



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Leaders' Guide: September 23/24, 2023

This guide is designed to help you be and become “deeply rooted followers of Jesus” by contributing to increasingly authentic and loving relationships with one another and with God.

You will find that it's not possible to fully cover each of the sections (Gather, Grow, and Go) in this guide. Prayerfully consider how much from each would be right for your group week to week.

GATHER

Deeply rooted through a *community based context*. This section is meant to heighten your awareness of God's presence in your time together, and give one another space to talk about what's really going on in life.

Leaders note: the five bullet points below are valuable things to give attention to every meeting.

We won't adjust this section often.

- Pray. Thoughtfully acknowledge God's presence in the room. Commit your time together to him.
Leaders note: This is a helpful place to start an organized discussion time and calibrate everyone to this essential reality.
- What practical needs should everyone know about? What can we do as a group to help?
- What decisions are you facing? Is there any input you'd like from us as a group?
- What are you praying about right now? How can we as a group join you in prayer?
- Does anyone have a story of where you've seen God at work? Is there something we can join you in celebrating?
Leaders note: This could be a way to follow up with the application plans from a previous group discussion. We'd love to celebrate these stories across our campuses, too!
(Please get permission and pass them on to us as regularly as possible.)

GROW

Deeply rooted through *biblically based content*. This section is meant to overlap with the current weekend teaching at your Northview campus and position you, as a group, to be formed by studying Scripture.

- Pray - acknowledge God's presence, and ask for his help to hear what he's saying.



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- Revisit the weekend sermon. Is there something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?

Leaders note: discussing the sermon people heard may take considerable time.

Don't feel pressure to rush through this guide and move on.

- Facilitate a guided reflection on Scripture. **The primary text from the weekend sermon was John 12:12-36.**

Leaders note: There's always more in the text than we'll be able to put into a guide. We've chosen a few items to draw your attention to.

- **Step 1: Read + Observe The Text**

Familiarize yourself with the section of verses.

- **Step 2: Understand Their Story**

Ask questions to discuss what the author is communicating to the original audience.

- Have you ever seen someone famous in person? Who was it? What was the atmosphere like?
Leaders note: You may want to select this question to have an "icebreaker" effect in your group by giving people insight into the lives of one another.
 - Examine John 12:12–19. John gives us some clues as to what the atmosphere of this "celebrity sighting" was like. What characters are present here?
Leaders note: Observe: Jesus (v.12) the crowd attending passover (v.12), people who saw Lazarus raised from the dead (v.17), the Pharisees (v.18).
 - Try and imagine the tone of this event! What does this text say is shaping their perspective of this moment? (eg. What is the crowd 'bearing witness' (v 17) about? How are the Pharisees reacting?) How does this help us understand the atmosphere here? (Note: previous moments in this gospel also contribute to this scene. You could look up John 6:14-15, 11:45-50, 11:55-57, 12:9-11 for some other context.)
Leaders note: For example, as you focus on Jesus in this text, notice how something has shifted at this point in John's gospel compared to John 6:14-15. "Now" is the hour to go public with his identity and mission in a new way.
- In John 12:12-19, the crowds welcome Jesus as a king, but he responds with surprising words. Re-read John 12:20-26. What is Jesus talking about and why? What details does he add in John 12:31-34? (Note: in these verses Jesus echoes John 3:14-15, which echoes Numbers 21:4-9. Feel free to look up these texts as well if you wish).
Leaders note: Jesus is talking about his own death (v 20-26); being lifted up on a cross (v 31-34). Sin is serious. Just like the Israelites in the story from Numbers 21, people - apart from the gracious provision of God - are hopeless to solve the problem of sin that they face. They, like we today, must look to the solution God lifts up in our midst.



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○ Step 3: Connect To His Story

Ask questions to understand how this text fits in the larger gospel story.

- Compare the people's declaration in John 12:13 with Psalm 118:25-26. What is the same? (**Both say "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"**) What is different? (**The crowd in John 12:13 adds: "even the King of Israel!"**) Now read Zechariah 9:9-10 which is quoted in John 12:15. What does this text add to the picture? What might we miss if John didn't refer to this Old Testament text?

Leaders note: Zechariah talks about this king being righteous and bringing salvation, but the picture here is bigger (and better!) than the crowds have in mind: 1) he's coming in peace, not military might, 2) he's coming to speak that peace to "the nations" from "sea to sea", not just save/rule the nation of Israel. This is a good reminder of the value of understanding the full story of God so we don't miss his larger purposes!

- Examine John 12:23 and then look up Daniel 7:13-14. What expectations do the Jewish people, who knew this vision, have regarding the "Son of Man"? How does this expectation align with what Jesus says he's going to do?
Leaders note: Both the crowds and Jesus' disciples misunderstand the nature of Jesus' identity and mission. They had an expectation of a victorious ruler that didn't match the contrasting reality of a king who'd be glorified through dying and achieve his kingdom victory through sacrifice (John 12:23-24).

○ Step 4: Apply To Our Story

Ask questions to discern what God is telling us to do with the help of the Holy Spirit.

- Reflect on John 12:25-26.
 - What is Jesus challenging his followers to do here? What is he specifically asking you to do?
 - What motivation is there from this text to do what he's asking here? How does that encourage you?
Leaders note: Jesus' death "bore fruit" of eternal life (v. 24-25). As we follow him in dying to ourselves, we too bear fruit for eternal life. If we follow him, we will be with him, and the Father will honour us (v 26)!
- There are a number of descriptions of Jesus in this week's text: "king" (12:13-15), "son of man" (12:23), and "light" (12:36).
 - How does some of the wider meaning of these terms contribute to your picture of Jesus as the one you've personally given your life to?
 - How can these realities help you think about the current fears and anxieties you're facing right now? Is there something you can do this week to bring these truths into your struggles?



GO

Deeply rooted through *culturally relevant applications*. This section is meant to prompt practices that bring the life of God's kingdom into us and out to others.

- Pray for your group's **5x5x5** lists.
Leaders note: This is something that we're putting deliberately at the top here. Every time. If you don't know what these are, "5x5x5 cards" are available at each campus on the weekend, or at <https://northview.org/5x5x5/>)
- Is there something that seems especially relevant for us to do personally based on our discussion?
Leaders note: This is something that may overlap with the "Apply To Our Story" step in the "GROW" section above, but here it is meant to help narrow down a specific thing that people actually plan to commit to doing.
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do together based on our discussion?
Leaders note: Depending on the applications you've discussed in the "GROW" section, there could be opportunities to serve others as a group. This could be at a Northview Campus, as part of a Northview project, or something in our city. Reach out to the Community Groups team if you're looking for ideas.
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do to spend time with someone who doesn't yet follow Jesus?