

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of October 18, 2020

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

LEADER NOTES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ **MAN EVENT** – We are unable to have our normal Real Man Weekend due to COVID-19, but we will be having a man event in its place. More details coming soon!

⇒ **COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS** – We have some high needs projects. Check out our website for **COVID-SAFE options** to serve: northcoastcommunityservice.org

LEADER INFO

⇒ MEETING REMINDERS

- **NEED HELP / SUPPORT?** If you need support for your group, please don't hesitate to reach out to your Life Group Pastor – we're here to help! Find a list of who to contact online at lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/staff.
- It's okay to have some weeks that focus more on discussion, and some that focus more on prayer! If you haven't taken the opportunity to break into **men-only/women-only groups**, try it this week.

⇒ MID-QUARTER TRAINING

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

⇒ 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

⇒ ONLINE GROUPS

Check out our Tips and Tutorials for Online Groups here: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/pro-tips/

ABOUT POLITICS IN LIFE GROUP - *We believe it is important for Jesus followers to think through and process how they are going to vote and engage in politics. But due to the polarizing nature of our current political climate, we want to keep our Life Group meetings free of politics and focused on relationships with each other and God's Word.*

Presenting the Good News of Jesus' saving grace to all, and the unity we have as believers is vitally important to us. In light of this, remember to keep politics completely out of your Life Group discussions. We exist to minister to everyone who wants to know Jesus. Every election cycle we have Christians who become divided over issues and can be deeply offended by comments, jokes, and even prayer requests. We do not want to send the message that people who vote a certain way or have differing political views are not welcome. 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 Republicans, Independents, Democrats, etc.

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?

MY STORY

1. How we respond to conflict is often affected by how our family handled it when we were growing up. Which of the following statements comes closest to accurately describing the home you grew up in?

Facilitation Tip: *If your group is meeting online, this would be a good question to move into breakout rooms to discuss, giving people more time to unpack their answers. Then, when you come back together with everyone, you could have each person briefly share their answer to both parts of the question.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> conflict was avoided at all cost | <input type="checkbox"/> conflict was present but never talked about |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conflict was considered no big deal | <input type="checkbox"/> conflict was most often dealt with in a healthy way |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conflict usually escalated into heated interactions | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

Which of the following comes closest to describing how you usually approach conflict now?

- Run
- Bury your head in the sand
- Fight/Argue
- Get defensive
- Become stubborn
- Listen
- Problem solve
- Panic
- Other _____

Additional Question: How does the way you respond now relate to how your family handled conflict when you were growing up?

2. God's message to Paul in this week's passage was, "Do not be afraid," which is a very timely message for us today. How have the things you are afraid of or are concerned/worried about changed over the years?

Additional Question: What issues in your life are you currently afraid of or concerned/worried about?

Facilitation Tip: One of the first answers some people will give will be their fear for our country if "X" person is elected president. If you think your group may go in that direction, you can either not ask the follow up question, or be prepared to follow up any statement regarding fear for our country in light of the rapidly approaching election by saying, "Many people are experiencing fear and anxiety over this upcoming election, but regardless of who wins, what are some things we know to be true for us because we have a God who is bigger than any political party?"

Another question you could ask is, "How does our understanding of what the Bible teaches about how to respond to fear and anxiety apply to issues like elections and politics?"

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Many of us long for a conflict-free life, but we are aware that conflict is inevitable for everyone except, possibly hermits. This means we need to think in terms of how to respond to conflict in ways that are healthy and consistent with our faith. How could the following passages help us learn to respond to conflict in a more God-honoring way?

Matthew 5:23-25 New International Version (NIV)

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

Note: Jesus tells us that even in the midst of required religious activity, if we realize we are out of sync with someone, we're to stop what we're doing and go make it right, no matter who is at fault.

This passage puts the responsibility on me to take the first step if I know another person has something against me, even if I haven't done anything wrong. A strained relationship means I need to do all I can to mend it, no matter who is at fault.

Matthew 7:3-5 New International Version (NIV)

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. *Self-deception is always a real problem. We think we see things from the "right" perspective, but we are not as objective as we think.*

Additional Question: How does thinking we're right and not owning our own stuff impact how conflict is handled?

Matthew 18: 15 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁵ “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

Here are some thoughts on this passage from David Guzik at enduringword.com:

“It is essential that we go to the offending brother first – not griping and gossiping to others, especially under the guise of sharing a prayer request or seeking counsel. Instead, speak to the party directly.

We can say that Jesus gives us two options when your brother sins against you. You can go to him directly and deal with it; or you can drop the matter under Christian longsuffering and bearing with one another. Other options – holding onto bitterness, retaliation, gossiping to others about the problem – are not allowed.

Jesus did not say that your brother must agree with you or immediately repent before you. At first, it is enough if he hears you.”

Additional Question: *What are some ways people handle conflict that are opposite of what this verses states?*

Romans 12:18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Additional Questions:

- *How far do we go in order to live at peace with everyone?*
- *How do we balance having tough love for someone (doing what’s best for them and us, even though it is hard) and living at peace with someone?*

What challenges do you face in trying to respond to potential conflict in the ways these passages suggest?

Additional Questions:

- *What do you find most challenging about putting these passages into action?*
- *What has been your experience with trying to handle conflict using the principles in these passages?*
- *Our motives are a very important part of responding to conflict. What are some good motives and some not so good motives for responding to conflict?*

2. Throughout the Book of Acts, we have seen that Paul had a calling to tell people they didn’t have to be spiritually lost. He endured a tremendous amount of conflict, pain and suffering to live out this calling. He knew from personal experience the difference between being lost and being found by Jesus. In Luke 15:1-10, Jesus tells two stories that give us some perspective on His view of spiritually lost people. What similarities do you see in these stories?

Luke 15:1-10 New International Version (NIV)

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

⁸“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Additional Passage: [Colossians 1:28-29](#) is a great statement of Paul's calling and purpose.

There is a third story in this chapter ([Luke 15:11-31](#)) about something lost (the prodigal son) that we aren't reading because of the length. You may want to read it if time allows. It differs from the first two stories because it is a human who is lost, not an inanimate object (so the value is higher and the person who is lost chose to be lost). The father doesn't mount an all-out search for his lost son, but waits until the son comes to his senses and returns. The result is the same – he throws a big party celebrating the lost being found.

- Similarities – Something of value is lost, the person who lost it mounts a search for it. When the lost is found, it causes great joy, which reflects the value of the object lost.
- One difference between the two stories – in the first, one of 100 is lost, in the second, one of ten was lost, and in the prodigal son story, one of two was lost.

What lessons do these stories teach us about those who are spiritually lost and God's attitude toward them?

Lost people are valuable to God, and it is worth putting forth effort to find them. The value of the lost item is seen in the celebration when it is found. We never meet anyone who isn't of value to God because lost people matter to Him. Finding lost people takes effort. I think it's safe to say that God throws a party in heaven every time someone becomes a Christian.

What do Luke 19:10 and 2 Peter 3:9 add to your understanding of how God wants us to view those who are spiritually lost?

Luke 19:10 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

2 Peter 3:9 New International Version (NIV)

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Jesus' mission and reason for being here was to seek and save the lost. The word "seek" implies that effort is needed.

The fact that the synagogue leader, Sosthenes, became a follower of Jesus is a great reminder that Jesus is still committed to "seek and save" the lost even if we don't think they would be interested. Is there someone in your life you once thought would never be interested in following Jesus who is now a follower of Jesus?

Note: *Not everyone will have an answer to this question but those who do will probably have a good story to tell. Hearing how God reached out to someone who we considered "unreachable" will be an encouragement for everyone who has someone like that in their lives.*

Facilitation Tip: *The follow up to this question is found in Taking It Home #1 -- Is there someone in your life you have a hard time believing will ever be interested in following Jesus? It might feel more natural to ask that question here rather than waiting until the end. After people suggest names, you could take some time at that moment to pray for these people in light of the passages you've looked at in this question.*

3. During the Last Supper, Jesus knew how difficult the next few days would be for His disciples as they struggled with fear, doubt and anxiety. He spent most of the dinner conversation preparing them for the challenges that were to come. What stands out to you in the following passages from this conversation that could have provided the disciples with comfort and encouragement?

Facilitation Tip: You may want to take some time to have the group think through all that the disciples would go through in the next couple of days following this conversation (or even flip through John 18-19).

John 14:1-3, 15-20, 27 New International Version (NIV)

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

¹⁵ “If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in 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.

John 16:6-7 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Jesus told the disciples that they didn’t need to let their hearts be troubled because of Him. He told them God had prepared a place for them and it was far better than anything on this earth. Jesus promised He wouldn’t leave them behind. He promised another counselor (the Holy Spirit) who would live in them and empower them to live the Christian life. He said they wouldn’t be left as orphans – that they are a part of God’s family and have a big God for their father. The source of peace will provide peace for them.

None of the things provided by Jesus were affected by their circumstances or anything they were going through or how people treated them.

Chris mentioned four things not to do in the midst of conflict. How do you see any of these being reinforced in the passages above?

Feeding the fear -- Jesus talks in a couple places about not letting their hearts be troubled or afraid and that He wants to provide peace. They will not be left as orphans, which communicates a sense of belonging and security.

Don’t stop pursuing obedience – Jesus says love equals obedience.

Don’t forget the God who is with you – Jesus will give them another Counselor who will live in them; Jesus says He is in the Father and He is in them.

Additional Questions:

- Which of the four things we’re not supposed to do in the middle of a conflict is the easiest one for you to remember?
- Which is the one that you’re most likely not to do?

Which of Jesus’ statements is most helpful to you as you potentially face fear and anxiety-producing circumstances in your life?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Jesus is committed to seeking and saving the lost. Is there someone in your life you have a hard time believing will ever be interested in following Jesus? Is there anything you'd like prayer for in regard to your relationship with them?
2. Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what is most important for you to remember?

PRAYER REQUESTS



COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

COVID-safe community service projects have been created for your group. To see what our high needs projects are, visit our website at NorthCoastCommunityService.org northcoastcommunityservice.org/community-service-impact/



NORTH COAST
FAMILY SUPPORT MINISTRY

NEW: FAMILY SUPPORT MINISTRY

Find yourself suddenly teaching your kids at home? We have some help for you! Check out our interview with some educational specialists in distance learning to get some encouragement. northcoastfamilysupport.com/

Conflict: The Recipe For Great Failure, Or Great Faith

When will the conflict end?

Acts 18:1-17

What not to do in the middle of conflict:

Acts 18, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, 1 Corinthians 1:1, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 2 Timothy 1:7, Mark 4:35-41

- Don't keep **FEEDING** the **FEAR**.
- Don't stop **PURSUIING OBEDIENCE**.
- Don't forget your main **CALLING** and **PURPOSE**.
- Don't forget the **GOD** that is **WITH YOU**.