

Practice Guide for September 8th 2024

Life Together, pt. 1 — Lead with Love.

Facilitator's Note: This is your first group of the Fall Session. After getting to know each other, it would be a good time to discuss any ground rules (such as start/end time, house rules, and your group's [guidelines](#)) to help your first meetup run as smooth as possible.

Suggested Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

What's one of your biggest pet peeves? How have you learned to cope with and communicate it to others graciously?

Opening (10 minutes)

Before beginning, open the meeting time with 2 minutes of silence to help you focus on interaction with God and one another. At the end, ask someone to open the gathering time with prayer asking for help reflecting God's love in the way we interact with the people in our faith community.

Opening Question: Share a time when someone gave you a second chance. How did that experience impact you?

Reflecting On Scripture (15 minutes)

Have someone read John 21:15-19 out loud for the group.

Question for discussion:

Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" three times. Each time, Jesus responds with a command: "Feed my sheep," indicating both Peter's restoration and his commission to care for others.

1. Why do you think Jesus asks Peter three times, and how does this relate to his earlier denial?
2. What emotions might Peter have been experiencing during this interaction?
3. How does Jesus' response to Peter's failure model "Leading with Love"?

Community Practice (25 minutes)

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 and Colossians 3:12-14 out loud.

Take 5-7 minutes to journal your response to these questions:

1. Is there someone in your life whose motives you've assumed, rather than seeking to understand their perspective? How can you give them the benefit of the doubt?
2. What imperfect behavior have you seen in others (general or specific) that you can reframe as an opportunity to love like Christ?
3. Who do you need to forgive, even if they haven't asked for it?

Share your answers in groups of two or three. It may be helpful to keep some of the names in your answers anonymous during discussion. (10 minutes)

Group Discussion (8 minutes):

- How can leading with love transform your relationships within our church community?
- How does leading with love transform the culture of a community as a whole?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Have one person read the following poem by Theresa of Avila slowly and another close in prayer:

*Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

Optional closing prayer:

Lord Jesus, You have no body now but ours. May we be Your hands, reaching out to love and serve others. May we be Your feet, walking in humility and kindness. Let our eyes see the needs around us with compassion, and our hearts reflect Your grace. Use us, Lord, as instruments of Your love towards each other, so that through us, the world may see and experience Your presence. Help us lead with love, as You have shown us. In Christ's Name. Amen.