



COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus

VISION: Joining in Covenant

March 8, 2020

Passages

- Primary passage: Matthew 13
- Psalm 63
- Psalm 42

Questions

- Opener:
 - Everyone makes sacrifices to get something they really want in life. Tell us about a time you did this.
 - When you were little, did you have some sort of box, or drawer, or stash of your “special treasures”? What did you keep there? What was it you valued most as a child?
- Share Experience:
 - In the parable of the sower, Jesus talks about 4 different kinds of soil (hard, rocky, thorny, and good soil). Recognizing that this isn't a place of judgement, how would you assess the soil of your heart currently? If an honest assessment of your heart indicates that your heart hasn't been good soil recently, instead of judging that, see it as the place where Jesus wants to meet you with His love and His grace.
 - In the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus challenges us to trust in the slow, patient growth of God's Kingdom both in our hearts and in the world. How easy or hard is it for you to trust in God's work in God's time?
 - What are some of the things you treasure most in life? What would it look like for you to treasure God above all?
 - When have you been a witness to the slow patient work of God changing things over time?
 - What was it about Jesus that first drew you to him?
- Dig Into:
 - Why do you think Jesus' own people rejected him in his day? Why do you think he is rejected today?
 - Why do you think Jesus instructed his disciples to shake the dust off of their feet as they left a place where they were rejected?
 - What would it look like for a church to treasure God above all?
 - How could you tell if God was at work, building his Kingdom around you? What would be some telltale signs?

Creative Ideas

- Watch the video “Buried Treasure” (See additional resources below). What thoughts and emotions does this stir in you? How does it shed light on the parable of treasure hidden in a field?
- Listen to the song “I’d Rather Have Jesus” arranged by Jill Phillips. What thoughts or emotions does this song stir in you? How true to your desires is this song?

Practices

- Putting someone on your Go Love Card should be an indication of your desire that they find and treasure Jesus. As you pray for them this week, notice if you can discern any of the telltale signs of the slow, patient work of God in their lives or around them?
- We often go through our days focused on what’s right in front of us but barely noticing if at all the work of God in and around us. This week, practice the Prayer of Examen at the beginning or end of each day to review the previous day. Notice especially how you see God and his loving invitation to you showing up in your life each day.

Additional Resources

- The questions at the end are fantastic! <https://timchester.wordpress.com/2016/03/21/following-up-the-sermon-in-small-groups/>
- Video - Buried Treasure <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfrVfMn6NY4>
- Prayer of Examen from the Fuller Youth Institute - <https://fulleryouthinstitute.org/articles/ignatian-examen>
- “I’d Rather Have Jesus” arranged by Jill Phillips - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bisj_uXVSWc

How to use this Walking in the Way Guide

1. It's important to know that there's more material here than any one group can cover in one night. Please DO NOT try to get through every scripture passage, question, and creative idea. That is a recipe for discouragement and burnout!
2. Do use this guide as a way to spark some discussion following from last Sunday's message. As the Community Group Leader, you know your group the best. Select which elements from this guide would be most helpful and relevant to your group!
3. **Scripture:** We will always give two or more passages of scripture that are relevant to the topic from Sunday's sermon. Ideally select one passage and stay there. Use only two at the most. You may want to have someone read the passage out loud and then work through the questions from the *5 Questions to Ask When Reading Your Bible* guide below. This is a great resource to print out and give to every member of your Community Group to help guide their own Bible reading at home!
4. **Questions:** There are more questions here than you'll likely be able to get through in one night. Select some questions you think might resonate with your group and throw questions to the group for discussion until one really takes off! You know a good discussion is happening when group members are interacting with and responding to what each other is saying and not just what is coming from you as the group leader!
5. **Creative Ideas:** If you feel it will help your group, select one of these creative ideas to help your group process and interact with the theme for this week. Feel free to add in your own creative ideas as well!!
6. **Practices:** This is how we grow in grace! Practices are what move a good discussion from merely interesting to life transforming. These sample practices are given to help you and the group live into the reality that was talked about on Sunday and that you interacted with in Scripture this week. **Choose one or (at most) two practices that you as a group will commit to doing this next week to live into God's truth.** As you come back next week, debrief how those practices went the previous week!
7. **Sample Schedule:** Here's a sample timeline for how to budget your time for a Community Group meeting. Keep in mind, this is a suggestion, not a rule to follow. **Do what works best for your community!**
 - **Arrival:** Catching up and Snacks - 15 min
 - **Intro:** See how everyone's doing. Maybe throw out an icebreaker question. As the group gets more comfortable, you can use this time to debrief the previous week's practice. - 10 min
 - **Scripture:** Dig into one passage from scripture using the 5 Questions (See Below) - 25 min
 - **Discussion** - 20 min
 - **Closing:** Decide on which practice(s) you'll commit to this week. Spend time praying for each other and those you sense God is sending you to - 10 min

5 Questions To Ask When Reading Your Bible - Worksheet

Whether you're a seminary professor or you've just recently picked up a Bible for the first time, these five questions can help you engage with Scripture. Try using it by yourself or with a group of people to read, understand and live out the Bible.

Question 1: What is going on in the passage?

- What's happening here?
- Who are the main characters?
- Very simply, *what is*?

Question 2: What do I like about the passage?

- What parts of this passage/story encourage me?
- What inspires, pleases or excites me based on what I've read?
- Why?

Question 3: What disturbs or startles me about the passage?

- What is it about this passage that reveals truth that may be hard to accept?
- What disturbs me or jolts, confronts or even offends me in my understanding of God, His Son, the world or my life?
- Why don't I like that?

Question 4: What does this say about the nature of God and/or the character of Jesus?

- What does this passage say about who God actually is?
- What does this say about the essence of his nature?
- What can I see about the character of Jesus (his patience, holiness, compassion, righteousness, etc)?

Question 5: What will I do with what I just learned in the next seven days?

- How will we respond to what we've just read?
- What will I do with what I just learned?
- How do I make sure that this wasn't just intellectual ascent? How do I put this into practice?