

Week 1 NEW YEARS REVOLUTION – LEADERSHIP COACHING

[The purpose of this page is to help you sharpen your skills as a Life Group Leader. Each week we will include concepts, challenges, and resources designed to assist you as you lead and shepherd your group and grow as a disciple yourself.]

Abiding *[grow as a disciple yourself]*

- This leadership series is focused on living a revolutionary Christian life. We will look at several critical practices that help us share Christ with others. The first is abiding in Christ. As we abide in Christ, others will see the evidence of Christ in our lives. Abiding includes devotional reading, studying the Bible, prayer and relationship with other believers. It's essential that we spend time with Jesus so He can lovingly challenge us with those areas in our lives that may be un-submitted to Him. This week we will look at the promises God gave Israel at the end of Deuteronomy. He promised them blessings and He also promised curses.
- Are you personally allowing God to illuminate areas of your life that are dark? How serious or willing are you about giving up known sins in your life? Is there a secret you've never told anyone about that you would be willing to share with a mentor or fellow disciple so you can be free of the shame and guilt you may currently have? Be prayerful with whom and what you share, but come out of the secrecy. No need for gory details, just courageously confess. Ensure it's someone of your same gender to protect your heart.

Leading *[learn to facilitate your group more effectively]*

- Begin thinking about how your group will stay connected this new year. You might ask group members to help you plan get-togethers and outings. Consider reading a book or a book of the Bible together and discussing it on social media, through email, text, or in person.

Shepherding *[know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]*

- During these 4 weeks, be very intentional with your group. Encourage them to study God's Word, forge deeper relationships, encourage them to serve, train them to lead, and love them well.
- You can personally shepherd several people. Your apprentice can personally shepherd several people. The more spiritually mature members of your group can each shepherd several people. As the leader, be intentional about who is shepherding whom within your group. Encourage the natural relationships within your group. Enlist some of your more mature people to take on the shepherding role for those who may not have someone watching over them right now. Who are you going to talk to about this? Don't just read this without taking action. A simple word or direction from you will begin to help you become the spiritual parent you are needing to grow into.

Week 1 — New Years Revolution - Living Life on Mission!

Open With Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Remind Group of Small Group Guidelines

Ask A Hook Question *[Ask a thought-provoking question to get the group focused]*

What is a secret to living a successful life you learned early on you could share with the group?

Share Background for The Story *[Provide context by sharing what comes before the story in the Bible]*

Over the next four weeks we will be studying the story of Elijah the prophet and how he prayed for the rain to stop and it did not rain for over 3 years. In order to understand this story better we will look at the conditional promises God gave the people of Israel through Moses before entering the promised land. This is where we find the Israelites once again, on the border with Canaan – The Promised Land – after spending 40 years in the desert. Moses speaks to them and challenges them to radical obedience to God. All of the people are spellbound by what Moses says to them and their hearts are moved, touched, and convicted by the seriousness of this moment in history. After waiting and wandering for an entire generation in the desert they are about to go into the long awaited land of prosperity, but first they need to know the promises of God are conditional. With this backdrop the rest of the Elijah story will make more sense over the next several weeks.

Tell The Story - This week's passage is *Deuteronomy 28:1-24, 30:1-6*

Rebuild the Story *[Group members tell the story together based on what they remember]*

Read the Story Out Loud *[Read the scripture passage to see if anything was added or omitted]*

Discuss These Questions:

1. Of all the blessings and cursings which ones resonated with you the most and why?
2. Today everything is said to be relative. What do you believe God is trying to help the people of Israel understand by these blessings and cursings?
3. How have you felt the blessing and cursing of God in your life? Share an example.
4. Is there anything God is moving on your heart to turn away from and what are you going to do about it?

Ask Someone to Retell the Story *[Ask for a volunteer from the group]*

Assign Next Week's Passage – *1 Kings 17:1-6*

Close in Prayer

Week 2 NEW YEARS REVOLUTION – LEADERSHIP COACHING

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Abiding *[grow as a disciple yourself]*

- Continuing the series on revolutionary Christian living, this week we look at the practice of “taking Jesus with you.” As we live our lives, consistency in our words and actions, shows others that we are committed to following Christ. Jesus was on mission when he shared meals with others and asked them questions that led to spiritual truths. We can do the same. We don’t need a Masters of Divinity to share with others our own story of our personal need for Jesus and the changes following Him has made in our lives.
- This week we are looking at the story of Elijah and his willingness to confront sin and call it out. Are there times when you have remained silent when you could have lovingly challenged people around you? How can you cooperate with God to share the truth of God with those around you? What if you asked for permission from people to share what you believe? What if you asked someone lovingly if you could share some advice on a challenging area of their life where they are clearly in sin?
- Today’s PC (Politically Correct) culture keeps many of us from confronting sin. How are we being unloving to those around us when we don’t ‘lovingly confront.’ How can you make sure you are in ‘love’ and not just wanting to be right or challenging people without humility?

Leading *[learn to facilitate your group more effectively]*

- Remind your group of the group guidelines. As we discuss topics that prompt people to reveal issues close to their heart, confidentiality is vitally important. Remind your group that even if a topic seems commonplace to them, it may be deeply personal for the person who shared it. What is shared in group should not be repeated elsewhere.
- Consider people in your group who do not normally share during discussion time. Communicate value to them by asking them to share this week.
- After someone has shared their heart during discussion time, simply state, “Thank you for sharing.”

Shepherding *[know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]*

- During your group time this week, share a meaningful touch with each group member. It may be a warm hand shake, a hug, or a hand on their shoulder as you pray.
- Discuss personal devotional time with your group members. Recommend some online or printed resources for them. Ask them what their learning preference is; reading, watching, listening, writing, and then guide them to an appropriate tool and resource for them to grow in their walk with Jesus.

Week 2 — New Years Revolution - Living Life on Mission!

Open With Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Remind Group of Small Group Guidelines

Ask A Hook Question *[Ask a thought-provoking question to get the group focused]*

What awkward conversation have you had that was difficult you'd be willing to share? What gave you the courage to have it?

Share Background for The Story *[Provide context by sharing what comes before the story in the Bible]*

Last week we were able to hear and study the dramatic passages of blessings and cursings in Deuteronomy 28 and on. We were confronted with the seriousness with which God requires our obedience. This week we will be introduced to a prophet named Elijah. He lived during the reign of a very evil King Ahab in the year 932 B.C. Ahab married a foreign wife named Jezebel, something God clearly opposed, and then began to worship the false gods of Baal and Asherah. He allowed his wife Jezebel to kill many of God's prophets as well as lead the people of Israel to the worship of idols. God raised up Elijah at this critical moment in history. This faithful prophet of God began to wonder with so much evil and so much disobedience why was it still raining?

Tell The Story - This week's passage is *1 Kings 17:1-6*

Rebuild the Story *[Group members tell the story together based on what they remember]*

Read the Story Out Loud *[Read the scripture passage to see if anything was added or omitted]*

Discuss These Questions:

1. Do you think it was difficult for Elijah to confront King Ahab? Why or why not?
2. What are some of the consequences Elijah faced for speaking truth to power? Should followers of Christ speak truth to power? Why or why not?
3. Is there anything you see in your life, family, work, city, or the world that bothers you enough to stand up and say something about it?
4. What are some of the things God might be calling you to lovingly confront? If you're unwilling, what would it take to make you willing? How can the group pray for you to have the courage and love to do so?

Ask Someone to Retell the Story *[Ask for a volunteer from the group]*

Assign Next Week's Passage – *1 Kings 17:1-16*

Close in Prayer

Week 3 NEW YEARS REVOLUTION – LEADERSHIP COACHING

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Abiding *[grow as a disciple yourself]*

- The next practice that helps us live revolutionary lives is “earning the right.” I’m sure you’ve heard the saying, “they don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” It’s a tired phrase, but it’s true. We are always more likely to take a friend’s advice to heart than we are someone whom we just met. When we love people well, we earn the right to speak into their lives.
- In the New Testament Timothy was willing to be mentored and led by the Apostle Paul. This is because Timothy knew Paul well and he was willing to be advised by him. Who is your Paul? Who is discipling you and speaking into your life? Who is your Timothy? Who are you discipling and investing in? Spend some time this week contemplating your answer to these questions.

Leading *[learn to facilitate your group more effectively]*

- Prepare well – Pray and know your material
- Facilitate, don’t teach – Facilitation cultivates discussion; teaching disperses information.
- Don’t feel like you have to know all the answers – We are human, and it’s okay for your group to see that you are limited.
- Don’t talk more than the rest of the group – Ask questions to generate discussion, ask people to explain their answers and go into more depth. Allow multiple people to respond, even if the first person gets the “right” answer. Do your best not to interrupt.

Shepherding *[know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]*

- Continue to intentionally invest in the people in your group. Follow up on prayer requests, spend time with them, and challenge them to serve in new ways.
- Spend extra time with your apprentice this week. Give your apprentice opportunities to lead group and to help you disciple the people in your group. Do not forget that your goal for them is that they can go out and lead a group of their own. As we look toward launching new groups this year, help prepare your apprentice for that opportunity.

Week 3 — New Years Revolution - Living Life on Mission!

Open With Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Remind Group of Small Group Guidelines

Ask A Hook Question *[Ask a thought-provoking question to get the group focused]*

Share with the group a time you did the right thing even though it was difficult.

Share Background for The Story *[Provide context by sharing what comes before the story in the Bible]*

This week we will repeat all of the story from last week as well as add some more to it. The background to all of our life group lessons are the blessings and curses found in Deuteronomy chapter 28 and on, where we find that God's blessings and curses are conditional. Much like the principle of planting and harvesting we can always expect there will be consequences for our actions. Elijah has boldly come before King Ahab and risked his life to tell him to his face that because of his lack of faithfulness there will be consequences. Once Elijah delivers his message there are several consequences even he must face for being faithful to God. Doing the right thing is rarely easy and many times they can put us in a difficult situation personally. We are going to see just how far Elijah is allowed to endure difficulties and see what lessons and inspiration we can receive for a revolutionary life in Christ.

Tell The Story - This week's passage is *1 Kings 17:1-16*

Rebuild the Story *[Group members tell the story together based on what they remember]*

Read the Story Out Loud *[Read the scripture passage to see if anything was added or omitted]*

Discuss These Questions:

1. What did you find most interesting about this story and why?
2. Is there anything you learned about the heart of God in this story?
3. Have you ever found yourself in a difficult situation like the widow where things didn't make much sense but you pushed through on faith? Please share.
4. What is God asking you to trust Him with right now that you're struggling with? How can the group pray for you this week to move forward?

Ask Someone to Retell the Story *[Ask for a volunteer from the group]*

Assign Next Week's Passage – *1 Kings 18:1-46* Because this passage is so long we're asking all of our storytellers to pick 3 or 4 of the most compelling parts of the story and paint a broad-brush stroke picture.

Close in Prayer

Week 4 NEW YEARS REVOLUTION – LEADERSHIP COACHING

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Abiding *[grow as a disciple yourself]*

- The last principle we will study in this series for revolutionary Christian living is “keep it simple.” We do not have to be Bible scholars or ordained ministers to share our lives and our faith with others. Sometimes the most simple actions – a kind word or thoughtful prayer can make a lasting impact on someone else.
- I Peter 3:15 says, “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,” Think about the people you are around every day. Who needs to know about Jesus? What can you do to share your story with that person?

Leading *[learn to facilitate your group more effectively]*

- Life Group is a beautiful way for people to connect in meaningful relationships. Today more than ever people are searching for a place to belong, a place to be accepted and be loved unconditionally.
- Encourage group members to prayerfully consider which of their friends, neighbors, and co-workers they can invite to join your life group. Remember Jesus says the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.
- Remember to have group members exchange cell phone numbers if you have not already. Find out who texts. Text messaging is a great way to plan an impromptu get together or send an urgent prayer request.

Shepherding *[know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]*

- Stay in touch with your group members throughout the week. Make regular phone calls, send texts, schedule one-on-one breakfasts, lunches, or coffees with your group members.
- Challenge your group members to stretch spiritually this year. Some suggestions for accomplishing this include keeping a prayer journal, memorizing scripture, completing a Bible reading plan, or serving during an outreach activity for the community.

Week 4 — New Years Revolution - Living Life on Mission!

Open With Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Remind Group of Small Group Guidelines

Ask A Hook Question *[Ask a thought-provoking question to get the group focused]*

Wheel Review:

Rather than asking a hook question take this opportunity to briefly review the Discipleship wheel. Help your group to identify the traits that indicate that we are maturing in our faith. Remember to help your people understand that the wheel describes the journey God is leading each of us on and His ultimate purpose is for us to be fully mature. No matter where your people are on the wheel let them know God wants to lead them on their unique journey towards full maturity and we're here to help them as well. You can see a copy of the wheel at the end of this PDF document.

Share Background for The Story *[Provide context by sharing what comes before the story in the Bible]*

This is one of the most compelling stories in the entire bible. Prepare to be in awe! Because this passage is so long we're asking all of our storytellers to pick 3 or 4 of the most compelling parts of the story and paint a broad-brush stroke picture. Even in retelling the story as a group, keep the details loose for the benefit of time. When we read the story all of the details will come to the surface. The mountaintop is where all of us want to be and yet there is a price to be paid in order to make it to the top. Just because you made it to the top doesn't mean you're on the right team. Listen to this powerful story and prayerfully ask God to reveal to you the personal lesson he wants for you to take away so you can also get to the top and succeed in the most important showdown in life. Buckle up! Here we go!

Tell The Story - This week's passage is *1 Kings 18:1-46*

Rebuild the Story *[Group members tell the story together based on what they remember]*

Read the Story Out Loud *[Read the scripture passage to see if anything was added or omitted]*

Discuss These Questions:

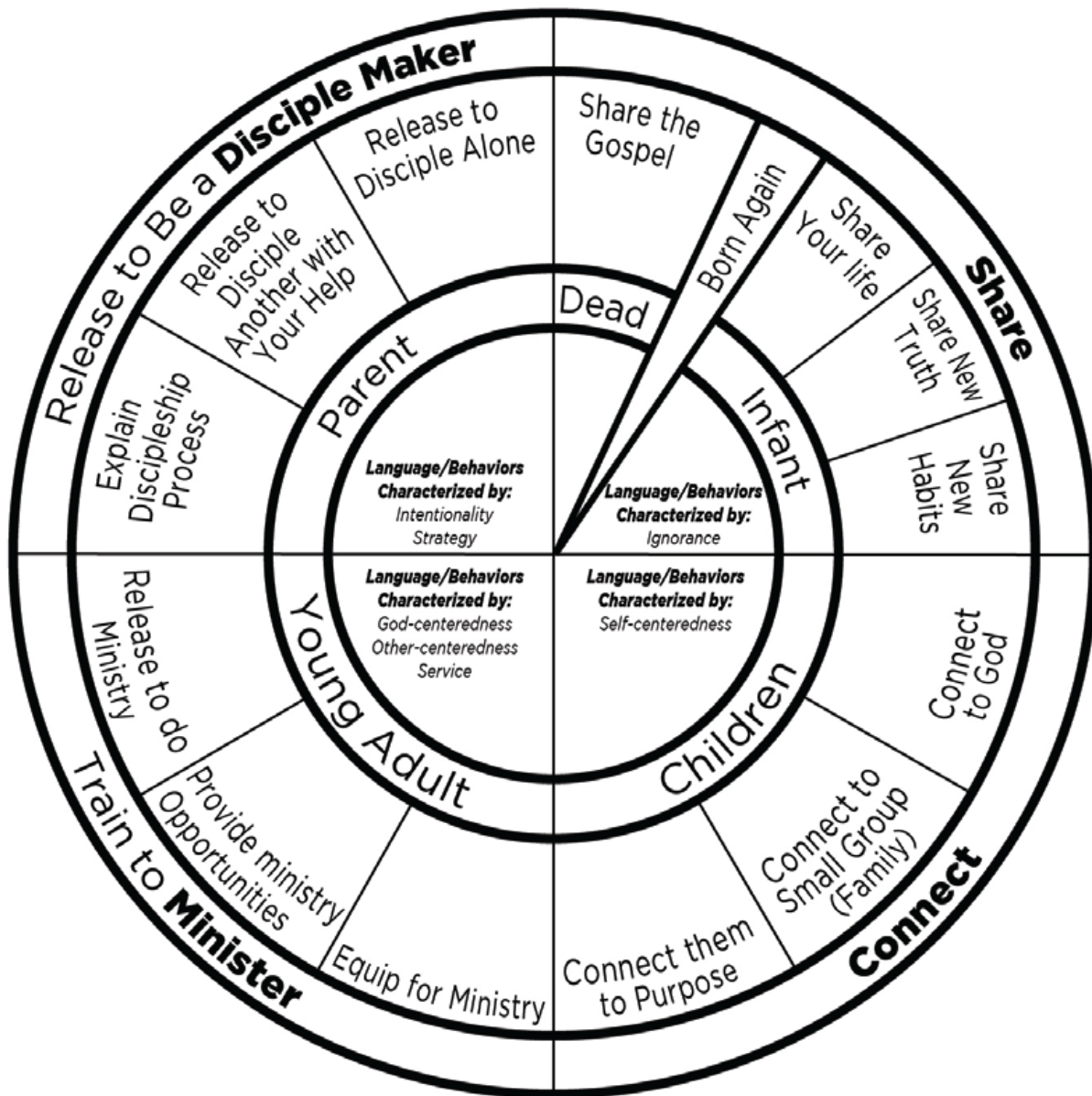
1. What part of this story is the most compelling for you and why?
2. In our present day who are the prophets of Baal?
3. What has been your greatest answered prayer to date?
4. What mountaintop is God wanting to call you to? What are the challenges you might encounter on your journey there?
5. What is God calling you to do in response to this story and what are you going to do about it?

Ask Someone to Retell the Story *[Ask for a volunteer from the group]*

Assign Next Week's Passage – TBD

Close in Prayer

Discipleship Wheel



*The life group leadership coaching notes have been modified for our use and were authored by www.TheMet.Church in Houston, TX.