

HENRI J. M. NOUWEN
Following Jesus

FINDING OUR WAY HOME IN AN AGE OF ANXIETY



SESSION 2 LEADER GUIDE

Session 2: THE CALL: “Come Follow Me”

HOST CODE: 246810

TO THE LEADER

Leader Responsibilities

- Pray daily for your participants.
- Complete daily assignments.
- Participate in the Group Discussion question, prayer request board and message board.
- Monitor prayer request board: Add any new spoken prayer requests from closing prayer time in the live meetings, update prayer concerns, and remove anything inappropriate.
- Prepare for the Live meeting.
- Follow up on absences and any care needs in your group.

Leader Preparation for Group Meeting

- Review this session’s leader guide ahead of time so you’re confident with the content and flow.
- Review the Group Discussion Thread responses and write a brief summary in the space provided in this guide.
- This guide is flexible for 60- or 90-minute sessions. Longer groups allow for longer discussion time on each question.
- Write in the exact start times for each segment to keep your session on schedule — and always honor your group’s committed start and end times. You will need to move the group along in discussions so you can cover the questions.
- Participants have answered all of the questions and have access to their answers in their meeting guides, so they are prepared for discussion.
- Plan to hear from 3-4 people per question. Take volunteers. Everyone will not share on each question. Be mindful to prompt the quieter ones to share when possible. Sometimes you may need to start the discussion by sharing your answers.

SESSION 2

Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety

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Leader Notes:

_____ MEETING OPENING (10 or 15 MINUTES)

Offer a personal welcome.

Take attendance as people join the meeting. If anyone is missing, ask the group if they know why.

Ask participants to open their app to the chapter’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. (*Feel free to comment on any prayer requests or celebrations you read on the app*).

If any participant(s) did not post a prayer, share the following.

If you tried to post a prayer request and couldn't, it may be due to the Welcome messages on your message board not being dismissed. I will walk you through how to do this when we close this meeting.

Open in prayer.

Lord Jesus, as we begin our time together, we ask You to quiet the noise within us—the fears, the scarcity thinking, the grip of control we so tightly hold. Open our ears to hear Your voice saying, “*Come, follow me,*” not as a distant invitation, but as a deeply personal one, spoken to each of us by name. Like the disciples at the water's edge, may we be willing to leave our nets—whatever keeps us anchored to our old ways of seeing the world. Replace our fearful, clutching hearts with ones that trust in Your

abundance. As we open ourselves to your teachings and to one another, may Your Spirit move freely among us, turning our thinking upside down and right-side up again. Amen.

LARGE GROUP (25 or 35 MINUTES)

Share the following:

Group Discussion Question

As we began this study together, we were given a group discussion question in our daily assignment to stir our thoughts.

We were asked: "In what ways do you get in touch with your brokenness? How do you pray, meditate, or confess? Do you have a spiritual director or mentor to share this brokenness with?"
Briefly summarize what was shared by participants in the Group Discussion.

Summary of discussion thread:

Contemplative Prayer Practice Discussion:

Nouwen strongly advocates for daily structured quiet time, not as a technique but as a *discipline of receptivity* — a committed, regular practice of showing up before God in stillness, trusting that God is present even when that presence is not felt. Would one or two of you comment on your experience with the Contemplative Prayer Practice this week?

Henri Nouwen Discussion:

Please open the **LARGE GROUP segment** of your app for content, questions, and answers.

We heard Henri Nouwen expanding on the themes from this session's chapter. What stood out to you? (*Hear from 2-3 participants.*)

(Choose from the following questions according to your preference and time frame. Participants have all these questions and their answers in the Large Group segment of their meeting guide. You should be able to spend 4-6 minutes per question to cover them all. Hear from 3-4 participants on each question.)

Day 1 Assignment Question from Chapter 2: THE CALL: "Come Follow Me"

- There are two logics, the logic of the world and the logic of the kingdom. Jesus breaks the disciples' expectations with the logic of the kingdom, which is one of abundance and overflow.
How can you live out this kingdom logic in a world of scarcity and skepticism?

What makes it so difficult?

Day 2 Assignment Questions from Chapter 2

- “When we are concerned that there isn’t enough, our first response is to start hoarding. We start hoarding the bread, the fish. Hoarding honor. Hoarding affection, hoarding knowledge. Hoarding ideas. If we start hoarding we find ourselves with enemies.”
In what ways do you feel the temptation to hoard?
What possessions are the most difficult for you to resist hoarding?
- “Jesus’ miracles are signs of a new reality. He says, ‘Do you remember how much bread was left over? You still don’t believe?’ Jesus gets almost desperate and says, ‘How can I make you believe that you can trust me? How can I make you believe that with me you will not lack for anything?’”
How would you answer these questions honestly?
What is it about Jesus that is sometimes hard to trust?
- What arguments or excuses do you find yourself telling to Jesus when he calls you to follow him in your daily life?

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (15 or 30 MINUTES)

Divide the class into random breakout rooms of 3–4 participants. Set the countdown clock for 15 or 30 minutes and the "Countdown after closing" clock to 60 seconds. Direct group to open the Small-Group Discussion segment of their Meeting Guide.

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

Note: The content of the Small-Group Discussion guide is included at the end of this document.

MEETING CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Share the following:

Now please open the **Meeting Closing segment** of your app.

Before we close in prayer, a few reminders:

- Remember to use our **private Prayer Request board** to share joys, sorrows, or personal needs at any time. Check it regularly and pray through the requests daily.
- Use your **group roster** to pray for each person in our group throughout the week.

Personal Prayer

At the end of your Daily Assignment, you were prompted to write a **Personal Prayer** in response to this session's teaching. Take a moment now to review and update your prayer with any new thoughts from today's discussion so you are ready to share it during our closing prayer.

[Pause one minute for the group to update their prayers.]

Your Personal Prayer will also appear each day in the coming week as part of your Daily Assignment, so you can continue praying it throughout the week.

Closing Prayer

I'll open us in prayer, then call on each of you to read your Personal Prayer. Afterward, we'll open it up for any additional prayer concerns.

Pray:

LORD, Thank you for our group and our time together today.

Now hear our Personal Prayers....

(Call on each participant.)

LORD, we bring to you these Personal Prayers as well as the following needs for others.

(Invite participants to share additional prayer concerns. Make sure to add these to the Prayer Board after the session.)

We bring you these and all our unspoken prayer requests.

Lord, thank You for this time together and for the truth that Your call does not require us to take dramatic leaps, but faithful small steps, the ones we already know we need to take tonight, and the ones waiting for us tomorrow. Remind us that each of us reflects a unique facet of Your love, and that together we make Your grace visible in the world in ways no one of us could alone. Where fear has whispered "*there is not enough*," let Your Spirit speak abundance. Where we have clung to control, loosen our hands to trust You more fully. Send us out as disciples who are becoming—slowly, humbly, and lovingly—more attuned to Your voice. May we walk into this week with open hearts, willing to let You be the center of all we are. Amen.

If needed, share the following with anyone unable to post on the prayer board.

Clearing the Welcome Messages

To navigate to the message board via computer, tap the icon in the navigation menu to the left.

To navigate in the app, tap the back button until you arrive on the Study Group screen. Then tap the message board icon in the lower navigation.

Read each welcome message and dismiss it.

Can you now see messages and a red button with a white plus sign on the message board and prayer request board?

<End>

Leader Notes:

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

(15 or 30 MINUTES depending on the length of your group meeting)

Ask one person to be a timekeeper. Divide the time you have been given by the number of questions to be able to discuss all of them. 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 takes their turn to share.**

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

Questions are from your Day 3 Assignment

(Your answers are in the Small-Group Discussion Segment of your Meeting Guide)

- “What we hold on to always diminishes. What we give away always multiplies. It is the great illogic.”
How does the counterintuitive logic of the kingdom teach you that by giving we receive and by hoarding we lose?
How do you hold on to things?
Why is it such a challenge for us to let go?
- “The great secret of the spiritual life is that you already know the little steps, even if you don’t know the big ones.”
What are the little steps you need to take today?
- “To follow Jesus is to hear his call as a very personal call. It is a call to give a unique witness to the love of God as revealed in Jesus.”
How have you heard the voice of Jesus, the call to follow him, in your own unique manner?