

Purpose

Week 1

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: What do you get purpose out of? What brings you purpose?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Romans 12:3-8

Summary/Law/Gospel:

As you start this semester have you ever asked yourself the question of what your purpose is? Maybe you are struggling to find that purpose or are struggling to find out what your major is. I love this passage when talking about purpose because it focuses on how everyone has a unique gift. Your gift could be prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, or something else not listed here. This passage specifically focuses on your spiritual gifts which are used for God's glory and to spread his message to the world. This is not talking about what you do but about what God and the Holy Spirit do through you. So, as you begin this semester think about how God is using you and your spiritual gifts in your life. Also challenge yourself to not shy away from opportunities that God gives you so that he can work through you

Three Key Consistent Questions:

- 1)What is Jesus teaching you?
- 2)How can you apply this to your life?
- 3)How can we support you?

SHARE as you GO:

Let's Join Jesus on His Mission wherever we go and whomever we are with!

WATCH: How did you see God at work in your life this week?

WORD: What has God been teaching you in His Word?

TALK: What kind of spiritual conversations are you having with others?

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PRAY: How can we help you in prayer?

Gratitude

Week 2

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: Have you had someone not say thank you after a favor you did for them? How did you feel?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Summary/Law/Gospel:

This passage is short and sweet. Honestly, it is not an easy one to follow. For example, imagine waking up in the morning and your friend smacks whip cream in your face as you open the restroom door. I can bet eighty percent of us would not respond with a thank you. 1 Thessalonians 5 tells us to be grateful in every circumstance, and that's because there's always something to be thankful for. In the previous example, we can be thankful for being blessed with friends who are close enough to prank us. Same thing goes with life. There are going to be times when it's hard to see the bright side, but you can be thankful for the ability to breathe and waking up that day. It goes beyond our understanding, but when you choose to lean on God and trust that he is working it all for His glory and your good, that gratitude leads to joy. Joy overcomes anxiety and other negative emotions #insideout2. Going through life with a grateful heart filter your soul and draws you closer to God.

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Hope

Week 3

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: What are you hopeful for? This week? Next month? In your lifetime?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Romans 15:13

Summary/Law/Gospel:

Hope. Every Spring when baseball kicks back into gear with pitchers and catchers reporting in late February, many baseball fans hope their team will go all the way to the World Series and win. Hope is a powerful blessing. For followers of Jesus, hope comes from God. God is the God of hope. Can you imagine if God was known to be the God of let downs, or lies, or mistakes, or accidents, or lack of knowing the future. And God is none of those labels. God is the God of hope. Hope cannot be conjured up by man's effort, it is God's gift by His Holy Spirit. Over the course of our lifetime, we will hope for many things to come true - jobs, relationships, security, adventures, and more. The greatest hope of all time has been fulfilled - Jesus has come down to save the world from their sins. Oh, and now we can continue to have a sure and certain hope that He will return again to take us to be with him forever. Until that day, another baseball season is on the way in the Spring and there is hope for each and every team.

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Glory

Week 4

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: From the context of a non-believer what does glory mean? Now, what does it mean to glorify God and What do you do to bring glory to God?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Revelation 4:1, Philippians 1:20-21, 1 Corinthians 10:31

Summary/Law/Gospel:

Glory is often misunderstood. We might think that when we give glory to God, it's because He needs it—like He's some distant, self-centered deity waiting for our praise. We tend to associate glory with our own desire for attention: we want people to admire us, to praise us, and when we don't get that, we can feel unhappy or discontent. But glorifying God is different. In reality, when we glorify God, it's often for our own good and the good of others. When we live according to the life Jesus has called us to—one of love, peace, joy, and freedom—we are glorifying God. And in doing so, we benefit deeply. Our lives are transformed as we reflect the goodness of God's kingdom. There's another important aspect of glory: it points others to Jesus. When we glorify God through our actions, our neighbors see that, and it draws them toward the gospel. Our lives become a testimony to the love and grace of Christ, inviting others to know Him. God has also given us a safe and pure way to worship and glorify Him. If we try to idolize or glorify anything other than Jesus, we can end up damaging the very thing we're worshiping. But when we focus on God—when we glorify Him—it's safe and life-giving. Through Jesus, we are able to live in the glory of God. Jesus washes away all the brokenness and sin, leaving us in a place where we can reflect God's love and grace. Thank you, God, for being the one who is worthy of all glory and honor.

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Forgiveness

Week 5

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: What does it truly mean to forgive someone? Do you feel it's easier for you to forgive others or be forgiven, why?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Matthew 18:21-35

Summary/Law/Gospel:

In the Lord's Prayer, we ask, "Lord, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." This reflects a core value for God: that we should be quick to forgive and slow to hold grudges. Yet, we know this is not always easy. At the start of this devotion, I asked, "Do you find it easier to forgive others or to be forgiven?" The truth is, we all struggle at times to fully embrace the grace and forgiveness Jesus offers. We often feel like we mess up constantly, and wonder, how could Jesus really forgive me? But the beautiful promise of the Gospel is that Jesus forgives us for everything because of what He has done for us. We get to live in that promise every day. It's easy to forget, though. We can easily lose sight of the truth that we are forgiven by God's grace, and when we forget that it becomes much harder to forgive others. In the parable, the servant quickly forgot the mercy his master showed him, and this is a warning for us. When we forget Christ's forgiveness, we forget how to forgive others. We must not forget the grace that Jesus extends to us. We are called to live in that forgiveness—and because of His grace, we are then called to extend forgiveness and reconciliation to others. This is not always easy. We desire justice, but remember that God is the ultimate Judge, and He promises to take care of justice. Our role is to forgive as Christ has forgiven us. So, remember this: You are forgiven because of Jesus. Live in that forgiveness, and let it shape every part of your life, especially your relationships with others.

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Identity

Week 6

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: What forms your identity? What do you put your identity in?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Ephesians 2:1-10

Summary/Law/Gospel:

This passage starts out with what we used to be. We used to be dead in our sins, we used to follow the ways of the world, or following our heart's desires. We all have been there, right? Where we focus on all the things of this world like your relationship, your sports team, your friends, your family, your grades, your status among peers. None of these things are particularly bad but when we focus on these things we lose focus of what truly matters, and we put all of our eggs in those baskets. The worst part is that when these things don't go well like we go through a breakup, lose a friend, get a bad grade, don't play well in our game we feel as though the whole world ends. Well thank goodness we are not left to guess what we should put our identity in. The passage then goes on to talk about how through Christ we have been made alive and raised up with Christ. I love the last three verse 8-10 when it says "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." You are God's masterpiece! Put your identity in the fact that Christ has saved you by grace and that nothing you can do can separate that from you.

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Heartbreak

Week 7

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: If you had a villain origin story, what would it be?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Job 1:13-22

Summary/Law/Gospel:

Job received one heartbreaking news after another. He went through lots of trials and tribulations. You can most likely relate to this. Maybe you went through a hard breakup, a close friend betrayed you, parents divorced, or your expectations were simply not met in a certain situation. Whatever it was or is, your feelings are valid. Jesus knows exactly how you feel. Jesus was betrayed by his close friend, he too felt heartbreak. In those times Christ ran to his father. He cried out to God. We are to be more like Jesus. In times of hurt, let's run to the father. God wants our honesty. He wants to be your source of comfort when you need it. Job was genuine with where he was to God. He had questions and needed reassurance in which God gave him answers to. You don't need a mask for God, he created your inmost being and desires a real relationship with you. Let him heal the heart he created for you.

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Doubt

Week 8

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: What doubts have you wrestled with as a follower of Jesus? How do you respond to those doubts?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Mark 9:17-29

Summary/Law/Gospel:

Doubt is a challenge that every Christian faces. We're called to believe in Jesus, even when he feels distant. As John 20:29 reminds us, "Blessed are those who believe without seeing." At times, we may find ourselves questioning God's existence, especially when we struggle to feel his presence. We can doubt his goodness when confronted with the darkness in the world. So, what should we do with our doubts? Should we ignore them, engage with them, or fight against them? We are invited to be honest and open with God. Just as Jacob wrestled with God, we too can bring our doubts to Him. It's important to share our struggles with our fellow believers as well, allowing us to support and uplift one another. God desires our honesty about our doubts, encouraging us to express them. Yet, we must also strive to return to faith. Sometimes, our prayer might simply echo the words of this desperate father: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief." It's perfectly okay to have doubts—Jesus loves you through them. If you find yourself questioning your faith, take comfort in knowing that you are saved because Jesus is calling you. He has chosen you, and you are forgiven for your doubts.

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Humility

Week 9

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: What does humility mean in following Jesus? How was Jesus Humble? How do you struggle with pride? Do you think you're a humble person? How and why?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: 1 Peter 5: 5-7, Matthew 16: 24-26

Summary/Law/Gospel:

Jesus calls us to a life of humility. We often struggle with pride, seeking respect and placing great importance on our reputations. It's dangerous because it leads us to anchor our identity in worldly things—wealth, vanity, and reputation. This pride turns our focus inward, making it hard for us to live for Christ or serve others. When we become prideful, we forget to love others and neglect our relationship with God. Jesus invites us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him. He exemplified humility through his service and love for others, ultimately giving his life for the world and enduring humiliation on the cross. He did this to demonstrate the depth of his love for us, humbling himself so that we might inherit eternal life. This is the humility Jesus calls us to: a self-denial that allows others to be lifted up. He urges us to serve others and to respond with love, even when it's incredibly difficult or seems unfair. Humility is challenging; it can feel impossible at times. Yet, Christ promises that picking up our cross and following him is the only path to true joy.

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Loss

Week 10

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: Has there been a time in your life that you were set on there being a negative outcome, but then were surprised with what actually happened?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: John 11:21-31

Summary/Law/Gospel:

It is incredible how Jesus shows us the cross so visibly in times like this story. Martha's faith (v. 24) is often an overlooked detail in this story. Martha's confession that she has confidence in the Messiah. Jesus then goes on and basically says "I'll do you one better" and raises Lazarus from the dead-on earth. Jesus is the King at turning graves into gardens literally. Just like Jesus' own death and resurrection, he takes what is horrible, death, and brings new life. Jesus may not bring that person back to life just yet, but I would challenge you to abide in the Lord and see how the Lord redeems broken situations.

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Life

Week 11

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of life? God, creation, people, oxygen, etc.?

Fact: the actual definition of life is: The condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter, including that capacity for growth, reproduction, functional activity, and continual change preceding death.

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Genesis 1:26-27 and 1 John 1:1-4

Summary/Law/Gospel:

These two passages explain why life is so important and why God created us. Genesis 1 talks about the creation and more specifically in verses 26 and 27, tells us very clearly that God created us in His own image. God loves us more than anything else He created on this Earth. How does it make you feel to know that you are created in Gods image? Joy, happiness, and smiling are some of the emotions and feelings I have when I think about God and how He created me. Life is hard and we all go through struggles, but we are never alone. 1 John 1:1-4 talks about the reliable and trustworthy actions and words God has given us. Verse 1 says, “Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life.” When life seems impossible and you feel all alone, we can trust that God is the word of life, because of who He says He is. We have the opportunity to experience and know God every day in such a beautiful and unique way. The hard truth is that God does not need us, because He is an almighty and powerful God, but the AMAZING thing is that God desires us. Our Heavenly father wants a relationship and to walk alongside us through this life. This earth and life is not permanent, so we have the choice every day to live a for God. Each morning, we wake up is a blessing and gift from God, because we get another day to live for Him.

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Peace & Comfort

Week 12

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: Where do you find comfort? Have you ever felt truly at peace?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Matthew 5:2-12

Summary/Law/Gospel:

The Sermon on the Mount starts with these verses known as the Beatitudes. I love these verses because they are so comforting no matter what you are going through. This season might be difficult as we are getting ever so close to ending the semester. There may be different things that are going on outside of school where you may feel defeated or like there is no way it can get better. God comforts those who mourn. He gives to those that are meek, the kingdom of heaven. Jesus says, “blessed are those that ___” and you fill in that blank. You might need peace and comfort in school with grades, maybe it is relationships, maybe it is family life, or maybe it is a loss you are dealing with. No matter what it is God will comfort you and give you the peace that passes all understanding. Also remember that God gives us the best gift ever where He sent Jesus, His only son, to die on the cross for our sins so that we can join Him in heaven forever. Remember that no matter what you are going through that God is right there for you and He gives you the peace that passes all understanding and life everlasting.

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Leadership

Week 13

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: Have you ever had a really bad boss or teacher? What did they do that was so outrageously terrible?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: 1 Corinthians 13:4-6

Summary/Law/Gospel:

I think we have all heard this before, but who would've thought it had anything to do with leadership?! As leaders of the Kingdom, we are called to love at a deeper level. Think back to what you shared earlier. Consider what love does NOT do, and ask yourself if that boss/teacher was acting out of love? Using this passage as a guideline for leadership will help you reflect and evaluate on the decisions you make as a leader now, and in the future. When people understand they are on the same team, working for the same goals, and are willing to speak truth respectfully, the best idea can be presented and adopted. Leaders cannot effectively lead people they do not love. Insecurity will stop us from loving the people we lead, and it will stop us from surrounding ourselves with the right people. In summary, use this scripture as a mirror for yourself as a leader. How can you love and lead better? Where are your weaknesses and insecurities?

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Rest

Week 14

CONNECT as you GATHER

Opening Questions: When was the last time you got rest?

Story – grow group leader provides the story.

ENGAGE as you GROW

Scripture Passage: Matthew 11:28-30

Summary/Law/Gospel:

In these verses Jesus is speaking on how those who feel weary and burdened can find rest in him. When we are tired and exhausted as Christians, we should find our rest in Christ, something amazing about this verse is that Christ says learn from me and we will find rest for our souls. The more we rest in Christ and know him personally the easier it is to give our burdens and weight to him. Sometimes we can get stuck in the rhythm of life and not take time to rest, and most of the time our time with God is either rushed or not as intentional, but when we are busy and need rest it is important to find rest in knowing Christ and everything he has done for us. What's amazing about all of this is all we have to do is go to him, Jesus says it in the first line of this verse "come to me" and he will give us rest.

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