

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

Feb 18th, 2024

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. If you could be the editor of a magazine, which one would it be and why?

Bible Study Questions

1. “Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me.” What is wrong with that statement?
2. Do you have a story of a time when you either unintentionally or intentionally put your foot in your mouth and hurt someone with your words?
3. Read James 3:1-12.
 - What do these verses say about the power of words?
 - What can practically do to limit that damage that our words cause?
4. Read 1st Thessalonians 5:11
 - When was a time that someone came alongside of you and spoke life into you with words?
 - Do you consider yourself to naturally be an encourager? Why or why not?
5. Pastor Michael talked about challenging someone as also being a way to speak life into someone. When is it and when is it not appropriate to challenge someone?
6. Is there something that you can practically do this week to encourage someone in your community?
7. Social media is often a platform for divisive comments. Christians should stand for principle. How do we discern between posting something that is principled and something that is divisive? How

can our posts on social media best promote both Jesus and love for one another?

8. How can our church move one step closer to being an encouraging community?

Feb 18th
What if we use our words wisely

Churches are notable for eating their own. Many walk into a church expecting to find a community that looks like Jesus only to be cut down. One of the most powerful weapons that people use is that of words. We need to be aware of the power of our words. We also though need to be aware of the power of words to build one another up.

I. The destructiveness of words: James 3 describes the tongue as being a fire that can burn down a forest.

- **The negative power of spoken words:** There is the saying, “sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.” But we all know that it is false. Many of us have deep wounds due to painful words that people have spoken to us.
- **The negative power of written words:** For some reason, we are more comfortable using our words as a weapon when we don’t have to talk with people face to face. Social media becomes a platform to post all kinds of divisive content. Sadly, many Christians are known for that division instead of promoting Christ.

II. The restorative power of words

- **God envisioned the church as an encouraging community:** In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul tells Christians to encourage and build one another up. There are few things as powerful when one is struggling as a word of encouragement. They have healing power and these healing moments are to be regular occurrences in the church. Hebrews 10:24-25 challenges Christians to spur one another on toward good deeds. The idea is that by our words, we will continue to push one another toward Christ.
- **God envisioned the church to be a community that builds one another:** Pushing one another toward Christ does not always involve easy words. Sometimes that means that when a brother or sister is moving away from Christ, the community uses tough words in love to redirect them toward Christ.

Conclusion

One only has to spend a few moments on facebook or X (Twitter) to be disgusted by the comments that people leave behind. We live in a culture that treats words cheaply. What if the church acted differently? What if we repented of the ways that we have used words as weapons and sought reconciliation with those that we have hurt? What if we took seriously the challenge to be a body that encourages and builds one another up? What if we intentionally looked for ways to encourage other people in our community?