

life *together.*

LIFE IS BETTER TOGETHER

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GROUP ICE BREAKER

How many people from your friend group in high school or college are you still connected with? What has kept you connected?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will pray for the Family Ministries Team.
- I will explore if Family Ministries is where my spiritual gift is best used.
- I will live my life in a way that sets a Christ-centered example for students.
- I will approach God as a child and simply sit with Him.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

As a church, we need to be thinking about the fact that the number one resource God generally uses to grow us, to make us better, to shape us and mold us, is people. About 2,000 years ago, Jesus started his small group. He chose 12 people to do life together with.

Simon Peter would put his foot in his mouth and was the first in failure. James and John had tempers and were not very self-disciplined. Every time we see Andrew, he's bringing someone to Jesus. Philip was from the same area as the first four, and they probably all knew each other.

If you've been around Blue Oaks for a long time and you have people you know really well, I hope you're doing life together with arms wide open, looking for people, saying, "God, is there someone who feels excluded, someone who feels left out? Could I invite them in?"

Then there's Thomas, who wrestled with doubt and skepticism even after Jesus' resurrection, and Simon, who came from a group zealous for the law of Israel and the overthrow of the Romans. Next to him was Matthew the tax collector, who worked for Rome when called by Jesus! Rounding out the disciples was James "the less", Thaddaeus, Bartholomew, and Judas Iscariot.

God has this dream for community, and in God's community, no one is perfect. And yet we all belong in community. Who made that group great? Jesus made the disciples great! What makes Christian community Christian isn't the presence of Christians. It's the presence of Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Psalm 133. How would you describe unity? What do you think it means to “live together in unity?” What are some barriers to unity?
2. Of the 12 disciples Jesus chose, which one surprised you most and why? Which one do you most identify with and why?
3. How would you describe a “disciple” to someone? What is the connection between a disciple and the small group experience?
4. Andrew is known for bringing people to Jesus. Who was it that first brought you to meet Jesus? Share that experience with your group.
5. What are some things that get in the way of finding or building community with others?
6. “Community is not about being around people who only make you feel good. It can be hard, there can be conflict, it might be inconvenient.” Have you experienced this? Why did you choose to be in community with others and what keeps you here?
7. When a church has been around for a while, sometimes you get groups of people that feel comfortable knowing each other. List some ways we can learn to do life together with arms wide open, looking for others to include. Who can you invite this week to be included in your group?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will ask God to use the people in my life to grow me.
- I will do life with arms wide open, looking for people to include.
- I will join a small group, where the presence of Jesus is made available.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Psalm 133:1
- Mark 3:13-14
- Mark 3:16-19
- Luke 9:54
- Luke 22:8
- Acts 4:13
- Acts 8:14
- John 6:8
- John 1:40-42
- John 11:16
- John 20:24
- John 14:22
- Matthew 28:16-20

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

- “The exclusion of the weak and insignificant, the seemingly useless people, from a Christian community may actually mean the exclusion of Christ; in the poor brother Christ is knocking at the door.” [Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together](#)

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week:

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