

Compelled

*The Irresistible Call to
Share Your Faith*

A SIX-WEEK GROUP STUDY



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Life Group Members,

WHY SHOULD I BE IN THIS GROUP?

Life Groups are designed to help you experience the life God has for you by helping you **CONNECT** with other believers, helping you **GROW** to be more like Christ, and make an **IMPACT** with the gospel.

Every time a group meets, they spend time connecting through building relationships, growing through a discussion-led Bible study, and making an impact by supporting each other through prayer and service. As a result, group members experience growth, belonging, and care. A Life Group is your chance to pursue healthy relationships and spiritual growth. You can't grow spiritually without connecting relationally.

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HOW WILL THIS SERIES HELP ME?

In this 6-week Life Group series called "Compelled," we will be discussing what it means to hear the call of Jesus and willingly accept the responsibilities that come with that call. We will discuss what evangelism looks like for each of us and discover our compelling stories that share the truth of Jesus' amazing love and power in our lives.

Through our discussions, we will learn first-hand how Jesus is still in the business of extending His kingdom through "unschooled, ordinary" people. Our prayer for this series is that you realize regardless of how "ordinary" you may seem in the world's perspective, extraordinary change can take place as God's love is boldly shared by those who have experienced it with those who have not.

WHAT IS MY ROLE IN THIS GROUP?

As you attend a weekend service and participate in this Life Group series, you will be equipped to live the life that God desires for you. Of course, the bottom line is, it comes down to you. Only you can share in your group, pray about the things God is teaching you, and take action to allow Jesus to work in you and through you. Enjoy the encouragement and challenges that God desires as His grace abounds in your Life Group.

The Life Groups Team

USING THIS WORKBOOK

Five Points to Help You Have a Great Life Group Experience!

1 In the Table of Contents there are three sections: (1) Sessions (2) Life Group Toolbox (3) Life Group Leaders. Familiarize yourself with the Appendix as some of them will be used in the weekly sessions.

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2 If you are leading or co-leading a Life Group, the section for Life Group Leaders will give you some hard-learned experiences of others that will encourage you and help you avoid many common obstacles to effective small group leadership.

3 Use this workbook as a guide, not a straightjacket. If the group responds to the lesson in an unexpected but honest way, go with that. If you think of a better question than the next one in the lesson, ask it. Take to heart the insights included in the Frequently Asked Questions pages and the Life Group Leaders section.

4 Enjoy your Life Group experience!

5 Read the “Outline for Each Session” below so that you understand how the sessions will flow.

OUTLINE OF EACH SESSION

Every Life Group session is structured to reflect the values of Life Groups, which are: **Connect**, **Grow** and **Impact**. Therefore, the sessions are designed to help each group member participate and gain deeper insight into each topic by Connecting with others, Growing to be more like Christ, and Impacting the community with the gospel.

A typical Life Group session will include the following:



CONNECT

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The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family (a few people who really know you and share their lives with you). This section of each session is designed to allow group members to get to know each other. You can do this by using the icebreaker questions provided, or by asking light, easy-to-answer questions of your own that invite involvement from everyone.

As your group begins, use the Life Group Agreement, Life Group Calendar, and Life Group Community Project Worksheet to help your group see how everyone has a part in making a Life Group come to life. As the group develops intimacy, use the Prayer and Praise Report to keep the group connected.



DVD SESSION

Serving as a companion to the “Compelled” Study Guide is the “Compelled” video teaching. This DVD is designed to combine teaching segments from pastors and teachers along with leadership insights and personal stories of life change. Using the teaching video will add value to this six-week series.



GROW

Here is where you will process the video teaching you watched as a group. The focus won't be on accumulating information, but on how we live in light of the Word of God. We want to help you apply the insights from Scripture practically and creatively, from your heart as well as your head. At the end of the day, our goal is to allow the timeless truths from God's Word to transform our lives - this is our greatest aim.

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IMPACT

Impact is about putting what you learned into action. It is about walking the talk. This section is to help apply the insights and principles learned in the lesson. It is by this application that the lesson will have an impact in you as well as through you. We ask that all groups do a community project together during each series. Most groups have found that they have made significant contributions to society through this, and have made a lasting impact on people's lives for Jesus.

This is also a good place to have different group members close in prayer, even when the instructions don't specify. We encourage you to provide time, if the schedule allows, for people to reflect on the Prayer and Praise Report at the end of each session or take a little time to meet with a Spiritual Growth Partner.



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SESSION ONE
THE MOTIVATION



CONNECT

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Since this is your first time together (at least for this new series), take a few minutes to make sure everyone knows each other's name.



10

- As you begin, turn to the **“Life Group Roster” on page 63**. Take time to pass around your study guides and have everyone write down their contact information.
- Whether your group is new or ongoing, it's always important to reflect on and review your values together. **On page 64, there is a “Life Group Agreement”** with the values we've found most useful in sustaining healthy, balanced groups. Take a few minutes to go over the agreement together.
- One of the markers of a healthy and happy group is when everyone takes ownership of the group. A great way to help everyone be involved is to share in weekly responsibilities, whether it's taking turns praying for the group, providing snacks or drinks. You can turn to **page 65** where you will find the **“Life Group Calendar”** and blank group tasks.
- In this 6-week Life Group series called “Compelled,” we will be discussing what it means to hear the call of Jesus and willingly accept the responsibilities that come with that call. We will discuss what evangelism looks like for each of us and discover our compelling stories that share the truth of Jesus' amazing love and power in our lives. Our prayer for this series is that you realize regardless of how “ordinary” you may seem in the world's perspective, extraordinary change can take place as God's love is shared by those who have experienced it with those who have not.

To start our series, and help break the ice for your group members, go around and answer one of the following questions:



- Share about a time when you got a new toy and told everyone about it.

- Describe a time when you were first given a big responsibility (ie: job, babysitting, caring for a neighbor's pet).



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session One. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

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Go around your group and share what stood out to you from the video.

1 After listening to Ruben's story, why do you believe he is so motivated to share the love of Jesus with others?

2 Share a time when you felt God call you to meet a need and share your faith with someone.



Read Mark 5:18-20, Luke 5:12-15, and John 4:25-30 & 39

3 What do each of these passages of Scripture share in common?

4 Use your own words to describe the excitement and joy that each of the people felt after encountering Jesus. Why do you think the characters in these passages felt so compelled to share their stories with others?

13

5 Describe the story of how God has done an amazing work in your life. How have you felt compelled to share that story?

*For when I
preach the gospel,
I cannot boast, since I
am compelled to preach.
Woe to me if I do not preach
the gospel!*

—1 Corinthians 9:16

6 What are some of the fears you face about sharing your faith and/or your story?

7 What is the difference between sharing your story and sharing your faith? What is the similarity?

Read John 9:1-41

8 What fear deterred the blind man's parents from sharing their belief in who Jesus was and what He had done?

14 9 Why do you think fear of what other people think is so strong? How can it prevent us from doing what is important? How would a better appreciation of our worth in Christ help us overcome that fear?

10 How does the value of the soul of your family, friends, co-workers, or even strangers, compel you to move past your fear and share the love of Christ with them?

The thing that motivates me to share my faith is God in my life ... I know everybody, one day or another, needs this message of hope. I need that message of hope every day.

—Ruben Aguilar

Read Matthew 9:35-38

11 How does this passage encourage you to accept your responsibility to share the good news of the Kingdom?

12 Why do you think the workers are few when the harvest is so plentiful? What steps can you take today to become a willing and faithful worker? How can your Life Group pray for you to take hold of this responsibility?

Deeper Study

15

Read Isaiah 6:1-8

13 What does God do with a man who feels unworthy to do God's work? How do you relate to Isaiah in this story?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

14 What does it mean to be a new creation? According to this passage, what kind of responsibilities come with being a new creation?

15 As a new creation, how are we empowered to do what God has commissioned for us to do?

16 How has God reconciled you to Himself? How are you allowing Him to use your story and faith to help others be reconciled to Him?



IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

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- Partner with us to make an IMPACT for Christ! **30cities.com**

As part of the **30 Cities Initiative**, Shepherd Church is partnering with Children's Hunger fund to fight hunger in two major metropolitan cities this year: Lima and Manila.

Children's Hunger Fund is providing Food Paks, designed to feed a family of four for about a week. Each Food Pak contains about 48 meals, at a cost of \$0.25 per meal. The goal is to fill one storage container with 2,000 Food Paks for each city. For only \$12 per box you can bless a family in need!

We want to encourage your group to be involved with making our world a better place to live. To directly IMPACT the city of Lima and Manila:

But he said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."

—Luke 4:43

Online Purchases – available now at 30cities.com
Packing Food Boxes – May 26 and 27 at
Shepherd Church Porter Ranch, Westside,
Agua Dulce, and West Valley campuses.

We would love to have you be a partner with us in making a global IMPACT for Christ!

For complete details on how to partner with us in this or future projects, please visit **30cities.com**

- Often times it helps to write out goals that you have for yourself. Nutritionists and personal trainers ask their clients to do this all of the time. They even make suggestions of goals that the clients have not thought of yet. Even if the goals do not seem attainable, they become motivation of something to strive toward.

On your own, write out a few goals that you have for sharing your story and your faith. Pray, asking God to give you some goals to write down that you have not considered. Write some attainable goals and write some that you think are impossible.

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As you pray through this process, confess your fears to God and ask Him to reveal the root of your fears. Pray for willingness, courage, and strength to overcome these fears, and for opportunities to share.

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.



PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

Prayer Requests:

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Praise Reports:

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SESSION TWO
THE DYNAMIC DUO



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

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- What is your favorite fast food meal combo?
- What is your favorite superhero duo?



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Two. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Take a minute and discuss with your group what you learned from the video testimony.

Read John 14:15-17 & 26 and John 15:26-27

1 What does Jesus promise to give to His disciples? According to these passages, what benefits do we receive from the Holy Spirit?



Read Luke 12:12, John 16:8-15, Romans 8:26, and 1 Corinthians 2:9-16

2 Based on these passages, how does the Holy Spirit impact the life of a believer in Christ? How does the world respond to Him?

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3 Why do you think God uses such an abstract concept – the invisible Holy Spirit – which can be confusing to not only non-believers, but some believers as well? What do you think God is trying to achieve within the believer and non-believer alike?

Read Acts 4:23-31

4 Using your own words, how would you describe what happened after the believers prayed? How did the believers respond to the event in Acts 4:32-33?

5 What role does prayer have in unleashing the power of the Holy Spirit? How do you see that prayer and the Holy Spirit are connected? In what ways have you been connected to the Holy Spirit through prayer?

6 Share a time when you experienced the boldness that comes through the Holy Spirit to share the good news of Jesus. How did the Holy Spirit help you overcome fear and give you boldness and peace? What did you learn through that experience?

23

Read Philippians 4:4-7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17

7 Based on these passages, what priority does prayer need to have in a believer's life? How do you think prayer helps us keep God at the forefront of our lives?

8 How does continual prayer instill and kindle the Holy Spirit's boldness within us?

9 How can you and your Life Group pray for the boldness to share His word in the way we read about in Acts 4:31?

*Prayer was
necessary for the
power of the Holy Spirit to
be poured out... They were
empowered to share the
gospel.*

—Jane Kasel

Deeper Study

Read Luke 18:9-14

10 List the attributes you see from each of these men given their short description in Luke 18. What is the difference in the heart of these two men in their prayers? Between the two, which kind of heart is God looking for?

24

11 How well do you think the Holy Spirit would work with either one of these two men?

12 Explain why you think which of these two men would be a better candidate to share with others how God has transformed their lives.

Read James 5:16

13 How does this verse supplement the Luke 18 passage? Describe how humble confession to God and others is displaying the heart that Jesus wants for each of us.

14 How does the Holy Spirit humble us and heal us when we confess our sins?



IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

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- At the beginning of the year, Pastor Dudley introduced the theme **“Certainty of Eternity”** for 2018. With the theme, he introduced the **30 Cities initiative**. A lot of people received bracelets with a name of one of the 30 mega cities with over 10 million people. Discuss with your group about possibly adopting one of the 30 cities for this year. Adopting a city as a group would include praying for the people of that city. It may also possibly include getting your group involved with the various activities that our Global Outreach ministry has set up with the various cities.

You may also pray with your Life Group for the cities that are on your various bracelets, that the Holy Spirit would powerfully change the people in that city. You can pray that the Holy Spirit would guide and empower the Global Partners in the cities where they’ve been called to minister.

- On your own, pray for one of the 30 mega cities that has 10 million or more people. To begin, go to **30cities.com** where we have an amazing guided prayer time ready for you to view and interact with for each of the 30 cities. Spend the next week praying for this city that the Holy Spirit would fully transform each and every person in that city, and that they would experience His power and love.

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

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Prayer Requests:

Praise Reports:

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SESSION THREE
MOUTH TO EAR
RESUSCITATION



CONNECT



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During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

- Describe why you prefer to hear the good news or bad news first.
- Are you afraid to speak publically or do you feel free to speak in front of whomever?



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Three. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Go around the group and allow everyone to share what they found interesting from the video testimony this week.

1 Describe evangelism in your own words. Who do you think is a good example of an evangelist?

2 After hearing Geronimo's story and how he evangelizes, how has your perception of evangelism and how it happens changed?

3 Who shared the good news of Jesus with you? How did it happen?

Read Acts 8:26-40

30 4 What are the key concepts in this story? How does this story emphasize what we discussed last week regarding the importance of the Holy Spirit?

5 What does Phillip ask the eunuch when he first sits down with him? How does an invitation and/or friendly conversation create opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ? How is this approach more effective than being obnoxious and condemning someone to hell?

There are many opportunities for us to display what God has done in our lives. For me, I do it in the kitchen.

—Geronimo Lopez

6 In your own words, describe the unlikely circumstances surrounding this story of evangelism. What does this story tell you about being available to share your faith anytime, anywhere, with anyone?

7 Describe someone you know who shares their faith and/or story anytime, anywhere, with anyone similar to Phillip.

8 Share how you think God could use you in the unique scenarios where you find yourself (at home, work, gym, grocery store, etc.) How is it encouraging to know regardless of who you are and what you do, God can use you to share the good news?

31

Read Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 10:14-15, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, and Philemon 6-7

9 What are these verses instructing us to do? How do these verses encourage you to share your story and faith?

10 Make a list of a few people with whom you could share your story and what you believe. Share these names with your Life Group and pray over these names for an opportunity as well as for courage to share.



Deeper Study

Read Matthew 10:7-8 and Mark 1:15

11 What does Jesus teach in these passages? Explain in your own words what it means to you to repent and believe the good news? How are you able to minister to the sick and worldly people you encounter?

12 Share about your experience when someone ministered to you when you were sick and worldly.

13 What does it really mean to give as you have received? Describe someone in your life who lives out this command from Jesus.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13

14 How has God gifted you to minister and evangelize like this in your own unique way? If you do not know how you are gifted, how have you prayed for God to reveal your gifts to you?



IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

- As a group, think of some people you can invite to your Life Group that would benefit from a community of believers. As followers of Jesus, you've already taken a next step with Him by joining your Life Group. But there are many who haven't had that opportunity. Brainstorm and pray about who you and your group could invite to your Life Group so that they too can begin to experience God's goodness and love.

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You may also use this time to fill in the circles with names of people who could experience support and love in the manner God intended us to experience it. You've experienced this love and support; now pray for someone to experience that same support and love.

Family
(immediate or extended)

Familiar
(neighbors, kids, sports teams, school, and so forth)

Friends

Fun
(games, hobbies, hangouts)

Firm
(work)

● God transforms you through your service to others, and He created each of us to be and do something unique in this world. Ephesians 2:10 says that we were created to do good works that He prepared in advance for us to do. God has gifted each and every believer with supernatural abilities to fulfill our purpose on this earth. Followers of Jesus have been perplexed by the relationship between faith and works for a long time. But, Jesus says in John 13:17, “Now that you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” Good works are a natural outgrowth of a relationship you have with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But first, it is very helpful to have an idea of what your spiritual gifts are. Spiritual gifts are an individual manifestation of grace from the Father that enables you to serve Him, allowing us to play a vital role in His plan for the redemption of the world. Spiritual gifts are attributes given to every member of the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit according to His grace for use within the Church body. It is an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers who empowers them to serve the body of Christ, which is the Church. Please use this link to take a spiritual gifts test. Please visit **giftstest.com**



Once you have taken the test and have your results, spend some time in prayer and ask for direction as to how to use your gifts to edify God's great Church. This will help lead you where He would have you serve as part of His vision and mission of the Church. You are a piece of God's greater puzzle. As you use your gifts, you add to the beautiful picture of God's kingdom.

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

Prayer Requests:

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Praise Reports:



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SESSION FOUR
THE POWER OF A
CHANGED LIFE



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:



- Do you like to move furniture around your house or always keep it the same?
- What is your favorite movie plot twist of all time?

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DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Four. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Go around and share what stood out to you from the video testimony this week.

Read Genesis 50:15-21

They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

—Galatians 1:23-24

1 This passage stands against a backstory of deception, jealousy, betrayal, attempted murder, and a broken family. In the end, Joseph followed God's will for his life and things ended up well for everyone involved. What does this teach you about God's ability to use all circumstances for His good?

2 Like Joseph, God is using Frank Sontag's life as an instrument for "His good, pleasing, and perfect will." What responsibility do we have to share the love of God through our victories as well as our struggles?

I picked up my phone and I called my friends and I said... "I think I want to go back to church." I knew something had happened because it had been 37 years. You couldn't drag me into a church.

—Frank Sontag

Read Acts 22:1-21 and Acts 26:1-23

3 In these two passages, Paul shares his story to different groups of people. Compare and contrast these two versions of his story. Why do you think he shared different details during these different occasions?

4 During his story, Paul shared candidly about his life. How do these passages encourage you to share your story, regardless of how embarrassing some of your past deeds may have been?

5 Why is hearing a personal testimony like Paul's or Frank's so compelling? How can your story be a reflection of God's love, forgiveness, and transformation?

6 Describe an occasion when you shared the story of your conversion for the first time. What emotions did you experience before, during, and after?

40




Read Mark 5:1-20

7 At most, this man spent just a few hours with Jesus before he was sent out by Jesus to share his story. Explain how this might convict and encourage you to share your story regardless of your spiritual maturity.

8 How do each of these stories that we have read and heard today encourage you to remember that your story matters in God's kingdom?

9 Why are stories of transformation so compelling to us? Describe how personal experiences are such powerful proofs for our faith.



10 How can your Life Group pray to encourage you to share your story this week?

Deeper Study

Read Luke 19:1-10

11 Zacchaeus was a thief of a tax collector hated by his whole community. But he met Jesus and his heart was transformed. Why do you think change is so prevalent for those who encounter Jesus?

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12 List some other Bible characters who experienced a change like Zacchaeus. List some people you know who have been changed by the Holy Spirit.

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18

—2 Corinthians 3:18

13 What happens to someone who is being transformed by the Holy Spirit?

14 Share some of the changes you have noticed in your own life since you came to know the Lord. How do these changes remind you of God's goodness and mercy, encouraging you to share your faith?



IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

- One way to help others come to a knowing relationship with Jesus is to pray for them. Together, with your Life Group, go to the **Blessing List on page 71**. Spend time sharing names of friends, family, co-workers, and others, that you would like to pray for to come to know Jesus. Praying for others is a wonderful reminder, that the greatest blessing anyone can receive is to be in relationship with the living God!

- On your own, take some time this week to pray about what sharing more about God with others could be like for you. Consider taking some time to write about some of the experiences you have had with God and how that effected your life. You may start with a simple paragraph with a few sentences about each experience; don't worry about too much detail. As you write, ask God to reveal some things that you may not have thought about before.

Here's an exercise to help: Form your testimony into a **Three-Act Structure**. First, write about when you realized you wanted to make a change in your life. Second, write about the forces that tried to prevent you from making a change. Finally, write about the moment you made the decision to follow Jesus. That's the Three-Act Testimony.

After you have written your experiences and put them into a story, practice sharing your story with a friend and other members in your Life Group. It will not take long to get comfortable with it because you lived the story you are sharing. Pray for an opportunity to share this with someone that you have formed a relationship with at work or school or even a member of your family who does not know Christ. Allow God to work in and through you as you prepare and share. Enjoy your time with God as you go through this process with Him.

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

Prayer Requests:

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SESSION FIVE
GOD'S WORD
NEVER RETURNS
EMPTY-HANDED



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

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- What is the first Bible verse you ever memorized?
- Share your favorite movie quote of all time.



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Five. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Go around and share one thing that stood out to you from the video testimony.

1 How has Kim Wynott relied on the word of God to bring about hope, healing, encouragement, and restoration – not only to herself, but to others?

Read Psalm 119:89 & 105, Isaiah 55:11, Hebrews 4:12, and 2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 How do these verses describe Scriptures? What other images do the Scriptures evoke for you?



Read Matthew 4:1-11

3 How did Jesus combat Satan's temptations? Why do you think He was able to implement Scripture during that difficult time?

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4 Explain how reading, studying, and memorizing the Bible helps you develop spiritual maturity.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

5 How does prayer and the Holy Spirit help influence how we read the Bible? Share a time when you were reading your Bible and felt God show you something that you had never seen or thought about before, even if the passage was familiar to you.

Read Ephesians 6:17-18

6 What does Paul call the word of God? According to these verses, what other spiritual force does he combine with Scripture?

*Your word is a lamp for
my feet, a light on my path.*

—Psalm 119:105

When I read the Bible, I feel (God speaking to me). It's a way that I hear my Shepherd's voice... being able to go to God's word is like sitting with a friend, a trusted friend, a friend that knows everything about me and still loves me.

—Kim Wynott

7 How often do you read and/or study the Bible? How do you think your life would change if you spent more time in God's word

8 Describe how you've seen God change someone's life after they had spent time reading and studying His word.

9 How has your reading and studying the Bible helped you share your faith and testimony with others?

10 What can you do this week to let God's word affect your life?

Deeper Study

11 What are some different ways to read the Bible? Of these, explain which helps you the most? Which have you never tried?

Read Acts 13:13-52

12 How did Paul use Scripture to evangelize others? This seems to be off the cuff speaking and not a prepared lesson. How do you think he was able to do that?

49

13 Why do you think memorizing Scripture could be very important when sharing your faith with others?

14 Share your favorite memorized Bible verse with your Life Group.





IMPACT

50

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

- Jesus taught the most important laws were to love God and love people. Our love of others is often how God shows His love to them. It is our desire to see our Life Groups serve in their communities. One way of doing that is through the **Community Impact Project**. The Community Impact Project is a way for you and your Life Group to be a light in your neighborhood. It is often noted, “Preach always, and if necessary, use words.” The point is that we are walking witnesses of our relationship with Jesus as we become His hands and feet to the world.

Another benefit of doing a Community Impact Project is the bond that is formed when your group serves together. Over the course of a six-week series, your Life Group will bond over discussion, but during a few hours of serving others, your Life Group can deepen that bond.



On our website, **lifegroups.org/impact**, there are the names, contact information, and descriptions of organizations you can partner with. These outreach ideas range from inviting someone to Life Group to serving in different areas of the city. Feel free to be creative. If your Life Group comes up with an idea not listed, please contact us so we can share ideas and help you bring your Community Impact Project to life.

You may also turn to **page 66** where you will find the **Community Impact Project Worksheet**. This worksheet will help you organize your project and ensure it gets done.

- There are many different ways to read the Bible. Devotional and study are typically the most popular. Lectio Divina is a Latin term, that means “divine reading” and describes a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. The practice of Lectio Divina as a way of praying the Scriptures has been a fruitful source of growing in relationship with Christ for many centuries and in our own day is being rediscovered by many individuals and groups. The Word of God is alive and active and will transform each of us if we open ourselves to receive what God wants to give us.

On your own, start with your Bible closed and bring the focus of your mind and heart on Jesus. After a few minutes as you center on Him, ask Him to guide you through your Scripture reading. With your eyes closed, open your Bible and drop your finger on a page without intentionally trying to land in a certain area. If you have a study Bible with lots of commentary notes, continue this process until you land on a piece of Scripture. Wherever your finger lands, begin to read.



As you read, go very slowly with your focus remaining on God and His guidance of your reading. At some point, you will come to a verse or phrase that sticks out to you for some reason or another. Stop reading once that happens. Read that verse or phrase over again a couple of times, repeat it in your head or out loud. Meditate on that piece of Scripture.

After a few minutes of meditation on those words of God, respond to Him. Simply let your heart speak to God. This response is inspired by your reflection on the Word of God.

The final stage is where you rest on what God has said to you and let go not only of your own ideas, plans, and meditations but also of your words and thoughts. Simply rest in the Word of God. Listen at the deepest level of your being to God who speaks within you with a still small voice. As you listen, you are gradually transformed from within. As you practice spending time with God, the process of this transformation slowly happens, it will have a profound effect on the way you actually live. But that is a huge encouragement to take what you read in the Word of God into your daily lives. Live out what God is saying to you in His Living Word.

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

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Prayer Requests:

Praise Reports:

Compelled

*The Irresistible Call to
Share Your Faith*

53



SESSION SIX
THE VICTORY IS
WORTH THE WAIT



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

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- Share about the longest car ride you ever had to take.
- Share about the longest date you ever had to endure.



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Six. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Take a couple of minutes to discuss what everyone thought about the video testimony.

Read Luke 15:11-16

1 What emotions might the father be experiencing at this point in the story? How do you think you might react if your child had done this to you?

Read Psalm 27:14, Psalm 130:5-6, and 2 Peter 3:9

2 What are these verses instructing readers to do? Why is it so difficult to wait for the Lord?

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3 What is it about our culture that stimulates our inability to wait on God? What can we do to combat this problem?



Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

4 What truth does Paul understand when it comes to the work of evangelism? Like Paul, how have you noticed that you are part of God's process and won't necessarily see end results soon?

Read Luke 15:12-20

What makes the patience pay off in the end is watching your loved one, watching your friend, watching your husband, watching yourself come to the person that the Lord made you to be.

—Jeff Duke

5 Why did the young man go back to his father's house? What do you think was his state of mind during his return?

6 Share about the time when you decided to come back to God the Father? How long did it take you and what was your state of mind?



7 How did God display patience, love, and grace while you were returning to Him?

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Read Luke 15:21-24

8 What was the response of the father toward his son when he came home? What emotions do you think this father experienced? How do you relate to this father?

Read Luke 15:7 & 10

9 What is the heavenly response to one sinner coming home? How does this help you to understand that patience with people and tenacity with prayer is worth the wait?

10 Share with your group about someone you are struggling to be patient with and how they can be praying for you.

Deeper Study

Read Matthew 13:1-23

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11 What are the different outcomes of the sower planting seeds?

12 Share how you have seen the effects and outcome of spiritual seeds being planted.

13 In what ways has God's patience with you taught you to trust His process when sharing the gospel of Jesus? How does 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 build that trust in His work?

14 How does God's patience encourage you to continue to plant seeds by sharing your story and your faith with others?





IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

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- For many Life Groups who are going on a break after the series for the summer, this is your last official meeting until the next series. An important aspect of your Life Group is celebrating together. We want to encourage you to plan a fun night: a BBQ/potluck, movies or games with your group in celebration of all that God is doing. Don't worry about an agenda or study for this time. Relax and simply enjoy each other and have fun!!

Make sure to put the Fall Life Groups Celebration on your calendar. We will hold the **Life Groups Celebration on Friday, August 17, 2018 at 7 p.m.** in the Worship Center at the Shepherd Church Porter Ranch Campus. We would like everyone in a Life Group to attend with their Life Group Leaders! It is an amazing night of worship and encouragement as we kick off the Fall Life Group series! You will not want to miss out, so plan to be there!!

- God knows the very core of who we are. However, we can effectively avoid the full extent of His love by putting up a front or mask that only shows what we want people to see. Because God often uses people to show His love to us, these masks hide the real us and it keeps God at an arm's length. Although God is not fooled, our dishonesty with ourselves and others actually reduces His transformational power in our lives. God knows this fact and is patient with us because He wants us to experience victory as we willingly give up certain things or step into a more disciplined way of living so that we might encounter God more throughout our days.

What are your masks? How are you hiding from God's love by covering up the real you?

On your own, take time this week to sit down, pray, and write out some of the things that keep you from realizing the love of God. These may actually be good things in your life but write them down anyway. Talk with a godly person in your life that you trust to be honest with you on these things. Take time to pray over the next week or two about who you are and what you do that may keep you from experiencing God's grace the way He wants you to.

Ultimately, this time spent with God helps you put Him at the center of your life and let go of the things that hinder the power of the Holy Spirit and His influence in your life. Let Him in and experience life in a new and exciting way!

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.



PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

Prayer Requests:

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Praise Reports:

*Wait for the
Lord; be strong
and take heart
and wait for the
Lord.*

—Psalm 27:14



LIFE GROUP TOOLBOX

LIFE GROUP ROSTER

Name	Phone	Email
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		

LIFE GROUP AGREEMENT

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations and commitments. Such guidelines will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. We recommend you discuss your guidelines in order to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify anything that does not work for your group. If the idea of a written agreement is unfamiliar to your group, we encourage you to give it a try.

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WE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING VALUES:

Clear Purpose	To encourage and challenge each other to live the LIFE God has called us to live (John 10:10, Matthew 28:18-20).
Group Attendance	To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am absent or late).
Safe Environment	To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments or simple fixes).
Be Confidential	To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group.
Spiritual Health	To give group members permission to help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God.
Welcome Newcomers	To invite our friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers.
Building Relationships	To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly.

WE HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED AND AGREE ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

Childcare _____

Starting Time _____

Ending Time _____

LIFE GROUP CALENDAR

Healthy groups share responsibilities and group ownership. It might take some time for this to develop. Shared ownership ensures no one person has responsibility for the group. Use the calendar to keep track of social events, mission projects, birthdays, or days off. Complete this calendar at your first or second meeting. Planning ahead will increase attendance and shared ownership.

Date	LESSON	LOCATION	LEADER	SNACK/MEAL
<i>Monday, February 7</i>	<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Steve & Laura's</i>	<i>Bill Jones</i>	<i>John & Alice</i>

LIFE GROUP COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT WORKSHEET

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Where?	
When?	
Task Assignments	
<u>Name</u>	<u>Task</u>

Please go to our website www.lifegroups.org/impact for Outreach Opportunities and contact information to local organizations you and your group may partner with to serve.

FAQS

What do we do on the first night of our group?

Like all fun things in life—have a party! A “get to know you” coffee, dinner, or dessert is a great way to launch a new series. You may want to review the Life Group Agreement (page 64) and share the names of a few friends you can invite to join you. But most importantly, have fun before your study time begins.

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Where do we find new members for our group?

This can be discouraging, especially for new groups that have only a few people, or for existing groups that lose a few people along the way. We encourage you to pray with your group and then brainstorm a list of people from work, church, your neighborhood, your children's school, family, the gym, and so forth. Then have each group member invite several of the people on his or her list.

Before every series, the Life Groups Team will conduct Life Group sign-ups, which allow people to sign-up for “Open” Life Groups. However, studies show it is exponentially more effective when Life Group members personally invite others to their group.

It's vital that you stay on the lookout for new people to join your group. All groups tend to go through healthy attrition – the result of moves, releasing new leaders, ministry opportunities, etc. If you and your group stay open, you'll be amazed at the people God sends your way. The next person just might become a friend for life. You never know!

How long will this group meet?

It's totally up to the group once you come to the end of this six-week study. Most groups meet weekly for at least their first six weeks, but every other week can work as well. We strongly recommend that the group continue to meet after the series for the first six months on a weekly basis if at all possible. This allows for continuity, and builds a rhythm of meeting together in the life of the group members.

At the end of this series, each group member may decide if he or she wants to continue on for another study. Some groups launch

relationships for years to come, and others are stepping stones into another group experience. Either way, enjoy the journey.

What if this group is not working for us?

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You're not alone! This could be the result of a personality conflict, life stage difference, geographical distance, level of spiritual maturity, or any number of things. Relax. Pray for God's direction, and at the end of this 6-week series, decide whether to continue with this group or find another. You don't buy the first car you look at or marry the first person you date, and the same goes with a group. Don't bail out before the six weeks are up – God might have something to teach you. Also, don't run from conflict or prejudge people before you have given them a chance. God is still working in them too!

Who is the leader?

Most groups have an official leader. But ideally, the group will mature and members will rotate the leadership of meetings. We have discovered that healthy groups rotate leaders on a regular basis. This model ensures that all members grow, give their unique contribution and develop their gifts. This Study Guide and the Holy Spirit can keep things on track even when you rotate leaders. Christ has promised to be in your midst as you gather. Ultimately, God is your leader each step of the way.

How do we handle the child care needs in our group?

We suggest that you empower the group to openly brainstorm solutions. You may try one option that works for a while and then adjust over time. Our favorite approach is for adults to meet in the living room or dining room, and to share the cost of a baby sitter (or two) who can be with the kids in a different part of the house. In this way, parents don't have to be away from their children all evening when their children are too young to be left at home. A second option is to use one home for the kids and a second home (close by or a phone call away) for the adults. A third idea is to rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson or care for the children either in the same home or in another home nearby. This can be an incredible blessing for kids. Finally, the most common idea is to decide that you need to have a night to invest in your spiritual lives individually, or as a couple, and to make your own arrangements for child care.

ENCOUNTERS AND SCHOOL OF DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus has left each one of us with a task...to make disciples! We believe that Life Groups are essential in this task because we learn to be more like our Teacher. Life Groups are a place where people can come together to study the Bible and grow to become more like Christ. Life Groups are a great place to make disciples.

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Since Life Groups are such a good opportunity and environment to make disciples we want to help equip our leaders to be the best disciple-makers they can be. Therefore, we strongly encourage all of our Life Group leaders and members to go to an Encounter and complete the subsequent School of Discipleship.

The Encounter is a weekend which will help you connect with God in a way you may have not experienced before, and will help you realize what the cross means to us today. The School of Discipleship immediately follows the Encounter and teaches how to become the disciple that Jesus invites all of us to be. The School of Discipleship has three tracks: Doctrine, Transformation, and Serving. Whether you are a current leader, a prospective leader, or you just want to take the next step in your faith, we believe the Encounter and School of Discipleship will change your life and help you become a more fruitful disciple-maker.

<i>Upcoming Encounters</i>	
<i>Men's Encounters</i>	<i>Women's Encounters</i>
<i>June 1-3, 2018</i>	<i>July 13-15, 2018</i>
<i>September 14-16, 2018</i>	<i>October 5-7, 2018</i>

Please check our website for future Encounter dates and more general information on Encounters: www.lifegroups.org/encounters

BECOMING A LEADER

What does it take to be a leader?

Have a heart for people.
Open to having people in your home.
Serve some coffee or soft drinks.
Tell others about the group!

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Basically, you need to have a desire to apply the Bible to your life and want to share that with others. The group does not have to meet at your home, and you do not have to have a Bible college degree to lead. You simply must have some basic people skills and a desire to grow in the Lord.

How can I become a leader?

First, you do have to be a member of Shepherd Church. To be a member, you must complete the “Membership Inquiry Class”. These classes are usually about two hours long, and are offered every six weeks. You may call the church office at 818.831.9333 to find out when the next one will be held. You may also visit **shepherdchurch.com/member**.

Second, you need to sign-up for the New Leader Training. It is a two-hour orientation on Life Groups. Here you will learn the philosophy of Life Groups and how to effectively begin leading a group. Completing this course does not obligate you, but does allow you to become a new leader.

BLESSING LIST

The Blessing List is an opportunity to intentionally pray for people who don't know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The greatest blessing anyone can receive is to be in relationship with the living God! Throughout the series, pray for God's Spirit to bless and reveal Jesus' love to each person listed.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name</i>

LEADING FOR THE FIRST TIME

1 Sweaty palms are a healthy sign. The Bible says God is gracious to the humble. Remember who is in control; the time to worry is when you're not worried. Those who are soft in heart (and sweaty palmed) are those whom God is sure to speak through.

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2 Seek support. Ask your leader, co-leader, or a close friend to pray for you and prepare with you before the session. Walking through the study will help you anticipate potentially difficult questions and discussion topics.

3 Bring your uniqueness to the study. Lean into who you are and how God wants you to uniquely lead the study.

4 Prepare. Prepare. Prepare. Go through the session several times. If you are using the DVD, listen to the teaching segment and take notes for yourself. Go to www.lifegroups.com and download the Leader's Notes. Consider writing in a journal or fasting for a day to prepare yourself for what God wants to do.

5 Don't wait until the last minute to prepare.

6 Ask for feedback so you can grow. Perhaps in an e-mail or on cards handed out at the study, have everyone write down three things you did well and one thing you could improve on. Don't get defensive, but show an openness to learn and grow.

7 Prayerfully consider launching a new group. This doesn't need to happen overnight, but God's heart is for this to happen over time.

8 Not all Christians are called to be leaders or teachers, but we are all called to be "shepherds" of a few.

9 Share with your group what God is doing in your heart. God is searching for those whose hearts are fully His. Share your trials and victories. We promise that people will relate.

10 Prayerfully consider whom you would like to lead the group next week. God is ready for the next member of your group to go on the faith journey you just traveled. Make it fun, and expect God to do the rest. Our hope and prayer is to allow God to work in their hearts and prepare them for their next step of possibly leading their own group!

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LIFE GROUP LEADING 101

Top Ten Ideas For New Leaders

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Congratulations! You have responded to the call to help shepherd Jesus' flock. There are a few other tasks in the family of God that surpass the contribution you will be making. As you prepare to lead, whether it is one session or the entire series, here are a few thoughts to keep in mind. We encourage you to read these and review them with each new discussion leader before he or she leads.

1 Remember that you are not alone. God knows everything about you, and He knew you would be asked to lead your group. Remember it is common for all good leaders to feel they are not ready to lead. Moses, Solomon, Jeremiah, and Timothy - they all were reluctant to lead. God promises, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Whether you are leading for one evening, for several weeks, or for a lifetime, you will be blessed as you serve.

2 Don't try to do it alone. Pray right now for God to help you build a healthy leadership team. If you can enlist a co-leader to help you lead the group, you will find your experience to be much richer. This is your chance to involve as many people as you can in building a healthy group. All you have to do is call and ask people to help. You'll be surprised at the response.

3 Just be yourself. If you won't be you, who will? God wants you to use your unique gifts and temperament. Don't try to do things exactly like another leader; do them in a way that fits you! Just admit it when you don't have an answer, and apologize when you make a mistake. Your group will love you for it, and you'll sleep better at night!

4 Prepare for your meeting ahead of time. Review the session and the leader's notes, and write down your responses to each question.

Pay special attention to exercises that ask group members to do something other than engage in discussion.

5 Pray for your group members by name. Before you begin your session, go around the room in your mind and pray for each person by name. You may want to review the prayer list at least once a week. Ask God to use your time together to uniquely touch the heart of every person. Expect God to lead you to whomever He wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way. If you listen, God will surely lead!

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6 When you ask a question, be patient. Someone will eventually respond. Sometimes people need a moment or two of silence to think about the question, and if silence doesn't bother you, it won't bother anyone else. After someone responds, affirm the response with a simple "thanks" or "good job." Then ask, "How about somebody else?" or "Would someone who hasn't shared like to add anything?" Be sensitive to new people or reluctant members who aren't ready to say, pray or do anything. If you give them a safe setting, they will blossom over time.

7 Provide transitions between questions. When guiding the discussion, always read aloud the transitional paragraphs and the questions. Ask the group if anyone would like to read the paragraph or Bible passage. Don't call on anyone, but ask for a volunteer, and then be patient until someone begins. Be sure to thank the person who reads aloud.

8 Break up into small groups each week, or they won't stay. If your group has more than seven people, we strongly encourage you to have the group occasionally gather in discussion circles of three or four people during the Grow and Impact sections of the study. With a greater opportunity to talk in a small circle, people will connect more with the study, apply more quickly what they're learning and ultimately get more out of it. A small circle also encourages a quiet person to participate, and tends to minimize the affects of a more vocal or dominant member. It can also help people feel more loved in your group. When you gather again at the end of the section, you can have one person summarize the highlights from each circle.

Small circles are also helpful during prayer time. People who are unaccustomed to praying aloud will feel more comfortable trying it with just two or three others. Also, prayer requests won't take as much time, so circles will have more time to actually pray. When you gather back with the whole group, you can have one person from each circle briefly update everyone on the prayer requests. People are more willing to pray in small circles if they know that the whole group will hear all the prayer requests.

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9 Rotate facilitators weekly. At the end of each meeting, ask the group who would be a good candidate to lead the following week. Let the group help select your weekly facilitator. You may be perfectly capable of leading each time, but you will help others grow in their faith and gifts if you give them opportunities to lead. You can use the Life Group Calendar to fill in the names of all meeting leaders at once if you prefer.

10 One final challenge (for new or first time leaders): Before your first opportunity to lead, look up each of the five passages listed below. Read each one as a devotional exercise to help equip yourself with a shepherd's heart. Trust us on this one. If you do this, you will be more than ready for your first meeting.

Matthew 9:36

1 Peter 5:2-4

Psalms 23

Ezekiel 34:11-16

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11-12