

Small Group 10 Week Starter Plan

These session plans are intended to be a guide: they will take you through our core values, and cover the journey of Connecting – Changing – Transforming. They give opportunities to develop and grow together as a group. They are not intended to be a straightjacket, but a starting point.

Session 1: What we believe

Aims:

To start to get to know each other
To understand a bit about each other's faith journey so far
To find point of connection despite differing experiences

Bible Passage:

Acts 13:16-39

Warm up

Allow 15-20 minutes for people to arrive, have refreshments and get chatting. Introduce yourself as the group leader.

Prayer

Pray briefly to focus on God at the start of the session.

Discussion

1. What do we hope to get out of a small group? If you have a quieter group, or a new group, you may like to do this as a post-it storm while you play some music. Make a note of the responses – you may like to go back through them later in the course.
2. Share your faith journey so far as briefly as possible.
3. Read Acts 13:16-39. Ask your group to consider the Spiritual Belief and Attitude Statements. Briefly discuss these if you like.

Response

You may like to use the Alpha swimming pool to ask people where they are in terms of their journey of faith. You may also like to read The Creed together as a statement of faith.

Spiritual Belief and Attitude Statements

1. Salvation by Grace: I believe nothing I do or have done can earn my salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9)
2. The Trinity: I believe the God of the Bible is the one true God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 13:14)
3. Personal God: I believe God is actively involved in my life (Psalm 121)
4. Christ Is First: I desire Jesus to be first in my life (Matthew 6:33)
5. Authority of the Bible: I believe the Bible has decisive authority over what I say and do (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
6. Identity in Christ: I exist to know, love and serve God (John 1:12-13)
7. Stewardship: I believe a Christian should live a sacrificial life that is not driven by pursuit of material things (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
8. Giving Away My Life: I am willing to risk everything that is important in my life for Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2)
9. Giving Away My Faith: I pray for non-Christians to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour (Ephesians 6:19-20)
10. Giving Away My Time: I give away my time to serve and help others in my community. (Colossians 3:17)
11. Giving Away My Money: My first priority in spending is to support God's work (2 Corinthians 8:7)

From 'Move: What 1000 Churches reveal about spiritual growth' by Greg L Hawkins and Cally Parkinson.

Session 2: Worship

Aims:

To share some of our experiences of church
To gain an understanding of worship despite differing preferences

Bible Passage:

Deuteronomy 6:1-6

Warm up

Describe your most memorable church service or experience of worship. What made it so significant?

Discussion

1. Read through the Bible passage. Give everyone a print out of verses 4 and 5 and ask them to consider all the connotations and implications of each individual word and phrase.
2. Share what you've discovered about God through this study.
3. How does sung worship help us to focus on God? What other forms of worship are there?

Response

Suggest everyone brings some worship to start the next few weeks e.g. a song, a photograph, a poem.

Session 3: Prayer

Aims:

To develop each other's confidence in praying together.

Bible Passage:

Romans 8:26-28

Warm up

Listen to a song or something else to inspire worship and focus.

Discussion

1. Remind the group that we are focusing on different ways to connect to God. How do we connect to God best?
2. What's your experience of prayer?
3. Depending on the group's responses, try different ways of praying together:
 - Praying in smaller groups of 2-3 people
 - Prayer walking around your neighbourhood
 - Spend time praying for one another without any prayer requests and listen for words of knowledge for that person
 - All pray out loud at the same time
 - Pray for the person on your left
 - Use 1 sentence prayers
 - Use prepared or pre-written prayers
 - Spend time researching and praying into a single issue (e.g. climate change) or a single place (e.g. your street).
 - Set up simple prayer stations where you meet
 - Use PRAY: Pause, Reflect and Respond, Ask, Yield

Response

Try starting a small group prayer journal, or a small group WhatsApp to share prayer requests. Commit to revisiting it every few weeks to give thanks for what God has done.

Session 4: The Bible

Aims:

To encourage and support one another in reading the Bible.

Bible Passage:

Matthew 4:1-11

Warm up

Share a moment where you've seen Scripture directly impact your life.

Discussion

1. How does the Bible sustain us?
2. What helps you to spend time reading the Bible?
3. What gets in the way of you reading the Bible?
4. How can we develop a personal plan or rhythm for reading the Bible?
5. How can our group support each other in reading the Bible?

Response

Choose a book of the Bible you would like to read over the next few weeks. If you want to, you could commit to reading a few verses each day and discussing it. If not, plan to study that book as a group in the future.

Session 5: Identity

Aims:

To understand and know our value and identity in Christ

Bible Passage:

John 1:1-14

Warm up

Share in a time of worship together.

Imagine you're walking down the street and you find a lottery ticket on the ground. This is the powerball jackpot winning ticket. You are instantly a millionaire! How would this change your life? What would happen if when you picked up the ticket you didn't know it was real, so you never redeemed it?

2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that if anyone is in Christ they are a new person – the old is gone and the new is come. They have a whole new identity and that is far better than winning the lottery! But sometimes we don't know what is true about us. Today we are going to look at some of the things God says about the new you.

Discussion

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-3.

- What does this passage say about what is true of us before we know Christ?
- In what way can you relate to this?

2. Read Ephesians 2:4-10. What does this passage say happens to us after we come to know Christ?

3. In verse 10, how does God describe us and his purpose for us?

4. What does it mean to you that God thinks of you as a masterpiece?

5. Read Ezekiel 36:25-27. What are some changes that happen when we come to know God?

6. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. What does this passage say?

Response

Take a look at the "Who I Am In Christ" sheet. It lists the truths we looked at today and many others.

- Which of these are hard for you to believe?
- Which ones mean the most to you?

Spend time praying for one another.

WHO I AM IN CHRIST

If you are a Christian, then the statements below are true of you.

In Christ, I am accepted...

John 1:12 — I am God's child.

John 15:15 — As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1 — I have been justified.

1 Corinthians 6:17 — I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 — I have been bought with a price and I belong to God.

1 Corinthians 12:27 — I am a member of Christ's body.

Ephesians 1:3-8 — I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child.

Colossians 1:13-14 — I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.

Colossians 2:9-10 — I am complete in Christ.

Hebrews 4:14-16 — I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ.

In Christ, I am secure...

Romans 8:1-2 — I am free from condemnation.

Romans 8:28 — I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances.

Romans 8:31-39 — I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the love of God.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 — I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.

Colossians 3:1-4 — I am hidden with Christ in God.

Philippians 1:6 — I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me.

Philippians 3:20 — I am a citizen of heaven.

2 Timothy 1:7 — I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.

1 John 5:18 — I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

In Christ, I am significant...

John 15:5 — I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life.

John 15:16 — I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.

1 Corinthians 3:16 — I am God's temple.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 — I am a minister of reconciliation for God.

Ephesians 2:6 — I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm.

Ephesians 2:10 — I am God's workmanship.

Ephesians 3:12 — I may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Philippians 4:13 — I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

Session 6: Relationships

Aims:

To explore principles of growing in relationship with one another.

Bible Passage: Acts 2: 42-27

Warm up

Spend some time worshipping God together.

Discussion

Describe someone who has been a really good influence on your faith.

Read Acts 2:42-47.

This is a description of the early church. How can adopt some of these practices or principles into our personal and church life today?

The church is not a building but a gathering of people. How can we keep our relationships, positive, affirming and healthy in the church?

What would you expect of healthy small group relationships? How can we develop them?

Response

You may like to consider developing some group principles or commitments.

Session 7: Growth

Aims:

To consider our own growth and how we may grow as a group.

Bible Passage:

Matthew 13:1-18

Warm up

Describe a time when you grew significantly in your faith. What was a key factor?

Discussion

1. Read the Bible passage.
2. What are the factors associated with growth?
3. What are some of the signs of growth in our lives?
4. Mark Pickett, in the DNA Course, says growth is accelerated through connection, obedience, suffering and service. To what extent do you agree?

Response

Spend some time praying over each other and listening for words of knowledge and encouragement for each other.

Session 8: Generosity

Aims:

To consider our own generosity and our potential for generosity as a group.

Bible Passage:

Various (all from <https://bibleproject.com/church-at-home/week1-generosity/>)

Warm up

Where do you find it easy to be generous? Where do you find it difficult?

Discussion

Read Luke 12:22-34

Where do you see the generosity of God in the world, your life, or the story of the Bible? What are you most grateful for?

What are you anxious about in your present situation? Reflect on God’s love and care and how it might help alleviate your anxiety.

Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19

In times of crisis, a scarcity mindset—focusing on what we don’t have—can easily cause us to cling to worldly goods. Do you experience this? What would you and others around you gain by trusting God’s generous love instead?

This passage includes a special command to the rich to be generous. While we might not be rich in wealth, we have all been given gifts that we can share with others, like our time, care, prayer, resources, etc. Reflect on what you can share specifically and with whom.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

In this passage, Paul says that becoming rich is found in Jesus. What does this mean? Is Paul talking about worldly wealth or something else?

The Macedonians are presented as a positive example of a group that joyfully gave in the midst of trial and poverty. As a group, they made a huge impact. What groups can you join with to do something meaningful in this time?

Response

What does a generous small group look like?

Session 9: Service

Aims:

To consider how we serve the people we know, our church and the world.

Bible Passage:

Exodus 35, Matthew 5:13-16 or Romans 12:9-21.

Warm up

What skills or talents do you have?

Discussion

1. Read Exodus 35, Matthew 5:13-16 or Romans 12:9-21.
2. Hand out copies of the Swedish Method of Bible Study. Try asking some of the questions about Exodus 35. [https://theresource.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Swedish Bible Study.pdf](https://theresource.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Swedish_Bible_Study.pdf)
3. Discuss your observations as a group.

Response

Is there an area where you could serve as a group? Could you consider hosting an event or perhaps taking on serving coffee once a month?

Session 10: Kingdom

Aims:

To understand what 'Being the Kingdom' looks like in our every day lives.

Bible Passage:

Matthew 28:16-20

Warm up

How comfortable are you on a scale of 1-10 in speaking about your faith to non-Christians?

Discussion

1. Read the Bible passage. What's your immediate response to this passage?
2. What does it mean to make disciples? How did you become a disciple? What can we learn and observe from this?
3. What are some ways we can share the Kingdom of God with non-believers?
4. You may like to consider the BLESS Strategy:
 - Begin with prayer
 - Listen carefully
 - Eat together
 - Serve in love
 - Share your story

<https://vimeo.com/252441558>

Response

Map your spheres of influence and connection. Choose 5 people to pray for and to look to share the gospel with.

Introduce the idea of the group growing and multiplying. Start considering who your next leaders could be, and aim to multiply within 18 months.