

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE SUGGESTIONS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

Welcome to another Sunday set aside to allow Communities and or small groups to meet (**Note:** Last year we called the small groups “Community Care Groups”, but that created some confusion and so therefore this year we simply will use the term “small groups” in place of CCGs.). It is entirely up to each Community what will happen, but it is hoped that opportunities given will be used and that energies will go to fulfill all four purposes of Communities: fellowship, pastoral care, discipleship and mission.

Materials for the small groups are based on the general themes addressed in the sermons: the sacraments and surprising or “odd” Bible stories. The latter theme is one that the youth at “Impact” are going to be studying as well. While the sermons provide some back ground information and help to inform the conversation, one does not necessarily have to listen to the sermons in order to participate in the small groups. Leading a group will take some work and creativity on the part of the group leaders...

For different study material suggestions or for different approaches to small groups please refer to the September 16, 2018 material as found under the “Communities” tab on the church website.

(Note: sermons can be accessed online at ccrc.on.ca/sermons)

I. Some ideas for beginning your time together:

1. Maybe you have been together for a long time or maybe you are just new to each other. Spend some time with some connecting exercises (good for all ages). Here are some suggestions:
 - Toss a beach ball from one person to another and get them to tell you something about them that no one knows. When the ball is in the person’s hand they speak and others listen.
 - Put coins on a table and have each one pick up a coin and look at the date. Ask them to tell you where they were in that year and what was going on. Put coins back on table and repeat.
 - Perhaps someone in your group is aware of some sort of game you can play that is fun and helpful for introductions.
 - Talk about your summer. What did you do and what did you experience?
 - What book did you read and would you or would you not recommend it?
 - What movie did you see and what do you remember?
 - Our God displays time and again, in scripture and in our lives, His awesome power; greater power than any other god we could follow. Why not take some time to go around your group and share a moment, whether a grand event or a quiet moment, in which you were very aware of the presence of the Lord.
2. Take the opportunity to spend some time in prayer thanking the Lord for the past week and for the things experienced. People of all ages can be involved in circle prayer.

II. Discussion Theme: What does it mean to be the church? The Sacraments

Each fall, as we begin a new season of church activities we like to ask the question, “What does it mean to be the church?” This year, (2018) we are looking at our identity as God’s covenant people, proclaimed in the gospel and sealed by the sacraments of Baptism and Lord’s Supper. For 7 Sundays (September 9-October 21) the messages are focused on the sacraments of Baptism and Lord’s Supper. Pick one or both of the sacrament sections below and work through it for your discussion time.

The Sacraments – Baptism (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 25, 26, 27)

1. Storytelling:

Go around the group and share stories about your baptism or your children’s baptisms. If people have any mementos of their baptism (baptism gown, outfit, pictures, certificate, gifts, etc.), encourage members beforehand to bring them along for a “show and tell.” If parents and children are in a small group together, this could be a wonderful opportunity for parents to tell their children the stories of their baptism.

2. Reflection:

Dr. Fred Klooster, once a professor of theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, used to start off his section on the sacraments by asking individuals to answer these questions and share with the group:

1. what really happened to you when you were baptized?
2. What did God promise you when you were baptized?
3. What did the church and its members promise you when you were baptized?
4. What is your obligation now as a baptized member of the church?

3. Discussion:

1. Why is baptism a sacrament, but profession of faith isn’t? What is the relationship between baptism and profession of faith? Does the method of baptism – sprinkling or immersion – really matter? Explain.
2. Why do we baptize believers and their children when so many churches baptize only believers? Explain. Why is this an important discussion?

The Sacraments – Lord’s Supper (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 28, 29, 30)

1. Storytelling:

Go around the group and share stories about Lord’s Supper. What sorts of different celebrations have you experienced? What is meaningful and what is not?

2. Reflection:

1. What really happens to you when you partake of Lord’s Supper?
2. In your own words, what benefits do you receive (or expect to receive) as a result of taking the Lord’s Supper?
3. Lord’s Supper is sometimes referred to as a feast? Is it a feast?
4. What is your obligation now as someone who partakes of Lord’s Supper?

3. Discussion:

1. What is the gospel? If someone were to ask you that, what would you say? How would you summarize it? See: John 3:16; I Corinthians 15:1-7. What is striking about the gospel? What does the word “gospel” mean? What is the relationship between profession of faith and Lord’s Supper?
2. What does the bread and the juice/wine signify and seal? What does God promise in the Lord’s Supper?
3. Would it be all right to substitute chips and pop for the bread and the wine/grape juice as you celebrate Lord’s Supper? Explain.
4. How are we nourished at the table? How is Jesus present in the elements?
5. How is our faith strengthened at the table?
6. Why is the Lord’s Supper not a private affair?
7. Cheryl is 9 years old. She says she loves the Lord and wants to partake of the Lord’s Supper. What do you think – should young believers like Cheryl be allowed to take communion? Why or why not? Do you know the CCRC position on children at the Lord’s Table?

III. Closing time: Take some time to pray together. Sing a baptism or Lord’s Supper song.