



Seek First

A WALK THROUGH THE
BASICS OF FAITH

LEADER GUIDE

This leader guide is a tool designed to support you by providing additional questions for you to discuss as you walk through this study either one-on-one or in a small group context. We want to make your role a bit easier and provide a starting point to get the conversation going. This study is unique in its format: Days 1 and 4 give readers a devotional, while days 2, 3, and 5 will provide practical illustrations for teaching foundational lessons.

Leader Expectations

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GATHER AND FACILITATE CONVERSATION

We recommend that each person read the study daily. Then, once a week, gather to dialogue about the daily questions and/or discuss the questions provided in this guide.

BUILD A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR PEOPLE TO GO DEEP

There are many ways to study together. However you go about it, we ask that you create a simple and pure environment for authentic discipleship—making room for new believers to grapple and question as they grow.

PRAY

In preparation for your time together, spend time in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit for His guidance and wisdom. Pray for the humility to listen well. Pray for those participating in the study, that they would gain a deeper understanding of God's love for them and the irrevocable gift of salvation.

LEAN ON GOD

God will have a unique agenda 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 others to open up.

LISTEN, BUT ALSO LEAD

When we are vulnerable, it is a tremendous risk that needs to be honored. Protect the women in your group by not interrupting and instead listening and empathizing. 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. 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 five weeks.

Keep Unity A Central Value

Each woman in your group likely has a different story; a varied collection of experiences. As a leader, you have the responsibility to keep the spirit of unity. We ask for sensitivity, openness, and a safe environment for everyone to learn together. We encourage you to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you in demonstrating love to everyone as you learn and process this study together.

Supplies

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- IF:Equip study book for each participant, or access to the study on IFEquip.com or IF:Gathering app
- Leader Guide
- Bible
- Notebook and pen to write down questions and to process
- Daily videos. The videos for the Seek First series are a key to unlocking the demonstrations outlined in the book. As a leader, you'll want to watch!

I'd love to hear your feedback from the study. Feel free to connect with me via social media at @vivmabuni, or my website: www.vivianmabuni.com

From Him, through Him and to Him....

Viv



WEEK ONE

Week One Purpose: clarify the gospel and help new believers understand what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

All of the illustrations to help new believers can be found on the videos at ifequip.com, categorized by study week and day. For week one, the 1) circle illustration, 2) Ephesians 2:8-9, and 3) spiritual journey question are modeled according to the corresponding study day noted in your book.

Saying a “sinner’s prayer” doesn’t magically make someone a Christian. The new believer you’re discipling may have placed her faith/trust in Christ without a point-in-time prayer. Help the new believer understand the decision she has made to be a follower of Jesus.

The lessons from Week One will also help equip women who grew up in church with different ways to communicate the gospel, and clarify aspects of the gospel. Help Christian women learn these lessons with the aim to turn around and teach others. If you’re leading a group study, I’d encourage you to break up into pairs to practice the illustrations with each other. If you are leading a believer through these lessons one-on-one, have her practice with you to help build confidence in sharing the gospel.

Choose discussion questions from the “Ask Questions” section at the end of the days’ lessons in a small group setting. Take the time you need if you’re meeting one on one with a disciple—these lessons can be taken at a slower pace. Don’t feel like you have to rush through all of the content each week.

Week One Homework: in preparation for Week 2, ask your disciple or group to read through all five chapters of 1 John, making note of all verses that mention eternal life. Assigning homework is not only beneficial for your people, but it’s also a way to assess whether the woman/women are motivated, teachable and willing to grow. If they make excuses for being unprepared week after week, they may not be ready to be discipled.

As a leader, if you are going to invest one on one time each week, you want to work with women who are teachable, available, faithful and want to grow in their faith.

Close time in prayer.



WEEK TWO

Week Two Purpose: help the believer understand that we can have assurance of our salvation. It's difficult to develop a foundation of trust if we are constantly fearful of losing our salvation and the promise of eternal life. Assurance provides a firm foundation for faith to flourish.

Take time to view the illustrations at ifequip.com prior to leading your person or group.

Walk new believers through the Bible passages and illustrations with the week's purpose in mind. If you are leading a group, have them break up into pairs and practice the pen-in-Bible and pen cap illustration. Next, have each person share about the "vital signs" in her life.

What verses did each person discover as she read through 1 John? Discuss the homework with her.

The purpose of having people read and reread the same book of the Bible each week is to help a new believer to become trained to read with intention. We are coaching our disciples to begin to dig deeper into the Scriptures and interact with the text. No matter their spiritual background, by the end of Seek First, your group will have a good grasp on 1 John.

Week Two Homework: read through 1 John again, this time noting verses concerning forgiveness of sin.

Close time in prayer.



WEEK THREE

Week One Purpose: clarify the gospel and help new believers understand what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Confession restores fellowship with God—but Jesus Christ alone can offer relationship with God.

During this week, take time to break down the definition and application of confession.

Focus on deepening your relationships with the women you are mentoring. Paul imparted not only the gospel, but his very life because those he disciplined became very dear to him (1 Thessalonians 2:8). The purpose of week three is helping a believer understand the why and how of forgiveness of sin. Have them share the verses they found in 1 John.

This week we cover another way of sharing the gospel with the bridge illustration and then complete the totality of our forgiveness through the Roman prison illustration.

Walking in the freedom of forgiveness is life changing. You may want to assign a separate exercise for the women to pray and ask God to reveal any areas needing to be confessed and renounced. And then writing out the sin list, confessing the sin, writing 1 John 1:9 over the list in thick black sharpie pen and shredding or burning the list.

Week Three Homework: return to 1 John and read the entire book again, this time noting verses describing the Holy Spirit and fellowship with God.

Close in prayer.



WEEK FOUR

Week Four Purpose: teach who the Holy Spirit is and the central role He plays in the life of every believer.

I am excited about this study as a whole, but this week is kind of my favorite. It's so significant because the lessons of surrender and dependence on God's Spirit rather than our own efforts change EVERYTHING.

Most Christians have not learned who the Holy Spirit is and the central role He plays in the life of every believer. This week is not only eye-opening, it is also very practical. I encourage you to pull together the ingredients to demonstrate the chocolate milk (you can substitute for the dairy or lactose-intolerant!) illustration, I highly recommend trying it out and then drinking the deliciousness together.

Again, take the time you need to look up the verses. Helping a new believer find their way around the Bible is an important part of discipleship. And if you don't have all the answers to the questions that may come up, it's perfectly fine to answer with "I don't know." And try and study together to find the answers.

Week Four Homework: Share with someone something you've learned about the Holy Spirit.

Close in prayer.



WEEK FIVE

Week Five Purpose: Coach the new believer to understand that the Christian life is more about knowing God and not just knowing facts about God.

This is the final week of the study! We often get preoccupied with Christian activities, focusing on external rules and morality instead of cultivating our personal love relationship with Jesus. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

If you are able, model your rhythms of quiet time with God. Go about your normal time with God, but narrate to the group your thoughts, prayers, what you read in the Bible, and what your thoughts are as you read.

I've added a few helpful suggestions. Our part is doing what we can to help a believer establish a regular meeting time to pray and read the Bible and connect with God. If they learn to be a self-feeder, they will be poised to lead others to do the same.

If you are leading a group, set aside some time to share what has been helpful or meaningful from the overall study.

Week Five Homework: What is one big takeaway you will consider and share with others from 1 John? How will you use the discoveries made during the course of the study to help someone else?

Close in prayer.