



HYMN OR WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT: [5 min]

Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

Open your group time by singing one of these classic hymns. You should be able to google the lyrics.

- A Mighty Fortress
- Amazing Grace
- How Great Thou Art
- Holy, Holy, Holy
- It is Well
- Great Is Thy Faithfulness
- Praise to the Lord the Almighty
- Be Thou My Vision
- All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name
- Blessed Assurance
- The Love of God

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: [35 min]

Read John 15:12-17 & John 17:20-26

1. In these two chapters, Jesus uses different descriptions to articulate the same truth.
 - Based on these verses, what is the Lord’s ultimate desire for his disciples?
 - What is his command, and how does it achieve the desired effect?
 - Jesus compares his relationship with his disciples to his own relationship with the heavenly Father. What do you think is so important about this comparison? See John 15:9; John 17:21.
2. We often try to manufacture love for other people that we don’t possess. Another way to look at John 15:9 is to remain in the love Jesus supplies us—like keeping your bucket under the faucet so that you’re filled up from the source.
 - How well do you do at keeping your bucket in the source?
 - What disconnects you from his love source for others? Are there practical moments, patterns, or triggers that knock you out of alignment with receiving from your love source?
3. What encouragement do you think the Holy Spirit might want to speak to those places that are dry and love-less?

COMMUNION: [15 min]

Celebrating communion together is a powerful way to reaffirm our commitment to the Lord's commands and to celebrate the community of God's people living in love, unity, and forgiveness toward each other.

Take 10 minutes to take communion together. (A script is provided below.)

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT: [30 min]

Out of the posture of unity that communion fosters, we will practice encouraging each other with our words. This may feel uncomfortable or clumsy to you. Those feelings are normal to many people—that's why we practice!

1. Break into groups of 5-6 people.
2. Take 10-15 and write down one thing you appreciate about each person's character (who they are). And one thing you've observed about each person's actions (What they've done).

Example: *"Vicky, I've noticed that you have a very sensitive heart for people, and I think that's really special (who she is). You take the time to listen when others talk, and I've watched you serve other people by cleaning up after them, and not everyone does that!" (what she's done).*

3. Take 10-15 minutes to have the group share their words of encouragement with each person. This is a time to practice our love with our words.

Script for Communion below.

Suggested Script for Communion

Say: “In the gospel of Luke, Jesus instructed his disciples to ‘*do this in remembrance of me.*’ (Luke 22:19)”

Bread

Say: “In Matthew, it says, ‘*While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”*’ (Matthew 26:26)”

The bread represents the body of Christ that was broken so that we could be restored to God.

Action: Hand out the bread.

Pray: Pray out loud on behalf of the group. Pray from your heart as you feel led. (It is usually appropriate to thank God for giving his son Jesus, to thank Jesus for giving himself for us so that we could be healed, and to recognize God’s presence in our midst.)

Action: Eat the Bread (take your time; give people time to pray and reflect).

Cup

Say: “Again, in Matthew, it says, ‘Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’ (Matthew 26:27-28)”

The cup represents the shedding of Jesus’ blood so that our sins could be washed away and we could be made new.”

Action: Hand out the cups.

Pray: Pray out loud on behalf of the group. (It is usually appropriate to thank Jesus for his blood, the cleansing from our sins, and the freedom we experience through his blood.)

Action: Drink the juice.

Closing Prayer

Pray: Pray out loud on behalf of the group or invite others to pray out loud, closing the time of communion.

Follow up suggestion

Because communion is so powerful, experiential, and intimate, it can be a great opportunity to lead people into a time of worship, confession of sins (groups of 2-3), or personal sharing.