

Community Group Leadership Training



Community Group Leadership Training

Content

- Week 1 – Why community groups?
- Week 2 – Know the Gospel: Bible study discussions
- Week 3 – Live the Gospel: Sharing our lives
- Week 4 – Advance the Gospel: Group on mission

Pre-work

Each week's pre-work gives you time to thoughtfully consider why and how you might lead a community group at Vintage Church. Each week's reading and exercises should take you about 30 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 books 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 you'll be followed up with and receive a tailored planting plan once the training is finished.

Session 1

Why community groups?

Session 1: Why community groups?

Intro: We're moving from why to how.

Not just part but part of the whole

Essentially, we're talking about the social or interpersonal dimension of following Jesus. But this exists within the broader context of what it means to be a person generally and what it means to be a Jesus-following person specifically.

God's Wonderful Works: Creation and Salvation

Starting point: The image of the Triune God

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them. – Genesis 1:26-27

The image of God in us is many things, including all the attributes about God that are true about us. For example, God is Creator, and we image him when we exercise our own creative abilities. Specific to our study of community, we see here a connection between God's being and our design. God has existed for all eternity as three members of the one Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Note how God set out to create mankind in his image and, for him to do so, immediately started by creating male and female. It took multiple, different-yet-complementary humans to image the Triune God. Of course, our community and God's Triunity are not the exact same thing; God isn't three distinct beings but one God in three persons (mind-bending as it is). But this is like the other attributes we share with God—for example, we know some things, but God is all-knowing; we are creative, but God is Creator. God is the essence of all being while our being is a creaturely derivative of his. All that to say, we are relational creatures who image our relational Creator.

In summary, all that we have to say about community starts with God. This is for two reasons: generally, because God is the Creator and source of all things and, specifically, because we are created in God's image. Generally, our understanding of anything, from humanity to physics to bird watching (and everything in between), should be referenced off the God who created all things and continually holds them together by his power (Col 1:17). But specifically, we humans are made in this God's image, and since he has existed for all eternity in loving community between the members of the Trinity, we are thus designed for community. It's in the very fabric of our being.

Timeline: from creation to re-creation

The massive, cover-to-cover story of the Bible is about God creating, losing, calling, redeeming, and recreating a people for himself (1 Pet 2:10).



Big Story plot points:

- Creation: Genesis 1-2
- Sin and curse: Genesis 3
- Covenants: Genesis 6, Genesis 12, Exodus 19
- Kingdom: Joshua – 2 Chronicles
- Redemption: Matthew – John
- Church: Acts – Revelation
- Jesus returns: Revelation 19-20
- New creation: Revelation 21-22

Takeaways:

- There's no context for individual salvation outside of corporate identity.
- Salvation comes through union with Christ, which is personal *and* corporate, not one or the other.
- Flow: Church > church > community group

The What/Why/How of the Church

What is the Church?

“The church is the community of all true believers for all time.”¹

Why is the Church?

“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 ...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.”²

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).

Aside: 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.”⁴

> Example: vine on a trellis

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 853.

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

³ Grudem, 857-58.

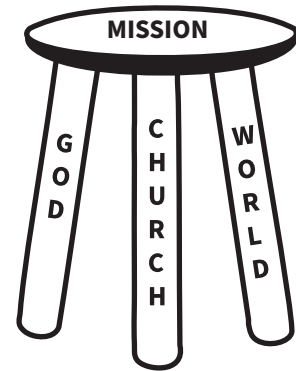
⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 567.

The mission of the Church/church

Tri-fold mission of the church:⁵

- Serve God through worship.
- Serve the church through nurture.
- Serve the world through witness.

*note: all three are intertwined



Vintage Church's Mission Statement:

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

Part of the How: 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 inter-relational 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.

⁵ Edmund Clowney, *The Church*, 117, 161.

⁶ Grudem, 855-56.

Community Group Structure

Vintage Community Groups are small groups of people who study the Bible together, share their lives together, and love and serve their surrounding communities 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: Loving and serving our surrounding communities together
 - Doubter, seeker, and follower friendly
- Accountability
 - Organizational:
Leaders > Coaches > Community Groups Pastor > Downtown Director
 - Spiritual: Members > 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.