

First Four Meeting Agendas

Below are four meeting agendas you can use to launch a new Community Group. They assume a group meeting length of 1.5 hours. Edit based on the specific needs of your group. The last two pages are resource pages for your group meetings, to be printed and distributed.

Meeting #1

Welcome (~5 Minutes)

Gather everyone together and start on time. Give an encouraging welcome and a brief overview of the meeting agenda. Begin with a brief prayer.

Telling Our Stories (~20 minutes)

Icebreaker: *Share your name and a season in your life when a group or a team (in any environment) was a positive influence on you.*

Ask for a volunteer to share their life story in roughly 15-20 minutes at the next meeting. They can tell it any way they would like with any amount of creativity, pictures or props (or none). If more structure is desired, have that person share three important life transitions they have made. Remind them as the next meeting draws near.

Covenant Development (~15 minutes)

The Group Covenant process embedded in these four weeks is expanded upon at ccclife.org/cgresources. During this first meeting...

- 1) Hand out the sample Covenant.
- 2) Read through and pause for any comments or questions.
- 3) Ask for people to consider additions, subtractions and adjustments for the next meeting.

Study (~40 minutes)

The four week study given in these sample agendas come from the first passages in each of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John). By

surveying the opening ideas of each gospel your group will see important themes unique to each gospel emerge. It will set the stage for any future study of Jesus and the gospels.

Study Icebreaker: *Who among your ancestors has done something interesting or notable?*

Read Matthew 1:1-17. A lot of names. Have fun! It can be given to three different readers (vs 1-6, vs 7-11, vs 12-17).

CONTEXT

I've included an excerpt from the *Introduction* to each gospel in the [NIV Study Bible](#) (Zondervan, 2011) at the bottom of this document and can be printed and distributed. The excerpt from Matthew can be read aloud by someone in the group.

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

What notable ancestors of David do you identify?

What notable women appear in this genealogy?

What else "jumps out at you" from this genealogy?

MEANING QUESTIONS

Why do you think Matthew includes this genealogy?

What does this genealogy reveal about Jesus?

What does this genealogy reveal about God?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Where have you see God working in your family history?

How might you creatively apply a passage like this to your life?

Prayer/Sharing (10 minutes)

Take time to have each person share one hope they have for this Community Group. Close in prayer with a focus on these hopes. You can do this as the leader or leave space for your group to pray out loud. End on time.

Meeting #2

Welcome (~10 Minutes)

Gather everyone together and start on time. Give an encouraging welcome and thank everyone for coming back for the second meeting.

Icebreaker: *Share your name and your favorite pastime.*

Telling Our Stories (~20 minutes)

Have the volunteer share his or her life story (see week #1). Allow questions & comments from the group along the way and/or at the end. Ask for another volunteer for next meeting. Remind that person as the next meeting draws near.

Covenant Development (~15 minutes)

Continue the discussion around the Group Covenant.

- 1) Hand out the sample Covenant with changes made from last week.
- 2) If there are new people, read through aloud.
- 3) Have the group share any additions, subtractions and adjustments they come up with since last meeting. Discuss and adjust the Covenant if needed.

Prayer (~15 Minutes)

Redistribute the resource hand out (below) containing The Lord's Prayer so that you are all reading from the same Bible version. Pray The Lord's Prayer aloud together.

Spend time in prayer using the four General Topics to focus. Encourage group members to pray *for themselves* in these areas and to focus on their own needs.

Study (~30 minutes)

Read Mark 1:1-11.

CONTEXT

Have someone read aloud the excerpt from the *Introduction* to Mark's gospel from the NIV Study Bible (Zondervan, 2011) from the resource page (at the bottom of this document).

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

Compare & contrast the opening of Mark with the opening of Matthew. What questions do you have about this passage? (the leader shouldn't try to answer these questions, the point is to get the group to dig deeper, they may get answered in the Meaning discussion)

MEANING QUESTIONS

Read 2 Kings 1:7-8: What does this reveal about John?

What other characteristics of John do you note?

What does this account reveal about Jesus?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Where is it hard for you to put others first?

What has been your experience with Christian baptism?

- ❖ Note on the church website any upcoming Baptism classes/dates should anyone be led or encouraged in that direction.
- ❖ Remind your group to invite anyone who might be interested in the group.

Close in a brief prayer or pray The Lord's Prayer again to close. End on time.

Meeting #3

Welcome (~10 Minutes)

Gather everyone together and start on time. Give an encouraging welcome and open in a brief prayer.

Hand out a "finalized" Group Covenant with edits from last week's discussion.

Icebreaker: *Share your name and the place you called home at age 16.*

Worship/Prayer Focus (~30 Minutes)

Redistribute the resource hand out (below) containing Psalm 23 so that you are all reading from the same Bible version and can reference the underlined words.

- ❖ Read Psalm 23 aloud together
- ❖ Direct everyone to re-read Psalm 23 in silence
- ❖ Have one person read Psalm 23 aloud, slowly

Question: Which of the underlined places in Psalm 23 most closely represents where you are these days - and why?

Prayer: Spend time in praise, thanksgiving or request based on what was shared.

Telling Our Stories (~20 minutes)

Have the next volunteer share his or her life story (see week #1). Allow questions & comments from the group along the way and/or at the end. Ask for another volunteer for next meeting. Remind that person as the next meeting draws near.

Study (~30 minutes)

Read Luke 1:1-4.

CONTEXT

Have someone read aloud the excerpt from the *Introduction* to Luke's gospel from the NIV Study Bible (Zondervan, 2011) from the resource page (at the bottom of this document).

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

What sorts of things do you typically rely upon to test the truth of something you've been taught?

What can you learn about Luke from this passage?

MEANING QUESTIONS

Why is Luke focusing on accuracy?

If you were telling "an orderly account" of the Christian faith to someone over lunch what things would you include?

If you were telling "an orderly account" of the Christian faith to someone over lunch what things would you exclude?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Where in your life are you looking for certainty?

Who might you need to share "an orderly account" with?

Close with a brief prayer focusing on responses to the application questions.
End on time.

Meeting #4

Welcome (~15 Minutes)

Gather everyone together and start on time. Give an encouraging welcome and open in a brief prayer.

Icebreaker: *Share...*

- 1) *One thing that went well since we last met*
- 2) *One thing that did not go well since we last met*

Study (~25 minutes)

Read John 1:1-13.

CONTEXT

Have someone read aloud the excerpt from the *Introduction* to John's gospel from the NIV Study Bible (Zondervan, 2011) from the resource page (at the bottom of this document).

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

Why does John start his Gospel so philosophically?
What questions do you have about this passage?

MEANING QUESTIONS

What do we learn about Jesus in vs. 1-4?
What do we learn about Jesus in vs. 9-13?
What do you think it means to be a child of God?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

What area of your life, if any, are you dealing with rejection?
Where in your life do you need to be reminded of your status as a child of God?

Revisit the Covenant (~10 minutes)

Redistribute the Group Covenant (if needed).

Discussion Questions: *Based on our first four meetings...*

...what's going well?

...what can we improve?

Telling Our Stories (~20 minutes)

Have the next volunteer share his or her life story (see week #1). Allow questions & comments from the group along the way and/or at the end. Ask for another volunteer for next meeting. Remind that person as the next meeting draws near.

Continue this practice weekly until everyone has told their story. Incorporate newcomers as you go.

Prayer/Sharing (20 minutes)

Use the "Prayer Cards" idea. Distribute cards for group members to write a joy/praise on one side and a request/concern on the other. Group members exchange cards and pray for what's shared on the card during the meeting as well as in the coming week.

Context Resources for Each Study

Taken From the *NIV Study Bible* (Zondervan, 2011)

Purpose of Matthew (pg. 1585, references removed)

Matthew's main purpose is to confirm for his Jewish-Christian readers that Jesus is their Messiah. He does this primarily by showing how Jesus in his life and ministry fulfilled the OT Scriptures. Although the Gospel writers quote the OT, Matthew includes many proof texts unique to his Gospel to drive home his basic theme: Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT predictions of the Messiah. Matthew even finds the history of God's people in the OT recapitulated in some aspects of Jesus' life. To accomplish his purpose Matthew also emphasizes Jesus Davidic lineage.

Special Characteristics of Mark (pg. 1651, references removed)

Mark's Gospel is a simple, succinct, unadorned, yet vivid account of Jesus' ministry, emphasizing more what Jesus did than what he said. Mark moves quickly from one episode in Jesus' life and ministry to another, often using the adverb "immediately". The book as a whole is characterized as "the beginning of the good news". The life, death and resurrection of Christ comprise the "beginning," of which the apostolic preaching in Acts is the continuation.

Characteristics of Luke (pg. 1696, references removed)

The third Gospel presents the works and teachings of Jesus that are especially important for understanding the way of salvation. Its scope is complete from the birth of Christ to his ascension, its arrangement is orderly and it appeals to both Jews and Gentiles. The writing is characterized by literary excellence, historical detail and warm, sensitive understanding of Jesus and those around him.

Purpose and Emphases of John (pg. 1757, references removed)

John's Gospel is rather different from the other three. Whether or not he knew them (or any one of them) continues to be debated. In any event, his witness to Jesus goes its own way, highlighting matters that in the other Gospels remain implicit and underdeveloped. The literary style of this witness of Jesus is also unique among the Gospels; here focus is on the "signs" of Jesus' identity and mission and on lengthy, theologically rich discourses.

The Lord's Prayer from Matt. 6 (NIV)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Four General Topics

- ❖ God's Will (line #1)
- ❖ Daily sustenance (line #2)
- ❖ Forgiveness (line #3)
- ❖ Temptation (line #4)

NOTE: The traditional "For yours is the kingdom and the power..." does not appear in the earliest versions of Matthew)

Psalm 23: A Psalm of David (NIV)

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.