

UnGrinching Christmas

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 don't want to admit it, but there can be a Grinch inside of all of us in the Christmas season. Our Grinch-like tendencies can steal some of the often forgotten gifts of Christmas that were given to us in Jesus. In this series, we want to UnGrinch Christmas in all of us, and reawaken the Awe, Joy, Gratitude and Peace that Jesus unleashed into the world 2,000 years ago at the first Christmas.

UnGrinching Christmas Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of sermon & Life Group
1	12/2/18	Life Group Socials
2	12/9/18	Joy
3	12/16/18	Life Group Break
4	12/23/18	Life Group Break
5	12/30/18	Life Group Break

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Ungrinching Christmas

The Big Idea

Joy in the presence of God keeps us from being a grinch.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: What is your all-time favorite Christmas gift that you ever got or gave?

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: Stresses and disappointments that we've experienced can steal our joy at Christmas. Let's talk about how we can reclaim the gift of joy this season as we think about the very first Christmas.

3. What tend to be the biggest joy-suckers for people in the Christmas season?
4. Are there any deep disappointments or stresses that weigh heavily on you at this time of year that you wouldn't mind sharing with us so that we can better know your heart?

Note: The Christmas story actually begins before the birth of Jesus with the angelic announcement of another miraculous birth--that of John the Baptist--to his elderly, childless parents.

Read Luke 1:13-14 NIV

13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth...."

Note: The angel says that John's birth would not only bring joy to his surprised parents, but to "many." Some of the reasons that it might have brought joy to many were that John's birth was the fulfillment of long-awaited prophecy (Mark 1:1-4). It was a sign that the Messiah was soon to come on the scene. The miraculous nature of his birth also was evidence of God breaking into human history and acting on behalf of not only a couple who felt forgotten, but all who were waiting for God's deliverance.

5. What reasons might we have for being among those who also "rejoice because of his birth"?
6. What has been an unexpected blessing, big or small, that God has brought you recently? How might it speak to his activity in your life?

Move #3: Next, let's look a little further into the Christmas story when Mary, miraculously pregnant with the Son of God, shows up at her cousin Elizabeth's house for a visit.

Read Luke 1:39-49 (NIV)

39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

46 And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

7. Where do you see joy being experienced and expressed in this part of the Christmas story? (see verse 44 and 47 especially)
8. What is it about Jesus's entry into our world and your life that gives you personally reason to rejoice?
9. Imagine a world in which Jesus had never come. How do you imagine your life would be different?
10. How can expressing your joy out loud, like Mary and Elizabeth did, enlarge and enhance it?
11. Let's brainstorm together and make a list of some specific ways that we can express and share our joy in Christ this season.

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

- The greatest joy often comes from giving it to others. Why don't we all go on a joy-giving mission this week and find someone we can pleasantly surprise? Let's talk about some possibilities!

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.