



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Guide: Easter Weekend 2024

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 primary text from this weekend's message was **John 20:1-18.**

Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage, John describes the first interactions Jesus' followers have with his empty tomb, and Mary's first encounter with the risen Jesus. 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: We all have stories we wish ended differently. Describe one - true or fictional - that you wish you could re-write for a better ending. (Maybe you'd make it so that your favourite sports team didn't lose the championship game - 49ers winning the Superbowl instead of Kansas? Maybe you'd make it so that a beloved character has a better ending - Boromir doesn't die in the Lord of the Rings?)

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.

- What happened to John in 20:8 as a result of seeing the "linen cloths" lying in the tomb with no body?
- What was the state of Jesus' disciples according to 20:9?
- What is Mary's emotional state according to 20:11?
 - Follow up reflection question: Given her state, look at how she responds to both the *angels* and to Jesus himself.
 - What is she focused on in 20:13?
 - Who does she initially perceive Jesus to be in 20:15?
- What words does Jesus use to describe God in 20:17?

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.

- 20:9 says "he must rise from the dead" according to Scripture.
 - One potential text this could point to is Isaiah 53:10-12. (Look this up and try reading in several different translations.)
 - Why is this servant suffering according to 53:10?
 - What does 53:11 indicate will happen *after* God's servant has suffered?
 - Also refer to Luke 24:25-27.
 - What does Jesus tell these disciples about what the Messiah had to experience?
 - How does Luke tell us he explained this to them?

- In 20:18, Mary tells the disciples: "I have seen the Lord"
 - Look up Acts 1:1-3.
 - What do these verses tell us about what Jesus was doing immediately following his suffering and death?
 - Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.
 - How does Paul describe the activity of Jesus after the resurrection?

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.

- In this scene we've seen the combination of both *fact* (the tomb is empty) and *personal encounter* (Mary sees Jesus alive).
 - Reflect further on Mary's response. She has an emotional experience that leads to testifying to the risen Jesus.
 - What in your life (or someone else's you know) is making it hard to believe in the "bigger story"?
 - Is there a way in which the reminder of Scripture being fulfilled - even when it didn't initially *feel* like it - could help you in your own story or in someone else's this week?
 - If there's time, you could also reflect further on John's response. He "believes". Is there a way in which this Easter has given you fresh confidence in the gospel?
- Jesus is alive! The resurrection can change everything about our identity. Is there a way to pray with adoration and thankfulness together in light of what Jesus says is now true of you in John 20:17?

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?