

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 (OPTIONAL) - 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

The Storyline – Christians are weird, and it may just be our best feature.

Christians live weird, talk weird, walk weird, spend weird, love weird, give weird. Christians are weird in our words, works, ways and wonders. All because of God's glory, from His glory and unto His glory.

And Christianity is the most fun, greatest thing going!

Themes

- Grace
- Abounding
- God's Work
- God's Way
- Weird
- Eccentric
- Faith
- Recognize
- Realize
- Reenergize
- Jesus
- Father
- Jesus
- Holy Spirit

1. Launchers: (10 min)

- What is your favorite “weird” that comes from being a Christian?

2. Worship God for wonder of both Plenty and Need (10 min)

We read God’s Word. Worship God for the wonder of need and plenty, poverty and riches, works and ways. Works are what God does. Ways are who God is.

Isaiah 58:6-7, 10-12 (ESV)

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? ... if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.”

How has God blessed you so that you are now able to bless others?

3. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

Proclamation of God’s Word

Text: 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 7-9; 9:6-11 (ESV)

Title: Staying On Message: The Grace of Radical Generosity

Teacher: Drew Bennett

GRACE ABOUNDING TO US - *From God’s fullness we receive grace upon grace.*

- What is your favorite work of God’s Grace:
 - In creation?
 - In His Providence, His control of all creatures and all their actions?
 - In Jesus?
 - In our salvation?

GRACE ABOUNDING IN US - *From our fullness, grace overflows to others.*

- Do you live overwhelmed by God’s grace?
- What needs to change for you to enjoy grace upon grace upon grace?

GRACE ABOUNDING FROM US - *Generosity is the hallmark of Christians.*

- How is God’s Grace of ALL sufficiency flowing through you to others?
- How is God Grace in ALL Things flowing through you to others?
- How is God’s Grace at ALL Times Flowing through you to others?
- What is Holy Spirit calling you, nudging you to repent about?
- What does Holy Spirit want you to do in keeping with that repentance?
- What promise is Holy Spirit pressing you to believe in light of your repentance?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer: (10 min)

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US ...

1. Worship the LORD, God Almighty, for His love. Praise Him for the grace upon grace that you experience daily. Take a moment to rehearse as many instances as you can of goodness and mercy from this past week.
2. How have you lived in pride or fear? Confess how your unbelief has kept you from the kind of sacrificial generosity God invites us all into, asking Him to forgive you and to change you.
3. Give thanks to Jesus, who for your sake became poor to make you rich. Thank Him for being trustworthy and gracious to leave all He had in heaven to come to suffer to bring rebels like us into His home and family!
4. Who do you know that is in need of physical assistance – food, clothing, housing, etc? Ask the Lord what He would have you do to help meet their practical needs.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you His fruit of sacrificial generosity. Pray for strength and motivation to encourage your fellow believers in love and good deeds as He has come alongside you.

5. Mission: Living is Giving. (10 min)

Christians live to give but our giving is secret, credit-less giving.

- What is God calling you to give this week?
- Each morning count your blessings. Name them one by one.
 - Surprise someone with a gift, an act of kindness or generosity, that meets a specific need but the key is to do it in a way no one notices.

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?