

## David Mitchell – Reach More Witness Talk

Good morning. My name is David Mitchell. I've been asked to speak to you very briefly this morning about my experiences taking part in a small group faith program called Reach More.

I've been a member of OMC for three years now. Every week I would come to mass - generally the nine o'clock because I'm not so hardy as you are and because, as a former teacher, I love being surrounded by all the children who attend that particular mass. And every week I would be moved both by the beauty of the mass itself and by the insights into the readings the homilies delivered by our wonderful Fathers and Deacon Joe would reveal. I never fail to be uplifted.

So, every week I would leave inspired to live my faith into action, to do my small part toward doing God's will on earth. I'd leave here determined to find a way for people to know I am "Christian by my love," as the hymn puts it, but I seemed almost never to find those opportunities to act, and I'd get involved in my week, and forget what the point of the homily I loved so much actually was, and soon it was Sunday again and I'd start the cycle of being moved by the mass and uplifted by the homily all over again, still not having lived my faith into action.

So, I was sitting here at a nine o'clock mass one Sunday and Liz Matthew spoke to us, as I am now speaking to you, about how being in a small faith group had changed her relationship with Jesus, about how Reach More had helped her carve out time and space for God in the midst of a very busy life.

And that sounded like just what I might need in order to follow Jesus more closely than I have done so far in my life.

Honestly, I'm not a joiner, and I really dislike calling attention to myself, so deciding to take part in small faith groups challenged me to confront both personality traits. And they almost always win. Yet, even as I was rejecting the idea of being part of a faith group, I thought, "David, nothing you've done for years has moved you off your spot or has challenged you to grow in your faith. Why not try something different?"

"Besides, you can always quit."

So, I signed up. I went. And I'm so grateful I did.

Put very briefly, small faith groups center on reading, reflecting, and reacting every day to two of the coming Sunday mass readings prior to a weekly discussion. I found my daily time commitment to take between ten and twenty minutes a day.

Carving out that small amount of time completely changed how I pray. It happened this way: The gospel reading for the second Sunday of Lent concerned the time that Jesus, Peter, John and James go up to the mountain to pray and a voice comes out of the cloud and says to the disciples, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him,” (Luke 9:35). Because I was reading the passage and reacting to it every day that week, I reached a moment when even slow-witted me realized that rather than talking at or to God in my prayers, I could simply listen. This changed everything for me.

I found that reading actively, reflecting on the readings, and quietly listening to what the Holy Spirit had to tell me changed my relationship with Jesus; it kept him front and center for me. And as a result, I became more *mindful*, more aware that Jesus might be speaking to me if I listened. And I find that that mindfulness stays with me through the day, allowing me to listen, allowing me to see opportunities where I can live my faith, offering me moments to know for myself that I’m a Christian by my love.