

THE CONSTITUTION
FOR A NEW KINGDOM

*Sermon on
the Mount*



SERIES COMPANION / HIGHROCK 2026

INTRODUCTION

What does it look like to live in a kingdom where the last are first, the mourning are comforted, and the peacemakers are called children of God?

In His most famous teaching, Jesus didn't just give us a list of moral suggestions; he created the foundation for an entirely new kingdom. Sermon on the Mount serves as the "Constitution" for a new kind of kingdom, a radical blueprint for a way of life that turns the values of our world upside down.

In this series, we will explore the heart of Jesus' message as He calls us to move beyond surface-level religion and into a deep, transformative relationship with Him. From the grace-filled promises of the Beatitudes to the challenging call to love our enemies, we will discover how these ancient words provide the foundation upon which we are called to build our entire lives.

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 13)

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.*

Sermon	Topics
Week 1	Jesus calls the disciples: Matthew 4:17-24

Week 2	Salt and Light, Law and Prophets: Matthew 5:13-20
Week 3	Retaliation and love of enemies: Matthew 5:38-48
Week 4	Lord's prayer: Matthew 6:5-15
Week 5	Treasure, sound eye, two masters: Matthew 6:19-24
Week 6	Do not worry: Matthew 6:25-34
Week 7	Do not judge, a tree and its fruit: Matthew 7:1-5 & 15-20

*For weeks 1 and 2 and weeks 3 and 4, use the topic/passage in the Sermon Discussion Guide covered in the sermon from your Highrock congregation on Sunday. The other topics/passage will be covered the following week.

WEEKLY FORMAT

SERMON DISCUSSION

(PRE-WORK) REFLECT: Listen to the sermon, read weekly selections/view video links (if provided), read scripture passages (used in the sermon), and answer reflection 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

- The Sermon on the Mount is sometimes considered the heart of Jesus's teachings and his call for us as disciples. Before we begin with it, reflect on the following: What are you bringing into this sermon series? What are some of the concerns, questions, and joys in your life right now?
- Reflecting on these concerns, questions, and joys, how might you begin to bring them to God – in prayer, worship, and your devotional life and practices? Is there something you feel nudged to bring up in the group conversations for this series?
- In the spirit of being a follower of Jesus, what do you hope to learn from the Sermon on the Mount? What are you excited about? What are you particularly open to right now? What might be challenging?

WEEK 1: Jesus Calls the Disciples

Matthew 4:17-24

(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 4:17-24

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. What does this question mean to you right now: Where in your life would you like to begin again or start anew? What feelings or ideas does it raise for you?
3. If you know or have heard this biblical story before, has anything about it been puzzling to you before, like Pastor Taylor shared about his own experiences with it?
4. How did this sermon help you understand what it was like when Jesus invited the (soon-to-be) disciples to follow him, seemingly out of the blue?
5. What's something that feels challenging about Jesus's call to follow him in your life right now? If following Jesus comes with costs, is there something that helps you see why it's worthwhile?
6. What, if anything, did this sermon or passage inspire in you? How did it make you want something in your relationship with God (or perhaps involvement in church or something God is calling you to)? Share how you can see yourself taking a step to pursue this a little more.

PRAY | God, help us to hear the words, "make a turn in our lives" (repent), and do what is asked of us. And help us to do what is asked of us with the joy and confidence and courage that comes from belief that you are a God who is on the move, who is healing and bringing us together in the most surprising of ways. Amen.

Matthew 4:17-24

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them.

WEEK 2: Salt and Light, Law and Prophets

Matthew 5:13-20

*The sermon topics for this series will alternate locations (Arlington/MetroWest) for weeks 1 and 2. Check to see which theme/passage was covered in the sermon from your Highrock congregation on Sunday. The other theme/passage will be covered in the following week.

(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 5:13-20

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. Pastor Richard filled out the meaning of "salt" in this passage as our calling to *preserve* what comes from God's grace and share it with others. What comes to mind when you think about a gift or passion that you enjoy sharing with others? How might you see this as part of your faith, a way to serve God?
3. What could it look like to both share gifts with others while being open to receiving them from others as well? Have you seen examples of people who do this well? What do you think helps them do that?
4. Have you known home environments that emphasized achievement at the expense of belonging, as Pastor Richard mentioned? What might Jesus's saying that we *are* salt and light impact how we see ourselves? What difference could it make for you?
5. What is the most appealing thing to you about living a life based in or inspired by forgiveness?
6. 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 | God, are we really the light of the world? At times, it doesn't seem that way. But let it be so. Make us more and more into the image of Christ, who is the light that illuminates us, and in whom all things find their true purpose and meaning.

Matthew 5:13-20

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19 Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly Questions? smallgroups@highrock.org

will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

WEEK 3: Retaliation and love of enemies

Matthew 5:38-48

(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 5:38-48

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 initial impressions (judgment free!): As you read this passage together, do you find it more encouraging or discouraging, challenging or invitational for a new way of relating to God and others? Share a factor or two that might influence how you're initial receiving or relating to these words?
3. Pastor Dave suggests that Jesus was not calling for passivity or enduring abuse, but offering ways to resist aggression, self-righteousness, and evil—anything that hinders love. Share your thoughts and reflections. How does this perspective deepen your understanding of this passage or connect with your own life experiences?
4. Reflect as a group on this line from the sermon: "Real love is not making people feel good; it's the willingness to suffer for their real good."
5. During the week we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy, consider one area – a relationship, a challenging situation or problem in our world – that could use healing or repair? Drawing from Jesus's call to radical love, how could you begin to approach this differently this week (and going ahead)?
6. 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 | Our heavenly Father, there is perhaps no harder teaching than love for an enemy. We ask first that you help us to better understand what that means. Who is our enemy? And we ask that, second, you give us all the practical wisdom, a true discernment, that we need in order to be faithful to this teaching. Remind us that you love us even when we were your enemies. And more and more, make our hearts exceedingly generous. All of this is only possible through your Spirit, who wills to make us more like Christ. Let it be so. Amen.

Matthew 5:38-48

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing Questions? smallgroups@highrock.org

that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

WEEK 4: Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:5-15

(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 6:5-15

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 would you describe your comfort level with praying, individually and in public (with other people)? Is this something you desire to grow in? Share about when or places you feel both less and more comfortable praying.
3. Pastor John framed the beginning of his sermon on the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6) as an invitation to greater *authenticity* in prayer. How does that resonate with you, or what comes to mind when you think about authenticity in prayer? Pay attention to how this might look different for others.
4. What would it mean for you to "give up control" when praying? How could that change the way you pray?
5. Pastor John regularly called this prayer (the Lord's prayer) dangerous, radical, or we could add, risky. Did any of his descriptions of the Lord's Prayer stand out to you? What, if any, parts of the Lord's prayer might be risky (in a good way) for you in your spiritual life, and why?
6. Pastor John describes forgiveness as deciding that the other person (who has wronged you) doesn't owe you anything. Does that shed any light on verse 12 for you ("forgive us our debts (sins) as we also have forgiven our debtors (those who have sinned against us)? What vision for relationships do you think Jesus desires for us here?
7. "Deliver us from evil" is a confession of weakness, our need for God's help. How would you like to see greater honesty between you and God? How about in relationships with others (maybe one relationship in particular?). How might this prayer help you move towards that authenticity, or allow you to invite God into that relationship?
8. 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 |

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

For yours is the kingdom and power and glory forever.

Amen.

Matthew 6:5-15

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 "This, then, is how you should pray:

 "Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,

 10 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.

 11 Give us today our daily bread.

 12 And forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.

 13 And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from the evil one.'

14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

WEEK 5: Treasure, Sound Eye, Two Masters

Matthew 6:9-14

(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 6:9-14

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. Pastor Prashan emphasized the idea from this passage that we cannot have two ultimate loyalties (God, money). Are there ways you see yourself loving material things over God, or might be? What does that look like and how are you (even in the moment) reflecting on this challenge?
3. Have you experienced times when a sacrifice you've made or an act of faith on your part has had surprising results, something that has encouraged you to keep loving God? If so, consider sharing with the group.
4. Pastor Prashan shared about some of his family's sacrifices and God's provision. What do you see in that story, or in stories like this you've heard from others? What might they mean for you right now?
5. Did this sermon help you see why God might not want us to love money (material things) above all else, why that doesn't lead to the best life? How so?
6. Pastor Prashan offered some practical tips: consider how you spend your time, tithing, and how we measure success. Consider one of these for discussion and how you might apply ideas from this sermon.
7. How might your daily perspective change by thinking about your life in light of its end, or what you believe God wants it to look like? What does that mean to you?
8. 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 |

God, creator of all things, all things belong to you. Forgive us for all the ways that put other things, created things, before you. This should not be so, but too often it is. Change the desires of our heart so that we would recognize what is really valuable and worth giving our lives to. And make this most tangible for us, God. Show us where there is need, where there is suffering, in the world around us, and help us to look for your tender hand in those places and how it can guide us towards the life that is real life. For you are at work in those places, and there we may discover unexpected light.

Matthew 6:9-14

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

WEEK 6: Do Not Worry

Matthew 6:25-34

(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 6:25-34

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. Would you consider yourself a 'worrier'? What kinds of things do you often worry about? What would you want to worry about less?
3. Pastor Dave offered some specific tips from the Apostle Paul (Phillipians 4:4-7) on how to stop worrying. Go over them one by one. Which ones do you resonate with most? How might they be challenging and how might they be helpful? Most importantly, how can you see yourself implementing them in your life? Here they are:
 - 1) Notice that you're anxious
 - 2) Turn your fears into prayers
 - 3) Remember God's faithfulness in the past
4. Pastor Dave also gave us a simple prayer: "Jesus, I trust you." How do you think this simple prayer can help you in times of worry?
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 |

Jesus, I trust you. Jesus, I trust you. Jesus, we trust you. Jesus we trust you. Jesus, I trust you. Jesus, I trust you. Amen.

Matthew 6:24-34

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

WEEK 7: Do Not Judge, a Tree and its Fruits

Matthew 7:1-5, 15-20

(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, 15-20

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. Once the sermon is made public, a question that connects to the content of the sermon will appear here.
3. Once the sermon is made public, a question that connects to the content of the sermon will appear here.
4. Once the sermon is made public, a question that connects to the content of the sermon will appear here.
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 |

God, too often we make decisions and judgments that lead to hurt, pain and confusion. You judge justly, and you also judge graciously. Teach us to look inside ourselves to see more clearly, to root out from ourselves what displeases you, that we might be able to see and discern and judge with greater wisdom. And give us the gift of your Holy Spirit, who can turn us from evil and towards the ways that lead to life and right relationships. Amen.

Matthew 7:1-5, 15-20

7 "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.

15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

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.