



Life Groups 2018

NLC Life Group Study

Week of December 16, 2018
BIG SCREEN | EIF

Life Group Schedule

15 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker: **Christmas Party!** Include Christmas carols and a game or two. Idea: White Elephant Christmas Gift Exchange (aka Dirty Santa). Set a spending limit (\$5, \$10, whatever the group decides), and set the rules before the game begins. Here's one version: Each member that brings a wrapped gift picks a number out of a hat (the numbers matching the number of gifts brought). Going in order from 1 to the highest number, each participant can either choose a wrapped gift or steal a gift from someone else (exception: a gift cannot be stolen twice in the same round). Each gift can be stolen only 3 times, then the gift is considered frozen. Once the person with the highest number has taken their turn, then the person who chose #1 can (if they want to) trade gifts with ANYONE in the room (including the frozen gifts). Then the game is over. (Slight variation: If an article of clothing is unwrapped, it must be modeled by the person who chose the gift).

TRANSITION: As you're gathering, spend a few minutes in worship & prayer.

OPENING PRAYER

45-60 MIN | ELF

- No one loves Christmas like Buddy! He's not your typical elf. We aren't typical, either!
SEE 1 PETER 1:9
- Buddy didn't fit in because the Code of the Elves guided him through every obstacle he faced:
 - › Treat every day like Christmas.
 - › There's room for everyone on the nice list.
 - › The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear.

Q1. What code do you live by?

SEE PSALM 119:105, HEBREWS 4:12, JOSHUA 1:8

- Never let the Word depart from your lips...meditate on it. Feed on it every day. Discipline yourself to feed your spirit with the Word every day before you feed your body.
 - › When the Word of God is written on our hearts, we can navigate life's challenges and truly prosper, because joy comes from within.
- Similarly, no matter how difficult things got, Buddy's principles guided him back to his true north: JOY in every circumstance, seeing the best in every circumstance.

Q2. What would you say is written on your heart?

- Many people want God to just be a savior, a deliverer, fire insurance, or provider, but what about Lordship? When we give Him our time

on earth, focusing on Him over ourselves, that is right alignment, growing up.

- › Bush 41 – At his funeral someone said, “His mom taught him early to grow up and give back. She said, ‘You are blessed. Spend the rest of your life giving back.’ ”
- For us, treating everyday like Christmas is keeping Christ first. Treat everyday like Christmas – like Jesus is Lord.
 - › When we do that, joy gives us hope in every circumstance— whether it’s news we want to hear or don’t want to hear, broken relationships, bad health news, tough parenting, or challenging finances.

Q3. How do we have joy in any circumstance? How can we rejoice in the Lord *always*?

SEE 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18, PHILIPPIANS 3:20 & 4:4

- Paul, in the midst of his pain, still had hope. How? He had joy in his heart, not his circumstances!
- Without joy in your heart you will quickly forget to have hope. You’ll get bitter and jaded, expecting and experiencing the worst.

SEE LUKE 10:20

- The code Buddy lives by slowly wins people over and changes those around him. Like Buddy, if we get the code right, we can change those around us. Joy is contagious.

Q4. Does your life inspire others? Does it urge them to know more about Christ?

SEE PSALM 5:11, NEHEMIAH 8:10, ROMANS 8:31-39

- The joy of the Lord is a joy that comes from knowing Him and knowing that nothing can change that or take that away.
 - › When we live with this written on our hearts...many times we help others find the same joy we have found in Christ!
- In the last clip Buddy’s dad is the last holdout. Sometimes people are like that. He actually drives Buddy away...and really hurts him.
 - › But when we allow the joy of the Lord to elevate us...sometimes it elevates others too!

PRAY OVER NEEDS, ANNOUNCEMENTS