

Growth Group Leader Guide

This “growth group leader guide” is meant to be just that, a guide. Please feel free as the leader of your group to add questions or comments, as you feel necessary, to fit your group’s dynamics.

Before the sermon discussion, ask a few of these questions:

Does anyone want to share a gospel conversation they had with an unbeliever this week?

Is there someone you want to share the gospel with but don’t know how to start the conversation? Ask the group for ideas.

Did anyone pass on an opportunity or an open door for a spiritual conversation? Why?

Also, don’t feel pressured to cover every question.

Paul’s Testimony – April 21, 2024

- What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend’s message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.

3 Parts to the Sermon

- **The Story of Paul’s Conversion**
- **The Heart of Paul’s Conversion**
- **The Theology of Paul’s Conversion**

I. The Story of Paul’s Conversion

- What is your conversion story? How did you come to believe in Christ? What was your life like before? In what tangible ways has Jesus Christ transformed you?
- **Read and discuss** Acts 9:1-19.
 - What happened to Saul in this passage?
 - What kinds of thoughts and feelings do you imagine Paul experienced during the three days he was without sight, while he fasted and waited for divine instruction? (Acts 9:6-9)
 - What specifically did God ask Ananias to do, and why was this a troubling command?

- When has God used you to play an “Ananias” role in someone's life? What was that like?
- What was the ironic twist in Saul’s story according to Acts 9:2, 23, 29?
- **Read Luke 18:9-14.** How does Paul’s life mirror the experience of both men described in this parable?

II. The Heart of Paul’s Conversion

- How do Paul’s words in Philippians 3:1-8 demonstrate the old saying that Christianity is not a religion but a relationship with Christ?
- List some of the dramatic ways Paul’s goals and motives changed after coming to know Christ.
- What prompted Paul to view his former credentials as rubbish?
- In Philippians 3:8, what does it mean to “consider everything a loss” compared to knowing Christ?
- Consider the things that people treasure over Christ. Why do they treasure these things?
- What sorts of sacrifices do Christians often have to make in order to be true to their faith?
- According to Philippians 3:3, what are the three distinguishing marks of a genuine Christian? How did Paul display these marks after his conversion?
- What distinguishing marks of true faith are present in your life? What signs are missing?
- How does Paul’s passion for Christ challenge you today? What needs to change your life to treasure Christ in the way Paul described in Philippians 3:7-8?
- **Read and discuss** the following quote.
 - *Paul’s desire to be ‘found in Christ’ means the same: He wants whoever looks at him, to see him as a man in Christ; whatever his experience should turn out to be, he wants to face them as a man in Christ. Jesus is his permanent address. Paul may be in Rome, Philippi, Jerusalem; he may be healthy, sick, worried, free of care - but he will always be in Him. - Kent Hughes*

III. The Theology of Paul's Conversion

- Why is it so hard to let go of our own righteousness and accept the free gift of the righteousness of Christ?
- Read Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:13-21. According to these verses, what is resurrection power?
- How do you see this resurrection power evidenced in your life and the lives of those around you?
- How does suffering for Christ enable us to know Christ more?
- In Philippians 3:8, what does it mean to “consider everything a loss” compared to knowing Christ? How is sharing in Jesus’ sufferings an example of this?
- How does the hope of your resurrection encourage you in the Christian life?
- Compare and contrast the story of the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-22) with Paul’s conversion.

Final Prayer -

- *Lord, when you shall enter my soul, you shall reverse my standard of greatness. Those things which I counted gain shall become insignificant unto me, and those things which I counted insignificant shall appear great gain. I care now for what I shall seem to be, more than for what I am; but then, my being shall be the mountain and my seeming the valley. - George Matheson (1842-1906)*

Announcements:

Taco Fundraiser

5/4 | 6pm | Chapel

Tacos, get your tacos! The Mexico Missions Awareness Team is having a Taco Fundraiser to help offset costs of the upcoming trip. We have about 20 people planning to go to Mexico this summer with Mexico Caravan Ministries. During the trip, parents and students will be helping to build casitas for families in need who live in and around Tijuana. We title this trip a Missions Awareness trip because participants are being taught about global cross-cultural work from missionaries and teachers from Radius International in the mornings and a few of the evenings.

Order tacos online at countryoaks.org/events. The cost to attend is \$25 per adult and \$15 per child. If you are not able to attend but would like to contribute, please click on the "Keep the Tacos" button to donate.

Photo Directory

We are making a new photo directory!! If you would like to be in it, please give us a few minutes of your time to take a photo in front of the Foyer. Photos will be taken on the following Sundays: **5/12, 5/19, 6/23.**

Sunday Night Service

4/28 | 6pm

Join us at the end of the month for night service as we learn about the topic of anxiety, worship through song, and fellowship with one another!