

# COMMUNITIES/SMALL GROUPS

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

FEBRUARY 9, 2020

**Welcome** to another Sunday set aside to allow Communities and or small groups to meet. The remaining dates, in this season, set aside for Communities or small groups to meet are: today; February 23; March 8, 22; April 5, 19 and May 3.

There are a number of different approaches that you can take whether you meet in a small group or as a Community joining together for a meal. Below you will find some suggestions as to what to talk about or what sorts of exercises you can do. If needed, please refer to the material prepared for September 22, 2019 for other suggestions as to how you might want to begin your time together. ([ccrc.on.ca/communities](http://ccrc.on.ca/communities)) If you are a leader take the time to go through the options and pick which ones you deem appropriate for the setting you find yourself in.

- I. **Beginning Your Time Together:** Do a circle check-in. What has been happening in the lives of those in the room? What news items struck them these past couple of weeks? What are people busy with? What are people worried about?
- II. **A question or matter to think about when you meet as a Community or Small Group.** Is your elder or deacon one of those office bearers – “responsibility bearers”- who is coming to the end of his or her term? Talk about that together and begin to think about who could become the new elder or deacon in your Community. Who has the gifts of leadership? Who would you (as a group) nominate for office? Spend some time in prayer over this matter. Please submit any names to the Nominations Committee (Henry VanderHoef, chair).
- III. **Are there some things you can do when you gather for a meal together besides just eating? Maybe an exercise between the main course and the dessert?**
  - a. Are there some fast moving board games that can include people of all ages?
  - b. There is now a foosball table in the multipurpose room. Perhaps a tournament of sorts? (That table is only available for those using the multipurpose room, of course.)
  - c. Today, **February 9**, the worship service featured the **Cadets** (boys club for boys ages 7-12). Ask who in your Community has been or is presently involved with Cadets to share some stories. What did Cadets do for them? What do they remember? What is it like now? What are they excited about? What is coming up for them?
  - d. Are there families or teachers affected by the **rotating strikes in the public and separate school boards**? How are they affected? What are the issues? Are there ways you can help the families or teachers affected?
  - e. Pastor Amanda has a pile of **photographs** available for use by a Community. Place the pictures face up on a table and throw out a challenge, like: “find a picture that expresses where you are at in your faith journey right now” or “find a picture of something that gives you joy” or “find a picture that best describes what you like to do for fun” ...well, you will have to be creative. Once every one has picked a picture, either in small groups or in the larger circle get them to share with everyone what picture they picked and why. This is a great exercise for all ages.

#### IV. Discussion Guide (for those desiring to talk about the sermon series)

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.

*(Note: sermons can be accessed online at [ccrc.on.ca/sermons](http://ccrc.on.ca/sermons))*

1. Scripture Reading: Matthew 6 or portions of it, as per question. (The quotes in questions 4 and 5 are from Pastor John Medendorp)
2. Pastor John mentioned the stories told by Anne Snyder (Comment Magazine) about how she experienced two radically different worlds within the church. ‘The first was with a group of wealthy white men at the New York Yacht Club. Throughout the evening the atmosphere was one of embattled weariness—these powerful men “felt isolated in their faith amid a secular elite, beleaguered by a mainstream culture that seemed increasingly hostile to their fundamental principles,” Snyder writes. Not twenty-four hours later, Snyder was at Bethel Gospel Assembly Church in Harlem for the commencement ceremony of Nyack College’s Alliance Theological Seminary. Filling the pews in this historic black church were the families of the students who were about to receive their certificates and degrees. Most of them were African American, Latino, and Asian American. And sitting in the front row on an old, hard pew, Snyder couldn’t help but notice the contrast. “Joy and expectation filled the air as one by one the masters and doctors of divinity walked, danced, and bowed their way to the stole that would confer the student’s official readiness for ministry. According to the commencement bulletin, most graduates were planning to return to their home neighbourhoods to serve in churches, social agencies, schools, and counselling centres. Instead of expressing fear that a great Christian heritage was losing ground, there was compassion in their testimonies, the scent of hope anchored in humility and fervent faith.’ With which world do you identify? What sorts of things could be done to bridge the two worlds, or to bring them together?
3. How do you understand the concept of “reward” (v. 1, 2, 4, 5, 18)? Is this works-righteousness?
4. “The Scripture is clear – as people of God, we should make ourselves poor if we want to inherit the riches of God’s Kingdom.” What does this mean? How do we become poor? What are the examples given in chapter 7?
5. “Christ calls us to be a church of the poor, a church *for* the poor. A church whose success is measured not by the number of her members, or the number of baptisms, or the size of her budget, or the vitality of her programs, but by the depth of her faith and the breadth of her love.” How can do we do that? Be specific.
6. According to psychologist Robert Leahy, “the average high school kid today has the same level of anxiety as the average psychiatric patient in the early 1950s.” Does this ring true? Do we live in an anxious age?
7. The definition of the word “anxious” (or worry) in this passage is a combination of two smaller words. It means, “to divide the mind.” How does worry divide the mind? (*Philippians 4:6–7, 12–13, 19, Proverbs 30:7–8, 1 Timothy 6:9–10*)
8. Walter Kelly, creator of the old Pogo comic strip, once said: “When I don’t have anything to worry about, I begin to worry about that”. What do you think? How do you react to this statement?
9. Share with the group, what things are you tempted to worry about? What impact does worrying have on your life? What do you do when you are tempted to worry?
10. As a group explain the ways culture tries to “heal anxiety.” How is Jesus’ approach different?
11. What does Jesus want to say about the character of God when he points to the birds and the flowers of the field (vv. 25-30)?

- V. **Prayer:** As you close out your time together, thank the Lord for teaching us what it means to be one of His children and offer a prayer for further understanding and transformation.