

Triads



“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” —Ecclesiastes 4:12

INTRODUCING TRIADS

Growing as a Christian always happens in the context of relationships. Jesus tells us that following and loving him means loving others who follow him (1 John 4:11-18). Learning to love well in the way of Jesus requires us to make room in our lives to get to know our brothers and sisters in Christ. By sharing our lives together with intentionality we can encourage and be encouraged in our growth in Christ.

To this end, we are introducing an opportunity for small group gatherings called Triads. Triads are groups of three men or three women who commit to meet together regularly for 3 purposes: discussion, sharing, and praying together. Outside of Holy Communion on Sunday, Triads are a way we encourage our community to connect and grow together. Triads are flexible, in that they can meet at any time or any place that is mutually convenient for the group.

Why join a Triad? Triads invite us into a greater attentiveness to Jesus, to others, and to our own faith journey. Jesus himself invested in small group outside of the twelve (Peter, James and John) for focused discipleship. Moreover, Christians are to be life-long learners, so Triads are one way for us to grow together in the kind of knowledge necessary to grow in Christ (Philippians 1:19).

JOINING A TRIAD

There are two ways to join a Triad. You can simply gather two men or women and let the Triad coordinator know you're forming a Triad. Or you may contact one of the Triad coordinators (Mary Ann or Blake) and they will work with you to find two others to form a Triad.

HOW TO HAVE A TRIAD MEETING

Triad meetings are meant to be relaxed and friendly, while geared towards encouragement and growth in Christ. We encourage each Triad to develop a meeting rhythm that works for their context with a simple format around discussion, sharing, praying.

1. **Discuss.** Discuss a reading. The coordinators will provide material during certain times of the year and at other times Triads will be encouraged to select a topic of study from the resource guide.

2. **Share.** Share what's going on in your life. We want Triads to be places where you can share you life with other Christians. Share highs and lows and ask for prayer. For example, each meeting you might ask one another: *What has given you life this week? What has been most draining or discouraging for you? Where do you think God is in both of these?* Decide on good questions to ask each week that encourage a healthy reflection on your relationship with others and God.
3. **Pray.** Pray for one another. After a time of sharing, pray in simple straightforward ways for each other. If you're not accustomed to praying out loud, that's okay! Pray in the best way you know how.

Note that each Triad will need to have a point person. This is not a teacher as Triads are meant to encourage mutual sharing. But to function well, each group still needs someone to keep things going and focused. The Triad coordinator will be in touch with the point person to help him/her get started.

TRIAD COMMITMENTS

1. **Commit to Consistency.** Triads are flexible in that they're meant to work with the rhythms of your life. So once you find a time and place that works, make a firm commitment to one another that you will meeting together unless there's some major conflict. Ideally, Triads will meet weekly, but make a commitment to meeting at least twice a month. Commit to meeting for 6-months before re-evaluating or considering forming a new Triad.
2. **Commit to Confidentiality.** Triads are meant to be contexts where, as we build trust with one another, we can share burdens and struggles that we wouldn't normally share in larger settings. So commit to confidentiality, which will build trust and encourage honesty. The depth of the group will reflect the vulnerability of its members, so take a risk and be honest with each other.
3. **Commit to Charity.** Scripture tells us we should bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), grow in in grace and knowledge together (2 Peter 3:18), and love one another (Colossians 3:12-14). Each Triad will have members of different ages, spiritual backgrounds, and personalities. Loving one another in the context of a Triad will mean being patient, showing empathy, not condemning, encouraging, and at times challenging one another. The basic commitment to loving one another in humility is the fertile soil in which faith and genuine relationships will grow.

APPENDIX

IDEAS FOR A TRIAD MEETING

A Triad agrees to meet during lunchtime for an hour on Tuesdays at the conference room in one of the members' workplace. One member asks a blessing for the food. Then, while eating, they discuss the reading for the meeting for 20 minutes. Then, each person can take 5 minutes to share highs and lows from the previous week and prayer requests. Then one person can offer a simple prayer for that person before the next person shares.

You could adopt a more liturgical format for your meetings. For example:

- Begin with either Morning or Evening Prayer, depending on time of the day, in the Holy Cross Prayer Book (available for download). Rotate who leads the leader parts of the prayer. The Holy Cross Prayer Book has clear directions for how to do this.
- At the time for reading Scripture, this is where you have your discussion. Discuss for 20 minutes.
- After the discussion, continue the prayers with the Apostles Creed and Lord's Prayer in the prayer booklet. Then, pause to share prayer requests at the appropriate place. You may find it helpful to set a timer (e.g., 10 minutes per person). It's also helpful to pray for the person who just shared immediately, before moving to the next person.
- Close with the General Thanksgiving.

The important point is to develop a simple, repeatable rhythm that gives some structure to your time together.

CONTENT FOR DISCUSSION

The Triad Coordinators will provide content for reading and discussion during parts of the church year. At other times, Triads are encouraged to use one of the resources from our recommend resources page on Holy Cross Commons.

Special content is provided for your first four meetings to help introduce Triads and facilitate getting to know one another.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND FAQs

- After meeting a year, each Triad should consider seeking another two people to form a new Triad before committing to keep meeting for another year.
- Triads may form at any time during the year.
- Triads may add a 4th person, particularly when newcomers are looking to join a Triad, but the goal should be to move towards 3.
- Each group should explore and pray for opportunities to serve the church (e.g., volunteering on the set-up crew) and serve the needs of others as opportunities arise (e.g., volunteering with Habitat, providing meals for a sick coworker, etc).
- Triads can meet anywhere: restaurants, coffee shops, homes or apartments, workplaces, parks, etc. But each Triad will want to consider what environment works best, especially or praying and sharing.
- It's important to remember that we are not here to "fix" one another, that's the Spirit's role in our sanctification. Listening well to one another is one of the most important gifts we can give.
- Triads are great opportunities for intergenerational relationships (i.e., older folks connecting with younger folks) and for making new friendships. While it's fine to form a Triad with folks you already know and are close to, we encourage you to consider joining with others whom you may not know well and/or may be outside of your peer group.
- When beginning to meet, especially with people you don't know well, awkwardness is always a possibility. Be patient, embrace the awkwardness, and trust that with time conversation will flow and trust will be built.
- Triads are meant to be places where, with time and trust, we can be appropriately vulnerable about our sorrows and struggles and even seek accountability (i.e., invite others to ask us tough questions). Such vulnerability should never be forced, but each group should develop a spirit of trust and grace where transparency is encouraged. Thus, confidentiality is essential for Triads.
- If a group runs into an issue or has conflict, then the point person should reach out to either the men's or women's coordinator.
- Why 3? *Mutuality*. With three people, as opposed to two, it's easier to develop a small group dynamic that is relational and non-hierarchical. *Simplicity*: it's easier to find a mutually convenient time for three people. *Intentionality*: The larger a group gets, the more difficult it is to be transparent and develop deep relationships.