



Community Group Guide: February 3/4, 2024

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

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.

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- Pray. Thoughtfully acknowledge God's presence in the room. Commit your time together to him.
 - 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?

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.
- **Share a takeaway from the weekend sermon.** Is there something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?
- **Facilitate a guided reflection on Scripture.** The text from this past weekend was **John 18:1-14.**

Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage Jesus enters into the darkest part of the story in order to accomplish the ultimate good. 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 something you initially thought wouldn't be good, but turned out to be a pleasant surprise.

- *(For example: Maybe it was something simple like: you've had low expectations for a movie or a restaurant, but it turned out to be one you really enjoyed. Maybe it was something more serious, like an inconvenience or hardship that God used to develop deeper trust in him.)*

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.

- The terribly painful climax of Jesus' story enters a new stage in John 18. According to 18:4, what is Jesus' perspective?
- How does John describe the group Judas brings to arrest Jesus according to 18:2-3?
 - How does this group respond to Jesus' words regarding himself in 18:6?
 - How does Jesus care for his outnumbered disciples?
- Look at 18:11. What imagery does Jesus use to describe the ordeal he is entering?
- 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.

- 18:4 - "Jesus said to them , "I am he". In our English translations we can miss what Jesus is alluding to by his response. However, Jesus is making a claim about his identity that becomes clearer with some Old Testament understanding. Read Exodus 3:13-14.
 - What name does God give for himself to Moses?
 - In light of this, what do you think Jesus is alluding to when he says "I am he"? Read 18:6 again and consider how this connection may inform our understanding of what Jesus says and how the group physically responds.
- 18:11 - "Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?" Jesus knows everything that is about to happen to him and he knows why he must allow it to happen. In the Old Testament the image of a "cup" carried a specific meaning. Read Isaiah 51:22, for example.
 - In light of this, what is the cup Jesus believes he is drinking?
- 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.

- In this week's passage we see that even in the darkest moments of history, despite what it may look like, God is in control, cares for his disciples, and works to accomplish his good purposes.
 - Is there a way in which this passage increases your trust in God amidst what you're experiencing in life right now? (Perhaps you're in a dark place where you feel overwhelmed, like the disciples did here, and it looks like God isn't in control.)
 - Is there a way you could use this passage as a guide to pray for one another or someone outside your group amidst what they are going through?
- For Jesus to "drink the cup" that the Father gave him means that we don't have to.
 - What was it like when you first understood what Jesus went through - *willingly and knowingly!* - for you?
 - Who is in your life that doesn't yet follow Jesus? Is there a truth about Jesus from this passage that you'd especially want them to know?

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.
- Is there something that seems especially relevant for us to do personally based on our discussion?
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do together based on our discussion?
- 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?
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