



COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus

Advent: Hope

December 13, 2020

Passages

- Primary passage: Psalm 34:4-5
- Deuteronomy 31:8

Questions

- Opener:
 - What hopes do you have for the coming year?
 - 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:
 - In what ways does hopelessness tend show up for you? Is it sleepless nights? Is it anxious worrying? Is it an inability to drag yourself out of bed? Or something else? How have you notice yourself losing hope this year?
 - Have you ever experienced hope that isn't tied to your circumstances? What is that like?
 - Matt shared with us on Sunday that God is constantly looking to take our fears and shame and trade them for joy and healing. How have you seen God show up in this way in your life?
 - If hope is trusting that God is in control to the point where I give Him control of me, what is it you sense Jesus inviting you to give Him control over in this moment of your life?
- Dig Into:
 - How would you define hope according to the passages we read today?
 - How does it help to shift the focus of our hope from our circumstances to what God wants to do in us?
 - Deuteronomy 31:8 promises God's presence will go with His people. How is that good news right now to you? How is that good news for the world?

Creative Ideas

- Listen to the song “Hopeless Wanderer” by Mumford and Sons. Notice what thoughts and emotions the song stirs in you? What light does it shed on the discussion of hope? What truths does it suggest to you about God and the ways He works in the world?

Practices

- Where do you feel hopeless right now? Write out a prayer releasing that area to God and inviting Him to do a deeper work in you. Keep that prayer in a place you’ll see it every day this week and make this your daily prayer to God.
- Often times, a tangible act of blessing can bring hope to someone experiencing despair. If you know of someone who could use encouragement, plan a way to serve or encourage them in a tangible way this week. If you’re not aware of someone, ask God to prepare you to be a blessing and to reveal the right situation. Pray this every day until you have an opportunity to tangibly bless someone.

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: [“Hopeless Wanderer” by Mumford and Sons](#)

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?