

LEADER GUIDE

THE STORY



Winter
2016



Welcome back to The Story!

We're glad you're back with us as we walk through history's preparation for Jesus in the Kings and the prophets, witness Jesus' birth, follow his ministry and then watch the early church form. This is an exciting swath of Scripture and world history!

We've made some changes to the weekly LifeGroup guide at the suggestions of you, our LifeGroup leaders. We hope this equips your group even more as disciple-makers and also enhances and deepens your study.

Pages 8-9 A timeline of The Story thus far plus a guide to the kings and prophets to help as we finish the Old Testament.

Pages 18-20 A revised suggested structure with generic head, heart and hand questions.

Our prayer is that you would know Jesus more deeply, follow him more closely, and tell his story more courageously this year. You are empowered to this by the Holy Spirit Himself.

The Pastors

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?

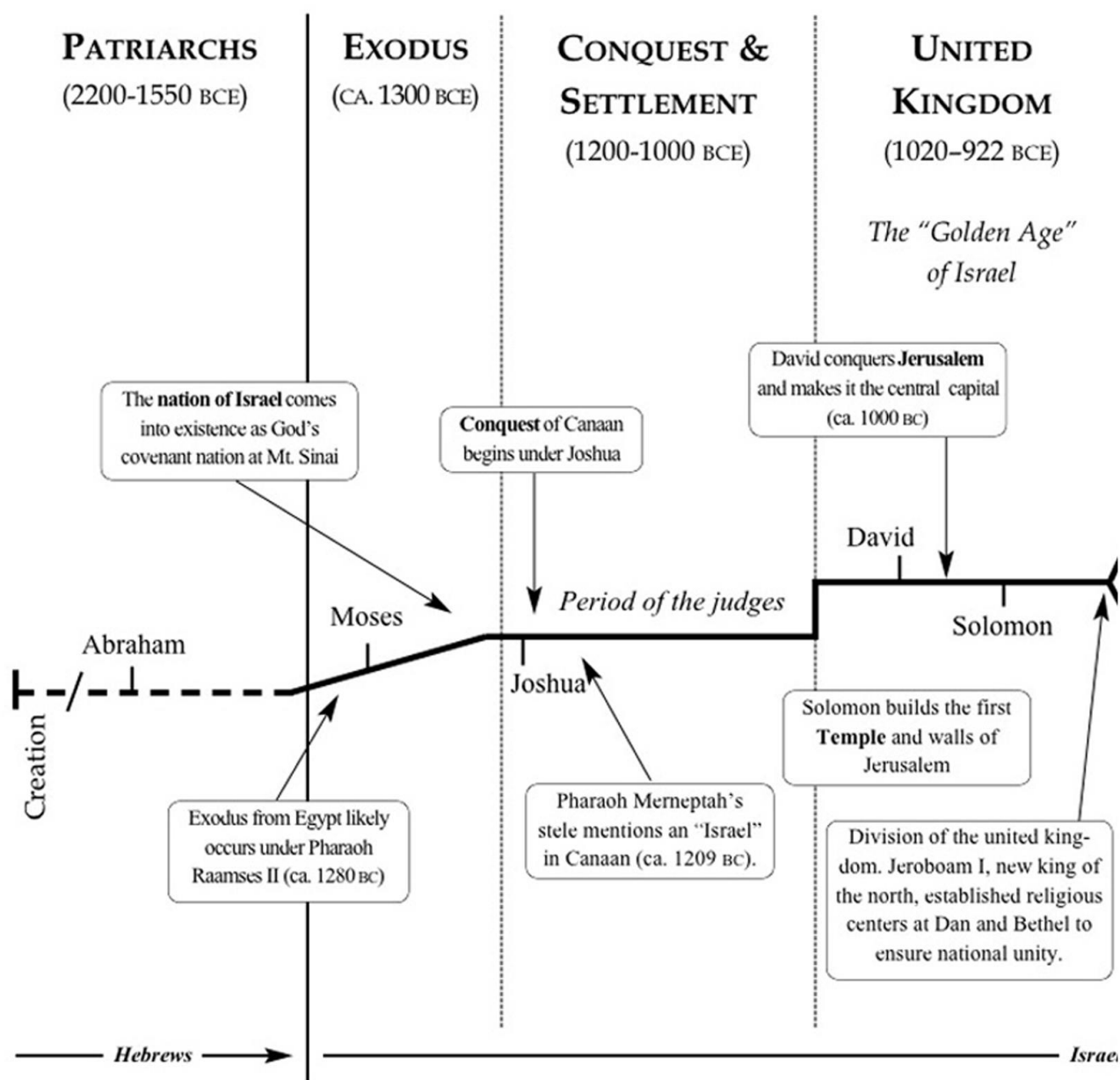
Contrasts

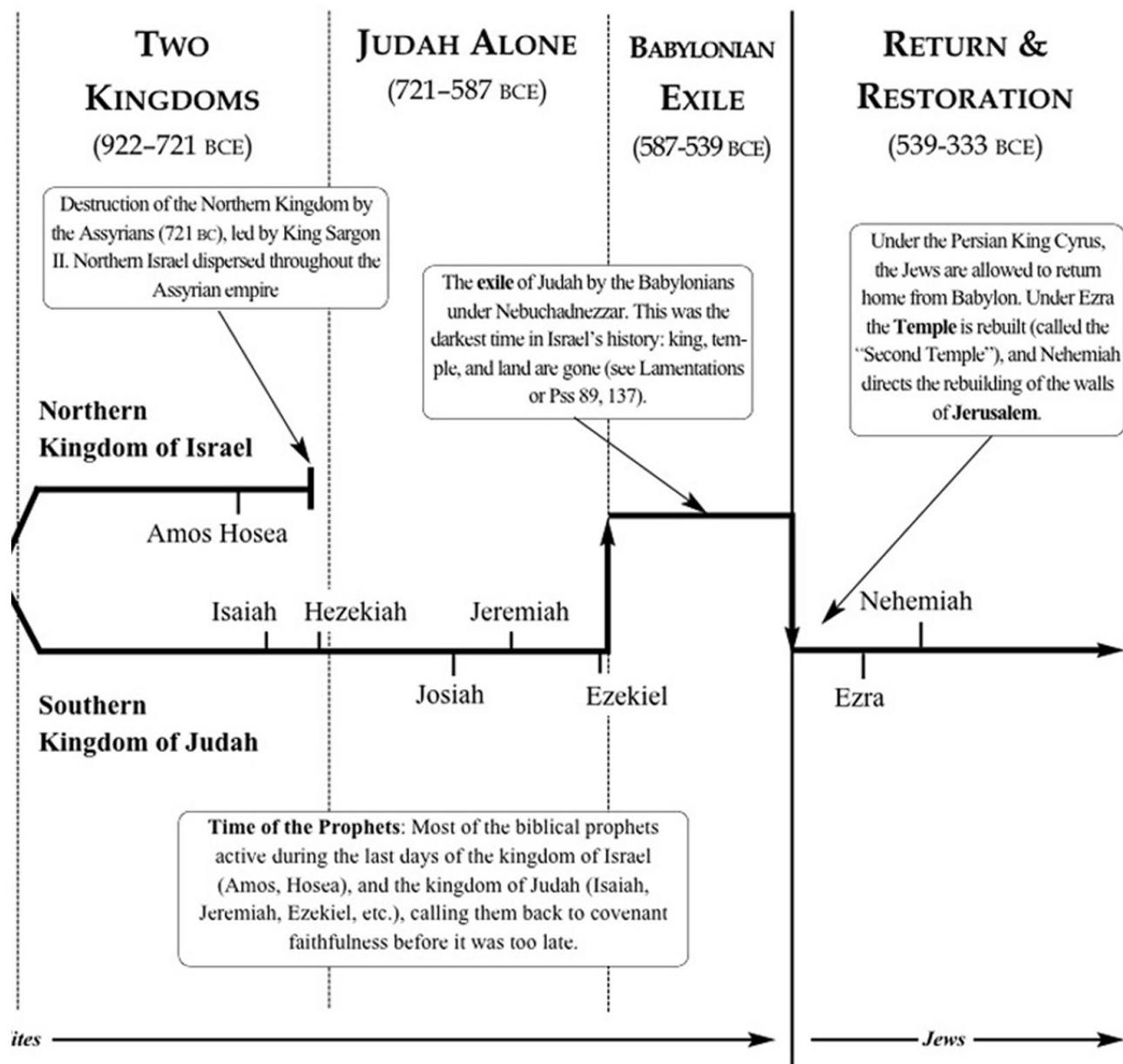
In what ways do things change after Jesus? How are certain characters in the Old Testament who may foreshadow Jesus (like King David) also different from him? What means does God use to relate to his people differently after Jesus?

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 Old Testament Story†





[JAN. 3 - 9]

○ CHAPTER 13: THE KING WHO HAD IT ALL

Bible Passages covered: 1 Kings 1-8; 10-11; 2 Chronicles 5-7; Proverbs 1-3; 6; 20-21

[JAN. 10 - 16]

○ CHAPTER 14: A KINGDOM TORN IN TWO

Bible Passages Covered: 1 Kings 12-16

[JAN. 17 - 23]

○ CHAPTER 15: GOD'S MESSENGERS

Bible Passages Covered: 1 Kings 17-19; 2 Kings 2; 4; 6; Hosea 4-5; 8-9; 14; Amos 1; 3-5; 9

[JAN. 24 - 30]

○ CHAPTER 16: THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Bible Passages Covered: 2 Kings 17-19; Isaiah 3; 6; 13-14; 49; 53

[JAN. 3 - FEB. 6]

○ CHAPTER 17: THE KINGDOMS' FALL

Bible Passages Covered: 2 Kings 21; 23-25; 2 Chronicles 33; 36; Jeremiah 1-2; 4-5; 13; 21; Lamentations 1-3; 5; Ezekiel 1-2; 6-7; 36-37

[FEB. 7 - 13]

○ CHAPTER 18: DANIEL IN EXILE

Bible Passages Covered: Daniel 1-3; 6; Jeremiah 29-31

[FEB. 14 - 20]

○ CHAPTER 19: THE RETURN HOME

Bible Passages Covered: Ezra 1-6; Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 1; 8

[FEB. 21 - 27]

○ CHAPTER 20: THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY AND COURAGE

Bible Passages Covered: Esther 1-9

[FEB. 28 - MARCH 5]

CHAPTER 21: REBUILDING THE WALLS

Bible Passages Covered: Ezra 7; Nehemiah 1-2; 4; 6-8; Malachi 1-4

[APRIL 3 - 9]

CHAPTER 22: THE BIRTH OF THE KING

Bible Passages Covered: Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2; John 1

[APRIL 10 - 16]

CHAPTER 23: JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS

Bible Passages Covered: Matthew 3-4; 11; Mark 1-3; Luke 8; John 1-4

[APRIL 17 - 23]

CHAPTER 24: NO ORDINARY MAN

Bible Passages Covered: Matthew 5-7; 9; 14; Mark 4-6; Luke 10; 15; John 6

[APRIL 24 - 30]

CHAPTER 25: JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

Bible Passages Covered: Matthew 17; 21; Mark 8-12; 14; Luke 9; 22; John 7-8; 11-12

[MAY 1 - 7]

CHAPTER 26: THE HOUR OF DARKNESS

Bible Passages Covered: Matthew 26-27; Mark 14-5; Luke 22-23; John 13-14; 16-19

[MAY 8 - 14]

CHAPTER 27: THE RESURRECTION

Bible Passages Covered: Matthew 27-28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 19-21

[MAY 15 - 22]

CHAPTER 28: NEW BEGINNINGS

Bible Passages Covered: Acts 1-10; 12

[MAY 23 - 29]

CHAPTER 29: PAUL'S MISSION

Bible Passages Covered: Acts 13-14; 16-20; Romans 1; 3-6; 8; 12; 15; 1 Corinthians 1; 3; 5-6; 10; 12-13; 15-16; Galatians 1; 3; 5-6; 1 Thessalonians 1-5

[MAY 30 – JUNE 5]



CHAPTER 30: PAUL'S FINAL DAYS

Bible Passages Covered: Acts 20-23; 27-28; Ephesians 1-6; 2 Timothy 1-4

[JUNE 6 - 12]



CHAPTER 31: THE END OF TIME

Bible Passages Covered: Revelation 1-5; 19-22

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.¹

Contact Carole Hughes at chughes@chapelhillpc.org or, call the church office at 253.851.7779 to sign up for the next seminar.

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

Intentional Leader: Your Role

The Roles of the LifeGroup Leader: INSIDE THE GROUP	The Roles of the LifeGroup Leader: OUTSIDE THE GROUP
<p style="text-align: center;">Abide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time in God's Word, prayer and fellowship during your LifeGroup meeting. • Encourage others to spend time in God's word, prayer and fellowship. • Be aware of where the group members are in their daily walk. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Abide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue your relationship with God throughout the week. • Encourage others to spend time in God's word, prayer and fellowship.
<p style="text-align: center;">Reach the Lost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite the lost to your LifeGroup. • Encourage the group to invite their seeking family, friends, coworkers etc. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Reach the Lost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for opportunities to invite the lost to group. • Encourage the group throughout the week to be aware of people they could invite.
<p style="text-align: center;">Connect the Unconnected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect new people to your group through personal invitation and phone calls. • Encourage others to spend time in God's word, prayer and fellowship. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Connect the Unconnected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call new people throughout the week to connect to group. • Encourage the group to connect people throughout the week to group and church.
<p style="text-align: center;">Chase the Strays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize who is missing from group. • Encourage others in group to recognize who is missing from group. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Chase the Strays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the missing from group each week to check on them. • Look for opportunities to connect with those missing throughout the week. • Encourage group members to connect with those missing throughout the week.
<p style="text-align: center;">Intentionally Shepherd to Spiritual Maturity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a safe environment for the group to thrive. • Ask good questions for the purpose of understanding where each group member is. • Be transparent. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Intentionally Shepherd to Spiritual Maturity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally create opportunities to spend time with group members outside group time at coffee, home etc.
<p style="text-align: center;">Identify, Equip, Release Disciple-Making Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify where each group member is at in their spiritual maturity. (Spiritually Dead, Infant, Child, Young Adult, Parent.) • Identify an apprentice. • Equip your apprentice by sharing different components of group. • Release your apprentice when the group is ready to branch. • Equip additional group members with leading different components of group. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Identify, Equip, Release Disciple-Making Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Coach to discuss group and training. • Meet with Apprentice regularly to raise up and release. • Create or Equip someone in group to create service opportunities.
<p style="text-align: center;">Function as a Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your coach weekly. • Talk with your apprentice weekly. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Function as a Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities to serve outside the group to grow as a team/ family.

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).

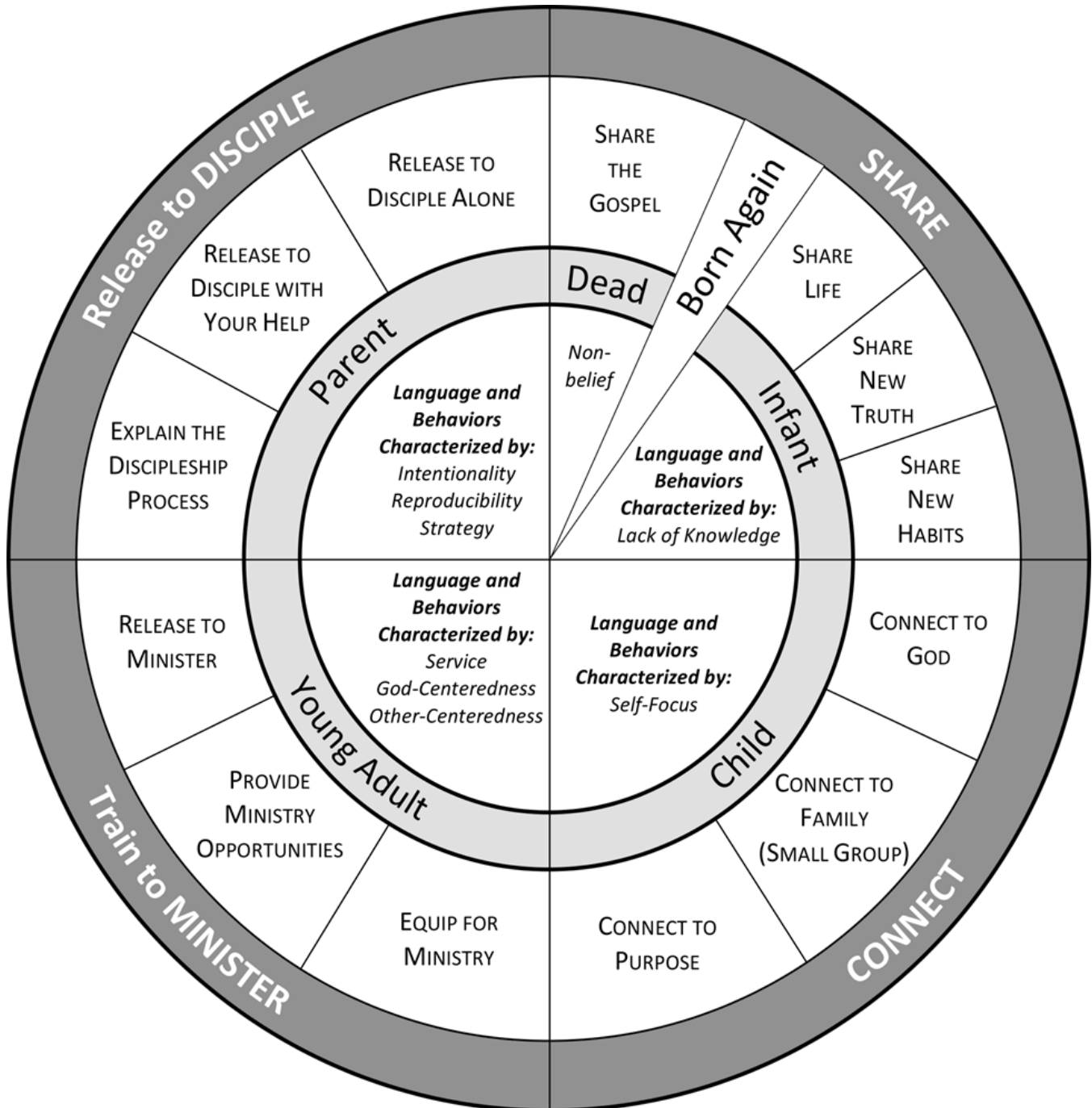
- If someone sins against you
(*Matthew 18:15-20*)
- Restoring someone in sin
(*Galatians 6:1-5*)
- Forgive a sinner
(*Colossians 3:12-13*)
- Reconciling differences
(*Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 7:1-5*)

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.

The Reproducible Process

Everyone goes through a process of spiritual growth. As the leader of a LifeGroup, you are tasked with how to recognize where someone is in that process, and how to help them continue in the process. The wheel below gives some great guidelines in how to identify where someone is in that process (dead, infant, etc.), and what an intentional leader can do to help that person (share life, share new truth, etc.).



BEFORE GROUP: Your role as a leader before group starts

- Read through the curriculum: This will help if you need to re-word any questions to better suit your group. Choose the questions you want the group to discuss.
- Read the assigned passages each week. Prepare to story the passage assigned under “Tell the Story” or designate a story-teller in your group.
- Recognize what God is showing you. Think through how this impacts your own life.
- Do you know where each person in the group is spiritually? (Spiritually dead, infant, child, young adult, parent.)
- What is your part as you walk with them?

MEN/WOMEN BREAKOUT: If you meet with a co-ed group, have your LifeGroup breakout into men's and women's groups 1-2 times a month and answer the chapter questions together. If this is the first time doing a breakout in your group, try breaking out for about thirty minutes for prayer requests and prayer time together. Be sure to communicate with your men's and women's breakout leaders ahead of time when you are planning to do a breakout during home group time. This will give your breakout leaders time for prayer and preparation. This time in break out may allow for deeper, heart-level sharing.

SERMON: Awareness & Preparation

- What is God showing me in this week's sermon?
- How might this week's sermon impact each person in my group?

AFTER GROUP: Your role as a leader after group

- Who am I intentionally praying for this week? Who needs me to pray with them?
- Who has God put on my heart this week? What needs can I or others meet?
- Do I need to have a follow-up conversation with someone from group this week?
- Who was absent from group or from service? What might they need from me/our group?
- Is my group growing a heart for lost people?
- How are our relationships deepening?

Suggested Group Format

DURING THE WEEK:

We want to continue to encourage the individuals in your group to daily being with Jesus and studying his Word.

GROUP TIME

This hasn't changed. For your review:

- Opening prayer
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

Follow "the scarlet thread," the message of the Good News of Jesus, throughout the Scripture requires remembering where you have been! What was the story from last week? What caused you to think about it this week? How did it help you abide in Christ, in your family, with fellow believers or in your world? When did you have the opportunity to share the story?

Also in your glance back to last week, ask members of your group when they had a chance to share last week's story as they went about their life. After all, learning God's story isn't just for our own head knowledge—it's to make God known to the whole world and in doing so, make disciples.

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

Use the provided summary to get the big idea of that chapter. Fill in with the context of the story – who the character will be, where they are, what they are doing, etc. We are providing you with a few extra sentences here to better see Jesus in these chapters and apply the story to your life.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

This is new! Before telling the story for the day, help engage the group in listening more deeply by letting them know what one of the "Heart questions" is before you start. For instance, if you were studying the parable of the prodigal son, you might say, "As you listen to the story today, consider which character you find yourself relating to the most."

TELL THE STORY:

- This hasn't changed. Instead of simply reading the passage for that week, re-tell the story in your own words. Do not memorize it word for word, but make sure to include important details and quotes. For more guidance, see "Becoming a Bible Story Teller" on the LifeGroup page of the Chapel Hill website.

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

We've just switched up the order here. Engage your memories by rebuilding the story by walking through it slowly. This sounds like, "Where did we start? Who was there? What happened? And then...? What question was asked? How did he answer? How did it conclude?..."

Follow this memory jog with having everyone open their Bibles. Have someone read the passage out of the Bible.

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

Self-explanatory, but important for several reasons. We want to stay true to God's Word, firstly. But it's also interesting what we are further able to draw out of the story by noticing anything that has been added or left out.

QUESTIONS:

The intention with storying is that we would know, be transformed by, and share God's Word. So the questions we ask should be challenging questions that help equip us through God's Word as his disciples. The storying structure involves you, the leader, writing and asking questions of the head, the heart, and the hands. The basis for these 3 categories of questions comes from how we define a disciple. Look at Matthew 4:19. Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you, fishers of men." Being a disciple of Jesus isn't a formula or a program, it's a relationship—a relationship of an individual with Jesus. Help your group encounter Jesus.

Following this verse, you could say that a disciple is someone who first, has made a decision to follow Jesus; this is a "head" decision, a belief. So the first questions we ask are head questions, questions of belief.

Jesus said "I will make you..." that is, we are transformed by Jesus to be people we otherwise would not be. So the second questions are directed at what only Jesus can transform—our heart. These are questions of our emotions, our will, our motives, and our character.

Finally, Jesus makes his followers into "fishers of men," that is, people who are on mission with him to make disciples. So the third set of questions are directed at our hands, that is, what we are going to do and what action we take with this Word.

We want you to write these questions because you are privy to how the Holy Spirit is working in your specific group. Here are some generic examples that can help you get started. Please come and talk with a pastor or with your LifeGroup coach if more guidance would be helpful.

Head questions:

- What do we learn about God?
- What do we learn about people or a particular character?
- How does this story point to Jesus?

Heart questions:

- Who do you relate to?
- Where do you see yourself in this story?
- What do you find convicting?

Hand questions:

- How will your life be different as a result of this story?
- What one thing will you change in your life?
- Who will you share this story with?

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

This is an opportunity to look ahead. Plan ahead with your group. Does someone else want to try storying? Will you meet in another members' home? Are you raising someone else to be a leader in your group? Do they want to take the lead next week?

CLOSING PRAYER

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." James 5:16

LIFEGROUP LEADER DEBRIEF:

Connect with your apprentice and discuss: How are the individuals in your group connecting with God? Are there any life circumstances either of you need to address? Who needs prayer? Do any need encouragement to take the next step on the wheel? Who is going to follow-up with people new to the group? Pray for your group together.

TIPS FOR LEADING DISCUSSION:

- Don't be afraid of silence
- Have something prepared to say but don't feel you always have to share it
- Don't worry if the discussion goes in a different direction
- Don't let it get off topic
- Don't be afraid to repeat the question, or ask follow up questions.

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THE STORY

THE KING WHO HAD IT ALL

[JAN. 3 - 9]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- King Solomon ushers in the greatest time of unity and prosperity in Israel's history, but falls from grace as he pursues other gods. Solomon is the greatest earthly king Israel has known, wise and prosperous, but "one greater than Solomon" has come. Jesus is the answer to Solomon's prayer for the presence of God, for transformation of our hearts, and for all peoples of the earth to know God.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- 1 Kings 8:54-61

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

What do we learn about God?

Heart questions:

What do you find convicting in Solomon's prayer? What would his prayer sound like in your own words?

Hand questions:

What does verse 61 challenge you to change in your own life?

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch. 14. / Bible Passages: 1 Kings 12-16

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE / PRAISE

13

THE STORY

THE KING WHO HAD IT ALL

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The Story: Ch. 14. / Bible Passages: I Kings 12-16

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14

THE STORY

A KINGDOM TORN IN TWO

[JAN. 10 - 16]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- After Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel is divided into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The kingdoms and kings fight each other, and few of the kings follow God as their predecessor David did. God is faithful to the line of David and shows great grace to Judah and their kings, even in the midst of their sin, so that ultimately He may bring them a true King. God is faithful and just, and no matter who or what seems to be in charge, He will bring about His promises.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- 1 Kings 15:1-8

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch. 15 / Bible Passages: 1 Kings 17-19; 2 Kings 2; 4; 6; Hosea 4-5; 8-9; 14; Amos 1; 3-5; 9

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

15

THE STORY

GOD'S MESSENGERS

[JAN. 17 - 23]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- During the reign of kings, God sent many prophets to confront their wickedness and beseech their return to God. The Prophets foreshadow the ministry of Jesus as the One who would call His people to account and seek to turn their hearts back to God. God calls us to take account of ourselves, turn from our evil ways, and follow Him through Jesus Christ.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- 1 Kings 18:20-40

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch. 16/ Bible passages: 2 Kings 17-19; Isaiah 3; 6; 13-14; 49; 53

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

16

THE STORY

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

[JAN. 24 - 30]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- The Northern Kingdom of Israel finally falls to its enemies, but Judah and its king hold fast to God against their enemies the Assyrians, for now. For the future Isaiah prophesies imminent destruction and yet, hope. Even as Isaiah prophesies that the end is near, there also remains a hope of restoration for Israel, the Suffering Servant. The salvation of God comes through the midst of suffering, not in spite of it, contrary to our expectations.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Isaiah 53

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch. 17 / Bible passages: 2 Kings 21; 23-25; 2 Chronicles 33; 36; Jeremiah 1-2; 4-5; 13; 21; Lamentations 1-3; 5; Ezekiel 1-2; 6-7; 36-37

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- The kingdom of Judah crumbles under the assault of the Babylonians and the temple of God is destroyed. The people mourn bitterly, but even now God gives vision of new hope, of dry bones filled with life. As God's plan unfolds, we see more clearly that ultimately His plan was all along to give His people new hearts and provide His own Spirit to live inside of us. Our ability to be righteous and walk with God does not depend on us, but on His Spirit.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Ezekial 36:22-27

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch. 18/ Bible passages: Daniel 1-3; 6; Jeremiah 29-31

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

18

THE STORY

DANIEL IN EXILE

[FEB. 7 - 13]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- While the people of God are in exile, Daniel rises to prominence in the Babylonian government. Daniel shows the kings of Babylon and Persia who the one, true God is. Daniel is not fooled by the appearance of absolute power that the Babylonians and Persians give, but sees who is truly in power, the "Son of Man," and reveals God's reign to the kings of these foreign nations. Jesus, "the Son of Man," remains on the throne, sovereign and powerful, even as nations rise and fall.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Daniel 6

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch. 19/ Bible passages: Ezra 1-6; Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 1; 8

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

19

THE STORY

THE RETURN HOME

[FEB. 14 - 20]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- The people's exile lasted 70 years, and a remnant returned to Judah and began rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem. Despite opposition, God protected them and the temple was rebuilt. God promised to dwell with His people, but this was not ultimately fulfilled in the temple built of stone but rather in the temple built in humble flesh, Jesus Christ. We are still called to "let our hands be strong," since God has promised to be with us through Jesus.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Zechariah 8:1-13

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch. 20 / Bible Passages: Esther 1-9

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

20

THE STORY

THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY AND COURAGE

[FEB. 21 - 27]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- The people of God who remain in exile continue to influence the world. Esther, a daughter of the Jews, works to preserve the people of Israel from the scheming of Haman. Even though God is nowhere mentioned in the story of Esther, His preservation of His people, and thus of the salvation of the world through the Jewish people (and one particular Jew-- Jesus) is evident. "For such a time as this..." Whether we see it or not, God is behind the scenes in bringing about salvation to you and me.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Esther 3:8-4:3; 4:13 - 16

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch. 21 / Bible Passages: Ezra 7; Nehemiah 1-2; 4; 6-8; Malachi 1-4

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK’S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK’S CHAPTER:

- Though the temple is built, the city of Jerusalem remains vulnerable against its enemies. But God enables Nehemiah to rebuild the city, and the nation of Israel is seemingly restored. Still, God’s people do not follow Him wholeheartedly. Though the temple and the city is restored and the people of God are perhaps more faithful to the religious duties than ever before, God’s plan is not complete. God must send His “messenger,” a “refiner’s fire” who will make His people pure so He can truly dwell with them. Jesus is concerned that His people not just be “religious” and go through the motions but be people who look like Him, who care for justice and mercy.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY’S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Malachi 4:1-6

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.22 / Bible Passages: Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2; John 1

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, is born to the Virgin Mary and her fiancé Joseph. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world – full of grace and truth. We are witnesses of the light that has come into the world.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Luke 2:1-21

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.23/ Bible Passages: Matthew 3-4; 11; Mark 1-3; Luke 8; John 1-4

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

23

THE STORY

JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS

[APRIL 10 - 16]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Jesus inaugurates His ministry through baptism in the Jordan River by His cousin John. He calls people to follow Him, traveling throughout the region of Galilee preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out evil spirits. Our mission is to share the good news of Jesus, inviting people to follow Him with us as we seek to extend His kingdom in this world.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Luke 8:40-56

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.24/ Bible Passages: Matthew 5-7; 9; 14; Mark 4-6; Luke 10; 15; John 6

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

24

THE STORY

NO ORDINARY MAN

[APRIL 17 - 23]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Jesus teaches and models God's kingdom ethic. He sends His disciples out two by two into towns and villages, empowering them to preach and heal, and they are filled with joy at the results. Jesus calls His followers to be on mission with Him serving as ambassadors of His kingdom.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Matthew 5:17-24

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.25/ Bible Passages: Matthew 17; 21; Mark 8-12; 14; Luke 9; 22; John 7-8; 11-12

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

25

THE STORY

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

[APRIL 24 - 30]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Jesus' followers come to a deeper understanding of Jesus as the Messiah. He is the light of the world and the light of life. Our role as His followers is to shine His light into a dark world.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Mark 8:27-38

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.26/ Bible Passages: Matthew 26-27; Mark 14-5; Luke 22-23; John 13-14; 16-19

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Jesus prepares the disciples for His departure by washing their feet as an example of how they are to love one another. Despite Jesus' assurance that He is going to prepare a place for the disciples, Peter denies Jesus before men leaving him utterly alone with God. To faithfully walk with Jesus is to walk the road of service and suffering with Jesus.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- John 13:1-17

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.27/ Bible Passages: Matthew 27-28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 19-21

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

27

THE STORY

THE RESURRECTION

[MAY 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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Jesus is crucified and buried. On the third day He rises from the dead and appears to Mary Magdalene, Peter and the other disciples over a 40 day period. We who are followers of Jesus are commissioned under His authority to the mission of making disciples.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.28/ Bible Passages: Acts 1-10; 12

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- The disciples, empowered by God's Holy Spirit, begin to spread the good news about Jesus to the Jews, the Samaritans & the Gentiles. We are witnesses empowered by His Spirit to spread the news of Jesus to the whole world.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Acts 2:1-13

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.29/ Bible Passages: Acts 13-14; 16-20; Romans 1; 3-6; 8; 12; 15; 1 Corinthians 1; 3; 5-6; 10; 12-13; 15-16; Galatians 1; 3; 5-6; 1 Thessalonians 1-5

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Paul travels throughout the Mediterranean preaching the good news about Jesus despite opposition, planting churches and writing letters to strengthen those churches already established. Paul's mission is to see people come to believe in Jesus, no matter the cost, and to plant churches in which those believers can mature in Christ. Our mission is to see people come to believe in Jesus, no matter the cost, and to help believers mature in Christ.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Ch.30/ Bible Passages: Acts 20-23; 27-28; Ephesians 1-6; 2 Timothy 1-4

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

30

THE STORY

PAUL'S FINAL DAYS

[MAY 30 -JUNE 5]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Paul continued to bear witness to Jesus under arrest in Jerusalem, in prison in Caesarea, through shipwreck on Cyprus, under house arrest in Rome and eventually unto death. Paul continued to bear witness to Jesus even if it meant suffering, prison and death. We must be willing to bear witness to Jesus in any and every circumstance unto the end.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- 2 Timothy 4:1-8

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

The Story: Revelation 1-5; 19-22

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

31

THE STORY

THE END OF TIME

[JUNE 6 - 12]

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
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- God will win the battle that is now taking place and will one day dwell with His people and make all things new. God made a way to eternally be with His people. We live in the midst of the battle, but we must remember that in the end the Lamb wins and we will be with our God.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

- Revelation 21:1-8

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

