

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of January 24, 2021

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

LEADER NOTES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ BEGIN TO MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR SOCIAL & SERVICE PROJECT

Begin to think about what service project you would like to do. Check our website for some options: northcoastcommunityservice.org

SOCIAL OPTIONS

Online Social Ideas: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/group-socials/

In-person Social Ideas: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/suggestions-for-socials/

**Please adapt in-person social options to comply with County social distancing guidelines for COVID-19.*

LEADER INFO

⇒ LIFE GROUP COMMITMENT FORM

Go over the Commitment Form with anyone who missed the first week. If anyone did not sign the Commitment Form, remind them to do so.

⇒ 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. **AND 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 of the questions. Great conversation and connection are far more important than covering all of 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 a Life Group 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

⇒ ONLINE GROUPS

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

PRO-TIPS TO KEEP YOUR ONLINE EXPERIENCE GREAT AND AVOID ZOOM FATIGUE

- 1) Shorten meetings to 75 minutes or less.**
- 2) Use break-out rooms to personalize conversation.** (If possible, try to do this at least 5-10 minutes every meeting.)
- 3) Coach people on how to engage and speak up online.** (Practicing this can really help.)

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

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Have fun with the first question below. It's meant to be light-hearted and engaging for everyone.

Group 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.*
- *Questions 1 and 2 are designed to bring some fun discussion. Hearing from everyone at the beginning of your discussion helps people to feel comfortable sharing. These questions often bring things out of people you may not know. Over time, these types of questions can be incredibly insightful and helpful in building relationships in a group, even if your group has been together for a long time.*
- *In the first few weeks we don't have a "Quick Review" section, but you can find a similar question in #3 under "Getting To Know You."*

1. What are your top three favorite emojis? (Hint: look at your text messages on your phone for the most frequently used.) **Fun Tip:** You could send a group text and have everyone look at the frequently used emojis from their phone and share them in the group text. You could share your top five instead of three. Feel free to have fun with it. (i.e. 🙏👉👍😊👉)

2. If you could turn the time ahead to when there are zero COVID restrictions, what would be the first thing you do? (i.e. travel, throw a party, see family, eat inside at a restaurant, delete your Zoom account 😊)

Discussion Reminder: Similar to last week's first question in "Getting to Know You," but focused more on what you want to do with zero restrictions instead of focusing on 2021. Have fun!

3. 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?

Additional Questions:

- This past weekend, Larry gave us six ways to respond when the right thing brings the wrong results. Which one of the six stood out to you most? Which of the two are most important for people to remember? Which one is the most challenging to you?
- Think about your favorite meal... do you prefer it to be:
 - Home-cooked for you, home-cooked prepared by you or at a restaurant?
 - On the go or a long sit-down meal?
 - By yourself, with friends, with family, with your spouse or significant other?

DIGGING DEEPER

Discussion Reminder: If you are hearing from everyone in your group, chances are you won't have 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 and if you have time, come back to #1.

1. One of the ways to respond when the right thing brings the wrong result is to not assume every valley means a wrong turn. One bit of truth that can help us understand this principle is to know the difference between a trial and a temptation. James, the brother of Jesus, gives us some incredible wisdom and insight when it comes to trials. As you read, underline anything that catches your attention, and put a question mark next to anything that might be unclear.

James 1:2-8, 12-15 New International Version (NIV)

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. ¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Note: Take note of the process of development/maturity that happens through trials (v.2-4). The next section refers to wisdom and trusting God during trials (v.5-8), and the last section connects the temptations that often come with trials (v.12-15).

Additional Verses: [Romans 5:1-8](#)

Although none of us ask for the "wrong" result, God often is able to use trials to mature us. Have you ever thought of trials through this lens? How might viewing them this way help us to respond to our next trial?

Note: It is key to note that God does not cause evil but uses it for good in our lives to expand and grow His Kingdom. See Larry's third point from the sermon – When everything goes wrong, don't blame God.

In James 1:13-15, we read that going through trials can cause a person to face temptation. Think about a trial that you or someone you know has walked through. What were some of the temptations faced during the trial? (i.e. question God with “why,” distrust of God’s goodness, unhealthy coping with pain, bitterness, anger, hatred)
Note: This section corresponds to Larry’s section about not blaming God and choosing to ask what instead of why.

Additional Questions:

- What were some of the temptations you might have faced while walking through a trial?
- Since we know we are going to face temptations while walking through a trial, as a group, make a list of as many ways we can face temptations during a trial.

Additional Verses & Questions:

- If you want to look at a cautionary tale, read about Judas ([Matthew 26:14-16](#)) and his response to his sinful choices ([Matthew 27:1-5](#)). What do you think the voice of temptation was saying to Judas? What might it have looked like for Judas to turn from temptation and make a different choice?

Why do you think so many temptations seem to pop up when we are experiencing a trial?

What advice/encouragement/truth would you share with someone walking through a trial to avoid falling prey to temptation?

Additional Questions:

- Can you think of a time when someone you know walked through a trial and God used that trial to help shape them towards maturity? If so, what did you notice?
- Is there a specific verse/advice/encouragement that has helped you or someone you know as they faced temptations while they walked through a trial?

2. This week in the sermon, we learned how to respond when the right thing brings the wrong results. In the life of Jesus, there was a family Jesus loved dearly— Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Even though they did the “right” thing, Lazarus still died. Read the story below and make note of anything that stands out.

John 11:32-44 New International Version (NIV)

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Discussion Notes:

- The entire story of Lazarus is [John 11:1-44](#). If you want take a further look, read through the entire story. For long-time groups, have your group read the passage prior to attending your group to prepare for discussion.
- “Digging Deeper” Question #2 is more emotive in nature. It is focusing on the emotions experienced in a trial. Have your group make note of the emotions of Mary/Martha and Jesus in the story.
- Here is a helpful Bible commentary for John 11: enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-11/

In the story above, Jesus had a visible response to the situation. What might we be able to learn from Jesus’ response that we can apply when we have an opportunity to respond to others?

Discussion Note: Take note of Jesus’ emotions in the story (v.33-38). Multiple times it refers to His emotional response. This is the only place in the Bible where it tells us Jesus wept. It may also be helpful to take a look at what Jesus’ emotional response tells us about His love for Lazarus. If He loved Lazarus this way, how much does He feel toward each of us? Remember, Jesus is the human expression/representation of God. God loves us and is not a distant God who does not care about our trials/hurts/pains; He hurts with us.

- An additional passage to go with this thought is: [2 Corinthians 1:3-7](#). These verses help us know that Jesus is our comforter and He comforts us as we comfort others. When we comfort others, we are showing them God’s love and comfort for them.

Additional Question: Based on Jesus’ visible response to Lazarus’ death, how might this help us understand Jesus’ love for us?

Can you think of a time when someone’s tough season had a positive influence on your relationship with Jesus?

Note: Sometimes reflecting on how others have impacted us helps us to think about a topic differently.

In the passage above, Jesus waited four days after Lazarus’ death to raise him from the dead. Take a moment to ponder what Mary and Martha must have felt in those four days. Have you ever felt like God wasn’t working on your timetable?

Discussion Note: Take a moment as a group to sit in the waiting of the four days. What would that have been like? What emotions were experienced? Why did Jesus take four days to heal? For many of us, we have experienced loss and pain, which can naturally lead us to the question, “Why didn’t God work faster?” In some situations, we do not see the healing of someone we love (or our problem solved) in this life. The hope is one day we will see healing and redemption in Heaven. In this story, Lazarus is healed on Earth, but it is symbolic of the eternal healing we will all receive when we put our trust, hope and life in the hands of Jesus.

Additional Questions:

- Mary and Martha responded to their trial by approaching Jesus to ask for healing. Do you find it easy or difficult to approach Jesus during a trial? What might it look like to approach Jesus in a difficult time?
- Has someone ever responded to or comforted you in a time where you were experiencing the “wrong” results? If so, did that have an impact on you?

TAKING IT HOME

Which one of the six responses from Larry’s sermon might be an area you would most like to grow in?

Discussion Reminder: Feel free to use this question to provide a further application of the discussion and sermon.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer Transition and Optional Question: *The number one 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 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.

NORTH COAST CLASSES & RESOURCES

[FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY](#)

Begins January 25

[PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE](#)

Begins February 8

[FAMILY SUPPORT MINISTRY](#)

Resources for parents



COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

COVID-safe community service projects are available for your group to serve. To see what our high need projects are, check out NorthCoastCommunityService.org

When The Right Thing Brings The Wrong Results

Setting The Context: *The Prequel And The Sequel*

The Text And Story: *A Good Deed Gone Bad* Acts 21:27-40

When The Right Thing Brings The Wrong Results Here's How To Respond:

- (1) Do not be **SURPRISED**.
1 Peter 4:12-19/ John 16:33

- (2) Don't assume every **VALLEY** means a **WRONG TURN**.
Exodus 14:1-31/ Psalm 23:3-4/ 2 Timothy 2:22 & James 1:13-15/ James 4:7 & 1 Peter 5:8-10
 - If you can get out of a valley without **DISOBEYING GOD** or **HURTING OTHERS**, get out.

 - If you can't, stay the **COURSE**.

- (3) When everything goes wrong, don't **BLAME GOD**.
Job 1:20-22/ Isaiah 5:20/ Romans 8:28/ 2 Peter 3:9

- (4) Instead of asking, "**WHY?**" try asking, "**WHAT?**"
1 Corinthians 10:13
 - What does God want me to do **NOW?**

 - There is **ALWAYS** a path of obedience.

- (5) If you're being persecuted, make sure it's for being a **CHRISTIAN**, not for being an **IDIOT**.
1 Peter 4:14-17

- (6) If the right thing brings the wrong results - **KEEP DOING THE RIGHT THING**.
1 Peter 4:19/ Proverbs 9:10/ 2 Corinthians 10:2-4