How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).

2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.

3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

We hope you are having a meaningful Advent. Many groups will be gathering for Christmas parties and so if you are reading this, I’m recommending a shorter time of study. If this is your last gathering of the year, it might be a good idea to also spend some time sharing where you find yourselves at this point in the Advent season and what you hope to receive this Christmas.

In the meantime, thank you for serving as a LC Leader and for helping people belong.
26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in
Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The
virgin’s name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly
favored! The Lord is with you.”

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might
be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You
will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be
called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father
David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will
overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth
your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to
conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail.”

38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel
left her.

Luke 1:26-38

O – For some of us, this is a familiar story. Re-read the passage very closely. What words and
images jump out and feel fresh to you this year?

I/A – Mary’s question and response reveals her obedience, wisdom, and genuine heart
for the Lord. If you were Mary, and the angel permitted you to ask a second question,
what would it be and why?

I – What an amazing passage of Scripture – we have angels, two divinely-appointed
pregnancies, and a young woman fulfilling ancient prophecy. Why do you think we are
still telling this story and celebrating in such ways more than 2000 years later?

A – One of the practical takeaways for us is to be reminded that nothing is
impossible with God and as the angel says, “God’s word will never fail.” Where is
there a moment in your life or in someone’s near you where you need to be
reminded that God’s promise will not fail?
a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.

b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)

c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!

d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.

e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.