I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Prepare a couple simple, fun and delightful icebreakers to help your group warm up. Help your cell group members to put aside their busy and tiresome life to prepare their hearts to come before God.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead the cell group members to worship God. The worship leader would encourage members to come before the throne of God to seek God’s face, and lead them into God’s presence. During this time, the cell group leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for the following prayer items:

A. MISSION ORGANIZATION: ________________, and their needs are: ________________
(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

B. CHURCH MINISTRY:
1. 3/29-6/7 Love & Logic Parenting Class
2. 5/27 Bi-Weekly Prayer Meeting
3. 6/14 English Family Luncheon

C. Newcomer: ________________ Confirm newcomers’ names before the meeting.
For sick members, friends or relatives: ________________ Please discuss how you may show your care for them.

III. WORD, 45 mins. By sharing God’s word, the group may discuss how to apply it to their daily life.

A. Sharing message from last Sunday’s sermon: (It would be helpful if you could listen on-line once again)
1. What is the key message from last Sunday sermon? How did God speak to you through the message?
2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?
3. ___

B. Topic of the week: Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life

Verses: John 18: 28-40
Memorizing Verses: “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. (John 18: 38)

The book of John, chapter 18-19, documents how Jesus took on the cross and was glorified, which is the climax of the gospel of John. All four books of the Gospel have lengthy documentation about Jesus’ crucifixion. We are studying chapter 18 about Jesus being betrayed by Judas, arrested by Roman soldiers and prosecuted by Caiaphas, the high priest. Jesus had prayed for the disciples and the high priest. He knew His time had come. Jesus said “Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?” When Judas, who had guided the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials, had come with torches and weapons to arrest Jesus, He admitted that “I am He, Jesus of Nazareth.”. They bound Jesus and brought Him first to Ananias and then to Caiaphas for trial. Peter had gone into the high priest’s courtyard to keep warm. Peter was identified as a follower of Jesus, but after being asked three times about this, Peter denied that he was a follower. The third time of his denial a rooster began to crow. The significance of the crowing rooster was that Jesus had already prophesied over Peter that before that moment, Peter would have denied that he even knew Jesus.

1. Jewish religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus (John 18: 28-32)

The high priest and Pharisees had no legal reason to arrest Jesus, nor did they have evidence to accuse Him of breaking the law. But they were determined to kill Him and did many unlawful things, such as holding Jesus overnight for questioning and slapping/beating Him before a conviction was made. They didn’t give Jesus a trial according to Jewish law, but they convicted Him for ‘doing evil’. Jewish people didn’t have the authority to kill under the rule of the Roman Empire.
The only way for them to kill Jesus was to bring Him in front of the Roman governor, Pilate, who had the right to execute Jesus. So that is what the priests did.

2. Jesus testified for truth (John 18:33-37)

According to Roman law, there had to be enough evidence before convicting a prisoner. What Jesus did was to preach the Kingdom Gospel and demonstrate that He was the Son of God through signs and wonders. The Jewish priests who had accused Jesus shouted that He had proclaimed Himself God, but that was not evidence for Him to be convicted. So they accused Him of proclaiming Himself as “King of the Jews” and brought Him to Pilate for prosecution as blasphemy.

When Pilate asked Jesus if He was “King of the Jews”, Jesus knew this was the accusation from the Jews. He only admitted His kingdom was not of this world; the kingdom is in everybody’s heart. The kingdom here refers to God’s ruling and authority, not territory. If Jesus were King of the world, his servants would fight to prevent his arrest by the Jewish leaders.

Only if Jesus proclaimed Himself as a king in politics could Pilate convict Him, so Pilate asked Jesus “Are you the King of Jews?” Jesus said the reason He was born and came into the world was to testify to the truth. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us to testify for the Truth (John 1:14). Jesus is the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. (John 14:6) Jesus is the Truth and he testified for the truth even at the cost of His life.

Jesus is the Truth; only those who accept Jesus belong to the truth. Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. (John 3:21)

3. Even when Pilate had found no charge against Jesus, the crowd still wanted to prosecute Jesus (John 18:38-40).

Pilate abruptly asked Jesus, “what is truth?” and he left without hearing His response. Pilate might not have agreed that Jesus is the Truth nor is He of the truth, but He surely was not a king of this world, and He did not come to betray the Roman Empire. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent because He was not a king, in terms of a political standpoint, so he told the Jews that he found no basis for a charge against Jesus. However, considering his political interest and wanting to please the Jews, Pilate negotiated with the angry mob; to choose – whether to release “the King of the Jews” or Barabbas, one of the prisoners. The Jews were determined to execute Jesus and would prefer to release the prisoner Barabbas, than the innocent Jesus, the King of the Jews.

Discussion (please choose the topic according to the needs):

1. Have you ever been wrongly accused by others? Please briefly share your experience.

2. Why did the people bring Jesus from the high priest Caiaphas’ house to Pilate’s? What was their intention?

3. Why did Pilate ask Jesus “Are you the King of the Jews”? What’s was Pilate’s reaction to Jesus’ response?

4. How can we know Jesus was testifying for the truth? And how can we testify for the truth or live out the testimony?

5. Do you believe Jesus is innocent? How does Jesus’ no basis of charges relate to you?
Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You. You sent Jesus to the world for us and allowed Jesus to be crucified for our sin. He is an innocent scapegoat coming to the world to bear our sins and to clean the unrighteousness. How blessed are we to receive such precious salvation and become God's sons and daughters. If it were not for the cross, we would still be living in our sins. Thank you God, for Your profound and unfathomable love. We pray in Jesus’ precious name. Amen!

IV. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.

Please break into groups of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.