

## The Call of Community: Pre-Immersion Session



### The purposes of this session are:

- Orient the group regarding their upcoming trip to a Youth Mission Co location
- Begin exploring the summer theme, The Call of Community
- Answer questions the group may have regarding their week with YMCo

### Materials needed

Newsprint, tape, and markers

Or

Whiteboards and markers

### Preparation

- Write one community question each at the top of each newsprint page (or sections of a white board) and tape them around the room.
- Print enough Bible study sheets for all participants to be able to read along.

*After gathering the group together, invite them to respond the following questions, writing their answers on the newsprint*

### Community Questions

What communities are you a part of? (Include at school, work, church, etc)

What online communities are you a part of?

Are there communities that you don't consider yourself part of?

What makes a community a community?

### Review Answers

*Get the group back together. Then, as the leader, walk to each newsprint and read aloud their answers. With each sheet, ask if there are other answers that have just come to mind that we might add. Consider these follow up questions in discussion with the whole group.*

***Follow Up Questions for group discussion:***

*What communities are you a part of...* Which of these groups did we make a choice to be part of, and which ones were we born a part of?

*Online Communities we are part of...* Is there a fundamental difference between being in these communities and the ones we just discussed? Are virtual communities “less real” than other kinds of communities?

*Communities we are not a part of...* Are these communities you want to be part of but can't? Are these communities you could be a part of but choose not to?

*What makes a community a community...* What are the things that make this youth group a community? How about our congregation(s)?

*Say to the group,*

Now we are going to look at some examples of community in the Bible.

*If you have a small group (10 or less) do the Bible study as one group. If you have a larger group (more than 10) divide the group into smaller groups and give Bible study sheets to each.*

## **Bible Study: Exodus 16:1-12 (NRSV)**

**16** The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim and came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. **2** The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. **3** The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate our fill of bread, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

**4** Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. **5** On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." **6** So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, **7** and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?" **8** And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD."

**9** Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites: 'Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.'" **10** And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. **11** The LORD spoke to Moses, **12** "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

### **Exegetical Notes:**

The Israelites have been enslaved by Pharaoh in Egypt. God instructed Moses and Aaron to lead them out of Egypt and into freedom. Just recently God caused the Red Sea to part and the Israelites escaped. Now they are walking in the wilderness trying to get to the land God promised them.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- How would you describe the community of the Israelites in this story?
- How would you feel if you were Moses or Aaron, leading this community at this moment?
- How would you describe God's relationship with this community of Israelites right now?
- In what ways is your church (or perhaps your youth group) similar and different from the Israelites in this story?

*After the Bible study, bring the group back together if they have been in smaller groups.*

## **Discussing the Theme**

This summer we will be going to *(Asheville/Raleigh/Charleston/Memphis/Dallas)* to spend a week serving and learning. The theme for all Youth Mission Co sites this summer is ***The Call of Community***.

What does that theme mean to you?

Given this theme, who do you think is doing the “calling”?

What are the different ways that people are “called”?

*Possible Answers:*

*Literally: (yell out for someone, call on the phone, text, intercom at school)*

*Figuratively: (one can feel “called” to do something, it’s not just a job, it’s a “calling”)*

When someone says, “They got ‘called out,’” what does that mean?

What would it mean for someone to be “called in?”

In the church we talk about God “calling people”. What do you think that means?

When God calls someone, what does that really, literally mean?

Is there a voice from the sky?

Is it a nagging thought in your brain?

Is it an idea planted by a friend or fellow church member?

Have you ever felt “called” to do something?

What was it? How did that happen for you?

How did it turn out?

In some ways perhaps we have felt called to be part of this week-long experience this summer.

## **Discussing Logistics of the Week**

*(The leader can describe some things from the leader packet about the trip, the kinds of things the group will be doing during the week, things we need to bring, etc.) If there are questions from group members that aren’t answered in these materials, write them down and contact your YMCo Site Director to get them answered.*

## **Building a Community Covenant**

*Say to the group,*

As we prepare to have this experience this summer, we should have an understanding of how we are going to live as a community. We are going to create a covenant, which is an agreement between two or more people regarding our relationship and our behavior in it.

How do you think God is calling us to be and act as a group during our trip?

*As group members respond, with each item, ask if the whole group can live with that as part of the covenant. If there is consensus, write that thing on the covenant sheet. After all things have been added, tell the group that we will keep this covenant with us as we go through the week, and we will revisit it to add or change things together. If everyone can live with what is on the covenant, each person is invited to sign it.*

*Say to the group,*

The folks at Youth Mission Co have a lot for us to experience and learn during our week with them. Thank you for choosing to engage in this important week! Let's close with a prayer.

### **Closing Prayer:**

God of Community and Covenant, thank you for the privilege and the opportunity to serve others and learn this summer. As the time draws closer to our trip, open our hearts and minds for what you have in store for us. Help us to see your face in the face of those we meet. Help us to recognize the ways that you are calling us to live our lives. Help us to be changed by our experience this summer, so we can participate in changing our community when we return. These things we pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.