

Preparing for LifeGroup

1. Prepare for each LifeGroup session by praying for:
 - A. Each group member
 - B. That God would make His Word (the Bible) clear to people in the group.
 - C. That God will help you as you lead
2. Personally prepare for the LifeGroup Discussion by:
 - A. Reading through this LifeGuide and becoming familiar with the content.
 - B. Make sure you take time to read and study the Scripture that is used in this LifeGuide.
3. Create a positive LifeGroup Environment by:
 - A. Serving Food! (Snacks or a meal – rotate who provides) - *optional
 - B. Arranging the seating where everyone can see everyone's face
 - C. Setting the room temperature @ 69 degrees (cold keeps them awake)
 - D. Placing pets in another room
 - E. Supervising and placing children in a remote room
 - F. Keeping room bright with natural and artificial lighting
 - G. Having light/fun music playing (low to medium sound volume)
 - H. Having pens available
 - I. Keeping extra Bibles on hand
 - J. Making sure everyone knows each other
 - K. Making sure you don't go too long. (Try aiming for 30 minutes of fellowship at the beginning and 1 hour of group time.)

Now you are ready for group time!

LifeGuide for Afterlife – What about death?

Ice Breakers

Use one or more of the following “Ice Breakers” to get them talking:

- A. *What is the strangest costume you’ve ever worn for a costume party?*
- B. *Are you a scary movie fan? Why or why not?*
- C. *What is your favorite all-time candy?*

Leader Tips:

Remember that the purpose of the ice breakers is to get everyone involved and ready to talk. Try to make this a natural transition into your Bible study time.

Setting the Stage

Leaders: The purpose of “setting the stage” is to effectively transition from the icebreakers to a discussion of the current weekend message. This section reminds everyone in your group of the overall theme and purpose of the sermon series, and gets their minds prepared for the subject matter.

Micah has started a new sermon series called Afterlife. Many people live in fear because they are unsure what will happen after they die. They try to avoid thinking about it, but death is all around us. All you have to do is turn on the TV or read the headlines, and you are reminded of the reality of death. What if you could know for sure what will happen after you die? Would that change the way you are living right now?

God does not want us to be unsure of what happens in the afterlife, so He has clearly revealed to us in the Bible what will happen when we die. Hope for the afterlife is part of what makes the Gospel the “good news”. As Christians, we should not fear death and our thoughts about the afterlife should change the way that we are living in the here and now. While it’s not easy to talk about death, it’s very important that we understand what the Bible tells us on this difficult subject.

Discussion Time

Leaders: Let me take a moment to make you aware of the content found in each LifeGuide, and how you can use it. Remember this is a “guide” so you should not feel compelled to read every word and follow it in perfect order. Basically, I want this guide to provide you Scripture that you can read and study together, explanation and commentary, and discussion questions to get the group talking. The questions are bulleted so that you can locate them easily. The guide does provide you with a general flow for the evening, but you are free to adapt the guide to the needs of your group. You are always welcome to call or email me if you have any questions. Please don't feel like you are bothering me. It's my pleasure and my job to help you.

Have someone in your group read John 11:25.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." (John 11:25)

1. Death is inevitable.

Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. (Hebrews 9:27)

- What has been your experience with death at this point in your life?
- Who is the closest person that you have lost to death?
- How did that person's death impact your life?
- What do you think about when you are attending a funeral of someone that you really don't know?
- How does watching death on TV and movies affect the way we think about death?

2. Death is not predictable.

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. (James 4:14)

- What kind of fears do you have about death?
- What kind of conversations have you had with family members about death?
- What are some of the ways that people cope with death apart from Christ?
- How do you find balance between not fearing death, and also taking caution in life?

3. Death is the moment your body and soul separate.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

Stat: 13 million Americans have had near death experiences
(2 Corinthians 12:2-4; Acts 14:19)

- Do you believe the many stories you hear about near death experiences, or are you a natural skeptic?
- What is the closest you have been to death in your life?

4. **Death is not the end.**

We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.
(2 Corinthians 5:8b)

1) Great White Throne Judgment for unbelievers.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it . . . and I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books . . . if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

2) Judgment of Rewards for believers.

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw . . . his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light . . . If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

- Why do so many Christians live as if this life is all there is to live?
- What do you think about when you read about God's judgment in Scripture?
- We think a lot about earthly rewards, but how much time do we spend thinking about heavenly rewards?

5. **Death is not scary, if you know Jesus.**

"Today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

- Why should Christians not fear death?
- If you are fearful of death, what do you think needs to change so that you are no longer fearful?
- Is the fear of death and hell alone a good motivation for wanting salvation?
- How can we encourage other believers to not fear death?
- What about Christ's life should give us confidence when it comes to death?
- How can we live in the confidence on a daily basis?
- How often should we think about the afterlife?
- If we thought about it every day, how would that change the way we are living each day?

Wrap Up

Sum up the lesson by re-capping the main point and challenge the group to apply the truth to their life this week.

1. Ask for praise reports from previous prayer requests
2. Ask for prayer requests
3. Ask each person (or couple) to volunteer for part of next week's meal/snack.
4. Make any announcements
5. Close with prayer and praise

☺ Let me know if you have any questions.

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