

Breathe

Module: CULTIVATING INTIMACY IN COMMUNITY

Lesson 1: COMMUNITY

Objectives:

- Students will discover the scriptural basis for spiritual community.
- Students will be able to articulate why practising spiritual disciplines in community is valuable.

Materials Needed

- ☐ A journal for each member of the group (see note below)
- ☐ 1 copy of Worksheet A for each group of 3-7 students
- ☐ An object with multiple pieces (e.g. Lego blocks, puzzle, etc.) OR a craft (e.g. a simple building model) with all appropriate tools

Leader's Note: Journals are a great way to get youth thinking before sharing, which often leads to a higher participation level in group discussion. I (Eric) work with a lot of neighbourhood youth and simply keep a bunch of journals in a big box. New kids start with a fairly simple (dollar store) one and then, once or twice a year, I invest in some nicer ones for the youth that have become “regulars”. While some youth aren't inclined to journal, a lot of them love it and some even choose to take their journals home with them to use throughout the week. If you want, a piece of lined paper could easily suffice, but I strongly encourage you to give journaling a try in your group. We will use them a few times during this module.

Minds On

Split your group into small groups of 3-4. Provide each group some of what is needed to complete the task (e.g. not all the pieces of the puzzle or only some of the required tools). Instruct them to accomplish as much as they can. (Depending on the size of your group, you could have each individual do this activity by themselves.)

Leader's Note: Do NOT specify in your instructions that they can only work within their small group. The intent is for them to discover that if they work together, they can accomplish the task.

After 2 min., if they haven't begun doing so, instruct them that they can share their resources together.

After they have completed the task, **ask:**

What was it like working on your project at first?

(If applicable) When did you realize you could work collaboratively?

Why was it so much easier once you began working together?

Action

Prompt: Richard Foster has described the spiritual disciplines as “the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us.” Although the spiritual disciplines are often considered to be independent activities only (prayer, meditation, fasting, etc.), I am sure that many of you have experienced God's blessing in the context of community in one way or another. We are going to explore that a bit further in smaller groups.

Divide into smaller groups of 3-5 students. Give each group 20 min. to complete Worksheet A together.

Consolidate/Debrief

After all groups have finished, have each group share their responses for Question 5 from Worksheet A.

Pray together as a group inviting the Holy Spirit to unite you as one community, asking for God to help you practice the disciplines together in a way that makes everyone feel safe, supported and encouraged.

Breathe In: Have students choose one spiritual discipline (it could be the same as their partner's discipline in "Breathe Out") to practise this coming week.

Breathe Out: Break into partners and have each set of partners choose one spiritual discipline to participate in this week (ex: meditation, fasting, simplicity). Encourage students to meet with their partner (in person, on the phone, text or online) to either a) practice it together or b) share and discuss your experiences with one another.

Leader's Note: You may choose to create space for this to happen before next week's session.

Worksheet A

Have everyone in the group answer questions 1 and 2 **in their journals**.
Then have group members share their answers out loud.

1. If you had a “favourite” spiritual discipline (either because you really enjoy it or simply find yourself practising it the most often) what would it be and why is it your favourite?

Some examples would be:

Prayer Meditation Solitude ServiceCelebration Worship

2. What is one way you believe you have benefited spiritually from this “favourite” discipline of yours?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-13 together.

Have everyone in the group answer questions 3 and 4 **in their journals**.
Have group members share their answers out loud and have one member of the group take notes.

3. Where have you seen examples of varying gifts such as wisdom, speaking in other languages, healing, etc. coming together to produce a richer sense of God’s presence?

4. Why do you think God doesn’t simply create us to be more similar?

Read and discuss question 5 together having one group member take notes.

5. So how could you see this happening with spiritual disciplines? Why would it be worthwhile to practise spiritual disciplines in community with others?

*If you have time, discuss the following:

In The Spirit of Disciplines, Dallas Willard writes, “Personalities united can contain more of God and sustain the force of his greater presence much better than scattered individuals. The fire of God kindles higher as the brands are heaped together and each is warmed by the other’s flame. The members of the body must be in contact if they are to sustain and be sustained by each other.”

What do you think of this quote?