

In The Middle Of The Mess

Leader Guide | Week 3

NOTE TO LEADERS: We will continue with the present format for Life Group. When you “Look Back,” you can care for the people in your group. Additionally, by using loving accountability, you keep your group members moving forward in the Lord. When you “Look Up,” you let the Word and the Spirit of God do their work. After all, you can provide the Spirit an opportunity to work. But nothing eternal happens if the Spirit doesn’t do his work. Finally, when you “Look Forward,” you trust the Holy Spirit to speak and to give marching orders.

There is one last thing you should remember. Take time throughout the year to have fun, eat together occasionally, and serve together as a group. In these things, you can show your group firsthand how to live for the Lord.

LOOK BACK: The Look Back section serves two essential aspects of body life in the church: care and obedience. In this section, you will start the group by focusing on the goodness of God. Give each person a chance to express what they are thankful for. Next, they will get a chance to share what they are struggling with. This is not a time to fix a problem. It is a time to pray.

The Looking Back section is also a time of accountability. Did you do what God wanted you to do to expand the Kingdom? Did you hear from God and respond by doing? Were you more than just a hearer of the Word this week? What did you learn about God’s faithfulness?

LOOK UP: This section is focused on the Word of God. Often, there will be more than one passage of scripture for you to choose from. There are four questions that you will ask each week. They will be the same questions. Some may see this as limiting. But we suggest these questions will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal Truth, convict of sin, and lead people deeper into an understanding of the Truth found in God’s Word. There may be, at times, two sets of scripture for you to use. Feel free to use one or both as time allows. If there is more than one set of scriptures, it is because of different points made in the sermon. You can choose the one that best fits your group, if necessary.

LOOK FORWARD: This is a time of prayer and a time for the Holy Spirit to guide each of us into action. Of course, anything the Holy Spirit asks us to do will be consistent with what God has revealed in the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Secondly, Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27, ESV) You need to be one of the sheep to hear God’s voice. Unless, God is calling a non-believer to move toward Him or accept Christ as Lord and Savior. Have everyone share what they believe God has told them to do. This allows the group to assess things against the Word of God.

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Key Things You Heard

- The choices we make in the middle of the mess can make all the difference.
- You can have everything, but you have nothing if you don't have Jesus.
- In the middle of the mess, the wise men chose to worship.
- The wise men came prepared to worship.
- Don't doubt what seeds of faith you can plant in the middle of the mess.
- The wise men chose to worship Jesus for who he is and not what he had done.

Look Back

- Have everyone share something that they are thankful for this week.
- Have everyone share something that they struggled with this week. After each person shares, have someone in the group pray for them.
- Last week, you wrote what God wanted you to do on an index card. How did it go? Did you do what God told you to do? Why or why not?
- SAY: "Share about a time this past week when you shared with someone the change God is making in your life or when you told someone about Jesus."

Look Up

- Read **Matthew 2:1-16** and ask the following questions. Then, repeat the process for **Matthew 16:24-26**.
 1. What did you like about this passage?
 2. What did you find challenging or hard to understand in this passage?
 3. What did you learn about people?
 4. What did you learn about God?

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Look Forward

Leader Note: You will need one index card and a pen or pencil for each participant in your group.

- Pass out one index card and a pen or pencil to each participant. Instruct them to pray this prayer. “God, how can I obey and apply what I have learned in my time in the Word today?” Then, have them write down what they will do before next week. Have everyone share what God has told them to do. Finally, challenge everyone to do what needs to be done. Next week, everyone will share what they learned about themselves and God through obeying Him.