

STORIES OF HOPE

Group Leader Guide - Fall 2020

This new fall series, and the group template that we will use, is **intended to build new and better authentic connections with people, that are anchored in the study of the stories of scripture.** The methodology that we will use for all our Life Groups, is a simple format that can be used by anyone, leads to application, and is very portable.

Premise of fall teaching series: Our culture feels like at times, it's drowning in the sea of hopelessness. We are bombarded by stories that don't feel fair and don't feel hopeful. But the story of our lives, have never been intended to be anchored in the circumstances of the culture, but in the grander story of God.

We've been given stories, in the scriptures, that are intended to **bring hope and encouragement** and become the stories of our lives.

Here are some of the questions people are currently asking:

- *With cases rising of Covid where is the hope?*
- *With injustice. where is the hope?*
- *With no job, where is there hope?*
- *With brokenness in my marriage or family where is the hope?*
- *With the severe disconnection between people in the past 5 months, where is the hope?*
- *With the uncertainty of what is going to happen next, where is the hope?*

SERIES STUDY FOR ALL NEWLY FORMED DISCUSSION GROUPS & ALL EXISTING LIFE GROUPS

Each time a group meets together, online, or in person, here is the format (or study guide) we'd like for you to use during our Fall Series. We will send to you, prior to Sept 20, the stories of scripture that we will be using each week.

The format consists of **three different sections** that will all be used, for each group gathering. If you'd like to watch our short video of a group, where a life-giving discussion, around the Bible, is being facilitated, then you can watch it at FirstOrlando.com/StoriesofHope

SECTION ONE: CONNECTION

TALK

Have everyone introduce themselves & welcome any new participants.

Read the Group Guidelines out loud, that are listed below.

- *What are you thankful for?*
- *What is causing you stress?*
- *Do you need our help? How can we help?*

Look Back

Start doing this the 2nd week of your group gathering and continue to do so for remaining group sessions

Have someone retell the bible story from the previous meeting.

- *What did you do differently because of this story? Who did you tell and what was the reaction? Let's celebrate these things!*

SECTION TWO: DISCOVERY

READ & RETELL

Have one person read the new Bible passage out loud, and the rest follow along. Then have someone else retell the story and then encourage others to fill in what is missing.

READ & LOOK

Read the passage again.

- *What does this passage say about **God, Jesus or his plan?***

READ & LOOK AGAIN

Read the passage once more.

- *What does this passage say about **humans?***

SECTION THREE: APPLICATION

INSIDE ME

- *According to this study, what are you doing well? What do you need to change?*

WHO ELSE?

- *Which two people in your life should you share this with?*

(The above questions have been adapted from The Discovery Bible Study)

GROUP GUIDELINES

Read these five guidelines to the group as you begin the first three or four gatherings of your group this fall.

1. Everyone shares in sentences, not paragraphs.
2. Focus only on what this passage is saying, not on other passages.
3. Focus only on what this group is seeing.
4. Give people time to respond. Silence is OK.
5. The facilitator should facilitate discussion, not teach.

FACILITATOR GUIDELINES

1. Keep the session on schedule and complete all sections, though not necessarily all questions. Spend 25% of time on Section 1; 50% of time on Section 2; and 25% on Section 3.
2. Prepare before by studying passage, looking for main idea, and think of some examples, stories or applications from your own life.
3. Respond to questions by asking group, "What in the passage helps us answer that question?"
4. Respond to distracting comments by asking, "Where is that found in this passage?"
5. Respond to "strange" answers by asking, "Help us understand what you are thinking."

GROUP SESSIONS	PASSAGE
Session 1. Any time after Sept. 20	Mark 5:1-20
Session 2. Any time after Sept. 27	Mathew 9:9-13
Session 3. Any time after Oct. 4	Luke 7:37-50
Session 4. Any time after Oct. 11	John 3:1-17
Session 5. Any time after Oct. 18	Luke 17:11-19

FAQ

How many people do I need to invite?

There is no required number of participants. Your gathering could include you and a friend, or you and 10 friends!

Why do I need to register?

Registering your gathering helps our team best serve you! We want to be able to help your group specifically and pray for your members by name

What if we can't meet every week?

That's okay! The goal of these gatherings is spiritual conversation. Whether you are able to commit to every week or only a handful, we encourage you to participate.

Who should I invite?

This will be different for everyone! It could be a co-worker, family member, or friends – who has God placed in your circle of influence?

I've never led a group before - Can I facilitate a group?

Absolutely! There is no experience required. You don't need to be a public speaker or a Bible scholar. All you need to do is help guide the conversation.

What will we be studying?

We will be using a weekly Discussion Guide with 8 questions.