

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of April 21, 2019

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

LEADER NOTES

⇒ **Leadercast is back!** Be a part of an extraordinary event that will make you an even better leader. It is the largest, one-day simulcast leadership event on the planet, with more than 100,000 current visionaries and future world-changers attending each year. **As a Life Group Leader or Host, we'd like to honor you and provide you with a special ticket rate.** Utilize the code **LGLeader** to take advantage of **special pricing at just \$69.**

To register, visit: northcoastchurch.com/leadercast

Date: Friday, May 10

Time: 8am-2:30pm

Location: LIVE, Vista Campus

Simulcast Speakers: Andy Stanley, Patrick Lencioni, Juliet Funt, Marcus Sameulsson and many more.

⇒ **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

Find all of our leader resources online: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools

Discussion Reminder: As always, remember that the purpose of multiple questions in the homework is to offer a variety of discussion options (kind of like a smorgasbord), as groups often vary where they would like to focus. Answering all the questions often times means you're not taking the time to hear from everyone, digging into the question or taking the time to catch-up and hear how everyone is doing.

QUICK REVIEW

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?

MY STORY

1 What was Easter like in your household growing up? What were some of your favorite Easter traditions as a kid?

Great question to have everyone answer.

Are there any Easter traditions you're happy to leave back in childhood?

2

Chris talked about Jesus wanting to have all of our life, not just a part of our life. What are some words or short phrases that would describe a person who has given Jesus all of his or her life?

Additional Question: *How do the words and phrases you wrote down match up with your life right now? You might want to make this a question they think about but don't respond to.*

DIGGING DEEPER

1

We saw in the stories of the bleeding woman and Jarius' daughter that faith is more than intellectual belief or just reaching out to Jesus. Biblical faith takes Jesus at his word and does what he says to do. What do you learn about faith in action in James 2:14-26?

James 2:14-26 – ¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Additional Passage: [John 4:43-54](#) This is the story where Jesus heals the son of a royal official. After begging Jesus to come heal his son and Jesus telling him that he didn't need to go there because his son would live, "the man took Jesus at his word and departed." This is very close to the definition of faith we've been using, "trusting Jesus enough to do what he says." In contrast to this definition of faith, in a sermon several years ago Larry listed six things faith is not:

Biblical Faith is not the absence of doubt

Biblical Faith is not a vivid imagination

Biblical Faith is not believing a set of facts about Jesus

Biblical Faith is not a powerful force that manipulates God

Biblical Faith is not believing the unbelievable

Biblical Faith is not optimism

How does Ephesians 2:8-10 compare with what you read in James 2 regarding faith and works?

Ephesians 2:8-10 – ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Additional Question: *How do you reconcile what James says with what Paul says?*

If you had to explain to someone the relationship between faith and works in your own words, what would you say?

Additional Questions: *What role does faith play in our salvation? What role do works play? What role does faith play in our Christian life? What role do works play in our Christian life?*

Note: *Much has been written about the relationship between faith and works. Here are a couple quotes that can help people better understand that relationship:*

- *Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone; it has good works with it.*
- *We are saved by the kind of faith that does good works.*
- *"Man is not justified by faith alone, that is, by a bare and empty knowledge of God; he is justified by works, that is, his righteousness is known and proved by its fruits." (John Calvin)*

Faith and belief are a big part of the two stories we looked at this weekend. Another story in the Bible that shows the importance of faith is found in Daniel 3:16-28. In this story, three of Daniel's friends were faced with the kind of situation that could easily have caused them to doubt God and his plan—they were told to either worship an idol or be thrown into a blazing furnace. What do you learn about faith from their experience?

This story reveals that faith is not being sure of the outcome, but being sure of the One who ultimately determines the outcome.

Daniel 3:16-28 – ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰ and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²² The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³ and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

²⁵ He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, ²⁷ and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

“They did not doubt God’s ability but neither did they presume to know God’s will. In this they agreed with Job: ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him (Job 13:15)’. They recognized that God’s plan might be different than their desires. I have my own desires and dreams and I pray that God fulfills them. But if he doesn’t, I can’t turn my back on him.” - David Guzik enduringword.com

What do you think helped these guys not give in when told to deny God?

Note: *People who don’t know the story of Daniel might not be able to come up with an answer for this question. Reading [Daniel 1](#) will give people a better understanding of these guys’ background and relationship with God.*

What would you say to someone who wanted to develop the same kind of faith as these three guys?

Note: *Not everyone will have an answer to this question.*

Additional Questions:

- *What were the results of them standing strong and not giving in to the pressure to deny God?*
- *What has helped grow your faith?*
- *When was a time your faith was challenged the most?*

3

Our faith ultimately rests on an understanding of who Jesus is and what he has done for us. The following passages all contain statements that Jesus made about himself. For each one, identify what he says about himself and ways his description could help build our faith in him.

Additional Passage: [Matthew 11:28-30](#)

John 6:35 – ³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Jesus is the bread of life – he is the one who sustains us. He is the one who satisfies our deepest longings. We can trust him because he promises to meet our needs.

Additional Questions: *In what ways have you seen Jesus meet your deepest needs? In what ways has he provided for you?*

John 8:12 – ¹² When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Jesus said he was the light of the world. The world is in darkness but Jesus brings goodness and righteousness to the world. Through Jesus we can see things as they really are. This builds my faith because I can trust that the way Jesus describes life and sin is accurate.

John 10:14-15 – ¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Jesus said he was the Good Shepherd. Jesus will care and protect us like a shepherd with his sheep.

Additional Question: *Can you think of a time in your life where you especially felt like Jesus was shepherding you?*

John 11:25-26 – ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Jesus said he was the resurrection and the life. While everyone will experience physical death, we will not experience spiritual death because of Jesus. His resurrection is our guarantee of eternal life.

Additional Question: *What is your emotional response to the thought of your death?*

John 14:6 - ⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus said he is the only way to God. He is also the truth and the life. If I have a relationship with him I am secure and loved by the Father.

Additional Questions:

- *What could help you consistently remember the things Jesus says about himself?*
- *Looking at your own life, how have you seen Jesus show up as these things for you over the years?*

Additional Passages: *If you’d like to explore a bit more on the Easter theme, here is a question from a previous Easter’s homework that you can use.*

In our society it seems like Easter is shrinking in its significance each year while the focus on Christmas keeps growing. In addition to that, our Easter traditions (although fun and rewarding if you find Easter eggs with chocolate or money in them) don’t usually point to the significance of the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. The clearest picture of the suffering savior in the Old Testament is found in Isaiah 53. How does this passage change or add to your view of the significance of Easter?

How does [1 John 4:9-15](#) further explain Easter and what our part is in being on “special assignment?”

TAKING IT HOME

1 Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what's most important for you to remember?

Additional Question: Here's a question you may want to ask for people to consider but not have people answer in the group.

We read this weekend how the woman healed from bleeding fell before Jesus and "told him the whole truth." Jesus can handle the whole truth and wants us to tell him the whole truth. Have you been totally truthful about your past life with Jesus?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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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



NORTH COAST CHURCH | LIFE GROUPS

Separating The Crowd From The Kingdom

Lies, legends or Lord?

Mark 4-5

Mark is claiming this man Jesus has the power over:

- ✓ **Epic storms**
- ✓ **Legions of demons**
- ✓ **Incurable diseases**
- ✓ **Death**

Finding our story in their story:

Mark 5:21-43, 8:34-35, James 2:14-19, Ephesians 2:8-9, Matthew 7:13-23, Romans 12:1-2

There is a HUGE difference between **reaching out** to Jesus, and putting **our faith** in Jesus.

Jesus will either take our **whole truth**, or **none** of our truth, he did not die on the cross to just be **part of our life**.

Without **surrender** there can be no **salvation**.

A question we have to answer:

Romans 1:18-20, 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9-11, 12:1-2

Are we simply part of the **crowd**, or one of the **committed**?