



ANNO DOMINI

Volume Two • The Middle Ages and Reformation

LEADER GUIDE

We love that many of you will be studying Anno Domini in a group setting. It really is the perfect way to study church history. This leader guide is simply meant to support you as you lead and provide additional questions for your group to discuss as you process the story of the church. If your group has a lively discussion going, there's no need to rush to get through all the questions. We simply want to make your role a bit easier and provide a starting point to get the conversation going.

Leader Expectations

GATHER & FACILITATE CONVERSATION

We recommend that everyone in your small group reads Anno Domini daily in their study book or online through the IF:Gathering app or IFEquip.com. Once a week, gather with your small group to dialogue about the daily questions and/or discuss the group questions provided in this guide.

BUILD A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR PEOPLE TO GO DEEP

There are many ways to host a study such as this. However you decide to go about hosting your event, we ask that you create a simple and pure environment for everyone to come, pray, and learn the story of the church.

Pray: In preparation for your small group gatherings, spend time in prayer. Beg for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh and use your time together for God's glory. Pray for those participating in the study, that they would gain a deeper love for the church and understanding of our history. This is the crux of what we are doing—we're ultimately seeking the Lord and learning His story.

Lean on God: God will have a unique agenda for your group each time you meet. Rely on Him instead of trying to control the conversation. Lean into your own weakness and into His strength and direction.

Be transparent: You have the opportunity to set the tone for those around you. If you choose not to be vulnerable, other women may not feel the freedom to be honest. We encourage you to be honest and transparent, creating an environment for women to open up.

Listen, but also lead: When women are vulnerable, it is a tremendous risk that needs to be honored. Protect them by not interrupting and instead listening and empathizing. You do not need to speak or pray after each person shares. In love, point women back to what the truth of God's Word says in their situation.

Model trust: Be open with your group about how you are processing this study. There are periods in church history that we will love and times when we won't understand how the church could act in certain ways. Throughout the study, we must continue to seek God and ask for His help in understanding the story of His church. These women look to you for an example. We encourage you to be intentional in your relationship with God as we walk through the next nine weeks.

KEEP UNITY A CENTRAL VALUE

Your attendees likely all have different experiences and backgrounds. They may know some parts of church history from their particular tradition. As a leader, you have the responsibility to keep a spirit of unity within your group. We ask for sensitivity, openness, and a safe environment for everyone to learn the story of the church together. We encourage you to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you in demonstrating love to everyone as you learn and process this story together.

Supplies

- IF:Equip study book for each attendee, or access to the study on the IF:Gathering app or IFEquip.com
- Leader Guide
- Bible

Optional: Daily videos. If the daily videos on IFEquip.com or in the IF:Gathering app are important to your discussion, use your computer or phone to play the video for the group.

Suggested Format

We suggest that women do the IF:Equip study on their own daily, then come together once a week to discuss your experience and what you have learned from the study. Begin with prayer and the daily questions, then supplement your discussion with the questions in this guide.



WEEK

ONE

Why do you find it important to study church history?

What are you hoping to get out of this study?

What are some things that you observed from the life of Gregory?

How can you adopt a Gregory-like posture of service in the current role God has given you?

This week, we read about Muhammad and the evolution of Islam. How does Christianity differ from Islam?

What are practical ways that you can interact with or minister to a person of the Muslim faith?

Discuss what it would be like to live in a culture where Christianity and society were viewed as one in the same.

01



WEEK TWO

This week, we learned about a duke who started a monastery, a monk, and a pope. What do these three men have in common?

How did the Great Schism impact the church? And how do disagreements within the church today impact the overall body of Christ/universal church?

What are ways that you can fight for unity in the midst of division?

Paul writes in Romans about the war of sin and righteousness. How does this play out in your life?

Francis dedicated himself to loving the poor because he understood Matthew 10:7. Take a moment and read Matthew 10:7; then discuss what it means to live a life dedicated to sharing the gospel and caring for those around us.

Mark Noll says that “political Christianity is only partial Christianity.” During this time, unless the gospel was being lived out authentically and preached faithfully, positions of authority were of no value. How as believers do we fight against this idea of partial Christianity?

This week, we learned that the main theological issue that confirmed the split of the Western and Eastern Church concerned a word that was added to the Nicene Creed. What is the importance of the Nicene Creed and the change that was made to it?

What does Scripture say about division, and how are we supposed to deal with it?

02



WEEK THREE

How do we try to rebuild God's kingdom ourselves instead of praying
"Thy kingdom come"?

What was your immediate response when reading about the crusades?

How do you see God's spirit moving in the world today?

How can we use our minds to know and glorify God?

How can we engage with Christianity on an intellectual level without
losing the heart of the gospel?

How can you process through your own doubts about faith in a positive
manner? How can you walk beside others as they process through their
questions about faith?

What missionary efforts are you a part of?

03



WEEK FOUR

In what ways have we contributed to a struggle for power among fellow believers, and how can we not allow these things to divide us?

What did you learn this week from the life of John Wycliffe?

Is God the ultimate authority in your life? Why or why not?

How do you feel God has gifted you? In what ways has He called you to use those gifts to influence His Kingdom?

Often times our head gets ahead of our heart. Do you ever find yourself idolizing knowledge? There is a tremendous difference in knowing something and believing it to be true.

Like Bridget of Sweden, do you focus on those around you, or are you too distracted by the busyness of life to notice those in need?


Do you struggle to believe in God's goodness in the midst of tragedy or difficult times?

What are a few areas of life that you need to devote more time to?

04



WEEK FIVE



In what ways does John Hus' prayer inspire you to follow Jesus? "Give me a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, a perfect love, that for Thy sake I may lay down my life with patience and joy."

If you could ask Hus one question, what would you ask him and why?

In what ways have you or someone you know been wounded or hurt by the church?

What is your understanding of the Renaissance period?

How did the Renaissance period impact the church/Christianity?

How have you come to know why you believe what you believe? Or what do you need to do in order to figure out what you believe and why you believe it?

Are there ways the church today uses worldly ways of trying to protect the gospel? Discuss how you can lovingly show God's truth to others without trying to be their judge or their Holy Spirit.



05



WEEK SIX

How has studying church history given you a greater respect and love for the church today?

Since we are all human and fall short of the glory of God, what areas of your life need some reform?

How can you relate to Luther's early days when he was doing all the "right" things but felt so disconnected from the heart of God because he was merely practicing legalism?

Take a moment and place yourself in Luther's shoes. Would you have stood up for truth or retracted your statement?

Have you experienced the freedom that Christ offers through His grace? Why or why not?

How often do you ask the question, "Is this biblical?" Why is it important for us to ask, "Is this biblical?"

Reflect on times in your life when mentors, teachers, or other key people in your life have called you back to God's Word. Share how the Lord grew you in those seasons.

What key passages of Scripture have shaped your understanding of the gospel?



06





WEEK SEVEN

What did you learn about the Anabaptist movement?

What do you think the modern-day church can learn from the Anabaptist movement?

In what ways are we called as followers of Jesus to question and challenge the status quo? How is our faith countercultural?

Do you believe that Scripture is the ultimate authority in your life? Why or why not?

What came to mind when you read that there are still 1 billion “Bibleless” people, and four thousand languages to go? How might God be asking you to participate in the movement for getting Scripture in the hands of more people around the world?

Consider the efforts of the women of the Reformation we read about this week. What does faithfulness look like in the place God has put you? Is God calling you to speak truths? Initiate changes? Make sacrifices?

07



WEEK EIGHT

Can you think of a time when the Lord unexpectedly altered the course of your life like He did John Calvin's?

How can you build bridges with other brothers and sisters in Christ who may hold to different theological beliefs or express their faith in a different manner than you?

Who are the men and women of faith that inspire you? How do their lives call you into greater action and obedience?

What spiritual exercises do you incorporate into your daily life?

What stirs your affections for the Lord?

Are you committed to a larger purpose and mission, like Ignatius Loyola and his companions? If yes, what is that purpose? If no, how/where can you find that purpose?

08



WEEK NINE

Is there a specific systemic injustice that God is calling you to fight against?

When you read Xavier's and Ricci's stories in day two, what thoughts came to mind?

Think back to a time when you had a disagreement with someone. Did you respond with humility or arrogance?

Knowing that, as we study the Word of God, we will most likely disagree with others at times, discuss as a group the posture we should take on when we do disagree.

Where in your life and the church's life today do you think either fear of or lust for power gets in the way of being obedient to God?

In what ways have you been reminded of God's power and grace this week?

How has our study of the church in the Middle Ages and Reformation changed the way you see the church's journey in the world now? How has it renewed your hope in God's work to make all things new?

How has this study shed light on God's faithfulness throughout the ages?

In what ways have this study inspired you to stand on the shoulders of those who have brought the gospel to us so that we can bring it to the generations to come?

