



Community Group Leaders' Guide (Downes) – October 19/20, 2024

This guide is designed to help you and your group be **deeply rooted followers of Jesus**.¹

You can take different approaches week to week - plan for your next meeting in advance.

IDEA #1 - BALANCE GATHER + GROW + GO.

The healthiest groups will give attention to all 3 discipleship categories: *Gather*, *Grow*, and *Go*.

You can't cover each of the 3 sections fully in 1 meeting. For balance, select one or two items from the *Gather* and *Go* sections in advance, and condense the *Grow* section (perhaps just do the sermon recap). You can also choose a different order (e.g., start in "grow", then hit "gather" + "go").

IDEA #2 - EMPHASIZE BIBLE STUDY.

Want a deeper "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*.

IDEA #3 - EMPHASIZE SHARING LIFE.

Want 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 well-prepared shepherd that "cares" and "facilitates".

¹ If you don't know your group very well, we recommend starting with our "First Four" discussion guide before this one.

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.

- "Let's start with prayer."
Thoughtfully acknowledge God's presence in the room. Commit your time to him. Start by calibrating everyone to this reality. Could be one person that opens your time in this way, or several.
- What is one thing you're really grateful for right now? Take turns and share one by one.
- Does anyone have a story of where you've seen God at work? Is there a life situation or answered prayer we can join you in celebrating? (This can be a way to revisit prayers or plans from a previous meeting.)
We'd love to share and celebrate stories from our Community Groups to honour God, encourage one another, and contribute to cultivating a culture of prayer across Northview! (With permission, share them with us!)
- What is one thing you're really burdened with right now? If comfortable, take turns and share one by one.
Idea: be specific. "Is there a practical need or decision you're facing that you'd like the group's help with?"
- What are you praying about right now? How can we join you thanking God or seeking God?
Idea: get one person to share, and then get one person to volunteer to pray for them. Repeat this process until everyone is covered.
- End with prayer, or move to the Grow and/or Go sections in the pages below.

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 + ask for his help to hear what he's saying through the text.
Idea: 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 Oct 18/19 sermon.** "Is there something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?"
For each person to share an insight they got or an action step they are taking from the sermon could use up your time. This might be a good use of your time, but if you want to go further into the study of the text below, indicate this upfront.
- **Facilitate a brief study of 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.**

Start the conversation with an "Icebreaker."

In this passage, Paul mentions that the gospel message is a mystery God hid from the world and made it known which can only be understood by the Spirit.

Share from your life to get a feel for this dynamic in the text - while also helping others get to know one another - by using this **Icebreaker question: Is there something you have recently tried to grow / develop (finances, garden, your physical muscles, a skill set, your kids' ability in something)? What are some of the common things that growth and development requires? (Leaders: Time, consistency, good environment, etc)**

Study Step 1: Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Familiarize yourself with this section of verses.

Study Step 2: Understand Their Story – (With answer key + leaders notes)

Ask *observation questions* to understand what the author is communicating to the original audience.

- **Look at 3:1-3.**
 - How does Paul describe the Corinthians?
 - **Brothers and Sisters (3:1)**
 - **People who are still worldly (3:1)**
 - **Mere infants in Christ (3:1)**
 - **Not ready for solid food (3:2)**
 - **Worldly (3:3)**

- **Mere humans (3:3)**
- **Look at 3:4-8.**
 - Paul continues to describe the dynamic of following a favorite teacher with a gardening metaphor. What does he say about who he and Apollos are and how they relate to God's work?
 - **Both Paul and Apollos are servants (3:5)**
 - **Through them the Corinthians came to believe (3:5)**
 - **Each have been assigned a task (3:5)**
 - **Paul planted the seed (3:6)**
 - **Apollos watered the seed Paul planted (3:6)**
 - **God gives the growth (3:7)**
 - What do you learn about the dynamic of God using people and working himself?
 - **Only he deserves the glory: neither planting or watering counts but the one giving growth (3:7)**
 - **Both the planter and the caretaker have their own purpose (3:8)**
 - **According to their work they will be rewarded (3:8)**
- **Look at 3:9**
 - What is Paul's conclusion about himself and Apollos?
 - **Apollos and Paul are co-workers and both in the service to/for God.**
 - What is Paul's conclusion about the identity of the Corinthians?
 - **Corinthians: God's field and house.**
- *Reflect on these observations: What do you think makes for a good church leader?*

Study Step 3: Connect To God's Story – (With answer key + leaders notes)

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.

- In 3:1-3 Paul addresses the Corinthians and describes them as "immature" and "worldly."
 - Look up **Hebrews 5:12-14**. How does this passage compare with what Paul says in our text?
 - **They should be teachers but need to be taught the basics (Heb. 5:12)**
 - **Milk is for the spiritual young whereas solid food is for the mature (15:13)**
 - **The mature have trained their discernment through practicing (5:14)**
 - **The mature are in a practice of distinguishing between good and evil (5:14)**
 - Now read **Ephesians 4:3, 11-15, Colossians 1:28-29, and 1 Peter 2:1-3**. What vision of "maturity" do we get for Christian life here?
 - The immaturity Paul is dealing with in this text is manifesting itself in "jealousy & strife" - and centered on their rallying behind a favorite teacher (for reference, see **1 Corinthians 1:10-13**). Paul asks a pointed question - "WHAT is Paul/Apollos?" - interesting that he doesn't say "who" - but "what"?

- Look at **John 15:1-8** to reinforce our perspective about how God accomplishes his purposes through his people.
 - What is the farming image Jesus uses in his “I AM” statement?
 - Who is the source of fruitfulness?
Note how it is the Christian abiding in Christ that brings fruit. Apart from him no one can bear fruit!
 - Who gets the glory for fruitfulness?
Note who gets the glory in the end (15:8) - the Father.
- *Reflect on the texts about God's servants. What's the difference between “fruitfulness” and “faithfulness?”*
 - **Leaders: a conversation that you could stir up could involve questions like: Do we rally behind individuals and ministries that “appear” successful? What about the servant who faithfully follows the LORD - yet sees little tangible fruit? Does little fruit mean failure?**
 - **How do the texts we've read inform our answers to these questions?**
- Take these observations and reflections with you to the next step.

Step 4: Apply To Our Story

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

- *Reflect on the “maturity” texts above.* Share about how you are working towards maturity in your life. What is working? What is challenging in your current stage of life?
Leaders: you may want to brainstorm with your group: How can you grow in love for God's word? The apostle Peter says that if anything we should long for God's word like and infant longs for milk. How is this different from actually being an adult on a “milk only” diet? You could also use this to shape how your group prays for one another.
- Paul urges the church to be in unity and not end up in dissention over different teachers! Regardless, for Christians to grow up we need rebuke and encouragement. Is there someone you are discipling to become mature in knowing God and loving others?
 - Share and pray for that relationship!
 - Also pray for faithful workers of God in local churches, foreign missions, and our people's own ministries in the marketplace where fruit may take a LONG time.

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 those far from God that you personally know, by name.

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, and our "Loving The Lost" group prayer guide is attached to our weekly group leader email.)

- 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?

IDEA: Northview Kids is running ["Trunk or Treat"](#) on October 31, and could use some help!

- **Donate Candy! Bring peanut free, individually wrapped candies to Northview Kids on the weekend or to office reception during office hours (M-F | 8:30-4:30)!**
- **Decorate your Car! We are looking for people to sign up to decorate their car and hand out candy as kids go car-to-car trick or treating!**
- **Dress Up! Come in a costume and with a bag to go car-to-car trick or treating!**
- **Invite your Neighbours! This is an opportunity to bring our Northview Kids Families and Communities together to bless our Northview neighbours.**