

Following *Jesus*, the Ultimate *Leader*



journal

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.—Colossians 3:17

W e l c o m e !

You are about to embark on an exciting experience designed not only to help others, but to change your life as well. This journal is a tool for you to record your insights, what you are learning, and how you might want to continue to change as you sharpen your servant leadership skills.

During your time in Appalachia, you will have many opportunities not only to work, but to learn about God, his calling for you, and the challenge of living a life of servant leadership. You will be learning in many ways—in small groups, in evening worship times, on site where you are working, and through quiet times with God.

As you anticipate your days in Appalachia, set aside regular time to meet with God in prayer, asking him to reveal what he has for you to learn and apply through this experience. If you arrive in Appalachia anticipating God's presence there, you will be better focused to see what he yearns to do in your life.

And, remember, your ministry isn't finished when you return home. In fact, this is only the beginning of service to others as you grow into God's Servant Leader. May you be blessed during this incredible week!



The "Getting Ready" section is designed for your use before you leave for Appalachia. Sessions One and Two on the following pages provide opportunities for you to take notes during the group preparation study. If you have not had the opportunity to participate in this study, skip ahead to the Getting Ready section entitled "Personal Reflection."

Session One: God's Leadership Mold

Session One Notes:

How do you describe a leader?

What is God looking for in a leader?

What words come to mind when you think about Jesus?

Challenge

God is always looking for strong leaders:

For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

—2 Chronicles 16:9

- Will you be that person God is seeking?
- Return to the characteristics you identified in Jesus. How do these words relate to the characteristics of a leader? Pick three that challenge you most. How will you work on developing these characteristics in your life beginning today?

Session Two: Joining in God’s Transforming Work

Session Two Notes:

In Appalachia . . .

Family is primary.

Education can be undervalued.

Job opportunities are limited.

Lack of resources keeps individuals from thriving.

How would you define poverty?

The Impact of Your Work:

When lives are changed for the better not just for today, but for the future as well, this is called "transformational development," and it's how World Vision does its work all over the world. Transformational development works in the isolated communities of Africa, in the slums of India, and in the war-torn Middle East. And it works here in the United States, too. Transformational develop is what you will be doing in Appalachia, and it includes social, physical, and spiritual components. Let's meet these different components that come together in lasting change:

Social transformation:

Physical Transformation

Spiritual Transformation

Transformational Development:

A big part of transformational development is transformed relationships. This means:

- We are in right relationship with one another
- We are in right relationship with God
- We maintain a right relationship with God's creation

Right relationships transcend physical poverty. While we may not be physically poor, we may need to do some work on relationships. We may see that we change our assumptions and our view of the world based on our experiences in Appalachia. We may value God's creation more. And we may return home with a greater sense of the world's needs and our ability to care for those in need. **As we are changed by this experience, God is transforming US as well as those we are working with in Appalachia. God will do his part during this time in Appalachia, and we are called to do our part as well: To reflect him in what we do, what we say, and how we live our lives.**

When you arrive in Appalachia you will become part of this process of transformation. You will be not only participating in construction, but actually pointing people you meet to Christ by:

What you do:

What you say:

How you live:

The characteristics I choose to develop in my life are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.—Colossians 3:17

Compassion Begins Here

Stephanie serves as director and volunteer coordinator for Appalachia's KidReach program, an after-school tutoring and mentoring program operating in three West Virginia counties. In 2000, she began her work with the KidReach program. Stephanie was born and raised in Michigan.



By Stephanie Norton

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, cloth yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love: which binds them all together in perfect unity. —Colossians 3:12-14

What does it mean to have compassion? It's being willing to suffer with another; have sympathy or pity; commiserate; show mercy.

Every time I hear the word "compassion" it truly strikes a note in my life. I did not understand it until I found myself really being touched by it. I didn't really understand compassion until I looked to Jesus for the true meaning.

All through Christ's ministry here on earth, he gave us a model of unbelievable compassion. I know He still shares that compassion today. I first came to Appalachia when I was 16 to participate in a mission trip. I knew God had a life of mission work for me in the future.

In the years to come I returned on several mission trips and then felt God was calling me to Appalachia to work with children and children's programs. I came here as an intern and I arrived with this not-very-humbling thought that I was going to help everybody. Of course I was young, excited, and full of ideas—which is great!. But I don't think it was because I had compassion for people. I wanted to change people to

what I thought Jesus wanted them to be (or really to change them to what I thought they should be).

The first year was hard and a very humbling experience. On several occasions, I found myself falling on my face as I tried to change things without getting to know the people Christ sent me to. Before God could really use me I had to know—really know—what compassion is. What I learned is that God knows us, he spends time with us, he loves us, and that love remains no matter who we are. Christ came in flesh and walked among us, felt our pain, and saw our hurt.

As we work together in Appalachia, it helps to realize that we ourselves are imperfect people. Even though we might look good on the outside, we still need Christ to have compassion on us for all the many things that are still not right on the inside.

When we see that in ourselves, we will not be super heroes for Christ but truly life changers who are humbled and mercy receivers. We can then share our story of Christ having compassion for us and demonstrate real compassion for others. Just take time this day and think about the mercy, forgiveness, love, and compassion Christ has for you.

Notes

Enrich Your Lives

Johnny heads up the Ministry Resource Center for Vision Appalachia. Raised in Appalachia's Flemington Community in Taylor County, Johnny also serves as pastor of the Mt. Calvary Assembly of God in Morgantown, WV. Johnny, his wife Maria and two sons, Nathan and Isaac, live in Flemington.



By Johnny Whitehair

Greetings, Today is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it. The essence of I Corinthians 12: 14-27 is this: Is every one an ear? If so, where would the seeing be? Is every one an eye? Then where would the hearing be?

A little more than a year ago, I traveled to Robertson, Illinois, to preach at a man's funeral. The man had traveled with his children to visit their grandfather three days before the grandfather was to have open-heart surgery. Unfortunately, the man had a massive heart attack and passed away before the father's surgery. He left a wife and three children behind.

I knew that the man's wishes were to be cremated, and I had been given the uncomfortable task of explaining to the children what cremation was and what would happen to their beloved father. I was dreading this conversation as I thought I would have to tell them that their father's body was to be burned and all that would be left would be ashes in an urn.

Before this conversation took place, I was speaking with an elderly volunteer about how apprehensive I felt about explaining the process of cremation to three children who had just lost their father. This elderly gentleman asked the question "What are your views on cremation?" I explained to him that the Bible teaches us that to be absent in body is to be present with the Lord. Our bodies are just tents; their purpose is temporary, like most tents are today. Tents wear out, mildew, and get damaged. They can be disposed of in various ways. This man is already in heaven and his body was just a tent. I thought about this for a

moment and suddenly I knew how I could talk to the children without further upsetting them.

I gathered the children together in a quiet place and said, "Your dad has gone to heaven to be with Jesus. In heaven, we do not need bodies like the ones we have on Earth. In Heaven we get a new body that is not sick or in pain and it never wears out. Jesus knows each one of us, however we may appear, because Jesus knows us by what is in our heart." After this explanation I asked if the children had any questions. They said no, and wanted to know if they could find a special place back in West Virginia to take his ashes. I told them they could and they got very excited that they did not have to leave their Daddy's remains behind in Illinois.

I said a small prayer for the children and gave thanks to God for the elderly volunteer. It amazes me how God uses each generation to teach the next. If not for the wisdom of our elders, these important life lessons could not be passed down. This is just one example of God's diverse plan for all of us. As we bring our different gifts, experiences, and views into each other's lives, we all are enriched. Do you approach differences with an open or closed heart? How can you appreciate each other's differences this week?

Notes:

Modeling Servant Leadership

Jeff serves as area director of World Servants and is responsible for the tasks that go along with hosting more than 1,000 workers every year. He hails from Camden, New Jersey. Jeff and his wife Lisa began coming to Chestnut Ridge on mission trips. In June of 2002, they realized the Lord wanted them to move to Appalachia and begin their ministry. Jeff and Lisa have three children, Jeffrey, Lauren, and Mike.



By Jeff Sickler

We had just moved to Southern Indiana and started attending a church that had 1,500 members and a K-12 Christian school.

We were amazed at the size of the church. It had seven pastors, and more Sunday School classes than you can count. We soon felt right at home. My wife was especially impressed by one senior pastor. She thought he was an awesome speaker. But in my opinion, he wasn't that impressive, and he was always in a suit and tie. I was a farming man myself, more impressed with physical labor than nice clothes.

Our children were attending the church school, and when it came time for a school work-day, I signed up to tear down some walls as part of a classroom remodel. Who was there, getting dirty and sweaty with me? That same senior pastor! My respect for that man grew 100 times that day.

God's Word tells us again and again to love one another, to place others first:

"Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing."

—Philippians 2:1-3 (NLT)

Are Christian leaders exempt from loving and serving? Absolutely not. In fact, they are to be the models for serving others.

What an excellent example of servant leadership that pastor showed that day. He did not think himself too good to get dirty and sweaty. He was willing to do himself what was being asked of the congregation. Just as Jesus did, he was leading the way by serving.

Be honest now. What kinds of things might you think you're "too good" to do? Pray about these things, and ask God to give you a heart willing to do anything he calls you to do.

Notes

Day 4

Shine Your Light

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."

—Revelation 21:4-6

Response

Jesus made many things new when he came to earth. He gave us new commands (love one another), he brought the new covenant, he gave us new life. Yet in this verse, Jesus promises that *everything* will one day be made new. As a leader, you have an opportunity to bring many people into this newness—now and for eternity. As you love others, you have innovative opportunities to draw them to Christ and to newness.

Plenty of Chain

Ruston Seaman, who serves as executive director of Vision Appalachia, has dedicated his adult life to improving Appalachian communities. After growing up in Nebraska, Ruston embarked on a nine-month journey seeking understanding and knowledge in the Lord. While hitchhiking in South Dakota, Ruston met a missionary and traveling evangelist, Rev. Frank Peoples. He traveled with Rev. Peoples to Chestnut Ridge and began a ministry that has spanned 22 years. Ruston is now the pastor of Peoples' Chapel Church. He, his wife Donna and children, Ruston Ray and Leah, make their home on Chestnut Ridge.



Ruston spending time with children in the Dominican Republic.

By Ruston Seaman

Among the many virtues of living in West Virginia, the ability to stay warm in the winter is made possible from the abundance of two of our major resources: coal and wood. As a matter of fact, it is almost an art form seeing how to get the most heat out of a pile of wood. Often the way to have central air and heating is to have a wood/coal stove centrally located in the home with a fan circulating the warm air. The old home we purchased to live in was drafty to say the least, and I was among the list of people trying to stay warm as cheaply as possible.

I remember one cool fall day during our mission program, I was working with a gentleman whose home was more like a hunting cabin. When he invited me in, I was very interested in his wood stove, which was hanging on chains from heavy beams in the ceiling. A fan was blowing hot air from around and under the stove.

The little cabin was very warm and I thought to myself, "What a genius! By raising the stove up in the air, he is getting all the radiated heat from off the stove to circulate through the house." I also noticed that, instead of having to bend over to load the stove, his wood and ash box were eye level.

I had seen a variety of stove configurations, but his approach moved me to ask the question, "What an ingenious way to get heat circulating. How did you ever think of raising your stove up in the air?" The man

smiled and said without blinking, "Simple. I had lots of chain and not enough pipe." I just grinned and shook my head and thought how many great innovations have come about because someone was not stopped by what they did not have, but succeeded by using what they have. "Plenty of chain and not enough pipe."

True Innovators:

- Can't be afraid to try and fail
- Figure out how to solve a problem or meet a need in new and creative ways
- Sometimes do peculiar things and get profound results

There is an innovator in each one of us when we have vision to do things in new ways. As a leader, you are called not only to new vision, but to helping make that vision become reality. What is your vision for your life, your ministry, your family? How can you begin to be an innovator in making that vision reality?

Notes

What is YOUR passion?

Jerry Stire serves as Vision Youth program manager. Raised in nearby Harrison County, Jerry recently joined the Vision Appalachia staff after being the youth pastor for Horizons Church in Lost Creek, WV. He and his wife Tracy are the parents of daughter Grace. Jerry loves cars, but is deathly afraid of snakes—and will scream like a little girl if he sees one!



By Jerry Stire

Have you ever been around someone who is crazy about something, so much so that they drive YOU crazy talking about it? When I was growing up here in West Virginia, I had a friend named Sean that absolutely loved bugs. He was fanatical about all sorts of bugs. He had little bug cages that he captured them in. He would tie strings to their legs and walk around with them as they flew. Sean lived and breathed BUGS! He was passionate about those things. It would be great to say Sean eventually went on to become an entomologist (that's a bug doctor), but he ended up managing a hotel! Anyway, my point is he was passionate.

Isn't it funny what we become passionate about? I am a car guy. Come into my office and you'll see cars everywhere. I'm a little passionate about cars. But I know that a car won't really change someone's life. I do know that Jesus Christ DOES change lives, and that makes me passionate about doing his work.

Have you ever tried a new product or food that was so great you had to let everyone know about it? Well, that's how I feel about Jesus. I've seen teens who were dying inside from abusive situations brought back to life in Christ. I've seen drug-addicted teens become dependent on Christ instead of drugs. I've seen miraculous life changes and I am passionate about letting others know what Jesus can do for them!

Jesus was passionate about giving his life for YOU. You were in his thoughts as he hung from the cross. This alone should spur our passion

and fervor to lead others to the cross and let them know what Jesus has done for them.

As you work this week, some of your jobs may be very routine and dull. But remember why you are doing that job: to show and share the love of Christ. Ultimately, you are doing that job FOR Christ. Last year I took my middle schoolers on a service trip to southern West Virginia. The entire week we scraped paint off a block house! It was boring! But we kept encouraging our students and reminding them who we were ultimately doing this for: Jesus Christ. But remember Ephesians 6:7 "Render service with ENTHUSIASM as to the Lord . . ."

What is your passion? Is it life changing? Is it really worth your time? Now you're getting to the end of your week, and you may be tired.

Notes

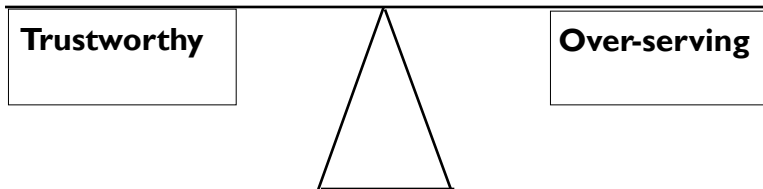
A Delicate Balance

Barbara serves as director of Appalachian Community CARE (ACC), a grassroots organization and partner of World Vision, World Servants, and Young Life at Vision Appalachia. A native of nearby Harrison County, Barbara was a volunteer for ACC when she became aware of the challenges facing rural communities. Barbara now lives in the town of Bridgeport and is active at Horizons Church in Lost Creek, WV.



By Barbara Weaver

The challenge of any serving ministry is to instill in the people served a new sense of hopefulness and a “With God’s help, I can do it” attitude. We at World Vision know—first and foremost—we must be trustworthy to this cause. The second thing we know is we could compromise the very people we are called to by “over-serving.”



Finding balance between the two is the challenge! Why? Because if we over-serve, we run a high risk of making people dependent not on God and themselves, but on us. If this happens, any improvements we bring to the community aren’t likely to last because we have to be there to make them work.

So how does World Vision maintain this balance? Our approach is to come alongside local community leaders and provide them with the resources and support they need to fulfill their own vision for a brighter tomorrow. These resources include building supplies, personal care items, training programs, and hands-on assistance. But the community and its leaders must “own” the dream for their own futures. They must

be willing to be equipped to build a community that is moving toward making that dream become reality.

Here’s an example of how this has worked in Appalachia: Brownnton was the second community to join the Vision Appalachia Community Network. The heart’s desire of the people of Brownnton was to have a Christ-centered community center, where people could gather and children could learn, play, and grow. That vision became reality as World Vision helped them write grants, buy an old store building, and add a large indoor recreation center to that building. Part of this work was accomplished by groups just like your group, who came Brownnton to help the people achieve a dream.

Here’s where they started . . .



... and here is where they are today: the Brownnton Community Center!



Thank you for the work you’ve done this week to help the people of Appalachia achieve their dreams for their communities. Through your life, you are showing people the love of Christ. May you be blessed as you have been a blessing to others!