

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of February 9, 2020

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

LEADER NOTES

⇒ MID-QUARTER TRAINING

Make sure you attend the Mid Quarter Training session for Leaders and Hosts (Vista Campus based-groups only). Click the link to RSVP: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/mid-quarter-training

MEETING NOTES

⇒ DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Remember you don't have to answer every question!
- Choose questions best suited to your group.
- Listen to the [Audio Guide/Podcast](#) for more discussion suggestions.

⇒ PRAYER

- Take prayer requests
- If you haven't divided into male/female groups already, you may want to do so for prayer.

⇒ 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

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time, caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. This weekend we learned that the apostles made a decision by 'casting lots,' similar to modern day throwing of dice. Have you ever made a decision using similar means (i.e. flipping a coin, spinning a dial, asking Alexa to flip a coin, drawing out of a hat)?

What is your typical decision-making process?

Discussion Note: This can be a fun question when it comes to creative ways we have previously made a decision. This question helps jump into Digging Deeper Q1.

2. Under the section "Why I'm an Optimist," which one of the four reasons caught your attention the most and why?

Discussion Note: This reflects back on Larry's main points in his sermon.

Additional Question:

- If you were a vegetable, what would you be?

Discussion Note: If you are a newer group and looking for a fun way to get to know your group better.

DIGGING DEEPER

Discussion Reminder/ Tip – You won't have time to answer all of these questions. Decide ahead of time which one you want to cover. You could have your group vote on which one they want to make sure your group digs into.

1. In the story this weekend, the apostles did not yet have the Holy Spirit to help them make their decisions, but prayer did play a role. Today as followers of Jesus, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit to help guide us. As you read the verses below, what do you observe (circle, highlight, underline) from Jesus as He prepared to make some key decisions?

Luke 6:12-16 - One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Discussion Note: Make a special emphasis on what Jesus did to prepare prior to making some decisions on who His twelve would be. Take note of His time away with God praying. This is easily passed over when we read.

Luke 22:39-44 - Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." ⁴¹He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴²"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Discussion Note: Take note of how Jesus prepared for His death. He took His friends with Him and asked them to pray. He then went on His own to pray and He prayed more 'earnestly.'

Three keys to help you make wise choices in your decision making process are: applying Scripture, seeking wise counsel, and connecting with God through prayer. Have any of these things impacted your ability to make a wise decision? What has been your experience?

Discussion Note: *These three principles are things that we mention often. The wise counsel and prayer need to align with what Scripture teaches.*

Additional Questions:

- *How has seeking God in a decision-making process impacted your faith?*
- *What role does faith play in making a decision?*
- *Is there a level of a decision you would make on your own without consulting God?*

What are some things that could help you pray through and seek God's guidance in your decision making (i.e. time in prayer, consistency, memorize Scripture, pray with others, read Scripture, journal)?

Discussion Note: *This would be a great spot to make a list of the many things that are possible. Try to make this a question that can level the playing field. Sometimes the 2-3 people who "pray the most" in your group have all the "right answers." Try to get everyone involved in the list. You may also ask what things haven't work (see below). Remember the goal in prayer is connection with God. Don't focus on the "watering schedule" as Larry often says, focus on the "fruit."*

Additional Question:

- *What things haven't worked for you as you pray through and seek God's guidance in your decision making?*

Which one of the examples above do you want to try or continue to do?

Discussion Note: *May be a great place to emphasize TRY. You could also turn this question into your Taking It Home question.*

Is there a topic or area of your life you want to be more engaged with God (i.e. work, marriage, parenting, finances)?

Discussion Note: *You could also turn this question into your Taking It Home question.*

Additional Questions:

- *(If married) What does the process look like as a married couple when it comes to making a major decision?*
- *Do you consult God when making a decision?*

2. We heard some great news this week that God can "draw straight lines with crooked sticks." Unfortunately, our culture today is fascinated with the mistakes of other people. From social media to reality TV, we are literally immersed in the personal lives of others. With so much focus on other people's "stuff," there is less emphasis on our own issues. What consequences in the following verses could help us remember we all make mistakes and need to be slow to judge others?

Matthew 7:1-5 - "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³ "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Discussion Note: *We are judged based on how we judge. This verse does not tell us to avoid conflict, but to look at ourselves first. The 'plank' in our eye versus the 'speck' in your brother's eye is the proportion that we need to spend on 'us versus them.'*

Matthew 12:36-37 - But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Discussion Note: *We are responsible for the words we use.*

PRAYER REQUESTS

James 4:11-12 - Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

Discussion Note: *James 4:7-10 are about submitting to God. Then v.11-12 encourages us to love one another and that we are not to judge. God is the only judge. Humility and submission to God is the posture that keeps us from judgement.*

What are some of the reasons why we are so quick to judge other people?

Discussion Note: *There are many answers here.*

Can you think of a time when God used you or someone you know, in spite of any weaknesses, fears or limitations you or they may have had?

Discussion Note: *This is a great question to reflect on humility and submission as mentioned in James 4:11-12. Only when we reflect on our common weaknesses can we come together in unity. Our weakness is where God shows up.*

Additional Verse: *2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ~ Paul talking about his power being perfected in weakness.*

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 - *or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

TAKING IT HOME

As mentioned in past weeks, mixing up how you end your meeting can help with focus. Dividing in men / women only groups, smaller groups, etc. may help with this. If you haven't divided up yet this quarter, this may be a good week to start.

Which point from this weekend's message or Life Group study is most important for you to remember?

Discussion Note: *Everyone may not have an answer.*

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THE ACTS CHALLENGE: Do you want to get more out of Acts than just hearing it during the weekend services? There are 28 chapters in Acts. Try reading or listening to a chapter a day for 28 days and see how it will grow your understanding in our Acts series.

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Straight Lines & Crooked Sticks

The Story:

Did They Choose A Successor or Jump The Gun?

Acts 1:12-26

- Why I think they chose the **WRONG GUY**.
Acts 1:4/ John 16:13-15/ Proverbs 18:18 & 16:33/ Galatians 1:1
- Why I could be **WRONG**.
- Either way, this is what we need to keep in mind:
*Acts isn't a story about **SUPERSTAR** Christians,
it's a story about **JESUS** building His **CHURCH**.*

WHY I'M AN OPTIMIST

- Jesus said **HE** would **BUILD HIS CHURCH**.
Matthew 16:18
- Jesus promised that the **GATES** of Hell would not **PREVAIL**.
Matthew 16:18
- God always draws **STRAIGHT LINES** with **CROOKED STICKS**.
1 Kings 3
- Just take the next step of **OBEDIENCE**. God will **USE IT**.
Proverbs 16:9/ James 1:22