



HOPE

CATCH UP ON LIFE:

We want to update each other on what Jesus has been up to in our lives since we last saw each other: what we're celebrating, what we're mourning, what decisions we are praying through, and where we've seen Jesus at work. ([1 Thessalonians 2:8](#), [Romans 12:10 and 15](#))

Suggested time: 20-30 minutes

- When were you most aware of Jesus' presence this week?
- When were you least aware of Jesus' presence this week?

REVIEW THE MISSION:

Just like God the Father sent Jesus on mission for us, Jesus sends us out on mission for others. So as a LifeGroup, we always want to invite our neighbors in, share Jesus with them, make disciples, and eventually plant a new LifeGroup so more people can come to know Jesus in our city. ([Matthew 28:18-20](#), [John 20:21 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#))

Suggested time: 10-20 minutes

1. People:

- **Reactive** - Who in your life (neighbors, coworkers, kids, friends, etc.) can we pray for? Who has God put around you that is showing spiritual interest? Who is hurting and could use some love from our group?
- **Proactive** - Who are the people we are intentionally living on mission with (neighbors, STC partner organizations, or a specific demographic in Columbia)? What are our plans to love, serve, and build relationships with this group?

2. Plan: Are there any rhythms in place or a different rhythm we could plan to create for these friends to connect with our group?

Pray: *Prayer is the fuel of God's mission. Let's pray for our people by name; pray for their needs, and opportunities to have spiritual conversations that help them take next steps toward Jesus.*

SERMON DISCUSSION:

God uses His Word to reveal Himself, equip us to live the good life, and strengthen us as we follow Him. We preach the Word on Sundays and apply it as a LifeGroup throughout the week. ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#), [Titus 2:11-12](#) and [James 1:22](#))

Suggested Time: 20-40 minutes

I. Scripture Discussion

Read [Matthew 1:18-23](#) and [Isaiah 7:13-14](#) out loud. Spend some time silently reflecting and journaling the following questions as a LifeGroup. (These questions can be used with any passage of the Bible to study on your own.)

What stands out from the passage?

- What does the passage reveal to us about God?
- What does the passage reveal to us about people?

Share with one another what you thought and wrote about.

II. Sermon Discussion

What stood out from the sermon that was beneficial for you? Why is that?

In the sermon, we said that God's people are in a time of darkness, silence, and suffering.

- Are there any specific types of suffering you frequently experience during the holiday season?
- Are there any other ways you are suffering right now?

In Isaiah 7:14, God offers hope in the chaos by promising the birth of Immanuel, "God with us." Jesus is the fulfillment of that hope.

- How does remembering times God has provided for us in the past (particularly in Jesus) encourage hope in our current suffering?
- What does it look like for you to practically remember that Jesus is your hope with whatever it is you're going through?
- Are there any friends of ours who are suffering right now? How can we offer them gospel hope and relief in their pain?

Pray: Before moving on to Engage the Heart, let's ask God to help us apply this week's passage to our lives.

ENGAGE THE HEART:

Jesus calls us to abide with Him and confess our sins to God and each other. Through confession and community, God's Spirit works to lead us to repentance and walk further in the light. ([John 15:4](#), [1 John 1:8-9](#), [James 5:16](#), and [1 John 1:5-10](#))

Suggested Time: 20-40 minutes

Formation - How are you doing abiding with Jesus (Bible reading and prayer)? What's He teaching you this week?

Confession - What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust Jesus with this week? How can you give Him control of it?

Consider using the [Gospel Fluency Tool](#) or the [Digging Deeper chart](#) as people share.

Celebration - Where have you seen victory over sin in the last week? Where have you recently been encouraged in your walk with Jesus?

Pray: James tells us that a community that regularly confesses sin and prays for each other will see a lot of healing. Confess your sins to God in prayer and pray for each other. **Pray** for the Spirit to work in you as you take steps of repentance.

During this time every year, we take 3-4 weeks to intentionally focus on growing in generosity. We reflect on how much God has given us and how we can bless others. Below are the initiatives we are rallying towards as a church family. Take some time to look over these initiatives and [sign up on our series page](#) or scan this code with your camera app:

- **Sign up to tithe** - We encourage church members to set up a recurring [tithe](#) because the gospel transforms us to be generous around the holidays and throughout the year. It's also specifically how we fund and fuel all we do as a church in our city.
- **Raise \$20,000 for our Serve the City partnerships in 2024** - These funds will also go towards our Serve the City Weekend on March 16, 2024.
- **Attend the Personal Finance Class** - We want to equip our church family to be spiritually healthy by stewarding the financial resources that God has entrusted to us. On January 27 from 9:00am - 12:00pm at our Downtown church, we're hosting a class that consists of practical training to manage your finances, pay off debt, invest well, and practice biblical generosity.



For tools and resources to grow in your walk with Jesus, go to [FollowingJesusTogether.com](#)