



COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus

What Will You Do With This?

June 28, 2020

Passages

- Primary passage: Exodus 14:11-31; 16:1-17; 17:1-7
- 2 Corinthians 11:23-27
- Matthew 11:28-30

Questions

- Opener:
 - What do you miss most about your life before COVID-19?
 - 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:
 - What kinds of things have you noticed yourself complaining about in this season?
 - What does it mean for you to not waste this crisis? In other words, what invitations have you sense from Jesus in this season?
 - How have you seen God providing for you during this crisis? In what ways do you feel God hasn't "shown up" in the ways you'd like Him to?
 - How have you seen God redeem difficulty in your life before this season?
 - On Sunday, Brian talked about the cycle we go through when we're in difficulty, how pain drives us to call out to God but then as soon as the pain is removed, we often return to our old patterns and habits. How have you noticed this in your life? What kind of lasting transformation do you want to see in your life after this season of crisis is over?
- Dig Into:
 - What are some of the ways God has met His people in times of crisis throughout scripture?
 - How can we reconcile the "light and easy" burden Jesus promises with our experience of pain and crisis? Is it possible to reconcile it this side of eternity?
 - Are there ever appropriate ways to complain to God? If so, how? If not, why?
 - The Exodus story is a story of redemption; how God takes a broken, sinful situation and uses it for his purposes. In what ways might our redeeming God be at work in us and around us right now?

Creative Ideas

- Listen to the song “Nothing to Fear” by The Porter’s Gate Project. What thoughts and emotions does this song stir in you? Does this song shed any light on the crisis season that we’re walking through right now? How?
- **Exercise:** A wise person once said, “God comes to us in the form of our life.” This implications of this are huge! This means that the difficulties we face aren’t obstacles to flourishing life with God, they’re actually the way to flourishing life with Him. This exercise will invite us to reflect on this in our own lives. Make sure each person in the group has a pen and paper. Ask each person to make two columns. In the first, write the things that they’ve complained about in this crisis season. In the second, next to each complaint, what are the ways God might be inviting you into deeper life with him through this difficulty. It’s ok if you can’t immediately think of an invitation to put next to each complaint. In the group, ask if each person would be willing to share one row (i.e. one complaint and one invitation) and ask the group to pray for them about that this week.

Practices

- Continue to sit with the list of complaints and invitations you made in the exercise above. For complaints where you were able to sense an invitation from God, in your daily prayer time, ask God to give you the grace to respond to this invitation. For complaints where you haven’t sensed an invitation yet, ask God to reveal it to you when He’s ready to show you.
- Be intentional this week: look for an opportunity each day when you encounter someone (whether it’s a neighbor, or a friend, or someone on Zoom) to ask them how they’re doing and what this season has been teaching them. Be prepared with a response if they ask you the same question.

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: “Nothing to Fear” by The Porter’s Gate Project - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cDyS5hWmHM>

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?