**Topic: Community**

**Bible Passage: Ephesians 2:19**

**Activity: Blindfolded Obstacle Course**

Set up an obstacle course/maze that can be used by 5 to 7 participants. Choose 5 to 7 preteens to compete against one another in the obstacle course race. Play 3 rounds of the obstacle course race.

**Round 1**—the participants must navigate the course blindfolded on their own.

**Round 2**—the participants may choose a friend to be a “guide” and shout directions from the finish line, but they cannot make contact.

**Round 3**—the “guide” can lead the blindfolded participant any way they choose. This includes holding their hand, pushing them from behind, or even carrying them through the course on their back.

**After the activity, ask the following questions:**

* For those of you who were blindfolded, which round was the hardest and which round was the easiest?
* What made Round 1 so difficult?
* What was the major difference between Round 2 and Round 3?
* For the whole group, what worked best to navigate the course in Round 3? Was there anything that would’ve worked better than what our guides did? (Holding hands, walking beside them, walking behind them, picking them up and carrying them)
* What are some other real-life activities that can be easier with help? (homework, chores, studying the Bible, serving others)
* On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being not important and 10 being VERY important), how important is it for God’s followers to serve and grow together?

As Christians, we are wired to be a part of a family. Not just a family with moms and dads, but a bigger family—the family of God. We are brothers and sisters who share the same Father, God. We all need one another. In fact, the phrase “one another” is used at least 58 times in the New Testament. Love one another, serve one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, teach one another, submit to one another, and bear one another’s burdens—all of these are mentioned in the New Testament as it talks about the Family of God. Listen to this passage. Ephesians 2:19 says, "You are a member of God's very own family and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." [paraphrased] God has called us to assist one another and encourage one another as brothers and sisters. It is very important that we connect with other believers by being a part of the Church and by being a part of a small group. We need to belong to a community like this. There are many reasons why belonging to a small group is so important, but we’re just going to highlight three of them.

**1. I need to be a part of a small group community because…I NEED TO GROW SPIRITUALLY.**

God has called each of us to grow in wisdom and knowledge of Him. This is impossible to do alone. We need to be with other believers who can encourage us and hold us accountable.

**Read Hebrews 10:24**

This verse instructs us to think of ways that we can encourage each other in our spiritual growth. We should be thinking of what we can do or say that will encourage others to live according to God’s will.

**Read Hebrews 3:13**

This verse calls us to hold one another accountable to sin. Being a part of a small group community means that we encourage one another to live a life that is pleasing to the Father.

**2. I need to be a part of a small group community because…more can be done together than can ever be done alone.**

There is always strength in numbers. This is true for Christians. There is power that comes through small group community.

**Read Matthew 18:19-20**

The power of God is unleashed when meet together as a small group community. This verse shows us that Christ is there with us, and He is listening to us pray together. There is power in this promise. God sees our time together and He answers the prayers of our small group community.

**Read John 13:35**

The world sees the love that we share as a small group. When we encourage one another and pray with one another, the whole world sees it and knows that we are part of God’s family. Think about this, being a part of a small group is a testimony to the entire world that Jesus Christ has changed your life and He can do the same for them.

**3. I need to be a part of a small group community because…GOD COMMANDED ME TO DO SO.**

Being a part of a small group community is not just a good idea; it’s a command from God’s Word. Scripture tells us that God gives us spiritual gifts when we become a Christian, and these gifts are to be used to serve other believers.

**Read 1 Peter 4:10**

**Read 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14**

God has given every believer a set of gifts, and He has commanded us to work together, by using our gifts, so that we can accomplish His mission. We need to be a part of a small group community so that we can fulfill our role—our part—in the body of Christ.

Galatians 6:10 says, "Let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." We should be thinking of how our words and our actions build up other believers. God had commanded us to be a part of a small group community. We need to obey His command because we need to grow spiritually and there is so much power that comes through our community.

**Break into small groups and discuss how the group can encourage one another and be accountable to one another. Spend time praying for one another by name. If possible, keep the same small group for the year. Encourage group leaders and preteens to implement an action step this week that reminds them to pray for one other and encourage one other.**