

## **Exciting Update: Streamlined Small Group Discussion Guide**

We're moving toward a streamlined, one-page "Sermon Discussion Guide," a tool crafted to support growth in biblical practices within your small groups. This consistent, weekly guide empowers you to lead dynamic discussions on any sermon, speaker, or topic.

As we transition to this new approach, we will include additional resources along with the guide for the next few weeks. These will include an example of how to lead your group through the "Grow" section of the guide and other resources to help you prepare.

The "Sermon Discussion Guide" and additional resources will remain accessible for download on the app and website. If you have any questions, please contact your campus groups pastors.

**Stay tuned:** We're developing a one-stop resource page for group leaders. You'll get easy access to tools like the Sermon Discussion Guide, a new Scripture Discussion Guide, our updated REAP Bible Study Method, the 3 Circle Drawings, and various free commentaries, among other helpful materials!

### **Remember the 4 Rules for Small Group Discussion**

1. **Confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
2. **No cross-talk.** Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.
3. **No fixing.** We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.
4. **Sharing.** Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

# Sermon Discussion Guide

## CONNECT

5-10 minutes

After reviewing the four rules of group discussion, begin your time with some connection questions to foster biblical community.

Personal Connection:

- What were your "highs" and "lows" this week?
- Last week, you mentioned \_\_\_\_\_. Can you give us an update?

Spiritual Connection:

- What has your time with God looked like recently?
- Where have you specifically seen God's work in your life lately?

## GROW

20-30 minutes

Start the discussion by giving a brief overview of the **SERMON**. Ask everyone to look up the main passage in their own Bible or Bible app. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:

Reflect:

- What was your main takeaway from the sermon?
- What scripture spoke to you?
- What insights did you gain about God, humanity, and your personal life?
- How did this sermon challenge or reinforce your current beliefs?
- Do you have a life experience that relates to the sermon's message?

Dig Deeper:

- What aspects of the sermon were familiar, challenging, or thought-provoking?
- Where does the key passage fit into the Bible's grand narrative (use the 3 circle gospel drawing for reference)?
- What cultural or historical details might the original audience have understood that differ from our understanding today?
- What are some cross-references to this passage that are present in other areas of the Bible?
- What theological themes were highlighted in the sermon?

Take Action:

- How would you describe the sermon to someone who wasn't there?
- How would you explain the sermon to a child?
- What specific action will you take this week based on the sermon's message and our discussion?

## SHARE

5-10 minutes

Transition into a time of discussing how to live out what you learned by sharing with others:

- What is your main takeaway from our discussion? Who is one person you will share this with this week?
- How have you recently used your gifts to serve your family, our church, and our community?
- Who can you invite to church or our small group?
- How can you bless someone in your circle of influence?
- Are there any opportunities for our group to reach out to our community this week?

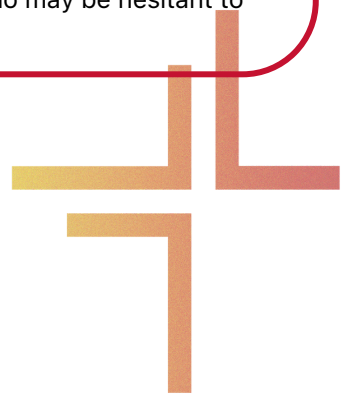
## PRAY

5-10 minutes

Enter a time of prayer by considering the following questions:

- What is your plan for spiritual growth this week?
- What challenges do you anticipate this week?
- What personal prayer requests do you have for the week?

Take note of each person's requests. Spend some time praying for each other. Encourage those who may be hesitant to pray out loud.



## **Example of how the GROW section of the Sermon Discussion Guide might flow:**

### **12.3.23 Sermon**

#### **Overview:**

The Birth of Jesus – God Gave Us a Great Treasure

For the next 3 weeks, Pastor Chip will take us through the classic story, The Tale of the Three Trees.

First tree story recap: *In the story, the first tree saw the stars twinkling like diamonds in the sky and said, "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I will be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world." But instead of a treasure chest, the woodcutter made him into a feed box for animals. He wasn't covered with gold or filled with treasure. He was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals. Time passed and the first tree nearly forgot his dream. But one night, the golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young mother placed her newborn baby in the feed box. "I wish I could make a cradle for him," her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful," she said. And suddenly, the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.*

God is generous. Our church is generous. We should be generous.

#### **Reflect (8 minutes):**

**What was your main takeaway from the sermon?**

**What scripture about God's generosity stood out to you?**

Ephesians 1:3, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Psalm 84:11, Romans 8:32, James 1:17, 2 Corinthians 8:9, 2 Corinthians 9:5, John 3:16 ...

**Share a life experience that relates to God's generosity.**

#### **Dig Deeper (8 minutes):**

**Spend a few minutes discussing personal generosity.**

**What does the Bible say?** (2 Corinthians 9:6-10, Matthew 6:19-21, Leviticus 27:30, Malachi 3:10)

**How does this challenge your current attitude and actions about generosity?**

**Take Action (8 minutes):**

**How would you explain this sermon to a child (how do we model generosity to our children)?**

**What specific action will you take this week based on the sermon's message and our discussion?**