

# COMMUNITY CARE GROUP GUIDE

MARCH 25, 2018

**Welcome** to the time set aside for Communities and Community Care Groups! This is the sixth (yes, we are keeping track...) of 9 Sunday opportunities to meet this winter and spring leading to the final date on May 6. Communities and Community Care Groups are, of course, encouraged not only to meet on the designated dates but to be creative and use any opportunity to fulfill the four purposes of Communities: fellowship, pastoral care, discipleship and mission.

\*\*\*There are **two options** for discussion presented in this material, preceded by some creative “connecting” questions for people to get comfortable with one another. Of course you are also welcome to go back to any material from previous weeks. The material is on the church website under the “Communities” tab. Suggestions (they are merely suggestions meant to provoke some thoughts or ideas of possibilities for community involvement) for Communities/Community Care Group projects or involvement can be found on previous CCG guides (January 28 and February 11).

**Option 1** includes the results of and feedback for the Community Exercise, now sent to all 12 Communities. The pastoral elder and deacon of the Communities have material in their possession.

**Option 2** includes questions about the current sermon series on the Gospel of Mark. Questions cover both the message from March 18 and from today, March 25.

**Leaders** are asked to go through these materials ahead of time and use them to prepare a discussion for the meeting times. Feel free to pick from all the available options.

*(Note: At the moment it is not possible to have the latest sermons online)*

## Beginning Your Time Together

Spend some time with one or two of the “connecting exercises” (good for all ages). Here are some suggestions:

- Talk about your week. What did you do and what did you experience?
- Did you notice anything about the area of the city you live in that was unusual? Any construction or people moving in or out?
- What signs of spring have you seen already?
- “Canada Reads” is happening this week on CBC. What book have you read lately and why would you or would you not recommend it?
- Anybody watch “Black Panther”? What do you think? What message is it sending?
- What are the youth or children watching?
- Anyone see the new film about the life of the Apostle Paul?
- Review the Community list. Who is all in your Community?

**Prayer:** Whichever of the options you choose to discuss as a community, ask God to bless your conversation and grow you as a Community through it.

**Option 1** – Since your Community leaders have received feedback on and questions about the Community exercise, you may wish to work through them (one section at a time). Please spend some time talking about the exercise and the questions it raised.

**Prayer:** As you think about your Community, take the opportunity to spend some time in prayer for your Community – the CCRC members and also your neighbours. Pray that the Lord would bind you together as a small “congregation” and provide leadership. Pray that the Lord would open doors of service in the broader community around you. Include people of all ages in your prayer time. Such prayer can be done early in your gathering or at the end of your time together. You will need to plan some time if a number of members of the group are going to be involved in prayer. Waiting until the very end of the meeting often cuts prayer time short because it encroaches upon eating time or departure time.

## **Option 2 - Reflections on the Gospel of Mark**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 14:12-26 – (March 18 sermon - led by Pastor John)

1. As we are reading through the Gospel of Mark, perhaps there are those who may wish to share some observations about the Gospel as a whole.
2. If you have been using the “Lent in a Bag” devotional guide, reflect with the group on how you have used it and if it has been helpful to your preparations for Good Friday. Please let Pastor Amanda know what you have discovered in your group.
3. If you have children from grades 4, 5, or 6 in your group ask them what they talked about in their sermon discussion last week. What sorts of topics and questions were raised?
4. On his way to Jerusalem Jesus stops to observe the Passover. Recount the story of the Passover (see Exodus 12).
5. How did Jesus redirect the meaning of the Passover at the last supper? Pastor John mentioned that the Passover became Jesus’ coronation feast. In what way did it become such a feast?
6. If you have the time compare the three accounts of the Passover Last Supper: Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23. What are some of the differences or similarities in the way in which the stories are told?
7. Every month we celebrate the Lord’s Supper. How would you explain it to those who have no understanding of the faith? How would you explain it to children? Why do we do what we do? What happens at Lord’s Supper? What does the pastor do? What does the congregation do?
8. How does this story of the Last Supper help you understand what’s going on when we “do all this in remembrance” of Jesus?
9. For those of you who have participated in the Lord’s Supper, perhaps this is a good time to share with the group what it means for you to come to the Table of the Lord. What is meaningful to you about participating in the Lord’s Supper? Share the story of a special celebration of the feast. What made it special?
10. Reflect: Pastor John said, “The sacraments are our pillar of fire and pillar of cloud as we wonder through the wilderness, following our new Moses. These ordinary things – water, bread, drink – reveal in earthly vessels a heavenly reality. In these everyday elements, God assures us that he is with us in a special way.” How do the sacraments assure us and build our faith?

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 118; Mark 11: 1 - 11 (March 25 sermon – Pastor Amanda preaching)

1. Retell the story found in Mark 11 in your own words. Be sure to involve children in the telling of the story.
2. If you have the time compare the four accounts of this story: Matthew 21: 1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44, John 12: 12-19. What are some of the differences or similarities in the way the stories are told?
3. What is striking about the story for you? Share with the group.
4. What does Psalm 118 have to do with story of Palm Sunday?
5. What does the word “hosanna” mean? Do you suppose the people really understood what they were saying? What do you suppose the different people in the crowd were saying when they prayed the “hosanna” prayer? What are you praying when you pray the “hosanna” prayer? Does your salvation, indeed, come from the one riding on the colt?
6. How many songs can you come up with that use the word “hosanna”? How is the word used in some of those songs, i.e. what is the meaning given to the word in the different songs?
7. Many people spread their cloaks on the road allowing the colt to walk on them. Why? What did that mean? **Wonder:** Wonder if you would have been one of those who put their cloak down on the ground to honour Jesus if you had been there.
8. What strikes you about the way Mark ends the account of the Triumphal Entry? How does his way of ending the story differ from Matthew and Luke? How do you account for the differences?
9. What does this story tell us about who Jesus is? What does this story tell us about the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven?
10. What do you do with a story like this? How does it speak into your life?

**Prayer:** For your closing prayer time, it’s always a good idea to go around the circle and let everyone who is willing share what is on their hearts. Be sure to include children as well. Let everyone who wants to pray have a chance to pray. If you want, you may close your time together by singing a song or reciting the Lord’s Prayer together.