

Opening: Open Each Community Group Meeting by Reading the Community Grp Summary

What is a Community Group at Trinity Presbyterian Church?

Community Groups are basic Christian communities. Believing that getting to know Jesus and falling in love with him are activities best carried out in a community context, Community Groups provide that context. They are gatherings of 6 to 12 people meeting in homes and apartments throughout the city during the week. In Community Groups, people come to know God and to experience His presence, community is developed and fostered, and people are nurtured, equipped and released for God's work in the world. They provide an opportunity for intimacy, mutual support, practical love and service, learning about the Christian faith, prayer, and sharing of what we see God doing in our midst.

What is the Purpose of Community Groups?

A place to meet and experience Jesus Christ in our midst through mutual ministry
A place for fellowship and friendship
A place where gifts are exercised
A place to discover Christianity

What happens during a Community Group Meeting?

Worship – Experiencing the Worth of God and freely giving ourselves to Him
Sharing – Learning to tell the story of our journey with God
Sermon Application – Reflecting together on what God has given us from His Word during Corporate Worship
Prayer – Talking with God
Mission – Having experienced God's love, we now go to love our neighbor with the love we have from God

How do they fit in at Trinity as a whole?

Community Groups are the *primary place for pastoral care at Trinity*. Churches do one of two things: They either practice systematic care and encouragement of the congregation or systematic neglect of the congregation. Our network of community groups is the means through which we seek to practice the former. While some congregations may have small groups, our congregation is small groups. Our network of Community groups serves as the nervous system of our church. In them, the gospel is used to motivate people towards a richer relationship with God. In them, the gospel is used as a balm to apply to the wounds we incur in this broken world. In them, the gospel is used to call and motivate people into the service of God's kingdom: In response to God's grace, people are urged to develop lives of moral beauty, integrity and other-centeredness and to discover and use their gifts to carry out ministry both within the congregation and to the world.

The Context of Change: The Worshiping Community

Worshiping God enables us to see the beauty of God and the beauty of godliness. When we worship, we find that our love for God deepens and the hold that other things have on us loosen. When we worship, we find that it changes what we want: we want God and we want to please him more than we want and desire other things. Regularly worshipping God with the larger church, in small groups and on a daily basis as an individual is indispensable if our lives are to change.

Growth by Multiplying New Groups

Trinity's primary vision is that by multiplying groups we are able to increase our capability as a church to care for people. When people are not involved in significant Christian relationships, like Community Groups, it greatly inhibits Christian maturity. Currently many of our friends at Trinity fall outside this kind of caring and encouraging community. For this reason, we consider it imperative to develop new leaders and expand the number of groups. We are not concerned with multiplying groups as an end in itself. We want to increase the number of groups because we want to provide quality personal care and community life for those who are part of our network of friends. As long as we have too few groups, Trinity, Lakeland and Polk County will fail to be as effective as we might be. If we are going to be successful at multiplying groups, then we will need to cast a vision that will make people enthusiastic and committed to these things. If this vision casting is neglected, the resistance to multiplying groups will prove too strong to overcome.

Warm Up - Read Sermon Passage and Corporate Worship Themes

We read the sermon passage, storyline and themes to warm our hearts and minds to remember what God has spoken to us in our time together Sunday morning.

Proclamation of God's Word

Text: Hebrews 11:17-19, Genesis 22:1-14 (ESV) Title: By Faith Abraham and Isaac

Hebrews 11:17–19 (ESV)

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."

¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

The Storyline – "What were you thinking?"... Abraham?

"Timothy Oliver!! What were you thinking!" My Mom seemed to always want me to think about that in the middle of some mess I had made. Folks always want to know that kind of stuff after something happened, whether good or ill. My Mom was different. She wanted to know right in the middle of the mess making and so she trained me so I am. I love the Bible cuz it tells you what someone was thinking right smack dab in the middle of what they were doing. This happens with our friend Abraham as he is going to sacrifice Isaac. Hebrews tells us that while Abraham was in the act of offering Isaac, he was considering that God was able to raise the dead. I love that. Faith is so great, even fun. Faith makes life exciting and God real. Faith not only thinks about God but presumes upon His greatness and goodness. Faith knows the unseen is the big deal in the seen. Faith acts. Like in a swimming pool, faith pushes off the side wall of our weakness and frailty to power ourselves into the heart of God. Abraham faiths. What a blast to live in God, on God and now for God.

God has designed opportunities to overwhelm and confuse you this week, to bless and confound you, to knock you off balance and transform you. Those moments are gifts, even presents, of His grace. So then be who you are in that moment. Be needy. Be weak. Be overwhelmed. Then cry to Him. Feed on Him. Reflect on His Goodness, His Power, His Greatness, His Love for you and wait for His Spirit to come then resurrection, wonder, awe and the ALL IN! You are ready for the next day and the next adventure of faith with your Father.

Themes

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| • Faith | • Jesus Greater Isaac | • Resurrection |
| • Test | • All in | • Dependent |
| • Abraham | • Awe | • As Dead |
| • Isaac | • Obedience | • Raise the Dead |
| • Promise | • Confidence | • How Big is your God? |
| • Sacrifice | • Assurance | |

1. Launchers: (10 min)

- When did you go “all in with Jesus”? What is the feeling of “all in” with Him?
- What is your Pokémon, a dumb idol of your own making, that you have loved more than God and others?

2. Worship is Counter Culture - Living in Awe of God (10 min)

Worshiping God is always the norm because He is our source, our hope and our joy. Read the following, pausing to praise God for all moments for all times, no matter where we are and how we are being treated, and worship God for the faithful who point us to their only hope in life and death Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Ask the Lord to fill you with awe and “all in” wonder.

Psalm 113:1–3 (ESV) Praising God is ALWAYS APPROPRIATE!

¹ Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord! ² Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! ³ From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!

Psalm 137:1–6 NO MATTER THE CULTURE – We Remember God Our Highest JOY!

¹ By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. ² On the willows there we hung up our lyres. ³ For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” ⁴ How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land? ⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! ⁶ Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!

Hebrews 12:1–2 Minds full of the Faithful, looking to Jesus, we run the race with Joy!

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

3. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

Introduction: Family Portraits: How do these both example and point you to Christ?

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| • Cain and Abel | • Abraham and Sarah Laughing |
| • Noah | • Abraham and Isaac - Sacrifice |
| • Abraham – Leaving Ur | |

God’s Righteous Test – Does Abraham love the gift (promised blessing) or the Giver more?

Abraham’s Ruthless Trust – What does Abraham believe that makes him bold in His trust?

Jesus’ Radical Sacrifice – How is Jesus the greater Isaac? What was Jesus thinking that made Him bold in trust to lay down His life for us?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer: (10 min)

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US ...

1. Worship the Father for His great love for us! Worship the Son because He willingly laid His life down for us. Worship the Spirit for His resurrection power!
2. Are you regularly in awe of God (His character and His works) and have you gone all in with Him?
3. What are the things that you're tempted to withhold from Him? Confess your independence and resistance to His lordship. Surrender those things to Him!
4. Give thanks for Jesus' obedience to the Father. Celebrate His radical sacrifice for your sin!
5. Who around you is placing their faith in things other than Christ? Pray for them, asking the Lord to reveal their dependence on creation rather than the Creator. Ask the Lord to grant them faith to see and savor Jesus.

5. Mission: Do this in remembrance of Me. (10 min)

Romans 12:1–2 (ESV)

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Think of the coming week –

- What are good, acceptable and perfect ways for you to offer yourself as a sacrifice to others as an act of worship to God?
- How can you strategize to do them great good but leave them thinking of Him?

6. Jesus From Others (10 min)

Close your time together in letting each person share something they came to love about Jesus from something someone in the group shared during your time together.

- What do you love more about Jesus from what someone shared during our CG tonight?