



Community Group Leaders' Guide – April 13/14, 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 primary text from this weekend's message was **John 21:1-14.**

Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage, Jesus reveals himself a third time to his disciples after rising from the dead. 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: Do you like surprises? Have you ever had a memorable moment of surprise? (Maybe a birthday party? An answered prayer? A decent sale on a normally more expensive item?)

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.

- What term does Jesus use to refer to his disciples in 21:5?
 - **Depending on your translation it might be "children" or "friends"**

- Compare 21:5 with 21:11. How many fish do they catch before Jesus helps them compared to after?
 - **Apart from Jesus they caught nothing. With Jesus they have a “large amount” - a miraculous amount - 153.**
- What things had Jesus prepared for his disciples' arrival on the beach?
 - **A fire, fish, and bread. Imagine having the resurrected Lord take the care to make you breakfast like this!**
- What term for Jesus is repeated in 21:7 and 21:12?
 - **3 times he's referred to specifically as “Lord”.**

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.

- “Children” (21:5). While this is a term of familiarity used in this scene, there's also rich theological significance to what the crucified and risen Jesus has done to make us “children of God.”
 - Go to Hebrews 2:10-15. What things does this passage tell us Jesus has done? How have these things shaped the Christian identity?
 - **There's lot's here. He's brought many sons and daughters to glory! He's saved us! He's made us holy! He calls us family.**
- “...they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of fish” (21:6).
 - Read Luke 5:1-11. What is the result of the disciples following Jesus' fishing instructions here?
 - **They catch such a large number that their nets begin to break, they require another boat to help, both boats get so full they begin to sink.**
 - **Leaders note: Isn't it fascinating how Jesus uses a similar miracle – something they'd perhaps easily recognize – from the disciples' past (in particular, Peter and the sons of Zebedee - Luke 5:10/John 21:2) to reveal that it's once again him in their presence!**
 - Now look up John 15:6. What does Jesus say they can accomplish here?
 - **Nothing. Apart from him they can do nothing. Some commentators believe that this moment was a practical illustration of this spiritual reality.**

- "...come and have breakfast" (21:12)
 - Look up James 1:17. How is God described here? What does he give?
 - **The Father of heavenly lights, who gives every perfect gift.**
 - Read Philippians 4:19. How does Paul encourage the church here? What does he tell them God will do.
 - **Meet all their needs out of his glorious riches!**
 - **Leaders note: There has always been a generosity to God's character. And in this passage we get a picture of that in the beachside breakfast he prepares for his disciples.**

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 the disciples, we may find ourselves working / toiling for something and not finding success.
 - Is there some project or goal you could involve God more intentionally in? How?
 - **Try and nail down some specifics beyond just "prayer", for example. When will you pray? How will you pray? Who will you rally to pray with you and hold you accountable?**
- The way Jesus (again) serves and provides for the disciples is a practical example of his love for them.
 - We sometimes view God like he's a distant employer (checking in once in a while to monitor the work he gave us to do). Is there something about this picture of Jesus that is comforting or encouraging to you today?
 - Follow up question: does this text encourage you to pray differently about something going on in your life or someone else's?
- The "Lord" is revealed to the disciples a third time after the shocking events of Jesus' crucifixion and the surprising events of his resurrection. Take some time to pray for God to reveal himself to those you know that haven't made Jesus their "Lord". (See first bullet in the "GO" section below.)

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.)

Note: We'll be hosting "Alpha" starting April 22. Is there someone from your life you could bring?

- 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?