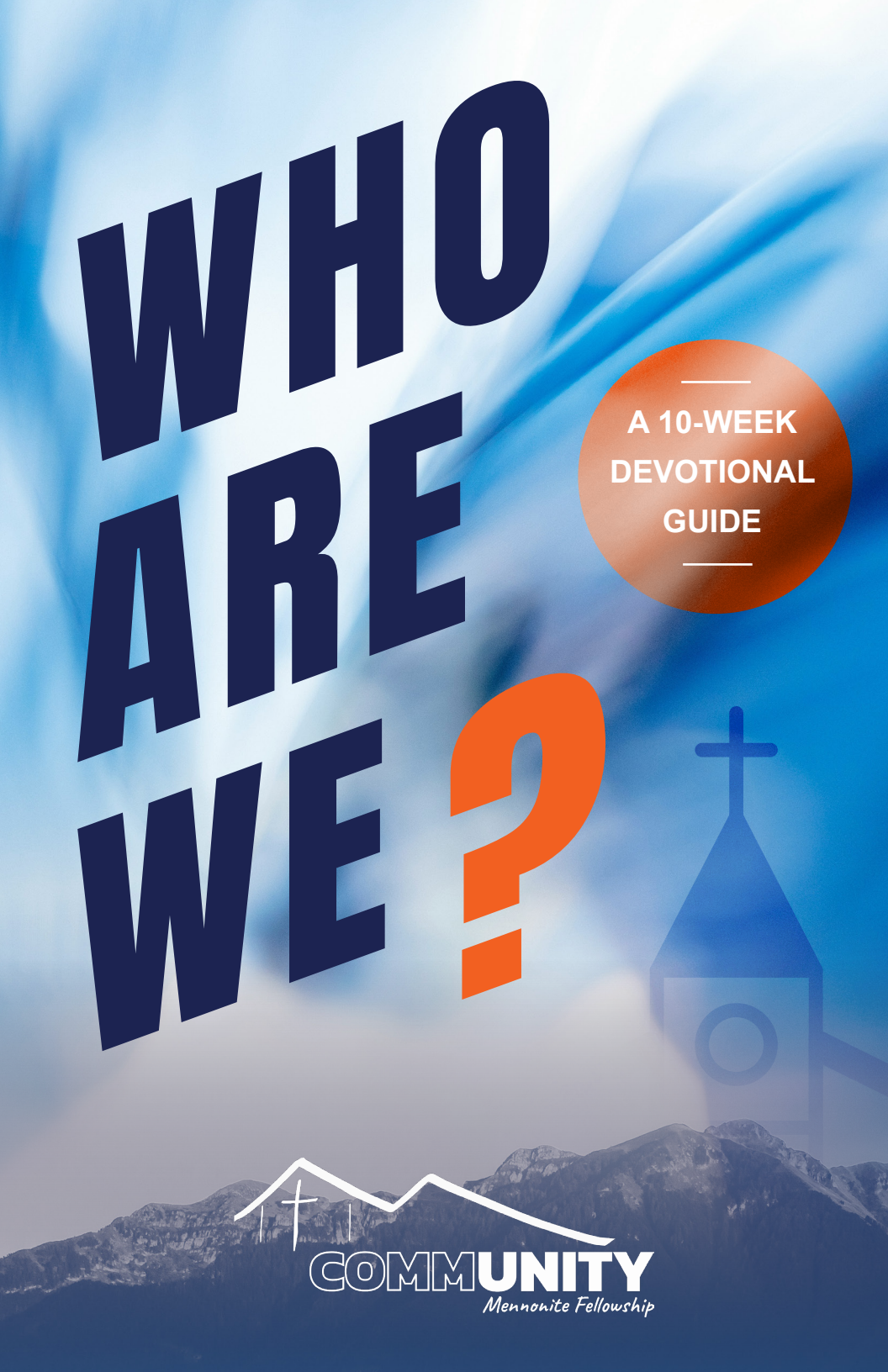
WHO ARE WE?

A 10-WEEK DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



COMMUNITY
Mennonite Fellowship

Community
Mennonite
Fellowship

cmfmilton.org

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY.

- How to use this book
- Why have membership?
- The new membership statement

Our Vision Statement



Our Mission Statement

Becoming Faithful Followers of Jesus Christ as

- Worshipers
- Spiritual Family
- Disciples
- Ministers
- Messengers

COMMUNITY
Mennonite Fellowship

How to Use This Book

As Christians we live in a state of life-giving tension: We believe in grace and truth. We believe in obedience and forgiveness. The Bible tells us what it means to be a Christian and to live life accordingly. The elders have endeavored to sift this idea down to it's most basic expressions.

This little book is meant to help guide you through Community's concept of membership. Each week we've given you a selection of bible passages related to the week's theme. Enjoy them during your devotional reading. Perhaps find a partner and memorize a few manageable passages. Use the Journaling/Discussion Guide in your personal or small group meditation.

We've also given you family and children's activities, because the ideas here are not just about membership, they are about Christian identity.

The front of the book attempts to explain why we should even address this whole question of membership. The statement itself should answer the rest.

Why Have Membership?

Membership is a very old concept. Before the Reformation, when almost everyone in Europe was Catholic, baptism was the mark of membership and everyone was baptized as an infant. Thus, people were members of the church whether they chose to be or not.

When Anabaptists began baptizing believers, membership changed. Folks were baptized into a Reformation church, but as far as the Catholic Church was concerned, they were still members there. Also, since Anabaptists would not baptize infants, then many people were not baptized and were not members anywhere. The whole thing became confused.

These days, in our circle, since baptism is a choice, so is church membership. Membership marks a declaration of unity and mutual support. It marks a commitment to the well-being of the body. It marks a dedication to participate in every aspect of the church. In this entitled, consumer-oriented society, it is an offer to serve.

The New Membership Statement

It's no surprise to many that church membership is on the decline. Some are engaged in a church without taking membership. Why is that?

In our case, one reason is the Mennonite identity. Some like the way we do things: worship is inspiring, lots of opportunities for involvement (even without membership). And we believe the Bible. That's becoming rare. But the Mennonite identity still seems foreign. It raises questions: What should I do about non-resistance? Why is our leadership structure so different from what I'm used to? What if I grew up in another denomination? Is there enough difference in being a member to make a difference?

There are other reasons: When I join a church, I get hurt. I'm just not a joiner. I can't quite whole- heartedly affirm every aspect of the membership statement. And to many, attendance and involvement seem the same as membership.

The elders have changed the membership statement to make the phrasing less about what we do and more about who we are, less like rules and more like an attitude, less about compliance and more about mutual desires and goals. We want to think of the membership statement more as a conversation we are engaged in and ideas we see as important than a binding contract.

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We believe in Jesus.

WEEK 1

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *John 1:1-13*
- ☐ *John 3:13-21*
- ☐ *John 11:21-27*
- ☐ *Romans 10:9-13*
- ☐ *1 Peter 1:13-21*
- ☐ *1 John 5:9-13*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Bible Charades - write some topics/titles of Jesus stories on pieces of paper and put them into a bag. Take turns pulling from the bag & acting out a scene to see who can guess the story first.

BONUS, FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Using blocks, build two block walls, one on a hard table, one on a soft towel. What do we learn about a firm foundation?

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

What is your understanding of the meaning of"belief"?

Why should we specify that we believe in Jesus and not simply say we believe in God?

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We love to worship God and do it as often as possible.

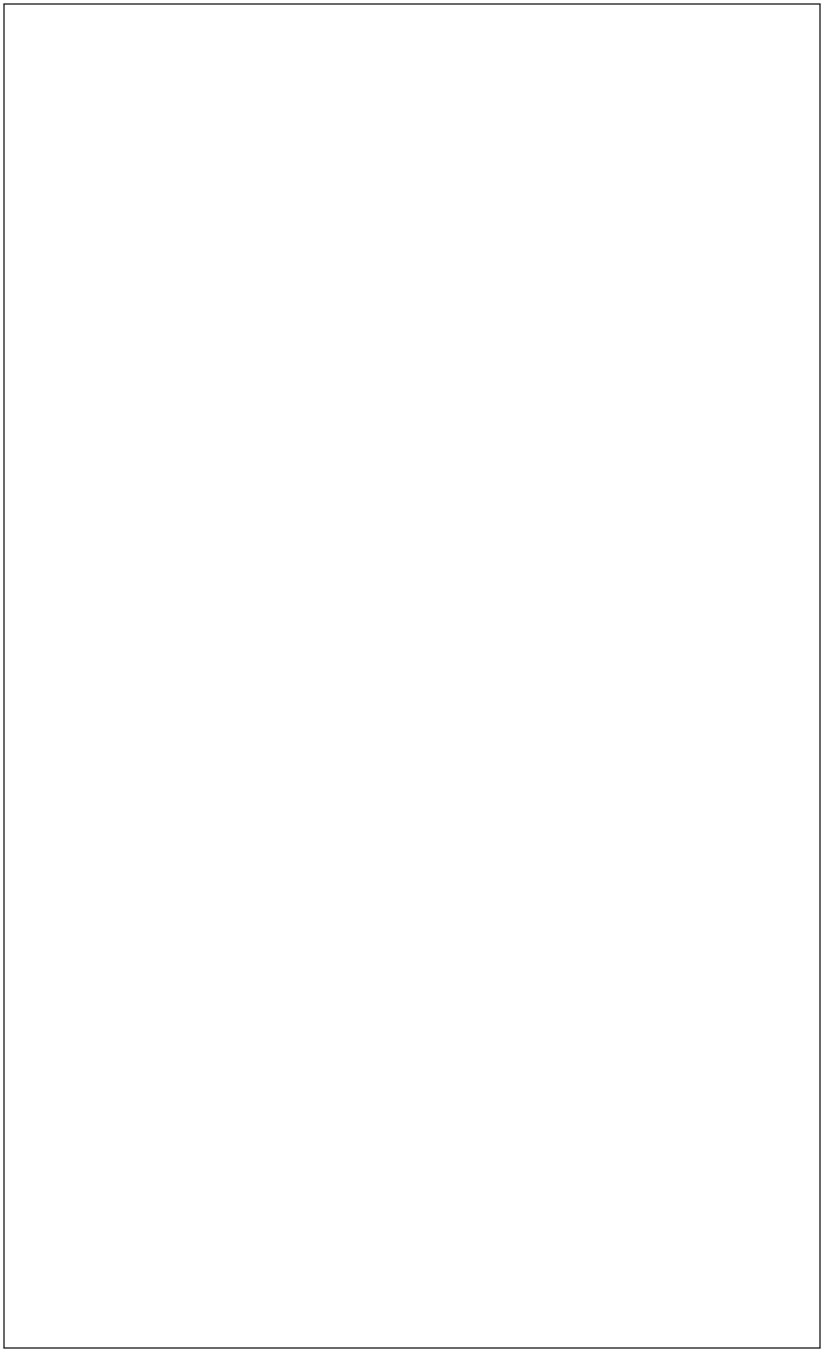
WEEK 2

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Psalm 29*
- ☐ *Psalm 100*
- ☐ *John 4:20-26*
- ☐ *Romans 12:1-2*
- ☐ *Revelation 15:1-4*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Play some worship music. While you're listening to the music draw something on the next page that reminds you of Jesus. If you have several children doing this activity, you can use looseleaf paper, too.



JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

What truths and attitudes does Psalm 100 suggest about worship?

Jesus tells the woman at the well that worship "in spirit and in truth" is the posture of true worship. How does that inform your worship?

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We believe the Bible and it's our intention to know it well and obey it.

WEEK 3

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Isaiah 40:6-8*
- ☐ *Isaiah 55:6-13*
- ☐ *Psalm 119:11*
- ☐ *2 Timothy 3:13-17*
- ☐ *James 1:21-25*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Choose a new passage from the Bible you've never read. Read it as a family.

Choose a favorite Bible story. Share it with your parents using Magnatiles or Legos.

BONUS, FOR SMALL CHILDREN

Younger - "Story Bags"- Fill a bag with objects that relate to a specific Bible story and show them to your child(ren) one by one. See if they can guess the story and then use the objects to tell it together.

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

What are some of your significant memories tied to the Bible?

What scriptures have you memorized? When do you recall them?

NOTES

While we do not have perfect understanding of everything, we have faith that God knows and reveals things to us as we seek.

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We love and respect each other and listen with open hearts even when we disagree, and even when we need to be corrected.

WEEK 4

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Proverbs 15:31-33*
- ☐ *Acts 15:3-7*
- ☐ *Romans 14:1*
- ☐ *Ephesians 4:1-16; 5:2-6*
- ☐ *Philippians 2:1-4*
- ☐ *Colossians 1:18-23*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Follow the maze on the next page. Be sure to read the stops along the way.


Follow Jesus!
Love and Respect Each Other
Help the children follow the path that shows how we can love and respect each other and follow Jesus!
Start here!
We want to follow Jesus and love others!
LOVE one another.
LISTEN with care.
PRAY every day.
BE KIND to everyone.
RESPECT each other.
BE FRIENDS and include others.
SPEAK with kindness.
SHARE and take turns.
FORGIVE one another.
HELP one another.
ENCOURAGE and build each other up.
Finish!
We follow Jesus when we love and respect each other!
"Love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8
When we love and respect each other, we show God's love to the world!

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

How difficult do you find it to practice gracious disagreement... dialogue to come to a meeting of minds?

From whom are you willing to receive correction?

NOTES

We may not agree on everything, but we can agree on God's grace and forgiveness.

NOTES

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We grow closer to God through constant personal, spiritual practices.

WEEK 5

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Joshua 1:8*
- ☐ *Psalm 77:12*
- ☐ *Isaiah 29:13*
- ☐ *Matthew 9:14-15*
- ☐ *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Choose a special place and time of day for drawing close to God (Bible reading, prayer, devotions). Keep track of this on a calendar or piece of paper and see how long it takes to make it a permanent and special part of your day.

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

What spiritual practices do you gravitate to? Practices such as prayer, meditation, fasting or others.

Which ones do you find difficult?

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We support and take part in His work among us.

WEEK 6

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Malachi 3:8-10*
- ☐ *Luke 6:38*
- ☐ *John 9:4*
- ☐ *Romans 12:3-8*
- ☐ *Ephesians 4:1-16*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Choose a way you can serve within our church family. This could be as simple as playing with a younger child during gym time or helping your teacher. You could give to a church mission by starting to save your coins for My Coins Count, gathering food to donate for Milton Panther Packs, or collecting small gifts to pack into shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. These are just suggestions. Feel free to be creative and come up with your own.

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

What determines and governs your giving practices?

What ministries and activities of the church are you most regularly involved with? Which others might you consider involvement in?

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We pursue God's peace in our hearts, in our homes, here at church, and outside our doors.

WEEK 7

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Proverbs 17:1*
- ☐ *Matthew 5:23-24*
- ☐ *Ephesians 2:17-21*
- ☐ *Philippians 4:6-7*
- ☐ *Hebrews 12:14-15*

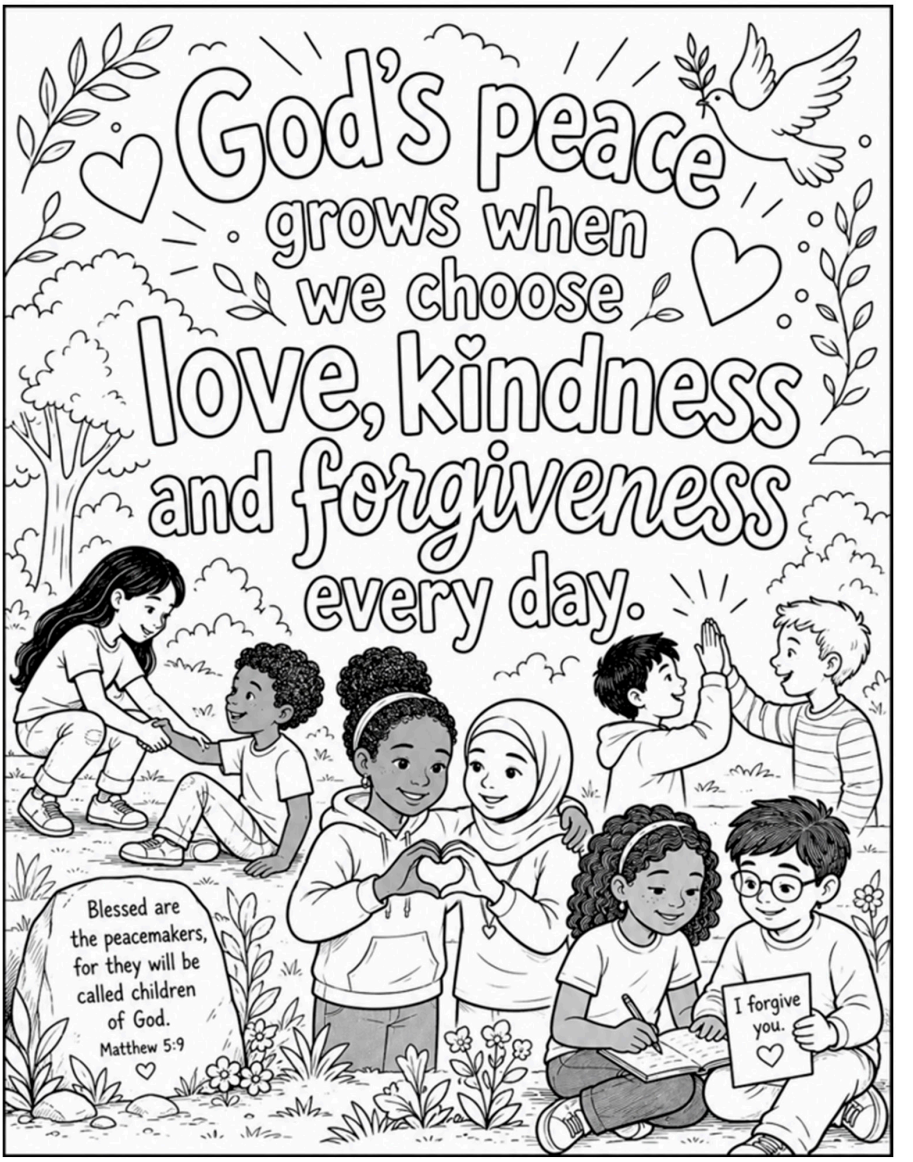
FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Color the picture on the next page.

BONUS

Memorize the verse on the rock in the picture.




God's peace
grows when
we choose
love, kindness
and forgiveness
every day.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Matthew 5:9
I forgive you.

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

What can you personally do to contribute to peace in your home, classroom, or work place?

Do you believe in military service? Can you think of godly reasons why others might oppose your position?

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When we see a sister or brother who needs help, we try to help.

WEEK 8

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Leviticus 25:35-37*
- ☐ *Deuteronomy 15:7-11*
- ☐ *Matthew 25:31-40*
- ☐ *Luke 10:25-37*
- ☐ *Acts 9:36-42*
- ☐ *2 Corinthians 1:3-4*
- ☐ *James 1:27; 2:14-17*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Think of a project you can do together as a family to serve someone else this week. For example, write cards for shut-ins. Clean up a yard for someone. Visit a person you know in a nursing home. Donate some of your toys that you no longer play with, and pray for the child receiving them. Or think of another service project that appeals to you.

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

Who are the widows, orphans, and foreign nationals you personally know? What challenges do they face?

How aware are you of the Church's budgeted means of helping those in need? Who would you ask to learn more?

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We love Jesus and share Him with others.

WEEK
9

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Deuteronomy 4:5-9*
- ☐ *Matthew 28:18-20*
- ☐ *John 14:23-24*
- ☐ *Philippians 1:12-18*
- ☐ *1 Thessalonians 2:2-13*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

As a family, make a list or links on a chain of "Not-So-Random Acts of Kindness" to share God's love with others. Have fun removing them from your list or chain as you share the love of Jesus! There are tons of ideas online. One site to check is joyintheworks.com (14 Acts of Sharing God's Love) for specific ideas and printables for things such as "Blessing Bags" for the homeless/needy, neighborhood treat surprises, mirror notes and much more.

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

How easy do you find it to share your faith?

What are the most regular ways you express your love to Jesus?

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Our heritage is Anabaptist so we've been baptized as believers. We take Anabaptist teachings seriously. We try to learn from them.

WEEK 10

BIBLE READING PLAN

- ☐ *Matthew 5:43-48*
- ☐ *Acts 5:25-29*
- ☐ *Acts 8:9-13*
- ☐ *Romans 12:9-21*
- ☐ *2 Corinthians 1:20-22*

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Figure out what the picture on the next page is about. Parents, use discretion.

Discuss: *What does it mean to be "baptized as believers"?*

CHALLENGE

If you've never attended a CMF baptism, go to one as a family and take time to talk about it afterward. It's a very special event that you won't regret attending.



Dirk Willems Saving His Captor's Life

JOURNALING / DISCUSSION GUIDE

What opportunities do we encounter today to boldly stand for Christ?

What do we gain by gathering together for worship and fellowship?

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When we say "Our heritage is Anabaptist" we are talking about the historic Anabaptist movement that paved the way for who we are and what we do today. They died for their beliefs and way of life.

Why did these people die?
What did they stake their lives on?

- The Holy Spirit is in all believers
- The Bible as their standard authority
- They interpreted the Bible respecting and receiving input from one another
- Baptism is a response to mature, informed belief
- When the ways of the world or the government ran counter to God's ways, they stuck with God's ways, and willingly suffered the consequences
- They embraced love of their neighbors and peace with their enemies, even in the face of fatal aggression

These boil down to a few Christian virtues

- love
- courage
- faithfulness

