



Community Group Leaders' Guide: March 16/17, 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:

APPROACH #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").

APPROACH #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*.

APPROACH #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 another 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 text from this past weekend was **John 19:38-42.**

Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage, John tells us about who handled the body of Jesus immediately following his death. We'll discuss this further, 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: If comfortable...As you read this "burial" story, what funeral experience from your own life comes to mind? Who was it for? Did any of your emotions surprise you? (For example, you could describe the first one you attended. Or, you could describe something from these sobering moments that made you feel surprisingly distraught and/or surprisingly comforted?)

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.

- Look at 19:38. Who is the first person described by John who handled Jesus' body after he was taken off the cross? What details do we learn about him?

- **Joseph of Arimathea**
 - **He was a secret disciple of Jesus.**
- Look at 19:39. Who is the second person described by John who handled Jesus' body after he was taken off the cross? What details do we learn about him?
 - **Nicodemus**
 - **He had an encounter with Jesus earlier in John's gospel at night.**

Leaders note: It is thought that both men held a spot in the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling class of the Jews. The Sanhedrin also were the ones responsible for Jesus' crucifixion.

- What did these men do to handle Jesus' body according to 19:39-41?
 - **V. 39 - Nicodemus brought 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes for the burial.**
 - **V. 40 - They bound Jesus' body in linen with the spices, in accordance with the burial customs of the Jews.**
 - **V.41 - They placed Jesus in a new tomb in which no one had been laid before.**

Leaders note: Most of us have likely never had to do anything close to what these men do with a dead body. You could comment on what this process may have felt like. Furthermore, commentators say that 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes was enough to bury a king!

Keep these observations in mind as you proceed through step 3.

Step 3: Connect To God's Story

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

We've selected a few connections that are here to a) expand on the content of the passage, and/or b) clarify the content of the passage.

- Reflect further on Jesus' previous interaction with Nicodemus by reading John 3:1-15.
 - Look specifically at 3:14-15. What had Jesus indicated would happen?
 - To himself?
 - **Jesus would be lifted up, just like the Serpent in the wilderness**
 - To those who believe?
 - **Whoever believes in Jesus would be given eternal life**

Leaders note: It is interesting to reflect on the connections between the scene in John 3 and John 19. How much would Nicodemus have remembered Jesus' words in John 3 as he's preparing to bury Jesus in John 19?

- In 19:38, John lets us know that Joseph was a "secret" disciple of Jesus and the reason was that he feared the Jews. Other texts in this gospel provide details as to what may have contributed to this fear.
 - Look at the tension in John 7:44-52. In v.47-49, how do the Jewish leaders describe the people who believe in Jesus?
 - **They claim that these people are "deceived".**
 - **They claim that these people don't know the law and are cursed.**

- Additionally, what detail do we learn about Nicodemus' relationship to the Jewish leaders in 7:50?
 - **He was "one of them"**
- Read John 12:42-43. What were the Jews doing to people who believed in Jesus?
 - **They were "put out of the synagogue".**

Leaders note: It's clear that there were social and religious consequences to identifying with Jesus.

- Last week's text highlighted the death of Jesus. This week focuses on his burial.
 - Look up Matthew 12:38-40.
 - What were the Jews asking Jesus for?
 - **They wanted a "sign" that would validate Jesus' authority and identity.**
 - What does Jesus predict?
 - **That the son of man would be "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The burial was always part of the plan/"sign".**
 - Go to Matthew 27:57-61. What additional information do we get about the tomb Jesus was buried in?
 - **Look at 27:60. Jesus was buried in Joseph's "own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock".**

Take these reflections with you into Step 4 below.

Step 4: Apply To Our Story

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

- Are there times you've been a "secret disciple" for fear of others? Describe the circumstances.
 - Follow up question: Has there been a time, like Joseph and Nicodemus faced, that forced you to publicly and visibly demonstrate where you stand?
 - Follow up question: What opportunities might be ahead of you this week to show others that you are a disciple of Jesus?
 - How would you like the group to pray for you as you anticipate those?
- Responding to Jesus in a way that honours him can be costly.
 - What things would you say you have "abandoned" or "given up" for the sake of worshipping or honouring God? What makes these sacrifices easy to do? And/or: what makes them hard to do?

Leaders note: keep in mind from the above steps, these men were part of the ruling class of the Jews - doing this would've visibly put them at odds with the group they belonged to. Furthermore, Nicodemus uses great wealth for the burial of Jesus, and Joseph used his own property to bury Jesus.

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.

***Opportunity from our staff team:** Every year our Pastors, Elders and their families gather together to pray and plan for our upcoming ministry year as well as have a time of fun and fellowship together. This year we will be at Rockridge Canyon from Thursday, May 9 to Saturday, May 11th and we are looking for a group of 10 to 12 people who would be willing to come and work alongside the kitchen staff at Rockridge while we are there. Food and accommodations are provided."

If a group is interested, you can have them email our team directly at cklassen@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?