



# SHARING SCRIPTURE

## Discover • Jesus • Together

### **An Exciting Way to Get Involved**

**For use:** August 30 - September 5

**Texts:** Genesis 1:1, 2, 26; Exodus 18:21-25; 1 Corinthians 12:12-25; Acts 16:11-15, 40; Acts 4:31; Acts 12:12

The Marin County Public Health Department is promoting a strategy to help people socialize in safety. They are encouraging “Social Bubbles” of twelve people or less, which allow for safe socialization. A social bubble is a group of friends or family members outside of a person’s household who agree to limit their in-person social activities to only each other for at least three weeks. Individuals also agree to join only one social bubble at a time. “A lot of effort has gone into finding ways to reopen our local businesses and economy, but the friendships and social lives of our residents are just as crucial to our community’s stability during the COVID-19 crisis,” said Dr. Matt Willis, Marin’s Public Health Officer. “This model will allow each of us to begin to engage with people from outside of our household unit as safely as possible.”

New Zealand and a few other nations successfully pioneered this model early on in the pandemic. The bubbles include safety protocols during these gatherings: physical distancing, face coverings, frequent hand washing, staying home when sick, and following proper quarantine guidelines if a member of the social bubble is exposed to COVID-19. “We know families and friends miss each other and want to socialize together,” says Dr. Willis. “This model provides guardrails so small gatherings can occur in a safe way.” [1]

The small group concept is nothing new; our lesson this week indicates that it was originally God’s idea. In fact, God is in essence a small group—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The very heart of the Godhead is built upon the relationships that occur between what Ellen White calls “the heavenly trio.” God, as a God of love, is all about relationships. There is no true love without relationships between people so they can fully experience that love.

During this current COVID crisis, small groups are ideally suited to provide for

the spiritual needs of our members and the community. The Bible uses the illustration of the human body as an example of how the church functions as the body of Christ. As each member functions within the larger body, according to their spiritual gifts and abilities, we can also function just as well within the context of the small group. These groups are built for service. Leaders, assistant leaders, hosts, and the other members of the group each offer their gifts for service to enhance the group experience. A well-functioning small group is always looking for ways to grow and develop others for service.

During this current COVID crisis, small groups are ideally suited to provide for the spiritual needs of our members and the community. While it may not be safe to meet in large congregations in some regions of your country, a small group can provide the logistical setting for easy physical distancing. Since the members of a small group naturally care about the well-being of the others in the group, even those who disregard the severity of the pandemic are more likely to follow proper guidelines.

In this current environment, small groups can become the setting where true love flourishes.

~Chuck Burkeen

[1] <https://www.marincounty.org/main/county-press-releases/press-releases/2020/hhs-covid-social-bubbles-061920>

## For Reflection

**Connecting:** Meet with your online/virtual Sabbath school group. Each one share the names of three Bible characters that you would invite to your small group. Why would you like to invite them? What character traits would each one bring to enhance your group experience?

**Sharing:** What is your favorite part of small group life?

1. Praying together
2. Sharing life experiences with each other
3. Studying the scriptures
4. Social activities
5. Outreach and helping projects
6. Other:

**Applying:** Apart from this group, do you have any other small "social bubble" get-togethers that meet on a regular basis? These can include any group activity of a spiritual or secular nature where you gather with a specific collection of people, online or in-person. What benefit do you gain from these groups? What benefit do you bring to these groups?

**Valuing:** How well do you integrate into a small group? Do you mix easily with the group? Do you find it hard to open up and be vulnerable around others? Connect with someone that you can safely share your thoughts with on a video chat and pray for each other.

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Three decades ago, we created this resource for small groups and Sabbath school classes, and it continues to bless so many people worldwide. Thank you for your continued interest in these biblical themes and what they mean to your life and those people with whom you share it.

Paul Richardson  
Executive Director

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