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# COMMUNITY GROUPS

**RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH**

Community Group Discussion Guide

April 2, 2023

Made For Monday Week #3

Monday Morning Evangelist / Pastor Josh Pocock

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Question | In advertising, word-of-mouth marketing is considered to be the most effective form of reaching potential consumers. What is a recent thing – say a restaurant, book, movie, vacation, local contractor, etc. – you shared a glowing review about with a family member or friend?
2. This is the second week of the Spring Quarter for Community Groups. Use the following questions to “set the stage” for your time together this Spring.
  - a) What are you looking forward to about being in a group this Spring? If this is your first experience with a small group at Rivers Crossing, what led you to join?
  - b) If your group is new, or you’re welcoming new members, getting to know each other’s personal story is a fantastic place to start building community. While there are many ways you can do this, here’s a simple structure you can use: The “2x4” Story – Spend two minutes talking about each of these four aspects of your life: family of origin, current family, spiritual journey, and desired future.
3. When you hear the word evangelism (i.e., sharing the message of Jesus), what first thoughts come to mind and what emotions do you feel? Explain your answers.

## DIVING DEEPER

4. In his book *8 to 15: The World Is Smaller Than You Think*, Pastor Tom Mercer writes, “Nobody would ever say Christianity is easy, but [the message of Christianity] has always been simple.” How would you explain the good news of Jesus to someone who asked you? How would you connect this good news with your own story of coming to faith? In your explanations, strive for clarity and simplicity.
5. During his sermon, Pastor Josh shared several reasons why we don’t share our faith. If you’re hesitant or perhaps even lack the desire to share your faith, can you relate with any of the reasons listed below<sup>1</sup>? If you’re willing, explain your answer.
  1. List adapted from Pastor Josh and Steven Lee’s “Four Reasons We Don’t Share the Gospel”
    - Not Being a Follower of Jesus | though you believe in Jesus, you’re not willing to heed His command to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)
    - Lack of Gospel Knowledge | struggle with articulating the truths of the gospel
    - Apathy | lack of prioritization to interact, engage with, or even pray for those who don’t know Jesus Christ
    - Fear | paralyzed by the thought of being disliked, marginalized, laughed at, or openly mocked
    - Lack of Compassion | lack of care for those who are without hope
  - a) How might you begin working to address/overcome these reasons?
  - b) How can your Christian community inspire you to continue sharing your faith?

6. Describe the last time you shared your faith with another person. What led to that moment and how did you feel during and after it?

Read Colossians 4:2-6 and 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 together. Pastor Josh provided three ways for how we can share our faith: 1) we meet their need, 2) we take a risk, and 3) we sacrifice ourselves and eliminate distractions so we can be available for others.

**Colossians 4:2-6 (NIV)** – <sup>2</sup>Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. <sup>3</sup>And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. <sup>4</sup>Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. <sup>5</sup>Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

**1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (HCSB)** – <sup>19</sup>Although I am a free man and not anyone’s slave, I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law—though I myself am not under the law—to win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those who are without that law, like one without the law—not being without God’s law but within Christ’s law—to win those without the law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some. <sup>23</sup>Now I do all this because of the gospel, so I may become a partner in its benefits.

Which of these three ways can you better step into as you live out the commission Jesus gave to all Christians to share their faith?

## TAKING IT HOME

7. Group Prayer Exercise | Sharing Your Faith With Your 8 to 15

As you conclude your group, pray over a few names from each person’s 8 to 15 list. Ask the Holy Spirit to provide discernment on how to best engage and nurture these relationships. Ask for opportunities to invite to church, especially as we approach Easter. Ask for opportunities to share the love of Jesus Christ and to humbly serve those around you. Ask for boldness in sharing the good news. And finally, ask for the fear of evangelism to be replaced by the joy of seeing lives changed.

**Philemon 4-6 (ESV)** – <sup>4</sup>I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup>because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, <sup>6</sup>and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

“Our faith becomes stronger as we express it; a growing faith is a sharing faith.” – Billy Graham, *Hope for Each Day: Words of Wisdom and Faith*

8. Easter Services – Call To Invite Others | We’re excited to celebrate Easter on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>! Jesus is still restoring hearts and transforming lives—as His followers, it’s our mission to share this hope with the world. As you add Easter at Rivers Crossing to your calendar, ask yourself– *who else* should be here this Easter? *Who else* needs to hear the hope of the resurrection? Whether you invite someone over lunch or send a simple text, this is the perfect opportunity to welcome people in your life to Easter at Rivers Crossing and the RC Kids Easter Celebration.

*Individual Challenge Follow Up* - Last week, we encouraged you to come up with a list of five people to invite to Easter services...and then start inviting! Share about how that's going. Do you feel more inspired to do this after Sunday's sermon?

Note - You can text 'EASTER' to 513-995-1770 to have a sample Easter invite message sent directly to you.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. Easter at Rivers Crossing | While we gather to celebrate and reflect on Easter at Rivers Crossing, your kids will have tons of fun. We're throwing an RC Kids Easter Celebration full of laughter and excitement for everyone 6<sup>th</sup> grade and younger. As they experience the joy of Easter, they'll make new friends and memories to last a lifetime. Join us on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> for an unforgettable Easter at Rivers Crossing!  
Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup> Service Times - 1pm, 3pm, and 5pm (Mason Campus)  
Sunday April 9<sup>th</sup> Service Times - 8:45am, 10:15am, and 12pm (Mason Campus)  
Sunday April 9<sup>th</sup> Service Time - 10am (Deer Park Campus)  
Learn more at <https://riverscrossing.com/easter/>.
2. Man Day | Get ready for a day of fun as Rivers Crossing hosts Man Day: A one-day men's event with team-based challenges, awesome prizes, food, and community! Man Day is Saturday April 29<sup>th</sup> from 9am - 1:30pm at YMCA Camp Kern. Learn more and register at <https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1660462>.
3. New Community Group Leaders | Interested in leading your own Community Group or have anyone you believe would make a great Community Group leader? If yes, we'd love the opportunity to connect with you or them and share more about our vision for groups at Rivers Crossing. We're always looking to create more space for people to experience and grow in the extraordinary life together!  
New Group Leader Interest Form:  
<https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/people/forms/414625>.
4. 2023 RC Students Summer Camp | Next summer (June 19-24, 2023), RC Students is going to Eagle Sky of the Ozarks for camp! We truly believe that Summer Camp is one of the best ways for your Junior High or High School student to get connected in RC Students. They'll build lasting bonds with other students and their leaders that will continue throughout the year. Most importantly, your student will have a week to focus on connecting with Jesus in a new way. Learn more and register below:  
<https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1450605>



# COMMUNITY GROUPS

## MISSION AND VISION

### Groups Mission:

To provide people an opportunity to experience loving community as they pursue being a fully engaged follower of Christ.

### Community Groups Vision:

To gather together regularly to share, study the Bible, and support one another. Community Groups are sermon-based, meaning they study a set of Bible passages and questions connected to the previous weekend's sermon.

### Healthy Community Groups:

Community Groups are designed so that we can love and care for one another and put God's Word into action – all in pursuit of experiencing and living the extraordinary life. As you lead, keep the following in mind for evaluating the health of your group:

- **ENGAGE:** Groups are only successful when people invest their time and energy to genuinely engage the process by attending regularly, being honest, and developing relationship with other group members. This takes time, but it's worth it. | *Acts 2:42-27, Colossians 3:12-17*
- **ENCOURAGE:** One of the primary roles your group will play is in encouraging one another forward in your individual walks with Christ. This includes supporting one another through the messiness and trials of life.
  - *Hebrews 10: 23-25*
- **EQUIP:** Regularly encountering God's Word through the sermon, group discussion, and personal study will, over time, equip each group member to be a more fully engaged follower of Jesus. As this information permeates the heart, the Holy Spirit will provide application and personal growth.
  - *2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 14:25-26*
- **EMPOWER:** As your group meets, you will see some people naturally begin to exhibit spiritual gifts including leadership, shepherding, and hospitality. Be on the lookout for these developments. Empower these individuals to step into larger roles within the group, to consider leading or hosting their own group, or to serve where led. | *Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:10-14*
- **EXPAND:** As each member of your group begins to invest in their "8 to 15," it's natural for your group to add new members and to connect others into groups ministry. | *John 13:34-35*