

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of January 20, 2019

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

LEADER NOTES

Things to Remember:

- Drinks when people arrive
- Nametags

Goals for the Evening:

- Continue to build relationships
- Pray together
- Start talking about plans for your social
- Talk about service project options



90 Second Leader Tip
vimeo.com/312857071

ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR SOCIAL & SERVICE PROJECT

Check our Community Service website for some options: northcoastcommunityservice.org You can also check out the Leader Tools page for social ideas. lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/suggestions-for-socials/

MEETING NOTES

⇒ 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 Welcome Booth on your campus by Sun, Jan 27.

⇒ 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. **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.

⇒ ATTENDANCE

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

Mark Reading Challenge

- Read Mark in one sitting (takes about 1-2 hours)
- One chapter per day – read through Mark twice in a month
- Bible Apps w/ Text or Audio – Bible Gateway App or The Bible App by YouVersion

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 first one below. It's 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.

Would you rather ...

1

- ⇒ lose your keys or your cell phone?
- ⇒ be known as a one-hit wonder for a novel or a song?
- ⇒ hear the good news or the bad news first?

Good question to have everyone answer.

2

Which of the three "Life Lessons" Larry gave us in the message this weekend would be most surprising to the average person?

Good question to have everyone answer. This question may lead into the "Digging Deeper" section.

3

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?

This question 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

This week we saw through Jesus's example that being in the middle of the storm may actually be right where God has led us. At times that can be hard to understand. What can we learn from the following passages about how we might benefit from these challenges?

James 1:2-4 – ²Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Testing matures me.

Additional Questions: Can you think of any difficult seasons in your own life where you realized after the fact that you were growing and maturing in the midst of the challenge? This verse says “count it all joy.” How do you balance being real about the difficulty of a situation, and yet still “count it all joy” without sounding fake or inauthentic?

1 Peter 1:6-7 – ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Its tests how genuine your faith is.

Additional Questions: We often focus on the big obvious challenges. But there are also subtle small ways we can be challenged and where our faith (or commitment to Jesus) can be revealed. What might be some examples of this at work, home, social life? See 2 Timothy 2:14-16, 22-26 to help understand the small but significant tests.

2 Corinthians 1:3-6 – ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

God comforts us and will use similar situations to comfort others.

Which of the Scriptures above are the most encouraging to you and why? Which one is most challenging?

Good one to hear from everyone. Some may say there are none that they feel challenged by, rather they are all encouraging.

If you were facing a great difficulty or challenge, what would you want someone to do (or not do) in their attempt to comfort or help you?

Many may have the same answer, but good to see what the group says.

2

It's reassuring to know that God is still at work in our lives in the midst of life's challenges (Philippians 1:6). Thankfully God's word also gives us guidance on the active role we play in the process. What resources do you find in the following passages that can help you cope with, handle, or even grow through a hard season in life?

John 14:25-27 – ²⁵ “All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

God's spirit will guide you.

Philippians 4:6-7 – ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Prayer (could use this passage to refer to when talking about prayer at the end of your meeting).

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

⁹ Two are better than one,

because they have a good return for their labor:

¹⁰ If either of them falls down,

one can help the other up.

But pity anyone who falls

and has no one to help them up.

¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.

But how can one keep warm alone?

¹² Though one may be overpowered,

two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

God's spirit & people.

Additional Verses: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 15:33

Can you think of any examples of how these resources have helped you? Is there one you tend to forget more than the others?

We were given some great news this weekend that just being tempted isn't a failure on our part. Wouldn't it be great if we could just snap our fingers and have temptation disappear? Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. Look over the following verses and identify some strategies that help us avoid and overcome temptation.

Psalm 119:9-11

⁹ How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to your word.

¹⁰ I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.

¹¹ I have hidden your word in my heart

that I might not sin against you.

God's Word in our life guides us.

Additional Discussion: *If your group is doing the Mark reading this would be a good opportunity to check in to see how it went.*

1 Corinthians 10:12 – ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

Thinking you're strong means you may not realize your own weakness and you don't put plans in place for protection.

James 4:7-8 – ⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Draw near to our God.

Additional Question: *How do you stay "near" to God?*

Philippians 4:8 – ⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

What we focus on is what we become.

Hebrews 10:24-25 – ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Gathering together is what keeps us aware of what we're doing.

Can you think of any examples of how one the verses above has helped you avoid falling into temptation in your own life?

Good question to ask, everyone will not have an answer.

When it comes to resisting temptation and sin, does anything come to mind that you have learned (maybe even the hard way)?

Good question to offer, but everyone will most likely not have a response.

Additional Question: *Below are the three extra questions that Larry asked in the sermon this week about temptation. As you look at the list below, which ones do you tend to struggle with more than the others?*

Three Temptations We All Face

1. *Who will we trust in a crisis?*
2. *What will we do to speed up the process?*
3. *What will we do to avoid pain?*

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

Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what's most important for you to remember? Good question to have everyone answer.

2

Are there any temptation avoidance, or exit strategies you feel like you need to add to your life?

It is best to only ask this question if you're divided into men-only / women-only groups.

Prayer Transition: *The #1 fear most people have is speaking in public. Group prayer falls 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 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.



COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

Community Service is dedicated to being the hands and feet of Jesus and showing God’s love in tangible ways through service to the community. There are many options for you to serve. For ideas, check out NorthCoastCommunityService.org

Don’t Blink or You’ll Miss It!

TODAY’S PASSAGE: **Mark 1:9-13**

A CLOSER LOOK: **Three Key Events**

(1) Baptized by **JOHN**

Mark 1:9/ Matthew 3:11-15/ Luke 3:2-3/ Matthew 28:19-20/ Romans 6:1-5

(2) Empowered by the **HOLY SPIRIT**

Mark 1:10-12/ Luke 4:14 & 5:17/ Mark 6:4-6/ John 14:15-17 & 16:7/ Ephesians 5:18

(3) Tested by **SATAN**

Matthew 4:1-11 & Luke 4:1-13/ 1 Corinthians 15:45, Hebrews 2:17 & 4:15
2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24 & Isaiah 53:5

A CLOSER LOOK: **Three Life Lessons**

2 Timothy 3:16-17

(1) It’s not a sin to be **TEMPTED**.

It’s a sin to **SIN**.

Mark 1:13/ Hebrews 4:15

(2) Sometimes the **CENTER** of God’s will
is in the **MIDDLE** of a **STORM**.

Mark 1:12/ Mark 4:35-41/ Exodus 14:1-31/ Psalm 23:1-4/ 1 Peter 4:12/ Hebrews 5:8

(3) A **BLESSED** life is not necessarily an **EASY** life.

Luke 1:28/ Luke 2:4-7/ Luke 2:22-24/ Mathew 2:13-15/ Luke 3:23/ John 19:25