



HEARING THE VOICE

Group Leader Guide



January 2024

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— Vision for Groups & Tips for Leading

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* HEARING THE VOICE – GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Vision For Groups & Group Leaders

- Our hope for these groups is that people walk away from these 4 weeks feeling more connected to community and more connected to God.
- Our hope for group leaders is that you develop a sense of community and network of support with other leaders, and are well equipped to lead and care for this group over these 4 weeks.
 - Join the Church Center group for Group Leaders for additional community and support.

How To Use This Guide

(visit <https://ecclesiahouston.org/thebible> for all videos)

- Watch the weekly video and read the weekly one pager prior to showing up to lead the group that week to get a sense for the content and your own engagement with it. Send a weekly reminder to your group to meet.
- Everything in here is a suggestion. Use what's useful for your particular group.
- Co-Leaders split up responsibilities to share the load. Examples of different ways to divide up:
 - By week — one person does week 1, another week 2, etc.
 - By section — each take one: community builder prompt, video, questions & wrap up
 - By group role — focus on community building, on discussion facilitation, on tech, etc.

Discussion & Facilitation Tips

- Pick the questions that will generate conversation for your group. Sometimes you'll only engage in one question, other times multiple. Allow space for silence and resist the urge to immediately answer your own question.
- Remember, this is a discussion not a lecture. As the weeks progress, encourage more and more people to participate.
- We value a diversity of voices and perspectives. Affirm people for sharing and move the conversation along by encouraging multiple answers to the same question.
- Emphasis and special care is placed on relationships and peoples' stories over beliefs. Seek to hold this tension with openness and curiosity, embodying our Rhythms as a group.
- Think/Pair/Share: To get people talking to each other, prompt the question, invite people to turn in groups of 2-3 to share, and then, ask people to share with the larger group.

Community Building Tips

(pick something from this list to do intentionally with your group)

- Intentional icebreakers that help people discover shared experiences or interests
- Invite those from the group to sit with you or together at the next Sunday service
- Share a meal together - invite all to bring/order food, or go out to eat after your group meets
- Serve together at a Harmony House BBQ or Simple Feast

Spotting Potential Leader Tips

- Be intentional about noticing people in your group who engage in community building, are intentional about learning people's names, and support in facilitating kind and curious conversation.
- In a 1-1 conversation, name those leadership qualities you see to that person/those people.
- If you're in a short term group, invite this person/these people to consider leading a short term group in the next round of groups. Consider doing this after the second week.
- If you're in an ongoing small group, invite this person/these people to facilitate your next study or take ownership of planning a community building portion of your group.



1. Welcome

- Introduce yourself
- Share your why for engaging in building community through this short term group
- Share your why for choosing to lead a group around this series of engaging with the Bible
- Share your hope for this group (see first page of this guide for inspiration if needed)

2. Community Building

- Go around the room: Share your name and an emotion you're feeling as we start this series (I'm Rachel and I feel nervous).
- Get creative and have them start with the same letter (Julie is jazzed.)

3. Video

- Through this first video, we'll explore the purpose and role of the Bible — for the formation of people who live and look like Jesus in the world. Let's jump in!
- **Watch Video (11:15)**
 - Scripture Referenced - Luke 1:1-3

4. Discussion Prompts

1. What is your first memory of engaging with the Bible?
2. How have you viewed the Bible in the past?
3. Can you think of any specific instances where you found the Bible to be either complicated or straightforward in its teachings or stories?
4. Pastor Sean states “Christians gave us the Bible. The Bible didn't give us Christians. Our faith isn't in the Bible. Our faith is in Jesus.” What might it look like to be a people who worship Jesus and not people who worship the Bible? How does this truth impact how we read the Bible?
5. In your opinion, what are some common misconceptions of the Bible?
6. What role does the Bible have in your life right now?

Application:

After today's video, is there a new idea that you are considering about how you view the Bible?

5. Wrap Up

- Thank everyone for choosing to show up
- Reiterate your hope for the group
- Share any community building invitations (see first page of guide)
- Invite someone from the group to close out the time in prayer
- Next week we'll explore the Gospels and how they function.
- See you all next week!

* HEARING THE VOICE – GROUP LEADER GUIDE

1. Welcome

- Introduce yourself (if there's anyone new)
- Share hope for the group and where you are in the series (week 2 of 4)

2. Community Building

- Go around the room: share your name and something vintage that you love. (get creative if it's been passed down/along by someone special.)

3. Video – Hearing the Voice Part 2

- Through this video, we'll explore what the Gospels are and how they function.
- Watch Video (12:54)
- Scripture Referenced - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

4. Discussion Prompts

1. If we consider that the Bible is ancient, how does that change our perspective on how we engage with the Bible?
2. How do you navigate the tension between cultural changes and the timeless teachings of the Bible?
3. How do you balance your faith in the Bible as a sacred text with the intellectual challenges that may arise when grappling with its ancient context and diverse perspectives?
4. How does understanding the genre of a particular biblical book or passage influence your approach to reading and interpreting it?
5. Pastor Sean warns against cultural relativism when interpreting the Bible. How can one avoid projecting contemporary values onto ancient texts while still engaging with the Bible's teachings?
6. How might reading different accounts of the same events in the Bible impact how we live out the way of Jesus in a world of different perspectives?
7. What might it look like to “read the Bible broadly” and “talk widely” in community about what we're reading?

week 2

Application:

After today's video, is there a new idea that you are considering about how you view the Bible?

5. Wrap Up

- Thank everyone for showing up
- Reiterate your hope for the group
- Share any community building invitations (see first page of guide)
- Invite someone from the group to close out the time in prayer
- Next week we'll explore a framework for how to understand and read the Old Testament. See you all next week!

1. Welcome

- Introduce yourself (if there's anyone new)
- Share hope for the group and where you are in the series (week 3 of 4)

2. Community Building

- In groups of 2-3, share your name & a favorite childhood story/children's book.

3. Video

- Today, we'll explore a framework for how to understand and read the Old Testament. Let's get started!
- Watch Video (17:47)
 - This is the longest video, so plan accordingly

4. Discussion Prompts

1. What are your preconceived notions about the Old Testament?
2. When you read the Bible, how often are you reading from the Old Testament?
3. Can you share a specific Old Testament story or passage that you find challenging, and discuss how you approach understanding its meaning?
4. Pastor Sean mentions the danger of "Allegorizing" the Bible. When have you experienced that?
5. "The Bible cannot mean what it never meant." How does this principle guide your approach to interpreting scripture, especially when faced with differing interpretations?
6. How can we strike a balance between finding personal meaning in the Bible and recognizing its universal truths for a diverse community of believers?

Application:

After today's video, is there a new idea that you are considering about how you view the Old Testament?

5. Wrap Up

- Thank everyone for choosing to show up
- Reiterate your hope for the group
- Share any community building invitations (see first page of guide)
- Invite someone from the group to close out the time in prayer
- Next week we'll explore our posture towards Jesus and what that means as we read the Bible. See you all next week!

1. Welcome

- Introduce yourself (if there's anyone new)
- Share hope for the group and where you are in the series (week 4 of 4)

2. Community Building

- Go around the room: share your name and whether you grew up
- praying before meals or before bed (or both or neither)

3. Video

- This last week, we'll explore our posture towards Jesus and what that means as we read the Bible.
- Watch Video (9:40)
 - Scripture Referenced- Hebrews 1:1-2

4. Discussion Prompts

1. Pastor Sean acknowledges that many people may feel inadequate in their knowledge of languages, theology, and history when reading the Bible. How does this perspective resonate with your own experiences & what challenges have you faced in approaching the scriptures?
2. The idea of reading the Bible on your knees is presented as a posture of prayer and dependence on God's illumination. How does prayer influence your Bible reading? Share personal experiences where prayer has enhanced your understanding of scripture.
3. How do you approach the scriptures with humility and a willingness to re-examine your beliefs and traditions? Share an instance where you had to reevaluate a long-held belief based on your engagement with the Bible.
4. How has your perception of the Bible changed over time, and in what ways do you view it as sacred & valuable in your life?
5. What is a practice you'd like to adopt for reading the Bible?

Application:

Over the course of this study, what has shifted in your thinking, feeling, perception of the Bible? What has piqued your curiosity about the Bible?

5. Wrap Up

- Thank everyone for choosing to show up
- Reiterate your hope for the group
- Share any community building invitations or next steps
- For short term groups, the next opportunity to engage in a group is Lent . If you'd like to participate, sign up on Ecclesia's website.
- For small groups, our next series as a group will be (insert series) and (insert name/s) will be leading discussion for our group.
- Invite someone from the group to close out the time in prayer