

MISSIONAL COMMUNITY COVENANT LEADERS' GUIDE

The Covenant Template and this Leaders' Guide are tools to help your community prayerfully determine & commit to how you will live out your gospel identity together in everyday rhythms of life.

The final covenant must be something each member of the MC really owns and is committed to. To that end:

- Devote yourself to prayer and lead your MC to pray, asking the Father for wisdom and listening to how he would direct you. It's all about him.
- Ensure your people understand and can articulate the gospel and their gospel identity found in the Scriptures. The "why" must come before the "how."
- Lead the group to *discover* the implications of their identity. Ask questions and help them find the answers rather than giving your ideas up front.
- Discern how these tools will best serve your MC.

Here's a possible scenario for each week on the covenant:

- Pray and read a key passage of Scripture that deals with the key belief.
- Ask questions to see how well your folks understand the gospel and their new identity in Christ.
- Use questions from the template as you brainstorm possible implications of your gospel identity—use a whiteboard or have someone take notes (Whether you pass out copies of the template depends on whether you think it would help your people).
- You may also want to try handing out a stack of Post-It notes to each person and have them write their ideas down and then put them on a poster board for each section (i.e. "Family" How will we walk out each of the rhythms as Family?)
- Mark your best ideas and post them on your MC group on The City.
- Have everyone pray about these ways of living out your identity.
- Incorporate these actions into your covenant as you become prayerfully certain about them.

GOSPEL

The Power of God for Salvation

KEY PASSAGES: Rom 1:16-25; Eph. 2:1-10; Rom 3:21-25; 6:20-23; 8:1; 1 Cor 15:1-6; Rom 8:9-11; 1 Pet 1:3-5

It all starts with the gospel. Take this opportunity to clearly walk through the specifics of the gospel with your Missional Community. You may want to start with a question like...

ASK If we were defining the gospel, what are some key truths from the Bible we must include? Where in the Bible do we see these truths?

LISTEN FOR:

- *Who God Is* – his character and attributes that lead us toward understanding our need for salvation
- *What he has done* – the story of redemption through Jesus' life, death and resurrection
- *How we respond* – we respond to the gospel through repentance, faith and baptism

You could also walk through the bullets in the covenant template line by line and ask the question...

ASK Why is believing this truth important to understanding the gospel?

For instance, the first one says, "I believe I was an enemy of God because of my sin and rebellion against him, deserving his wrath." One of the things your MC should be able to articulate is the just consequence for sin and our identity apart from faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Without this truth the work of Jesus is not necessary, nor is it amazing news. For each aspect of the gospel that they cannot articulate, you will want to guide them to key passages in the Bible that communicate the key truth.

Or, you may want to teach about the power of the gospel in regards to the past, present and future realities of our salvation: We *have been saved* from the penalty of sin. We *are being saved* from the power of sin. And, we *will be saved* from the presence of sin. You will want to make sure people understand the gospel as the *power of God for salvation* to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16-17) ...believes in the perfect life, substitutionary death and powerful resurrection of Jesus Christ as well as his ascension to God's right hand, the sending of his Spirit and his future return.

[From the Covenant Template + some key passages]

I believe I have been saved from the penalty of sin...

- I believe I was an enemy of God because of my sin and rebellion against him, deserving his wrath (Romans 1:18, 21, 28-29; 3:23; Eph. 2:1-3)
- I believe Jesus is the Son of God who is fully God and fully man and that he lived his life fully submitted to God the Father (John 1:1-4, 14; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; 2:9)
- I believe Jesus died on the cross for my sins (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; John 1:29; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 5:1, 3; 1 Peter 2:24)
- I believe Jesus was buried and rose again on the third day and then he appeared to many people (1 Cor. 15:4-7)
- I believe Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father and sent his Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness & judgment and to guide us into all truth (John 14:15-17, 25-29; 15:26-27; 16:7-15)
- I believe that I am justified before God by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:21-26)

- I believe the Holy Spirit has made me alive in Christ and I am now no longer condemned, but a new creation loved by God as Father, submitted to Jesus as Lord and sent and empowered by the Spirit for his mission of making disciples
(Romans 8:1-17; Eph. 2:4-10; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:19-22)

I believe I *am being saved* from the power of sin...

- I believe that the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from dead now lives in me and I have access to resurrection power to overcome sin and Satan today
(1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Romans 8:11)
- I believe it is God's will that I be sanctified – set apart to do his will
(John 17:15-19; 1 Thess. 4:3)
- I desire to obey God and continue to grow in becoming more like Jesus and accomplishing his mission
(Eph. 2:10, 4:11-16; Col. 1:28)
- I believe I have all I need to make this a reality—his Spirit, his word & his church, and I intend to steward all of this for his glory
(2 Peter 1:3-11)

I believe I *will be saved* from the presence of sin...

- I believe Jesus will one day return and will make an end to sin, suffering, evil and brokenness
(1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 21:4)
- I believe there will be a new heaven and a new earth
(Rev. 21:1-3)
- I believe he will judge the living and the dead and all those who put their trust in Jesus' life, death and resurrection on their behalf will enjoy being in God's presence forever in the new heaven and new earth
(Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:11-15)
- I believe all those who trust in something or someone other than Jesus for their life and justification before God will be separated from God forever
(2 Thess. 1:5-10; Rev. 20:15, 21:8)
- I believe it is our job as the Church to therefore proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls and to display the foretaste of the future so that people will hunger for it and put their faith in Jesus Christ
(Romans 10:8-15; 1 Peter 2:11-12, 3:15)

The Purpose of the Gospel

Key Passages: Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:10; Matthew 28:18-20

We have been saved for good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Consider asking these questions:

ASK What is the purpose for which God has and is saving us through faith in Jesus Christ?"

1. To glorify God in all things
2. To make disciples who make disciples and to be sent ones for the ministry of reconciliation

ASK In what ways are we called to accomplish the purpose of the gospel?"

1. Do everything for God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17)
2. Live lives that lead others to worship God – lives of love, service and sacrifice (1 Peter 2:11-12)
3. Share the gospel as the reason for hope (1 Peter 3:15)
4. Make disciples who make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)

GOSPEL IDENTITY

Here we move from general to specific. Before getting into details of each aspect of our new identity in Christ, be sure the Missional Community understands why the gospel makes us family, missionaries and servants AND why new identity is the key to new living (Our doing comes out of our being). For instance, you could ask...

"What is it about the gospel that makes us family?"

Jesus' great commission is a great way to introduce gospel identity. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them in the name of** the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you." (Matt 28:19ff) Briefly, the command is to make disciples who obey Jesus commands (including this one about making disciples). Part of making disciples is baptizing them—not just getting wet, but establishing them in their new identity with the Father, Son and Spirit. Our new identity with the Father is connected to our adoption into his family (Rom 8:15) – God is now our Father and we are his children who love one another as brothers and sisters. We now identify with Jesus as our Lord and Master, who took on the form of a servant, and calls us to serve others as a way of life in service to the King of kings (Phil 2). And we identify with and are being changed by the Spirit as witnesses to Jesus empowered and sent by the same Spirit that empowered and sent Jesus on mission (John 20:21-22; Acts 1:8).

Take time to walk through each Identity. You may want to do one each week working through the key passages that help us understand our new identity in Christ Jesus. The covenant template guides you through four key areas of focus:

1. **Prayer:** Each section begins with a commitment to prayer emphasizing the importance of the Spirit and leaning on God's wisdom not our own.
2. **Rhythms:** Questions related to our everyday rhythms of life are included in each identity section: Storyformed, Listen, Bless, Celebrate, Eat, ReCreate.
3. **Family groupings:** A nuclear family may see each other everyday, but 2nd cousins in different states won't. Yet they're all rightly called family. The Soma family is similar. We're all family but involvement in each others lives varies. Consider what is appropriate in living out your identity at each level, MC, Expression, etc.
4. **Learning:** In each section there's at least one question on how we expect to grow spiritually in this area. This learning should be holistic: head, heart and hands. You will want to work through what kind of study, training and development the group should commit to in order to grow up in each identity – growing up into fullness in Christ.

Missionaries: We are missionaries sent by the Holy Spirit to make disciples

Key Passages: Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 3:15

Typically we do this one first. Hearing who the Spirit is sending us to in order to make disciples affects the rest of the covenant. Our commission is to make disciples of *all nations*. Let's not lose sight of that grand vision even as we focus on our neighborhoods.

We are ambassadors for Christ to whom God has given the ministry (demonstration) and message (proclamation) of reconciliation. This means we live in such a way amongst those who don't yet believe that it demands a gospel explanation and we proclaim the gospel as our motivation and the hope for their salvation.

ASK *What is it about the gospel that makes us missionaries?*

ASK *What do we know about what this people group believes? What might their actions say they believe? What storyline do they live by?*

ASK *Where do their beliefs line up with God's grand redemptive story? Where do they differ?*

ASK *What might be some barriers to them understanding the gospel message?*

ASK *What are some opportunities we have to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel in way that would be relevant to them? What would *good news* look like to these friends?*

[From the Covenant Template]

How we will commit ourselves to making disciples who make disciples in the power of the Spirit:

- Which PEOPLE group or groups are we focusing on in our obedience to Jesus' commission to MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS?
- How will we commit to listen in prayer for our next steps in our friendships with those God is sending us to? Both as an MC and as individuals?
- How will we partner with the other Missional Communities in our Expression to make disciples in our area?
- What foreign nation or people group will be our focus as we support those making disciples to the ends of the earth? How will we help? Prayer, finances, sending someone?
- How else will we partner with others in making disciples of all nations? (Expression, city, region, Soma Communities, beyond...)?
- In what ways do we all need to grow spiritually so that we will be faithful in making disciples? Specifically, how will we foster that growth?
- How will we discover other areas where we need equipping as missionaries?
- What specifically will we do to insure that the people we are sent to hear the gospel this year?
- How can we become so fluent in God's Story that it shapes our worldview and we can't help but teach it to others?
- How will we bless those we are sent to?
- How will we invite others to the table with us?
- Where should we go to engage in "gospel eating" regularly?
- How will we engage in celebrating with the people group God is sending us to?
- How will we play and rest with those God is sending us to?

Take some time to pray and ask the Spirit to show you who and how in light of these questions.

You may want to give each person post-its and a sharpie to write down their ideas and then post them on a wall or poster board. **Discuss what you believe God is calling your group to commit to for this year.**

Servants: We are servants of Jesus who serve Him by serving others.

Key Passages: Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Peter 2:16

Now, lead your group to work through how you will show what life looks like in submission to Jesus as our King. We are his servants and we serve others as our way of serving him.

Consider what the new heaven and earth will be like when everything is as it ought to be with Jesus as the ruler of all. Then, in light of Jesus' instructions to pray, *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"*, talk about what heaven on earth would look like in your context missionary context and community.

You may want to talk about how we can give a foretaste of that future rule of Jesus Christ today by how you love and serve each other and those in your missionary context

ASK *What is it about the gospel that makes us servants?*

ASK *What does Jesus' kingdom and rule over our lives and community look like in the everyday?*

ASK *How should his kingdom be seen today through our lives of love and service to others?*

ASK *How can we give tangible expression to being Jesus' servants in our local mission?*

ASK *In what ways can we live that would only make sense through the lens of the gospel? In other words, how should we live so that it requires a gospel explanation for why we do what we do?*

[From the Covenant Template]

How we will tangibly demonstrate the gospel in service to our King, Jesus:

- How will we commit to listen in prayer for how and whom we should serve? Both as an MC and as individuals?
- What does GOOD NEWS look like to the people group we are sent to?
- What needs beautifying in our mission focus?
- How might we demonstrate the gospel through service to those God is sending us to? To each other?
- What specific projects or events do we need to accomplish or get involved in to demonstrate the gospel?
- How will we serve the underprivileged (poor, widows, orphans) among the people we are sent to?
- How will we serve the other Missional Communities in our Expression? City? Region? Soma?...
- How will we serve during our Sunday celebrations with the larger church?
- What finances do we pledge to give toward the work of the gospel through our larger Soma family?
- How will this affect our giving—financially, physically, emotionally, etc...?
- In what ways do we all need to grow spiritually this year to be faithful to live as servants? Specifically, how will we foster that growth?
- How might we demonstrate God's creative beauty and restorative intent?
- How will we intentionally share what we have with each other and those in need?
- What are some tangible ways we believe God has called our MC to bless others?
- How will we serve in the regular rhythms of eating together and with others?

Take some time to pray and ask the Spirit to show you who and how in light of these questions.

You may want to give each person post-its and a sharpie to write down their ideas and then post them on a wall or poster board. **Discuss what you believe God is calling your group to commit to for this year.**

Family: We are children of God the Father who live & love as family.

Key Passages: John 1:12-13; 13:34-35; Romans 12:10-16; Ephesians 5:1-2

Finally, lead your group to work through how you will love one another as family in the same way in which God the Father loved us as dearly loved children while we were his enemies.

ASK *What is it about the gospel that makes us family?*

ASK *How has God loved us?*

ASK *In what ways has he loved us?*

ASK *What has become true of us because of his love for us?*

ASK *As children of God called to love one another as brothers and sisters, how should we love one another?*

ASK *As children of God sent to show the Father's love to the lost children around us, how should we love those he is sending us to reach?*

[From the Covenant Template]

How we will express our love as brothers and sisters adopted by the Father:

- How will we commit to listen in prayer for the Father's love and guidance for us as a family? Both as an MC and as individuals?
- What actions will we commit to which express our gospel identity as sons of God and brothers and sisters together?
- How will we commit to the "ONE ANOTHERS" that are key to being God's Family together?
- Do any of us believe the gospel and are not yet baptized? How will the rest obey Jesus command to baptize them?
- How will we insure that each of us is involved in regular, intimate discipleship, nurture and accountability (DNA)?
- How will we extend the family to those who are still unreconciled to the Father?
- How will we be good family to the other Missional Communities in our Expression? City? Region? Soma?...
- How will we honor the elders and other leaders in the Soma family appointed to shepherd us?
- In what ways do we all need to grow spiritually to faithfully live as God's family? Specifically, how will we foster that growth?
- How will we teach and learn from the other Missional Communities in our Expression? City? Region? Soma?...
- How will we make sure all of us know each other's stories?
- How will we celebrate communion together?
- What meals will we share with each other?
- What will our gatherings together look like and how often?
- What larger Soma gatherings are we committed to and how often?
- In what ways will we intentionally celebrate together and around what?
- When and how will we share the stories of what God is doing in us with others in the Soma family?
- What regular rhythms of ReCreating will we commit to together?

Take some time to pray and ask the Spirit to show you who and how in light of these questions.

You may want to give each person post-its and a sharpie to write down their ideas and then post them on a wall or poster board. ***Discuss what you believe God is calling your group to commit to for this year.***