



A Bible Study from the LCMS Northern Illinois District

Incarnate Community Bible Study Leader's Guide

Session II Community Around Christ

For Concrete Learners from



Helping congregations be more centered on a rich life of Word and Sacrament,
with congregational support in transitions as well as time of joys and sorrows.



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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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Incarnate Community

Northern Illinois District Bible Study

Session II Community Around Christ

Leader's Guide for Concrete Learners

Focus Verse: *"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them"* (Matthew 18:20).

Welcome and Fellowship [15 – 30 minutes in a 90 minute time frame]

The blue questions and yes/no or the thumb up or thumb down responses are meant to be used with participants who think and operate on a more concrete level of understanding. They may be young, have intellectual disabilities, and perhaps nonverbal in their communication skills. This may be due to a variety of contributing factors such as: being on the autism spectrum, trauma from brain injury or stroke, or even age onset dysfunction like dementia or Alzheimer's.

Please adjust the level of questions to the level of function for your individual person. If they are able to communicate beyond the yes/no format, simply give them the opportunity to share by asking follow-up questions: Please explain, tell me why you think this, and let's talk more about this and others. For this person, the blue questions should be viewed as discussion starters. There are times a series of questions are presented to lead up to a concept. Adjust any and all questions to the needs and abilities of your group or individual.

This format of questions and responses are presented with the belief that all members of the Body of Christ are able to learn, grow, and participate in spiritual growth and that intellectual or physical disabilities does not exclude them.

Opening Prayer: Gracious heavenly Father, out of your steadfast love for the world You sent Your only Son, Jesus, into our midst. Through His incarnation and birth, you placed Him in a family and a greater community. He gathered this community to reveal the signs that His gracious reign had come, to proclaim Your Word salvation, and to fulfill Your plan of redemption through His sacrifice on the cross and



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resurrection. We praise You for the gift of Jesus, God with us, in the midst of community. As we walk with Jesus today through the Scriptures, may Your Spirit deepen our understanding of the blessings Christ gave to the neighbors of His incarnate ministry that we might also see the blessings He so imparts among us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Circles

They all attended the same event but saw it from very different perspectives, experienced it in different ways, and even identified with different groups at it. A pop music group came to town for a concert! Most who were part of the event were the audience. They came with their families. Some brought their dates. Others came in groups with friends and co-workers. Everything from the place of their seats in the concert hall to the conversations they had during the concert, to how well they knew the musical group shaped their impression of the event. Yet, they were not the only ones who attended. There were concert promoters and vendors, security details and ushering staffs. There were the stage crew, lighting coordinators, and sound engineers who all had their experiences of the event. Of course, there were the musicians and singers themselves, whose perspective and experience of the concert were vastly different compared to those who sat in the “nose bleed” balcony or those who never even saw the stage as they staffed the t-shirt booths. It was the same event, but many circles of community were a part of it.

1. What are some of the differences between being a part of an “inner” or “outer” circle of any event in life?
2. How does your community consist of different “circles?”

NOTE: Answers will vary with your group, but encourage members to share.

Video Segment [A three to five minute video or just one or two people discussing what it might have been like to be part of the outer and inner circles of Jesus' Incarnate



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ministry. Try to “concretize” a few details of what it must have been like to be at an “event” with Jesus. Note: there are positive aspects of being part of an “outer circle” at times. Try to steer clear of making the outer circle “bad” and the inner circle always “good.”]

1. What stood out for you in today’s video segment?
2. If you could have been in person at any event recorded in the Gospels, which would it be and why?

NOTE: Answers will vary. Encourage group members who may speak a little less to feel comfortable to share.

Gathered Around Jesus

Whether it was teeming crowds, a close circle of disciples, or intimate one-on-one encounters, Jesus is seen as regularly gathering community around Himself in the Gospels. No matter what the community, Jesus always used those “in person” encounters to carry out His gracious will.

Let’s take a look at various communities in which Jesus lived and served.

The Feeding of the 5,000 – Luke 9:10-17

1. Who were the various communities who were gathered around Jesus in this text?

When Jesus did the miracle of feeding the 5,000, which of these groups of people were part of the community hearing His message?



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The Disciples

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Men

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Women and children

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Families

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Sick people

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Believers in Jesus and non-believers

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



2. What were some of the various blessings that each community received from Jesus?

What were some of the blessing given to each group of people?

Healing of the sick and joy for that healing.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Hearing Jesus teach about the loving Father.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)





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Being fed the meal.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Sharing being in the presence of Jesus.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



3. How might Jesus' instructions to gather the largest circle of people into groups of fifty for the meal be a teaching moment for the crowd?

Why did Jesus have the people sit in groups of 50 to 100?

Groups of families could sit together and talk.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Groups could include people who came by themselves.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



People who did not know each other share a meal together.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Poor and rich people would share a meal.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)





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This showed that in God's eyes all people were of equal value. Are all welcome in Jesus' groups.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



The Healing of the Paralytic – Mark 2:1-12

1. Who were the various communities who were gathered around Jesus in this text? What might have been their understanding or perspective of Jesus before the miracle?

Were the disciples one of the groups of people who gathered together?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Were the regular people of the community gathered together?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Were the church leaders of that day gathered at the house as well?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



2. How did Jesus address the paralyzed man's deepest need first? Why might it be said that Jesus' forgiveness was the greater of the two miracles He did that day?

Is being able to walk more important than having our sins forgiven?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)





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Is having our sins forgiven more important than a physical healing?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Which healing brings eternal life with God in heaven?

Being able to walk.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Having our sins washed away.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



3. What blessings do the various communities who witnessed and later read about this event receive from Jesus' care for the paralyzed man?

Is it a blessing that Jesus cares about our eternal needs the most?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Does Jesus also care about our needs on earth as well?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Are the friends of the man who brought him to Jesus an example of how we should care for others?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



The Woman at the Well – John 4:1-30, 39-42



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1. What “community boundaries” did Jesus stem to speak to the Samaritan woman?

In that day and age was Jesus supposed to talk to the woman at the well?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Why did Jesus break the rules to talk to the woman?

Because He was really thirsty.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Because He wanted to forgive her and share His love.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



2. Share one or two highlights of the blessing Jesus’ teaching brings into her life.

Does Jesus share the blessing of being saved with the woman?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Does Jesus share the blessing of forgiveness with the woman?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Does Jesus share the blessing of peace with God, with the woman?



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Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



3. How did this woman's encounter with Jesus impact her, and in turn, her community?

Does the woman keep the blessing all to herself?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Does the woman share the blessing with the town people?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Is the woman now part of the community again?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)





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The Healing of the Man with Leprosy – Mark 1:40-45

1. What was a leprous person's lot in life (especially in regard to community) once they were labeled as "unclean?" [Leviticus 13:45-46] Share what it might be like to live in isolation from one's community while dealing with an infectious disease, and the label of being "unclean."

Would you like to live somewhere where no one could touch you?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Would you like people to think you are dirty and not clean?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



2. Discuss the significance of Jesus' physical touch to heal the man.

Could the man go into the temple with his disease?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Could the man have his friends around him?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Does Jesus want us to touch and care for others?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)





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3. How does Jesus' healing impact the man and his community?

Does Jesus heal the man's disease?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Does the man keep this to himself?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Do others come to find Jesus?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



4. Where do we find Jesus at the end of the miracle? What might this imagery foreshadow? How does it result in "community" according to Mark's description in verse 45?

At the end of the story Jesus is in the city or towns.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



At the end Jesus is in the lonely countryside.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Did Jesus and the man kind of trade places?

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Does Jesus trade places with us to free us from sin?



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Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



5. How does Jesus bring His touch today through His Church?

How does Jesus touch us today in His Church?

Through Baptism.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Through Communion.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Through people caring for each other.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Through gathering together around the Bible.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Through laughing at others and making fun of them.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



6. How does His compassion through us draw together people “from every quarter”?

How does the love of Jesus bring people from all over together today?



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We see the love of Jesus when:

People of all ages come together.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



People of all abilities come together.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



People from all the same skin color come together.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



People who look the same come together.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



People always agree with each other come together.

Yes or No (or circle correct thumb)



Final Thought

The Lord faithfully sent His Word among His people through the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures. Throughout their messages, God painted a picture, gave a promise, that one day He Himself would come among His people. Jesus did not come merely spiritually or even virtually. He came in flesh and blood, fully taking on our

The logo for 'InCarnate Community' features a stylized orange flame or drop shape to the left of the word 'InCarnate' in orange and 'Community' in dark blue.

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human nature yet sinless. As He came, Jesus constantly drew community around Himself. He sometimes addressed great crowds with His teaching of God's forgiving mercy. He sometimes instructed His disciples on their own. He sometimes brought the touch of His mercy to just one individual. Yet through all of His Incarnate earthly ministry Jesus was drawing and shaping a new community ... one that would be founded upon Himself, especially His cross and empty tomb ... and a community that would "in person" go with the Lord and in His Name to the various communities of the world with His message of hope and everlasting life.

