



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980  
**COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**Community Group Guide: April 6/7, 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.

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- **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?
- **Participate in a guided reflection on Scripture.** The primary text from this weekend's message was **John 20:19-31**.

## Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage, Jesus appears to his disciples and his presence brings both comfort and belief. 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: Is there a time in life you thought you lost something but ended up finding it?** (Maybe your pet went missing for a period of time? Lost your luggage on a trip? Misplaced your keys? Had a moment of panic when you lost sight of a loved one in a crowd?)

## 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 repeated phrase does Jesus say to the disciples? (See 20:19, 21, 26)
  - Follow up question: what was the state of the disciples prior to Jesus saying this to them? (20:19)
- John records a strong statement from Thomas in 20:25. What does Thomas say will happen if he doesn't see Jesus' hands and side?
  - What does Thomas call Jesus after seeing him in 20:28?
- How does Jesus describe those who believe in him without seeing him? (20:29)

- John 20:31 is the clearest purpose statement of why John wrote this book. What does he want people to experience as a result of belief in Jesus?

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.

- Jesus says that those who believe without seeing will be blessed (20:29).
  - Read 1 Peter 1:3-9.
    - How does Peter describe our inheritance in 1:4?
    - How does Peter describe what the believers had without seeing him?
  - How does Paul describe what happens to those who believe in Ephesians 1:13-14?
- "...life in his name" (20:31). This is a statement near the end of the book. Trace this theme back more thoroughly from what John previously wrote.
  - Read John 1:4 and 5:26. What are we told about Jesus?
  - Now look up John 3:36 and 8:12.
    - What description do we get of those who "reject" the Son? (3:36)
    - What description do we get of those who follow Jesus? (8:12)

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.

- Like Thomas, we may have causes for doubt and/or unbelief.
  - What are more common reasons for doubt in you or the people you know: the stuff of the "head" (logic, historical evidence, philosophical arguments for Christianity, etc) or the stuff of the "heart" (pain of unanswered prayer, disappointment in difficult circumstances, hurt from the church, etc)?
  - Follow up question: How would you help guide someone to belief in either case? Is the approach different? Is there something in Jesus' interaction with Thomas that informs your answer?
- Thomas' response to Jesus is to not just acknowledge a truth about Jesus - "Lord" and "God", but to make that truth personal to him - "my" Lord and "my" God. Who Jesus objectively is becomes something Thomas subjectively grabs onto in faith.
  - What things in your life helped you in the past and/or are currently helping you now to "own" your faith for yourself? (Is there a specific situation or time when you remember recognizing that Jesus was now "your Lord and your God"... not simply the person that your parents or friends worshipped and followed?)
- Jesus indicates there will be people who believe without seeing him (which is all of us), and that is a blessed state to be in! Perhaps that's a prompt for prayer today. You could use this guide as a group:
  - Adoration: Is there a way to incorporate more intentional "praise" towards God this week?
  - Confession: Is there something you need to confess to God or "repent" of this week?

- Supplication: Is there something you feel prompted to “ask” God for this week?

## 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.

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- 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?