

youthESource Bible Study

Beyond Community

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This study is written to be used with older middle school-aged youth, or high school youth. It is an in-depth look at some of the foundational pieces of Christian community, whether that is a youth's group of friends, or the congregation's youth group, or even the general concept of the community of believers. Each of the parts of this study has been designed so that the whole study can be done within a one-hour time frame. However, they can certainly be expanded or shortened if necessary. Items that are in "italics" are notes for those leading the study.

Supplies: pens or pencils, Bibles, 4x6 inch index cards, plain scratch paper.

Hook: 10-15 minutes

This section of the study time is designed to introduce the topic and get the group to begin thinking in the general direction of the topic- community.

- **Game:** If you have the time, and the space (and the courage), try to play a game of Red Rover, Red Rover. To play, break the group up into two teams. Both teams form a line, shoulder to shoulder with their arms linked and each side facing the other. One team begins by saying, "Red Rover, Red Rover, let ----- come over." That person then is to run and try to break through the line. If they succeed, they get to take a player of their choice back to their team. If they are unsuccessful, they stay with that team.

OR

- **Discussion:**
 - How long have you been friends with your friends? Do you remember the first time you hung out? If so, what did you do?
 - Why is it important that you have your friends to hang out with? What do you appreciate the most about your friends?
 - Have your friends ever helped you out in a tough situation? Have you helped your friends out in a tough situation?
 - What do you think it takes for friends to stay together through high school, college, or even into being an adult?
 - Of those things, what do you think is the most important and why?
 - How would you define the word community? Is there a difference between "community" and "friends"?

Book: 20-25 minutes

- Look up the following passages and as a group/individual, and try to figure out what these passages say concerning "community"
 - **1 Corinthians 13:** *Paul's famous discourse on love- which is found ultimately in Christ Jesus alone.*
 - **Galatians 6:1-5:** *speaks to humility and service to others out of love for one another as the vocation of all believers*
 - **Galatians 5:13-15:** *we are called to love and serve one another, as followers of Christ*

- **1 John 1:5-10:** as we turn to our Savior for forgiveness, we can turn to each other and forgive. This is how we are called in Christ to handle conflict with each other. See also Matthew 18 below.
- **Luke 22:24-30:** humility and respect are essential in any relationship, but especially in a community/group of friends.
- **Matthew 5:1-12:** the attitudes and behaviors of a Jesus follower, but for a purpose- see next Scriptural reference.
- **Matthew 5:13-16:** how to conduct yourself in such a way that your life reflects the good news of Jesus Christ.
- **Matthew 18:15-20:** Jesus' response to how we are to handle conflict between each other when it arises.
- **John 15:1-17:** Jesus' answer to how we live our life of faith in Him- by abiding (dwelling in Him, and how He reveals Himself to us in His Word).
- **Acts 1:6-8:** Jesus' final words to His disciples before His ascension according to Luke. Speaks directly to our calling as His community of believers. Similar to Matthew 28:16-20.
- **Acts 2:42:** Many consider these four acts of the early Church to be essential to Christian community.
- **Colossians 1:9-14:** It is vitally important that we pray for one another continually. This is just one example of how the Apostle Paul prayed for the churches, the communities of people, that he had served and continued to minister to through letters.

Look: 15-20 minutes

Use the following discussion questions to help tie together the Scripture passages above with what it means to be in Christian community. You can also have the groups that went through the Scripture passages together also answer the following the discussion questions.

- What do these passages say concerning the idea of community, but especially what it means to be a community of believers in Jesus Christ?
- As you think about your group of friends, or our youth group, or even our congregation, what of these pieces of Christian community are you/we doing? What are you/we not doing?
- How is this different than how we typically think about "community" in our culture today?

Took: 10-15 minutes

The activities in this section are designed to bring application to the discussion in a way that gets the youth thinking beyond Bible study, as well as opens up opportunity for further discussion.

- Write out, on your scratch piece of paper, two things from today's Bible study that you want to start doing with your friends to help you come closer together.
- On an index card write out three things you'd like to see us do as a youth group/ congregation that you think will help build deeper community.
- As a group, close this time in prayer and lift up the very things the youth shared on their index card for your youth group/congregation. Allow the youth themselves to lift up their individual ideas in prayer.