



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Guide – May 24/25, 2024

This guide is designed to help you and your group be **deeply rooted followers of Jesus**.

THIS GUIDE WILL BE DIFFERENT FOR A FEW MORE WEEKS. (“REBUILD” SERIES NOTE)

Following our series in the Gospel of John, we are now shifting into a “topical” weekend sermon series.

Typically, our sermons aim to be more “exegetical” (teaching through a book of the Bible verse by verse), than “topical” (using biblical principles and texts to speak to themes in life and culture). As such, our Group Guides

Typically our Group Guides follow a specific 4 step framework for discussing scripture. But alongside this atypical style of sermons, we’ve adjusted the “Grow” section of the guide to be far less thorough in interacting with one primary passage of verses in the text and more “thematic” in nature (like the sermons themselves).

Don’t feel pressure to cover everything, but praye

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.
- 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 shape a biblical view on a specific topic.

- **Pray.** Acknowledge God's presence, and ask for his help to hear what he's saying.
- **Facilitate a guided reflection on the topic and scriptures from the weekend sermon.**

Looking back.

- As you look back on your childhood or early faith experience - what were the spiritual "rhythms" that were embedded in your life?
 - What practices and patterns did your parents put in place to foster your faith journey?
 - Was "church" a positive or negative in your childhood? Why?

- As you think of how church attendance has fallen away for so many Canadians who used to regularly worship with God's people, what are the key issues that you think has led to this decline? Are there common distractions that have drawn people away? Is there a kind of teaching or worship experience that has been lacking?
 - What do you think will draw people back to Christ & to church fellowship?

Looking at Scripture

- Have someone read aloud Ezra 7:6 & 10, and Nehemiah 8:1-8.
 - What stands out to you about the commitment to and confidence in the Word of the LORD? What made these people so hungry for the teaching, and why do we see this hunger lacking today?
 - Add Amos 8:11-12 into your discussion. Is there a famine in the land today - OR - is there plenty of spiritual food but we are willingly starving ourselves?
 - In your own life/experience, what has created spiritual hunger and what has fed spiritual apathy? When have you been most desperate for God?
 - Focus on the four parts to Ezra's commitment (Ezra 7:10) - 1) He set his heart, 2) He studied, 3) He "did", and 4) He taught the law of God.
 - Now, add in Matthew 7:24-27 and James 1:22-25 and share your own journey - are you more student, doer, or teacher?
- Read Haggai 1:2-14 and Malachi 1:6-13. *These are hard words.* (not many sermons are preached from these texts!)
 - What do you observe in the text about the priority of the WORD, and the priority of "temple worship"? What is the general tone of these texts and how do you "feel" as you hear them read? Do you see/hear similarities between that day and ours?
 - Malachi depicts an apathetic, almost sneering approach to worship and the things of God. The people are accused of bringing their "leftovers" to God - and of saying that there is no benefit in honoring the Lord (3:13-15).
 - Are we guilty of the same attitudes today? Why does money have such a strong grip on our lives?
 - Does anyone have a story about how God has blessed you alongside times of sacrificial giving? Would you be willing to share?
- Finally, these people were gathering around the old covenant ceremonial worship practices that could never take away their sins - but only cover them over for a season (Hebrews 10:1-4; 11-14; & 19-25). How much greater should our celebrations of worship be, in that we come to a High Priest who is able to not only "cover over" our sin, but to take them away once and for all!
 - Read Colossians 1:13-20 and talk about why Jesus Christ must always stand at the center of our gathered worship times!

Looking Forward + Praying Together.

- As you think about your personal level of commitment to the regular rhythms of church life and worship/Word ministry - are there changes you think the Spirit of God is calling you to make?
 - Pray for one another and for our church family, that there would be a hunger for the things of God and for the gathering of God's people.
- As you think of friends who know the truth of God's Word, but have drifted away from regular church fellowship, spend some time praying for them and how you might invite and/or engage them in renewed gospel conversations (this overlaps with 5x5x5 prayer in the "GO" section below).
- Finally, have someone read the words of "Patrick's Breastplate" (see below) over your group. As you go to prayer, ask Christ to exalt Himself in your group, in your individual life and family, and to exalt Himself through the ministries of Northview.

Patrick's Breastplate

I rise today
in the power's strength, invoking the Trinity
believing in threeness,
confessing the oneness,
of creation's Creator.

I rise today
in the power of Christ's birth and baptism,
in the power of his crucifixion and burial,
in the power of his rising and ascending,
in the power of his descending and judging.

I rise today
with the power of God to pilot me,
God's strength to sustain me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look ahead for me,

God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to protect me,
God's way before me,
God's shield to defend me,

God's host to deliver me,
from snares of devils, from evil temptations, from nature's failing,
from all who wish to harm me, far or near, alone and in a crowd.

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me;
Christ within me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me;

Christ to the right of me,
Christ to the left of me;
Christ in my lying,
Christ in my sitting,
Christ in my rising;

Christ in the heart of all who think of me
Christ on the tongue of all who speak to me,
Christ in the eye of all who see me,
Christ in the ear of all who hear me.

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?