

COMMUNITIES/SMALL GROUPS - STARTUP NOTES AND DISCUSSION QUESTION

SEPTEMBER 22, 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 22, October 6, 20, November 3, 17 and December 1.

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. 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: this fall – prayer, based on The Lord’s Prayer. 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)

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) Discuss how you could be creative this season and what things you could do as a Community.
 - f) Are there some things you can do when you gather for a meal together besides just eating?
 - g) What is the purpose of any small group you create?
 - h) 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. Discussion Guide: A Mindset on Missions and a question.

This past season youth went on SERVE, 5 people went to Montreal, a number have gone on Disaster Response Services trips, a group from Community 2 went to visit Manitoulin Island and the ministries of Daystar. The question that arises always is, how do we capture the joy we experience on a mission trip for everyday living? Because on a short mission trip we are kind and loving, flexible, sacrificial and selfless. We pray more. We study God's word differently. We are constantly aware of the needs of those around us whether they be physical, spiritual or emotional. We are ready to get involved and serve. Why is it so often that such is our approach to a mission trip, but once we get home things are different? So how do we keep it going when we get home?

Think Communities. When we understand that for God His mission is to redeem the world, then as Christians our calling is to join the Lord in that mission. When Jesus walked this earth he engaged with people and established relationships. How did he establish relationships? He started by being hospitable. At the essence mission is as simple as that – being hospitable and inviting people into a relationship and let the Spirit do the rest. The question that the Mission Strategy Team has been asking is not how do we **make** people do mission, rather it is how do we **let** people do mission? Where is God already at work in our neighbourhoods?

We are presently divided into 12 geographic regions and the area around the where the church building is located is about to change rather dramatically as roads will be widened and as apartment buildings and senior's dwellings and stores are in the plans for building. What will the response of CCRC be to those changes? How do we respond to the changes about to come? Where does your imagination take you? Whose responsibility is it to be involved locally when many of us do not live near the church building?

In order to get at an answer to these questions each Community, either as a broader gathering or in small groups is asked to spend some time thinking about and exploring the following question based on our mission statement: *“Growing in relationship with God, each other and our community.”*

Key Question: If our church’s mission statement were fulfilled, what would that look like? What indicators would we use to know that our statement is being fulfilled?

What are the indicators of a transformed neighbourhood, city or region? List them. What would a neighbourhood, city or region look like that has been transformed by Jesus Christ and his kingdom values?

Here are some ideas that might give us a sense of what might be possible but these need developments and more specifics:

1. Christians joining forces to seek the spiritual wellbeing of the KW area.
2. Christians working for beautiful cities, pedestrian centered cities, people centered cities, good ecological practices
3. Christians working for a decline in violence against vulnerable populations
4. Christians using their gifts in neighbourhood associations, local politics, affordable housing, peaceful communities.

Note: The idea is that for the next three weeks (September 22, Oct. 6 and 20) the Communities or small groups spend time brain-storming, dreaming, pondering on the question raised and that the answers or thoughts be written down and submitted to the elders to add to the information to be discussed at the November 23 full council meeting which will address the future of CCRC.

IV. Prayer: As you begin a new season take the opportunity to spend some time in prayer 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.

“Growing in Relationship with God, each other and our community”

If our church’s mission statement were fulfilled:

What would that look like and how would we know?

Please list your ideas for each of the community purposes	What does fulfilling our mission look like?	By what measures would we know it was fulfilled?
<u>Fellowship:</u> With God, Each Other And Our Community		
<u>Pastoral Care:</u> With God, Each Other And Our Community		
<u>Discipleship:</u> With God, Each Other And Our Community		
<u>Mission:</u> With God, Each Other And Our Community		

Use additional sheets if necessary. Please label them clearly.