

COMMUNITIES / SMALL GROUP MEETING SUGGESTIONS

2018 - 2019

Welcome to a new season of ministry at Community CRC! Actually, we are continuing our ministry, but September always seems like we are beginning something new, so here we go... Prior to the end of the year there are 6 designated Sundays for Communities and small groups to meet – September 16 and 30, October 14 and 28, and November 11 and 25.

Over the next number of weeks you will be meeting with the larger Community or in a small group. It is hoped that each Community will have at least one “living” small group. (**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.) Joining a group is voluntary, but if someone joins they will be asked to make a commitment to meet. 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 will be based on the general themes we will be addressing 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. What follows are some suggestions for ways for small groups or Communities to get into the theme for this season. And, yes, it will take some work and creativity on the part of the group leaders...

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

I. 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. How did you experience the Lord throughout the summer?
 - What have you done to make your family or personal devotional time meaningful?
 - 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 summer and for the things experienced. People of all ages can be involved in circle prayer.
- II.** Some questions/matters to think about and discuss together as you meet as a Community.
- a)** Take some time to think about the CCRC Community you are in. Who is in that Community? Can you name everyone?
 - b)** Take some time to list some of the needs in your CCRC Community, if known. If not known, what can you do to become more informed about the needs in your CCRC Community? What are some creative ways in which to minister to the needs of those in your CCRC Community?
 - c)** Are you aware of the geographic area in which members of your CCRC Community reside? Could you describe it? Are you aware of opportunities or needs in your geographic community as part of the Region of Waterloo or outside the region? What are some things you can do to become aware of the opportunities or needs in your geographic area?
 - d)** Are there any global mission opportunities that your group may want to connect to? Think of the missionaries we support in various parts of the world. Are there ways in which your Community or small group can connect with one of our missionaries?
 - e)** Community 1 got together a group of people to for a service project to Manitoulin Island and Daystar Ministries. Is your Community up for the challenge of putting together a team to do something like what Community 1 has done?
 - f)** Discuss how you could be creative this season and what things you could do as a Community. Brainstorm ideas.
 - g)** Are there some things you can do when you gather for a meal together besides just eating?
 - h)** What is the purpose of any small group you create?
 - i)** If you have children in your group or other youth, talk about the ways in which they can also participate in the small group meetings. What may you have to give up or add?
- III.** Each September, 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. The questions will be posted on the church website well in advance of the small group meetings.
- IV.** If your small group is meeting over the next week or so, here are some questions you may want to consider:

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:** Why is baptism a sacrament, but profession of faith isn't? What is the relationship between baptism and profession of faith?
- V. Prayer:** As you begin a new season take the opportunity to spend some time in prayer about the plans you have made for your Community Care Group and about your CCRC Community as well as the geographic area in which you find yourselves. Pray that the Lord would open doors of service not only in the CCRC Community, but also in the broader community around you. People of all ages can be involved in circle prayer after you perhaps spend some time talking about the kinds of matters that can be prayed for. This can be done early in your gathering or at the end of your time together. You will need to plan some time if members of the group are going to be involved in prayer. Waiting until the very end often cuts prayer time short because it encroaches upon eating time or departure time.

Note: If there is a desire to go deeper or do something else as a small group or as a Community please contact Pastor Carel or speak to your Community Pastoral Elder.