

# Missional Serving Communities

## Homelessness - Week 1

### **PRAY** – see – learn – serve

**Objective: Our goal this week is to develop the desire to have God direct our praying so that our hearts more closely reflect God's heart**

#### **Meal and/or team building (30 min)**

- Would you rather...
  - Would you rather have all traffic lights you approach be green or never have to stand in line again?
  - Would you rather have unlimited international first-class tickets or never have to pay for food at restaurants?
  - End war or hunger?
- Have you ever been on a mission trip that greatly impacted you? Where did you go and how/why did it impact you?

#### **MSC Pray - See - Learn - Serve rhythm (30 min.)**

- Our desire is to serve but before we serve, we need to pray, see, and learn
- Our goal tonight is to pray but also to have our praying expanded.
- Opening prayer by St. Francis. Share with the group that all MSC will be using this prayer. (Handout and PPT)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

- Why start with this prayer?

- o What about this prayer catches your attention?
- Discussion question: When we pray for the homeless (assuming that we pray for the homeless) what things do we usually pray for?
  - o Guide the conversation to the point that we realize that we usually pray for homeless people and/or agencies and ministries but often neglect our responsibilities or a willingness to have our hearts changed

### **Expanding our praying (30 min)**

- Scripture guided prayers
  - o Hear the scripture (Handout and PPT)
  - o What does the scripture tell me/us about how we are to respond to those in need?
  - o How does this scripture inform how you/we pray and what you/we pray for?
  - Prov. 29:7 - “The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.”
  - Lev. 19:9-10 - “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.”
  - Prov. 21:13 - “Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered.”
  - Matthew 25:40 - “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”
- PowerPoint images (PPT)
  - o Look at each image
  - o How does each image spur you to pray?
- Poem (Handout and PPT)
  - o What is one thing from the poem that caught your attention?
  - o How does this inform what/how you pray?
- Physical position
  - o How does one’s physical position impact one’s prayer?
  - o What if, when praying in response to homelessness, we don’t sit in chairs or wear shoes?
- 2-3 things you are feeling called to pray for/about
  - o Each person writes their 2-3
  - o Share with group

- o Group prayer

Instant debrief (30 min)

- How has your thinking about praying around the topic of homelessness changed or been informed tonight?
- Pray for one another (first share how we're doing and how the group can be caring for and praying for each other)



# Missional Serving Communities

## Week 2

pray – **SEE** – learn – serve

**Objective: Our goal this week is to learn to see through God’s eyes. In order to do this, we need to consider what are the obstacles or things that make it difficult for us to do so.**

### **Meal and/or team building (30 min)**

- Checking in with each other
- High, Low, Huh?
- How can we be praying for each other going into this week?

### **Pray - See - Learn - Serve (15 min)**

- Review the Pray-See-Learn-Serve steps of the MSC
  - Still start with prayer
- Prayer of St. Francis (Hndout)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

- What about this prayer catches your attention this week?
- Our goal this week is to learn to see through God’s eyes. In order to do this, we need to consider what are the obstacles or things that make it difficult for us to do so.

### **Images Exercise (15 min) (PPT)**

- With each image ask, “what do you see?”

- After you have gone through every image ask, “what does this exercise have to do with our ability to see homelessness clearly?”

### **Good Samaritan (40 min)**

- Read Luke 10:25-37 aloud or watch the video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLzdQteted>)
  - List everyone in the text
  - Underline or circle the people or groups
  - What did each person or group “see” or not “see”?
- Mending the Divides: The Problem of Damaged Sight - Part 1 (Handout and PPT)
  - Read this paragraph and then answer the question below  
*“Something had damaged the priest’s and Levite’s ability to see this person as a human being. What was it? Was it an elevated sense of call or personal importance? Was it lifelong patterns of busyness and fulfilling an overly full schedule? Was it their understanding of what faithfulness required of them? Was it opinions, fears, and biases that had been ingrained into them through their upbringing? Had they heard and told stories, even jokes, about the Jericho road and the kinds of people who got in trouble there?”*
    - Question: Why did they see or not see?
- Mending the Divides: The Problem of Damaged Sight - Part 2 (Handout and PPT)
  - Read this paragraph and then answer the question below  
*“Let’s make this a bit more personal. What about us? What has damaged our ability to see the humanity, dignity, and image of God in other people? What are the variables that blind us from seeing people whose lives are different or broken? What inhibits us from seeing the pain of those closest to us?  
 Is it our own sense of personal importance? Do we live by an unspoken cultural caste system that helps us identify who does and doesn’t deserve our time, touch, and attention?  
 How does the frenetic pace of our lives and our calendars blind us to what is beautiful and broken around us?  
 What opinions, fears, and biases have been ingrained in us through our upbringing, the brand of church we’ve been a part of, and our preferred media sources?  
 We, like the violent few and religious elite of Jesus’ story, have been trained to see and to not see certain people. The people we are most concerned*

*about tend to be a homogeneous, insulated few. We're very clear who the "us" and the "them" are, and we are careful to keep the distinction defined and the distance severe.*

*To help with this, we tell each other stories in which we play the heroes and "others" are the villains. We speak of our "others" not as different but as wrong, dangerous, violent, and to be feared. We trust only those who think, believe, sound, and act like us and grow progressively suspicious of accents, skin tones, economic disparities, sexual orientations, political affiliations, and names of God that are different from ours. We manage our fear not by seeing them, building friendships, or allowing them to teach us about who they are but by not seeing them at all."*

o Questions:

- What was one thing from this portion of "Mending the Divides" that caught your attention (made you flinch a bit)?
  - Tell your group: If we want to see like God sees, then we need to do the hard work of understanding the causes of our blindness and then cry out for the healing touch of Jesus.
- What are our blind spots?
- How have our experiences or lack thereof impacted our sight?
- What do we see? Who or what have we learned not to see?
- Share about a time you observed or had an interaction with a homeless person
- What did you see? What did you not see? Why?
- What does all of this ("see" definition, exercises, parable, "Mending the Divide" book) have to do with our desire to care for the homeless in our community?

**Instant debrief**

- How has your thinking about seeing around the topic of homelessness changed or been informed tonight?





# Missional Serving Communities

## Week 3

pray – see – **LEARN** – serve

**Objective: Our goal this week is to learn about homelessness (in our context) and begin to discern how we are called to participate in what God is already doing**

### **Meal and/or team building (30 min)**

- Checking in with each other
- High, Low, Huh?
- How can we be praying for each other going into this week?

### **Pray - See - LEARN - serve**

- Review the Pray-See-Learn-Serve steps of the MSC
- Reminder of sampler platter approach to MSC
  - o Each MSC Unit will only give the group a taste of the specific topic
  - o By the end of the term (3 units) the goal is for every individual to be able to identify which unit resonated most with them
  - o Year 2 will provide opportunities for people to dive deeper into a specific topic (more than a simple sample)
- Still start with prayer
- Opening prayer (St. Francis) (copies and PPT)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. - Amen.
- What about this prayer catches your attention this week?



Percentages marked with an asterisk (\*) are calculated on the total number of responses received to the associated question(s) on the survey. Limited information was collected for 65 people who could not be interviewed.

03-19-2019

## Why are people in our area homeless (top 5 reasons)?

- Make list as table groups
- Share table top 5
- Each table, put them in order of greatest % to lowest %
- Misconceptions and truths about homelessness. What assumptions have we made as to why people are homeless or why people stay homeless?
- **Transition: We've got a lot to learn...**

## pray – see - LEARN (3 fold approach)

- Learning about the issue (in our context)
- Learning what God is already doing
- Learning from those that are already involved (next week)

## Learning about the issue (in our context)

What is a “Point In Time” count?

- How the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates the number of people experiencing homelessness
- An unduplicated count on a single night of the people in a community who are experiencing homelessness that includes both sheltered and unsheltered populations

2020, the total number of people experiencing homelessness in the USA was:

- 427,837
- 580,466 \*
- 671,936

A person is classified as experiencing “chronic homelessness” if they have:

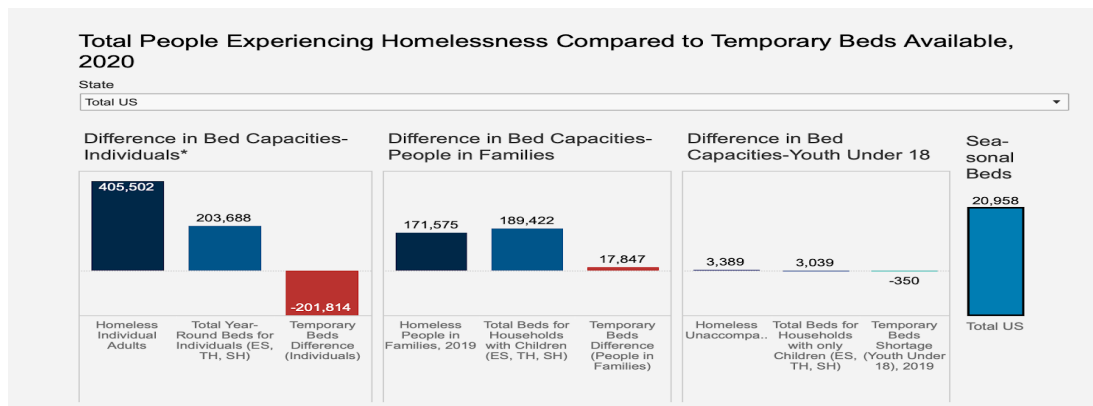
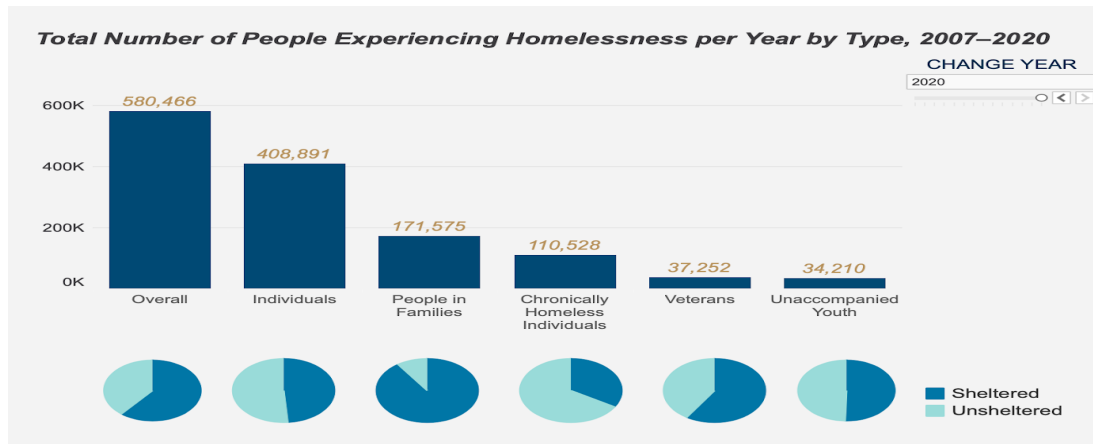
- a. A disability
- b. Been continuously homeless for at least a year
- c. Experienced homelessness at least 4 times in the last 3 years for a combined length of time of at least a year
- d. b and c
- e. a, b and c \*

In 2020, what percent of the homeless population were chronically homeless?

- a. 14%
- b. 17%
- c. 19% \*

2019, what percent of the homeless population had formal labor market earnings in the year they were observed as homeless?

- a. 19%
- b. 38%
- c. 44%
- d. 53% \*



According to the 2019 “Point in Count”, how many people were experiencing homelessness in Placer County?

- a. 617 \*
- b. 746
- c. 972

According to the 2019 “Point in Count”, what % of the 617 people experiencing homelessness in Placer County can be characterized as “chronically homeless”?

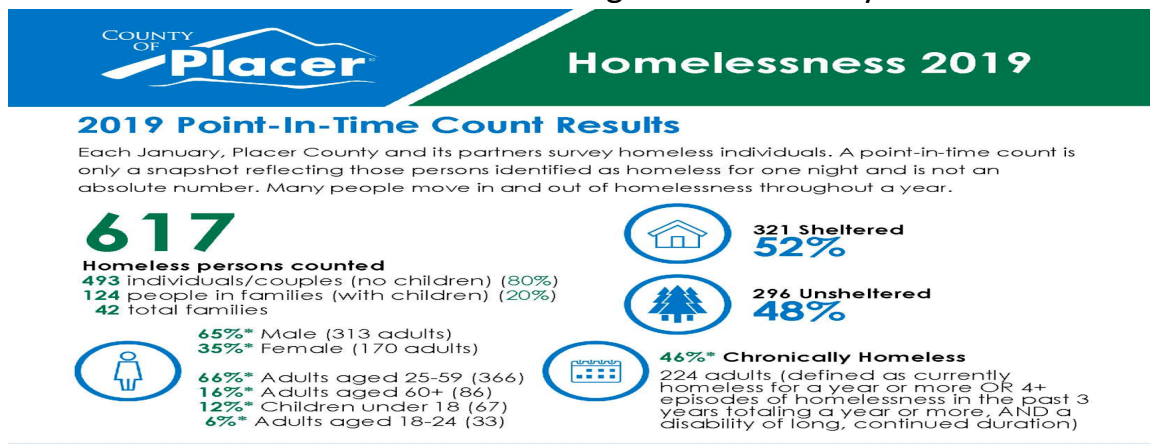
- a. 14%
- b. 19% (national %)
- c. 34%
- d. 46% \*

According to the 2015 “Homeless Needs Assessment and Action Plan for Placer County”, which of the following “good news” did they cite regarding homelessness in the county?

- a. The overall homeless rate is dropping,
- b. The situation with veterans is improving,
- c. Families with children is low on a per capita basis compared to the rest of the USA.
- d. A and B
- e. B and C
- f. A, B and C \*

Does the Placer County homeless population consist of transplants (not originally from Placer County) or “homegrown”?

- 34% of the individuals went to High School in Placer County
- 50% of the individuals have/had family members in Placer County
- 55% had Job in Placer County prior to becoming homeless
- 82% became homeless while living in Placer County



## Learning what God is already doing

- John 5:17, 19-20 (Handout and PPT)
  - Read together
  - ...Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working...Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.*
- John 5:17, 19-20 Outline from "Experiencing God" (Handout and PPT)
  - The Father has been working right up until now.
  - Now the Father has Me working.
  - I do nothing on My own initiative.
  - I watch to see what the Father is doing.
  - I do what I see the Father already is doing.
  - You see, the Father loves Me.
  - He shows Me everything that He, Himself, is doing.
- Questions:
  - What is something from John 5:17, 19-20 OR the "Experiencing God" outline that grabbed your attention?
  - What does this have to do with "pray-see-LEARN-serve"?
- Experiencing God - Chapter 6: "God is at Work Around You" summary (Handout and PPT)
  - *God is always at work in His world. He is working to bring about world redemption through His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus described the way He knew and did the will of His Father. Because the Father loved His Son, He showed the Son what He was doing. Jesus watched to see where the Father was working and joined Him. You can follow that same pattern by watching to see where God is at work. When He shows you, join Him in His work. Focus your attention on God's call to an assignment rather than your spiritual gifts, personal desires, personal skills, abilities, or resources. Once you understand God's call to an assignment, obey Him and He will work through you to accomplish His purposes.*
  - Question: What does this have to do with "pray-see-LEARN-serve"?

- Experiencing God - Chapter 6: “God is at Work Around You” prayer (Handout and PPT)
  - Read the prayer together
  - Question: What, in the prayer, reminds us to learn what God is already doing around us?
  - Pray the prayer as a group
 

*God, I know You are always at work around me. Thank You that You are redeeming this lost world through Jesus. I want to be a participant in that work. Thank You that you have chosen to work through ordinary people like me. I am ready to work. Let me see where You are working. I seek Your invitation to join You in Your work. I wait for You to take the initiative. I want to work with You because I love You and I want to continue in this wonderful love relationship You have started with me. Make me attentive to Your Holy Spirit. Show me Your assignment for me. I am reporting for duty when You are ready. I know You will work through me to accomplish Your perfect will.*

**Share with the group:** This might seem overwhelming

- It is overwhelming if we think we have to solve this alone or assume that something isn’t already being done
- Our job is to discover what is being done and discern how we are called to participate
- Question:
  - Where do you see God at work among the homeless in our community?
    - Homeless Resource Council of the Sierras
- End by highlighting the group you will be working with later in the unit

**Instant debrief**

- How has your thinking about seeing around the topic of homelessness changed or been informed tonight?

# Missional Serving Communities

## Week 4

pray – see – learn – **SERVE**

**Objective: Our goal this week is to prepare ourselves to partner with a local ministry that is already helping the portion of our community experiencing homelessness.**

### **Meal and/or team building (30 min)**

- Checking in with each other
- How can we be praying for each other going into this week?

### **Pray - See - Learn - Serve (15 min)**

- Review the Pray-See-Learn-Serve steps of the MSC
  - Still start with prayer
- Prayer of St. Francis (Handout)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
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where there is darkness, light;  
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O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
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to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

- What about this prayer catches your attention this week?
- Our goal this week is to prepare ourselves to partner with a local ministry that is already helping the portion of our community experiencing homelessness.

### **Pre Video (5 min)**

- What is one thing from the past 3 weeks that has resonated with you or was “eye opening”.

## Interview Video (70 min)

- This Saturday your group will be serving with either Compassion Planet or Loaves & Fishes.
- If your group is serving with Loaves and Fishes
  - Watch 7 min Video:
    - <https://www.facebook.com/loavesandfishes/videos/727433844675640/>
  - Watch Interview with Angela
    - <https://vimeo.com/794282144>
  - Post Interview Reflection Questions:
    - What was one thing that Angela said that caught your attention?
    - What language did you hear being used in reference to the homeless?
    - What word or phrase best describes Loaves & Fishes' approach to homelessness?
    - What role does "welcome & hospitality" play at Loaves & Fishes and why is this important?
    - On a couple of occasions Angela said, "there is more than meets the eye." Why is this important to remember as we serve those experiencing homelessness?
    - Loaves and Fishes has a dining room but there is so much more to Loaves and Fishes than simply a dining room. What are some of the other services Loaves and Fishes provide and why are they important?
    - According to Angela, what is one thing you will need when serving those experiencing homelessness? Why is it important?



- If your group is serving with Compassion Planet:
  - Watch Compassion Planet Video
    - <https://vimeo.com/357690503>
  - Watch the interview with Scott
    - <https://vimeo.com/794287306>
  - Post Interview Reflection Questions:
    - What was one thing that Scott said that caught your attention?
    - How does Compassion Planet’s mission address the issue of homelessness?
    - What stands out to you about Compassion Planet’s approach to caring for foster youth?
    - How did Scott see employment linked to healing?
    - Two aspects of Scott’s attitude and approach that are really powerful and important as we consider this journey and the work ahead of us were:
      1. Saying “Yes” and letting God figure out the rest
      2. Recognizing our own tendencies and competencies (or lack there of) and needing others (the collective Body of Christ)
        - Why are these two attitudes important as we begin to partner with ministries like Compassion Planet?

**Instructions for serving day:**

- Specific instructions will be available prior to your week 4 meeting

**Instant debrief**

- How has your thinking about seeing around the topic of homelessness changed or been informed tonight?