

artisan church

# Community

values exploration

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this kit is to help you to explore what Artisan's values mean to you, how you are living them out in your day-to-day life, and to foster collective re-engagement of the Artisan community to develop ways we can more fully embody our values.

This kit can be completed by individuals, friends, families, or small groups -whatever is right for you. You should complete the activities at your own pace, but we would suggest to try to work through one activity from each section (Define, Reflect, Immerse, Challenge, and Act) at a time.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Journaling activities can be done on an individual basis or in community. You can choose to write down your answers in a notebook, or share with others.

When practicing meditation, particularly if you are new to the practice, it is important that you forgive yourself for being distracted. We suggest meditating for 5-10 minutes, but an even shorter period will work, just find what works for you. Find a quiet place and set a timer to countdown so you are not distracted by the time. Sit in a posture that is comfortable, but still feels like you are alert. Take a few deep breaths to begin and consciously relax your shoulders and other tense areas. The meditations suggested will give you a focus, or you can focus on your breath. Every time you notice yourself distracted, gently guide your attention back to your focus, without judgement. Try to increase the amount of time you meditate as you go along.



# Define

## Activity 1: Journaling

**How do you define community?**

**Describe a time you recently experienced the value of community.**

**Ask two people what they think of when they hear the word community.**

Community is defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary as:

**Com·mu·ni·ty** *noun*

1: a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

a: a group of people living together in one place, especially one practicing common ownership.

b: a particular area or place considered together with its inhabitants.

c: the people of a district or country considered collectively, especially in the context of social values and responsibilities.

2: a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.

**How does this definition compare to or change how you define community?**

## Activity 2: Word Association Exercise

Write down the words that pop into your head as you consider the word community. Alternatively, if you have access to the

internet, visit [Visuwords.com](http://Visuwords.com) and type in the word “community”. By double-clicking on the connected words, you can expand the word network.

**Did these connections make you consider community in a new light? In what ways?**

## Activity 3: Bible Study - Lectio Divina

Artisan Church’s value of Community reads:

We are a covenantal family of authentic relationships and reconciliation in the image of God, who exists in perfect communion as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – yet one God.

*John 13:34–35; John 17:20–23; Acts 2:43–47; Hosea 2:18–20; Galatians 3:27–28; Romans 12:3–8; 1 Peter 2:9–10*

Choose one of these verses to study using the [spiritual practice of lectio divina](#).

Step One: **Read** the passage, listening with the “ear of your heart.” What phrase, sentence or even one word stands out to you?

Step Two: Read the passage again and **Reflect** on the word of God. Be aware of what touches you, a thought or reflection that is meaningful. Allow a minute or two of silence.

Step Three: Read the passage again and **Respond** spontaneously to the word of God. Be aware of any prayer that rises up

# Define

---

within that expresses the experience. Allow a minute or two of silence.

Step Four: Read the passage a final time and **Rest** in the word, reflect or pray and allow God to speak in the silence. Allow three or four minutes of silence.

**What stood out to you in the verse you studied? How does that change the way you see the value of community?**

## Activity 4: Bible Study - Lexicon/Blue Letter Bible

Let's look some more at how community is talked about in the bible. If you have access to the internet, go to [BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org) or download the Blue Letter Bible app on your phone or tablet.

Using their search engine, search for verses in which the word community or family is used. Note that the number of uses may vary between translations, so check out a few different ones.

Read the verses. If you have time, go to each verse and look at the context for each use of the word.

**What do these verses have in common?**

**How do these verses expand your idea of community?**

# Reflect

---

## Activity 1: Journaling

**Why did you choose to explore this value?**

**What images, objects, or ideas capture your imagination when you think of community?**

## Activity 2: Journaling

**How have you experienced the value of community?**

**At what time in your life did you feel most connected to this value?**

**What feelings are stirred when you consider this value?**

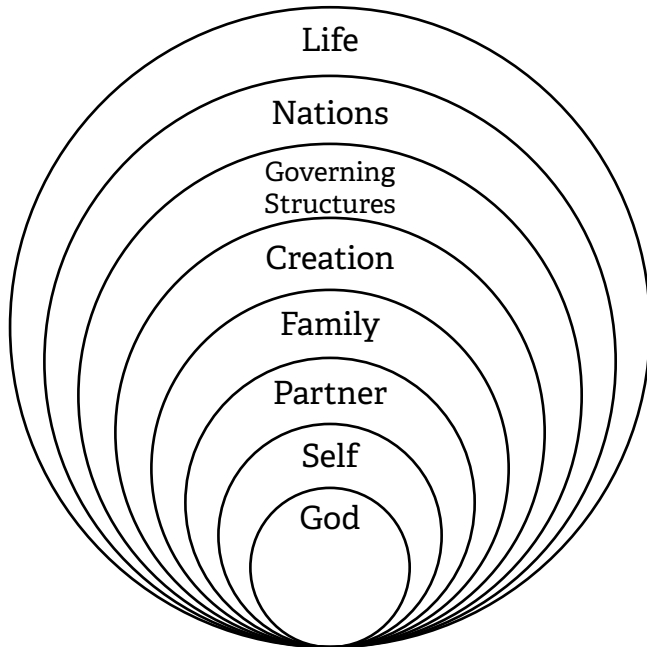
## Activity 3: Journaling

**How have you seen community exhibited in people's lives, including your own?**

**Who in your life embodies this value well? In what ways?**

# Reflect

Lisa Sharon Harper uses this diagram in *The Very Good Gospel* to illustrate the different circles of relationship. There may be layers of this diagram that do not resonate for you. That's okay. Feel free to skip layers that don't connect with you or add layers beyond what's listed here.



**Starting with your relationship to God, how could you express the value of community in these relationships?**

# Immerse

## Activity 1: Candle Meditation

Find a space where you feel comfortable and calm. Sit in a comfortable spot. If it's safe for you, light a small candle and put it in a safe place within your eyesight. If a flame isn't safe for you or those around you, you can use a battery-operated candle or any other light source. With your eyes fixed on the candle or other light source, take a few deep breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Then, with your eyes still fixed on the candle or other light source, meditate on the value. Perhaps say the value out loud or silently. Give yourself a few minutes to meditate on the value and observe the light. Close by taking a few deep breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Reflect on how you felt during this meditation time. Make sure to blow out the candle if you're using one.

## Activity 2: Belovedness Meditation

This is a meditation exercise that you can feel free to modify to whatever feels comfortable and meaningful for you.

- Find a place where you feel comfortable to spend some time in solitude.
- Take a couple of minutes to look around and notice the space where you are.
- Close your eyes and take a couple of minutes to breathe deeply and notice how you are feeling.
- With your eyes closed, imagine God's warm loving gaze on you and rest in that for a couple of minutes.

*(continued on next page)*

# Immerse

- Read this *Prayer of “Belovedness”*. Pause after each line, and close your eyes and take a deep breath. When you’re ready, read the next line and repeat through the end of the prayer.

You are beloved.  
You are valued.  
You are cherished.  
You are valuable.  
You are brave.  
You are held.  
You are known.  
You are delighted in.  
You are enough.  
You are beloved.  
Amen.

- Reflect. Which lines stood out to you? Which ones felt affirming? Which ones felt uncertain or messy? Repeat any of the lines that feel meaningful in some way.
- Take a few minutes to close your eyes and reflect on the experience. Reflect on what it would like to embody belovedness in your interactions and engagement with others.

**How can you see people in your life as beloved? Be curious about what it would look like to be a beloved community.**

## Activity 3: Audio

Listen to some of the following songs or read through the lyrics ([links to audio and lyrics](#) can be found in the online version of the values exploration kit)

*Brother* - The Brilliance  
*Build Your Kingdom Here* - Rend Collective  
*One Voice* - The Wailin’ Jennys  
*Trusty and True* - Damien Rice

**What images of or connections to community do the artist’s lyrics bring to mind?**

**What new connections to community did you find in the song(s)?**

## Activity 4: Art Engagement

For this engagement, we will try something different. We will think about art related to the Bible passages for this value, especially the passage from John 13:34-35.

*34 I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

With these words in mind, we can practice building love for our community, our city, and beyond. Perhaps, by embracing and appreciating the incredible array of “*Wall Therapy*” around Rochester, we can start to feel more connected to others, understand their stories, and build compassion. Through connection, understanding, and compassion, we practice love.

# Immerse

---

Wall Therapy is described as “more than just murals” (<https://www.wall-therapy.com>). On this site you can read more about what Wall Therapy is and can even view murals online. Hopefully, you can find time to go see one or more of these murals in person (a [map/location guide](#) is also on the site).

Consider using this opportunity to walk around a neighborhood that’s new to you - stop by some local businesses, have a conversation with someone you meet there, notice the similarities and differences between that neighborhood and your own.

While viewing the murals, simply reflect and pray about what you see and what you feel as you try to connect the artwork to the idea of community and the commandment to love one another. You may also use the mediation and reflection questions below.

## DESCRIPTION

First, create a mental description of the artwork. Build a list of what you actually see. Look for recognizable objects. Consider what seems to be happening. What types of lines, colors, shapes, and textures do you see?

## ANALYSIS

Next, explore the visual structure and the artist’s choices. How did the artist arrange the elements? Where does the emphasis seem to be? What stands out to you or captures your attention? Notice how your eye moves around the artwork. What areas make you stop for longer moments, or return frequently? How do the colors influence your attention? Which colors stand out to you? Why do you think that might be?

## INTERPRETATION

Next, work towards making meaning of what you see. What story might the artist be telling? What details help to add meaning? Does this work of art seem to express an emotion or mood? Does anything you have noticed in this work of art remind you of a personal experience? You could also consider Biblical or spiritual connections, especially to the Artisan value of community.

## EVALUATION & REFLECTION

Finally, evaluate the artwork. This is where you make it personal, reflect, and pray. Based on your observations and interpretation, what stands out most to you? Why do you think the artist created this work? What have you discovered through this process? What is your personal opinion about this artwork? In what ways, if any, does this painting evoke a sense of community for you personally? Reflect on any questions it has brought to mind. Spend time in silent meditation or prayer, based on your experiences with this observation process.

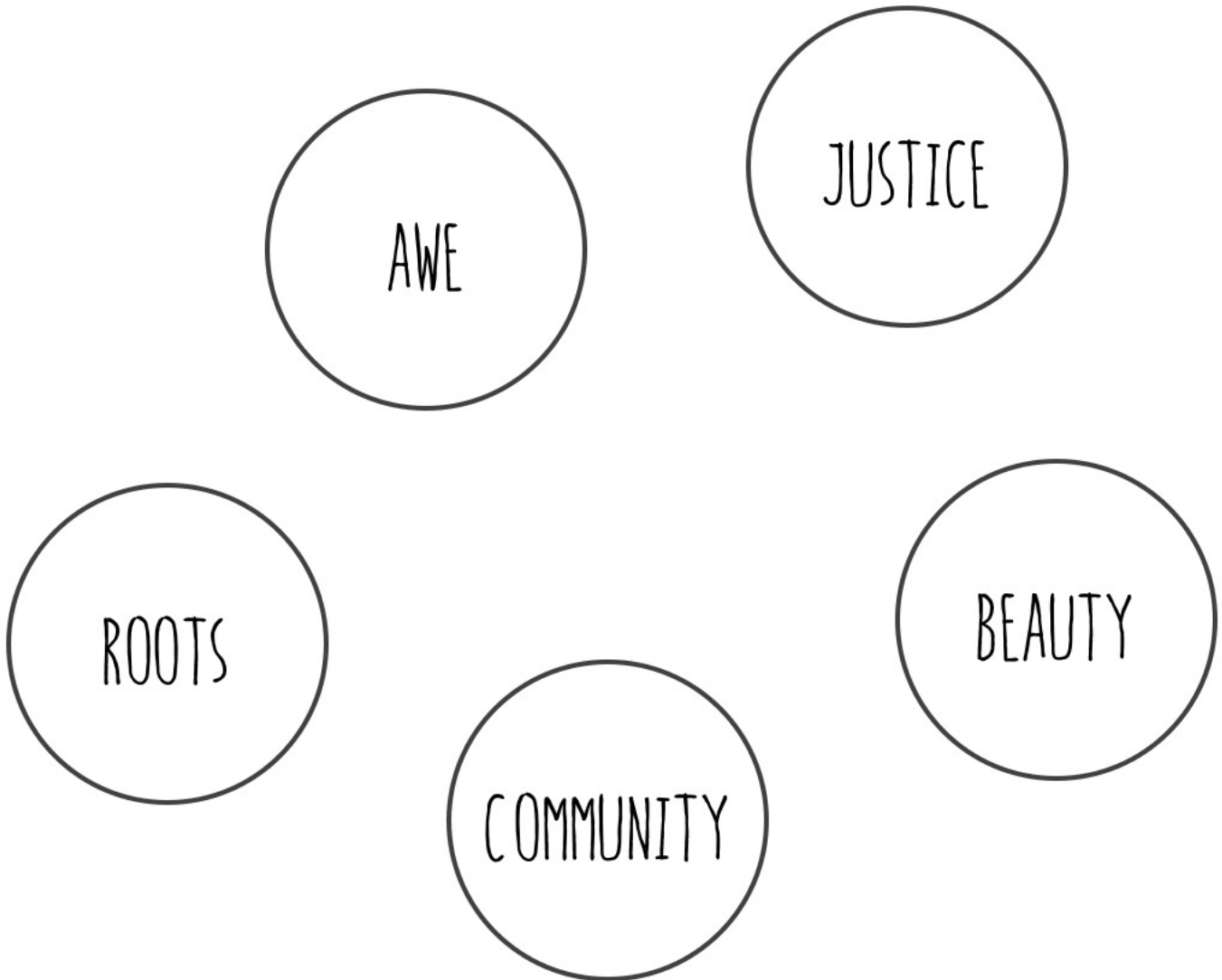
**What new reflections on community did this process provide?**

# Immerse

---

## Activity 5: Connections

In this activity, consider how the value of community connects to the other four Artisan values: roots, justice, awe and beauty. **Use the diagram below to explore these connections by drawing or writing in the connections you come up with.**





# Challenge

---

## Activity 1: Journaling

**How well do you feel that you embody this value? In what ways?**

**If you don't feel that you embody this value very well, what do you think is holding you back?**

## Activity 2: Journaling

**Can you think of ways that this value or verses associated with this value have been or could be used to harm others?**

**What could we do to prevent that?**

## Activity 3: Journaling

**Not everyone connects with each value. Is there anything in the description of this value or the accompanying verses that you think is problematic?**

**What could be added to the description that would make it easier for you to connect with this value?**

**There are many gifts and virtues discussed in the Bible. What other values do you think we're missing?**

# Act

---

## Activity 1: Journaling

**What does it look like to live this value everyday?**

**What act will you do to show yourself and others that you value community?**

## Activity 2: Learn

Learn more about how to live out this value. You can learn from a book/website/social media personality, or really any source. If you can, post the resources you find on Instagram with #ArtisanValuesCommunity.

## Activity 3: Practice

Find a place/organization/person who engages with this value and give them some support. Volunteer, affirm, donate.

## Activity 4: One Little Thing

Here is a list of little things you can do to embrace community in your life. Or come up with your own!

- Write a note of encouragement to someone and give it to them
- Learn about an intentional community that you are not familiar with (Corrymeela or The Simple Way, [jesuspeopleusa](#))
- Be intentional about listening well the next time someone opens up to you
- Reflect on a time that someone "showed up" for you and make a plan to "show up" for someone in a similar way
- Read about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of Beloved Community
- Talk to someone you haven't talked to in a while, or someone new