



Community Group Leaders' Guide: February 17/18, 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 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 18: 28-40**

Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage, Jesus faces unjust imprisonment and, ultimately, a broken judicial system that fails to protect him, though he is innocent. Of course, this is by design, Jesus knew full well he would not be treated fairly. 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: What is your favourite story of a hero overthrowing an especially despicable villain?

(For example, perhaps you really hated the Emperor in *Gladiator*, or really found it satisfying to see *Sid* in *Toy Story* get put in his place, or maybe you recall a particular championship victory of your team over another in a sporting event?)

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 John describe the actions of Jesus' captors once they reach the governor's headquarters?
 - **They "do not enter" so that they "would not be defiled." (John 18:28)**
 - **Irony: They are intent on killing God's son, and yet think they are pure! They are fixated on outward markings of righteousness but don't realize the issue with their hearts.**

- What does John say is fulfilled by Jesus' captors delivering Jesus over to Pilate?
 - **John says, "This was to fulfill the word Jesus had spoken" about the death Jesus understood he would have. (John 18:32)**

- What does Jesus say about his kingdom and the purpose for which he came into the world?
 - **John 18:36-37, Jesus said...**
 - **"My kingdom is not of this world."**
 - **Jesus Disciples would be fighting to free him, if his kingdom was of the world.**
 - **Jesus' purpose was to "bear witness to the truth."**

- What questions does Pilate ask Jesus in 18:38? What does Pilate do right after asking it?
 - **Pilate asks, "What is truth?". Despite the good question, Pilate walks away before he gets the answer.**

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.

- "This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die." He has alluded to his death in John 10: 11-17 and John 12:32-34, but in other gospels he is more explicit about the details.
 - Read Mark 10: 32-34, how does Jesus describe what will happen to him that will lead to his death?
 - **Jesus said...**
 - **"The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chiefs priests and the scribes"**
 - **"they will condemn him to death"**
 - **"Deliver him over to the Gentiles."**
 - **"they will mock him and spit on him"**
 - **"flog him and kill him"**
 - With these images in mind, return to John 18:28-40. What is remarkable about Jesus' posture and attitude during this interrogation, given that he knows the future?
 - **It's amazing to think that Jesus had such a detailed understanding of what he would experience in advance, yet during this interrogation, he is calm, controlled, and resolute.**

- "My kingdom is not of this world..." "for this purpose I was born... to bear witness to the truth." The nature of God's kingdom is that it reveals spiritual realities- namely, the sinfulness of people's hearts, Satan's oppression in the world, and people's need for God.
 - Read John 3:1-15.
 - What does Jesus say must happen in order to see the kingdom of God?
 - **A person must be born again. v. 3.**
 - What does Jesus say people must be born of?
 - **Jesus says one must be born again of the Spirit and water. v 5-8**
 - What must happen for people to have eternal life, according to these verses? (After reading this, you could also refer to John 1:12-13.)
 - **Jesus must be "lifted up" on the cross (v.14) and people must believe in him (v.15)**
 - Jesus told Pilate that he came into the world to "bear witness to the truth." In John 14: 6 - 7, what does Jesus reveal about truth, and what does that truth reveal?
 - **Jesus called himself "the way, and the truth, and the life." (v.6)**
 - **Jesus also shows what he has revealed, the Father (v.7)**

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 our text, we see the unjust nature of Jesus' prosecution. Pilate himself thinks Jesus is innocent, but doesn't protect him. Jesus' captors would rather see the criminal Barabbas set free instead of Jesus!
 - We likely haven't faced the level of injustice and suffering Jesus faced here. However, is there something in the text that might help you pray or persevere in the midst of an injustice or suffering you are facing?
 - **Encourage people to think about what they can learn from Jesus' confidence, posture, or attitude that might be applicable to their situation.**
 - **How is it encouraging to be reminded that Jesus' kingdom is the real kingdom and that he has authority over any earthly opponents we face?**
- In our text, we saw Jesus' understanding of his kingdom. His kingdom is very different from the kingdoms of the world. Jesus' kingdom is experienced by those reborn by water and Spirit, and these born-again people believe in Jesus, and follow his commandments.
- What would it look like for you to live every day of the next week as a citizen of this kingdom? (If you want some ideas, read Colossians 3:1-17 which describes how kingdom citizens should live)!

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.
- 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?