



JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

Community Group Studies

Contents

Week 1 of 6 · Growing Jesus-shaped Community	4
Week 2 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Know Jesus	9
Week 3 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Treasure Jesus	14
Week 4 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Belong to Jesus	20
Week 5 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Serve Jesus	25
Week 6 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Represent Jesus	30

JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

Week 1 of 6 · Growing Jesus-shaped Community

Colossians 1:15–29

Big idea

Jesus is the centre of everything. He is the one who brings us to himself, grows us into maturity, and forms us into a community that increasingly reflects him.

Getting started

Think about a group or community you've been part of — a sporting team, workplace, family, club or something else.

1. What made that group what it was? Was it the people, a shared purpose, particular values, a leader, or something else?

Every community has something that brings people together and shapes the way they live. As we begin this series, we're asking to what degree this is true for the church — and what it means for Jesus to be at the centre of everything we are and do.

Listening to God's Word

Read Colossians 1:15–23.

Paul gives us a picture of Jesus and his relationship to everything that exists, including the church.

2. What stands out to you about the way Paul describes Jesus? What does this passage tell us about who he is?

3. Look particularly at verses 17–18. What does it mean that all things hold together in Jesus, and that he is the head of the church?

4. According to verses 19–23, what has Jesus done to reconcile us to God? How does this shape our understanding of what it means to belong to him?

Read Colossians 1:24–29.

Paul moves from describing who Jesus is and what he has done to explaining his own ministry.

5. What is Paul working towards in verses 28–29? What does he do, and whose power makes that work possible?

Jesus is not simply the subject of Paul's message. He is the head of the church, the one who reconciles us to God, and the one in whom Paul longs to see everyone mature. Paul works hard towards that goal, but he depends on God's power at work within him.

This is the same Jesus who is growing and shaping our community today.

Becoming Jesus-shaped together

At Blacktown Anglican, we've described our mission as Growing Jesus-shaped Community.

We long to see more people coming to know Jesus, and those who know him becoming increasingly like him. We believe that Jesus is the one who gives this growth, and that he calls us to participate in his work.

Jesus at the centre

It's possible for a church to be busy, welcoming, well-organised and full of good activities — but still lose sight of Jesus.

6. What might be some signs that a church is genuinely centred on Jesus? What might be signs that other things are taking his place?

How could we encourage one another to keep Jesus at the centre of our Community Group?

Growing in two directions

We want to see both more people becoming disciples and disciples becoming more like Jesus.

7. How do those two kinds of growth belong together? What might happen if we focused on one but neglected the other?

Thinking about our Community Group and BAC more broadly, where do you see encouraging signs of growth? Where would you love to see more?

Growing as a community

Paul's goal is to present people mature in Jesus (v. 28). That maturity is personal, but it is never merely private. Jesus is forming a people who belong to him and to one another.

8. What would you hope a visitor to church might notice about the way we relate to one another if Jesus were increasingly shaping our community?

How might remembering what Jesus has done to reconcile us to God change the way we treat one another?

What might need to change in the way we relate to one another for us to become more like that?

Taking a step together

We've talked about what it means for Jesus to be at the centre of our church and for him to grow us into maturity.

9. What is one thing we could do together over the coming weeks to help us keep Jesus at the centre and encourage one another to grow?

It might involve the way we welcome people, how we encourage one another, how we use our time together, or something else that has emerged from the discussion.

Choose something realistic that the group can revisit as the series continues.

Praying together

Thank Jesus for who he is and for reconciling us to God through his death.

Pray that he would continue to grow our Community Group and Blacktown Anglican — both by bringing more people to know him and by making us increasingly like him.

Ask for his help to follow through on the step you've identified together.

JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

Week 2 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Know Jesus

John 15:1–11

Big idea

Jesus-shaped people are life-long learners of Jesus, growing in their relationship with him through his Word and by his Spirit. As we remain in Jesus together, he shapes our lives to become increasingly like his.

Getting started

Think about someone you've come to know really well over the years — perhaps a close friend, family member, or someone you've worked alongside for a long time.

1. How did that relationship develop? What helped you move from simply knowing about that person to genuinely knowing them?

Every relationship develops over time. We get to know people by spending time with them, listening to them, sharing experiences and learning to trust them.

As we continue exploring what it means to be a Jesus-shaped community, we're beginning with the first of our five dimensions: **Know Jesus.**

But what does it actually mean to know Jesus? And how can we grow in knowing someone we cannot physically see?

Listening to God's Word

Read John 15:1–11.

Jesus uses a familiar picture from everyday life to describe the relationship between himself and his disciples.

2. What stands out to you about the picture Jesus uses? What does it teach us about the relationship between Jesus, his Father and his disciples?

3. Jesus repeatedly tells his disciples to remain in him (vv. 4–7). What do you think it means to remain in Jesus? Why does he describe this relationship as essential rather than optional?

4. What does Jesus say about bearing fruit (vv. 2, 4–5, 8)? What do you think this fruit might look like in the lives of his disciples?

What does the picture of a vine and its branches teach us about where this fruit comes from?

Jesus doesn't tell his disciples to make themselves fruitful through greater effort. He calls them to remain connected to him, because apart from him they can do nothing.

5. Look at verses 7–11. What connections does Jesus make between his words, obedience, love and joy?

How does this challenge the way we sometimes think about what it means to follow Jesus?

Jesus describes a relationship in which his disciples remain in his love, listen to his words, obey his commands and share in his joy. Knowing Jesus is not simply acquiring information about him. It is a living relationship that increasingly shapes every part of our lives.

Becoming Jesus-shaped together

At Blacktown Anglican, we describe the first dimension of Jesus-shaped People as **Know Jesus**.

We want to be life-long learners of Jesus, growing in our knowledge of him through his Word and by his Spirit. Not simply so that we know more, but so that we increasingly become like the one we know.

Knowing Jesus, not just knowing about him

It's possible to know a great deal about someone without really knowing them. And it's possible to have known someone for years without our relationship growing much deeper.

6. Looking back over your own relationship with Jesus, what has helped you recognise that you're growing in knowing him?

What might be some signs that someone knows a lot about Jesus but isn't actually growing in their relationship with him?

How does Jesus' invitation to remain in him challenge the way you think about your own relationship with him?

Remaining in Jesus together

In John 15, Jesus speaks to his disciples together. Each branch must remain connected to the vine, but Jesus is forming a people who share their life in him.

Our relationship with Jesus is personal, but it was never intended to be private.

7. How can our relationships with one another help us remain in Jesus and grow in knowing him? What have other Christians done that has genuinely helped you know Jesus better?

What might we need to change about the way we spend time together if growing in knowing Jesus became a greater priority?

Knowing Jesus through his Word

Jesus tells his disciples that they are already clean because of the word he has spoken to them (v. 3), and that his words are to remain in them (v. 7).

One of the primary ways we come to know Jesus is by listening to him through Scripture.

8. How can we help one another move beyond simply reading or studying the Bible to genuinely knowing Jesus through his Word?

What might this look like in our Community Group? What might it look like in our conversations and relationships outside our regular meetings?

Taking a step together

Jesus doesn't call us to produce fruit independently. He calls us to remain in him.

9. Think about the relationships within our Community Group. What's one practical way we could help one another grow in knowing Jesus over the coming weeks?

Perhaps it's changing something about the way we approach Scripture together, encouraging one another outside our regular meetings, sharing more honestly about our walk with Jesus, or finding opportunities to pray together.

Rather than creating another activity for the sake of it, consider what would genuinely help your group remain in Jesus together.

Praying together

Thank Jesus that he has brought us into a living relationship with himself, and that we do not need to produce fruit apart from him.

Ask him to help us remain in his love, listen to his words, and experience the joy he promises.

Pray that our Community Group and Blacktown Anglican would become communities where people increasingly know Jesus and help one another to know him more deeply.

JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

Week 3 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Treasure Jesus

Philippians 3:1–14 and Matthew 13:44–46

Big idea

Jesus-shaped people treasure Jesus above everything else. As we discover his surpassing worth, he reshapes what we value, where we find our joy, and how we live together.

Getting started

We all have things we value deeply — things we're willing to spend our time, money or energy on, or make sacrifices to keep.

1. What's something you've valued enough to make a significant sacrifice for? What made it worth the cost?

Sometimes the things we treasure most are revealed not simply by what we say matters to us, but by the choices we make.

As we continue exploring what it means to be Jesus-shaped People, we've moved from *Know Jesus* to *Treasure Jesus*. But what does it actually mean to treasure Jesus above everything else?

Listening to God's Word

Read Philippians 3:1–11.

Paul describes a dramatic change in the way he values the things that once defined his life.

2. What were the things Paul previously considered valuable (vv. 4–6)? Why might they have mattered so much to him?

3. How has Paul's assessment of these things changed (vv. 7–8)? What has caused him to see them differently?

What do you think Paul means when he describes knowing Jesus as being of "surpassing worth"?

4. Look at verses 9–11. What does Paul gain through Jesus that he could never achieve for himself?

How does this help us understand why Jesus is worth more to Paul than everything he has lost?

Read Philippians 3:12–14.

Paul has come to know Jesus, but his relationship with him is far from finished.

5. What do these verses tell us about Paul's ongoing priorities and ambitions?

What does it mean that Paul presses on because Jesus has already taken hold of him (v. 12)?

Read Matthew 13:44–46.

Jesus tells two short parables about discovering something of extraordinary value.

6. What do these parables teach us about the value of God's kingdom? How does this help us understand what it means to treasure Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus emphasises the joy of the man who discovers the treasure?

Paul's life has been transformed by discovering the surpassing worth of Jesus. He hasn't simply exchanged one set of religious obligations for another. He has found someone worth more than everything else.

And because Jesus has taken hold of him, Paul continues pressing on to know him more fully.

Becoming Jesus-shaped together

At Blacktown Anglican, we describe the second dimension of Jesus-shaped People as **Treasure Jesus**.

We want Jesus to be our deepest joy and greatest treasure — not simply one priority among many, but the one who shapes everything else we value.

What captures our hearts?

There are many good things in life worth enjoying: family, friendships, work, security, achievements, possessions and opportunities.

But even good things can begin to occupy a place in our hearts that belongs to Jesus.

7. What are some of the things that compete with Jesus for our deepest affection, trust or loyalty?

How might we recognise when something good has become more important to us than Jesus?

Does this mean we should give up anything in our lives that might compete with Jesus? Why or why not?

A community that treasures Jesus

What we treasure shapes the way we live. That is true not only for individuals, but also for communities.

A church can say that Jesus is its greatest treasure while its decisions, priorities and relationships tell a different story.

8. If Jesus really is our greatest treasure, what difference should that make to the way we live together as a church, particularly in how we use our time, money, abilities and opportunities?

Where do you already see people at BAC demonstrating that Jesus is worth more than anything else? What stands out to you about their example?

Thinking about our own Community Group, is there anything we might need to change about our shared priorities to better reflect how much we treasure Jesus?

Taking a step together

Paul describes everything else as loss compared with the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus. And the man in Jesus' parable joyfully gives up everything to gain the treasure.

This week, rather than choosing another activity for our Community Group, let's take some time to reflect honestly.

9. What is one area of your life where you would like Jesus to become a greater treasure?

You might like to share your answer with the group or simply reflect on it quietly.

As a group, share one thing you've been encouraged by or challenged about in the way we treasure Jesus together. How might that shape the way we live as a community?

Praying together

Thank Jesus for the extraordinary privilege of knowing him and for the righteousness we receive through faith in him.

Ask God to help us see Jesus' surpassing worth more clearly, particularly when other things compete for our hearts.

Pray that our Community Group and Blacktown Anglican would increasingly be communities whose joy, generosity, relationships and priorities show that Jesus is our greatest treasure.

JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

Week 4 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Belong to Jesus

Ephesians 2:11–22

Big idea

Jesus brings us near to God and makes us members of his family. As people who belong to Jesus, we belong to one another, learning to love, welcome and care for each other as his people.

Getting started

Think about a time when you joined a new group, moved somewhere unfamiliar, or found yourself among people who already knew one another.

1. What helped you feel that you genuinely belonged, rather than simply being welcomed as a visitor?

There's a difference between being included in an activity and knowing that you're part of a community.

As we continue exploring what it means to be Jesus-shaped People, we've considered what it means to **Know Jesus** and **Treasure Jesus**. This week, we're thinking about what it means to **Belong to Jesus** — and why that necessarily changes our relationships with one another.

Listening to God's Word

Read Ephesians 2:11–18.

Paul reminds Gentile Christians of what their lives were like before Jesus brought them into God's people.

2. How does Paul describe their situation before they knew Jesus (vv. 11–12)? What had they been excluded from?

3. What has changed because of Jesus (vv. 13–18)? What has he done to bring people near to God and to one another?

Why is it significant that Jesus doesn't simply bring two groups closer together, but creates one new humanity?

4. According to verses 14–16, what barriers has Jesus broken down? How has he made peace possible?

What does it mean that this peace was accomplished through the cross?

Read Ephesians 2:19–22.

Paul uses three pictures to describe the new identity Jesus has given his people.

5. What do the pictures of citizenship, family and a building teach us about what it means to belong to God's people?

What stands out to you about the way Paul describes the church as a place where God lives by his Spirit?

Jesus hasn't simply saved a collection of individuals who happen to meet together. Through his death, he has reconciled us to God and to one another, making us members of his household and building us together into his dwelling place.

Becoming Jesus-shaped together

At Blacktown Anglican, we describe the third dimension of Jesus-shaped People as **Belong to Jesus.**

Belonging to Jesus means belonging to his people. We're not simply individuals who share similar beliefs or attend the same services. Jesus has brought us into his family, where we're called to share our lives together.

From strangers to family

Paul says that those who were once foreigners and strangers are now members of God's household (v. 19).

Family belonging involves more than being recognised or welcomed. It means sharing life, taking responsibility for one another, and knowing that we have a place.

6. What difference should it make to our relationships if we genuinely see one another as members of the same family?

What might prevent someone from feeling that they truly belong, even if they've been attending for some time?

How can we, as a Community Group, help others experience a genuine sense of belonging at church?

One new humanity

The divisions between Jews and Gentiles in Paul's day were deep and longstanding. Yet Jesus brought them together through his death.

Our church includes people of different ages, cultures, backgrounds and experiences. These differences can enrich our community, but they can also make genuine belonging challenging.

7. What might it look like for our church to demonstrate the unity Jesus has created across our differences?

How can we move beyond simply being friendly to people who are different from us, towards genuinely sharing life with them?

Being built together

Paul describes Christians as being built together into a dwelling place for God (vv. 21–22). None of us is meant to stand alone.

8. What might be missing from our understanding of church if we think of belonging primarily in terms of attending services or participating in activities?

How could we help one another move from simply attending church to genuinely sharing in the life of God's people?

Taking a step together

Jesus has already made us members of his household. We don't create that belonging through our efforts, but we are called to live it out.

9. Earlier, we reflected on how our Community Group can help others experience a genuine sense of belonging at church. What is one thing you could personally do to help make that happen?

It might be someone who is new, someone whose circumstances have changed, someone who feels disconnected, or someone we've simply never taken the time to know.

Take a moment to consider how you could personally express the belonging Jesus has given us. You might like to share an idea with the group or simply commit to following it through.

Praying together

Thank Jesus that through his death he has brought us near to God and made us members of his family.

Pray that our Community Group and Blacktown Anglican would increasingly reflect the unity Jesus has created, especially across differences of age, culture and background.

Ask God to help us recognise those who feel disconnected or overlooked, and to love one another as people who truly belong together in Jesus.

JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

Week 5 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Serve Jesus

Mark 10:35–45 and Acts 20:32–35

Big idea

Jesus-shaped people follow Jesus in serving others with love and generosity. Because Jesus gave himself for us, we use what he has given us to bless others, build up his church and reflect his love to the world.

Getting started

Think about someone who has made a real difference in your life by serving you — perhaps through their time, generosity, practical help or simply being there when you needed them.

1. What did they do, and why did it make such a difference to you?

Some of the most significant ways people influence our lives have little to do with their position, achievements or recognition. Often, it's the way they've given themselves for the good of others.

As we continue exploring Jesus-shaped People, we've seen that knowing Jesus, treasuring Jesus and belonging to Jesus are all part of the life he is growing among us.

This week, we're considering what it means to *Serve Jesus*.

Listening to God's Word

Read Mark 10:35–45.

James and John approach Jesus with a request that reveals something about how they understand greatness.

2. What do James and John want from Jesus (vv. 35–37)? What does their request reveal about their priorities?

3. How do the other disciples respond (v. 41)? What does this suggest about their own understanding of greatness?

4. How does Jesus challenge their understanding of greatness and leadership (vv. 42–44)? What makes his definition so different?

What might it mean to become great by becoming the servant of others?

5. Look carefully at verse 45. How does Jesus describe his own mission? Why is this verse essential for understanding what it means to serve him?

What is the significance of Jesus giving his life as a ransom for many?

Jesus doesn't simply tell his disciples to serve others. He points to himself as the one who came not to be served, but to serve — ultimately giving his life to rescue us.

His service is the foundation and pattern for ours.

Read Acts 20:32–35.

Paul reminds the Ephesian elders of the way he has lived and served among them.

6. What do you notice about Paul's attitude towards work, possessions and helping others? How does his example reflect the teaching of Jesus?

What might Jesus' words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," teach us about the joy of serving?

Becoming Jesus-shaped together

At Blacktown Anglican, we describe the fourth dimension of Jesus-shaped People as **Serve Jesus**.

Jesus has served us with extraordinary love and generosity. As his people, we're called to follow his example — using our time, abilities, resources and opportunities for the good of others.

Serving Jesus isn't limited to a particular role or ministry. It's a way of life shaped by the one who gave himself for us.

Greatness through serving

Our world often measures greatness through success, influence, wealth or recognition. Even in church, it's possible to value the most visible contributions while overlooking quieter acts of service.

7. What might it look like for us to adopt Jesus' understanding of greatness in our everyday lives and relationships?

Where have you seen people quietly and faithfully serving others at BAC?

Are there forms of service we tend to overlook or undervalue?

Serving with what we've been given

God has given each of us different abilities, circumstances, resources and opportunities. We won't all serve in the same ways, but every member of Jesus' people has something to contribute.

8. How could we become a community where people increasingly use what they've been given to serve one another and those around us?

What might prevent people from serving, even when they want to? How could we help one another overcome those barriers?

How can we make sure our service extends beyond the people who are already part of our church?

Taking a step together

Jesus calls us to follow him in serving others, but he doesn't call us to earn his love through our efforts. We serve because he has already given himself for us.

9. Think about the people God has placed in your life. Where might you have an opportunity to serve someone in a way that reflects the love of Jesus?

It might be within your family, workplace, neighbourhood, Community Group or the wider church.

Take a moment to reflect on what you have to offer, and who might benefit from it. If appropriate, share your thoughts with someone in the group who can encourage you.

Praying together

Thank Jesus that he came not to be served, but to serve, giving his life as a ransom for many.

Ask God to shape our attitudes so that we increasingly find joy in serving others rather than seeking recognition or status.

Pray that our Community Group and Blacktown Anglican would be known for generous, humble and joyful service — within our church family and throughout our city.

JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

Week 6 of 6 · Jesus-shaped People Represent Jesus

Matthew 9:35–38

Big idea

Jesus-shaped people represent Jesus in the world through their words and actions. As we grow to become more like him, we reflect his compassion, share his good news and help others come to know him.

Getting started

Sometimes, our experience of just one person can shape the way we think about an entire group or community.

1. Have you ever had your opinion of a group, organisation or community changed by an interaction with just one person? What happened?

Whether we realise it or not, the way we live can shape how others understand the people and communities we're connected to.

As we reach the final week of our series, we're considering what it means to *Represent Jesus*. How can our lives help people see what Jesus is like — and come to know him for themselves?

Listening to God's Word

Read Matthew 9:35–38.

Matthew gives us a summary of Jesus' ministry and a glimpse into his heart for the people around him.

2. What do you notice about the different things Jesus is doing in verse 35? What does this reveal about his priorities?

3. How does Jesus respond when he sees the crowds (v. 36)? What does Matthew tell us about why he feels this way?

What does the picture of sheep without a shepherd help us understand about the people's needs?

4. Jesus describes the crowds as a plentiful harvest with few workers (vv. 37–38). What does this picture tell us about the opportunity and the need?

Why do you think Jesus tells his disciples to pray, rather than simply telling them to work harder?

Read Matthew 10:1, 5–8.

Immediately after calling his disciples to pray for workers, Jesus sends them out to continue his work.

5. How does Jesus involve his disciples in his mission? What connections do you see between what Jesus has been doing and what he sends them to do?

What does this teach us about the relationship between following Jesus and representing him to others?

Jesus sees people with compassion. He responds to their needs, proclaims the good news of the kingdom and calls his disciples to participate in his work.

Representing Jesus begins with seeing people as he sees them — and allowing his compassion to shape both our words and our actions.

Becoming Jesus-shaped together

At Blacktown Anglican, we describe the fifth dimension of Jesus-shaped People as **Represent Jesus**.

We want our lives to reflect the character of Jesus and make his good news known. This happens through our everyday relationships, our care for others, and our willingness to speak about the hope we have in him.

Seeing people as Jesus sees them

Jesus doesn't look at the crowds with irritation, indifference or contempt. He sees their need and responds with compassion.

6. What might change about the way we relate to people if we increasingly saw them through the eyes of Jesus?

Who are the people we might find easiest to overlook, avoid or misunderstand?

Where do you already see Jesus' compassion being reflected in the life of our church?

Representing Jesus in word and action

Jesus' ministry included both proclaiming the good news and demonstrating compassion through his actions.

Neither his words nor his actions were disconnected from his mission to bring people to God.

7. What might it look like for us to represent Jesus faithfully through both our words and our actions?

What can happen when Christians emphasise one but neglect the other?

How can our Community Group help one another grow in confidence and compassion as we make Jesus known?

A Jesus-shaped City

Our vision at Blacktown Anglican is **to see a Jesus-shaped City**.

We know that only Jesus can transform people's hearts. But we long to see his influence spread throughout Blacktown as more people come to know him and his people increasingly reflect his character.

8. If our church became increasingly Jesus-shaped, what difference might that make to the people and communities around us?

Where do you already see encouraging signs of this happening?

What opportunities might God be giving us to represent Jesus more faithfully in our city?

Taking a step together

Over the past six weeks, we've explored what it means to be a community shaped by Jesus.

We want to be people who:

- **Know Jesus** — growing in our relationship with him.
- **Treasure Jesus** — finding our deepest joy and greatest treasure in him.
- **Belong to Jesus** — sharing life together as his people.
- **Serve Jesus** — using what we've been given for the good of others.
- **Represent Jesus** — reflecting his character and making him known.

These aren't five separate tasks to complete. They're different dimensions of the life Jesus is growing among us.

9. Looking back over these five dimensions, where have you been most encouraged? Where would you most love to see Jesus continue growing and shaping us — personally, in our Community Group, and across BAC?

Take time to share your reflections together. Celebrate what Jesus is already doing, and consider what it might look like to keep participating in his work beyond this series.

Praying together

Thank Jesus for bringing us to himself, making us his people, and continuing to shape us into his likeness.

Pray that we would increasingly reflect his compassion, speak his good news with confidence and love, and see the people around us as he sees them.

Pray for Blacktown — that more people would come to know Jesus, that his people would grow in maturity, and that through our lives together we might see a Jesus-shaped City.