

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of September 23, 2018

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing & leading your group in discussion.

MEETING NOTES

Each week in this section you'll find the most important information for your group. Check out the **Leaders Notes** at the end of this guide for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ REAL MAN WEEKEND - OCTOBER 26-28

This is a great opportunity for the guys in your Life Group to get connected. Getting away for an entire weekend together facilitates connections that typically take months to realize. You can sign up online using your credit card, mail in your registration, or drop it off at the church office with your deposit during the week. Just write "Attention: Men's Weekend" on your envelope. Cost ranges from \$165-\$189, depending on which rooms are chosen. There are also two special discounts on standard rooms: a "4 Friends" option and a "Father/Son" option. Chris Brown and Jay Foulk will be our speakers. *See the end of the guide for more details.*

FOR LEADERS

⇒ BEGIN TO MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR SOCIAL & SERVICE PROJECT

Begin to think about what project you would like to do. Check our website for some options: northcoastcommunityservice.org

⇒ COVENANTS

Go over the Covenant with anyone who missed the first week. Remind anyone who hasn't signed the Covenant to do so. Email it to your [Life Group Admin](#), turn it in by mail, or drop it off at the office or Life Group box at the Info Booth on your campus by Sun, Oct. 7.

⇒ SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT WEEK #2

*Remember we're on week #2 with your group. People are still acclimating, especially any new people. Lead your group through the questions according to how well everyone knows each other. There are plenty of questions in this guide to take you deeper. **AND REMEMBER, as a leader your goal each night is to lead your group in such a way that you hear from everyone and use the Bible as your guide. Know that if you do this each week the people in your group will grow! Remember you don't need to cover all questions. Great conversation is far more important than covering all the questions.***

⇒ PRAYER NOTE

Check out the **Tips on Group Prayer at the end of this Leader's Guide**. If you have new people in your group, please make sure you go over this. **And NEVER make someone pray. Group prayer is similar to public speaking, which is the #1 fear people have.** More than once we've had people tell us they quit Life Groups because a well-intentioned person required everyone to pray.

ABOUT POLITICS IN LIFE GROUP:

Remember to keep politics COMPLETELY out of your Life Group discussions during this election cycle. Despite the fact that there may seem to be a predominant political persuasion in our church and in your group, we exist to minister to everyone who wants to know Jesus. Every election cycle we have new Christians, seekers, and even long-time Christians who are deeply offended when comments, jokes and even prayer requests send the message that people who vote a certain way are not welcome here.

If someone in your group starts to take things in a political direction (be it with humor, a rant, or even a "prayer request" for a specific outcome) gently remind them that the body of Christ (and North Coast Church) is made up of followers of Jesus - some of whom are Republican, Independents, Democrats, Tea Party, etc.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Depending on time, you may only want to answer one or two questions in this section. It is important to ask #3 this week, especially if you didn't ask it last week. Have fun with the first two below. They're meant to be light-hearted and engaging for everyone.

Discussion Tip: Go around the circle and have everyone answer, or open it up to the group and ask someone who doesn't talk much to answer. Remember, giving the group time limits helps keep one person from dominating the discussion.

- What's the most interesting building you've ever seen or been in?
- What's one of your most memorable surprises?
Great question to have everyone answer as it ties in with later questions.
- We all have different responses when we suddenly find ourselves not where we want to be. Two extreme responses are, 1) "*It's the end of the world as we know it,*" and 2) "*Don't worry, be happy, it will all work out.*" What might be the downside of living on either of these extremes?
This question creates discussion for the sub question below.
 - *End of the world as you know it – No longer able to see the positive work of God or good of others.*
 - *It will all work out – Unaware of the need to make some changes, deal with issues, or difficulty of the situation.*

If you asked two friends which way they think you would respond, what do you think they would say? (Extra Credit: Try texting/calling them to really find out).

Though a bit more serious, have fun with this one. We all can tend to go one way or the other. Good question to have everyone answer.

- Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
Make sure you ask this question this week. It gives people the opportunity to discuss questions or issues that come up beyond the written questions. People's responses can often lead into one of the questions in the "Digging Deeper" section. Some weeks this question will result in a lot of discussion, other weeks, not so much.

DIGGING DEEPER

Discussion Reminder: *If you are hearing from everyone in your group, chances are you won't have the time to discuss every question. You may start with one that catches your attention so you don't run out of time. For example, it's not odd to start with question #2, then go to #3 and if you have time come back to #1.*

1

None of us like to find ourselves in tough situations, especially when it seems like God isn't responding the way we think he should. The story in John 11:1-44 is an example of this. As you read each section of verses below, write down any comments, actions or attitudes that stand out to you as a surprise to those in the passage.

v. 1-10 – *Jesus seemingly sees no urgency to go see Lazarus. The disciples are afraid to go back to Bethany.*

v. 11-16 – *There's a confusing conversation about Lazarus with the disciples, whether he's dead or sick. Thomas even thinks they will all die, but he's all in to go. What I often thought was just a mellow walk towards Lazarus was actually quite intense and filled them with fear for their lives because of possible violence. Jesus reveals a bigger purpose by him not being there.*

v. 17-37 – *Martha & Mary are both upset with Jesus which isn't surprising. They know his power. Jesus is still incredibly saddened by Lazarus's death, even though he knows he's going to raise him from the dead. People are questioning why he didn't save him while he healed many others.*

v. 38-44 – *Jesus is moved by emotion. They still don't understand that Jesus is going to do a miracle.*

Which surprise catches your attention the most and why?
Good question to have everyone answer.

Like the disciples, can you think of any situations where it seemed like God was absent and then it became apparent that he was at work all along?
Everyone may not have an answer to this.

2

After going through a tough season, sometimes it can be surprising to find that your experience actually allows you to help others. Ironically, receiving help from others isn't always as easily done. Can you think of any way someone could effectively come alongside you during a difficult time? If so, explain.

People will have different answers here. Moving to the question below may help people with answers here.

When someone we know is going through a rough time, our intentions are always to help, but sometimes it backfires. Can you think of any potential ways someone thinks they are helping, but they actually aren't? If so, explain.

Examples would be: Though well intentioned, people give advice when not asked. Another is you turn the conversation towards yourself and how you experienced the same difficulty, trying to show them you can relate to them, instead of focusing on them and their concern. Everyone will not have an answer for this.

How do these verses help guide us in how to effectively come alongside others?

Discussion Tip: *The additional verses listed below offer great additional guidance. Have various people read each verse and have others answer the question.*

Ephesians 4:29 - ²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.
Our focus should be on others needs and what benefits them.

Philippians 2:3-4 - ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. “

Focus on their “interest” or needs – find out what they want or need from you. Ask them what they need or would like. “Is there anything you need or that I can help with?” or “Would you like me to pray for you?”, etc.

Proverbs 18:2, 13 - ² Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.
¹³ To answer before listening—that is folly and shame.
Listen, don't focus on your opinions.

Proverbs 17:27 - ²⁷ The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.
Less words are usually a better choice.

Additional Verses:

Hebrews 6:10-12 – ¹⁰ God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.¹¹ We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. ¹² We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Romans 15:1-2 - We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.

Galatians 6:2 - ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 12:15 - ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Which of these verses catch your attention the most and why? Which one is more important for you to remember?

Good question to have everyone answer

TAKING IT HOME

If you don't have any new people in your group you may want to divide into men-only/women-only groups to discuss this next section and pray together. You could also break into smaller groups of 3 to 5 and have everyone answer these questions. If you have new people, we suggest waiting another week so they can get to know each other better. Make sure you take some time to think through how you're going to cover the topic of prayer if you have new people.

1 Which point from this weekend's message is most important for you to remember when you find yourself "not where you want to be"?

Good question to have everyone answer.

2 Is there any challenge or difficulty in your life you'd like prayer for this week?

If you ask this question, make sure it isn't at the end time of your meeting, as it may not give people enough time to explain.

Prayer Transition and Optional Question: *The #1 fear most people have is speaking in public. Group prayer would fall into this category. If you have new people in your group, going over "Tips on Group Prayer" (below) is crucial. In most cases it's also a good reminder for returning groups. More than once, we've had people tell us they quit a Life Group or didn't join a group because they had to pray out loud.*

Additional Question (an important one for new groups): *Prayer is an amazing avenue God has given us to communicate with him and he with us. But we also come to it with a lot of different thoughts and feelings. Which of the following statements are most true for you?*

- Prefer to pray silently instead of out loud
- Find my mind wandering when praying
- Like to write out prayers
- Look forward to time in prayer
- Don't really know how to pray
- Other

PRAYER REQUESTS

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TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in a Life Group. Over the years we've found that group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME - Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

PRAY MORE THAN ONCE - Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE - Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one is required to pray out loud.



REAL MAN WEEKEND – “The Palomar Experience”- Oct. 26-28
Lookin' for some crazy guy stuff to do? Want to kick back or get refocused on God? Join us for another epic men's weekend that will get you recharged and refreshed as our speakers lead us into a look at what a real man is and isn't! The weekend will also include plenty of "man" event options like paintball, high ropes course, skeet shooting, archery, zipline, horseback riding, etc. Space is limited so don't delay!
Register online at northcoastchurch.com/real-man-weekend

WHAT TO DO WHEN "HERE" IS NOT WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

AN HONEST COMPLAINT

Psalm 73/ Proverbs 12:21,13:21,14:19/ Ecclesiastes 7:15, 8:14/ Psalm 44:17-26

WHAT TO DO WHEN "HERE" IS WHERE YOU DON'T WANT TO BE

(1) Don't be **SURPRISED!**

1 Peter 4:12/ John 16:33/ Acts 14:21-22/ 1 Peter 1:6-7

(2) If you can move on without **HURTING OTHERS** or
DISOBEYING GOD - then do so!

Psalm 15:1-4/ Matthew 11:28-30

(3) If you can't move on:

✓ *Focus On* your **DESTINY**.

Psalm 73:16-17/ 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 & 11:23-29

✓ *Look For* God's **PLAN**.

James 1:5

• Is he building my **CHARACTER**?

James 1:2-4/ Romans 5:3-5

• Is he preparing me to **HELP OTHERS**?

2 Corinthians 1:3-6

• Is this a chance to show his **POWER**?

Philippians 1:29-30/ Colossians 3:17/ Philippians 4:11-13

LEADER NOTES

These notes are designed to be a resource as you lead your Life Group each week.

MAKE YOUR MEETING GREAT

⇒ **MAKE SURE PEOPLE FEEL WELCOME**

This includes having name-tags, drinks when people arrive, a little music playing and plans for dessert.

⇒ **DISCUSSIONS & SHARING SUGGESTIONS**

Did you know that you can view this guide online, listen to the audio version, or subscribe to the podcast? Each week we share ways to lead your group in a great discussion.

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REMINDERS

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⇒ **ATTENDANCE**

Submit your group's attendance online through the Leader Toolbox here: members.northcoastchurch.com. If you're not sure how to post attendance, you can check out the guide here: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance

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