



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980  
**COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**Community Group Leaders' Guide: Nov 25/26, 2023**

**\*\*NOTE: This is the FINAL Group Guide of 2023. We'll be resuming our weekly resource in January!\*\***

The Northview Pastoral team is developing an **ADVENT DEVOTIONAL** that will be available the weekend of **December 2/3**. We'd encourage you to follow along as it continues to guide you through the Gospel of John this Christmas season and provides some helpful **prayer prompts** aligned with the themes of advent: **hope, peace, joy**.

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.

## 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. Be sensitive to this, but indicate your plan to move through the other sections of the guide below. It might be helpful to say something like: "we want to take a few minutes to hear what God highlighted for you in the message, and then in a few minutes we'll be moving into a guided reflection on the Scripture passage the speaker used."***

- Facilitate a guided reflection on Scripture. **The primary text from the weekend sermon was John 15:18 - 16:4a.**

**Leaders note: *Rather than try and hit "everything", we've chosen a few pieces 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:** This passage contrasts the identity of the disciples with the identity of "the world". We'll discuss what this means further in the steps below, but for now, share from your life to get a feel for this dynamic in the text (while also helping others get to know you).
  - *Describe a time you felt "out of place" or like you didn't belong.*  
(A sports fan in the wrong arena? Traveling to a foreign country? Visiting your in-laws for the first time?)
- Try to imagine what's happening in this scene through these observations.

***You will hopefully find these simple to answer. They are here to a) highlight some key details that contribute to the questions in the later steps ahead, and/or b) help you look deeper at something that might be easy to miss.***

  - 15:18-25 contrasts the identity of the disciples with the identity of the world. What things describe...
    - ...the world?
      - ***Hates Jesus (15:18)***
      - ***Persecuted Jesus (15:20)***
      - ***Don't know/Rejected Jesus and the Father (15:21)***
      - ***They are guilty of sin (15:22, 24)***
      - ***Hating Jesus AND the Father (15:24)***
      - ***Hate Jesus without cause (15:25)***
    - ...Jesus' followers?
      - ***Don't belong to the world (15:19)***
      - ***Are hated by the world (15:19)***
      - ***Will be persecuted (15:20)***

- What does Jesus promise the Holy Spirit will do in 15:26?
  - **The Spirit will be their “Helper”**
  - **The Spirit will bear witness to Jesus**
- What are Jesus’ motives in telling his disciples these things?
  - **To keep them from “falling away” (16:1)**
  - **To warn them of the events in advance of them occurring (16:4)**
- Keep these observations in mind as you proceed to the next 2 steps.

### ○ Step 3: Connect To God’s Story

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

- Look up Mark 4:1-20, paying close attention to the explanation Jesus gives in Mark 4:16-17. How does this text overlap with what Jesus says in John 16:1-4a?
 

**Leaders note: Jesus knows that there is a reality of life-threatening persecution that people will face in the world. He also knows that these experiences may cause people to fall away (Mark 4:16-17), but his desire is that they do not (John 16:1). Furthermore, Jesus seems more concerned about his disciples “falling away” than he is about them being “killed”!**
- John 15:22-24 at first glance may seem somewhat difficult to understand. **Taken out of the larger biblical witness - may make us think that people would have lived without sin and need of a Saviour until he came, but this isn’t what the biblical story tells us.**

How do other texts expand on and/or clarify what Jesus is saying?

  - What does Ephesians 2:1-3 tell us about our state before God ‘made us alive with Christ’ (Ephesians 2:5)? **People are dead in their sin apart from him already, because they disobediently walk in the ways of the world and its trespasses. We’re by nature “children of wrath”.**
  - Romans 1:18-21? **We see from Romans 1 that people are without excuse because of their own actions and hearts.**

**Leaders note: Jesus had performed some unprecedented signs among them (think back to the raising of Lazarus a few chapters earlier!), and yet people still did not believe in him. So, it’s not that Jesus is saying they would have been “generally innocent of sin” if he didn’t come, but instead are “specifically guilty of the sins associated with rejecting him”. Here’s a helpful note from one commentator: “Rejection of Jesus’ words (v. 22) and works (v. 24) is thus the rejection of the clearest light, the fullest revelation; and therefore it incurs the most central, deep-stained guilt.”<sup>1</sup>**

- What you’ve discussed here can shape your thinking in step 4.

### ○ Step 4: Apply To Our Story

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

- What would you consider to be persecution (15:20) in our Canadian context? In what way do you think Christians are “hated” (15:18)?

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 526.

- Would you use the word “persecuted” or “hated” for anything you’ve ever experienced because you’re a follower of Jesus?
- Based on your discussion thus far, or based on the topic generally, are you anxious or fearful about opposition from the world?
  - Jesus explains some hard truths and shapes the disciples’ expectations for what’s ahead. What words of his do you find comforting or encouraging in this passage (15:18-16:4a)?
    - Is there a way in which Jesus’ promises in this text stir you to pray?  
*Leaders note: For example, we ought to be grateful for the gift of the Holy Spirit who helps us and testifies to the truths about Jesus! (15:26)*
    - How could these help you prepare yourself or others for potential experiences that have not yet happened, or may get worse if they’re already happening?

## 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?  
*Christmas time can create some natural connection points with your neighbours and others in our community. For example, what social events could your group plan that would be easy to invite someone to?*
  - *Christmas movie night?*
  - *Glow Christmas in Langley?*
  - *Mt. Lehman Christmas Home Tour? <https://www.mtlehmanchristmashometour.com/>*
  - *A Christmas production/concert?*
  - *One of our Christmas Eve Services?*

**Have a very merry Christmas - full of hope, peace, and joy in Jesus!**

(We hope to see you - and any guests you invite - on Christmas Eve!)

- Pastor Jesse