

Class overview

Content

- Week 1 – Why community groups?
- Week 2 – Know the Gospel: Why study scripture?
- Week 3 – Know the Gospel: Bible study discussion
- Week 4 – Live the Gospel: Share our lives
- Week 5 – Live the Gospel: Stewarding conflict
- Week 6 – Advance the Gospel: Group on mission
- Week 7 – Advance the Gospel: Multiplying + some final things

Pre-work

Each week's pre-work is intended to provide you with time to thoughtfully consider why and how you would lead a community group at Vintage Church. Each week's combination of reading and reflection questions should take you roughly thirty minutes. And please don't skip the reflection questions! Your time spent in this pre-work will build into our time together in class. Also, just so you know, weekly reading assignments are taken from source materials that would be helpful to you in the future.

What if I need to miss a week?

If you have a trip planned or end up getting sick one week and need to miss a meeting, that's totally fine! We have a couple options for making up the content you missed. You can either listen to the content recording or meet with Eric in the week following the Sunday you've missed.

If you know or suspect that you'll need to miss more than two meetings, then we'd recommend that you wait until the next time we offer the training.

What happens after the training?

Going through the training doesn't commit you to starting a community group. Following the training you can always opt to stay in your current community group and simply assist your current leader(s). However, if you go through the course and do decide to plant a group, or you want to think through that some more, then Eric will follow up with you about a tailored planting plan once the training is finished.



Session 1: Why community groups?

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

What does this passage say about our state before Jesus saved us vs. after Jesus saved us?

Before	After

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

What does this passage say about our state before Jesus saved us vs. after Jesus saved us?

Before	After



Flow: Church > church > community group

Read Ephesians 5:25–32

What is the Church?

“The church is the community of all true believers for all time.” – Wayne Grudem¹

The church is most typically referred to as the called-out assembly. . . the passive concept of “called out” underscores the fact that this community is formed by the Word. It does not come together as an aggregate of individuals who have determined to form such a society, but is summoned, gathered, and called out by God’s electing, redeeming, justifying, and renewing grace. Ecclesiology is not a topic that exists alongside the gospel, which needs to be related somehow to it. Rather, the gospel itself, as God’s saving speech act. . . generates a community called the church. The attributes, marks, and mission of the church therefore form the threads of a single bolt of fabric that is woven by the Spirit through the gospel as it is delivered through Christ’s appointed means. – Michael Horton²

What is the church?

In the New Testament, the word “church” may be used to refer to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small group meeting in a private home (“the church in their house,” Rom. 16:5), to the church in an entire city (“the church of God that is in Corinth,” 1 Cor. 1:2), to the church in an entire region (“the church throughout all Judea,” Acts 9:31), to the church throughout the entire world (“Christ loves the church,” Eph. 5:25). “The community of God’s people considered at any level can rightly be called a church.”³

Despite the broad range, we typically use “church” to refer to a local congregation, a specific group of people who participate in the universal Church but who group up in a place based on shared belief, distinctives, and practices, and who are organized under pastors and other leaders (ex. deacons).

Church as organization or organism?

“The Church as an institution or organization. . . is a means to an end, and this is found in the Church as an organism, the community of believers.” – Louis Berkhof⁴

› Example: tomato on a trellis

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 853.

² Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 828.

³ Grudem, 857-58.

⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 567.



What does the church do?

Three-fold, three-directional mission:⁵

1. Ministry to God: worship
2. Ministry to believers: nurture
3. Ministry to the world: evangelism and mercy

The mission of Vintage Church:

Vintage Church exists to make much of Jesus. We do that by making disciples who know the gospel, live the gospel, and advance the gospel.

Doubters, seekers, and followers are invited to become everything God designed them to be and see their city become everything God desires it to be.

Aside: Can a church be made up of doubters, seekers, and followers?

1. Church invisible vs. church visible: “The invisible church is the church as God sees it. . the visible church is the church as Christians on earth see it.”⁶
 - a. The church proper is only made up of those who profess faith in Christ.
 - b. However, the church always has nonbelieving members.
2. New Testament evidence: Acts 2:46-47; 10:33.
 - a. Conclusion: the church is true to her mission when nonbelievers are present

So why community groups?

Community groups exist to help the people of our church carry out Christ’s mission for the church with a particular emphasis on the interrelational aspects of that mission. Simply put, only so much of the church’s mission can occur on Sundays, so CGs exist to produce meaningful relationships that enable and nourish what happens the other six days of the week.

Three-fold mission of community groups:

1. Know the Gospel: study scripture together
2. Live the Gospel: share our lives together
3. Advance the Gospel: love and serve our surrounding communities together

⁵ Grudem, 867-68.

⁶ Grudem, 855-56.



Community Group Structure

Vintage Community Groups are small groups of people who discuss the Bible together, share their lives together, and live like missionaries together.

- Structure
 - Led by Vintage member(s)
 - 5-20 people
 - Hosted in homes
 - Not grouped by affinity, age, life stage, or location
 - Grow organically and through the Connections Process
 - Multiply by planting other Community Groups
- Priorities
 - Make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20):
 - Know the Gospel: Learning from the Bible together
 - Live the Gospel: Sharing our lives together
 - Advance the Gospel: Living on mission together
 - Doubter, seeker, and follower friendly
- Accountability
 - Organizational:
Leaders > Coaches > Community Groups Pastor > Local Pastor > Board of Elders
 - Spiritual: Members > Deacons > Elders > Jesus

Coaching

Community Group Coaches are put in place to assist, care for, and help shepherd community group leaders. They're there to help you be supported you in your role, connected with church leadership, and growing in faithfulness and fellowship with the church.

Expect monthly meetings with your coach initially to establish a coaching relationship, followed by regular but less frequent check ins (you and your coach can work out the frequency that is most helpful for you). Your coach is available to assist or connect you to resources as needed.

