



CONNECT GROUP LEADER GUIDE

REACH Sunday

BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

A place to BELONG! Hopefully everyone who is in a Connect Group feels like they belong here at Christ Community Church. These discussion questions are intended to help your group uncover the things we do as individuals in a church family that make it both more difficult and easier for people to belong. Your group may trend toward sharing only positive or only negative answers in this discussion, but try to keep the conversation balanced between the two. Also encourage the group to do more personal reflection in this area than evaluation of “other people” or “the system”.

A LOOK IN GOD’S WORD

Adopted to Belong. There are a couple of big concepts being taught here that everyone can understand and relate to. 1. We can not be good enough by following the law to earn God’s acceptance. 2. Only through faith in Jesus can we be made right with God. 3. God’s promise of grace to Abraham and his descendants applies to us because in Christ we are adopted into the family as heirs. BUT, those concepts are conveyed through ideas that aren’t as fresh to us as they were to the church in Galatia. These biblical themes may be very familiar to your group, but if they are not, it may be worth looking at all of chapter 3 in Galatians to see this passage in its context.

MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

Work it out. An adopted family, a diverse family, a culturally unique community, are all places to belong that are full of joy and struggle. Encourage your group to talk through why it is worth the struggle to help a diverse group of people find a sense of belonging here at Christ Community Church. We have all moved from NOT belonging to belonging because of Jesus.

Christ Community Church - Announcements

Baptism | Take that step of faith and prepare to make the public proclamation of your faith in Christ with many others on Easter Sunday (4/16). Pastor David would love to follow-up with you and let you know what is entailed. Contact Pastor David at dstaff@ccames.org for more info.

Quest Men’s Retreat | MAR 3-5 at Pine Lake Christian Camp [Eldora]. What to expect: focused, brief teaching sessions, time for solitude/prayer/reflection, and time for fellowship and outdoor activities. For more info or to sign up visit www.iowaquest.com.

CONGO | **White Cross** | Monday, FEB 13, 9:30a - 2:30p in Connect 8/9. Help prepare necessary supplies for Tandala Hospital, Elikya Training Center, and Global Fingerprints Orphans we support in Congo. All are welcome, come for as long as can, and bring a sack lunch. Questions? Contact Annette Miller (quiltbear@gmail.com or 232-9162)

SERVE | Donations for Bolivia | A team will be in Bolivia MAR 9-20 taking donations for Talita Cumi orphanage. Current needs: tennis shoes, sizes to fit ages 4-18 for girls and boys; soccer balls; and books in Spanish (Magic Tree House, Dr. Seuss and Spanish bibles for children and young adults). Donations can be dropped off at the Start Here desk. Additional needs coming soon. Contact Peggy Best with questions - 515-460-1611.



Big Idea: This week's teaching explored what it means for a diverse group of people to belong to the church. As a church, we are committed to the broader goal of reaching "all nations" with the Good News about Jesus and the diversity of people and cultures that will bring into the church. In this study, we are going to explore what Paul wrote in his letter to the church in Galatia about BELONGING in Christ.

BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

Christ Community Church is made up of a diverse group of people, culturally, economically, socially, politically, and spiritually. Share in your Connect Group the story of your own involvement with our church. How easy or difficult has it been to feel like you BELONG here or to help other people experience BELONGING here?

- **What were your first impressions?**
- **What have you found helpful?**
- **What has surprised you?**
- **What role can you play in helping someone else BELONG here?**

A LOOK IN GOD'S WORD

In Galatians, Paul is writing a letter to a church with a diverse group of people who are learning what it means to belong like family. Paul helps them understand how to live out that struggle by reminding them that in Christ, those diverse labels do not disappear, but they take on a different priority because of their new identity in Christ.

Adopted to BELONG like family.

Read Galatians 3:26-29. Verse 26 and 28 remind me of the significance of choosing two key words in our mission statement as a church. "Connecting people to life-defining relationships **IN CHRIST**." When by faith we have been baptized into Christ, or put on Christ, this new identity covers differences that would otherwise divide people, such as ethnicity, gender, or social status.

1. How does Paul describe someone who is a child of God in these verses?
2. What questions remain for you about what it means to be "Abraham's offspring" and an "heir according to promise"?
(IDEA: read through and study Galatians with a friend if this concept still confuses you)
3. According to v.28-29, how would you describe the family that God is building?
4. How does this identity in Christ, as children of God's family, influence the way you look at others in our church? How should it?

Read Galatians 4:1-7. The truth Paul writes here moves our hearts to consider the great lengths to which God has gone to adopt us and give us a place to belong. He sent both His Son and His Spirit to rescue us. Jesus objectively to rescue us from the penalty of sin and the Spirit subjectively to apply that rescue to our daily lives in our actions and attitudes. Welcome to the family. The Father loves you.

1. We have ALL gone from a position of not belonging, to belonging like family. In these verses, what actions did God take to accomplish this and what actions did we take?
2. How does it feel to know that there is nothing you can do in yourself to be acceptable to God?
3. What are the benefits of being adopted into God's family? What kind of relationship does God desire to have with us?
4. How should our relationships in Christ be shaped by the identity we share as children and heirs in a family?

MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

MY LIFE – Are you still living under the law, trying to follow all the rules, in an attempt to earn God's acceptance in any way? Do you put that expectation on anyone else? Pray that God would allow you to live in freedom as an adopted heir, a child of God, in a family where you belong.

YOUR FAMILY – Talk to your kids this week about this picture of being adopted into the family of God. Ask your family to think about someone you know who has been adopted and discuss what impact that had on their life. Read this passage and talk about the impact of us being adopted into God's family and how we receive that through faith in Christ.

OUR MISSION – We are a diverse group of people united as family through faith in Christ. Talk with your group about the challenges and joys of welcoming people despite differences in ethnicity, social status, or gender into a relationship in Christ.