
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.

Friends on the Journey seeks to establish God's vision and passion in women for lifelong discipling of others, who in turn will invest their lives in future generations. This study seeks to impart vision, passion, and skills.

Vision: God's Commission to redeem and disciple His women

Passion: God's love expressed to and through His women

Skills: To equip and encourage women to know how to confidently disciple others

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 FRIENDS ON THE JOURNEY

- Allow 75-90 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 use her own journal for My Daily Journey pages, using the model questions provided. 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 with one another. As relationships grow and deepen, you can also record prayer requests for one another.

- **My Daily Journey.** As the women reflect on what God says to them, explain the importance of using their own journals to record their responses to these two questions: (1) What did I learn about God or myself on my journey? (2) How can I grow deeper in my relationship with the Lord or demonstrate His love to others? For the second question encourage them to respond by writing their thoughts in a prayer. Remember to cover with the group the My Daily Journey explanation, found on page 13 in Session 1. Your group members will be using Acts for their daily devotions. The assignment for each session is listed in Next Steps on the Journey.
- **Our Journey Together.** This is a time for group members to share recent devotional highlights and lessons learned on their journeys.
- **Reflections from the Heart of a Discipled.** 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.
- **Writings on the Way** gives additional perspective from other travelers on their spiritual journeys.
- **Tips for the Road** is a section that offers practical help and encouragement on your journey of discipleship.
- **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 C. Through consistent review, the women will strengthen this vital habit.
- **Next Steps on the Journey.** This is the assignment to be completed before the next meeting.

CELEBRATION

Through God's Holy Spirit and His powerful Word, the women in your group have been transformed from young believers into women ready to disciple others. Wow! What a time to celebrate! We recommend 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 10, 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, to celebrate new and growing relationships with Jesus and new truths learned about following Jesus in discipleship. This is a time for the leaders to affirm and encourage the women in the ways they have seen God transform their lives. It's also a time to challenge the women to continue in a lifelong pattern of investing in future generations through discipleship. Remind them of the personal and individual impact of 2 Timothy 2:2: These things they (the women in your group) have heard (you) say, they (the women in your group) are to entrust to reliable (women) who will be qualified to teach others also.

- Who will they empower with God's vision and passion?
- What spiritual legacy will they leave for the next generation?

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.