

Leader's Growth Group Homework Guide

For the week of January 14, 2018

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

Welcome to the Winter Quarter of Growth Groups!

This week we kick off our Winter Growth Group Quarter. Your first meeting will include a potluck dinner, time to get acquainted, as well as time to discuss your Growth Group Covenant. The homework has been shortened this week to allow ample time to accomplish this.

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great first meeting as you come together to connect and encourage one another to grow and to see God work!

Agenda: Please refer to your Leader Notes for important specifics to this agenda - found under Leader Tools - <http://mygrowthgroup.org/leader-tools/leader-homework-guides/>.

Make sure you leave plenty of time to answer the question in the "Launching Your Growth Group Quarter" section and spend time going over the Covenant with your group.

** Remember Our Goal for every meeting is to hear from everyone every week and keep God's word as part of your time together.*

- Potluck
- Group sharing/homework discussion
- Go over Covenant (see Leader's Guide – Growth Group Covenant).
Use last question in homework to transition into this:
http://mygrowthgroup.org/fileadmin/content/docs/covenants/covenant_guide.pdf
- Try to get to the "Taking It Home" section by 8:00 or 8:15 so you can have plenty of time to go over the Covenant
- Close in prayer
- Eat (more) dessert

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Add these questions if you have new people in your group – If this hasn't happened while eating dinner, have everyone in the group share how long have they been coming to North Coast, if they have been in Growth Group before, how long, maybe a hobby or pastime, etc.

1. Tell us a little about yourself...

Fun question to have everyone answer.

What is the best tasting food/course you are able to make?

How do you make yourself fall asleep when you can't seem to get to sleep?

What movie or book (other than the Bible) do you most often quote?

2. As we start the new year of 2018, what are one or two things you're looking forward to?

Good question to have everyone answer.

Discussion Tip: Depending on time, you may want to transition directly to the "Launching Your Growth Group Quarter" section, and skip the "Digging Deeper" questions.

3. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

DIGGING DEEPER

You'll probably only have time to answer one of these questions, if any. #2 is a good transition to the last section "Launching Your Growth Group Quarter" and going over the Covenant.

1. This weekend, Chris' description of Mark 1-3 gave us a great picture of who Jesus is. Without looking back at the sermon notes, re-read Mark 1-3 and jot down anything that alludes to who Jesus is or what he has done (you might also want to underline in your Bible also).

Looking back at what you wrote above, are there one or two things that particularly caught your attention? If so, explain. Are there any you should pay more attention to?

2. As followers of Jesus, none of us wants to live an ineffective and powerless life for him. But one of the enemy's strategies is to subtly distract us from who Jesus is and what it means to follow him. That's why Hebrews 2:1 says that, "we must pay careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard so that we do not drift away." What strategies do the following passages give to help us pay careful attention and live as God has called us to?

Psalm 119:9-11, 15-16

⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

¹⁰ With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not wander from your commandments!

¹¹ I have stored up your word in my heart,

that I might not sin against you.

¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts
and fix my eyes on your ways.

¹⁶I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.

Focus & study of Scripture.

Matthew 22:37 - Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Love God & Love Others - These are the main things God is calling us to put into action.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Meeting with others just as we do in a Growth Group.

Additional Questions: *Which of those listed above helps you the most? Does one come easier than the other?*

LAUNCHING YOUR GROWTH GROUP QUARTER

One of the key reasons we meet in Growth Groups every week is to gain the encouragement and support we each need to keep our focus on Jesus and live our lives for him. Before you go over the Covenant in your group, take a moment and write down your responses to the two questions below:

What are you looking forward to in your Growth Group this quarter?

Looking back at this week’s sermon, is there any specific part of who Jesus is that you want to stay focused on this quarter?

WINTER QUARTER SPIRITUAL GROWTH GOAL / PRAYER OPTION: *Write down what each person says and use it as spiritual growth goal and prayer focus for the rest of the quarter. Come back and evaluate how it went the last week of the quarter.*

Transition Statement to Covenant: *“One of the great benefits of being in a Growth Group is the opportunity to have help from others as we seek to be strategic and intentional about our spiritual growth. The Growth Group Covenant is designed to serve as intentional guidelines to help us make the most of our time together.”*

Pass out Covenants and go over them with your group – see the Leader Guide to Growth Group Covenant at the end of the documents and / or under leader tools online here: <http://mygrowthgroup.org/leader-tools/leader-documents/>

Close in prayer

THE PURPOSE OF GROWTH GROUPS

Growth Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God’s Word. (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). Here’s how it will happen:

SHARE

Each week we’ll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned “sharing questions.” But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY

Each week we’ll study a section from God’s Word that relates to the previous weekend’s sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

SUPPORT

Each week we’ll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms, such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another and meeting real needs.

SERVE

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God’s Kingdom.



COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

Community Service is a ministry of North Coast Church dedicated to being the hands and feet of Jesus and showing God’s love in tangible ways through service to the community. There are many options for you to serve. For ideas, check out NorthCoastCommunityService.org

Which Jesus...Man, Myth or Messiah?

The Entire Point Of Hebrews (& The Bible):

Hebrews 2:1-9, 1:1-4, Colossians 1:15-22

Hebrews is both an **encouragement** and **warning**
about our definition of **Jesus**.

The Jesus Of The Bible:

The book of Mark claims that:

- 1:2 Jesus is the **God** of the Prophets.
- 1:7-8 John the Baptist thought Jesus was **God**.
- 1:9-11 God and the Holy Spirit are one with **Jesus**.
- 1:13 Satan knows that Jesus is **God**.
- 1:14-15 Jesus is the key to the Kingdom of **God**.
- 1:21-28 Jesus has **authority** over **spirits**.
- 1:29-45 Jesus has **authority** over all **diseases**.
- 2:1-5 Jesus has **authority** over **sin**.
- 2:6-12 Jesus claims to be **God**: **"Son Of Man"**.
- 2:13-28 Jesus claims **authority** over the **Old Testament**.
- 3:1-6 Jesus has **authority** over **religion**.
- 3:7-12 Jesus has **authority** over **sickness** and **spirits**.
- 3:13-21 Jesus has **authority** over all **humanity**.
- 3:22-30 Jesus has **authority** over **Satan**.
- 4.....

After The Cross:

Mark = **50 AD** Matthew & Luke = **60 AD** John = **85-90 AD**

To The Intellectually Convinced But Non-committed:

Hebrews 2:1-4

If our definition of Jesus doesn't change **everything** about us,
then we don't have a **biblical** definition of Jesus.

LEADERS GUIDE - GROWTH GROUP COVENANT

This form is downloadable at http://www.northcoastchurch.com/fileadmin/docs/Growth_Group/covenant_guide.pdf
When discussing – use the proactive leadership style – clear direction, yet flexible

Leaders _____ Ph.# _____
Hosts _____ Ph.# _____

Small groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this covenant is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.

GROWTH GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Growth Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions". But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

Our goal is to interact interpersonally on the topic and how we can practically follow Christ, not to answer all the questions.

SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.*

SERVE

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve, and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to...

- 1. Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29).**
⇒ *Tangents – they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep spiritual growth our focus and stay on topic.*
- 2. Accept one another (Romans 15:7).**
⇒ *We will have different preferences.*
- 3. Take care of one another (John 13:34).**
⇒ *When crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals etc.*
- 4. Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).**
⇒ *Listening to one another, if one's talking let's all listen, nothing worse than two conversations going on at once.*
⇒ *Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (Advice is given when asked for) We are not here to judge or fix – unless someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand, that doesn't mean we can't question what is said or what someone is doing.*
⇒ *Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a dominator – be careful, I as a leader might have to help you.*
⇒ *Be careful of gossip prayers. For example, "we need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this ..."*
⇒ *No put-downs.*
⇒ *What is said here, stays here – of course we never promise confidentiality if something shared would be harmful to yourself or someone else and/or if I, as the leader, need to seek counsel on how to respond to an issue in the group.*
- 5. Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).**
⇒ *Please give us a call if you can't make it to Growth Group so we know what's going on and how to pray for you.*

GUIDELINES & COVENANT

1. **Dates** We'll meet on _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of this quarter will be on _____. *Fill in blanks*
2. **Time** We'll arrive between _____ & _____ and begin the meeting at _____. We'll spend approximately _____ minutes in singing (optional), _____ minutes in study/discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing. *Fill in blanks*
3. **Children** Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome provided they are not a distraction to the group!
4. **Study** Our studies will focus on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. *Not to answer every question.*
5. **Prayer** Praying for one another. *You'll go over tips on topical prayer the second week of group. Remember - being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people to not want to come to your group. If you have new people in your group, you might want to say something like this: "It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also realize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray." Let them know you'll talk more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of the stereotypes of what it means to pray.*
6. **Homework & Attendance** Joining a Growth Group requires a commitment to *attend each week and do the homework ahead of time*. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more!
This commitment is the key to a healthy group.

If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call _____.
⇒ *Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance and preparation. (A good group starts with good preparation)*
⇒ *Make sure that everyone is with you. (Do we agree? Is this what we want? Make eye contact, etc.)*
⇒ *Most weeks require 20-30 minutes of homework to prepare for the group study and discussion.*
7. **Desserts** *Have everyone sign up for a night to do dessert.*
8. **Social & Service Project(s)** *Emphasize the importance of a quarterly social and service project. As a leader and host, have 2 or 3 suggestions ready and 2 or 3 potential dates. Choose a date or ask the group to bring their calendars next week. New groups are preferred to have their social by mid-quarter.*
9. **Other**

We agree together in Christ to honor this covenant.

(To be decided by each person on or before the third week.)

Have the members sign the group Covenant now if they are ready. If not, they are welcome to wait until the third week of the quarter.

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|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |