to be helpful to stay grounded in grace, that you are indeed blessed?
- 6) How does the habit of generosity currently show up in your life?

Action Step: Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal to you three people you can bless this week. Then keep your eyes open for someone you know who needs a blessing and someone you don't know but encounter this week that you can bless, and then do it! Your goal is to bless three people this week!

Share Your Stories: Post this week on social media about blessing! It may be a story of an encounter. It may be an encouraging word or picture. Use **#surprisetheworld**, and tag the Minnesota Annual Conference so we can pass along those stories.

Conclude: Join hands and go around the circle, with each person saying what they thank God for, and what they ask God for, and then all join in the Lord's Prayer.

If you are using the Michael Frost videos that can be found at <http://www.crossover.org.au/surprise-the-world/>, begin the session with Minnesota Annual Conference video, follow by the Get Connected Question, and then use the Michael Frost video after the Bible study.