

SESSION 1 LEADER GUIDE

HOST CODE: 246810

LEADER NOTES

_____ WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Offer a personal welcome.

Take attendance as participants join the meeting.

Ask participants to open their app to the session's Meeting Guide.

Opening Prayer

Thank you for using the Prayer Request section of the app this week. Please continue to do so throughout this Study. Let's keep in mind the prayer requests as we use this week's psalm as our opening prayer.

Raise your hand to volunteer to open our session in prayer, first with the psalm and then adding your own prayer. You will find the Daily Psalm in the **Meeting Opening segment** of your Study Guide.

*"I will thank you, LORD, with all my heart;
I will talk about all your wonderful acts.
I will celebrate and rejoice in you;
I will sing praises to your name, Most High."
(Ps. 9:1-2)*

_____ SPIRITUAL PRACTICES (10 MINUTES)

Celebration

Share the following:

Today, let's share our responses to the questions listed under the Spiritual Practice of **Celebration**. I am dividing you into pairs for **4 minutes**. You will find the questions and answers in the **Spiritual Practices segment** of your Meeting Guide.

Divide the class into **random breakout rooms of 2-3 participants** and set the countdown timer for **4 minutes**. The leader should participate in one of the small groups. The small groups do not need to report their discussions to the entire group.

BREAKOUT ROOM GUIDE

Participants (<u>excluding</u> leader and co-leader)	14-15	12-13	10-11	8-9	6-7
Breakout rooms needed	7	6	5	4	3

BROADCAST MESSAGE

Countdown timer says:	Message to broadcast
1 minute remaining	60 seconds remaining in breakouts

Note: Below is the definition of Celebration from the Daily Assignment and the questions that small groups will discuss.

Celebration: *As we learn to trust God to provide, we begin to see ourselves in proper relationship with God's total creation, which frees us for obedience experienced as joy.*

+ *What would help you live within God's creation, through care and stewardship, in ways that would be both purposeful and joyful?*

+ *How will you practice this spiritual discipline this week?*

Sabbath

Share the following:

Sabbath allows us to celebrate the grandeur and mystery of creation.

When you intentionally used all your senses to experience God's Creation, what did you notice? (*Hear briefly from 2-3 participants.*)

BEGIN SESSION (10 MINUTES)

Into the Word

Share the following:

How did everyone do with their homework? (*Clarify specific questions as needed.*)

Follow along as I read these key items in the **Into the Word segment** of your Meeting Guide.

Theme Word: Respect

Title: God Speaks

Theme Verse:

“God said, ‘Let there be light.’ And so light appeared. God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness.”

(Gen. 1:3-4)

Our Human Condition:

The world and all that is in it was created for human beings. I make the most of it, enjoy life, and use everything available to me, even when I may be wasting resources or harming the Earth.

Briefly summarize what was shared in the discussion thread on the Human Condition.

Summary of discussion thread:

A Biblical Scholar’s Perspective

Share the following:

This week you heard our scholar share information meant to enhance our understanding of the Scripture. Does anyone have a comment about the video? You’ll find any notes you took in the **Into the Word segment** of your Meeting Guide. (*Allow 2-3 comments.*)

EXPLORE “GOD SPEAKS” (15 MINUTES TOTAL)

Share the following:

Let’s begin with a discussion of the two Creation stories from Genesis. Consider what you read from Scripture and commentary this week. You’ll find your answers to the following questions in the **Large-Group Discussion segment** of your Meeting Guide.

In the first story, Genesis 1:1–2:3, what examples do you see that help reveal the character and behavior of God? Let’s here 3-4 examples. Raise hands. *(Possible answers: God creates; God speaks to create; God creates a “good” creation; God is good, all-powerful, creative, kind; God values rest.)*

What about in the second story, Genesis 2:4-25? What examples do you see that help reveal the character and behavior of God? Let’s find 3-4 examples. Raise hands. *(Possible answers: God creates from the dust; God has the power to give life; God cares about relationship; God gives authority to others.)*

In your Assignment this week you read “Creation is a witness to God” and answered the question “What parts of Creation draw you especially near to God and lead you to praise the Creator?”

Would several of you briefly share your responses? *(Take comments.)*

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (25 MINUTES)

Divide the class into **random breakout rooms of 3-4** participants and set the countdown clock for **25 minutes**. Tell class to choose a group leader who will keep the discussion moving.

Tell participants to use the Small-Group Discussion segment of their Meeting Guide.

The leader should participate in one of the small-group discussions. The small groups do not need to report their discussions to the entire group.

Note: The small-group discussion content is at the end of this document.

BREAKOUT ROOM GUIDE

Participants (<u>excluding</u> leader and co-leader)	15	12-14	9-11	6-8
Breakout rooms needed	5	4	3	2

BROADCAST MESSAGES

Countdown timer says:	Message to broadcast
15 minutes remaining	5 minutes elapsed ... 15 remaining
10 minutes remaining	Halfway through our breakouts
5 minutes remaining	5 minutes remaining
1 minute remaining	60 seconds remaining in breakouts

GROUP OPEN DISCUSSION (5 MINUTES)

*Ask if there are any thoughts or questions about this session's content that have not been covered in this meeting. Address comments as time allows. Remind participants that any topics not addressed can be discussed on the Group Message Board. Be sure not to go over the time allotted because the **Into the World** section and Personal Prayer section are critical to the Study.*

CONSIDER "INTO THE WORLD" (10 MINUTES)

Share the following:

As we study the Bible together, keep in mind that what we learn in each session needs to be taken into our world today. We are being transformed from the person described in our Human Condition to a more Christ-like person.

Hear again the **Human Condition**:

The world and all that is in it was created for human beings. I make the most of it, enjoy life, and use everything available to me, even when I may be wasting resources or harming the Earth.

Into the World 1:1's

*Divide the class into **random breakout rooms of 2-3 participants** and set the countdown clock for **8 minutes**.*

Tell participants to discuss the questions in the Into the World segment of the Meeting Guide.

The leader should participate in one of the pairings. Paired participants do not need to report their discussions to the entire group.

BREAKOUT ROOM GUIDE

Participants (excluding leader and co-leader)	14-15	12-13	10-11	8-9	6-7
Breakout rooms needed	7	6	5	4	3

BROADCAST MESSAGES

Countdown timer says:	Message to broadcast
15 minutes remaining	5 minutes elapsed ... 15 remaining
10 minutes remaining	Halfway through our breakouts
5 minutes remaining	5 minutes remaining
1 minute remaining	60 seconds remaining in breakouts

Note: Below are the 1:1 discussion questions:

- + *What are your main environmental concerns?*
- + *What are you doing and what more could you do as a steward of God's creation to link arms with other concerned people?*
- + *What will you do to make a difference?*

CLOSE WITH PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

God's Word in My World

Share the following:

Turn to the **Meeting Closing segment** of the Meeting Guide. As we prepare to close in prayer, I want to remind you that you can use the Prayer Request section of the app during the week.

In the **Response to God's Word in My World segment** on Day 5, you were prompted to write a Personal Prayer in response to this session's learning. You can find your prayer in the **Meeting Closing segment** of the Meeting Guide

Please take the next minute to make any updates to your Personal Prayer as a result of today's discussion. In a moment I'm going to place you in small groups to share your Personal Prayer and close the meeting. Also, your Personal Prayer will be able to be accessed each day of the coming week as you pray the Daily Psalm.

*Give a minute for updates while you divide the class into **random breakout rooms of 3-4 participants** and set the countdown timer for **10 minutes**.*

BREAKOUT ROOM GUIDE

Participants (<u>excluding</u> leader and co-leader)	15	12-14	9-11	6-8
Breakout rooms needed	5	4	3	2

I will now place you in small groups. I hope you have a wonderful week and I look forward to our next meeting. I have put **10 minutes** on the clock for breakouts, and you may leave the call when your group concludes its prayer. Be sure each person shares their Personal Prayer.

Open breakout rooms and join a room for prayer.

End

Leader Notes:

Small-Group Discussion (25 MINUTES)

Ask one person to be a timekeeper and plan to spend 2-3 minutes per question for discussion. Remember, the purpose of the Small-Group Discussion is not just to quickly answer the questions but to take time to share openly your thoughts and feelings. Be sure everyone in the group gets a chance to share.

You will be transferred back into the main group when the breakout timer runs out.

Made in the Image of God (10 MINUTES)

Have one person read aloud Genesis 1:26-27. Then discuss the questions that follow.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.’

God created humanity in God’s own image,
in the divine image God created them,
male and female God created them.”

What does it mean to you that humankind is made in the image of God?

How does the idea that all people are made in the image of God challenge your thinking and/or your behavior?

What is your understanding of the responsibility that comes with being made in the image of God?

Sabbath (15 MINUTES)

Have one person read aloud Genesis 2:1-3:

“The heavens and the earth and all who live in them were completed. On the sixth day God completed all the work that he had done, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work of creation.”

Each week of this study there is a focus on Sabbath. We will be encouraged, reminded, and challenged with many examples of ways to keep the Sabbath. Hopefully, we will grow in our appreciation of this Spiritual Practice.

Discuss the following:

When you think of keeping the Sabbath, what thoughts come to mind?

Sabbath-keeping is not meant to be a new legalism; it is a gift of rest and freedom. How does this idea influence your thinking about Sabbath?

What do you think are some benefits of Sabbath-keeping for people today?

What changes might you consider making during this study that would help you honor the Sabbath?