



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Leaders' Guide: Nov 11/12, 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. 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 14:15-31.**

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: Jesus promises his disciples a "Helper" ahead of a significant series of events. 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 where you would have experienced serious failure or trouble (or embarrassment even!) without someone else coming to help you. (Could be anything from things like: having someone assist you with a vehicle breakdown, having a skilled athlete join your team, or having a parent come to your rescue.)
- 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.

 - What similar things do the 4 verses below say?
 - ...14:15? ***To love Jesus is to keep his commands.***
 - ...14:21? ***Whoever "has" and "keeps" Jesus commands loves him.***
 - ...14:23? ***Those who love Jesus will do what he says.***
 - ...14:31? ***Jesus' love for the Father is expressed in him doing what the Father has commanded - which, in context, is him heading to his death!***

Leaders note: The connection between "love" and "obedience" are what we don't want to miss!

- Jesus' arrest and death are imminent. What descriptions does Jesus provide about who the "Helper/Advocate" is? (See v.16, v.17, v.26 specifically.)
 - ***Given by the Father at Jesus' request (v.16)***
 - ***Will be with Jesus' disciples forever (v.16)***
 - ***He's the "spirit of Truth" (v.17)***
 - ***The "world" doesn't receive, see, or know him (v.17)***

- *Will be both "with" and "in" Jesus' disciples (v.17)*
- *Is the Holy Spirit (v.26)*
- *Will remind Jesus' disciples "all things" and "remind" them of what he's said (v.26)*

Leaders note: Remember, in context, Jesus is about to be arrested and head to his death. Following his resurrection, the disciples would physically lose him, but simultaneously gain the Spirit.

- 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.

- Jesus' promise regarding the Holy Spirit echo Old Testament promises.
 - Look up Ezekiel 36:26-27. How does this prophecy connect to what Jesus says in John 14?
 - *God's Spirit will be "in" his people*
 - *The Spirit will move God's people to obey his commands.*

Leaders note: As noted in Step 2 above, if loving God requires obeying God, the promise of the Spirit further shows us that God helps us to obey. We have empowerment from God to love him!

- Following the events of John's gospel, years later, the apostle Paul would write a letter to the saints in Rome.
 - Look up Romans 8:9-17. How does Paul's writing expand on or clarify what Jesus is saying in John 14:16-20?
 - *Jesus says he won't leave his disciples as "orphans" (14:18). Paul writes that the Spirit brings about our "adoption" and makes us God's "children" (Romans 8:14-17).*
 - *Jesus says that because he lives, we also will live (14:19). Paul writes that the Spirit who raised Jesus to life, lives in us and gives us life (Romans 8:10-11).*
 - *Jesus indicates a close connection between him and the Father, and eventually this would be true for his disciples (14:20). Paul's words add clarity to this: the Spirit enables us to call God Abba, Father (Romans 8:15)*
 - *The Spirit enables us to obey Jesus (Romans 8:12-14), which is what is required of those who love Jesus (John 14:21)*

Leaders note: The impact of the Spirit cannot be overstated. Jesus also says that the Spirit will never leave us, be with us forever, and be "in" us (14:16-17). The loss of Jesus "with us" visibly might make us feel abandoned - like orphans. But despite the current physical absence of Jesus, we're currently - now - as Paul reminds us, God's children.

- 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.

- Reflect further on the idea of loving God by keeping his commandments (14:15, 14:23).
 - What do you think about Jesus making such a close tie between loving him and keeping his commandments? In your experience, do people think it is possible to love Jesus and NOT keep his commandments? Why do you people think this is an option?
 - Where or how do you find it challenging to obey God's commands? What do you think you could do this week to obey him in this specific area or situation?
 - This text contains several profound claims about the realities of God and his relationship with his people. Which statements of Jesus particularly encourage or challenge you?

For example, to sit in the implications of 14:23 might allow the Holy Spirit to stir up fresh conviction, repentance, and motivation to keep God's commands by thinking along these lines: "Do I feel like, or realize that, Jesus and God the Father have come to me and made their home with me? What does it mean that they live with me?"

- Reflect on "peace". Jesus doesn't want his disciples' hearts to be troubled (14:1, 14:27), despite the events that have unfolded and will eventually unfold in later chapters. Reflect further on John 14:1-3 and the promise of having the Holy Spirit.
 - Like the disciples, we'll have moments that give us cause to be afraid and troubled. If God feels distant or absent for you today, you may resonate with the language Jesus uses of "orphan" (14:18). Orphans have lost someone they may otherwise receive protection, provision, love, care, and close connection with (you may be familiar with this firsthand).
 - If this is you today: Are you comfortable sharing why, or in what situations you might be feeling like an orphan?-
 - If this isn't you today: How could this text help inform your counsel or encouragement for someone who is feeling like an orphan? How can you encourage them without simply speaking Christian platitudes?
 - If this has been you in the past: How have you experienced learning to trust in or recognize the protection and provision of God?

Leaders note: Peace isn't something we need to manufacture. Jesus says he's offering "his" peace! He knows that his physical absence will initially be a dramatic change for his disciples. But his promises here aren't accommodations or compromises - they're great news. The Spirit will be with us to help.

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?