

**THE  
GREAT STORY  
OF  
God**

**LIFE GROUP  
STUDY GUIDE**





## Life Group Gathering Guide

*Great Story of God*

11/26-12/17 2023

### About Life Groups

Life Groups are small communities that follow Jesus on mission together! Life Groups help us as we journey as a community and individually, along the Discipleship Pathway. Our Strategic Pathway at St. John's and Renewal is to Gather around the promises of Jesus, Grow in the truth of Jesus, Serve in the Name of Jesus, and Go with the power of Jesus. Life Groups usually gather weekly or every other week for community, to process through the content of that week's message, and to encourage one another to GROW together 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](http://SJDenver.org) / [RenewalDenver.org](http://RenewalDenver.org)





## Life Group 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*

# Great Story of God

## The Great Requirement

### Micah 3:1-8, 6:6-8

# TALK IT OVER

## Study Description

Micah was a citizen of Judah during a time of political unrest, injustice, and unfaithfulness toward the God of Israel. Caught up in idolatry and civil unrest, Micah brings a message of destruction and exile to the people of Judah, namely Jerusalem. However, even in a time of judgment and wrath from the same God who rescued the people from slavery, Micah shares a promise of restoration to the remnant of Israel and faithfulness even in moments of fallenness. A King will rise out of Bethlehem to bring righteousness and rule to the nations. There will come a day when out of the exile will come a people who will stream up to the mountain of the LORD, peace will flourish among the people, and God will be their King forevermore (Micah 4:1-5). In this, our hope is in the advent of the resurrected King, Jesus Christ to restore all things. This is the Great Story of our God.

## Passages

*“And I said: Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice? you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in a pot, like flesh in a cauldron. Then they will cry to the Lord, but he will not answer them; he will hide his face from them at that time, because they have made their deeds evil. Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry “Peace” when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths. Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision, and darkness to you, without divination. The sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be black over them; the seers shall be disgraced, and the diviners put to shame; they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God. But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.” – Micah 3:1-8 (ESV)*

*With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? – Micah 6:6-8*

More of God’s truth all week long at the “Renewal Church Denver” app or “St. John’s Denver” app in your app store.

## Share: (15 Min)

- Is there something from last weekend’s sermon that you hope we talk about as a group?

## Head: (10 Min)

- Read Micah 3:1-8 and Micah 6:6-8 What is it that the Lord requires from His People?
- What do they think is His requirement?
- How are the people of God not doing what God truly desires? Where do you see this with Christians today?

## Heart: (10 Min)

- How does Micah express his emotions or moral concerns in the passage?
- Is it possible for us to be just? How do we fail at this in comparison to the people of Judah?
- What do you think is the advent message in this part we read in Micah today?

## Hands: (10 Min)

- In Micah 6:6-8, what practical actions does God desire from His people? How can we apply these principles in our lives today?
- How can we, as individuals or as a group, actively work against the injustice described in Micah’s prophecies?
- In what way can your actions match your words this week? Commit to following through on what you’re going to do this week with one another.

## Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three. Pick a question. (15 Min)

1. Who is one non-believer or someone without a church home that you need to reach out to this week?
2. What kind of conversations are you having with people you are reaching out to?
3. Is there anything God is leading you to repent of?
4. What’s something you’d like someone else to check in with you about this week?
5. Pray for one another.

# Great Story of God

## The Great Rescue

### Micah 4:6-10; 7:8-9

# TALK IT OVER

## Study Context

*The people fall into rebellion and are exiled from the land to be slaves to foreign nations. Understanding the Great Rescue acknowledges that we cannot by our strength rescue ourselves. Yet, out of the kindness of God, He promises rescue. His salvation is our sanctification to live a life that would honor Him above all others. His rescue reveals His character, a God of compassion and delights in steadfast love for His people. His Great Rescue continues to be a theme throughout the Scriptures from the enslavement of Egypt, the rescue by the judges, and ultimately through the life-blood sacrifice of His own Son, Jesus.*

## Passages

*"In that day, declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore. And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, the former dominion shall come, kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem. Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counselor perished, that pain seized you like a woman in labor? Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued; there the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies." – Micah 4:6-10 (ESV)*

*"Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication." – Micah 7:8-9*

## Share: (15 Min)

- As you reflect on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?

## Head: (10 Min)

- Read Micah 4:6-10; 7:8-9, what all will the Lord do according to these verses? What does this reveal about God's redemptive plan for the world?
- Why would Judah need to hear this? Based on the context, what is going to happen to Judah?
- Where will they be rescued? Why do the people need rescuing?

## Heart: (10 Min)

- Babylon was seen as a strong, powerful nation, filled with injustice and idolatry. God promises to deliver them from this enemy. Where in your life do you need rescuing from an enemy?
- How are the promises of God toward Judah relevant to you right now?

## Hands: (10 Min)

- This Advent season can bring hope of Jesus to someone you know who might need the promises of Jesus. Who needs to hear it and how can you share with them?
- How can we actively participate in God's grand story of restoration, as depicted in Micah 4:6-10? What specific actions can we take individually and as a community?
- Pray for those in your life and community who need the promises of Jesus.

**Great Story of God**  
**The Great Rescue**  
**Micah 4:6-10; 7:8-9**



**TALK IT OVER**

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

1. Who is one non-believer or someone without a church home that you need to reach out to this week?
2. What kind of conversations are you having with people you are reaching out to?
3. Is there anything God is leading you to repent of?
4. What's a passage of scripture that has impacted you this week? Read it to the group and explain why.
5. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
6. Pray for one another.

## Great Story of God

### The Great Restoration

#### Micah 4:1-5; 7:18-20

# TALK IT OVER

### Study Context

*There will come a time when all things are restored under our Great King. God will call not only the nation of Israel, but all nations from every corner of the earth to stream up the mountain of the King. As God rescues His people (even in the here and now), He calls them to learn from Him as we meditate on the law day and night (Psalm 1). In this, we see a glimpse of this reality in the sermon on the mount, and on Mount Calvary, where streams of water flow to all nations, and out of the chaos of death, death shall be no more. The Great Restoration is good news for those who feel like, in this Advent season, they have no hope. Hope comes through a child in a manger to bring about this reality.*

### Passages

*"It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. For all the people walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." –Micah 4:1-5 (ESV)*

*"Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old." –Micah 7:18-20 (ESV)*

More of God's truth all week long at the "Renewal Church Denver" app or "St. John's Denver" app in your app store.

### Share: (15 Min)

- What are some highs and lows for the week?
- Was there any one thing that you most agreed with or disagreed with from last weekend's message? What was it and why?

### Head: (10 Min)

- Read Micah 4:1-5; 7:18-20, describe in your own words what the prophet is explaining to Judah.
- How is this a promise of restoration?
- Who is this promise for?

### Heart: (10 Min)

- When you think of restoration what images come to mind?
- What things are you waiting for to be restored?

### Hands: (10 Min)

- What are some things in our community around us that need restoration? How can we actively pursue that this Advent Season?
- Are there any relationships that need restoration? What are some steps you need to take toward restoration?

### Start Praying. (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. Pick a question. (15 Min)

1. Who is one non-believer or someone without a church home that you need to reach out to this week?
2. What kind of conversations are you having with people you are reaching out to?
3. Is there anything God is leading you to repent of?
4. What's a passage of scripture that has impacted you this week? Read it to the group and explain why.
5. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
6. Pray for one another.

# Great Story of God

## The Great Return

### Micah 5:2-5; Isaiah 9:6-7

# TALK IT OVER

## Study Description

*This Great Story of God comes to its fullness with the arrival of King Jesus as a baby. However, we should not forget that on this side of the resurrection, we celebrate the Advent season as hope for His eventual return. As we approach Christmas and celebrate the birth of the King, the story does not begin with Christmas and ends on Easter. This Great Story is one without end, where our Great King will “establish and uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.” (Isaiah 9:7b)*

## Passages

*“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men;” – Micah 5:2-5 (ESV)*

*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” – Isaiah 9:6-7 (ESV)*

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## Share: (15 Min)

- What are some highs and lows for the week?
- If the preacher had to give an abbreviated version of last week’s message, what two points or ideas would you tell him to include no matter what?

## Head: (10 Min)

- Read Micah 5:2-5 and Isaiah 9:6-7, What is the ultimate hope for Judah?
- Verse 3 speaks of giving up the people until the time when she who is in labor has given birth. What does this metaphorical language signify, and how does it contribute to our understanding of God’s redemptive plan?
- Do you think the people in exile understand the prophecy that Micah is giving them?

## Heart: (10 Min)

- Every Advent we await the birth of Christ and anticipate His return. In this season of your life, what are you currently waiting for and what are you anticipating?
- What are the promises of God while we wait for Christ to return? How do we live out those promises?

## Hands: (10 Min)

- This Christmas, remember that our hope is ultimately in Christ’s return. How can we cultivate a spirit of patience as we wait for God’s promises to be fulfilled?

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

### Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three. Pick a question. (15 Min)

1. Who is one non-believer or someone without a church home that you need to reach out to this week?
2. What kind of conversations are you having with people you are reaching out to?
3. Is there anything God is leading you to repent of?
4. What’s a passage of scripture that has impacted you this week? Read it to the group and explain why.
5. What’s something you’d like someone else to check in with you about this week?
6. Pray for one another.



# 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.