



Community Group Leaders' Guide – PALM SUNDAY (March 23/24, 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 "Palm Sunday" weekend took us out of our Gospel of John series and into **Luke 19:28-48**.

Start with an "Icebreaker"

In this passage, Luke describes Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem ahead of the events of his arrest and crucifixion. 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: If King Charles came to Abbotsford and had a public parade/procession (with the possibility you could shake his hand or get a selfie!), would you make time to attend? Why or why not? (If not, you could also share which celebrity you would make time to go out and greet instead.)

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.

- Who does Luke say began to rejoice at Jesus' coming in 19:37?

- **The “whole multitude/crowd of his disciples”**
 - What title do they use when referring to Jesus in 19:38?
 - **They call him King. The one who comes in the name of the Lord.**

- Praise isn't the only reaction to Jesus' coming.
 - What response does Jesus get in 19:39? From who?
 - **The Pharisees offer him rebuke, not rejoicing.**
 - What other plans are made in response to Jesus according to 19:47? From who?
 - **The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people seek to destroy him.**

- What is Jesus' reaction to seeing the city in 19:41?
 - **He weeps over it.**
 - His reaction reflects the state of the people's hearts. What description/actions do we have that characterize their “lost-ness” in...
 - 19:44?
 - **They did not know the “time of visitation” (they did not recognize the time of God's coming to them)**
 - 19:46?
 - **They turned God's house “into a den of robbers”**

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.

- The words of praise in Luke 19:38 come from Psalm 118:25-26.
 - Compare these two texts. What does Luke add that the Psalm does not?
 - **Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”**
 - Now go back to Luke 2:13-14. How is this first declaration of praise from the angels similar to what the crowds say in Luke 19?
 - **In both cases, the idea of the “glory of God” and “peace” from God surrounds the worship of Jesus at his coming - both at his birth, and at his entry to Jerusalem.**
- Leaders note: Furthermore, for Jesus to ride a colt was an image of peace in those times. Conquering kings came on war horses; kings that come in peace ride in on a donkey.**
- In 19:40, Jesus tells the Pharisees that if the crowds were silent the “very stones would cry out”.
 - What God has made has always brought him glory. Look up Psalm 19. What does 19:1 tell us about what the heavens and sky do?
 - **They ‘declare the glory of God” and “proclaim his handiwork”**

- Look further at creation's specific connection to Jesus.. What does John tell us about Jesus' relationship to creation in John 1:1-3?
 - **"All things were made through him..."**
 - **"...without him was not any thing made that was made"**

Leaders note: Creation itself recognizes Jesus! He is the maker and master of the stones in Luke 19.

- Human response to God always has consequences - both good and bad - throughout the biblical story. Look up Deuteronomy 30:15-20, for example.
 - What command do the people receive in 30:16?
 - **Love the lord, walk in his ways, keep his commandments.**
 - What is the consequence of not following this command according to 30:17-18?
 - **Wandering hearts and idolatry lead to perishing and not living long in the blessing of the land God was giving them.**
 - What does Moses encourage the people to choose in 30:19-20? What is the benefit of this choice?
 - **Moses encourages them to "choose life"! The benefit is the experiencing the goodness of life in God and dwell in the blessing of what God wanted to give them.**
 - How does this connect with what Luke tells us about Jesus in 19:41-42?

Leaders note: God's call through Moses eventually led to cycles throughout history of judgment due to disobedience. This continues right to Jesus' arrival, which is reflected in the words of sorrow and judgment that Jesus has in 19:41-48.

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.

- This text has two contrasting responses to Jesus' arrival: praise and hostility.
 - We know from later in the story that the praise of the crowds doesn't last. The disciples flee, and the crowds call for his crucifixion. This can be similar to how we live, rejoicing in one moment and doubting or denying Jesus in the next.
 - Have there been noticeable times when your excitement about Jesus has faded? What commonly contributes to this?
 - What do you think contributes to lifelong worship?
 - Are any of your group's answers something to be more intentional with this week?
 - Who do you know personally who responds to Jesus similar to the Pharisees? (Hostility, would rather he not be in the picture)
 - What reasons or causes do you think shape their perspective?
 - How can you pray for them by name today?

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.

***Opportunity from our staff team:** Every year our Pastors, Elders and their families gather together to pray and plan for our upcoming ministry year as well as have a time of fun and fellowship together. This year we will be at Rockridge Canyon from Thursday, May 9 to Saturday, May 11th and we are looking for a group of 10 to 12 people who would be willing to come and work alongside the kitchen staff at Rockridge while we are there. Food and accommodations are provided."

If a group is interested, you can have them email our team directly at cklassen@northview.org.

- 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?