



 **highrock**
CHURCH

IMAGO

RELATIONSHIPS
THAT REFLECT OUR MAKER

SERIES COMPANION

INTRODUCTION

God created us for relationships, yet so often our relationships mirror the brokenness in the world rather than reflect the love of God. How do we recover God's loving intent for our relationships with one another? In this series, we will unpack why it matters that we are all created in God's image, and how putting that profound truth into action can restore and reconcile our fractured relationships. We hope you join us for this five-week series as we learn together about how to nurture and create relationships that reflect our maker.

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

Here we provide space to take notes on the sermon and Scripture text and answer reflection questions that you can discuss with others. When considering the reflection questions, remember that the goal is not to have all the "right" answers—instead, let these questions serve as a starting point for curiosity in your conversation with God and others. See the Appendix of this guide for more resources and opportunities to engage with this study.

Please note this discussion guide is created before the series begins. Discussion questions are prepared before the sermons are written and based on the theme and text for the week. Thank you for your understanding that the topic and focus of the sermon as the pastor writes it may differ from what is written in the discussion questions.

APPENDIX (page 19)

Offers a deeper dive into the topic as well as resources for Bible study, leading small groups, and links for further support.

- Additional Resources
- Online Bibles
- Prayer Tools
- "Icebreaker" Questions
- Tips for Guiding Conversations
- General Resources for Individual Support

SERMON SCHEDULE & SCRIPTURE READING

**Subject to change at the discretion of the pastors.*

Although there are no additional reading/viewing materials for this series, two books can be used for individuals and groups to explore during this series: [Emotionally Healthy Relationships workbook](#) (EHR), by Pete and Geri Scazzero, and [Emotionally Healthy Spirituality](#), by Pete Scazzero.

| Sermon | Topic & Scripture Passage | Suggested reading: EHR Workbook |
|--------|--|---|
| Week 1 | The Trinity: Matthew 5:1-7 | Recap of Emotionally Healthy Spirituality |
| Week 2 | True Self/False Self: Mark 3:20-35 | EHR, chapter 6; EHS, chapter 1 |
| Week 3 | Community in God's Image: Acts 2:42-47 | EHR, chapters 1 and 3 |

| | | |
|--------|---|----------------|
| Week 4 | Learning about Others, Proverbs 18:2-3, 18:5, 18:17 | EHR, chapter 2 |
| Week 5 | Clean Fighting in Community, Matthew 5:3-11 | EHR, chapter 7 |

WEEKLY FORMAT

(PRE-WORK) REFLECT: Listen to the sermon, read weekly selections/view video links, read scripture passages, and answer questions. (30-40 mins)

RELATE: Discuss reflection questions with your small group. (50 mins)

PRAY: Use the suggested prayer prompt to conclude your time (5-10 mins)

CONVERSATION COVENANT

We hope all small group discussions are lively and enriching, but sometimes tough topics will be discussed. The Conversation Covenant* is an agreement to hold respect and grace toward all participants within a small group, no matter the conversation. Please adhere to the Conversation Covenant or consider creating one that fits your context.

*Adapted from <https://conversational-leadership.net/conversation-covenant/>

I pledge:

To act in good faith, with curiosity. I will assume the best about my conversation partners when entering into our groups. I will give the benefit of the doubt, recognizing that they may know something I don't.

To show respect. I will show respect. I will be polite and give due regard to the feelings and traditions of others. I understand that I do not have to agree with someone to show them respect.

To speak the truth. I won't use rhetorical tricks to try to win an argument. I will speak what I genuinely believe is the nuanced truth.

To aim to discover the truth. I will not enter into a conversation with the purpose of changing the mind of anyone to my way of thinking.

To focus on what we can change. I will focus on what we can do differently in the future since we cannot change what we did in the past.

To take responsibility for the conversation. I will take responsibility for the quality of the conversation and the abidance of the rules both in principle and in spirit.

To follow the covenant even when others fail to do so. I will abide by the rules regardless of whether another person breaks them.

To respect the confidentiality of the group. I will not share the stories of group members verbally or in written form (including on social media and online outlets).

To lighten up and approach the conversation in good humor. I recognize that humor is a hallmark of a constructive, generative conversation and take the conversation in good humor.

PREPARE

The following questions are jumping-off points for personal reflection. Engage with them to awaken your awareness of themes in this sermon series. Pay attention to the questions that stand out to you and look back on them throughout the series to see how God might be speaking to you.

CONSIDER

- What are your first impressions upon hearing the words, emotionally healthy relationships? How would you describe a healthy relationship? How do you think faith can support mature, healthy relationships?
- What interests you about the topics of emotional health, relational health, and spirituality? What's something about these topics you're excited about? What's something that could be challenging about them for you?
- As you enter into these discussions, how would you describe your spiritual life at the moment? Is there something you believe God is asking of you? List this (or these) below:

WEEK 1: The Trinity

Matthew 7:1–5

(PRE-WORK) REFLECT | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Matthew 7:1–5

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Name one prominent emotion you've been experiencing recently. How might this emotion impact your spiritual life and/or relationships with other people?
3. Pastor Dave shared that we need to be emotionally healthy to be spiritually healthy. Share your reflections on this.
4. What does it mean for you to see God as inherently relational (triune)? How could this relational image of God impact how you view or relate to God, and/or how God desires to relate to you?
5. How do you want to grow in your relational health and relationships with others? Come up with one step you can take this week to begin this process.

PRAY | Give thanks for God's relational love, graciously revealed and shared with us in Jesus. Ask God for help in navigating the relationships in your life. Pray for sensitivity, wisdom, and courage to see more fruit in your relationships with God and others.

Matthew 7:1-5

1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

SCRIPTURE EXPLORATION QUESTIONS | Matthew 7:1-5

This is a new section of the sermon discussion guide! The questions below are adapted from Community Bible Experience and the 5 Cs . They are suited for individuals and groups that want to dig deeper into the Scripture passage for this sermon and some of the surrounding context (passages).

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION |

(1) Read the additional (surrounding) passages and (2) work through the questions below.

While this additional reading won't uncover much of the historical or cultural context of the passage(s) (the sermon might help you with this, however), it does serve to provide additional information for understanding the main passage, key reference points that can illuminate the meanings of the Scripture and how to responsibly apply it today. A tip: be patient and curious with this approach: learning to connect parts of Scripture with others, especially the whole of the Bible, is a lifelong process that can be part of our spiritual growth!

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES |

Alongside Matthew 7:1–5, read the beginning of this section, the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:1–20, and these sections: Matthew 5:43–48 and Matthew 7:6–29.

QUESTIONS |

1. What did you notice for the first time? What questions did you have?
2. Context: How does the main passage (from the sermon) connect to the surrounding passages you read? If you noticed any connections/differences between them, what meaning(s) might you draw from that?
3. Was there anything that piqued your curiosity (e.g. that surprised you, bothered you, intrigued you)?
4. Crux: What do you think is an essential point this passage is making?
5. From the passage, your discussion, and/or the sermon, what is one thing you are learning about (1) loving God and/or (2) loving others?

WEEK 2: True Self/False Self & Integrity

Mark 3:20–35

(PRE-WORK) REFLECT | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Mark 3:20–35

RELATE | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. What does the word integrity mean to you, or being an authentic, consistent kind of person? How did the sermon shed light on this idea?
3. How did this sermon help you understand what it means to have an identity (given or gifted to us) from God? How do you think this relates to other ways you might find or have an identity?
4. Relatedly, how can the story of Jesus and family from Mark 3 show us and others their value in the eyes of God? How can this be challenging? How might it be healing?
5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

PRAY | Ask God for the gift of knowing more fully who you are in God's eyes, and for courage to live out this identity faithfully and graciously.

Mark 3:20-25 (NLT)

20 One time Jesus entered a house, and the crowds began to gather again. Soon he and his disciples couldn't even find time to eat. 21 When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. "He's out of his mind," they said.

22 But the teachers of religious law who had arrived from Jerusalem said, "He's possessed by Satan, the prince of demons. That's where he gets the power to cast out demons."

23 Jesus called them over and responded with an illustration. "How can Satan cast out Satan?" he asked. 24 "A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse. 25 Similarly, a family splintered by feuding will fall apart. 26 And if Satan is divided and fights against himself, how can he stand? He would never survive. 27 Let me illustrate this further. Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.

28 "I tell you the truth, all sin and blasphemy can be forgiven, 29 but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. This is a sin with eternal consequences." 30 He told them this because they were saying, "He's possessed by an evil spirit."

31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him. They stood outside and sent word for him to come out and talk with them. 32 There was a crowd sitting around Jesus, and someone said, "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you."

33 Jesus replied, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" 34 Then he looked at those around him and said, "Look, these are my mother and brothers. 35 Anyone who does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

SCRIPTURE EXPLORATION QUESTIONS | Mark 3:20-35

This is a new section of the sermon discussion guide! The questions below are adapted from Community Bible Experience and the 5 Cs. They are suited for individuals and groups that want to dig deeper into the Scripture passage for this sermon and some of the surrounding context (passages).

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION |

(1) Read the additional (surrounding) passages and (2) work through the questions below.

While this additional reading won't uncover much of the historical or cultural context of the passage(s) (the sermon might help you with this, however), it does serve to provide additional information for understanding the main passage, key reference points that can illuminate the meanings of the Scripture and how to responsibly apply it today. A tip: be patient and curious with this approach: learning to connect parts of Scripture with others, especially the whole of the Bible, is a lifelong process that can be part of our spiritual growth!

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES |

Alongside Mark 3:20–35 read John 19:25–27 (for a comparison of Jesus on family) and Luke 3:21–22, Luke 4:1–19 (on Jesus' sense of belonging and identity).

QUESTIONS |

1. What did you notice for the first time? What questions did you have?
2. Context: How does the main passage (from the sermon) connect to the surrounding passages you read? If you noticed any connections/differences between them, what meaning(s) might you draw from that?
3. Was there anything that piqued your curiosity (e.g. that surprised you, bothered you, intrigued you)?
4. Crux: What do you think is an essential point this passage is making?
5. From the passage, your discussion, and/or the sermon, what is one thing you are learning about (1) loving God and/or (2) loving others.

WEEK 3: Community In God's Image

Acts 2:42–47

(PRE-WORK) REFLECT | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Acts 2:42–47

RELATE | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. How did the sermon's description of community in the book Acts shed light on what life together as Christians can look like? Did anything stand out to you about being community that reflects God's character?
3. Discuss the details of relationships (in faith community) where there is *mutuality* and *differentiation*, or *interdependence* and *individuality*. What is appealing about this?
4. After hearing this sermon, how do you think we can help create and inhibit communities that show God's design for humanity?
5. How might you approach community or an important relationship differently this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

PRAY | Take a moment in silence before God, reflecting on God's good, relational character. Ask God to come into parts of your community and relationships with others to bring healing, health, and deeper connections.

Acts 2:42-47

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

SCRIPTURE EXPLORATION QUESTIONS | Acts 2:42-47

This is a new section of the sermon discussion guide! The questions below are adapted from Community Bible Experience and the 5 Cs. They are suited for individuals and groups that want to dig deeper into the Scripture passage for this sermon and some of the surrounding context (passages).

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION |

(1) Read the additional (surrounding) passages and (2) work through the questions below.

While this additional reading won't uncover much of the historical or cultural context of the passage(s) (the sermon might help you with this, however), it does serve to provide additional information for understanding the main passage, key reference points that can illuminate the meanings of the Scripture and how to responsibly apply it today. A tip: be patient and curious with this approach: learning to connect parts of Scripture with others, especially the whole of the Bible, is a lifelong process that can be part of our spiritual growth!

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES |

Alongside Acts 2:42–47, read Acts 1:1–9 and Acts 10 to Acts 11:18.

QUESTIONS |

1. What did you notice for the first time? What questions did you have?
2. Context: How does the main passage (from the sermon) connect to the surrounding passages you read? If you noticed any connections/differences between them, what meaning(s) might you draw from that?
3. Was there anything that piqued your curiosity (e.g. that surprised you, bothered you, intrigued you)?
4. Crux: What do you think is an essential point this passage is making?
5. From the passage, your discussion, and/or the sermon, what is one thing you are learning about (1) loving God and/or (2) loving others.

WEEK 4: Learning about others

Proverbs 18:2–3 18:5, 18:17

(PRE-WORK) REFLECT | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Proverbs 18:2–3, 18:5, 18:17

RELATE | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Share about an experience where you and another person had a conflict due to misunderstanding one another, and that could have been avoided (or at least, went better) if approached differently? What do you see in yourself that played some part in this conflict?
3. What are one or two ways you can learn about others by listening and asking questions? What have you found as helpful listening and learning practices (specific questions, things to listen for)?
4. Likewise, drawing from the sermon and personal experiences, what practices can help you share more confidently, honestly, and/or vulnerably with others? What does it look like to approach being vulnerable with discernment and wisdom (acknowledging no two situations are the same)?
5. Consider the spiritual vision here. How can better, more truth-filled relationships help us connect with God and others? What might motivate you to see relationships as part of your spiritual life?
6. How can you apply a point from the discussion about listening, asking questions, or honest sharing to your life and relationships this week?
- 7.

PRAY | Ask God to give you wisdom and discernment to know yourself better to know others. Pray to see God's image in others more clearly, especially in both the important and challenging relationships in our lives.

Proverbs 18, (sermon passages highlighted):

1 An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends
and against all sound judgment starts quarrels.

**2 Fools find no pleasure in understanding
but delight in airing their own opinions.**

**3 When wickedness comes, so does contempt,
and with shame comes reproach.**

4 The words of the mouth are deep waters,
but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing stream.

**5 It is not good to be partial to the wicked
and so deprive the innocent of justice.**

6 The lips of fools bring them strife,
and their mouths invite a beating.

7 The mouths of fools are their undoing,
and their lips are a snare to their very lives.

8 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels;
they go down to the inmost parts.

9 One who is slack in his work
is brother to one who destroys.

10 The name of the LORD is a fortified tower;
the righteous run to it and are safe.

11 The wealth of the rich is their fortified city;
they imagine it a wall too high to scale.

12 Before a downfall the heart is haughty,
but humility comes before honor.

13 To answer before listening—
that is folly and shame.

14 The human spirit can endure in sickness,
but a crushed spirit who can bear?

15 The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge,
for the ears of the wise seek it out.

16 A gift opens the way
and ushers the giver into the presence of the great.

**17 In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right,
until someone comes forward and cross-examines.**

18 Casting the lot settles disputes
and keeps strong opponents apart.

19 A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city;
disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.

20 From the fruit of their mouth a person's stomach is filled;
with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied.

21 The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.

22 He who finds a wife finds what is good
and receives favor from the LORD.

23 The poor plead for mercy,
but the rich answer harshly.

24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

SCRIPTURE EXPLORATION QUESTIONS | Proverbs 18

This is a new section of the sermon discussion guide! The questions below are adapted from Community Bible Experience and the 5 Cs. They are suited for individuals and groups that want to dig deeper into the Scripture passage for this sermon and some of the surrounding context (passages).

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION |

(1) Read the additional (surrounding) passages and (2) work through the questions below.

While this additional reading won't uncover much of the historical or cultural context of the passage(s) (the sermon might help you with this, however), it does serve to provide additional information for understanding the main passage, key reference points that can illuminate the meanings of the Scripture and how to responsibly apply it today. A tip: be patient and curious with this approach: learning to connect parts of Scripture with others, especially the whole of the Bible, is a lifelong process that can be part of our spiritual growth!

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES |

Alongside Proverbs 18:2–3, 18:5, 18:17 read all of Proverbs 18, Proverbs 1, and scan the beginning of Proverbs 10 (this is a new section in Proverbs, focusing on wise sayings).

QUESTIONS |

1. What did you notice for the first time? What questions did you have?
2. Context: How does the main passage (from the sermon) connect to the surrounding passages you read? If you noticed any connections/differences between them, what meaning(s) might you draw from that?
3. Was there anything that piqued your curiosity (e.g. that surprised you, bothered you, intrigued you)?
4. Crux: What do you think is an essential point this passage is making?
5. From the passage, your discussion, and/or the sermon, what is one thing you are learning about (1) loving God and/or (2) loving others?

WEEK 5: Clean Fighting In Community

Matthew 5:3–11

(PRE-WORK) REFLECT | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Matthew 5:3–11

RELATE | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. In conflict, which of these common responses do you resonate with most: fight, flight, freeze, or fawn?
3. Drawing from the sermon, what is the difference between clean fighting and conflict that is destructive in relationships? What parts of clean conflict are new or intriguing to you?
4. How does Matthew 5:3–11, the beatitudes, offer a different vision for relationships and entering into hard conversations?
5. What would it look like for you to apply a new listening skill, something from the biblical vision of peacemaking, or collaboration to a difficult relationship in your life? What is a practical step you can take to implement this, asking for God's grace to assist you?

PRAY | Gives thanks for the grace and peace that God gives to us. Ask that we as individuals as a community might come to better reflect the peacemaking heart of God; also, ask that conflict-ridden places in our world might become places where God's peace reigns. God. Close with a confession: "God, make us peacemakers, like you."

Matthew 5:3-11

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

SCRIPTURE EXPLORATION QUESTIONS | Matthew 5:3-11

This is a new section of the sermon discussion guide! The questions below are adapted from Community Bible Experience and the 5 Cs. They are suited for individuals and groups that want to dig deeper into the Scripture passage for this sermon and some of the surrounding context (passages).

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION |

(1) Read the additional (surrounding) passages and (2) work through the questions below.

While this additional reading won't uncover much of the historical or cultural context of the passage(s) (the sermon might help you with this, however), it does serve to provide additional information for understanding the main passage, key reference points that can illuminate the meanings of the Scripture and how to responsibly apply it today. A tip: be patient and curious with this approach: learning to connect parts of Scripture with others, especially the whole of the Bible, is a lifelong process that can be part of our spiritual growth!

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES |

Alongside Matthew 5:3-11, read Matthew 5:43-48, Isaiah 32:1-8 (a vision of peace/shalom), and Jeremiah 6:14 (on the connection of peace, truth, and justice; and see surrounding passages).

QUESTIONS |

1. What did you notice for the first time? What questions did you have?
2. Context: How does the main passage (from the sermon) connect to the surrounding passages you read? If you noticed any connections/differences between them, what meaning(s) might you draw from that?
3. Was there anything that piqued your curiosity (e.g. that surprised you, bothered you, intrigued you)?
4. Crux: What do you think is an essential point this passage is making?
5. From the passage, your discussion, and/or the sermon, what is one thing you are learning about (1) loving God and/or (2) loving others?

APPENDIX

Below are resources to look into if you are interested in diving deeper into some of the topics covered in this series. If you need resources that more specifically address your own experience, demographic, or faith journey, please reach out to a Highrock pastor or to smallgroups@highrock.org and we will be happy to help!

ONLINE BIBLES

- [Blue Letter Bible](#)
- [Bible Gateway](#)

PRAYER TOOLS

- [The Prayer of Examen: Tracking Our Moods](#)
- [Breath Prayer/Prayer of the Heart](#)
- [Divine/Fixed Hour Prayer](#)
- [SoulCare guide to Imaginative Prayer Spiritual Practice](#)
- [Imaginative Prayer/Ignatian Contemplation](#)
- [SoulCare guide to Recall & Paraphrase Spiritual Practice](#)
- [Lament](#)
- [Laughter and Prayer](#)
- [Palms Up, Palms Down](#)
- [Pray a Psalm in a Nature Setting](#)
- [Praying with your Body](#)
- [Welcoming Prayer](#)

“ICEBREAKER” QUESTIONS

- What was a small win from your week?
- Share a High/Low from your day or week.
- On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing coming into this meeting?
- If you were to describe yourself as a weather forecast today, what would you be? Example: sunny, partly cloudy, rainy with a chance of snow, etc.
- What song would be the theme track for the day you had?

GENERAL RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- [Spiritual Practices](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Parenting & Kids—Understanding each other through Milestones](#)

TIPS FOR GUIDING CONVERSATION

- Allow everyone space to share. It's ok to ask what people are thinking even if they don't volunteer to share right away. But always give people the option to decline to share. Example: "Hey, Fred, you've been a little quiet and I'm curious to know what you think. Would you like to share anything?"
- Remember there aren't necessarily "right" answers. Encourage participants to simply be curious about what came up for them or others without the pressure of feeling like they "should" have thought or felt anything in particular. Example: Instead of asking "What is this story supposed to be communicating?" ask "What did you notice?"
- Embrace the differences. Affirm that different people can come to different conclusions regarding the same thing. Example: "Interestingly, the text reminded Susie of ABC, while it reminded José of XYZ. Both can be present and true."
- Adapt to suit your group's needs. Sometimes conversation is free-flowing and sometimes it's easier to move through discussion questions one at a time. Do what feels suitable for your group, but don't feel pressured to answer/discuss every single question.

- Encourage curiosity by modeling curiosity. Asking someone “Tell me more about XYZ” can be a really simple but effective tool to go deeper in conversation.
- Don't be afraid of silence. It's natural to want to fill silences or pauses in a conversation. But don't be afraid to sit in silence with your group members. Sometimes thoughts just need time to percolate, so don't feel like you have to rush to another question if no one shares immediately.
- Refer back to the Conversation Covenant. This is the posture that we as Highrock hold as we gather in groups. When the conversation gets tough, you can always refer back to the Conversation Covenant to remind the group that everyone has agreed to abide by this covenant in small group meetings.