

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

What a day! Our church gathered together worshipping a risen Savior and then learning that His resurrection is the great sign ever given to mankind. It was a great day to teach on our 9th core value: we value **Radical Evangelism** and expect signs and wonders to follow us as we make disciples of all nations. We unpacked the meaning of that statement (radical evangelism is intentional, backed by the miraculous, and all about discipling those who then disciple) and then we looked in depth at 3 truths about the sign of the resurrection.

1. **Everyone HOPES for a sign:** Jesus never ran short of people asking Him for a sign, and one thing we realize is that we are all born unbelievers, but we're all looking for something to believe in. Unbelief wants more, but needs less. In Matthew 12:38-40, the religious leaders wanted to see more (even though they'd seen plenty already!) and yet Jesus offered less: one sign – the sign of Jonah – which was His death, burial, and resurrection.
2. **Everything HINGES on a sign:** 1 Corinthians 15:14 says that without the resurrection our faith is in vain, or empty. For years, Satan has tried to cast doubt on the resurrection of Jesus because that one event is the foundation upon which our faith rests. None of the theories hold water, though, and so we can have confidence in the resurrection and, according to Romans 8:11, we can live energized as a result!

3. **Every soul HANGS in the balance over a sign:** *Sometimes belief seems easy for us because we look at the facts, the theories about the resurrection and realize that we can confidently cling to the reality of that event. Unfortunately, that isn't enough because belief is more than logic. Belief is much more about a Lord, and Romans 10:9 is clear that we can believe in the resurrection, but salvation comes when that belief is married to a life that confesses that the Lord of the resurrection is also the Lord of our lives.*

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Pastor Paul talked about being intentional in evangelism. Discuss what that might look like practically in your life.
- Have someone read Romans 15:18-19 and then discuss how signs and wonders help us proclaim the full gospel of Jesus.
- Take a few minutes and try to come up with a good, simple definition of discipleship (one could be “the shared life”) and talk about why people are so hesitant to disciple others in the faith.
- If making disciplers starts by simply sharing life together, then your Community Group is an obvious way to live this command out. What are some other ways?
- Why do you think it's so important for Satan to try and throw doubt on the actual, physical resurrection of Jesus? Read 1 Corinthians 15:14 for help if you need to.
- All man's attempts to explain away the resurrection fall into what 2 types? (Occupied tomb and Empty tomb theories) Pastor Paul mentioned 8 theories which ultimately fail to explain the miracle away. How many can your group name? Do you remember the most popular of each type? (Occupied Tomb – Hallucination theory; Empty Tomb – Stolen by the Disciples theory)
- How does it feel knowing that you can live your faith with confidence in the FACT that Jesus was raised from the dead?
- If belief was just about logic, it would be easy, but it's also about the Lord. According to Romans 1:4, the resurrection was like a big stamp of approval on Jesus as LORD OVER ALL! In what areas of your life is it too easy to bump Him off the throne, even if momentarily?
- How does it feel knowing that Jesus – being the resurrected Lord over death and the grave – is able to save completely those who bow their knees to Him as Lord over their lives, too?

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.