

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of February 14, 2021

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 groups only). Click the link to RSVP: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/mid-quarter-training

MEETING NOTES

⇒ DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- ONLINE DISCUSSION IDEAS
 - Because you are all looking at screens, continue to use variety in your discussions! ([Check out leader audio](#) for more info on this.)
 - Start with a fun, short video through screen sharing. [Here's a video](#) that came out about a person who couldn't figure out how to take off the "cat Zoom filter" when meeting online with a judge. Use [this link](#) to learn how to share a screen on Zoom.
 - Use breakout rooms to break into smaller groups for discussion.
 - Remind your group about some of the little things that help make your meeting personal even online – not walking around while you meet, saying goodbye when signing off (it's not polite anywhere in person to just walk away without saying goodbye), speaking up while you talk, etc.
- 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

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

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. It's Valentines' week! What are seven things you love? How might this list be different if you wrote it ten years ago?

Have fun with this question. Make sure everyone answers.

Online Groups Option: Randomly divide into four rooms/groups. Have everyone share their answer, and then come back together and share which answers were similar and any unique ones only one person had in the group.

2. Can you think of a time you did something you thought you'd never have the courage to do or ended up enjoying something you thought you'd never like? *There could be a variety of answers here, from overcoming the fear of heights to now enjoying a new food. Everyone may not have an answer.*

3. Can you think of any situations in your life (small or large) when someone else's courage to do what God was calling them to do (or not do) encouraged you to do the same? If so, explain. *Everyone may not have an answer. Note "Digging Deeper" #1 deals with the motivation to keep moving forward looking for opportunities, and #2 is designed to help people see the many opportunities they have around them that they may not realize.*

DIGGING DEEPER

Discussion Reminder: Remember you most likely won't have time to answer all of these questions. Pick the one that fits best for your group and/or for you to lead in discussion.

1. Joshua, the leader of the Israelites had an "obstacle-to-opportunity" encounter with God similar to what we heard about Paul in this weekend's message (Acts 9:1-22). Read about it in Joshua 5:13-6:21. What catches your attention in regard to "Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities?" *You may want to have your group read this one together before you dive into the other text.*

Imagine for a moment you are part of the army that marched around the city walls of Jericho for six days listening to horns being blown, but seeing no progress at all on the walls' destruction. On the seventh day, you are following God's direction, you are six and a half laps into a seven-lap march, and you still haven't seen one rock fall or even begin to move. You are tired, doubtful, frustrated and questioning if obedience is really worth it. Can you relate? If so, explain. *See how people respond to this.*

Additional Question: *When do you feel frustrated, doubtful or tired when it comes to following Jesus (obeying) as we are called to?*

How do the following verses encourage you to keep going on the seventh lap of hoping to see the opportunity on the other side of the obstacle?

1 Corinthians 15:58 New International Version (NIV)

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Though I see no fruit of what I'm doing, what I do is not in vain. We don't always know how God is at work. What does "give yourself fully to the work of the Lord" mean to you when you hear it? This could also be read, "abounding in the work of the Lord." In other words, fully committed. See [Philippians 2:14-16](#).

2 Timothy 4:6-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

You know there will be reward in the end.

James 5:10-11 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Galatians 6:7-10 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Keep my focus on what God has for me and the impact I can make. [Ephesians 2:10](#)

Which two verses are most helpful for you to keep moving forward and why?

Good question to have everyone answer.

Online option (or in-person): If you're nearing the end of your meeting, dive into smaller groups/rooms and have people share their answers, and then take prayer requests and pray together.

2. Many times when we think about courage or turning an obstacle into an opportunity for impact, we think of over-the-top, "superhero/bigger than life" type of moments (saving someone in distress, giving a speech to a crowd to stand up for justice, etc.) and miss that opportunities for courage and impact may actually be more commonplace than we think. As you read the Scripture below, list what it's calling us to do and why courage might be needed to put what it says into action.

Discussion Tip: *Have someone read a passage, and then have the group answer their reasons why what the verses are calling us to do may become difficult. Brainstorm with your group the challenges each offers.*

(Note about group reading: Be careful about going around the circle and having everyone read if you're not aware of your group members' reading abilities – reading out loud is not easy for everyone and could be embarrassing for those who struggle with it.)

Matthew 5:21–24 New International Version (NIV)

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. 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.

This passage talks about the importance of working through reconciliation with others. The context is that it is not just the "big sins" we need to pay attention to, but it's also vital we pay attention to conflict and sin that leave the church and relationships not functioning at the height God intends.

Additional Questions: How has doing this worked out in your life? Success and failures? If we need the relationship, why don't we move toward it?

Additional Verses: Guidelines on how to put this into action—[Proverbs 15:1](#); [Galatians 6:1-6](#); [1 Peter 4:8](#); [Proverbs 28:13](#)

Leader Note: Know some people may need a third party to help work out conflicts.

Matthew 5:44–45 New International Version (NIV)

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Additional Question: How often do you pray for those you struggle with? Some may say, "I have no enemies." If so, change the word from "enemies" to those who annoy you or cause you problems or stress.

Hebrews 3:13 New International Version (NIV)

¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Encourage others daily – For some, this is not a big deal, for others, it's not part of what they typically do. Some may not realize how they come across. Some may need to work up the courage and discipline to really put this into action.

"Encouragement and recognition are so easy to do and so inexpensive that there is simply no excuse for not doing it."

Discussion Idea: Encouragement is more than nice words to others. Brainstorm with your group and try to come up with 20 specific actions to encourage others. Ask each person to come up with five things others can do to encourage them.

1 Timothy 6:18-19 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Rich in good deeds, generous, willing to share.

Questions to think about: Why this is difficult? (It's not always easy to share.) How are you at sharing your stuff? When is it easy? ...difficult? How would you rate yourself in good deeds/sharing? How would others rate you in good deeds?

Which of these verses is the best reminder for you that you can make a difference?

Is there one you need to focus on more than the others this next week?

Online option (or in-person): If you're nearing the end of your meeting, dive into smaller groups/rooms and have people share their answers, and then take prayer requests and pray together.

TAKING IT HOME

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

2. Are there any obstacles you sense God is trying to help you see as opportunities? *This is an optional question. Good question to ask, but everyone may not have an answer.*

3. God has designed you uniquely to reach and impact others. Take a moment and make a quick list of some of your, talents, abilities, passions and possessions. Are there any God might be nudging you to use to reach, help and/or connect with others?

Additional Questions:

- *Brainstorm on how you can be used for ministry. Serve Your City coming up in April is a great example of tradesmen using their skills and abilities for ministry. Another example would be how hobbies and recreational resources can be used to reach and connect others in a variety of ways. The same could be true for almost any skill, ability and possession.*
- *Another way to state this question is by referring back to 1 Timothy 6:18 and asking, "Are there any abilities, possessions or resources you'd like to give to God or use more generously to reach and connect with others?"*

PRAYER REQUESTS

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SKILLED/TRADE PROFESSIONALS NEEDED:

We're excited to let you know we have an amazing volunteer opportunity coming your way starting April 11 called Serve Your City. During this three-week campaign, we will focus on helping others by the way we give, serve and love our community. More info to come.

If you have a **professional skill such as carpentry, painting, landscape, etc.**, and are interested in working on a hands-on project during Serve Your City, please contact Chandler Pine at cpine@northcoastchurch.

Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities

We have to remember how it all started:

Acts 23:11, Acts 9:1-2

How our past changes our present and future:

Acts 23:11, Acts 9:1-22, Mark 12:28-31, John 15:1-17, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 John 4:19, James 2:15-17

True love has a **SOURCE**, and it isn't **US**.

Our response to God's love is measured by our **OBEDIENCE TO HIM** and how we **TREAT OTHERS**.

Christian love is an **ACTION**, not a **FEELING** or an **EMOTION**.

True grace and mercy are things we can only **PASS ON** once we have **RECEIVED THEM**.

The difference between an **OBSTACLE** and an **OPPORTUNITY** is found in our **PERSPECTIVE**.

Courage is a **DECISION** based on knowing God can work **IN ALL SITUATIONS**.

Our opportunity to be God's answer today:

Reminder: If you would like to give a special offering to support the work being done in Ecuador that Pastor Chris mentioned, donate online at northcoastchurch.com/ecuador. Thank you!