

LG Winter week 4 2/4/18 Leader Guide

Leaders, please be prepared ahead of time for this week both with bread and grape juice (you can pick supplies up at the church if you need) and also mentally to lead the group through this exercise. THIS WEEK IS NOT ABOUT QUESTIONS. IT IS MEANT TO BE AN EXPERIENCE. We just spent a series reading about the early church in Acts and now we want to live out a bit of what they did. It is said that growth usually does not happen in our comfort zones, so for most of us as leaders, this will be a growing moment as this pushes us outside our comfort zones. If you have any questions, please feel free to text or call Josh (408)316-1834. This is something new for probably every group, so please lean into the discomfort and allow for questions and some processing while not giving up on really diving into this. Also, please be aware of the stage of sharing and vulnerability of your group and adjust accordingly.

Now that we have come to the end of the “My Church” series, we are going to be doing something a little different this week. We have spent the last five weeks looking at **Acts 2:42-47** discussing questions and thinking through how we live it out, so this week we are going to have an “**Acts 2 experience.**”

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

We are just walking through this passage phrase by phrase and doing what it says they did back then.

Step One - “*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching*”

What has God been teaching you lately from this series or from another place in the Bible? If they devoted themselves to the teaching, we are going to take some time to discuss what we have been learning from this or another passage in the Bible. This is not meant to be a time to recap every message or summarize the series, but to talk personally about what stuck out for you in your life and why, and maybe how you are living it out.

Step Two - “*and the fellowship*”

Encourage one another. Share what you feel someone adds to the group or something about them you appreciate. If you know a role in the church body they fill well, acknowledge and encourage that. If they have gifts and strengths you see in them, whether they see them or not, call those out and affirm them. We all need each other and meeting together is important. We also need encouragement and support from others to help us on the way. The opportunity on

this one is huge. We all long for support and encouragement, and this has the potential to be one of those moments people remember forever and can change the trajectory of someone's life. Please take some time ahead of group and really think of ways to affirm and encourage those in your group. Hopefully we all remember a time a coach, teacher, friend, or coworker said something affirming or even called out something great in us we needed help to bring forth. We have the opportunity to do that for one another here.

Step Three - *"to the breaking of bread"*

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Take some time to examine yourself and prepare yourself to take communion. (If you are not a Christ follower, we are thrilled that you are in a group and digging in. However, because communion is a time to remember and express gratitude to Christ for pouring out His blood as a sacrifice to save followers from their sins and since you have not yet chosen to accept that sacrifice, we would ask that you not take communion with the group at this time.) Take communion together after reading these verses: Isaiah 53:5; John 6:33; and Luke 22:19-20.

As we share in the sacred act of taking communion together, we want to be sure of a few things. (1) Make sure everyone understands what communion is and knows exactly what it is they are doing. (Reading the verses and, if need be, discussing them should take care of this.) (2) Make sure everyone gets time to examine themselves and get their hearts in the right place to take communion. (3) Make sure that people who are not followers in your group know that communion is not for them and that they know the reasons why. Do your best to still make them comfortable and assure them that we want them in the group. Give space for questions if it seems appropriate.

Step Four - *"and the prayers"*

Pray for one another--for repentance, guidance, help, wisdom, strength, or anything else that is heavy on your heart. Take this time to pray. The desire is to move beyond the traditional prayer request moment here and really push for what is really going on inside of you that we can be praying for. For groups that have history and trust built, this may even be a time for confession and prayer (James 5:16). (if you choose to do a time of confession in a couples or mixed gender group, it is probably a good idea to split the group for this time by gender and go in two separate areas.)

Step Five - *"with glad and generous hearts, praising God"*

End this week's discussion time in praise and thanks to God: pray and sing songs of praise to Him. You can either choose a few worship songs to play or use your own voices to sing praise to Him. Fill the room with songs of praise! Close the time by praising God and thanking him for who He is, for the sacrifice He gave for us, and for the incredible love, mercy, and grace He gives everyone of us who chooses to follow Him. This may be really weird for some to sing in a small room with others, so assess your group and do what you feel is right. Do not make people sing if they don't want to. This will be a stretch for every group but may be a great way to end if people are at all willing to try it.