



COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus What's My Reality? - Philippians 1 April 19, 2020

Passages

- Primary passage: Philippians 1:1-11
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Questions

- Opener:
 - What's your favorite love song of all time? If you're married or in a relationship, do you and your significant other/spouse have that "one special song"?
 - How are you doing this week? What do you need right now? (Continue to refer to the Needs Inventory, see Additional Resources below)
- Share Experience:
 - Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians to address Discouragement, Distraction, and Disunity. Where do you see these themes showing up in your life? What would you like God to do in each of the places you're feeling this way?
 - How do you understand your identity, your sense of self and what defines you in the world? What in your life today tends to shape your sense of identity?
 - When you've walked through difficult seasons in the past, what has kept you going?
 - What's your "flinch" move when something happens that's good? How about something hard or bad? How might Jesus want to meet you in that place of your response to circumstances?
 - What are ways you've seen yourself grow in love? What are ways you'd like to still grow in love?
- Dig Into:
 - What does Paul have to say about God's desires for us in this passage of Philippians? How does that give us the resources to endure and even thrive while we face difficulty?
 - The content of Paul's prayer for this church he planted is that their love would abound. Why do you think this is Paul's prayer for them? What does love abounding look like?
 - How does growing in love happen? Are there ways for us to pursue this?

Creative Ideas

- Listen to the song “Oh the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus” arranged by Audrey Assad (See Additional Resources below). What thoughts and emotions does this song stir in you? How does this help you understand and experience God’s love for you? What thoughts does it bring up about how love could look in your life?
- **Exercise:** Each person in the group, take 2-3 minutes to write down a short description of when they’ve felt the most loved in their lives. Once this is done, go around the group and have everyone share as much as they’re comfortable. Now, what common themes or threads emerged in everyone’s or multiple stories about feeling well-loved. Put these pieces together and come up with a definition of loving well.

Practices

- At the end of each day this week, do a 3 minutes review of your day with Jesus. Invite Him to show you your day, especially places when you loved well and missed opportunities to love. Notice these without judging or condemning yourself and ask Jesus for grace to love well in similar situations tomorrow.
- As you pray with your Go Love card this week, ask Jesus to show you opportunities to reach out in love to someone on your card. This could be as simple as a phone call to find out how someone’s doing in the midsts of our lockdown.

Additional Resources

- The questions at the end are fantastic! <https://timchester.wordpress.com/2016/03/21/following-up-the-sermon-in-small-groups/>
- Needs Inventory - <https://www.cnvc.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/CNVC-needs-inventory.pdf>
- Song: Oh the Deep Deep Love of Jesus by Audrey Assad (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vUhwjkd8A>)

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?