



TOGETHER: LIFE IN THE FAMILY

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

This study guide is meant to help you learn and apply the truths of Scripture to your life right now, both individually and with your community group. To get the most from these guides, work through it on your own before gathering with your community group. If you aren't in a community group, consider attending the next Starting Point at Mercy Church, where you can take the next steps to connect with a community group in your area. RSVP at mercycharlotte.com/connect.

PART III

INTRODUCTION

LEADER NOTES: *Welcome your members to the group. Use the discussion questions to help your group members observe, interpret, and apply the Scriptures to life.*

THE BIG IDEA: *God made you who you are to show others who he is, and he made US who WE are to show others who he is.*

One of the great struggles in every person is the search for identity. People will change everything about their lives, hair color, clothing style, and even relationships to change their identity into something more favorable. The truth is we are all looking for some form of identity. Some kind of course-setting meaning we can point our whole lives towards. No matter where you have been or are currently, you experience the struggle over identity on a daily basis. Even if it is not your current struggle, someone around you is fighting desperately to gain a better identity.

As we continue our study about Community in the church, we look next to the biblical picture of community. As the church, we must learn to lean the weight of our lives on Christ's teaching about our identity. As his earthly ministry grew, he showed his disciples and followers that their identity should become one with his.



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Essentially, Jesus said that we don't have to search anymore for identity, because it can be rooted firmly in Him.

1 Peter 2:4-10 gives us a great picture our new found identity in Christ. This passage shows clear insight into how God, through Christ, gives our lives new identity and purpose. 1 Peter 2:9 explains that Christ's followers are,

"A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession."

This is the identity we find in Christ. We are set apart for him and his purposes. Furthermore, because we are new in Christ, we are able to show the world more about who he is. Mercy Church, we are called to be a people of great mercy. We can show mercy to others because of the great mercy we are given in Christ.

As we conclude our series, "Together," we see a beautiful picture of a gospel community knit together in Christ. Our communities, friendships, and identity are firmly rooted in the finished work of the cross. The very reason we can be together and thrive under the Lordship of Christ is because of his sacrifice for us.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION

In the message we saw the great identity given to us by Christ. These questions are a reference point to help your community group study.

LEADER NOTES: *These questions are here to help your group get their minds re-engaged with the passage and teaching points from the weekend message. Think of this as "priming the pump" for a more interactive discussion in your time together.*

1. How do you identify yourself?
2. Why is identity so important in our lives?



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INVESTIGATING SCRIPTURE:

The following questions are designed to help you gain understanding of what the Bible teaches.

LEADER NOTES: *The following questions will help you work through the passage(s). Have someone read the passage(s) aloud, dividing among two or three people if needed.*

The reading of the word, as a group, is an act of worship that helps the group focus on the importance of Scripture. Make a point to emphasize this as an important part of worship together. After the scripture is read, pray to continue to set the tone of worship. Praise God for the gospel and the finished work of Christ, and the transformation he gives through Christ.

Read 1 Peter 2:4-10

1. Identity

- a. What are some common things people in our culture find their identity in?

The goal of this one is to help people start connecting the abstract concept of “identity” with real life. Another way to ask this is “Your identity is something you build everything else around. What are some things people build their whole lives around?” Examples: People who find their identity in their career are the ones who make all their decisions based on what will propel them forward in their career. People who find identity in being in a relationship will feel like they always have to be in one or they are incomplete. Others: Popularity, Wealth, Kids.

- b. What are you most prone to build your identity around other than Christ?

2. Look at each descriptor of 1 Peter 2.9-10 gives. Let’s take them one at a time and talk about what they mean for us.

This is a bible investigation question. People can pull from their notes from



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the sermon of course. The goal is they see for themselves the rich identity we have in Christ.

3. How does the reality that we have a *common* identity in Christ set the course for the way we interact with others in the church?
This is a chance to move into the us-centric nature of the passage (as opposed to me-centric). How does the fact that our deepest level identity is shared with others affect how I should act with those people? How could this play out in your community group?
4. According to 1 Peter 2.9 what is our new purpose as the people of God
Don't overthink this. This is just acknowledging the passage and that there is a purpose for what God has done in our lives.
5. What could "proclaiming his excellencies" Look like for you in your life?
Now it's time to push towards the mission of God's people. We want to create a culture where talking about Christ to non-christians is a realistic endeavor. This should be one of those questions multiple people answer. More of a brainstorm than a right or wrong question.
6. What are the major barriers we perceive to carrying out the ideas from the previous question?
A question like #5 is good, but unless you ask this one and #7, people will nod their heads and never make any progress. This one will be easier than #7. Get them to talk about their fears in evangelism.
7. What are some steps we can take to overcome those barriers?
Tools, Opportunities, and models are all important things. We definitely should begin by praying though. After all, Jonah 2.9 – salvation belongs to the Lord. Let the group simmer on this one for a while. This should be brought back up in your prayer time as well.
8. What are some ways that we (Mercy Church) can live out this mission together? And how can we get started?
This question is here to help create ownership over the Mercy Church vision. We believe the best ideas are in the body of believers so use this to brainstorm some ways we can be on God's mission together. And, most



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importantly, this isn't a task list to write up for the pastors. It's a set of ideas that those in your group could lead Mercy Church in.

TAKEAWAYS

These questions are intention to help you apply the truths about the mission of the church family to your own walk with the Lord.

1. What is my next step toward a better practice of biblical community and identity?
2. In light of our discussion, what step do I need to take outward toward an unbeliever I know?

PRAYER

Prayer is an essential component of your life as a follower of Christ, and an integral part of any healthy church body. Divide up into groups of 2-3 people and use the following points to guide you through a time of prayer together.

LEADER NOTES: *The following is designed simply as an outline for you to use in your group prayer time. Feel free to make this your own and adjust it to fit your group.*

- Thank God for new identity in Christ.
- Pray that Mercy Church would be identified as a people filled with God's mercy.
- Pray that our city would respond to seeing the identity of Christ through His people.