



COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus

Miracles

August 9, 2020

Passages

- Primary passage: John 9:1-12
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Questions

- Opener:
 - Would you say that you have a challenge that's coming, going, or already here?
 - 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 do you feel is standing between where you are right now and where God wants to take you in your faith?
 - Where have you seen opinions (i.e. secondary, debatable issues) wrongly turned into convictions (non-negotiable issues) in the Church? Are there any convictions in your life that God is inviting you to hold as opinions? Are there any opinions in your life that God is inviting you to hold as convictions?
 - Have you ever had the experience of looking back and understanding at least part of the purpose of pain in your life? Tell us about that.
 - Does it comfort you or frustrate you that God has purposes in your pain? Why?
 - Even if you don't understand the purposes behind your pain, have you experienced Jesus' presence with you in the midst of pain? How? What was that like?
 - What is Jesus' invitation to you through your pain? How will you respond?
- Dig Into:
 - What's the difference between convictions and opinions in our Christian faith? For you, what are non-negotiable convictions and what are opinions that it's ok to differ on?
 - Why do you think that people tend to focus on a "karma" view of suffering (i.e. that if we're suffering, it's because we've done something wrong)? What is a "Biblical" view of suffering according to our passages in John 9 and 2 Corinthians 12?
 - Is it right to say that God is the cause of our pain? Where does our pain come from?

Creative Ideas

- Listen to the song “Death in Reverse” by John Mark McMillan. What thoughts and emotions does this song stir in you? How does it help you think about the pain we’re experiencing right now? Does it shed any light on our scripture passages for this week?

Practices

- This week, spend 15 minutes writing out exactly where your soul is at this week, both good and bad. Allow yourself to be brutally honest with yourself and with God. For the next 5 days, during your time of prayer, invite God to meet you wherever you’re at. After 5 days, notice, has your experience of God shifted in any way? Where is your soul at after these 5 days? Is it the same as before you started? Continue to pay attention to your life and invite God to meet you wherever you’re at!
- This week, have a conversation with someone who you disagree with about politics, theology or some other topic. See if you can get past your disagreement and see them for the person they are, made in God’s image. Notice how this level of connection changes the way you perceive your differences.

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: “[Death in Reverse](#)” by John Mark McMillan

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?