



WINTER WEEK 2 | January 17-18, 2026



LEADER NOTES

- ◇ **Life Group Commitment Sheet.** If you didn't go over this last week, make sure you take time to go over the Commitment Form this week or review what you talked about with anyone who missed the first week.
- ◇ **You don't have to answer every question.** Pick the questions that best fit your group. Remember it's only week 2 and people are still getting to know one another if you lead a newer group.
- ◇ **Note on Prayer.** Check out the Tips on Group Prayer at the end of this Leader's Guide.
- ◇ **Start planning your social!** Check out: [Life Group social ideas](#)
- ◇ **Don't forget about your Impact project!** Check out: [Impact Projects](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◇ **Desert Rat Experience 2026** - The Desert Rat Experience is a man's weekend designed for guys who are into all kinds of off-roading. You can count on lots of riding time, great Desert Rat messages from our own Chris Brown and three hot meals! January 23-25, 2026 Register to attend in the North Coast Church app or at northcoastchurch.com.
- ◇ **Serve as a Buddy for an Honored Guest at Night to Shine** - North Coast Church has the honor of hosting Night to Shine, sponsored by the @Tim Tebow Foundation, on Friday, February 13, 4pm-9pm at the Vista Campus! It takes hundreds of Buddy Volunteers to make Night to Shine an unforgettable prom night experience centered on God's love for people with special needs ages 14 and older. Attendees are our Honored Guests! Each Honored Guest is partnered with a Buddy who is with them throughout the night from 4pm-9pm. The role of a Buddy is a vital part of making this event a success! Buddy Volunteers are still needed to make Night Shine possible. Learn more or register to serve as a Buddy in the North Coast Church app or at northcoastchurch.com.

LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

WARM UP



This weekend, we studied The Parable of the Sower. Parables are short stories that Jesus used to teach spiritual truths by comparing them to everyday life, but they were intentionally complex, meant to provoke the listener to ask questions and lean in.

- **Reminder:** You want to hear from everyone during your Life Group meeting.

1. Are there any sayings you heard growing up that seemed confusing, silly, or strange? Do they make more sense now?

- **Additional Question:** When you hear something that's confusing or challenging, what is your natural response?

2. Jesus' parables featured many different types of places: fields, vineyards, homes, roads, banquet halls, and more. Which do you connect with? Are you more of a country person or a city person? Indoors or outdoors? Coastal or mountain?

3. Is there a part of this message that has stayed on your mind after hearing it?

- **Additional Thought:** This could be a moment, phrase, or idea.

KNOW IT



After learning about the four soils, which one best describes where you're at today? Depending on our response to God's message, our spiritual life will either grow, stagnate, or be nonexistent.

1. Read James 1:22-27. After reading this warning from James, what do you think are some pitfalls of merely listening to God's Word without putting it into practice? How might we deceive ourselves by being hearers of the Word, but not doers?

- **Additional Thought:** To get the most out of the first question, you might need to leave some breadcrumbs for others to follow. Example: What are some pitfalls emotionally, mentally or spiritually, when we don't put God's word into practice?
- **Additional Scripture:** Luke 8:15 - *But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.*
- **Additional Thought:** The second question is not another version of the first. It's a great follow-up question that can help your group to identify what the deception can look like as hearers, but not doers. Examples: delayed obedience, applying God's word to others first, mistaking knowledge and familiarity with obedience and maturity.

2. The point of this parable is to be the type of soil that bears fruit. Read Psalm 1:1-3 and Galatians 5:22-25. How will the Fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians shape your day-to-day? How does the image of a strong, healthy tree in Psalm 1 illustrate the benefits of a life surrendered to Jesus?

- **Additional Question:** Are there any rhythms, influences, or choices that would nourish the Fruits of the Spirit in your life?



SHARE IT

1. Share about a season in your life when you felt your heart was hardened or being choked out by “thorns and weeds.” What was tripping you up at the time? What helped (or could have helped) you grow?

- **Additional Question:** What are some early warning signs that your heart is starting to harden or become crowded by thorns and weeds?
- **Additional Scripture:** Hebrews 3:12-13 - *See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.*

2. How about a time when you knew you were growing out of “good soil”: a moment where you experienced transformation, encouragement, or God at work? What was different about the condition of your heart than when it was hardened?

- **Additional Question:** What practices, people, or postures helped prepare you for growing out of good soil?
- **Additional Scripture:** Colossians 2:6-7 - *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

LIVE IT



Prepare the soil:

1. What are some ways you can come into God’s presence with an open and ready heart? Whether through worship, prayer, Bible study, time with Christ-centered friends, or something similar, choose at least one practice you’d like to try daily this week with the goal of becoming more open to God’s work in your life.

- **Additional Question:** What helps you slow down enough to notice God’s presence?
- **Additional Question:** What might help you protect the practice you chose this week when life gets busy or disrupted?
- **Additional Scripture:** Psalm 95:6-8 - *Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice, Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did.*

2. Look again at the fruit in Galatians. Which one is most lacking or least evident right now? Share with your group and pray for each other this week to walk in the newness of life that comes from growing out of good, fertile spiritual soil!

- **Additional Question:** What would progress look like if this fruit grew just a little stronger?
- **Additional Scripture:** Philippians 1:9-11 - *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in a Life Group. Over the years, we've found that group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME - Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request, either before prayer begins or during prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

PRAY MORE THAN ONCE - Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE - Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused, and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one is required to pray out loud.

- **Additional Question** (An important one for new groups): Prayer is an avenue God has given us to communicate with Him and He with us, but we also come to it with many different thoughts and feelings. Which of the following statements is most true for you?
 - Prefer to pray silently instead of out loud
 - Find my mind wandering when praying
 - Like to write out prayers
 - Look forward to time in prayer
 - Don't really know how to pray
 - Other



Why Does Church Work For Some And Not Others?

Jesus' only sermon that needed a lot of help:

Matthew 13:1-23, 5:6, 2 Samuel 12:1-7

The only one responsible for my **SPIRITUAL CONDITION** is me.

Jesus wants to be our **HEALER**, not **HELPER**.

The four types of people listening today:

Matthew 13:1-23, James 1:22-25, Psalms 1:1-3, Galatians 5:22-25

Paths:

Rocks:

Thorns:

Miracle Grow:

Tips for tilling the hard soil:

Matthew 13:1-23, Psalms 139:23-24

1. Show up with an **EXPECTATION** that God has something **FOR ME**.
2. Pray: Just ask God to give me **ONE THING** that I need to **HEAR**.
3. Attitude: Be willing to **SURRENDER** to whatever God is **SAYING**.
4. Worship: Set my **HEART** and **MIND** on who **GOD IS**.