



Participant Handout for *Reclaiming the “E” Word: Waking Up to Our Evangelical Identity* By Kelly A. Fryer

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for bringing us together. We thank you that you have given us good news that has the power to change lives. May we truly hear that news and see how you are working in our world today. Fire us up with your Holy Spirit so that we can't help but share what we have heard and seen. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Points to Ponder

Evangelicals: Does That Mean Us?

1. What does the word *evangelical* mean to you?
2. The origins of the word come from Greek: the prefix *eu-*, meaning good, and the word *angelos*, meaning messenger. If you think of *evangels* as essentially messengers of good (news), what would you look for from people who say they are “evangelical”? What messages would you expect?
3. Look up the definition of *evangelical* in a dictionary. Which of the meanings are tied to the original meaning of *evangel*? Which reflect the gospel as you understand it? Which seem to be tied mainly to politics?
4. Of the meanings we have discussed, which describe your congregation? Which meanings do you *wish* described your congregation?

Reality and Possibility

5. Why does it matter whether we share the good news about Jesus Christ? What do you think happens when we do? What have you seen happen?
6. If you are uncomfortable with some of the meanings of *evangelical* or with some of the practices people have used in trying to convert people to Christianity, how should that discomfort affect what you do? Should it keep you from practicing evangelism in the sense of sharing the good news? Why or why not?
7. Read the four paragraphs that begin “Imagine” under “Imagine This” on page 8 of *Reclaiming the “E” Word*. What elements of Kelly Fryer’s vision inspire you?
8. Imagine your own faith community being full of energy and excitement to share the gospel. Write some of the possibilities you are imagining:
 - a. Imagine _____.
 - b. Imagine _____.
 - c. Imagine _____.
 - d. Imagine _____.
9. What, if anything, is holding your community back from these possibilities?

Participating in God's Mission

Read Mark 4:35–5:20. Listen for what God is saying to you as you read.

10. What might God be saying to you in this story today? How, if at all, is what you are hearing God say related to being “evangelical”?

The following questions provide further ideas for discussing the passage from Mark, based on what some people have heard God say in the story.

11. Who was afraid in this story (verses 4:40 and 5:15)? What were these people afraid of? To what unexpected, different, or difficult places might Jesus want you to travel with him? Do you consider encounters and travels with Jesus to be comforting, frightening, or both? Why?
12. What was the role of the disciples in this story? What was the role of the man possessed by demons? How did the disciples and the man relate to Jesus? Which roles and behaviors showed faith? How do their actions shed light on ways we can “evangelize” today?
13. In the story, did the good news spread because of the disciples’ fearlessness and well-crafted message or because of what Jesus was doing? What is Jesus doing in your life and your community’s life today? What do you believe Jesus *can* do?

Closing Prayer

Praise the LORD, all you nations!
Extol him, all you peoples!
For great is his steadfast love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.
Praise the LORD!

(Psalm 117)

Source: Kelly A. Fryer, *Reclaiming the “E” Word: Waking Up to Our Evangelical Identity* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008).