



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Leaders' Guide: Oct 21/22, 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.

- Pray. Thoughtfully acknowledge God's presence in the room. Commit your time together to him.
Leaders note: This is a helpful way to start an organized discussion 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 share and celebrate stories from our Community Groups to honour God and encourage one another! (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.
- 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 13:18-30.**

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 The Text**

Familiarize yourself with the section of verses.

- **Step 2: Understand Their Story**

Ask observation questions to understand what the author is communicating to the original audience.

- Icebreaker: Share a bit from your life to get a feel for a dynamic in the text. Peter is curious about Jesus' intense claims and asks John to inquire further (13:24). While we don't specifically know why Peter did this, describe a time you delegated something to someone because you didn't want to do it. (Could be anything from making your spouse go and deal with a mess your kids have made, to asking a co-worker to handle a task to bribing a sibling to do something uncomfortable for you.)
- Insert yourself into the scene and try imagine what's happening through these simple observations:
 - What is the setting of this scene? *When* do these events take place? (Like last week, refer to 13:1-2).
 - **Before the "Feast of Passover"**
 - **At the "hour" Jesus knew it was time to depart from the world**
 - **During supper**
 - Jesus reveals that something is going to happen that hasn't yet fully occurred (13:18). What does 13:19 indicate about why he tells them this?
He tells them so that they "may believe" when it does happen.
 - What is Jesus "feeling" according to 13:21?
He's "deeply troubled" in his spirit.
 - Jesus eventually identifies his betrayer (13:25-26).
 - What happens to the betrayer? (13:27-30)¹
Satan "entered" into Judas. Judas departs from them immediately.
 - How does the rest of the room respond? (13:28-30)

¹In Judas' choices in the earthly realm, John also makes us aware of activity in the spiritual realm. While we're not spending time going down the rabbit trail of spiritual oppression, or demonic possession thoroughly this week, there is a reality in which we may find ourselves living in opposition to God. Our physical choices have consequences spiritually. Hang onto these thoughts for further reflection in Step 4: Apply To Our Story below.

They can't connect the dots. They don't understand Jesus' instruction to Judas nor why he departs.

- Does anything surprise you about these events?

For example, people may comment on Satan himself being involved (v.27) or the fact that the things they were thinking in v.28-30 seem somewhat strange based on v.21-27. We don't know for sure, but perhaps the conversation of v.25-26 was quiet enough that only Jesus and John were aware?

○ Step 3: Connect To God's Story

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

- Jesus says in 13:18 that Scripture is being fulfilled. Look up Psalm 41:9.
 - Taken together, what additional information does the verse from Psalm 41 add to this scene? What additional words are used in 41:9 to describe the betrayal?
 - ***Leaders note: Psalm 41 includes the description of "my close friend" and "in whom I trusted". This betrayal brings relational pain. It's no wonder Jesus was "deeply troubled" (John 13:21).***
 - ***Additionally: "To "eat bread" is a cultural symbol that refers to personal intimacy, and to expose the bottom of the foot is another symbol of personal contempt".²***
- John 13:21 highlights how Jesus feels in this moment. Check out Hebrews 4:14-16.
 - What does 4:15 tell us about Jesus?
 - ***He is not unable to empathize with our weaknesses.***
 - ***He has been tempted in every way like us, except he never sinned.***
 - What does 4:16 tell us we can do in light of who Jesus is and what he experienced?
 - ***These two verses indicate that we can go to Jesus in prayer and for healing with anything and everything we've experienced because he has been there too. The story we're focusing on today shows us that Jesus knows what it is like to be betrayed by someone close to us, so encourage your group members to make this link, and exhort them to bring their own experiences of betrayal to Jesus in prayer and ask for his mercy and his healing.***

○ Step 4: Apply To Our Story

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

- Jesus was aware of the betrayal and anticipated the difficulties he'd face prior to the physical suffering of crucifixion. Consider the many layers to the pain Jesus experienced.
 - How does it encourage or challenge you today to think of Jesus' willingness to endure both emotional and physical pain to bring us salvation? How does this challenge you as you think of enduring or investing with the people or the places you are serving or are thinking of serving?
 - Leaders note: This could help people take what they're already doing (serving in church, financially giving, singing in a church gathering, etc) to another level of passion or wholeheartedness.***
- There's a way in which each of us may relate to Judas in our vulnerability to sin against God and live like there's better priorities to pursue.
 - What are the most common "betrayals" committed against Jesus today?
 - Is there an area you feel especially vulnerable today? Are there any insights from this text/discussion that could help you do something different about it?

² Gary M. Burge, *John*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 372.

- Despite the sin of betrayal, and a collection of other evil activities, God accomplishes his ultimate purposes through Jesus' suffering. Is there something in your life that feels "wrong" or someone in your life who has "wronged" you?
 - Does Jesus' experience of deep betrayal give you some ways to pray differently about your circumstances this week? Or: how might Jesus' obedience to God amidst pain help you think differently about people who have "betrayed" or wronged you?

Leaders note: God asks us to do something with our betrayals. Are we willing to pray that he would use them to accomplish his good purposes (Matthew 6:9-10) rather than wallowing in them? Jesus asks us to forgive (Matthew 6:12, Matthew 18:21-22) knowing first hand what forgiveness requires.

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.
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do to spend time with someone who doesn't yet follow Jesus?

Leaders note: Think of the upcoming dates on the calendar like Halloween or Christmas. Is there something you could do to interact with your neighbours, or others who don't have a church home? It doesn't need to be something big or overly "evangelistic".

Think: "what are people already engaged in that we could leverage for connection?"

For example, regardless of your enthusiasm for "Trick-or-Treating," could your group set up a Hot Chocolate table (or something) in a front yard so you are present in your neighbourhood and could interact with others that evening? Or, could your group do a prayer walk around a neighbourhood that evening?

****If there is something you're planning on doing, let us know so our team can be praying for you!!****