LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE
For the week of February 9 - 15

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

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Leader Note: Feel free to pick one of the two questions here. Question 1 is a bit higher risk.

1) Roller-coaster question: What was the “high” and the “low” of your week?

2) If you could “run away,” drop everything for a month and leave all of your obligations behind, where would you go? What would you do?

Leader Note: Given our discussion on Luke 15 and the parable of the lost sons, this might be a fun way to allow members of your group to go deeper with one another in sharing unique elements of their own life.

Additional Questions:
1. What is your favorite place in the whole world?
2. What are some of your favorite hobbies that you never seem to have time for?

QUICK REVIEW

Leader Note: These questions are low risk. Ask anyone, but remember time limits.

1) Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

2) Of the characters in the parable (father, younger son, elder son), who do you most relate to?

Leader Note: Everyone may not answer for this one. An initial response would be lower risk, but there may be some reasons why they may not want to go deeper than a simple one-word response. Others may be very quick to share who they most relate to, and give an unprompted reason why.

LEADER NOTES

THIS WEEK

Don’t Forget the Basics:
- Music on
- Drinks when people arrive
- Nametags (if you feel even one person doesn’t know everyone’s name)

Goals for the Evening:
- Hear from everyone in your group
- Continue to build relationships
- Pray together
- Finalize plans for your social and service project

Tips:
- You don’t have to answer every question (or even go in order!)
- Choose questions best suited to your group
- Consider using a messaging app for your group (GroupMe, WhatsApp, FB Messenger, etc.)

LEADER ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ MID-SEMESTER GATHERING – FEBRUARY 16TH (AFTER AM SERVICE)
- This session is an “optional” meeting, designed to build on your leadership skills and provide valuable information and tips as you lead your group. We will have coffee and snacks and hear from you on what’s working, what questions you have, and how we can learn from one another.

⇒ WELCOME, ADAM!
- This is Adam’s first week in the office. In the not too distant future, he will be leading this ministry by compiling the questions, leader guides, leader audios, etc. If you haven’t already, be sure to give Adam a warm welcome to the Gateway community. Send him an email, adam@gatewaycrc.org, or call/text, 604.309.5858.

⇒ WEEKLY TRAINING TIP (OPTIONAL READING)
Looking for more guidance for your fourth meeting? You can find the weekly training tip “Training Week 4 – Leading a Missional Group” in your planning center portal under “resources” or at the end of this document.

⇒ HASHTAG CHALLENGE - #GATEWAYLIFEGROUPS
With serve projects and social events right around the corner, it might be a good time to share the church-promoted hashtag challenge with your group members. All the information can be found on the last page of the sermon guide. The winner receives a $250 gift card to celebrate with their group.

ATTENDANCE
Submit your group’s attendance online at https://gatewaycrc.churchcenter.com/groups/life-groups. If you’re not sure how to get on to planning center to post attendance, find our website access instructions at http://www.gatewaycrc.org/lifegroups/leader-tools.

Find all of our leader resources at: http://www.gatewaycrc.org/lifegroups/leader-tools
GOD’S STORY – TRIADS

Discussion Note: Triad simply means “3” and is three corresponding question. Here our goal is to remain centered on scripture’s script and to learn more about what it says about who God is, the needs of the world, and our calling as Christians. This section will always start with a re-reading of Sundays’ sermon text.

READ Luke 15:11-24
(Note: The goal of Life Group Bible study is to engage with the Bible text primarily and treat the sermon as supplemental.)

1) What does this passage say about the character of God?

2) What does this passage say about fallen humanity?

3. Where does this passage specifically expose sin or unbelief in my own life? How does it specifically call me to change my thinking, redirect my affections, replace my behaviors, and trust my Savior?

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 Jesus’ parable, the younger son starts by demanding, “Father, give me…”, then takes his share of the inheritance and chooses to live life his own way. READ Genesis 6:5; Romans 7:13-20; Ephesians 2:1-3. Then answer the following questions:

• What specifically do you think drove the son to make the choices he did?
Leader Note: The younger son might have had feelings of jealousy and greed as he saw all that the elder brother had access to – ultimately, he desired control of his own life.

2) The result of the younger sons’ choices left him literally in the mud feeding pigs. After this story, Jesus’ shares another parable about a rich man who, like the younger son, wished that he could have lived differently. READ Luke 16:19-31. Then answer the following questions:

• What do you think Jesus is trying to communicate about both parables by putting these stories next to each other?
Leader Note & Additional Questions: To be outside the family of the Father, of God, is to be utterly alone. It’s easy to be distracted by the world’s allusions and fantasies of our own control. What opportunity did the Rich Man really have in front of him with Lazarus (Luke 16:19-21)? What opportunity did the younger son have within his family?

• Thinking about these two parables, how are you challenged to live out your faith?

3) The greatest surprise of the entire parable is the Fathers’ response. The son goes from destitution to full sonship in an instant! Of course, this is our story, too. READ Romans 5:6-11; Ephesians 2:8-10. Then answer the following questions:

• Scripture tells us that God’s grace is something that cannot be earned. It can only be received. Why do you think this is so hard to believe?
Leader Note: Society says that there’s nothing free in this life. However, in God’s economics, grace is given free of charge. God’s grace, is His unmerited favor – He chooses to turn His face to shine upon us.

• What might change in your life if you believed, without a doubt, in what God communicates through these passages?
TAKING IT HOME (PERSONAL)

READ Psalm 139. Then look at vs.13-16, where David writes, “my soul knows it full well.” Do you feel that way? Do you know that you are wonderfully made for Him?

Prayer Ideas: 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 semester, this may be a good week to start.

GROUP REMINDERS

GATEWAY HASHTAG CHALLENGE!
This semester we are going to have a #GatewayLifeGroups Hashtag challenge. Here is how it works: invite members of your group to take a picture and post it on Facebook or Twitter with the hashtag #GatewayLifeGroups. In the comments, write what you love about your group. At the end of the semester we will have a random draw. The winner will receive a $250 gift card for their entire group to enjoy together! One entry per member.

[P.S. Leader can also get 9 additional entries! All submitted homework on time also equals an entry!]

Breakdown:
- 1 entry per person, per group (max of 10 entries for the sake of fairness to smaller groups) = 10 total possible entries.
- 1 entry per submitted homework = 9 total possible entries.
  = 19 POSSIBLE ENTRIES PER GROUP
**TWO SON’S DEMANDS:**

- “I WISH YOU WERE DEAD!”
  
  Luke 15:11-12

- “TEAR APART YOUR LIFE FOR ME!”
  
  Luke 15:12

**THE SON’S DESIRE:**

- “I WANT CONTROL!”

**THE FATHER’S RESTITUTION PLAN:**

- GOD’S GRACE CAN’T BE EARNED, IT MUST BE ACCEPTED!


⇒ THE ATTITUDE OF REBELLION = “GIVE ME!”

⇒ THE ATTITUDE OF BROKENNESS = “MAKE ME…”
Leading a Missional Group

At Gateway, we want our small groups to be relational and transformational. We want people within them to experience community and to be discipled – to be transformed into the image of Christ. But that’s not all. We also want them to be missional!

Jesus came to earth with a mission – to reconcile us to God. He did that in part by caring about the spiritual and physical needs of the people He encountered.

Whether it was comforting and challenging the woman at the well, feeding the 5,000, or healing the blind, Jesus met the tangible needs that were right in front of Him. In a parable in Matthew 25, Jesus declared:

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

‘Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

‘The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ (vv. 34-40)

Jesus didn’t tell us to write a check. He told us to get involved in the grit and grime of people’s daily lives. We’re called to invite the poor wanderer into our homes, not to keep them at arm’s length and serve them “out there.” We’re called to invite others into our lives and enter into theirs.

So what does this mean for Life Groups? Is it just another thing to add to our busy schedules? Ultimately, this is not about a service project once a month – it’s about living missionally. It’s a lifestyle of intentionally loving those around us and helping them know who Jesus is through our actions. Our vocational calling is to be on mission every day. Discipling others and having influence in their lives gives us the responsibility to help them understand the mission Jesus calls us to. They need to catch the vision to love and serve others.

So while living missionally isn’t about just doing a service project, practically speaking it may very well begin there. Often service projects can open your group members’ eyes to needs they’ve never seen before, enabling them to enter into others’ lives in new ways.

In terms of first steps, this likely means having your group participate in one of our ‘Service’ projects and then going from there.

Ask yourself: What is Christ calling you to do considering the passions you have and the people He’s called you to and placed around you? And how can you get your group involved in that?

Some Things to Consider:
• What are some experiences you’ve had with living missionally – loving and serving others – as an individual?
• What are some experiences you’ve had with living missionally as part of a group?
• Where do you personally feel called to serve? Are there ways your group can come alongside you in that?
• Brainstorm: What are some ways our groups can be missional?