



ADVENT
CONSPIRACY



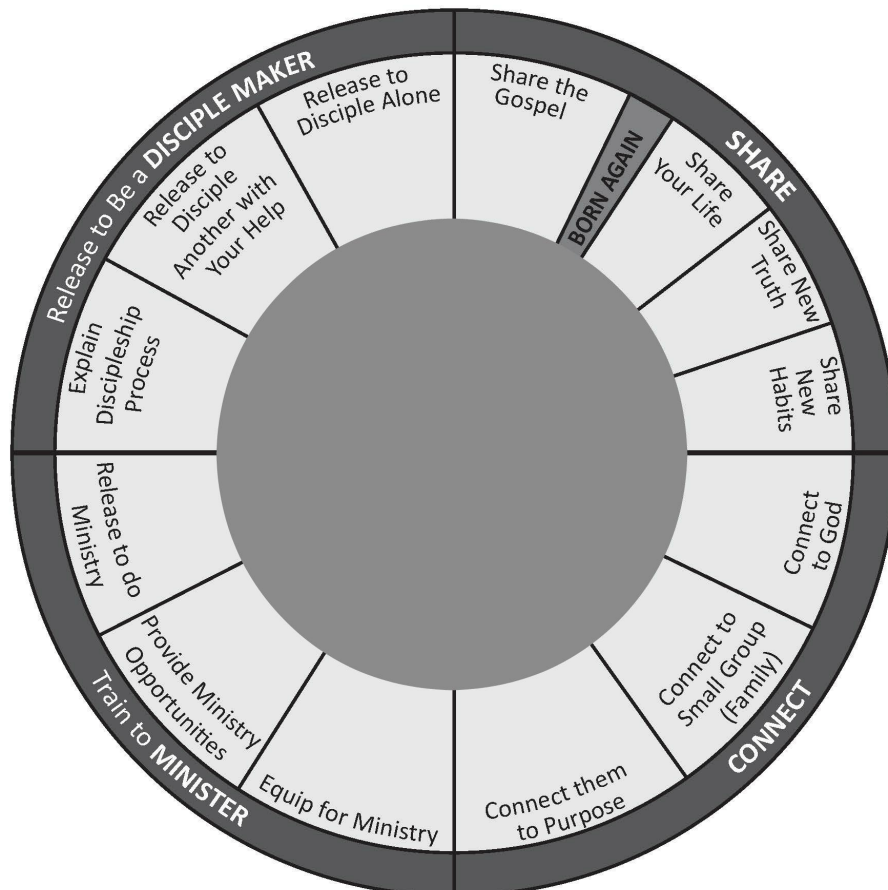
LIFEGroup Gathering Guide

Advent Conspiracy Message Series
Sunday 11/28/2021 - Saturday 12/23/2021

About LIFEGroups

LIFEGroups are small communities that follow Jesus on mission together! LIFEGroups help us as we each individually and as a church journey along the Discipleship Pathway of Connecting with God, Loving our Neighbors, and Serving our City. LIFEGroups usually gather weekly or every other week for community, to process through the content of that week's message, and to encourage one another as we seek to live out our faith and make a difference in our city. For more information or to join a

LIFEGroup, visit SJDenver.org / RenewalDenver.org





LIFEGroup Relational Guidelines

TIME: Please be sensitive about the amount of time you share. Group time is limited.

I will seek to avoid conversation dominating.

LISTENING: We seek to cultivate a group culture in which everyone can be real and open about their struggles and celebrations. If we feel like we must normally “wear a mask,” this is an environment in which we are encouraged to “take it off.”

I commit to being an understanding listener. I will not hold side conversations while you are sharing. Before responding; I will first seek to listen to you all the way through. If your struggles are emotional, financial, legal, medical, relational, spiritual, sexual, or any other, I endeavor not to be surprised. I endeavor not to offer advice without your permission.

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

I promise to hold your words in confidence. They stay with me.

“I” STATEMENTS: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “you”, “them”, “they”, etc.

SELF-AWARENESS: Be aware of how you are personally affecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

SILENCE: Can play an important role in group discussion as it allows for people to process the topic or question being considered. Don’t always jump right in - give people a moment.

CONFLICT: We will resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we make sure to honor God and each other in the ways that resolve issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard:

- If someone sins against you - *Matthew 18:15-20*
- Restoring someone in sin - *Galatians 6:1-5*
- Forgive a sinner - *Colossians 3:12-13*
- Reconciling differences - *Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:1-5*

Group Prayer Ideas

Pray for Each Other

- Everyone share their prayer requests before entering into the time of prayer;
- As you open a time of spontaneous prayer, ask people to pray for each other's requests / not their own;
- *Option: Have one person record the group's prayers in a prayer journal. Periodically review the journal to see just how much God answers prayer!*
- *Option: Conclude with the Lord's Prayer or Apostle's Creed.*
- *Option: Do a "Prayer Exchange," assigning people to pray for one another this week, & text as you do.*

Responsive Psalm Prayer

- Choose a psalm (ex: 13, 116, 136, 139, etc.);
- Have the leader and the people pray through the Psalm by trading verses responsively, OR go around the circle and have each person take the next verse.

Missional Prayer

- Have everyone go around and pray specifically for a non-Christian friend, neighbor, co-worker, etc.
- *Option: Have everyone use the "MissionHub" app to set a prayer reminder for that person OR write the name on a 3x5 index card, take it with them and put it somewhere that they'll see it.*

Category Prayer

- The leader guides the group by inviting spontaneous prayer around a "category" at a time, allowing a couple of minutes per category;

Ex: Relational Circles

Our Families
Our Church
Our Neighbors
Our Co-Workers
Our City
Our Country
Our World

Ex: A.C.T.S.

Adoration
Confession
Thanksgiving
Supplication

Ex: Lord's Prayer

Petition 1: Holy Be Your Name
Petition 2: Your Kingdom Come
Petition 3: Your Will Be Done
Petition 4: Give us Today our Daily Bread
Petition 5: Forgive us our Trespasses
Petition 6: Lead us Not into Temptation
Petition 7: Deliver us from Evil

Ex: Healing

Physical
Emotional
Spiritual

Simultaneous Prayer

- Set a timer (ex: 3 min) and ask everyone to pray simultaneously (out loud) until the timer runs out.

Timed Prayer

- Set a timer (ex: 20 min) and then go around the circle taking turns praying until the timer runs out.

Advent Conspiracy Worship Fully

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." 46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; 49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. 50 And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; 52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; 53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, 55 as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever." 56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home. – Luke 1:39-56 (ESV)

Search for the "Renewal Church Denver" app or "St. John's Denver" app in your app store. More of God's truth all week long at renewaldenver.tv and sjdenver.tv

Start Talking: Find a conversation starter for your group. (15 Min)

- What is something you are looking forward to in regard to preparing for the Holiday season?
- What is something you are dreading in preparing for the Holiday season?

Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking. (10 Min)

- Read Luke 1:39-45. Where is Mary and what is she doing, and why is she there?
- Read Luke 1:46-55. What do Mary and Elizabeth do with the news that they have received?
- Read Psalm 150. How is this Psalm similar to Mary's song?
- How is Praising God a part of preparing?

Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness. (10 Min)

- Do what we worship form our hearts? What are we tempted to worship leading up to Christmas instead of God?
- Why should we prepare our Hearts for the Lord? How can we do that?
- What does it mean to you to worship fully?
- Is corporate worship and personal worship different or the same, why are both important?

Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week. (10 Min)

- What resources can you use to worship more fully this Advent season, check out adventconspiracy.org for some ideas.

Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power. (15 Min)

- For suggestions on structuring prayer time, see the *Group Prayer Ideas* page in this packet.

Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three. (15 Min)

1. What's a passage of scripture that has impacted you this week? Read it to the group and explain why.
2. Is there anything God is leading you to repent of?
3. How's your weekly 3-2-1 challenge going? (*3 Conversations with New People, Learn 2 Names, Make 1 Meaningful Connection*)
4. Who is one non-believer that you need to reach out to this week?
5. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
6. Pray for one another.

Advent Conspiracy

Spend Less

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" 20 And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." – Mark 10:17-25 (ESV)

Start Talking: Find a conversation starter for your group. (15 Min)

- What would you say is the hot ticket item to buy this Christmas? What is on everyone's must have list?
- What are some other things you spend your money on besides gifts around Christmas time?

Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking. (10 Min)

- Read Mark 10:17-25. What is the rich man asked to do and why?
 - Was he able to do it? "How hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven?"
 - What did Jesus feel for him? What does it say in verse 21?
 - What do you think this passage has to do with Advent?

Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness. (10 Min)

- What would it mean for you this Holiday season to spend less?
- How can money and shopping rob you of some of the truer gifts of Christmas?
- What are some ways for you to spend less this year? What can you do instead of buying a lot of gifts?
- How can remembering the greatest gift fill you this Christmas?

Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week. (10 Min)

- Maybe this year it's about putting your money in to a more meaningful use? Donate to a charity, make a gift for someone, travel to see someone special.
- Plan a smaller budget this Christmas and stick to it.

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Advent Conspiracy

Give More

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. – John 3:16-17 (ESV)

He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." 6 So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." – Luke 19:1-10 (ESV)

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Start Talking: Find a conversation starter for your group. (15 Min)

- Share what is one of your favorite and most meaningful Christmas gifts that you have ever received?
- What do you say you treasure more, good memories or nice gifts? Why?

Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking. (10 Min)

- Read John 3: 16-17 and Luke 19:1-10. What do the two sections of scripture have in common ?
- What is the cause of Zacchaeus' reaction in Luke 19:1-10? What changed him?

Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness. (10 Min)

- How can the idea of spend less and give more go together, why would it seem to conflict?
- What are some creative ways you can give more without spending more?
- Have you ever felt compelled to give like Zacchaeus gave? Why and how?
- In what ways do you want to Give this Christmas season?

Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week. (10 Min)

- Ways to give more without spending more money, try giving your time by volunteer somewhere or spending time with someone you know might be lonely?
- Who is someone you can give the love of Jesus to this year?

Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power. (15 Min)

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Love All

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." – Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV)

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. 8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 And when Paul[a] had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. – Acts 16:6-10 (ESV)

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Start Talking: Find a conversation starter for your group. (15 Min)

- What do you love?
- What makes you feel loved?

Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking. (10 Min)

- Read Matthew 22:36-40. What is the greatest commandment? How does this cover all of the laws in one command?
- Read Acts 16:6-10. Where was Paul called to go and why?
 - How was Paul's obedience an act of love?
 - Do you think it was easy for Paul to go where God wanted him to go rather than where he wanted to go? Why or why not?

Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness. (10 Min)

- Does Love call us to do something that might be inconvenient sometimes?
- Have you heard the saying Love Does? What do you think that means?
- Think of a time when you were overwhelmed by someone's love? What was that like?
- How is Love meant to strengthen and grow us? How are you growing in love through Jesus?

Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week. (10 Min)

- How can you Love All? Who needs your love right now?
- Try befriending someone who might be lonely or hard to love, invite them into your home for a meal.

Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power. (15 Min)

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