



WELCOME TO GROW GROUPS AT PLATTE WOODS!

You have made a courageous decision to dive deeper into your faith and GROW closer to God. These materials are designed to help guide you either for personal devotion or, ideally, in conversation with others. It is our hope that you can invite friends, family, or neighbors so that you can GROW together!

These materials were created to be adapted and shared. What does that mean? They should be used to fit your personal needs and the needs of the group. This isn't a task to be completed; rather, this is a guide to bring additional insight into your life. It's another voice to encourage you as you learn and grow as a follower of Jesus.

This journey, and these resources, are not meant to be kept private. In fact, we want you to share them with others! Matthew 5:16 tells us to "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." With you, we believe that sharing these resources will reach people we never dreamed of reaching. We hope that everyone would know the comfort of community and the fullness of God's love!

– The Pastors at Platte Woods Church

TIPS FOR YOUR GROW GROUP

As a host, you want everyone to have the best possible experience in a Grow Group and we realize when people get together it can be a bit messy. Everyone has different experiences, backgrounds, and understandings of God and the world around us. Here are some helpful tips for your group!

1. **Check in with each other.** Make time each session to check in as a group. Lead this by sharing "highs" and "lows", using a scale of 1 to 10, or another fun method. It is suggested to do this before your group dives into the material.
2. **Pray for one another.** The group that prays together grows together! Prayer opens our hearts and expands our world. When we pray, we increase our compassion and empathy for one another; groups will have disagreements along the way and prayer helps us overcome those barriers.
3. **Be concise.** Healthy groups create space for one another. One of the best things you can do is listen. Make sure not to overshare which may cause others to feel they don't belong.
4. **Communicate regularly.** A simple message of, "I hope you have a great week!" goes a long way. Think about how your group would like to communicate. You can use a group text messaging app, email, or create a Facebook group. Regular communication has a big impact.
5. **Meet regularly.** Our recommendation is to meet weekly or bi-weekly. Don't worry if your group needs to take a break. Schedule it in and come back when the group is ready!
6. **Share your needs.** The pastors and staff at Platte Woods Church are here to serve you. If there are questions that need further exploration or a major need comes up, we want to know about it!

Week 1 – The Gospel Experiment – Matthew

JOURNAL

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OPENER

What is the coolest science experiment that you have seen or done?

READING FOCUS

As you read through this gospel, watch for:

- Jesus’ power that is gentle and can undo destruction
- Jesus’ power that is inverted and can be found where you least expect it.
- Jesus’ power that outlasts and can sustain beyond power on earth.

READING PLAN Monday – Saturday

Mon. Matthew 1-5 Tues. Matthew 6-10
Wed. Matthew 11-16 Thurs. Matthew 17-20
Fri. Matthew 21-25 Sat. Matthew 26-28

GROUP DISCUSSION

- What powers are you subject to in your world?
- How is God’s power different than the world’s power?
- How can you take responsibility for your own power?

TAKEAWAY

Power takes on many different forms, is held by many different people, and is used in many different ways, yet God views power differently. How do you interact with power? Where is power moving in your life? Where is God calling you to undo, invert, or outlast the powers of this world in living a life like Jesus?

PRAYER

Creator of love and Inventor of power, you know the strength of these forces. Thank you for this story – the life lived by Jesus and those brave enough to write it down. Show me new perspectives in your living word. In your name of power, Amen.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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Week 2 – The Gospel Experiment – Mark

JOURNAL

OPENER

What is your favorite summertime activity?

READING FOCUS

As you read through this gospel, watch for how:

- God as active in our world
- Jesus is on the move
- Jesus is in the moment
- Jesus is in the thick of it

READING PLAN Monday – Saturday

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| Mon. Mark 1-3 | Tues. Mark 4-6 |
| Wed. Mark 7-9 | Thurs. Mark 10-12 |
| Fri. Mark 13-14 | Sat. Mark 15-16 |

GROUP DISCUSSION

- How do you perceive the movement of Jesus in the world?
Do you feel that the Spirit is more active or passive?
- Where do you see evidence of God’s activity in the world?
- Where do you feel God asking you to be active?

TAKEAWAY

“We do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live ourselves into new ways of thinking.” – Richard Rohr

God is changing the world through our actions...our actions that are like Jesus’ actions. We have opportunities every day to act in our world – and the most amazing thing is, when we act – we can never even begin to predict what God is going to do through us.

PRAYER

God in Motion, give me the courage to follow your movement. I want to act. I want to be a part of your world change. I will not sit idle; I will carry forth your motion. You are a God on the move, and I am with you. In your perpetual name, Amen.

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PRAYER REQUESTS

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Week 3 – The Gospel Experiment – Luke

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OPENER

Remember your time in school growing up. On the first day of classes, how did you feel walking into the lunchroom?

READING FOCUS

As you read through this gospel, watch for when:

- Jesus sits at a table to eat
- Jesus interacts with new people

READING PLAN Monday – Saturday

Mon. Luke 1-4	Tues. Luke 5-8
Wed. Luke 9-12	Thurs. Luke 13-16
Fri. Luke 17-20	Sat. Luke 21-24

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Have you ever found yourself at a table that felt awkward? What was that like, what made it awkward?
- As you read through Luke, have you been surprised by who Jesus ate with? Share your thoughts with the group.
- What does your “table” look like? Who is not at your “table”? Who do you need to invite?

TAKEAWAY

Jesus was the master of the awkward table. Jesus did not merely eat to survive, he shared meals at tables where everybody was welcome to pull up a seat. The substance that gives our bodies life is an opportunity to invite others in, to see them and elevate their value. Who is at your table?

PRAYER

Inviting God, you have saved me a seat at your table. I am not always great at extending the same grace to those around me. Open my eyes to see who is – and is not – at my table. Let me model my invitations to look more like yours. Amen.

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PRAYER REQUESTS

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Week 4 – The Gospel Experiment – John

OPENER

Share your favorite fact about outer space or the stars!

READING FOCUS

As you read through this gospel, watch for:

- Metaphors, symbols, and poetry
- The feelings you experience
- Jesus and God as both cosmic and close

READING PLAN Monday – Saturday

Mon. John 1-3	Tues. John 4-6
Wed. John 7-10	Thurs. John 11-13
Fri. John 14-17	Sat. John 18-21

GROUP DISCUSSION

- How do you experience God as cosmic? When does God feel close? Which is a more familiar understanding for you?
- How do you see the holy in your everyday?

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TAKEAWAY

Use this Prayer of Examen this week and consider adapting it to write your own:

Holy One,

Jesus said, "I AM the light of the world." Be my light that I might see your world as you see it.

The day I have just lived is a gift from you. I am grateful for it. Thank you for.....

I carefully look back on all the events of the last day, guided by your Spirit. What do you want me to see?

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I face up to what is wrong – in my life and in me. God, I'm sorry for...

.....
God, where do I need you in the day to come?

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Thank you for waking us up this morning. You are bigger than the whole earth and you are connected to each one of us. Help us each day, to know just how close you are. In the name of Jesus – the Bread, the Light, the Door, the Shepherd, the Way – Amen.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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