

Leader Notes for:

WALK

WITH GOD



• A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FOLLOWING JESUS •

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WALK WITH GOD LEADER NOTES

Each time you gather with your group, you will want to divide your time into 3 sections: Looking Back, Looking Together and Looking Forward. Your group time together should last between 60 to 90 minutes each. Plan to balance your time between these 3 sections. Remember not to spend all of your time just teaching content, so leave plenty of time for all 3 areas.

LOOKING BACK

The goal of this section is to provide pastoral care and accountability

- Ask questions about the past week such as: “How did this week go?” “What stressed you?” “What went well?” “What’s heavy on your heart?” “Where did you struggle the most?” (Pray for each other as you begin your meeting time.)
- Review last week’s “I Will” statement. How are you putting into practice what you are learning? What problems did you have? What success did you have?
- Review the memory verse of the week. “What did God show you through this verse?”
- Ask them to share from their prayer journals how God has spoken to them this week.

LOOKING TOGETHER

The goal of this section is to review the new teaching and practice what you have learned.

We want each person to grow in competence and confidence as they put God’s Word to practice.

- Spend time reviewing the key questions from each day and discussing answers.
- Half of the time should be spent on teaching and half of the time on practicing what you have learned together as a group.

LOOKING FORWARD

The goal of this section is to plan how they will practice what they have learned during the week and then commission them to do it.

- Have each person craft an “I Will” statement, setting a goal of how each person will put into practice what he or she has learned this next week.
- Commissioning: Pray for the group as they go out to do what they have learned in the power of the Holy Spirit.

INITIAL GROUP MEETING

- **Looking Back:** Since you haven't met before, spend your time getting to know each other. Have everyone briefly share his or her background information. You, as the leader, start off first, sharing about yourself, your family and perhaps what you do for a living.
- **Looking Together:** Hand out the books to everyone. Have someone read aloud the section "How To Use This Book". Explain that there is a daily reading for them to do along with a Scripture memorization for each week. Ask someone to read through the "Memorizing Scripture" section. Discuss any questions they may have. You may want to help everyone download the discipleFIRST App using the QR code found on Page vi. Then, show them how to view the memory verse section and how to scan the barcode on the back of their book to access the digital resources. If members would like to use physical Scripture Memory Verse Packs, they are available at disciplefirst.com. Next, read through the "I Will" commitment page and ask them to make a commitment to the group by checking the appropriate boxes. Help your group select prayer partners from within the group and encourage them to exchange contact information. In addition, using the table of contents, briefly give your members an overview of what you will be studying over the next seven weeks.
- **Looking Forward:** Clearly set your expectations for the group and confirm the details of when and where you will meet. If a member must miss for any reason, they will need to contact both you and their prayer partner. Point out that the Grow Series is purposefully designed for each person to spend time with God each day, and even though the daily assignments are short the first week, they should do them daily and not just wait to do them all right before you meet next week. Ask if there are any questions. Close out in prayer together, commissioning them as they head into this first week. I love asking the group to get on their knees for prayer, if possible, as I pray over them. Encourage them by telling them how you will be praying for them every day and how excited you are to see what God will teach them during your time together.

GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK ONE

- **Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask questions like “How did it go this week?” “What problems are you facing?” “Did you run into problems with your daily reading?” After everyone has shared, review the memory verse for the week. Remind the group that you are trying to say the verse word for word with the reference, as it appears in the Bible... not just a paraphrase.
- **Looking Together:** Review the questions at the end of each day’s reading for the first chapter. This week is all about the Gospel. While this week is not focused on a skill to practice, make it your goal to listen for each group member’s testimony. This is a good time to discern if they know Jesus.
- **Looking Forward:** Encourage the group to make an “I Will” statement that is actionable, such as committing to write out their personal testimony and to bring it to the group next week. Commission them in prayer as they are sent out to do this. During the week contact each group member, affirming and encouraging them. If there were questions about their testimony or confusion over the Gospel, this would be the time to discuss it. Pray for them daily.

GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK TWO

- **Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. This is important because the group will begin to share burdens and concerns during this time. Pray together. Take time to review the memory verses assigned. Collect any testimonies they may have written, but read them privately. This is to help you understand where each group member stands spiritually and how you can pray for them. If you are concerned that one of your group members does not know Christ, then set up an appointment to meet with them privately during the week.
- **Looking Together:** Review the discussion questions at the end of each day’s reading for Chapter Two. This week is about putting Jesus in the center of your life. Remember to review the questions but also stop and practice. On Day Five, stop and discuss how the priorities of Jesus match up with the priorities of the group. On Day Six, demonstrate what a prayer of surrender might sound like. Pray for the Spirit to fill you and lead you. This demonstration helps each member to know how to practice surrendering to God.

- **Looking Forward:** Encourage the group to make an “I Will” statement such as committing to pray every day this week, yielding the control of their lives to Jesus and asking the Holy Spirit to fill them and lead them. Contact each group member this week. Remind them to yield control daily to Jesus and ask for the Spirit’s help. Try to make a point to meet personally with one member each week for prayer and encouragement.

GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK THREE

- **Looking Back:** As you gather together, begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” “What struggles are you facing right now?” Pray together. Take time to review the memory verses assigned. Review the “I Will” statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” “If not, what hindered you?”
- **Looking Together:** Review the discussion questions at the end of each day’s reading for Chapter Three. This week is about hearing God’s Voice through Bible reading and journaling. Remember to review the questions but also stop and practice. As you cover the **l.i.s.t.e.n.** acrostic, you may want to bring a copy of your own prayer journal and show them how you put this into practice. Refer them to the “Sample Journal Entry” page (Page 72) so they can see how to begin to journal as they read God’s Word. The goal of journaling is to hear from God and write down what He says.
- **Looking Forward:** Create an “I Will” statement where each member commits to reading God’s Word daily using the **l.i.s.t.e.n.** plan. Have them come next week prepared to share what God has spoken to them. Tell them that this week, in addition to their regular reading, they will be reading from the Gospel of Luke (specified on the bottom of Page 70 and top of Page 71). Show them how these Bible readings appear in the “Live it out” section during the upcoming week in Chapter Four. Ask if they have any questions. Be sure to pray and commission them out to put into practice what they have learned this week.

GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK FOUR

- **Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” Review the “I Will” statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” “If not, what hindered you?” “What struggles did you have as you practiced the **l.i.s.t.e.n.** plan this week?” Be aware that they are now taking a huge step. Not only are they doing their daily reading and Scripture memory, but they are also reading in the Gospel of Luke and journaling. For some, this extra work can be overwhelming. Create a safe place to express any trouble they may be facing. If you see one group member is struggling, work with them during the week to help them pace out their time, or you may need to make some accommodations so they don’t get discouraged and want to quit. Take time to review the memory verses assigned. You may also have them share something God spoke to them through their reading in Luke. Pray together.
- **Looking Together:** Read together the questions of each day for Chapter Four. This week is about praying to God. Be sensitive to the questions group members may have about prayer. Stop at each part to model for them praying prayers of **praise**, **repentance**, **asking** and **yielding**. Modeling is critical! You may want to ask different people to practice praying during each step.
- **Looking Forward:** Create an “I Will” statement where each member commits to reading God’s Word daily using the **p.r.a.y.** strategy. Remind them to continue reading through Luke and journal using the **l.i.s.t.e.n.** to God format. Challenge them to come back next week prepared to share what God has spoken to them. Be sure to pray and commission them out to put this into practice this week. Follow up with each person this week. Offer to meet one member of your group to model doing a “time alone with God” together at their home or office.

GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK FIVE

- **Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” Review the “I Will” statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” “Did you **p.r.a.y.**?” “How did it go?” “What problems did you have?” “Were you able to **l.i.s.t.e.n.** to God each day?” Remind them they are doing this to know Jesus personally – moving what they learn from their heads to their hearts, but also to their hands as they obey what He is teaching them. Review journal entries and memory verses.

- **Looking Together:** Go through the questions for each day in Chapter Five. This week is about learning to obey God in every area of life. Be sure to stop and really discuss the resistance they may experience in following Jesus and how they handle temptations. Help them to think about creative ways to overcome temptation. Modeling how to avoid temptation is key! Think through actual examples. Stop and pray as you go through these sections... specifically for temptations or resistance they may be experiencing. This time may get very personal, so be sure to stress the importance of confidentiality within your group.
- **Looking Forward:** Create an “I Will” statement for the week. Some examples might be “I will be obedient to one area God is speaking to me about this week.” “I will address an area in my life that is not producing holiness in me.” “I will not give into temptation this week.” “I will displace my tempting thoughts this week with God’s truth.” Make sure these statements are specific, so you can tell if they have actually been done. Pray and commission them to obey Jesus this week.

GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK SIX

- **Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” Review the “I Will” statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” Review journal entries and memory verses. Remind them they are doing this to know Jesus personally – moving what they learn from their heads to their hearts, but also to their hands as they obey what He is teaching them. Celebrate each time they hear from God and put it into practice!
- **Looking Together:** Go through the questions for each day in Chapter Six. This week is about experiencing and sharing God’s Grace. Spend time talking about God’s grace in times of hardship and trial. Model for them how to face difficult times by sharing your own crisis story/stories. Spend time on how to extend God’s grace to others, starting with their own families. This is a critical week because God will begin to open up areas of hurts that need healing. Be sensitive to where the Spirit is at work among your group. Stop and pray as you discuss these things together.
- **Looking Forward:** Create an “I Will” statement for the week. Some examples might be “I will extend God’s grace this week by...”, “I will spend time every day in prayer thanking God for His grace in my life”, or “I will find key verses to hold onto during my trial this week”. Be sure to pray and commission them out to stand in God’s grace and reflect God’s grace this week.

GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK SEVEN

- **Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” Review the “**I Will**” statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” Review journal entries and memory verses. Take time for the group to share how God is speaking to them. Celebrate each time they hear from God and put it into practice!
- **Looking Together:** Go through the questions for each day in Chapter Seven. This week is about the importance of being a part of a local church. These lessons are designed to help you determine next steps for those in your group. Take time to discuss baptism. Does anyone need to be baptized? Are they actively participating in a local church? Are they in a group at their church? Are there any negative church experiences that need to be dealt with? Model by sharing your convictions about the local church and your participation in it.
- **Looking Forward:** This is the last session of your group. It is very important that you take time to review what has meant the most to each group member. Have they learned how to walk with God daily and in a deeper way? If so, how? It is also important to remind them that this is just the first step in spiritual growth. Encourage every group member to take the next step, learning how to live on mission with Jesus by completing the next seven-week study called “*Reach Your World*”. Give them details about when and where the next study will start. You may want to get a commitment from those in the group who want to move forward so you can order books for them. Also challenge them to continue to **l.i.s.t.e.n.** to God and **p.r.a.y.** daily for life!

FAQ FOR LEADERS

Q: How should I use the “Leader’s Notes”?

A: I think it is best to read through the “Leader Notes” before you meet with your group. Any thoughts or ideas you glean should be written down in your “Walk with God” book. That way, you are not referring to the “Leader’s Guide”; you will be just looking at your own book. The “Leader’s Guide” contains only general suggestions about how to lead your group, and does not contain any additional content to be shared in your group.

Q: How long should each group time last?

A: The length of the group time will often be determined by how many are in your group and by how engaged your members are in the discussions. Generally, a group time should last from 60 to 90 minutes. I suggest you don’t let it go too much longer than that. Have a clear start and end time in mind. As you approach the end time, bring the group to a close and then make yourself available for discussion for those who want to stay. This way, you honor everyone’s time but allow additional discussion for those who might need it.

Q: What if someone misses a group session? What should I do?

A: It is common that someone will need to miss a session. If you postpone a meeting someone has to miss, then the rest of the group will be held back. The book is designed to be completed in seven consecutive weeks. If you skip weeks, then the group could get confused as to what week they are studying and will get out of the habit of being in God’s Word every day. My suggestion is to continue to meet as a group for the full seven consecutive weeks. If a member misses, ask them to continue to do their study every day and attend the next group session. You might offer to meet with them individually to discuss the week they missed. Also, you can see if they would be able to join the group via Zoom, Facetime, Skype or some other technology.

Q: What if you are starting a group but know that your group will end up meeting through the holidays when most members will have to miss?

A: My suggestion is to look at the calendar before you begin a group and plan accordingly. If your group is going to roll through the holidays, make a plan on the front end to meet during that time or just wait to launch your group until after the holidays have passed.

Q: What if I have a group member who is disruptive or strongly disagrees with the material presented?

A: It would be prudent to personally meet with that member and try to resolve the situation. Let them know that they are loved and wanted in the group. However, they must not be disruptive. If they can't make the group time positive for everyone involved, they may need to step out and try it with another group at a later time.

Q: What if I have a group member who comes to the group unprepared on a regular basis?

A: Everyone is busy, and you need to show a healthy dose of grace for anyone who is trying to learn to walk with God in a Grow Group. That being said, if they are not doing the basics to learn how to walk with God laid out in this study, then the group will certainly not benefit them. It would be like joining a gym but never working out. You've got the membership, but you won't see the results. I suggest you meet with them privately and encourage them to come prepared. You may have to make accommodations for them such as decreasing the amount of Bible reading to just a few times a week or allow them to look at the verse when reciting their memorization scriptures. You want them to be successful and if they are willing to try, you should do all you can to help them. However, if they can't do what's expected of the group, then you might suggest that they step out of the group until they have the time to really put their best effort forward.

Q: What if there are several weeks between Book One: "Walk with God" and Book Two: "Reach your World". What should I do during that time gap?

A: I realize that there may be time gaps between books. What you do during that time really depends on you and your group. You might suggest that the group members read through a book of the Bible during that gap time while continuing to **l.i.s.t.e.n.** to God and **p.r.a.y.** You might suggest that the group meet once during the time gap to stay connected and pray for one another. You might also suggest that the group stay connected through a group text or social media, and you might provide Scriptures to memorize together. Ultimately, you are the best judge of your group members. Any way you can keep them in God's Word and praying for one another will keep the continuity of the group going.