

Missional

★ The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

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Getting a Missional Community Up and Going

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two lessons, you have been actively experimenting with ways to create sacred space, meaningful relationships, and seek the goodwill of the community around you. If you have faithfully worked these steps, you are ready! It's important to remember that a healthy community has three central attributes: *spiritual*, *relational* and *missional*. As you begin, consider if your weekly rhythm of gathering shares these attributes so that your community can thrive as Jesus transforms the lives of those participating the group and the lives of those participants touch.

NEXT STEPS

How will your missional community ...

1. ... nurture the *spiritual* formation of participants?

There are many in our culture that are spiritually hungry but unwilling to darken the door of a traditional church. Missional communities provide an environment where those that cannot, or will not, participate in a traditional church can learn spiritual practices and begin to be able to articulate their own spiritual journey. The Book of Common Prayer provides a variety of prayers and services for guiding worship that does not require previous experience. You may light a candle, sing a song, or recite a certain prayer to signify that this is not just any group, but a distinctly Christian gathering. If





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you intend to celebrate the Lord's Table, please visit epicenter.org/missional and read the "Communion for Missional Communities" document.

2. ... *cultivate relationships of equity and trust?*

Sharing a meal is one of the simplest ways to build healthy group dynamics within an emerging missional community. If you choose to share a meal, make sure that there is enough for all and that feeding each other is a shared, yet equitable exercise. If you pray, sing, study the Bible or hold a discussion during your meetings, meet in the round as opposed to classroom style. Practice group dynamics that convey value to all participants and healthy group participation by all. For more resources on leading a healthy small group visit epicenter.org/missional.

3. ... *act missionally by inspiring service and evangelism?*

Communities that care for each other can quickly become insular. It's critical to determine how to keep the needs of others regularly in mind. This may mean praying for those that are not there on a weekly basis. It may mean regularly meeting for other purposes than worship and fellowship, such as community service, outreach, or attending neighborhood activities and rallies. Actively consider how to intentional bless and befriend those are not a part of this community yet are present in your context.

As you consider what these rhythms will look like for your missional community, approach them with a spirit of experimentation. These will look different from group to group, and as groups evolve, their practices may as well. Try out a certain set of practices for a few months, and then hold a "town hall" style meeting with group participants to consider what is working and what isn't. Invite participants to contribute to solutions, not just providing critique, and always being cognizant of the possibility that it may be time to launch another missional community. Remember, the harvest is plentiful!

