
LEADER'S GUIDELINES

A WOMAN'S JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP is more than a Bible study series. It's a process through which women learn how to walk daily with Jesus and pass on to others that same discipling vision Jesus gave His disciples.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR MEETING

- 10 minutes—Casual interaction.
- 35 minutes—Share from your devotional times, review the memory verse, and talk about experiences or new thoughts that were especially encouraging in walking with Jesus during the previous week. Spend a few minutes praying for one another, particularly about personal insights that came as a result of the present week's session.
- 40 minutes—Discuss the session's material, including reflection stories and Travel Guide.
- 5 minutes—End in prayer.

GUIDELINES FOR USING *BRIDGES ON THE JOURNEY*

- Allow 60 minutes for session preparation time, not including My Daily Journey. Encourage group members to spend a little time each day to prepare.
- This study can be used one-to-one or in small groups.
- Sessions can be held weekly or biweekly.

THE LEADER

- The leader should aim to facilitate rather than teach in order to encourage participants to discover truth for themselves.
- We suggest having an assistant leader, who will learn how to lead as she participates with and helps to facilitate a small group.
- The optimum size for small groups is six to eight women. By keeping groups relatively small, each woman is assured of having enough time to be able to share.
- Everyone should be encouraged to do the My Daily Journey pages. This practice is essential for establishing the habit of meeting with the Lord each day.
- At the first meeting, the leader should explain to the group that A WOMAN'S JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP is a process outlined in three books: *Bridges on the Journey*, *Crossroads on the Journey*, and *Friends on the Journey*. These studies can be done separately, but we recommend going through them in sequence. *Bridges* is designed to help women grow from an initial encounter with Jesus into a deeper understanding of how to walk with Him. *Crossroads* encourages women to make choices that will help them walk consistently with Jesus and grow in spiritual maturity and understanding. *Friends* brings them to a deeper relationship that results in learning how to disciple others.
- None of these books guarantees the making of a believer or a disciple. But the process outlined in the books will provide exposure to life with Christ for those who don't know Him yet and will provide opportunities for believers to become established and equipped in spiritual maturity.
- At the first meeting, the leader should explain what to expect on the journey. Here are the chapter components and how to make the most of them:
 - **My Journey Friends.** At your first gathering, encourage your group to record each other's names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses in appendix A so you can keep in touch. As relationships grow and deepen, you can also record prayer requests for one another.
 - **My Daily Journey.** Point your group to appendix B, where they can keep

a record of their daily Bible reading times and establish the habit of a daily devotional time.

- **Our Journey Together.** This is a time for group members to share recent devotional highlights **and** lessons learned on their journeys.
- **Reflections on the Journey.** These are personal stories of different women's journeys with Jesus. Each story relates to the particular topic for the week, giving group members the opportunity to learn from another woman's experience.
- **The Travel Guide.** The Travel Guide is a Bible study that group members do on their own during the week. As the women explore the Scriptures and learn new truths, they will experience life change. It's important to emphasize that each woman should complete the study before the group meets so she will be ready to share with others during the group time.
- **Learning the Route by Heart.** This feature provides group members with a systematic plan for memorizing Scripture, allowing God's Word to be stored in their hearts to transform their thinking and behavior. Bookmarks with each week's memory verse are provided in appendix D. By consistent review you will encourage the women to strengthen this vital habit.
- **Next Steps on the Journey.** This is the assignment to be completed before the next meeting.

CELEBRATION

It's recommended that the leader organize a luncheon or dessert party to celebrate what God has done in the group members' lives. At the end of session 6, set the date and time for this event and invite the women to come with their hearts prepared to share about their journeys with the Lord. Celebrate new and growing relationships with Jesus, new habits of spending daily time in the Bible, and new truths learned about following Jesus in discipleship.

At the conclusion of your luncheon or dessert party, invite group members to continue their study in book 2 of the series, *Crossroads on the Journey*. Share highlights from this second book and tell the women how it could enhance their next steps on their journeys with God.

ESSENTIALS ON THE JOURNEY

Here are some ideas that we believe are vital to helping women become believers and disciples who follow Jesus all their lives and pass their stories on to others:

- **Small-group relationships.** The focus of your group time should be on developing the women's relationships with Jesus and with each other. Setting an environment of grace and trust allows group members to discover Jesus and be honest in their sharing. Assuring confidentiality is necessary for building trust. This can be instilled in the group by saying simply in each session, "We want each woman to feel comfortable in exploring the Bible and her relationship with Jesus, so please make sure that everything shared in this group stays in this group."
- **Life-to-life.** This means the practice of investing in others from the overflow of your own relationship with Christ. One way you can do this is by sharing personal examples of God's work in changing your life, developing your character, and empowering you for ministry.
- **Spiritual generations.** When God works through one believer to birth a new generation of believers, we call this a "spiritual generation." God's design is for each generation to pass on to others faith lessons and a profound desire to know and obey Him. Each woman can be a link that reaches into the future. It is inspiring to realize that you are not only impacting the individual women in your group but also influencing the new generations they will reach.
- **Discipleship process.** In each session, emphasize that discipleship is a process. By speaking candidly about your personal continuing growth, you will encourage your group to take the next steps on their own journeys and realize that discipleship is a lifelong endeavor.