

7 WEEKS

Creed

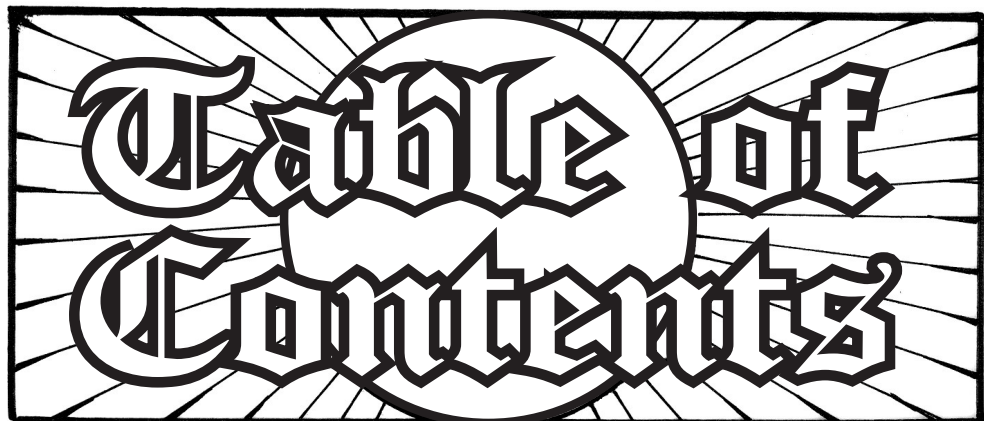



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I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
 Make of Heaven and Earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, dead and buried;
 He descended into hell;
on the third day He rose again from the dead;
 He ascended into heaven,
 and is seated at the right hand
 of God the Father Almighty;
 from there He will judge
 the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and life everlasting.

Amen



CREED

In this series, we are walking through The Apostle's Creed, a doctrinal statement adopted by followers of Jesus about 150 years after the last of the original apostles died.

The creed contains roughly one hundred words that give us the nutshell of the million words found in the Bible. It takes this massive book and condenses it down into a pocket-sized, manageable frame of reference for those who are believers in the God of the Bible. It's the irreducible minimum when it comes to following His Son, Jesus.

Rampant persecution and heresy caused Jesus' faithful followers to construct this standard of faith, in order to bring unity and clear vision to who and what followers of Jesus ascribed to. It is, if you will, a load-bearing wall for believers in Christ. It is essential to the structural integrity of our faith.

For the next seven weeks, we'll unpack this creed, what it says and what it means - even for us today. May this journey bring affirmation to your own faith and draw you closer to the One for whom it represents.



Maker of Heaven and Earth

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What experience (if any) do you have with the Apostle's Creed? Did you grow up with the tradition or not so much?

Big Idea:

God is not only the mighty Creator, but also our merciful Father.

Key Scriptures:

Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Psalms 104:27-32

"All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the

Lord rejoice in his works—He who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

Isaiah 40:22, 25-26

"He sits above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in..." "To whom then will you compare Me, or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these things, who brings out the starry host one by one; He calls forth each of them by name. Because of His great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing."

Matthew 10:29-31 (NLT)

"What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows."

Discussion:

1. Begin your group by reciting the Apostle's Creed together.
2. Put yourself in the place of those who were part of the early church – those who sought to follow Jesus. In what ways do you think this creed would have been helpful as a baseline of faith for them?
3. Read Genesis 1:1. In the first chapter of Genesis, God establishes himself as the Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything that exists in them. Including mankind. Discuss how this truth serves as a foundation to faith in Him.
4. Do you ever struggle with believing God as Creator?
5. Read Psalm 104:27-32 and Isaiah 40:22, 25-26. Discuss how this passage speaks of God's sustaining work as merciful Father. How have you seen evidence of this in the world around you and in your own life?
6. It's easy to get so caught up in our own lives that we neglect to "lift up our eyes on high" and be reminded of the majesty and sovereignty of God and His purposes. In what ways might you give praise and glory to God for His role as Creator, Sustainer and merciful Father?
7. Read Matthew 10:29-31. What does this passage tell you about your value before God? How might that impact the way you feel about yourself?
8. How helpful might this creed be for followers of Jesus today? For you?

Wrapping It Up:

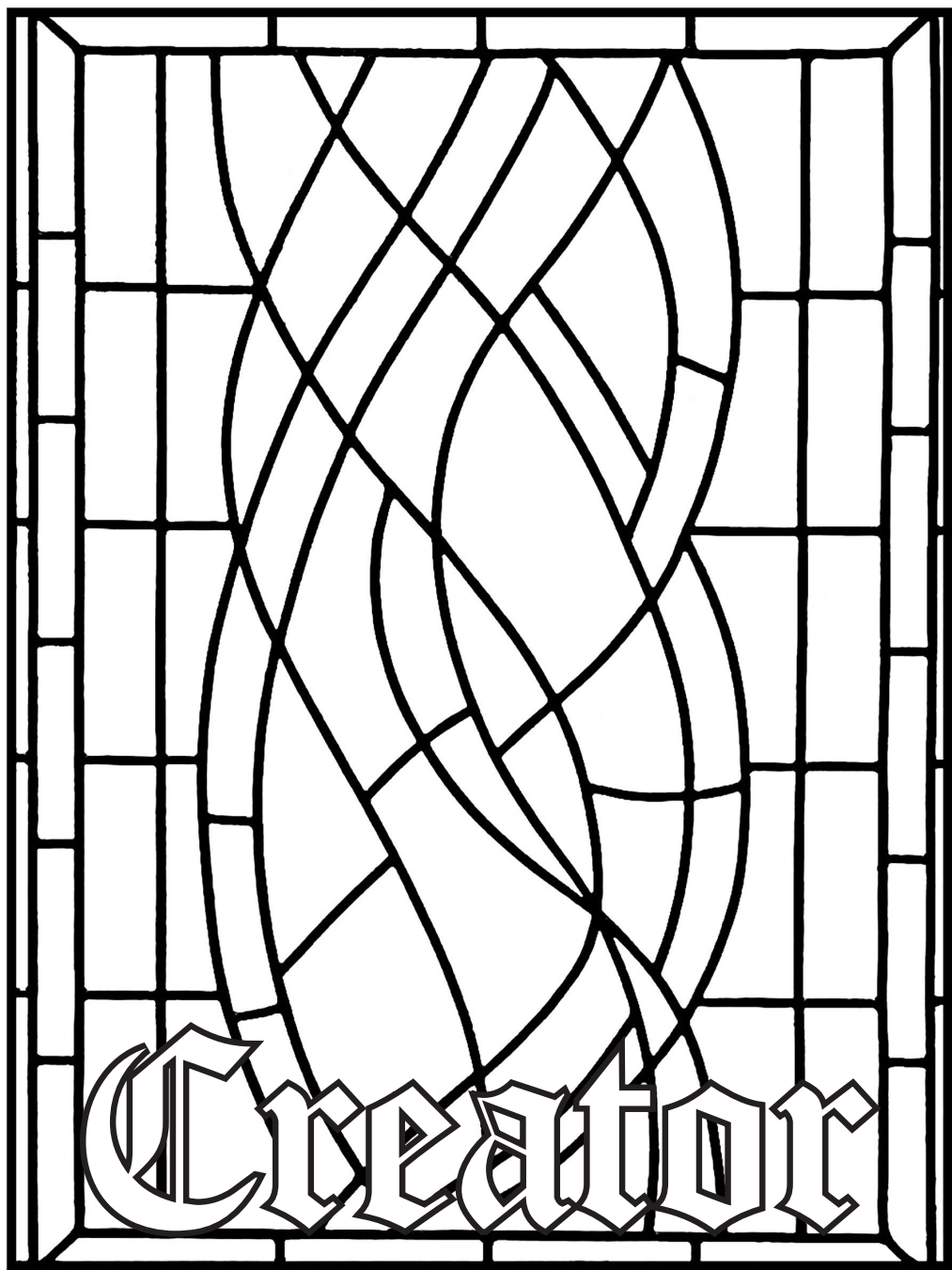
Spend some time in prayer together, giving thanks and adoration to God for His mighty works and His merciful care. And tonight, as darkness falls, observe the stars in the sky and be reminded that God calls every one by name. And the same God, whom Heaven displays, also thinks of you in intimate ways.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for the new small groups and support groups that will be launching this week.

Memory Verse:

"To whom then will you compare Me, or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these things, who brings out the starry host one by one; He calls forth each of them by name." Isaiah 40:25-26





And in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What comes to mind when you hear people speak the name of Jesus in a not so positive way? What is evoked in you when that happens?

Big Idea:

Jesus' identity, ancestry, and supremacy are foundational to the Gospel and central to the creed's development.

Key Scriptures:

Colossians 1:15-19
"The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in Heaven and on Earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and

the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him..."

Hebrews 1:3

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in Heaven."

John 1:1-4

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind."

Discussion:

1. Take time to begin your group by reciting the Apostle's Creed together once again.

2. In the first century there were a lot of very religious people who would deny the deity of Jesus. The line "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord" defines Jesus as the long awaited Messiah, God's only Son, and worthy to be called Lord. Many would deny this, and still do today. Where do you see that happening both in religious circles and in those who have no faith?
 - Identity/Ancestry of Christ
 - Work of Christ
 - Supremacy of Christ
3. How do you respond to the accusation that to claim Jesus is the only way is narrow-minded and hateful?
4. The name of Jesus Christ triggers an intense reaction in people, both good and bad. 2000 years after He walked this earth, people still speak His name either in praise or to curse. Why is that?
5. Out of the 24 statements in the Apostle's Creed, fourteen of them focus on Jesus. For at the center of the Christian faith is the person, of Jesus Christ our Lord. Read Colossians 1:15-19, Hebrews 1:3, and John 1:1-4. Discuss in detail what each these passages tell you about the:
 6. How do these passages affirm your faith and trust in Jesus?

Wrapping It Up:

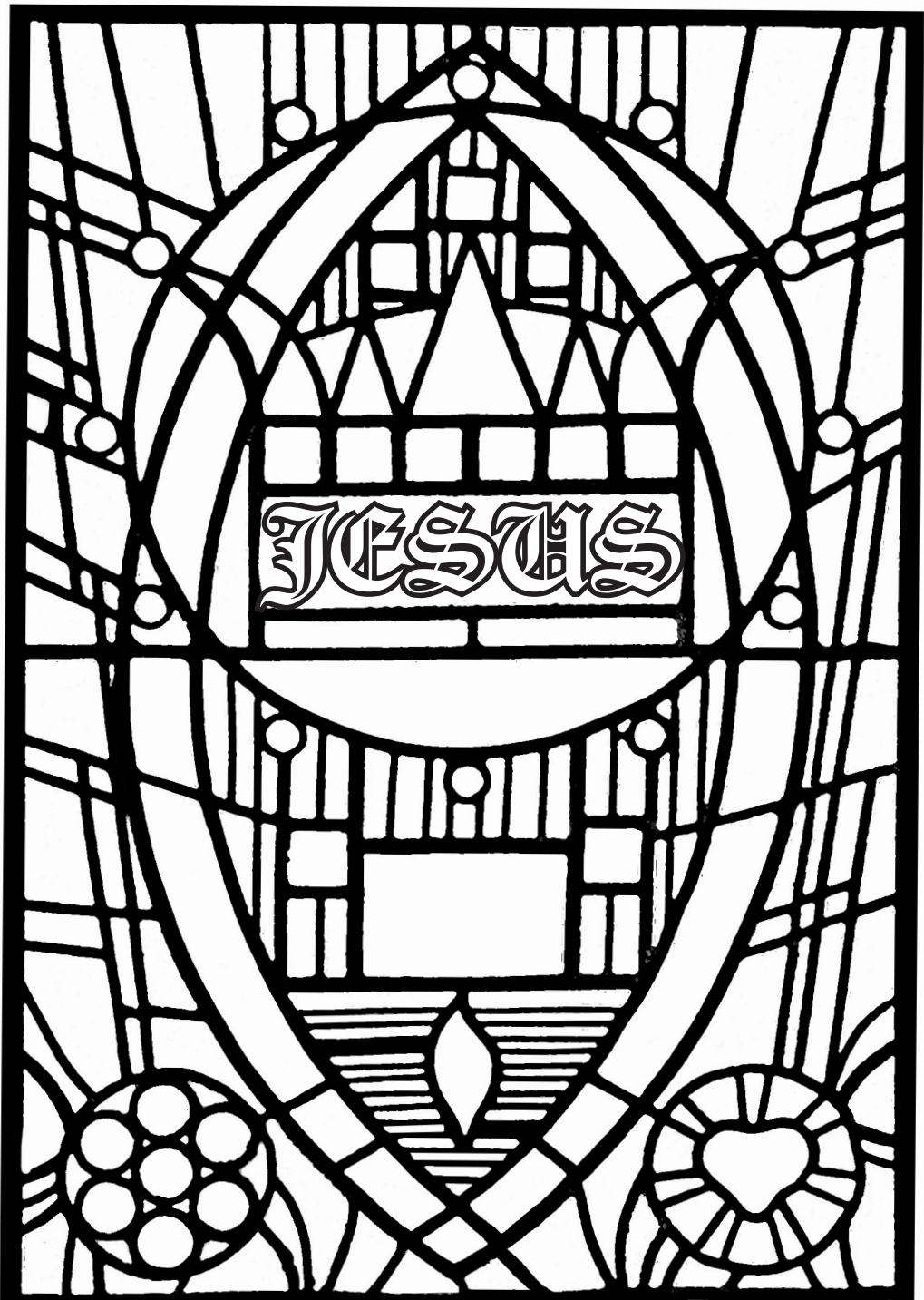
As you wrap up your group, pray together for the confidence and boldness to share with others who Jesus is.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for the United College ministry, and all the students who are meeting together on the campuses in our area, to grow in and share Christ with others.

Memory Verse:

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word." Hebrews 1:3



Suffered, Crucified, Buried, Descended

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What is something you hate doing? Why?

Big Idea:

Christ and Him crucified is the crux of the Gospel message.

Key Scriptures:

John 19

"Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man! As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify!

Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the

judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of

them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the

Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus

brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there."

Discussion:

Read through the entire count of Jesus' death and crucifixion in John 19 and discuss the following:

1. The crux of Jesus' life is summed up in His own words: "I came to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28) As you read through the account of Jesus' last hours, where do you see specific examples of Him willingly submitting to this kind of humility, suffering, and ultimately death?
2. Jesus' death and resurrection is the heart of the Gospel message. And when the Creed states "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was

crucified, died, and was buried” that gives us a very specific time in history. Pontius Pilate, the fifth prefect of Judea, under the reign of Emperor Tiberius in the Roman Empire reveals the time and place that Jesus suffered. This is who was in charge, and this is how it all went down. It was a specific event in history that actually happened. Discuss the details of the interactions with Pilate and his involvement in Jesus’ death, and how they give support to the historical event of Jesus’ crucifixion.

3. How might the inclusion of the words “suffered under Pontius Pilate” give historical context and confidence to future generations of Jesus followers?
4. Discuss the significance of the roles that both Pilate and Joseph of Arimathea had in Jesus’ burial. Discuss the prophecies that were fulfilled because of it.
5. The apostle Paul spoke to the church in Corinth by saying, “When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about

God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:2) Consider all the various religions and versions of faith that we encounter today. Discuss what it looks like for you to live out these words to be resolved to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

6. Faith without Jesus Christ is no faith at all. What temptations do you face to believe otherwise?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray with and for one another to stand firm in your resolve to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified when it comes to your faith.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for the Hope Center food pantry and the hundreds of families that are served through the weekly shopping experiences made available.

Memory Verse:

“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”
1 Corinthians 2:2

Rose Again on the Third Day

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What's the most amazing feat you've ever accomplished? (big or small)

Big Idea:

The resurrection of Jesus is the linchpin of history and of our faith.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 16:21

"From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

Matthew 17:22-23

"When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief."

Matthew 20:17-19

"Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."

Acts 2:22-24,32-33

"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him... God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear."

1 Corinthians 15:12-14

"But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our

preaching is useless and so is your faith."

Discussion:

1. Read or recite aloud together the Apostle's Creed once again.
2. Read Matthew 16:21,17:22-23 and 20:17-19. In these passages, Jesus clearly predicts His death and resurrection to the disciples. They seemed to get it, for we're told they were "filled with grief." Yet when his death and resurrection actually happened, they were filled with fear, doubt and unbelief, some even after seeing Him (Matthew 28:16). Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples and discuss what it must have been like to witness Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection, and the actual event itself. What obstacles may have challenged their belief?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 and Acts 2:22-24, 32-33. These accounts of Jesus' resurrection, shared by Peter on the day of Pentecost, and written to the church in Corinth by the apostle Paul, are powerful eyewitness testimonies. They were,

and still are, instrumental in millions of people coming to know Christ as Savior.

What challenges have or do you face in believing in the resurrection of Jesus?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-14. Discuss Paul's statement as it applies to you today.
5. Jesus' resurrection on the third day reflects a significant pattern seen throughout Scripture – a pattern that reflects God's resurrecting and life giving provision. Look up Jonah 1:17, 2:10, Hosea 6:1-2, Genesis 22:4-18 and discuss what you see emerging.
6. Our faith begins with the empty tomb. For the resurrection is THE event, that began THE movement, that has literally changed the world. Andy Stanley once famously said "My high school science teacher once told me that much of Genesis is false. But since my high school science teacher did not prove he was God by rising from the dead, I'm going to believe Jesus instead. If Jesus could predict His own death and resurrection and then actually pull it off, I'm gonna go with what He says."

Billy Graham once said: "If I was an enemy of Christianity, I would aim right at the Resurrection, because that's the heart of it." And for 2000 years, many skeptics' have done precisely that, wielding hammers seeking to rain blows down upon the Church. No one has ever disproven it, but a lot of skeptics have come to faith because of it. When one actually looks into the facts and historical evidence of the resurrection of Christ, the evidence overwhelmingly supports this miraculous event. Take some time to share as a group what facts and historical evidence you have discovered in your own search for truth. If you're unsure, check out this article from Josh McDowell who wrote Evidence that Demands a Verdict. <https://www.josh.org/jesus-resurrection-fact/>

Wrapping It Up:

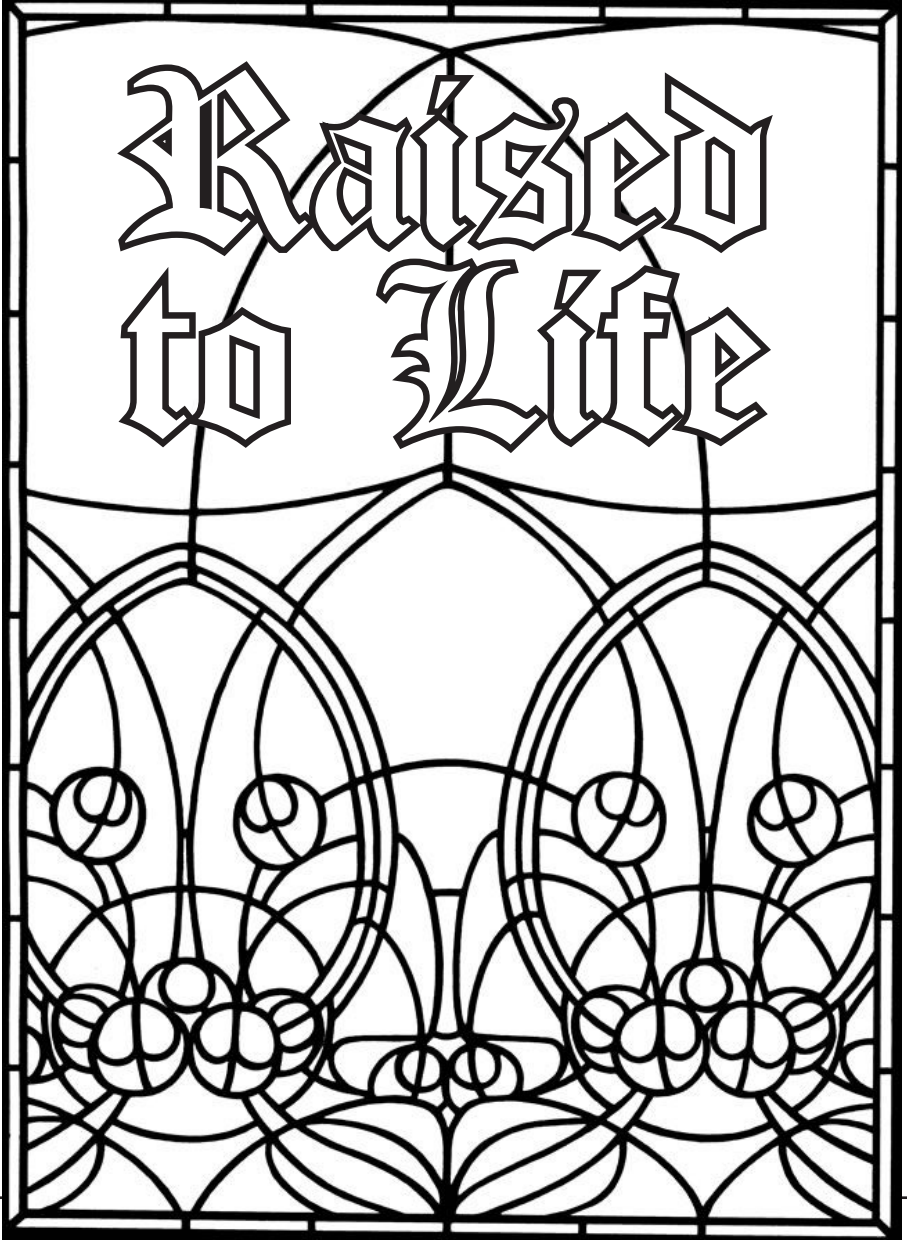
As you close your time together give thanks to God for His resurrecting power-power that was at work in raising Jesus from the dead and that is still at work today, bringing life where death has reigned.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for those who are walking through our Sunnybrook Membership Class this month.

Memory Verse:

"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." 1 Corinthians 15:14



Ascended, Seated, Coming Again

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What crazy thing do you dream of trying someday?

Big Idea:

The Ascension of Christ propelled Jesus' followers to both worship and to witness, and the church exploded!

Key Scriptures:

Acts 1:6-11

"Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. "After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up

into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Luke 24:50-53

"When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God."

Mark 16:19-20

"After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it."

John 16:5-7

“But now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

Discussion:

1. Begin your group time by reading/reciting the Apostle’s Creed together and aloud.
2. Now read the Biblical accounts of Jesus’ ascension in Acts 1:6-11, Luke 24:50-53 and Mark 16:19-20. What commonalities do you see in these accounts? What differences?
3. 40 days after Jesus rose from the dead, His resurrected body ascended into Heaven. Did you notice as you read that the disciples were filled with joy? He left them, but they weren’t sad; they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with joy, praising Him in the temple. To what do you attribute that joy and courage?
4. Read John 16:5-7. What

insight does this passage give you to the impact the Ascension would have on the disciples?

5. Initially, the disciples believed that the ascension meant that was Jesus going away. But in reality, Jesus was coming nearer. An exchange was about to happen and it would ultimately be for their good. How do you think you would have processed Jesus’ statement and then His ascension if you were present?
6. Discuss the following from Sunday’s message and how these truths impact you: Because of Jesus ascension we will experience:
 - **His Representation** (1 John 2:1, Hebrews 7:24-25)
 - **His Return** (Acts 1:11, Revelation 22:12-13)
 - **His Reward** (Revelation 22:12)

Wrapping It Up:

Jesus’ ascension essentially was the catalyst to release His disciples into the world to do His work until His return. You are included in that group when you received Christ as Lord and Savior. Pray together that you will fulfill the responsibility

you have as His follower to be faithful to that work until He comes again.

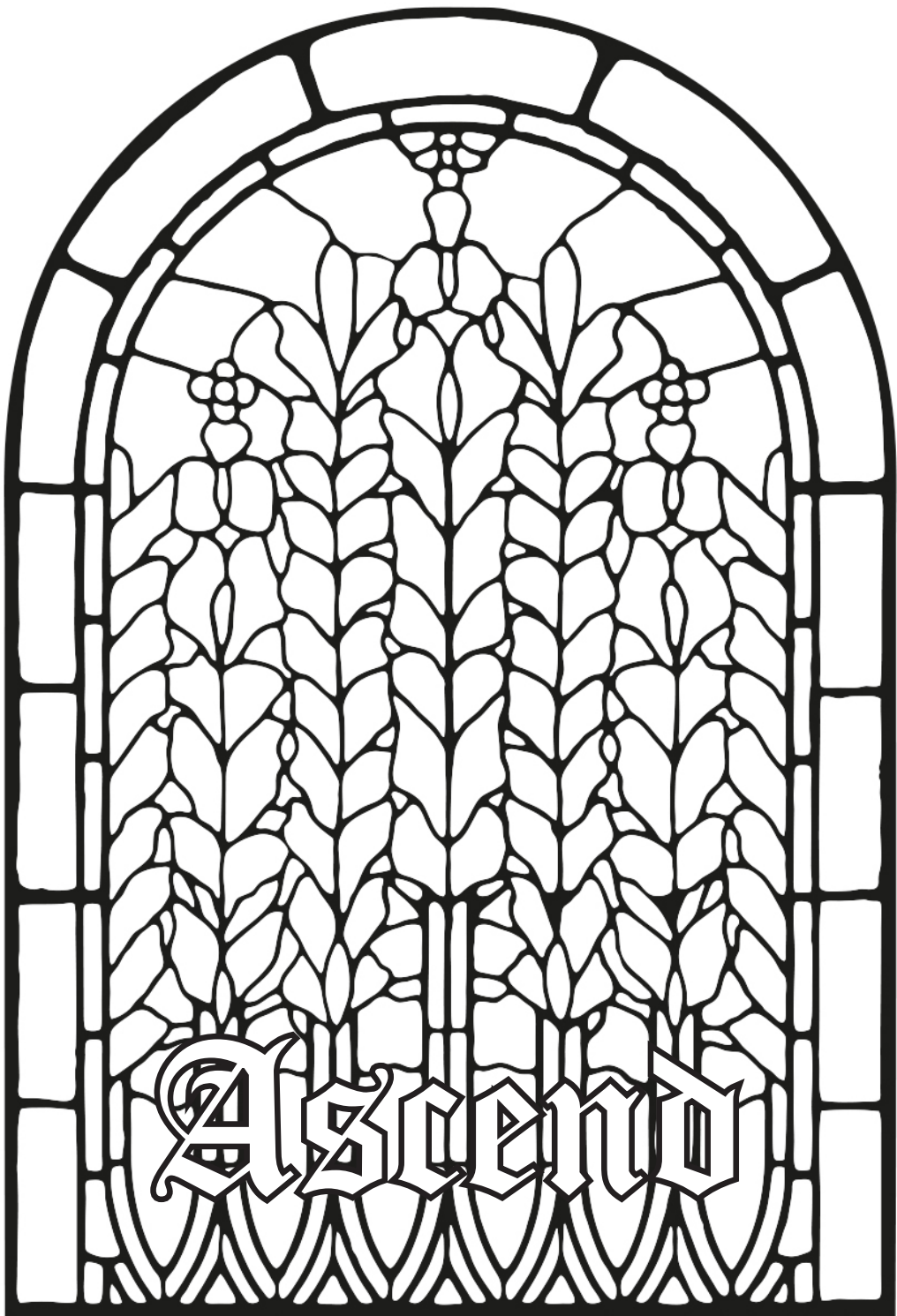
Prayer Focus:

Pray for our Volunteer Appreciation event as we celebrate all the people who make ministry possible at Sunnybrook. Give thanks for each person and what they contribute to the work of ministry.

Memory Verse:

“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:11





Holy Spirit, Church, Forgiveness

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why?

Big Idea:

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit empowered the church to be supercharged, global and eternal.

Key Scriptures:

Acts 2:1-6

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:12-18

"Amazed and perplexed, they

asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.'

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in

bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.”

Acts 2:38-41

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. “With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

John 16:5-7

“But now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

Luke 4:14-19

“Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was

teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Discussion:

1. Recite the Apostle’s Creed together and aloud.
2. Read Luke 4:14-19. This incident reflected the beginning of Jesus earthly ministry. He was quoting

the prophecy from Isaiah 61 regarding the Messiah. Discuss what role the Holy Spirit played in Jesus' ministry according to this passage.

3. Read about the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-6, 12-18, 38-41. How do you connect this day at Pentecost with Jesus' promise in John 16:5-7? What advantages did this bring to the disciples and early church?
4. What happened as a result?
5. What advantages does this bring us today as Jesus' followers?
6. According to Peter (in Acts 2:38) how does one receive the Holy Spirit? Who is this promise for?
7. Discuss how the Holy Spirit empowers you and our church to carry out God's mission in this world.

Wrapping It Up:

Pray together for the Holy Spirit's power to be unleashed in you and in our church, that the Lord might add daily to our numbers those who are being saved.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our upcoming FOR the World campaign as we seek to

carry the message of Christ to the world.

Memory Verse:

**“Peter replied,
“Repent and
be baptized,
every one of
you, in the
name of Jesus
Christ for the
forgiveness of
your sins. And
you will receive
the gift of the
Holy Spirit.”**

Acts 2:38



Resurrection of the Body Everlasting

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

If you could change one thing about your body, what would it be and why?

Big Idea:

Jesus went into the grave so you can I can come out of the grave.

Key Scriptures:

Daniel 12:2

"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

Therefore encourage one another with these words."

1 John 5:13

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

John 12:23-24

"Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

Discussion:

1. "I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting." Discuss the meaning that statement has held for you.
2. Read Daniel 12:2 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. What emotions are evoked in you as you read these passages? Joy? Fear? Anticipation? Discuss together what may lie behind those emotions.
3. According to 1 Thessalonians

4:18, what is the purpose of Paul sharing these words?

4. In what ways do you find these words encouraging?
5. Read 1 John 5:13. For those who may fear awaking to shame and everlasting contempt, how might this passage alleviate that fear?
6. Read John 12:23-24. Jesus is speaking of His death and glorification; because He died, we can live. How does that also apply to you?
7. The grave is not our final resting place. One day, our spirits will reunite with our bodies to be with the Lord forever. How does that bring hope to you today?
8. How might you have more urgency and diligence to share that hope with others?

Wrapping It Up:

One last time as we close this series, recite the Apostle's Creed out loud together.

Prayer Focus:

As we close discussion on this series, give thanks to God for the everlasting heritage we have in Christ, and for the continued work that we have as His followers to carry out His mission.

Memory Verse:

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
- Childcare _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be _____
- Date of this agreement _____
- Date we will review this agreement again _____
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____



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