**Page 1**

I. Belong (Cover)

A. Ephesians 2:19 (Scripture)

B. Belong Logo

C. Published by the Youth Ministries Department of the Southeastern CA Conference of SDA’s. 2016.   
 a.) secc youth logo

**--The Highlights pages are for you to get context of the lessons. You don’t need to create a design for the highlighted section.---**

**Pages 2-3**

I. Belong

A. Welcome to BELONG!

Belong is a series of five lessons for leaders who are looking to jumpstart small group fellowship in a Christian environment. That might be a church, classroom, summer camp, church club, youth retreat, or AY program; basically anywhere that young people gather together for instruction and fellowship.

As a ministry leader, you probably strive to create community every week with different social events, outreach events, and leadership training. These lessons can be an intensive tool for you, especially if you’re looking to bring people closer together in a short period of time.

B. Lesson Categories

Each lesson consists of 5 segments with recommended timeframes. (Yes, we were very hungry when we wrote this outline format.)

1. Starter: Let’s begin by doing something together. Starters are short games or activities that are basically icebreakers.

2. Salad: Let’s continue by having a short conversation about what we just did. Shoot off several questions and spend a few minutes talking about the highlights of the game you just played.

3. Entrée: Let’s have a more in-depth discussion or do an activity that relates to starter and helps us start to think about our lesson point. A lot of thinking and talking should take place in this section, so watch the time.

4. Dessert: Let’s think about how we see the world, what the Bible tells us, and what we need to do as Christians. Some of you might choose to insert a short sermon or devotional thought from one pastor or leader centered on the ideas presented in the dessert section.

5. Napkin: How much does what we talked about in the dessert section ring true for the people in your group? Try to figure out if the lesson was relevant or if it missed the mark.

C. Getting the most out of these lessons

\*Small groups: I’m sure you could repurpose these lessons for almost any learning environment, but they’ve been designed for small groups of 7-10 people.

\*Group leader: The lessons have also been designed for someone to lead out in each lesson. I imagine the same person will lead out for all five lessons, but not necessarily. The group leader should review each lesson before instructing others, and make sure they have the required materials prepared.

\*Materials: You’ll need pens, blank notecards, and post-it notes. You’ll need to establish a few guidelines like 1) No cell phone use, 2) Please don’t talk over other people or engage in ‘cross talk’ where you’re having separate discussions with others about things not related to the topic, 3) Please be appropriate with your words.

\*Snacks: If it’s not too much of a distraction, having a bit of food around for everyone to share may help people feel more comfortable.

\*Training: If you have a large group of participants, you’ll probably need to do some training with your group leaders in how to lead a discussion and the content of each lesson.

D. Useful tips.

\*Make these lessons work for you. If you only like the starters and want to use them as ice breakers, go for it. If you’d like to change to order of lessons 2, 3, & 4; do it. If you don’t like the follow-up questions, feel free to make your own. If you’d like to discuss race, gender, and other hot topics that really affect how we feel about belonging I think there is plenty of space to go in those directions with these lessons.

\*As much as possible, I think the same people should be in the same group for each of the 5 lessons. However, if you do these lessons over a period of 5 weekends, it’s probably not going to work out that way. Don’t worry about it too much. Each lesson should be able to stand alone, and the starters are really designed to get people talking, interacting, and building shared experiences.

\*Have fun. Creating an atmosphere where people can feel free to be themselves is probably the most important factor when determining how well things are going each week.

E. Thank You

Thank you to SECC Youth Ministries Department & their desire to create content for the local church that speaks to youth and young adults.

**Pages 3-?**

**I. Belong: Starting a Community**

1. Today our focus is learning more about the people in our group.

2. Materials: For this lesson you’ll need a pack of notecards for the Starter, enough pens for everyone, and about 50 minutes to an hour if you’d like to do every section.

3. Sitting in a circle, having snacks, and setting up a few guidelines on avoiding ‘cross talk’ and restricting cell phone use are always good ideas.

**A. Starter (Time: 12-15 minutes)**

Instructions: On a notecard, instruct everyone in the group to write an answer for each of the follow categories (Don’t write your name on the notecard):

a. Most of my friends are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

b. Two hobbies I enjoy, but most people don’t know are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

c. Once I tried to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but it didn’t go exactly like I planned.

2. Next, collect all the notecards.

3. Now we’re going to read the notecards aloud one at a time and talk about who everyone thinks wrote each one. Put it to a vote and then hand the card to the person who the most people thought wrote the response.

4. You can only get one card and try not to get the one you actually wrote.

5. After the game is over, go around the circle and see who got their own card and who got a different card.

**B. Salad (Time: 7-10 minutes)**

\*If you got your own card, what gave it away?

\*If you got a different card, why did people think it was yours?

\*Did you find out you had something new in common with someone else?

\*In the group who had the best answer for the second question? Who had the best answer for the third question?

**C. Entrée (Time: 12-15 minutes)**

Instructions: On a new notecard write these categories:

1) Close friends

2) Friends

3) Acquaintances

4) Not friends

5) Strangers

Next, look around at the people in your group and decide how close you feel to the people around you and then number your notecard accordingly. Example:

1) Close friend: 2 (Two people in my group are close friends.)

2) Friends: 1 (One person in the group in my friend.)

3) Acquaintances: 0 (no one in the group fits into this category for me.)

4) Not friends: 0 (no one of the group fits into this category for me.)

5) Strangers: 5 (Five people in my group are strangers to me)

The group leader/facilitator should collect the cards, shuffle them, and read the result aloud. Don’t show anyone the cards, people might recognize the handwriting.

At the end of the five lessons, we’ll do this activity again and see if anything’s changed.

**D. Dessert (Time: 12-15 minutes)**

\*Is one of your goals in life getting to know Jesus better? Maybe change the relationship status with God from strangers to friends?

If you’ve ever made a new friend, you probably started off by just talking and then graduated to spending time together with that person and other friends. Eventually you spent enough time together that you had a bunch of shared experiences, and maybe (if you’re very close) you’ve told them some of your problems and even asked for their help or advice.

The entire process takes time, proximity, commitment, and probably a group of friends who can nurture that relationship. We call the destination of this process ‘belonging’ and it’s a long road to start out on alone.

So, I’m going to invite all of you to get to know each other better. It’s my hope that after these lessons you’ll be able to upgrade each other a few friendship levels, and also be reminded about how you can grow in your relationship with Christ.

One part of belonging in a church means **starting a community**, which is something you can build every day but it involves talking to others who we might not know very well. However, there might be a few obstacles based on what we’ve learned from our experience in life.

\***The world wants me to believe...**

“Love your family *if* they support your choices but always look out for your friends, those are the people who matter the most because they’re the family you’ve chosen for yourself.

You see other people all the time, at school, church, and at social events but you’re not really friends. You can’t get to know all of them and when they follow you on Instagram you appreciate it but you don’t automatically add them back. If you added everyone on Facebook, it’s just another person you have to say ‘“Happy Birthday”’ to every year (if we feel like it).

As long as you’re not mean to acquaintances or strangers, then you’re not doing anything wrong. Sometimes it feels good to help someone, but if it doesn’t feel right for you then you shouldn’t try to support someone else you don’t know very well.”

\***But** **the Bible Says...**

“If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even scoundrels do that much.

47If you are friendly only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even the heathens do that.

-Matthew 5:46-47 (CEV)

In other words, if you only care about people who care about you, that’s not really anything special. As followers of Christ, we have an opportunity to minister to others every day by giving some of our precious time to other people we don’t know very well.

**E. Napkin (5-7 minutes)**

\*Take a minute to go around the circle and rate the ‘What the world wants me to believe’ statement above. Does it match with your life experience? Is it false, mostly false, mostly true, or true for you?

**Lesson Point**

\*When we get to know others around us better, we’re practicing the same habits we’ll need to know Jesus better. Hopefully you learned a few new things about the people around you today.