

SAC Small Groups Discussion Guide – Jan. 25th, 2026

This guide comes with the expectation that even if someone has missed the Sunday service, they have watched the sermon before coming to their small group.

Fellowship Time

Make sure to have time where people can chat and catch up. This section could include a dinner together, having a potluck, preparing snacks, etc. The key to this section is make people feel welcomed and seen.

Read the Scripture & Overview Aloud Together

This section contains the text and a brief summary of the sermon that was preached on Sunday. It will have the main point explained as a way to help those remember the sermon. This is not an in-depth overview because the expectation is that everyone will take the time to listen to the sermon. Make sure to read this aloud for everyone to hear.

Text

John 15:18-25

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. 21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. 24 If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. 25 But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

Overview of Sermon

This week we continued our series in the book of John and leaned into the theme from the text of the Holy Spirit, the promised and present one. Jesus begins in verse 18 by stating that if the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. The world in this passage means, “the people of the world who form a sphere of unbelief and hostility”. Jesus links unbelief that people have in Jesus to a growing hostility that some people develop in their lack of faith. The world only loves those who belong to it which is a reference to the different communities the early church was made up of. For Jews, it would’ve been their religious communities and practices that shaped them and for Gentiles, it would’ve been the Roman pagan context. In the face of persecution, it would be tempting to slide back into their old ways of living to avoid the discomfort and potential violence directed at them. Jesus is teaching his disciples that persecution isn’t a mistake, but rather expected because His followers are tied to His name.

John then uses a chiastic structure (or literary sandwich as Pastor Nick put it) to highlight that by Jesus words and works, the world has no excuse for not understanding the true nature of Jesus that He and the Father are one. If they hate Jesus, they also hate the Father and vice versa. John concludes by pointing out that persecution is not a mistake, but part of God's sovereign plan for disciples of Jesus. The hope for us as disciples is that God has not left us alone to figure this out, but has sent the Spirit to indwell in us and empower us to new life (John 14:16-18). We need to remain in Jesus and His love so that we can endure persecution on behalf of His mission to love and save the world (John 3:16-17; 15:4-5).

Discussion Questions

These questions are prompts to help the group have meaningful dialogue over the sermon this past weekend. Do not feel the need to ask all these questions. You are more than welcome to create your own questions or mix the questions together.

Connection to Other (Icebreaker/Light)

- What is your favourite thing to do in Surrey?

Connection to Head (Study/Knowledge Questions)

- Read the passage in John. What stands out to you most from this passage? What questions does it raise?
- In verses 22-25, Jesus says the world has “no excuse” for their sin because they’ve seen His words and works. What does this reveal about God’s character and His desire for relationship with humanity?

Connection to Heart (Deeper Engagement)

- Verse 19 states, *If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own.* In what ways might we be tempted to belong to the world to avoid persecution or discomfort? What would that look like practically?
- Read John 14:16-18. How does the promise of the Holy Spirit’s presence change the way we face persecution or rejection? How have you experienced the Spirit’s comfort or empowerment during difficult times?
- How do we navigate the reality that we are called to love the world even though the world might hate us? What does this look like practically?

Reflect and Discuss the Practice and Prayer.

This is an opportunity for accountability and formation in your group. Accountability to ensure people are practicing the practices and formation because we believe that these practices will shape and form us into the people that God intended us to be. Take time to practice this together and reflect on each person’s experience of these practices.

Practice: Ask someone to pray for you this week and intercede on your behalf.

- Consider who you might ask for prayer from, what that prayer request is, and then do it!

Prayer: Psalm 142:6-7

6 Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. 7 Set me free from my prison that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

Prayer Together.

Take some time to pray with each other. This is not a time for gossip or to be cynical, this is an opportunity to share with each other our burdens, to celebrate and praise God together, and to pray expectantly that God would move.