



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Leaders' Guide – November 23/24, 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 Nov 23/24 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 4:14-21.**

Start the conversation with an "Icebreaker."

In this passage, Paul concludes his first argument (cultivating humility and union in the Corinthian church).

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: Who is a "spiritual father" (or mother) to you? Who has impacted you most significantly with regards to the gospel.** (What makes this mentor so special? What is your current relationship with them? How do you see their impact reflected in how you live?)

Study Step 1: Read 1 Corinthians 4:14-21.

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.

- **Take a look at 4:14-16.**
 - What is the reason Paul is writing to the Corinthians? How does he address them?
 - **"...not to shame them" (14)**
 - **"...but to warn you" (14)**
 - **"...as my dear children" (14)**
 - What is Paul saying about being a "spiritual father?"
 - **Corinthians might have many guardians (15)**

- **Paul has become a spiritual father through the gospel (15)**
 - What is Paul wanting the Corinthians to do?
 - **Paul wants them to imitate him (16)**
 - **Take a look at 4:17.**
 - Paul says he sent Timothy for this reason! (Perhaps as another spiritual father, helping them to imitate Paul.) List what you learn of Timothy.
 - **Paul loves him**
 - **He is faithful in the Lord**
 - **Remind the Corinthians of Paul's way of life in Jesus**
 - **Take a look at 4:18-21.**
 - Paul talks about coming to the Corinthians! What do we learn? What is the nature of the kingdom?
 - **Some have become arrogantly thinking he wouldn't come (18)**
 - **Paul will come and inquire about these people and their influence (19)**
 - **The kingdom of God is not of talk but power (20)**
 - *Reflection question. Why do you think Paul asks them rhetorically of how they should receive him in 4:21? (Strict or loving?)*
 - Take these observations into the next step below.

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.

- Paul argues about the importance of spiritual fathers and his role in the life of the Corinthians: Look up **1 Timothy 4:12-16**. How did Paul "father" Timothy?
 - **Encouragement: Paul speaks into potential challenges Timothy might face (the impact of his age) (v.12a)**
 - **Challenge: Paul urges Timothy to lead by example (v.12b)**
 - speech
 - conduct
 - Love
 - Faith
 - Purity
 - **Direction: Paul shows Timothy which spiritual disciplines he needs to focus on (public reading of Scripture and preaching) (v.13)**
 - **Reminder: Paul reminds him of his calling and affirms him (v.14)**
 - **Warning: Paul urges him to watch out (15)**
 - **Motivations: Paul encourages him to be diligent & highlights the fruit it will bear (16)**
- *Reflection: Who are you influencing in their pursuit of the gospel? Are you a spiritual father/mother to someone? If not, who might you be in a position to become a father/mother to in this way?*

- Let's learn a bit about Timothy. Who is he? Why is he sent to Corinth? Read **Acts 16:1-3, Acts 18:1-5 and Philipians 2:19-22**
 - What do you learn about Timothy in Acts 16:1-3 and Acts 18:1-5 (especially verse 5)
 - **A disciple from Lystra and Derbe (16:1a)**
 - **Has a jewish mother (16:1b)**
 - **Had a gentile Father (16:1b)**
 - **Had a good reputation (16:2)**
 - **Paul circumcised him (16:3)**
 - **Timothy and Silas came to Paul at Corinth and spent time with him as he preached and reasoned (18:5)**
 - How does Paul speak of him to the Phillipians (see **Phillipans 2:19-22**)?
 - **Paul sees Timothy as uniquely faithful, sharing his heart and commitment to Christ's work. He describes Timothy as a "son" who serves alongside him like a partner in the gospel.**
 - *Reflection Question: Taking the two texts above together, how helpful was Paul's discipleship towards Timothy regarding gospel advancement?*
- Paul mentions the kingdom of God as a kingdom of "power" not talk (4:20). Given the relationship with the Corinthians and their conduct, what power is he referring to?
 - You could also look up **Romans 14:13-23**. Paul confronts another conflict in a different city by pointing to what the kingdom of God is "like" in 14:17. What picture do we have of the kingdom of God by taking 1 Corinthians 4:20 and Romans 14:17 together?
- 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.

- Where could our conversation help shift our perspective about something in life today? Where might the Lord be wanting to challenge you? Where might the Lord be wanting to encourage you?
 - What would help you live a life that more reflects the kingdom we've talked about today? What do you need to work on to have a life that's more worth younger Christians "imitating?" (Get the group to pray along these lines.)
- How should we pray in light of today's discussion?
 - Take some time to reflect on your spiritual fathers in the gospel. Thank God for faithful shepherds in his church and for the mentors he has given you.
 - Take some time to ask God if there is someone you can encourage and challenge in the gospel, just as Paul did with Timothy.
 - Share a struggle you're having with influencing someone positively in the gospel. How can the group pray for you on 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 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 available upon request.)

- Is there something we could do this Christmas season as a group to bless others? A special note from Connor, our Local Outreach Coordinator:

Christmas is coming, which means I am busy starting some of our Christmas initiatives, one of which is our Christmas Hamper program in partnership with Abbotsford Christmas Bureau.

Providing a Christmas Hamper for a household in need is a wonderful way to demonstrate the love and graciousness that we have been given through Christ. Providing a hamper or two to your group is a great way to serve our neighbour. I talked to one community group leader last year who, through their group, was able to pool their time, money, and resources to help two families with eight members each! The leader remarked that they could provide way more than they could alone.

It was a great way for the group to work and pray together for families they had never met. Delivering the hampers was a joy, as the families were so thankful and shared a bit of their story and the hardships they faced that year.

I invite you to consider signing up to provide a hamper with your Community Group this year. If you would like to, follow the steps below. And if you have any questions, please email me at cbelsher@northview.org

1. Fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/9NTKNVgtbzykqoo9>.
2. Applications for providing a hamper are due Dec. 1st.
3. Get matched with a family starting in the first two weeks of December.
4. Contact the matched family within 48 hours to confirm food, gifts, and drop-off date.
5. Shop for the family!
6. Pray for the family before you drop off your hamper.
7. Drop off the hamper on the designated day for your matched family on the agreed-upon day.