
West Valley Church Mission Love

Introducing People to Jesus Christ; Making the Introductions

John 1:40-42, 6:8-9, 12:20-22; Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 19:10

1. The Calling to Introduce

- John 1:40-42; Luke 15:4-6; Acts 4:12

2. The Communication to Introduce

- John 1:42; Luke 8:39; Mark 5:19; Acts 8:4; Psalm 107:2

3. The Culmination to Introduce

- John 1:41-42

love.learn.live.

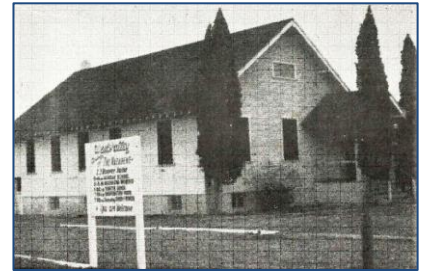
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West Valley Church
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West Valley Church Mission: Love

Over sixty years ago, a group of three couples and their four children became charter members of Wide Hollow Church of the Nazarene, located on the corner of Wide Hollow and Chekola Roads.



They had purchased a little church building that had housed the Valley Methodist Episcopal Church since 1914. Two years later, already under their second pastor, they added on two additions to the building.

The church continued on its way for another 14 years, having changed its name to "West Valley Church of the Nazarene," and then in 1974 they had the opportunity to purchase two and a third acres from Congdon Orchards for the bargain price of \$1. That brought the total acreage of the church to two and three quarters acres.

Four years after that, under the church's fourth pastor, the current sanctuary was built. Ten years after that, under the church's fifth pastor, the overflow, music room, and some offices were added.



Six years and three more pastors later, the church purchased another 7 and a quarter acres from Congdon Orchards, this time for a little bit higher price of over \$360,000 (not bad, considering that Marvin Bales told us that it is now going for over \$500,000/acre!).



Seven years and over 4 million dollars later, the children's, youth, gym, administration, and playground were added. In 2011, after a year under the church's eleventh pastor in 54 years (which happened to be me), the church raised and paid off a \$120,000 renovation of the foyer, adding the café.

All of that is a brief historical, geographic, and construction history of West Valley Church. That doesn't even begin to list the literally tens of thousands of people whose lives have been touched by Christ through West Valley Church. The church has had its ebbs and flows, its good days and its difficult days.

The history books of heaven will list the victories as well as the spiritual battles that have been won and lost over more than six decades of a worshipping congregation on the corner of Wide Hollow Road and Chekola Road, or what is now 72nd and Nob Hill Blvd.

For a long time, there were only two buildings on this intersection, far outside of town and surrounded by orchards: Wide Hollow School and Wide Hollow Church of the Nazarene. Wide Hollow School had been operating for around 30 years before the Wide Hollow Nazarene Church took up residence.

Way back when that school started, God had *today* in mind as he waited patiently for West Valley Church to arrive. God led obedient pastors, board members, and leaders over the decades to bring us to *today* at West Valley Church; we – those of us who are part of this church today – have come to this place for such a time as this. So many people have followed the Lord faithfully through the decades to hand us an incredible legacy. They gave of themselves so sacrificially in time and money, to bring this church to us in 2017. Many of you are sitting here this morning. We dare not squander what has been prepared and preserved for us at West Valley Church today.

Today, we share more than geographical proximity and a one-time same name with an elementary school.

Today we work closely together with the school, helping it be successful in educating our community's children, but our church does far more than help educate. We provide tutoring, mentoring, soccer ministry, hospitality, a helping hand and loving action that is all driven by the love of Jesus Christ and our desire for them to know personally the God who loves them so much that he would tell us to love them – the God whose loving Son and abiding Spirit compel us to be a loving community, encouraging each other in our faith. Several families that attend our church today have come to us through the work of West Valley Church in this neighborhood. Ninety percent of our current worshipping people live within the West Valley School District. *We are West Valley*. Yet our reach extends far beyond this corner; we support local ministries in our city like PrimeTime, Love Inc., and Union Gospel Mission. We provide monthly support along with volunteers and work teams throughout the year as needed to Mission Agape Church – the bilingual Nazarene Church in Wapato, pastored by our own Luis and Lisa Rodriguez. Beyond the Yakima Valley, our church has touched lives by ministering in major cities like Seattle, Portland, Denver, Salt Lake, Phoenix, St. Louis, and Los Angeles through our youth mission trips. And we are now in our third year and over \$90,000 into a partnership with the Victoria Church in Guyana, as you heard the report this morning. Over 60 of our church family have been there in person to meet the amazing people of the church who work so tirelessly for the Gospel, and to see the

great things God is doing, and we've been inspired to return and carry the Gospel into our own neighborhoods. We are a church that knows we are loved by God, so we are determined to share that love in Christ locally, regionally, and globally – all from this corner of old Wide Hollow Road.

All of this has been envisioned, and driven, by the mission statement that we've had for the last seven and a half years. West Valley Church exists to:

- Introduce People to Jesus Christ,
- Equip People with a Faith that Works, and
- Live as People with Purpose.

Put more simply: love, learn, and live.

We are going to spend the next three Sundays revisiting each of those three components of our mission statement, reminding ourselves how important it is, and the vital ways that we incorporate it into our lives and culture here at West Valley Church. We'll spend time in our small groups each week exploring these, as well.

Today, we are going to unpack the first of the three parts of our mission: to introduce people to Jesus Christ. These three are listed in order of their importance; while they are all of equal value, we carry them out in their order of priority.

We start with that first part –

Introducing People to Jesus Christ; Making the Introductions

Everything we do is done with this intent. We know God loves us, and we know God loves everyone. But there are people who have no idea about that, so we love them enough to introduce them to Jesus. We either do it through our work as a church, in things like Upward Soccer and Breakfast with Santa, or it is done through each of our conversations that take place at events like Trunk or Treat, or as we invite others to attend our small groups with us.

The word “introduce” is really vital to our mission because it speaks volumes about our attitude and approach to *how* we share the Good News of God's love through Jesus. We don't preach at people, we don't debate with people, we don't thrust pamphlets into people's hands or faces, and we certainly don't argue, berate, or judge people. We *introduce* people.

We believe we have met the greatest person ever – the greatest God ever – and he is so great and so loving and so giving and so rescuing and so redeeming and so forgiving that we just absolutely *know* our unchurched friends and neighbors would love him too, so we can't wait to introduce them to him. We do that, in love, through our actions and our words.

While there are multiple excellent examples of this in the New Testament, we are going to see this pattern through a guy named Andrew. In the Gospel of John, Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist's. John the Baptist introduced his disciples

to Jesus, so Andrew began following Jesus. When Andrew met Jesus, he immediately realized that Jesus was the Christ, or the Messiah, or the Son of God, whom the Jewish prophets had promised centuries ago. We pick up the story from there:

“Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means ‘Christ’). Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, ‘Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas’ (which means ‘Peter’).” (John 1:40-42, nlt)

Andrew is mentioned only a few times in the New Testament, but *each* time we see him, *he is introducing people to Jesus*. First was the passage we just read, when Andrew introduced his brother, Peter, to Jesus. Then, Andrew introduced the little boy with the five loaves and the two fish to Jesus (John 6:8-9), and Jesus used that little boy’s lunch to perform an amazing miracle, feeding over 5000 people. Finally, Andrew introduced a group of Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20-22). He was so filled with Jesus’ love that he wanted others to know Jesus, too.

What we see Andrew doing is exactly what Jesus had told him to do:

“Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ he said, ‘and I’ll show you how to fish for people.’ Right away, they left their nets and followed him.” (Matthew 4:18-20, ceb)

Andrew took that call to heart and we see him doing it throughout the New Testament. Introducing people to Jesus is the primary task we have as Christians, and that’s why it is first in our tri-priority mission statement. It is borne in love.

When we at West Valley Church do this, we are continuing the very reason Jesus said that *he* came to this earth:

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”
(Luke 19:10, nlt)

Andrew was just an ordinary person – like all of us – but like him, the Lord can use us to help others grow into a relationship with Jesus. Andrew didn’t rank up there with Peter or with Paul in the history books – we don’t know if Andrew ever even preached a sermon! But, he introduced Peter to Jesus, and Peter preached *a lot* of sermons, but Peter wouldn’t have preached at all if it weren’t for Andrew. The Day of Pentecost and the birth of the Church may not have happened had Andrew not introduced Peter to Jesus. Let’s learn from Andrew so that you and I can introduce people to Jesus. Because every interaction we create for you as a church is to give you an opportunity to make this introduction.

First, let’s see...

1. The ***Calling*** to Introduce

Every disciple of Jesus – every Christian – has this calling to introduce people to Jesus. Look again at verses 40-42:

“Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. *The first thing Andrew did* was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.” (John 1:40-42, niv)

Do you see that part that I’ve italicized: “The *first* thing Andrew did.”

Notice the word, ***first***.

When Andrew met Jesus and realized who he was, he introduced a lot of other people to Jesus. As soon as he realized who Jesus was, he wanted to introduce Jesus to the other people he knew and loved. How could he *not* want them to know the greatest person he’d ever met? Most of us who love Jesus can’t help but have this compulsion to introduce him to others. Unfortunately, over time we believe the lies of the enemy and our culture that say we shouldn’t talk about Jesus because no one wants “religion shoved down their throat.” So we suppress this natural desire. While it’s true – no one wants religion shoved down their throat - *everyone* wants to meet Someone as loving, accepting, forgiving, and transforming as Jesus is. *It’s all about a loving relationship with a real Person, not a set of rules enforced through a religious persuasion.* The only way to keep alive your loving desire to introduce people to Jesus, or to rekindle that desire, is to *do it* – *keep* introducing people to Jesus.

Let’s bring those two verses back up again:

“Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. *The first thing Andrew did was to find* his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.” (John 1:40-42, niv)

Do you see that part I highlighted this time: the first thing Andrew did was *to find* his brother Simon...”

Notice the word, ***find***.

We don’t really know how far Andrew had to go to find Peter, but he found him, which implies Peter was “missing” somehow, right? Peter was missing out on Jesus, he wasn’t with Jesus, and he was missing out on the greatness of being a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Peter was *missing* from God’s love and God’s kingdom, so Andrew went to find him.

It’s our calling to “find” those who are missing out on the love of God in Jesus and introduce them to Him. Some people expect the *church* to “save” people – that it’s through our programs, but everywhere in the New Testament, it is *individuals* who make the introductions, not churches.

Jesus described our mission with this parable:

“Suppose someone among you had one hundred sheep and lost one of them. Wouldn’t he leave the other ninety-nine in the pasture and search for the lost one until he finds it? And when he finds it, he is thrilled and places it on his shoulders. When he arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Celebrate with me because I’ve found my lost sheep.’” (Luke 15:4-6, ceb)

Do we realize that all of the people around us who don’t know Jesus are missing out on God’s Kingdom? Do we realize that every person like that is a child of God who is lost? Heaven is filled with milk cartons covered with the faces of God’s lost children on them.

Look around you. Most of the people around you are “found.” There are exponentially more outside this room that are not. They don’t know how much God loves them. How dare we be content with this group of people in this room, when God still has missing children that he loves very much?! He’s provided the Way for them: his One and Only Son.

“Salvation can be found in no one else. Throughout the whole world, no other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12, ceb)

The first thing we need to do is love people enough to find them and introduce to Jesus.

And who was it that Andrew found? *his brother*.

Andrew started with his own family. Do you have people in your own immediate family who haven’t met Jesus? Start praying for them and start looking for Spirit-led opportunities to make the introductions. You don’t have to have all the right answers. You don’t have to be ready to debate. You simply need to introduce them to Jesus, the one you’ve met.

The first thing we want to do is find those who haven’t met Jesus – especially those closest to us – those we love the most – and make the introductions.

One of the reasons that our small groups are so important is because each week we pray for each other as we do this. We pray for those we are reaching out to. We love each other, and we encourage each other and hold each other accountable to carry out the calling that we all have – to introduce people to Jesus.

Now, see...

2. The *Communication* to Introduce

What did Andrew *say* to Peter when he found him? He said,

“‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.” (John 1:41-42, niv)

All Andrew did, like we just said, was to tell Peter what he knew about Jesus: “We’ve found God’s Son! I want you to meet him!” Let’s say you want to introduce me to a good friend of yours. So I ask you to tell me about your friend; what would you do? Would you begin to recite his or her historical verifications? Would you try to prove to me that your friend is real? Would you begin to explain to me the theories and reasoning that explain your friend’s life and actions? Would you be prepared to argue with me about whether or not your friend was a real person? I highly doubt you’d do those things. If you did, I might still want to meet your friend, but I wouldn’t be very excited about knowing *you*.

So the communication to introduce is important. Don’t over-think it! Notice a few things about Andrew’s introduction:

First, it was ***spoken***.

Letting our actions do the talking is very, very important. It’s our actions that validate our words. That’s why we love and serve our neighbors. But actions without words are empty, the same as words without action are just hot air. If you are going to introduce me to a friend, but you don’t *speak* to me, how am I supposed to figure it out? Don’t just show me; *tell* me too!

Jesus healed a man and then told him,

“Return home and tell the story of what God has done for you.”
(Luke 8:39, ceb) (see also Mark 5:19!)

Just tell the story. Most of us are ready to talk about anything when we are asked our opinion. Why not be willing to introduce people to Jesus, just telling them what we know about him?

It’s not complicated; just keep it ***simple***.

Even a child could’ve understood what Andrew told Peter. We aren’t making a theological, philosophical thesis here; introducing people to Jesus is as simple as introducing one friend to another. In Acts 8:4 we are told that it was simply a natural part of the believers’ lives to tell people about Jesus wherever they went:

“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.”
(Acts 8:4, niv)

Have *you* met Jesus? Do *you* know some things to be true about him? Has he answered *your* prayers? Has he given *you* a new life? Why can’t you simply tell people *that*?

And then also see that Andrew’s communication when he introduced Peter to Jesus was ***sure***.

Andrew was absolutely certain of his message, and that’s what people want to hear today. They don’t want to hear theories or arguments; they want to know if *you* believe it – are you sure of *your* truth?

Speak what you know, keep it simple, and share what you are sure of. We aren't making a sales pitch and we aren't trying to close a deal. We are simply making introductions. We are simply making friends and introducing people to Jesus.

The Bible says...“Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has saved you...” (Psalm 107:2)

So we have a *call* to introduce people to Jesus; that should be the first thing we think about doing, finding those who are missing (especially those closest to us), and we can *communicate* the message by speaking simply about what we are sure of.

Finally, see...

3. The ***Culmination*** of Introduction

The point of introductions is not to “win someone over,” it's not to make someone a “convert,” it's not to evangelize or proselytize or sermonize or homilize or anesthetize or accessorize or caramelize anyone! We just want people to know Jesus and how great he is – exactly what we know about him. So we introduce them to him. We see the point of it all in Andrew's story of introducing his brother Simon (Peter) to Jesus.

“The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). *And he brought him to Jesus.*”
(John 1:41-42, niv)

He brought him to Jesus. That's the hope, that's the goal, that's the point of making an introduction, isn't it? If I have a great friend, and I think you'd like to meet him or her, I'd introduce you to each other, and I'm hoping that you two will become friends too.

It's important to see that Andrew *brought* Peter to Jesus; he didn't tell Peter to go find Jesus. Andrew led Peter to Jesus and made the introduction. You can do that simply by bringing folks to church with you!

Let me ask you this: of all the people in this room, how many of you had someone else introduce you to Jesus – whether it was a parent or grandparent or friend or stranger, a pastor or a teacher? Raise your hand if at least one person introduced you to Jesus in some way. See?

It is a fact that the majority of people who are Christians today were brought to Jesus by someone else. That's what happened each time in the Bible, too.

It's up to us to make the best introduction we could ever make to the people we know and love. They are missing out on knowing Jesus, on all the great things that come with being a part of God's kingdom.

As a church we do this in a lot of ways – by serving our community and through hospitality (Wide Hollow, Trunk or Treat, Breakfast with Santa, Easter, Upward Soccer, opening our doors...)

We happen to believe that attending worship is a great way to meet Jesus. As a church, we build loving relationships with people in our neighborhood, so that when YOU invite them, they will come. It won't happen if YOU don't make the introductions.

Transition to small groups – every week in small groups we are asking who is on our prayer list, who we've invited to church.

Small groups is the place where you will get the encouragement, prayer, and accountability to carry out the mission!