

Missional

★ The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

READY

Getting People Ready for Missional Communities

INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this, it's safe to assume that you have an interest in missional communities. Hopefully, you have already watched the corresponding video with this handout. If not, stop here and watch the video. It can be found at epicenter.org/missional. After you have watched the video, this handout is intended to help you take the next step towards starting missional communities, which begins by finding partners within your congregation. It's never wise to start something like this on your own. In Matthew 18, Jesus tells his friends that when two or more are gathered, He is there with them. Jesus' good news is at the heart of missional communities, so finding two or more people to get involved in this effort is critical.

NEXT STEPS

Stir up interest for missional communities in your congregation ...

1. *Share your interest in missional communities with your head of congregation.*

It's important that the leaders of your congregation are supportive of your efforts to start a missional community. Schedule a time to share your interest with your head of congregation so that this development does not surprise them. Use language of experimentation. Be prepared to share materials such as the Missional Bible Study, this handout, and the corresponding video. You may want to review the Missional Communities FAQ at epicenter.org/missional in preparation for your meeting.





READY

2. *Plan a four to six week Missional Bible study.*

Once your congregational leadership is supportive of this effort, it's time to prepare others for starting a missional community. Use the Missional Bible Study, which can be downloaded at epicenter.org, and take 4-6 weeks for the study. During this time, you can gauge interest from others and prepare them for involvement. Find someone who is willing to host the Bible study. Ensure that this is someone with the gift of hospitality and a clean space for others to meet. Find someone to facilitate the conversation each week. Ensure that this is someone comfortable leading conversations and is familiar with the Bible and Book of Common Prayer. Pick the dates in which you will meet. Liturgical seasons such as Advent and Lent are often ideal times to try a new weekly rhythm. Be clear on the time expectations so that your host and facilitator are prepared.

3. *Invite congregation and community members to participate.*

Now that your leadership is on board, hosts and facilitators identified and meeting dates are selected, you are ready to promote the Bible study. Decide when announcements will be made verbally and in print before your start date. Put an announcement up on your church website and social media platforms. Be clear how people can show their interest in participating and who to contact. Public invitations such as these are never as powerful as personal invitations. Extend a personal invitation to as many people you can think of that might be interested in missional communities. This may even include friends and neighbors that are not members of your church.

After you have completed the Missional Bible Study series, we encourage you to consider what you have learned and discern what next steps the Holy Spirit is leading you take. Select a time and place for the group to gather again to watch the next video and work the corresponding handout. Share the collective lessons learned and next steps with the leadership of your congregation.

