



## 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?  
*\*Unlike most weeks, most of the direct connections to the message this week are in the "Go" section.\**  
**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 a few weeks ago as we prepare to go back into John this coming weekend."**
- **Facilitate a guided reflection on Scripture.** The text this week is the one used in the January 6/7 sermon, as we anticipate returning to our "Gospel of John" series next weekend: **John 17:1-19.**

### Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage we get a unique window into the prayer of Jesus for his disciples.

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: Was there a time someone prayed for you and it left an unforgettable mark on your life?**

- *(For example: It could have been because of "who" it was, "how" the prayer built your faith, encouraged you, or was answered by God later, etc.)*

### 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.**

- How does Jesus define eternal life? And, who receives it? (See 17:1-5)
  - **It's to "know you [the Father], the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (17:3).**
  - **Those who receive it are those the Father has given Jesus (17:2)**
- What does Jesus ask for himself? And what does this text indicate as to why? (17:1-5)
  - **"...glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you" (17:1)**
  - **"...glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." (17:5)**
- What does Jesus ask for his disciples? And what does this text indicate as to why? (17:6-19)
  - **"Keep them in your name" (17:11)**
  - **"Sanctify them in the truth" (17:17)**

**You could also observe the desires of Jesus attached to each of these primary requests for the "why". For example: "keep them in your name"...why?**

- **That they may be one.**
- **Because they aren't being taken out of the world.**
- **That they be kept from the evil one.**

**Leaders note: Jesus here is praying for the disciples with him. However, in next week's text, v.20 tells us that Jesus is praying for his future disciples - like us - too!**

- 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.

- "This is eternal life..." - What Jesus describes and provides goes beyond a "location people go after they die". How does the wider witness of Scripture reinforce this? Look up Revelation 21:2-4 and compare with the promise of Jeremiah 31:33-34 and list how "eternal life" is further described.
  - **The idea of "knowing God" and being "with God" are portrayed from Old to New Testament as the goal of the gospel. Eternal life isn't just about "going to heaven". It's about heaven coming to us - and the chief benefit is the full experience of what's available in part now because of the work of Jesus: "knowing God".**
- "Keep them" - Jesus' prayer acknowledges that his followers will be in the world, amidst the presence of the "evil one". Look up Ephesians 6:10-18. What are Paul's instructions that connect to these realities?
  - **Put on the full armour of God! Which involves everything from the "truth" to "prayer" because there's more going on beyond the physical realm - whether we "feel" it or acknowledge it.**
- 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.

- What do you think the difference is between knowing “about God” and “knowing God”?
  - What things do you do (or should you do) to experience and enjoy the type of union with God that this prayer describes?
  
- Is there a way in which Jesus’ prayer for you is something others can pray for you today?
  - Facing a challenge that is testing your faith? Perhaps you could be prayed for along the lines of God “keeping you” in close union with himself and away from the schemes of the evil one.
  
  - Struggling with an area of sin or temptation that you’re open to sharing? Perhaps you could be prayed for along the lines of God “sanctifying you” in his truth.
  
  - Seen God at work in your life through him keeping or sanctifying you? Perhaps there are prayers of thankfulness to be prayed, too!

# 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.)**
- What would this practically look like to seek and "pray for the peace of our city"? Reflect and pray.  
**This connects to a takeaway from the weekend message and the Jeremiah 29:7 reference.**
- 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](http://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."
  - **Short-Term Mission Trip?** Have you considered participating in short-term missions? Plans are underway for a trip this summer! Join us as we travel to South Asia alongside our Northview-supported global workers, with opportunities to share the Good News, work with children in education programs, take part in leadership development, and encourage young adults and leaders who are learning and serving there. Go to [northview.org/short-term-trips](http://northview.org/short-term-trips) to learn

more. Application deadline is January 31, 2024. For more info or questions, email [globalmissions@northview.org](mailto:globalmissions@northview.org)

- 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?