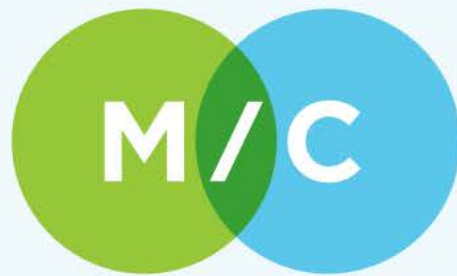


Missional Community Curriculum (Volume 1)

THE AUSTIN STONE COMMUNITY CHURCH



x Introduction

This is the first volume of curriculum for Missional Communities here at The Austin Stone. There will be three volumes (Gospel, Community, Mission) that will take roughly just under a year to work through (including breaks, holidays and other diversions).

- This first volume has the overall theme of “Gospel.” This was meant to be a very broad study of the wonderful truths that make up the core of the Christian faith.
- The second volume has the theme of “Community.” Here we will cover some of the unique gospel realities that draw Christians into community and particular practices that keep us together.
- The third volume will be themed “Mission.” At this point we will look at what drives Christians to look outward in declaring and demonstrating the gospel. At the same time, we’ll look at ways to do it.

If you’re looking for more information about particular ideas or practices that are mentioned here or elsewhere in here, read the FAQ provided in the leader’s guide of this Missional Community curriculum.

x Outcome

This curriculum was built with a few goals in mind.

- **Obedience, not just knowledge** – We study the Bible together to believe and submit to what it says in its declarations and its commands.
- **Self-feeding** – We’re hoping that this curriculum serves as a kind of anti-curriculum. After finishing the full three volumes, we would hope that you feel confident to use the Bible alone as your group’s weekly guide (REAP), not depending on curriculum. To this end, we’ve modeled how to ask questions of the text. And more and more the lessons will consist of REAPing through a single passage.
- **Inclusion of outsiders** – The lessons are designed to serve your mission as much as any other part of your group. The lessons are “low-barrier,” meaning that a person doesn’t need to know a minimum amount of Bible or theology to meaningfully contribute. In other words, you can invite your lost friends who you’re praying for and hanging out with. We hope that your group’s Bible time becomes a place for outsiders to discover the greatness of the gospel.
- **Commitment to community** – We believe that your community together on mission is critical for so many things. We believe that it is crucial to getting more Jesus, more mission, more care, more discipleship, and more life.

Volume 1 contains 15 sessions and will probably take you about 18 or so weeks to work through. Don’t try to quickly crank through this material. Take some time with it. Hopefully, you will take some weeks to focus on demonstrating and declaring the gospel, refocusing the group, celebrating together, and taking every opportunity to be together.

If you have any questions about the content, feel free to contact me at jon@austinstone.org.

May God move us to obedience by the power of the Holy Spirit to the praise of the glory of his grace!

Jon Dansby

01. A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

A Missional Community is not JUST a small group, Bible study, support group, social activist group, or a weekly meeting. It can involve these sorts of things, but it doesn't stop there.

GOD – WHAT IS TRUE?

x Introduction

Welcome to the first meeting. In this time we'll try to discover what we're together for. People are bringing all kinds of expectations from their past experiences with church and Christianity. Because of that, it's going to be important for us to define our group's purpose and identify some practices that will help us on the way.

So, what are you expecting from this community?

x Scripture Study

Open your Bibles to Acts 2 and read verses 41-47 out loud. Underline or circle words and phrases you think are important to understand.

41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

What is going on here? What is binding all of these people together?

List out the beliefs and rhythms (regular activities) that were mentioned in this community? Why do you think they were so powerfully attractive? Which ones are particularly intriguing or challenging to you? Why?

What do you like about what we read? Is there anything you don't like?

GOSPEL – HOW DOES TRUTH CHANGE US?

How would the community here in Acts 2 differ from a small group you've been in before? What, for you personally, would be hard about being in an authentic biblical community like this?

Rapid response: In our own context, what challenges (internally and externally) does a community like this face? Write down some responses.

At The Austin Stone, we have a saying, “if you aim at community you get neither community nor mission. But if you aim at mission, you get both mission and community.” Why does having a vision and a mission (like in Acts 1:8) pull a group together to be able to overcome these challenges?

MISSION – WHAT MUST WE DO NOW?

As a group, in the chart below list each practice and rhythm that you found in the passage. In the column to the right, write out some possible ways to make these practices and rhythms a reality in this group.

Ex. They ate together	We should all share a meal together at least weekly. Maybe Tuesdays? Or at gatherings of our Missional Community?

Talk about how you’re going to implement some of these. Don’t leave until at least a few are on everybody’s calendar. Understand that this is not a checklist, but the beginning of creating a family together.

To do this week:

REAP through Acts 1-5 this week. Discover what needs to be a part of a group called to mission for Jesus.