



COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus

Advent: Love

December 20, 2020

Passages

- Primary passage: Matthew 22:36-40
- Acts 17:16-31

Questions

- Opener:
 - Have you ever done something silly or foolish because you were in love? What happened and what was that like?
 - 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:
 - Who are some of the people who have loved you best in life? How do you know you're loved by them?
 - What are some ways you tend to believe you need to live in order to be worthy of love?
 - When have you felt most loved by God? What was that like? What helped you acknowledge and deeply feel loved in that moment?
 - When have you seen the love of God "break out" of the church walls and spread out into our community? What were the effects?
 - How does making the leap from the "safe" walls and community of the church to active engagement with our community on their own turf make you feel? What excites you about this?
- Dig Into:
 - Why do you think we humans tend to struggle so much with accepting love?
 - Why do you think Jesus boils down the faith of Israel to love; love for God and others (Matthew 22)?
 - What do you think of the statement, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him?" Do God's glory and our joy somehow belong together? Why or why not?
 - Is God more interested in our obedience or our heart? Why?

Creative Ideas

- Listen to the song "Sigh No More" arranged and sung by Audrey Assad (See Additional Resources Below). What thoughts and emotions stir in you as you listen to this song? In what ways does it help you think about the nature and beauty of love in the world? How about in your own life?

Practices

- How might God be calling you to let His love "break out" of your life, your household, and the church to spill over into public spaces? Pick one person from within the church family and one person who isn't yet a follower of Jesus and plan a way to tangibly show love to them this week.

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: ["Sigh No More" Arranged and Sung by Audrey Assad](#)

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?