



COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus

Renovate: Despair

October 4, 2020

Passages

- Primary passage: Psalm 42
- Isaiah 43:3-4

Questions

- Opener:
 - Tell us about a time you got lost. How were you able to find your way again?
 - 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:
 - Are you someone who's prone to despair or depression? What's your experience with it been like?
 - What kinds of losses has the last year brought you? How are you doing coping with them?
 - In what ways have you experienced hope this year? What helps you find hope?
 - In what ways has God cared for you in the difficulty of this year?
 - How do you sense God shaping and forming you to experience greater joy and greater flourishing through this season?
 - How has your experience of despair made the hope Jesus offers even sweeter?
- Dig Into:
 - How do you see orientation - disorientation - new orientation in this psalm?
 - What brings the writer of Psalm 42 hope?
 - How do you feel about the way the psalm writer expresses his disappointment to God? Are you comfortable with this? Does it make you uncomfortable? Could you express yourself to God this way?

Creative Ideas

- Listen to the song “Why God” by Austin French (See Additional Resources below). What thoughts and emotions does it stir in you? What things do you wonder, “Why God?” How does this song shed light of Psalm 42?

Practices

- At least 5 days this week, make it a point to offer your messy, unvarnished self to God. However your feeling that day, let God know. You can pray this silently in your heart, out loud, or by writing it out as a prayer in your journal. After a week of being as vulnerable with God as you possibly can be, what do you notice? How do you sense God responding to you? Do you sense any new invitations from God?
- Who in your life is in need of tangible love, presence, and support? Reach out to them this week and make a point to find a way to love and serve them this week, even if it doesn’t immediately lead to an opportunity for a spiritual conversation. How does this act of service deepen your relationship?

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>
- Overview of Orientation - Disorientation - New Orientation - <https://korycapps.wordpress.com/2014/10/08/rhythm-of-life-orientation-disorientation-reorientation/>
- Song: [“Why God” by Austin French](#)

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?