

**PARTICIPANT GUIDE**

# THE STORY



Fall 2015



## Why the Story?

Many believers go about their faith journey understanding the central place of Jesus' life and death without understanding how the whole of Scripture revolves around that crux. In fact, through the myriad of genres, authors, and over the span of thousands of years, Scripture tells us of one overarching story, The Story of Jesus.

As we read through The Story, we will look for the "Scarlet Thread," the sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious clues that point forward and backward to the climax of The Story: Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. We hope that as these clues come forward we will not just be intellectually stimulated. Rather, as we see how the Trinitarian God interacted with people throughout history, we will see how he continues to interact with us today. Not only that, but we hope we'll recognize that The Story isn't over; we are in the midst of it! How will we participate in what the Father continues to do in His Story?

## The Big Picture

It is easy for a book that spans so many genres and epochs of history, to lose track of the Big Picture of Scripture. Is it possible that these 66 books written by 40 different authors might tell one story? **Amazingly, with all that literary diversity, Scripture does tell one story.** Not only that, but there is an intricate beauty in The Story that traces many storylines and themes. Themes of worship, sacrifice, redemption, and a kingdom, among others, weave themselves in and out of The Story, though the climax and resolutions of all those storylines is always Jesus. In other words, there are lots of angles we can approach The Story to get the Big Picture that resolve in Jesus. But, for our purposes, we will focus in on one angle: PRESENCE.

The Story begins with God present with his creation. Mankind enjoys unfettered access to God, who is the source of all life and goodness. This is how it should be, how we were made to be. But deep within the heart of our ancestors, and still within our own hearts, beat the lie that maybe we would be better off on our own. So our ancestors left God's presence and thus began a history of misery and turmoil.

But God had made us to be with him, he was not content to allow things to be. He chose one man, Abraham, and told him that from his descendants would come a blessing for the whole world, a veiled reference to Jesus. Jesus would be born to the bloodline of Abraham, the promised "seed" and "Son" given to the world. God's presence was with Abraham, then with his sons, and because God was with them they were blessed.

In time, Abraham's children became a nation of many tribes: Israel. God rescued them from slavery and told them that he wished to dwell with them. He gave them a way of life and ceremonies that showed them who he was and how they could be holy as he is holy so that he could be with them. He instructed them to build a temple so that his presence could be right in the midst of them. But the lie that beat in the heart of our ancestors beat in the people of Israel's hearts too, so time and again they rejected the presence of God for lesser things. God's intention was not simply to make a nation, but to prepare a people for his ultimate coming in Jesus. So with great patience, he wooed and disciplined his people. Over time, it became more

and more clear that a Savior would come. A man, Emmanuel, God with us, would make a way for us to be with God forever.

Then Emmanuel came; and God was with us. In Jesus we see the Godhead stoop down into our world so that we can behold him face to face. Men and women felt his embrace and were healed by his touch. In his death and resurrection, the lie that beat in our hearts could be put to death and a new life begun with him.

As Jesus returned to the Father, he left with us the Holy Spirit. Now, instead of dwelling in the midst of his people in the temple, they became the temple. The Story tells us of the first fruits of God's presence invading the world through the Holy Spirit as it recounts the stories of the early church.

We now live in a time when God's promise to Abraham continues. The blessing of God's presence spreads through our world as the Holy Spirit jumps from heart to heart like a raging fire. God's Spirit lives inside of us to give us a taste of a time when we will once again live unfettered in God's presence. The end of The Story is already written, but it is yet to come. The ending will be a time of ultimate justice and ultimate grace as all that is wrong will be righted. Finally, the goodness of God's presence will shine on our faces unhindered by fear or darkness, forever.

In summary, The Story begins and ends with God's presence. **Jesus is the way that God is present with his people.** He's the shocking twist in the climax of The Story, the ending that no one really expected. If the bookends of The Story are about presence, and the climax is Jesus, then the parts in between are all about anticipation and waiting. The Jews waited for their Savior to be with them, and now we wait again.

## Finding the Scarlet Thread

As you read through The Story, keep an eye out for ways these character and events foreshadow and reflect back on the central place that Jesus takes in the Story. This is what we call the "Scarlet Thread." In the end, The Story is the story of Jesus. God makes himself and his plan known to the world in the person of Jesus. Here are some cues to look for as you read:

### **Redemption**

Remember, The Story is about God redeeming his people back to Himself through Jesus after they have been separated by The Fall. How does the current narrative you're reading move The Story toward that purpose? How does it reveal his heart for redemption? How does it show that he is willing to pay the price to dwell with mankind?

### **Promises**

What promises does God make to his people? How do they point to Jesus as their ultimate fulfillment? What promises have not yet been fulfilled?

**Patterns**

Are there people or things that remind you of Jesus? Why and in what way?

**Themes**

Where do you see grace? Love? Justice? Wisdom? Do you see other characteristics that Jesus embodied played out through The Story in characters or the actions of God?

**Contrasts**

In what ways do things change after Jesus? How are certain characters in the Old Testament who may foreshadow Jesus (like King David) also different from him? What means does God use to relate to his people differently after Jesus?

**Scripture Cross-References**

If you're using a Study Bible, what Scripture cross-references do you find? What do New Testament writers say about Old Testament events? What do later Old Testament passages say about earlier events, and vice versa?

# The Story Fall Schedule

[SEPT. 13 – 19]

## ○ **CHAPTER 1: CREATION: THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT**

*Bible Passages covered: Genesis 1-4; 6-9*

[SEPT. 20 - 26]

## ○ **CHAPTER 2: GOD BUILDS A NATION**

*Bible Passages Covered: Genesis 12-13; 15-17; 21-22; 32-33; 35; Romans 4; Hebrews 11*

[SEPT. 27 - OCT. 3]

## ○ **CHAPTER 3: JOSEPH: FROM SLAVE TO DEPUTY PHARAOH**

*Bible Passages Covered - Genesis 37; 39; 41-48; 50*

[OCT. 4 - 10]

## ○ **CHAPTER 4: DELIVERANCE**

*Bible Passages Covered: Exodus 1-7; 10-17*

[OCT. 11 - 17]

## ○ **CHAPTER 5: NEW COMMANDS AND A NEW COVENANT**

*Bible Passages Covered: Exodus 19-20; 24-25; 32-34; 40*

[OCT. 18 - 24]

## ○ **CHAPTER 6: WANDERING**

*Bible Passages Covered: Numbers 10-14; 20-21; 25; 27; Deuteronomy 1-2; 4; 6; 8-9; 29-30; 34*

[OCT. 25 - 31]

## ○ **CHAPTER 7: THE BATTLE BEGINS**

*Bible Passages Covered: Joshua 1-2; 6; 8; 10-11; 23-24*

[NOV. 1 - 7]

## ○ **CHAPTER 8: A FEW GOOD MEN ... AND WOMEN**

*Bible Passages Covered: Judges 2-4; 6-8; 13-16*

[NOV. 8 - 14]

◎ **CHAPTER 9: THE FAITH OF A FOREIGN WOMAN**

*Bible Passages Covered: Ruth 1-4*

[NOV. 15 - 21]

◎ **CHAPTER 10: STANDING TALL, FALLING HARD**

*Bible Passages Covered: 1 Samuel 1-4; 8-13; 15*

[NOV. 22 - 28]

◎ **CHAPTER 11: FROM SHEPHERD TO KING**

*Bible Passages Covered: 1 Samuel 16-18; 24; 31; 2 Samuel 6; 22; 1 Chron.17; Psalm 59, Psalm 18*

[NOV. 29 – DEC. 2]

◎ **CHAPTER 12: THE TRIALS OF A KING**

*Bible Passages Covered: 2 Samuel 11-12; 18-19; 1 Chronicles 22; 29; Psalm 23; 32; 51*

# The Purpose of LifeGroups

## Our Mission

Working together to present everyone mature in Christ.

At Chapel Hill we believe in striving together as a community towards growth in Christ. As we have explored how to pursue our mission, we've learned that maturity means disciple-making. As we grow more and more like Jesus, we do as he did: make disciples. That was his mission. We want to join in it.

What does disciple-making look like? We believe it needs three important pieces:

- First, disciple-making doesn't happen without an intentional leader. An intentional leader is someone who is strategic and intentional about walking with others in their journey with Christ.
- Secondly, disciple-making happens in relational environments. A relational environment is a place where people feel safe to be themselves, and also accountable to be like Jesus. This most often is a small group.
- Third, disciple-makers need to be equipped with a reproducible process. In other words, they must recognize that people can be in different stages of their spiritual journey, and then be able to point them towards the steps they can take to grow in their journey.

An intentional leader, relational environment, and reproducible process all comes together best in a LifeGroup. Thus, disciple-making happens best in LifeGroups. And ultimately, our mission as a church is fulfilled best in LifeGroups.

So what is the purpose of a LifeGroup? Disciple-making. A LifeGroup that is committed to this purpose is very different from a LifeGroup whose purpose is, for example, studying Scripture or fellowship. Those may be a part of a LifeGroup that is about disciple-making as well, however, the end result of a LifeGroup whose purpose is *not* disciple-making may not necessarily be disciples. So we invite you to consider, what is the purpose of *your* LifeGroup?

If you want to grow as an intentional leader, or learn more about what a disciple-making LifeGroup can look like, consider taking a Multiply seminar. Much of the principles and structure in this guide are expanded on in the seminar. These one day learning experiences could revolutionize your LifeGroup.<sup>1</sup>

Contact Carole Hughes at [chughes@chapelhillpc.org](mailto:chughes@chapelhillpc.org) or, call the church office at 253.851.7779 to sign up for the next seminar.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapel Hill is grateful to Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho, for sharing the principles and materials that are used in this guide.



## Relational Environment: Group Rules

Setting some basic group guidelines for how we will honor one another in our group discussions is important. We recommend reading these before your discussion begins each week.

- Ground rules give boundaries for people to operate within.
- They help with the flow and pace of the discussions.
- They help us value one another.
- They help people to be more comfortable sharing deep and meaningful things.

**SAFE GROUP:** We will strive to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with their struggles and victories.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** What is said in the group stays in the group.

**LISTEN:** Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

**PAUSE:** Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

**SILENCE:** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

**NO "CROSS TALK":** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

**SHARING:** Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

**NO FIXING:** We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

**NO RESCUING:** When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

**CONFLICT:** We will commit to resolve conflict Biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (there are many others).

- If someone sins against you  
(*Matthew 18:15-20*)
- Restoring someone in sin  
(*Galatians 6:1-5*)
- Forgive a sinner  
(*Colossians 3:12-13*)
- Reconciling differences  
(*Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 7:1-5*)

**BE SELF-AWARE:** Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment through your words, actions and non-verbal communication.

**USE "I" STATEMENTS:** It's easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc.

# 1

## THE STORY

## CREATION:

### THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

[SEPT. 13 - 19]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

#### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines.
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

#### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- God created us to be in relationship with him but mankind rebelled and was cast out by God from his presence.

#### TELL THE STORY:

- Genesis 3:8-21

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

#### REBUILD THE STORY

#### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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#### CLOSING PRAYER

#### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch. 2. / Bible passages: Genesis 12-13; 15-17; 21-22; 32- 33; 35; Romans 4; Hebrews 11*



# 2

## THE STORY

# GOD BUILDS A NATION

[SEPT. 20 - 26]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- God seeks relationship with the whole world through Abram.

### TELL THE STORY:

Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6; 21:1-7

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch. 3 / Bible passages: Genesis 37; 39; 41-48; 50*



# 3

THE STORY

## JOSEPH: FROM SLAVERY TO DEPUTY PHAROAH

[SEPT. 27 – OCT. 3]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- God works in everything in Joseph’s life toward his ultimate goal of restored relationship with his people.

### TELL THE STORY:

Genesis 37:12-28; 50:20

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK’S READING:

*The Story: Ch. 4/ Bible passages: Exodus 1-7; 10-17*



# 4

## THE STORY

# DELIVERANCE

[OCT. 4 - 10]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- The Passover sacrifice spared the lives of the Israelites and brought about their deliverance.

### TELL THE STORY:

Exodus 12:21-28; 42, 50-51

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch. 5 / Bible passages: Exodus 19-20; 24-25; 32-34; 40*





# 5

## THE STORY

# NEW COMMANDS AND A NEW COVENANT

[OCT. 11- 17]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- God gave the commandments to the people of Israel that they might know how to live in his presence.

### TELL THE STORY:

Exodus 20:1-17

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch. 6 / Bible passages: Numbers 10-14; 20-21; 25; 27; Deuteronomy 1-2; 4; 6; 8-9; 29-30; 34*



# 6

THE STORY

# WANDERING

[OCT. 18 - 24]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

## GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

## SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- Even for a rebellious people, God responds to intercession and repentance with grace.

## TELL THE STORY:

Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-15

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

## REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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## CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch. 7/ Bible passages: Joshua 1-2; 6; 8; 10-11; 23-24*



# 7

## THE STORY

# THE BATTLE BEGINS

[OCT. 25 - 31]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- The people of God see God's justice and his mercy in the conquering and the salvation of those in Jericho.

### TELL THE STORY:

Joshua 6

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch. 8 / Bible Passages: Judges 2-4; 6-8; 13-16*



# 8

## A FEW GOOD MEN

THE STORY

[NOV. 1 - 7]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- Behold in the judges the relentless nature of God's grace toward *such* a rebellious people.

### TELL THE STORY:

Judges 4

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch. 9 / Bible Passages: Ruth 1-4*





# 9

## THE STORY

# THE FAITH OF A FOREIGN WOMAN

[NOV. 8 - 14]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- God weaves the promise of his son's coming through the life of the marginalized and rejected, providing for them a redeemer.

### TELL THE STORY:

Ruth 1:15-18; 2:1-13; 4:13-17

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch.10 / Bible Passages: 1 Samuel 1-4; 8-13; 15*



# 10

THE STORY

## STANDING TALL, FALLING HARD

[NOV.15 - 21]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- God concedes to give a king to accommodate the demands of his people, but this concession comes with consequences.

### TELL THE STORY:

1 Samuel 10:17-19, 25; 14:47-48; 15:1-11, 24, 35

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

#### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

#### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch.11 / Bible Passages: 1 Samuel 16-18; 24; 31; 2 Samuel 6; 22; 1 Chronicles 17; Psalm 59; Psalm 18*



# 11

THE STORY

## FROM SHEPHERD TO KING

[NOV.22 - 28]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- God chooses the unlikely, lowly, least shepherd to lead his people for he is zealous for God's name; he is the one God can be in relationship with.

### TELL THE STORY:

1 Samuel 17:10-23, 32-49

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*The Story: Ch.12 / Bible Passages: 2 Samuel 11-12; 18-19; 1 Chronicles 22; 29; Psalm 23; 32; 51*



# 12

THE STORY

## THE TRIALS OF A KING

[NOV. 29 – DEC. 2]

**DURING THE WEEK:** Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

### GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Review group guidelines
- Vision cast
- Follow-up

### SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER:

- God Restores relationship with David even after his adultery.

### TELL THE STORY:

2 Samuel 12:1-14; Psalm 51:1-2

**ASK:** Was anything added or left out of the story?

### REBUILD THE STORY

### QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

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Heart questions:

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Hand questions:

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### CLOSING PRAYER

### NEXT WEEK'S READING:

*Note: we will break for the Advent Season.*







