

At the Movies 2018

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

We believe all great stories find their source in God's story. Movies in many ways are the dreams of our culture, and we believe the church is meant to be the interpreter of these dreams. As we dive into the stories embedded in movies over the next 4 weeks, we believe that you will be further drawn into God's story.

At the Movies 2018 Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of sermon and life group
1	7/15/18	The Greatest Showman
2	7/22/18	Jumanji
3	7/29/18	Dunkirk
4	8/5/18	Black Panther

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Dunkirk

Purpose of Study

The purpose of today's study is to remind us that Jesus came to us so that we could spend eternity with him.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: If you saw the movie *Dunkirk*, what did you like or dislike about it? Did you have a favorite scene? What interested you about the story?

Move #1: Since the sermon series and life groups are covering similar topics, it might be a good idea (both for content and time) to begin the discussion with some unpacking questions from this Sunday's sermon.

1. Did anything stand out to you from the message this weekend?
2. Is there anything from the message this weekend that you want to apply?

Move #2: Next we will revisit one of the texts from the sermon and contrast our condition before and after putting our faith in Christ.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 (NIV)

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

3. The situation at Dunkirk was pretty grim as there were close to 400,000 soldiers who were facing death if no one came to rescue them. What does this passage say about our situation before Christ came to rescue us?
4. Why do you think Paul used the term "dead" to describe our situation in verse 1? In what sense were we dead?
5. The soldiers at Dunkirk were at war against an enemy that they could see. This passage demonstrates that we are at war with an enemy that we cannot see. What are some of the subtle ways that this enemy attacks and leads people astray?
6. We live in a society of self-entitlement where everyone thinks that they deserve the best things in life. What did Paul say we deserved, and why is this significant?

Read Ephesians 2:4-7 (NIV)

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6** And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

7. What are some things this passage tells us about God's character?
8. Previously, Paul said that we were "dead." What is the significance of Paul using the word "alive" to describe the current state of believers?
9. The soldiers at Dunkirk were stranded in a hostile environment and all they wanted to do is get home. What does this passage say about the home God has prepared for us, and what do you most anticipate as you consider that?

Move #3: Next, let's briefly look at the main passage from this morning about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Read Matthew 26:38-45 (NIV)

38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." **39** Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."
40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. **41** "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."
43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. **44** So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.
45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners."

10. The civilians who came to rescue the soldiers at Dunkirk knew that they may not make it back alive. How would you feel if you were in their shoes?
11. Jesus left his home knowing the pain he would have to endure if he submitted to his Father's will. How does this affect the way we respond to the gospel and live it out in everyday life?
12. It is so easy to forget what a radical thing it was for Jesus to leave his heavenly home to come and die on the cross so we could have a heavenly home. How can we avoid becoming complacent about this?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum further.

- Challenge your group to take some time this week to get alone to re-read Matthew 26:38-45 and reflect on what Christ did for them and how that should change the way they live.
- Note to leader: If you have anyone in your group that has not yet placed their faith in Christ, take some time this week to follow up individually with them about tonight's discussion.

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

Geography determines identity: The former life (Ephesians 2:1–3). Who are we? We are all people with a past, a past marked by disobedience and failure, which demonstrates something is very wrong at the core of our being. This is true of all people. None of us can escape the indictment; we are geared to self-seeking and the satisfaction of self-centered cravings, whether we make this obvious or covert in our lives.

We spoke earlier of Paul's "sense of geography," referring to his "spheres of influence" theology, which views life as lived either in sin or in Christ. That theology is expressed in this text. If one lives in sin, one's identity is determined by sin, the old world order, and the "ruler of the kingdom of the air." Such a person is controlled by sinful desires and reasonings and, consequently, lives under the wrath of God.

As a result, this text requires us to take sin more seriously than we usually do. As to the plight of humanity, sins cannot be thought of merely in terms of the individual and choices that one makes. Rather, we must think first of a world order and a power of evil dominating our perspectives and actions. The world in which we live seeks to stamp us with its assumptions and character. Clearly Paul believed people need deliverance from an evil realm or age (cf. Gal. 1:4).

How did the United States become so distorted with racism and the Vietnam war? Why does materialism have such a deep grip on modern society? How do needs become cravings? How does sexual practice become so distorted as to be idolatrous? The good is distorted by a world system that leaves God out of the picture, which is what sin always does. Isaiah's confession is descriptive of us all: "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5). Sin is personal, individual, and corporate, and a consent to a manipulative age without God.

The problem for Christians is that two overlapping realms or ages exist (compare 1:21 and 2:2). Though a new age exists in Christ, the old age is still with us and at work. Which realm will define us? This text attempts to describe what was formerly true (2:2–3), but for many Christians that is still their reality. A break with the past has not really occurred. They are attracted to the glitz and glitter of the world. One can understand that people who do not know God are stranded in a living death, but how can one comprehend Christians who have found life still turning back to death? Christians need to be much more aware that the old order still wants to define who we are. If the desires of Christians are the same as those of non-Christians and if the desires are fulfilled the same way, the gospel is useless.

To live out the implications of this text requires self-analysis and defiance. Christians must always distinguish between life with and without God. Again the focus is on our minds. What belongs to life as God created it and gave for our enjoyment? What belongs to the world as an attempt to find life in one's self and without God? On

first glance the two may look the same—all humans have the same needs and drives—but the two approaches are miles apart. We must distinguish the world that God created from the world that human beings subvert to their own purposes. The former leads to worship of God; the latter leads to the wrath of God. Once we have distinguished God’s order from the old order, we are obligated to defiance, a defiance rooted in the confession “Jesus is Lord.” If Jesus is Lord, sin and the old world order cannot be our geography, and Christians must say a constant “No” to their attempts to define us.

Geography determines identity: Life in and with Christ (2:4–10). A Christian’s self-understanding is found outside the Christian, and conversion is a transition to a new identity. Our true identity is not determined by personal characteristics, experiences, and abilities, even though those items are important. It is determined by life in and with Jesus Christ. He is the environment that shapes us. Paul felt this so forcefully that he said: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). Specifically, Christ’s death and resurrection are events reproduced in our lives. We die to the old world and its tyrannies of sin and self and rise to life in the Spirit (6:14–15). As important as imitation of Jesus is, identification with Christ is much more important. Our culture will always shape us, but Jesus Christ must be our primary culture. That is the force of the “co-resurrection” language.

To be in and with Christ means that ours is no longer an individual identity. We are in solidarity with Christ, or as 5:31 puts it, “we are members of his body.” Life is relational, and our primary relation is with Jesus Christ. So what is this new identity? Because of our attachment to Christ, believers are people about whom it must be said:

- (1) They have experienced resurrection. Their living death has been turned into true life. They experience salvation as a present reality.
- (2) Their new lives are the very creation of God.
- (3) Exalted with Christ their Lord, they enjoy unparalleled privilege, honor, and security. They are not held back by fear or vulnerability; rather, they have what they need for life with God.
- (4) They experience God’s abundant kindness throughout eternity.

In essence this passage screams out “Get a life!” Too often we have become spectators of life and spend enormous amounts of time on trivialities. Is not the fascination with the lives of the “rich and famous” due to our triviality? Why does our society spend so much time watching talk shows that discuss the banal and bizarre? We need to live out the transition from death to life (2:1–10) by turning from banality to life with Christ. (Klyne Snodgrass, *NIVAC*)