

Introduction to Leading Reach the World Next Door

The Opportunity. Imagine not knowing a loving God when you feel the need to pray. Picture your life never having a Bible as your guide. Think of your darkest moment and how it would have been without the mercy and uplifting power of Jesus. That is the reality for at least 4,000 unreached people groups consisting of more than 3 billion precious individuals.

Doesn't it make you long to do something? Perhaps you have always wanted to be a missionary but could not go overseas because of family responsibilities, financial challenges, or other barriers? The mission field has moved next door. More than 100 of those unreached people groups have migrated to North America in large numbers. They have also poured into cities throughout the world. We can readily be part of finishing the Great Commission and seeing Jesus return.

Do you feel unprepared to do this? This course, *Reach the World Next Door*, will help you become more effective as you learn from Jesus and depend on the Holy Spirit. You will be able to make friends with people of another culture, to care meaningfully for a refugee, immigrant, or international student, and to share your faith with a Buddhist, a Muslim, and others.

The Method. *Reach the World Next Door* has developed a thirteen-lesson training program that prepares Christians to befriend and witness to their unreached neighbors. The focus is on immigrants, refugees, and international students; however, the outreach skills that you will learn can be used to witness to anyone who need to hear the Good News. The program consists of video segments, small group discussions of biblical mission principles, and field activities that take you out to meet, serve, and share with people from non-Christian backgrounds.

The method is based on Jesus. He was the best of teachers and called His students together to learn as a small group of disciples. They spent time with Him and then He sent them out to witness two-by-two.

Since we can't physically walk with Jesus, the video segments will give you examples and instruction from individuals who are serving cross-culturally. *My Favorite Missionary*, a Bible study booklet, will focus your attention on Jesus in the specific stories where He reached out cross-culturally. The small group focus will give you the community that can encourage you and hold you accountable. The *Praying for the World Next Door* booklet will help you depend on God through prayer at every step. Finally, each lesson has a cross-cultural activity that will take you out into the field to learn by doing.

Perhaps you were thinking of doing this training by yourself. You certainly can, however, you will likely find it more effective and more fun if you invite at least one

other person to join you. The encouragement and accountability increases the chance for success. If no one nearby can partner with you, consider recruiting a friend living somewhere else to join the training, while checking in with each other digitally. Meeting through a conference call is also an option for church members who live too far apart to easily meet in person.

The *Reach the World Next Door* program can engage youth groups, Sabbath school classes, and families in mission training. It can also be an effective activity for club ministries and Friday or Saturday evening programs.

The Leadership. Each *Reach the World Next Door* group needs a leader who will commit time, prayer, and love to see the team succeed. The instructions for when to play the video segments and what questions to ask and assignments to give are all built right into the workbook. Is that leader you? You may not feel qualified, but everything you need to know is here and the Holy Spirit is fully adequate to help you facilitate the learning and provide the caring support. You can also write the author for additional coaching at scott@reachtheworldnextdoor.com. If you do not feel you should lead, seek a friend to do it for you and your group and offer to assist.

If you do not have a group yet, use the *Reach the World Next Door* [promotional materials](#) (available under “Training” at reachtheworldnextdoor.com) to help make family and friends aware of the needs of unreached internationals living nearby. Ask your church leadership for permission to share information about this training at church and invite members to join. Ask those who are interested to fill out a decision card and meet you after the church service.

Talk with your group of interested friends and family to establish a meeting place and time. Plan to meet weekly, setting aside 1½ hours for your time together. Decide if you will meet at church, in a home, or somewhere else. Determine whether a meal or refreshments will help or hinder your time together.

Gather the team members’ contact information and register them online or help them register themselves. This will enable them to receive e-notes that will encourage their involvement in mission outreach.

Prepare the materials in advance. All of the resources for the training can be viewed online at adventistlearningcommunity.com/rwnd. If you prefer hard copies of the workbook and the two booklets, these can be obtained for a donation through the links on the same site. An additional option is to print them out from the website and organize them into folders or binders.

Each week, review the lesson in advance and become familiar with the content. Arrange seating to allow group members to easily see and interact with each other. Lead your team so everyone has a chance to talk and no one monopolizes the conversations. Affirm what members say when you can, but bring them back to the

lesson if they get sidetracked. Monitor the time, referring to the suggested times allotted for each section so that you can cover everything included in the lesson.

As a leader, you are key in holding the team accountable to put the teaching into action. Use the *Mission Checklist* to keep track of attendance and completed field reports.

If team members miss a meeting, have them listen to the video segments and write answers to the small group questions. If members miss a field activity, encourage them until they can show you that it is completed. If several are getting too far behind, postpone your weekly meeting in order to make sure everyone continues to do the actual mission work. If one person cannot keep up, encourage him or her to wait for another cycle of training. Good learning will not take place without applying what is learned in the activities.

Does this sound busy? It is a real commitment that should be entered with serious thought and prayer. The group meeting time lasts about 1½ hours, the field assignment averages an hour and the reading and video homework is about an hour. If you and your group want to accomplish that each week, you will have to pray about your schedule to see where God will help you scale back on other activities to make room for this important work among the unreached. Especially consider involving your family in this program so that your time together with them increases rather than decreases. An alternative is to take longer than 13 weeks to complete the training.

Serving others, both church members and those who are not Christians, takes the sacrifice of time and energy. When we reach out cross-culturally there will be frustrations and challenges. Sometimes our efforts will be rejected and our tears will flow. Will it be worth it?

Jesus thinks so. When Jesus was considering the necessity of the cross, He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:24-25). As we throw ourselves into the needs of the world, it will take time to see the fruit. Let's remember the value of just one. Jesus died for that one and that one will bring Him joy for eternity. Additionally, one person reached may in turn reach many of his or her own people. Let's claim the promise in Isaiah 60:22, "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time."