



# COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

## Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus

Advent: Joy

December 6, 2020

---

### Passages

- Primary passage: Luke 1:46-55
- Leviticus 25

### Questions

- Opener:
  - What's the best thing that has happened to you so far in 2020?
  - 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:
  - How would you describe your experience of joy right now?
  - How have you experienced joy breaking through the darkness of a hard season of life? What was that like?
  - In what ways do you find yourself not allowing yourself to really savor the joy of good things that happen to you? What does this look like in your life?
  - The upside down economy of God's Kingdom goes against the grain of much that we believe as Americans. How does the language of Mary's song sit with you? Does it excite you? Does it scare you? Does it encourage you? Share your perspective.
  - How have you cultivated gratitude? When you've been intentional about this, how has it impacted your joy?
  - Share a time when a celebration lifted your spirits?
- Dig Into:
  - In your own words, how would you explain the Creation—>Fall—>Redemption —>New Creation story? (See "The Four Chapter Gospel" in Additional Resources below).
  - How do you interpret the "great reversal" language (i.e. Luke 1:52 God has brought down the powerful and lifted up the lowly) in Mary's song? Is this something real and physical that will happen? Is it spiritual? Is it both or???
  - What do you think it would take for Christians to become known as a people of celebration?

## Creative Ideas

- Listen to the arrangement of “Joy to the World” by Jamie Barnes and Sojourn (See Additional Resources below). How does this fresh arrangement of the song shed light on the meaning for you? What thoughts and emotions does it stir in you? What insight does it give you about your experience of joy in this Advent/Christmas season?

## Practices

- Cultivate joy through gratitude this week by either keeping a gratitude journal or practicing the Prayer of Examen (See Additional Resources below). Notice your emotional state and your awareness of God’s presence in your life after practicing gratitude for a week.
- Plan a celebration making sure to keep yourself and everyone you want to celebrate with safe. In this season you might host a Zoom party or choose to celebrate with those in your COVID Bubble. However you choose to celebrate, make concrete plans and send out invitations 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>
- Article: The Four-Chapter Gospel - <https://www.madetoflourish.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/4ChGospelSummary.pdf>
- Article: [Jubilee from “The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels”](#)
- Article: [Year of Jubilee from “Anchor Bible Dictionary”](#)
- Song: [“Joy to the World” by Sojourn arranged by Jamie Barnes](#)
- The Prayer of Examen from InterVarsity - <https://intervarsity.org/blog/invitation-examen>

## 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?