

# LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of April 12, 2020

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

## LEADER NOTES

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### ⇒ BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT YOUR SOCIAL and/or SERVICE PROJECT

Yes, you can do a social online & make an impact in our community even when you're "Stay @ Home"! We'll have some fun ways to connect and play games by week four or sooner. By then your group should be flowing well as an online group. Check out [northcoastcommunityservice.org](http://northcoastcommunityservice.org) for ways to impact our community during this crisis.

### THE MEETING

#### MEETING ONLINE REMINDERS & MORE "PRO TIPS"

- Resend your meeting link to everyone in your group.
- Log in early, welcome people in, and be ready for some confusion ... **AGAIN**. The first few weeks are going to be clunky.
- DISCUSSION TIPS**  
*Group Review - How to hear from everyone every meeting!*
  - **Pass the Baton!** Pretend the person talking has a baton. Once they are done, they then hand off the "baton" by naming the next person to take the baton and answer the question. This will work on questions you want everyone to answer. It's also a great opportunity to mention the need to allow time to hear from everyone and that at times you'll mention how long to share.
  - **Speak UP & Wait UP** – Remind your group to speak up so everyone can hear them. You also may want to suggest waiting 2 or 3 seconds after someone else talks to allow their microphone to switch from them to you.
  - **Hang out after the meeting is over** – Just as people sometimes stay late to talk, feel free to offer the same option.

#### ⇒ COVENANTS

**Life Group Covenant Review / Doesn't need to be turned in** – If need be, review the Covenant with anyone who missed the first week or if you didn't get time to cover it the first week. It's included at the end of this Leader Guide.

*\*Due to being online, we are not asking you to submit a signed Covenant this quarter.*

#### ⇒ PRAYER NOTE

Check out the "Tips on Group Prayer" on the back of this Leader Guide. If you have new people in your group, please make sure you go over this. It can also be a good time to review how your group prays together. And NEVER make someone pray. Group prayer is similar to public speaking, which is the #1 fear people have.

#### ⇒ ATTENDANCE

Submit your group's attendance online at [northcoastchurch.com/attendance](http://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](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance)

## LEADER INFO

### LATEST ZOOM TIPS

**Break-Out Rooms** – Zoom allows the host to break your group into smaller groups. Practice this before you try it with your group. We'll create a tutorial for you next week. [Here's one you see online for now.](#)

**Updated Security Button** – Allows you to lock meeting, enable waiting room, etc. Reminder, use password, & other [recommendations](#)



Find all of our leader resources online: [lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools)



## Life Group Study Questions

For the week of April 12, 2020

### HOW TO GET ONLINE WITH YOUR GROUP:

*In case you missed the first week of Life Group, your leader or host will be emailing you information regarding the platform being used by your group to get online. Go to this link for more details <https://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/>*

### QUICK REVIEW

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

*One option is to start your group by discussing the first MY STORY question as a warm up and then come back to this.*

## MY STORY

1. This past weekend we experienced one of the most memorable Easters any of us will ever remember. What was Easter like in your household growing up? Has it changed over the years?

*Great question to have everyone answer. As Dave suggested, one way to do this is by using a technique we call "pass the baton." You have the person who just answered the question pick the next person to answer. Continue like that until everyone has answered.*

### **Additional Questions:**

*What did you miss about Easter this year besides not being able to go to an Easter service live?*

*Did you do anything to make Easter special this year?*

**Additional "Getting to Know You" Question:** *If your group is new, you have a lot of new people, or you want to have more discussion at the beginning of your meeting, here's a getting to know you question that you can use.*

*Music is said to be the universal language. What is your favorite kind of music and who is one of your favorite musical performers in that genre?*

2. Extending comfort and empathy to people is greatly needed right now. Some people are more naturally empathetic than others. Where would you put yourself on a scale of 1-10 (10 being high) when it comes to empathy?

**Note:** *Digging Deeper Question #2 deals in greater detail with empathy. Here are a couple questions you can ask here or wait and use them when you get to question #2.*

### **Additional Questions:**

- 1. How would you define empathy? Do you think it is similar or different from sympathy?*
- 2. Agree/Disagree: Sympathy and empathy are just different words for the same thing?*

**Note:** *It's a challenge to understand what empathy is. There is a lot of confusion around the difference between sympathy and empathy. Sympathy can be understood as feeling compassion, sorrow, or pity for the hardships that another person encounters. It is our response to someone's misfortunes. Empathy on the other hand is putting yourself in the shoes of another person, which allows you to be able to imagine what they are feeling.*

*Here's a link to a short animated video that talks about the differences between sympathy and empathy.*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=159&v=1Ewgu369Jw&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=159&v=1Ewgu369Jw&feature=emb_logo)

Has there been anything in your life that has helped you grow in the ability to extend comfort and empathy to others?

**Note:** *Not everyone will have an answer for this question. Someone might bring up the trials and suffering they've gone through, which is a good lead in to Digging Deeper #2.*

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Easter is a time when we're reminded of how Jesus' death on the cross provided forgiveness of our sins. Remembering our need for forgiveness and God's incredible provision of it will help us become generous in our forgiveness of others. Right now, many of us are spending a lot of time around a small group of people which means there is ample opportunity for increased relational friction, so forgiveness is needed now more than ever.

The story of Joseph in the Old Testament is a great example of what forgiveness looks like. He was nearly killed by his own brothers and then sold into slavery by them. He later rose to a position of great leadership and power in a foreign country. When he was finally reunited with his brothers, he had every right to seek revenge, but instead he showed them grace and mercy. Read Genesis 45:1-15 and answer the following questions.

**Genesis 45:1-15** - Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup> And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. <sup>3</sup> Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. <sup>4</sup> Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! <sup>5</sup> And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. <sup>6</sup> For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. <sup>7</sup> But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup> So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. <sup>10</sup> You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. <sup>11</sup> I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.' <sup>12</sup> "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. <sup>13</sup> Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly." <sup>14</sup> Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. <sup>15</sup> And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

Why do you think Joseph was able to show his brothers this kind of grace and forgiveness?

*Note: While Joseph didn't have the example of Jesus to rely on, he did know about God's forgiveness, and mercy, plus he was aware of how good God had been to him to allow him to go from prison to being the second in command in all of Egypt.*

What do you think "forgive as the Lord has forgiven you" looks like in real life?

*To forgive is to no longer hold something against someone and not seek revenge. So, to forgive is to let go of the offense someone has done to us. It doesn't mean we automatically go back to the same relationship we had with the person as before. It doesn't mean we forget the offense or we don't set boundaries on the relationship or we trust them again.*

**Additional Questions:**

1. *What exactly does it mean that God has forgiven us?*
2. *How does God's forgiveness of us impact our relationship with Him?*

**Possible Answers:** *Forgiveness means our debt has been paid (Colossians 2:13-14), we are no longer under condemnation (Romans 8:1); our sins have been removed as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12), we are adopted into God's family (Ephesians 1:5), we are reconciled to God (Romans 5:10), eternal life (2 Corinthians 5:6-8), unlimited grace and mercy (Ephesians 2:5-9). See also Ephesians 1:3-10.*

Forgiveness tends to be more of a journey than an event, and sometimes we don't want to be on that journey. What are some of the reasons we have for holding on to a grudge or not forgiving?

*If forgiveness were an event, we'd forgive once and be done with it. But for many people, they have to keep exercising their forgiveness muscle over time before their emotions catch up to their rational decision to forgive someone.*

**Additional Questions:**

1. *Which of these reasons have you experienced?*
2. *What have you found that helps you deal with these reasons not to forgive?*

Often we think of forgiveness in the context of some big wrongs, like what happened with Joseph and his brothers. But we also face issues of forgiveness in our daily life. What are some of the small things that happen to us where we also need to ask for or offer forgiveness?

**Additional Questions:**

1. *Can you think of a small thing that someone has done that was hard for you to forgive?*
2. *Is there anything that a member of your family does repeatedly that you've had to learn to overlook or forgive?*

*Below is a story about forgiveness under extreme circumstances you could share with the group. You could use the "Share" function on Zoom to put the story up so everyone could read along.*

*One person who learned to forgive in an extremely tough situation was Christian author and speaker Corrie Ten Boom. Here is her story:*

*Corrie and her sister Betsie were confined in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II because they were caught concealing Jews. Corrie survived 10 months of inhuman and humiliating treatment at the hands of the Nazi guards but her sister died because of the brutal conditions. After the end of the war, Corrie traveled the world telling the story of God's faithfulness during her imprisonment.*

*After one of her messages in 1947, a man approached her who she immediately recognized as one of the more brutal guards at the concentration camp. He identified himself as a former guard and then told her he had become a Christian since that time. He went on to share how he had experienced God's forgiveness for all the cruel things he had done there. Now he was standing in front of her, his hand extended, asking for her forgiveness as well.*

**Additional Question:** *If you were Corrie Ten Boom, how do you think you would be feeling or what would you be thinking at that moment?*

*The rest of the story:*

*"And I stood there – I whose sins had every day to be forgiven – and could not [forgive him]. Betsie had died in that place – could he erase her slow, terrible death simply by asking?*

*I had to do it – I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were also able to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that. And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion – I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. 'Jesus, help me!' I prayed silently. 'I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.' And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. As I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced*

*down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.*

*'I forgive you, brother!' I cried. 'With all my heart.'*

*For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then."*

**Additional Questions:**

1. *What stands out to you about this story?*
2. *How do you think it was possible for Corrie to forgive the guard?*
3. *What do you think took place in Corrie's life prior to this encounter that allowed her to forgive the guard at that moment?*

2. We heard this weekend that we're "saved to save others." Being involved in "saving others" often means ministering to them by extending comfort and empathy, which are two big needs in our world today as many people are struggling financially, physically and emotionally. One of the best ways God teaches us to comfort others is through the trials and difficult seasons in our own lives. What stands out to you about how God wants to teach us to comfort others from 2 Corinthians 1:3-7?

*Note: This would be a good question to ask those who may not have talked much yet.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-7** - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

How is Paul's perspective in this passage contrary to how people normally think when facing physical or emotional challenges?

*What responses and emotions have you struggled with when you were going through physical or emotional challenges?*

Can you think of a time in your life when you've experienced the comfort of God?

*This is a very subjective question. Some people may not even know what it's like to experience God's comfort. Others will have stories of feeling a great sense of peace in the middle of a challenge or trial.*

**Additional Questions:**

1. *How do we experience the comfort that is spoken about in this passage?*
2. *Can you think of anything that could hinder us experiencing God's comfort?*

Is there a person in your life who has been an example of consistently showing comfort and empathy to others?

**Additional Questions:**

1. *What have you learned about extending comfort and empathy from them?*
2. *How would you define empathy? Do you think it is similar or different from sympathy?*
3. *Agree/Disagree: Sympathy and empathy are just different words for the same thing?*

*Note: It's a challenge to understand what empathy is. There is a lot of confusion around the difference between sympathy and empathy. Sympathy can be understood as feeling compassion, sorrow, or pity for the hardships that another person encounters. It is our response to someone's misfortunes. Empathy on the other hand is putting yourself in the shoes of another person which allows you to be able to imagine what they are feeling. Some people actually feel the same emotions as the other person. Other people don't necessarily feel those emotions but they can put themselves in other people's shoes and understand what emotions they are experiencing and respond accordingly.*

*Here's a link to a short animated video that talks about the differences between sympathy and empathy.*

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Can you think of any positive or negative examples in your life when someone has attempted to show you compassion or empathy? Is there anything you can learn from what they did or did not do?

*Please let people know that you don't want them sharing any names of people in answering this question so you can protect the "guilty."*

**TAKING IT HOME**

1. In light of the struggles so many people are having right now, take a moment to pray and ask God to show you how He can use your trials, sufferings or difficulties to minister to others.

2. Can you think of any ways you can be comforting to those inside or outside of your home despite the limitations of social distancing right now?

*Here's a way to transition into your prayer time.*

*As followers of Jesus we can be confident that following Him will allow us to find our true value and remain hopeful no matter what life throws at us. "Christ is Enough for Me" is the name of a song that speaks of just that - that He is enough to put our full trust in!*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6MzgVsP2uE>

*If you're using Zoom, you can all watch this video together in your meeting as a lead in to your prayer time. You will need to have YouTube open to this link in a separate window on the meeting host's computer. To share it, the meeting host clicks on "share screen" at the bottom of the Zoom window and then selects the YouTube window and then clicks on "Share." Make sure the meeting host also checks the two boxes at the bottom of the share window so everyone can see and hear the video.*

*Christ is my reward and all of my devotion  
Now there's nothing in this world that could ever satisfy*

*Through every trial my soul will sing  
No turning back I've been set free*

*Christ is enough for me, Christ is enough for me  
Everything I need is in You, everything I need*

*Christ my all in all, The joy of my salvation  
And this hope will never fail, heaven is our home*

*Through every storm my soul will sing  
Jesus is here, to God be the glory*

*I have decided to follow Jesus  
No turning back, no turning back*

*The cross before me, the world behind me  
No turning back, no turning back \**

*Words & Music by Jonas Myrin & Reuben Morgan • Copyright © Hillsong Music Publishing CCLI #141391*

**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 group members. 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

### 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.

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**RESOURCES DURING QUARANTINE:** Check out these links, also available on our homepage: [northcoastchurch.com](http://northcoastchurch.com).

- Need some extra help or are you looking to serve in the midst of this crisis? Visit the [COVID-19 Resources](#) page for a variety of options.
  - Also, check out our [Daily Doses](#) to help encourage you while dealing with the potential challenges COVID-19 may cause.
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## Getting Easter Right

### How the first Easter upset the kingdom:

Acts 5:12-33

### Getting Easter right:

Acts 5:12-33

It's not about what they **DID**, but who they **WERE WITH**.

This is a great example of how God works for  
His **PURPOSE** and **GLORY**, not **OURS**.

The purpose of Easter is to get a **NEW LIFE**, not a new:

**RELIGION**

**IDEOLOGY**

**MORALITY**

Christ exchanged His **LIFE** for **OURS**,  
so we could exchange our **LIFE** for **HIS**.

### Good news, there are only two ways to get Easter wrong:

1. To forget that we are **SAVED** to **SAVE OTHERS**.
2. To forget that we need a **SAVIOR**.