



Community Group Leaders' Guide: March 9/10, 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 19:31-37**

Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage, John gives eyewitness testimony of what happened to Jesus and provides a window into why it matters. 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 someone who testified to you about Jesus (through their words and actions), and helped you believe that Jesus is worth trusting? (Perhaps someone who has lived experience following Jesus and led you to see how Christianity "makes sense" or "makes a difference".)

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.

- When does this scene take place according to 19:31?
 - **The day of Preparation before the Sabbath.**

- What physical details about Jesus does John provide in this passage?
 - **He had been crucified with 2 others - 19:32**
 - **He died while on the cross, while the other 2 were still alive - 19:33**
 - **His side was pierced with a spear - 19:34**
 - **His bones were all intact - 19:36**

- What does John hope happens to his readers according to 19:35?
 - **He wants them to believe because of his testimony.**

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.

- We are nearing the end of the gospel of John. What did he previously tell us, using the words of another John (the Baptist) in 1:29, about Jesus?
 - **He is "the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"**
 - In light of this, consider further 19:36: "Not one of his bones will be broken."
 - Several Old Testament texts demonstrate the significance of this Scripture being fulfilled. For example, read Exodus 12:45 and Numbers 9:12. Whose bones aren't to be broken in these verses? How do these instructions relate to Jesus?
 - **The first instructions about the Passover involved slaughtering and eating a lamb, but not breaking any of its bones. As the ultimate passover lamb - Jesus, too, would be slaughtered but not have any of his bones broken.**
- Leaders note: it is very likely that on the very day that Jesus - the true and ultimate Passover lamb dies, the Jews would slaughter their Passover lambs (see 19:14). The timing is significant!**
- 19:36 refers to Psalm 34:20. What type of person is the Psalm referring to according to Psalm 34:19-22? What are God's actions?
 - **The Psalm is referring to God's actions towards the "righteous". Jesus, the ultimate "righteous one", would experience both affliction (crucifixion) and deliverance (resurrection). Like Jesus, none who take refuge in God will ultimately be "condemned", but God will "redeem" his servants.**
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- Look again at 19:37 - "...They will look on him whom they have pierced."

- Look up Zechariah 12:10, which is quoted here. What does God do here and how did Zechariah anticipate the people would respond?
 - **12:10 indicates that God would pour out a spirit of grace and people would mourn because of looking at the one they pierced.**
 - Often when a biblical writer is quoting a single verse, they are trying to remind people of the larger story in which that verse sits (its “context”). With this in mind, what does Zechariah say happened after they “look on him whom they have pierced” in Zechariah 13:1?
 - **13:1 points to the day when God wanted to cleanse his people from sin and unrighteousness.**

Leaders: Here’s extended commentary note for more: “...just as the Jews in Zechariah 12 wept in contrition and repentance when they saw the one whom they pierced, how much more will the nations of the earth mourn...when they see the exalted and returning Christ coming in glory, the Christ whose followers they have been persecuting, the Christ whom they pierced since it was their sins that sent him to the cross? As John cites the text, however, the focus is on the piercing, now literally fulfilled in the spear-thrust of the soldier: that is the point of the introductory and, as another Scripture says. John does not explore *when* ‘They will look on the one they have pierced’. If John has in mind a referent for *They*, he does not tell us; yet as at the cross both executioners and disciples saw the wound but in time perceived quite different significance in that wound, so also both in this world and at its end men and women are confronted by the one whom they have pierced and perceive very different things. One day, however, all will look on him and mourn, whether in deep contrition or grim despair.”¹

- How does Isaiah 53:5 help us further understand the significance of the “piercing”?
 - **Jesus was pierced “for our transgressions”!**

Leaders note: pulling all this together, how little the soldier realized how much that one action meant in terms of the promised plans of God!

- “...his testimony is true..”
 - In 19:35, John gives us his personal perspective as one of the gospel writers. Check out Luke 1:1-4. What do they have in common?
 - **John, as an eyewitness, wants his readers to “believe.” In a similar way, Luke wants a believer to have “certainty” regarding what had been passed down from the eyewitnesses.**

Leaders note: Scenes like those in John 19 are meant to give us confidence in the gospel!

Take these reflections with you into Step 4 below.

Step 4: Apply To Our Story

¹ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 628

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

- If someone asked you: “why did Jesus have to die?”, what would you tell them?
 - Has this brief study helped shape your response? How?
- Who do you know that doesn’t think Christianity makes sense? Describe your interactions with them.
 - Follow up question: Is there something from today’s text/discussion that bolsters your conviction in the credibility of Christianity?
 - **Fulfillment of prophecy? Historical witness/proof of Jesus' literal death (as opposed to him fainting as some would claim)?**
 - Follow up action, as pointed to in the “Go” section: pray for those who haven’t yet “believed” as John would desire. Pray for opportunities to share, and clarity to explain the hope you have!
- God’s perfect plan came to pass. Use this template for prayer that this masterpiece never gets old and works its way into our everyday lives more frequently.
 - Adoration: Is there a way to incorporate more intentional “praise” towards God this week?
For example, you could share how you work thankfulness and worship into your everyday life with your group.
 - Confession: Is there something you need to confess to God or “repent” of this week?
For example, perhaps there is a secret sin you’ve allowed to stay active. Jesus paid for this on the cross. Look afresh on the one who was pierced for you and talk with him about this.
 - Supplication: Is there something you feel prompted to “ask” God for this week?
For example, perhaps you’ve experienced doubts in your faith. John would want you to know this as true! As for the Spirit to guide you into a deeper conviction of this.

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?

***Opportunity from our Outreach team:** Diana Madden is head of the Brader Elementary PAC and would love Northview to help with Bradner May Day. It might be a great opportunity for a few community groups to help out at. *From Diana: If you haven't heard of it before, we're celebrating the annual 104th event on Saturday, May 25, 2024... The call is to be in community, reach the next generation, and marketplace. Our event can offer an opportunity for all of that and I would love for nothing more than to be a part of God's work.*

If you'd like to peruse and better understand what volunteering is all about, feel free to check out the links below and contact our Local Outreach Coordinator, Connor, directly to get involved at cbelsher@northview.org

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