



Community Group Leaders' Guide: January 13/14, 2024

This guide is designed to help you and your group be **deeply rooted followers of Jesus**.

Leaders note: Feel free to take different approaches week to week.

Take 10-15 minutes and map out an approach for your next meeting in advance.

Here's a few examples:

1 - BALANCE GATHER + GROW + GO.

Our hope is that by the end of each semester, you've given attention to all 3 discipleship categories: *Gather*, *Grow*, and *Go*. But you won't be able to do the entirety of each of the 3 sections in 1 meeting. If you want a balanced approach in this meeting, select one or two items from the Gather and Go section in advance, and condense the Grow section (perhaps skip the sermon recap, and prioritize a few things from each step). You can also choose a different order (for example, maybe it works better to start with "grow" and end with "gather" + "go").

2 - EMPHASIZE BIBLE STUDY.

If you want this meeting to have a higher "study" feel, skip the "gather" section, and work through the "grow" section". Then, at minimum, take one thing from the "go" section: *prayer for the lost*.

3 - EMPHASIZE SHARING LIFE.

If you want this meeting to have a higher "relational" feel, work your way through the "gather" section, and leave the "grow" section for this week. But try, at minimum, to take *prayer for the lost* from the "go" section.

You don't have to spend hours preparing like a scholar that "teaches".

You can spend your week a) walking with God to lead out of the overflow of that relationship, and b) taking 15 minutes familiarizing yourself with this guide to be a shepherd that "cares" and "facilitates".

GATHER

Deeply rooted by sharing life seeking the presence of God.

This community based context can 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.
Start here. This is an important way to start an organized discussion and calibrate everyone to this 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?

This can be a way to revisit application plans or prayers from a previous group meeting.

**We'd love to share and celebrate stories from our Community Groups to honour God and encourage one another!
(Please get permission to pass them on to us as regularly as possible.)**

GROW

Deeply rooted by being formed through the word of God.

This biblically based content overlaps with the current weekend teaching at your Northview campus and positions you, as a group, to be shaped by studying Scripture.

- **Pray.** Acknowledge God's presence, and ask for his help to hear what he's saying.
Leaders note: you could ask one other person to do this. A sample prayer: "Father, thank you for this time we have. We acknowledge that you are here with us and we ask for your help to hear what you're saying through your word by your Spirit. We commit our time to you for your glory and our good. Amen."
- **Share a takeaway from the weekend sermon.** Is there something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?
Leaders note: Be sensitive to time by indicating upfront if you plan to move through the other sections of the guide below. It might be helpful to say something like: "we want to start by hearing one thing God highlighted for you in the message, and then in a few minutes we'll move into a short study of the Scripture passage the speaker used."
- **Facilitate a guided reflection on Scripture.** The primary Jan 13/14 sermon text was **Jude 1-25.**

Start with an "Icebreaker"

This short letter calls the church to contend for the faith amidst the presence of adversity.

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 one another).

Icebreaker Question: Describe an unpopular opinion you have that others have ridiculed you for.

- (For example: "I order a hawaiian pizza just for myself because my family hates pineapple." "I cheered for the Oilers at a Canucks home game." "I think paper straws are better than plastic.")

Step 1: Read The Text

Familiarize yourself with this section of verses.

Step 2: Understand Their Story

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

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 are the descriptions of those the letter is written to in verse 1?
 - **Called**
 - **Loved in God the Father**
 - **Kept for Jesus Christ**

- In contrast to the audience, what illustrations does Jude give of the “ungodly” in v. 12-13?
Leaders note: these may not be easy to understand. Don't worry about explaining specifics - especially here at the “observation” stage. Just know, in summary: these aren't good things!
 - **“Hidden reefs” or “blemishes” at the love feasts**
 - **Shepherds feeding themselves**
 - **Waterless clouds, swept along by the winds**
 - **Fruitless trees, twice dead, uprooted**
 - **Wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame**
 - **Wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever**

- Jude writes so that we'll “contend for the faith” (v.3) and gives a list of things to “do” to that end in v. 20-23. What do you see listed?
 1. **“Keep” - “Keep yourselves in God's love...” (v.21)**
 - **How?**
 - **By building yourselves up in your most holy faith (v.20)**
 - **By praying in the Holy Spirit (v.20)**
 - **By waiting, anticipating the mercy of the Lord Jesus... (v.21)**
 2. **“Have mercy on” - “Be merciful to those who doubt...” (v.22)**
 3. **“Save” - “Save others by snatching them out of the fire...” (v.23)**
 4. **“Have mercy on” - “to others show mercy with fear....” (v.23)**

- 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.

There are several challenging parts in this letter - connected to Old Testament references, and even some texts outside the Bible. Because we aren't doing a full series on Jude's letter, we narrowed the focus to emphasize discussion that will lead to specific application questions in Step 4.

- Given our focus this week on “contending for the faith”, go further in examining some of the practical ways Jude's letter challenges us.
 - **Keep yourselves in God's love - Look up John 15:4-10. This was a recent text in our Gospel of John series. How do we “keep ourselves in God's love according to Jesus in these verses? How does this expand on or clarify what Jude says in v.20-21?**
 - **By remaining/abiding in Jesus (15:4)**
 - **By having his words abide in us (15:7)**
 - **By bearing fruit (15:8)**
 - **By obeying his commands (15:10)****Additionally, “Praying in the Spirit” is one of the overlapping ideas and conveys the same sense of asking/praying “in Jesus' name” in 15:8 (alignment with his power, presence, and desires).**
 - **Save others by snatching them out of the fire - Go to James 5:19-20. How does James explain what it may look like to snatch someone out of the fire?**
Sin is serious. The imagery of fire often connects with God's judgment towards sin. For the wayward, we ought to aim to restore people. This isn't always easy as it can require rebuke (pointing out what is wrong). Which is likely why Jude lumps this together with the concept of “mercy”.

- Have mercy on others - Read Colossians 3:5-14. How do Paul's instructions in this text model what it looks like to balance both "fear" and "mercy" as Jude indicates in Jude 22-23?
Mercy might be an uncommon word, but it connects to the idea of the compassion or love or kindness we ought to express to all people - both to those who doubt, and to those who oppose us. But take note of the "with fear" piece in Jude 23 and how it overlaps with "putting to death" what belongs to our earthly nature - we want to show love without compromising ourselves and becoming "stained" with sin.
- This letter has one of the most beautiful "doxologies" that we often use as a word of blessing / benediction today (v.24-25). Amidst the danger of the world, there's a glorious God who acts to preserve his people.
 - Look up Romans 8:18-39. How does this passage expand on Jude's doxology?
- What you've discussed above 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.

- At the start of this new year, where do you feel you are at when it comes to "contending for the faith" amidst the ungodly influences in our world? Which of the commands you've discussed above is the most challenging or convicting to you right now and why?
 - How might God want you to move forward in one of the areas Jude lists in v.20-23 this year?
- Jude's prayer is for mercy, peace, and love to be multiplied in abundance to the church (v.2). How can your group pray for each other along these themes this week?
 - Where is there a need to extend God's mercy in your life?
 - Where is there a need for God's peace in your life?
 - Where is there a need to experience God's love in your life?

GO

Deeply rooted by participating in the mission of God.

These culturally relevant applications are meant, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to prompt actions that bring the life of God's kingdom into us and out to others.

- Pray for the "lost" in your sphere of influence. Use the **5x5x5 cards** as a tool.

Leaders note: This is something that we're putting deliberately at the top here. Every time.

("5x5x5 cards" are available at each campus on the weekend.)

- 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. Or, perhaps to gather for worship, prayer, and/or equipping together.

Consider some upcoming Northview events that might be especially helpful to attend as a group!

- **Parent Discipleship Night** on January 25: "How To Build Your Kids' Faith" - Register at northview.org
- **Grief Service** on January 28.
 - Synopsis: "There are various kinds of grief, and for many, this burden is carried in silence. Some have felt the pain of loss for many years. Northview Downes Road is hosting an event for individuals and families who are navigating the challenges of grieving the loss of a loved one, experiencing infertility and for those who have lost a child of any age, including miscarriage, abortion, stillbirth, and infant loss."
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do to spend time with someone who doesn't yet follow Jesus? Or to make/strengthen connections with our neighbours?