



Connection Group (Small Group)

Week 1: The Beginning of the Movement

Acts 1:1-11, Called to Follow

WELCOME *[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same.]*

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind them someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them – we share our hearts out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, not to please someone else]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

The Book of Acts was written by Luke, the Physician, a close friend of Paul and the Apostles. He writes to a friend named Theophilus. He picks up on the story of Jesus and the apostles after Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection, just before Jesus ascends back to His throne in Heaven.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, ie. your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

Acts 1:1-11. The Promise of the Holy Spirit

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]*

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

Acts 1:1-11

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS *[Questions marked * are the key questions that need to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to "teach" them something.]*

- * What do we learn about God from this passage?** *(God understands our weak faith; Jesus continues to disciple them; The Holy Spirit is our power to be His witnesses. He is our Comforter; He has work for me to do)*
 - * What do we learn about Man/us from this passage?** *(I can set my mind on earthly things; when I choose not to trust and wait on God I can limit God's power; I can put God in a "box"; I often need explicit instructions from God; I don't like to wait.)*
 - As a disciple of Jesus, what is the impact on you of Jesus' words as it may pertain to your life, marriage, family, work?**
 - Where are you called to Christ's witness? How do you sense a need from Holy Spirit to help you?**
 - * What is God leading you to do? Sum up your "take-away" in a word or short sentence.**
- Who will you tell this week what God has shown you in His Word today?**

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE Acts 1:12-26 *[Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.]*

HUDDLE *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...

2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...

3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]

Early Church Week 1 – Leadership Coaching

The purpose of this page is to help you sharpen your skills as a Group Leader. Each week we will include concepts, challenges, and resources designed to assist you as you lead and shepherd your grow group and grow as a disciple yourself.

Leading *[Learn to facilitate your group more effectively.]*

- Recording attendance helps you keep track of your group members and it helps the church staff to know who is active in a group and the church family.
- Be sure to add new Connection Group members so that you can record their attendance. If you have someone on your roster that no longer plans to attend your group, please fill out the yellow note for Judy Nance to remove them next time rosters are printed. This will keep your roster very manageable.

Shepherding *[We must know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, and protect the sheep.]*

- In Matthew 18:10-14 and Luke 15:3-7 Jesus tells the parable of the Lost Sheep. Jesus tells those listening that if a shepherd with one hundred sheep has lost just one of them, he will leave the ninety-nine and go find the lost one. When the lost sheep is found, the shepherd rejoices. In the same way, it is important for us to keep in contact with everyone who is part of our grow group.
- If there is someone in your grow group who has not been in attendance for a while, call to check up on them. Let them know how much the group has missed them. Find out what is going on in their life and how you can be praying for them. A personal contact from the group leader or apprentice will often be enough to bring someone back into the group.

Abiding *[We must personally grow as disciples.]*

- We must BE disciples before we can MAKE disciples, but what does it mean to BE a disciple? John 8:31 says: "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, 'You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings.'" To accomplish that, we must know His teachings by studying the Bible and we must do what He asks of us in those teachings.
- Choose a biblical concept to study and meditate on this week (love, patience, and tithing, using your gifts) and spend time thinking about what it means to live that out. Be intentional about insuring that your actions accurately reflect God's Word.

Connection Group (Small Group Time)

Week 2: Foundation of a Movement

Acts 1:12-26



WELCOME *[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same.]*

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind them someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them – we share our hearts out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, not to please someone else]*

SHARE THE BACKGROUND OF PASSAGE *[Provide context by sharing what comes before the story.] Following His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus remained with His disciples for forty days. These forty days were marked by convincing proofs that He was alive. His followers were convinced that Jesus had conquered death and pondered their next move. However, as Jesus ascended to heaven and promised the Holy Spirit, He commanded His disciples to stay in Jerusalem. It was here that they considered a new addition.*

TELL THE STORY – this week's passage is Acts 1:12-26 *[Have someone tell the story.]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[Group members tell the story together based on what they remember]*

READ THE STORY OUTLOUD *[Read the scripture passage to see if anything was added or omitted]*
Acts 1:12-26

DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about God from this passage? *[God gives us clear consequences of our sin (Judas' death); God knows our hearts (v 24), God calls us quite often to wait, God calls us to intimacy with*

Him through prayer, we can trust the Lord for guidance, the Holy Spirit speaks to us through prayer, God

desires unity among His disciples, God speaks to us through His Word (Psalms), etc.]

2. What do we learn about Man/Us from this passage? *[We don't think about the consequences of our sin in advance, we don't know the "heart" of man, we are deceived by the devil, the*

news of our "failures" can spread quicker than the gospel, etc.]

3. What is God saying to you specifically through this passage as it pertains to your life, marriage, family, or work?

4. What is God leading you to do with this truth?

OTHER QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THIS PASSAGE:

1. Judas received 30 pieces of silver for betraying Jesus, why do you think Luke was so graphic in describing Judas' death and decomposition? *[He wants us to see the clear consequences of our sin.]*

2. Because the devil "watches our game film," what specific tactics does he use in attacking you?

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE Acts 2:1-13 *[Ask someone tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.]*

HUDDLE *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...

2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...

3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]

Group Guidelines

Safe Group

Confidentiality

Listen

Pause

Silence

No "Cross Talk"

Sharing

Don't Fix

Don't Recuse

Be Self Aware

Use "I" Statements

Personal Application

Conflict

Connection Group (Small Group Time)

Week 3: The Power of the Spirit

Acts 2:1-13



WELCOME *[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same.]*

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GUIDELINES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind them someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them – we share our hearts out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, not to please]*

SHARE THE BACKGROUND TO THE PASSAGE *[Provide context by sharing what comes before the story.]*

After the disciples saw Jesus ascend into heaven they went back to the upper room where they had met many times. They waited as He told them what to do. They prayed. They searched the Scriptures. They cast lot to see which of the disciples should take the place of Judas. After the lots fell to Matthias the disciples waited in Jerusalem until the promise from the Father came to pass.

TELL THE STORY –Acts 2:1-13 *[Have someone tell the story.]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[Group members tell the story together based on what they remember]*

READ PASSAGE ALOUD *[Read the scripture passage to see if anything was added or omitted]*

DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS

- 1. What do we learn about God from this passage?** *[God keeps His promises, the Holy Spirit empowers us, God's presence transforms us, God uses plain ordinary people, God desires for everyone to come to faith in Him, other people take notice when God transforms us, etc.]*
- 2. What do we learn about Man/Us from this passage?** *[I am His instrument for spreading the gospel, the pathway of discipleship is the same today for me as it was for the first disciples, I am amazed when I see God move in the lives of others, there are times when my life doesn't show a clear picture of Jesus, etc.]*
- 3. What is God saying to you specifically through this passage as it pertains to your life, marriage, family, or work?**
- 4. What is God leading you to do? Sum up your "take-away" in a word or short sentence.**

OTHER QUESTIONS PERTINANT TO THIS PASSAGE:

1. What will you answer when people ask, “What does this mean?” when they see the Spirit working in you?
2. How do you respond when you see the Lord obviously at work in those around you?

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK’S PASSAGE Acts 2:14-36 *[Ask someone to tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS

HUDDLE *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

- 1) *identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...*
- 2) *identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...*
- 3) *did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it’s ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]*

Group Guidelines

Safe Group

Confidentiality

Listen

Pause

Silence

No “Cross Talk”

Sharing

Don’t Fix

Don’t Recuse

Be Self Aware

Use “I” Statements

Personal Application

Conflict

Connection Group (Small Group Time)

Week 4: Acts 2:14-36 Peter's Sermon



WELCOME

[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same]

OPEN IN PRAYER

INTRODUCTIONS/CAST VISION

REMIND THE GROUP OF GUIDELINES

SHARE BACKGROUND TO THE STORY *[Provide context by sharing what comes before the story.]*

As promised, the Holy Spirit is poured out on the disciples of Jesus to begin His work of renewal in Jerusalem and make it possible for His salvation to reach “to the ends of the earth.” As the result of this outpouring, the disciples spoke in various languages. For those from across the globe, they were amazed to hear the disciples speaking in “their own languages.” Then Peter takes to the stage to declare God’s message of the Messiah.

TELL THE STORY – This week’s passage is **Acts 2:14-36** *[Have someone tell the story.]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[Group members tell the story together based on what they remember]*

READ HE STORY ALOUD *[Read the scripture passage to see if anything was added or omitted]*

DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS:

1. What do we learn about God from this passage? *[God desires for everyone to come to faith in Him, God desires for us to testify of His grace, God will give us the words to say, God gives us the courage to testify of His love, God fulfills His promises, God uses the miraculous to encourage us in our faith, God longs to have an intimate relationship with us, etc.]*
2. What do we learn about Man/Us from this passage? *(I am His instrument for spreading the gospel, All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, I am called (like Peter) to “take a stand” for Christ, I often demand evidence before belief/action, People often reject Christ not because of lack of knowledge but fullness of pride, etc.)*
3. What is God saying to you specifically through this passage as it pertains to your life, marriage, family, and work?
4. What is God leading you to do?

OTHER QUESTIONS PERTINANT TO THE PASSAGE:

1. Peter did not include his personal story of coming to faith. What are the dangers of relying too heavily on our testimony rather than conveying truths about Jesus?
2. Is it hard for you to have a “gospel centered” conversation with an unbeliever? Why?

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK’S PASSAGE – Acts 2:37-47 *[Ask someone to tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.]*

HUDDLE *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

- 1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...*
- 2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...*
- 3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]*

Group Guidelines

Safe Group

Confidentiality

Listen

Pause

Silence

No "Cross Talk"

Sharing

Don't Fix

Don't Recuse

Be Self Aware

Use "I" Statements

Personal Application

Conflict

Connection Group (Small Group)
Week 5 – The Birth of the Church
Acts 2:37:47 Peter Addresses the Crowd



WELCOME *[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same.]*

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other]*

REVIEW GROUP GUIDELINES

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind everyone to stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

In this passage, we see a harvest of those who responded to the Gospel delivered by Peter. They were immediately baptized and added to the church. Fast forwarding from this scene, the early church not only devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, but they also devoted themselves to one another. The church began to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of Christ so much that it shaped how they viewed one another. As a result of their devotion, the Lord continued to add to the church those who are being saved.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, ie. your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]*

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

³⁷ When the people heard this, it had a deep effect on them. They said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

³⁸ Peter replied, "All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose."

⁴⁰ Peter said many other things to warn them. He begged them, "Save yourselves from these evil people." ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized. About 3,000 people joined the believers that day.

⁴² The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared their lives together. They ate and prayed together. ⁴³ Everyone was amazed at what God was doing. They were amazed when the

apostles performed many wonders and signs. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together. They shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold property and other things they owned. They gave to anyone who needed something. ⁴⁶ Every day they met together in the temple courtyard. They ate meals together in their homes. Their hearts were glad and sincere. ⁴⁷ They praised God. They were respected by all the people. Every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS [Questions marked * are the key questions that need to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to “teach” them something.]

- 1.* **What do we learn about God from this passage?** (*God brings conviction to our hearts, God calls us to repent, forgiveness is only found through Jesus, the Lord calls us to intimacy with Himself*)
- 2.* **What do we learn about man/us from this passage?** (*I am selfish and do not want to sacrifice for the needs of others, I try to do God’s part, repentance is difficult for us.*)
3. **When was the last time you were “pierced to the heart” by God’s word? What did you do to respond to it?**
4. **What is God saying to you specifically through this passage as it pertains to your life, marriage, family, and work?**
- 5.* **What is God leading you to do? Sum up your “take-away” in a word or short sentence.**

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK’S PASSAGE Acts 3:1-11 [*Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.*]

PRAYER REQUESTS [*Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don’t have to have something to share every week.*]

HUDDLE [*As members are leaving gather your team and...*

- 1) *identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...*
- 2) *identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...*
- 3) *did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it’s ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]*



Connection Group (Small Group)

Week 6 – The Miracle of the Movement

Acts 3:1-11



WELCOME *[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same.]*

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GUIDELINES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind them someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them – we share our hearts out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, not to please someone else]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

Shortly after the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, many were added to the number of disciples. Now, the followers of Jesus found themselves meeting in community and sharing life together. Out of their newfound togetherness, they began to proclaim Christ publically, especially in the temple, where there was gathered a large number of Jews. During these trips to the temple, they encountered many people who God had placed in their path.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, ie. your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]* **Acts 3:1-11 Peter Heals the Crippled Beggar**

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]*

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹ While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS [Questions marked * are the key questions that need to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to “teach” them something.]

1. * **What do we learn about God from this passage?** (God knows our deepest needs and hurts, God is all powerful, God heals a brokenness that the world cannot, God doesn't overlook the distressed and downcast, God blesses the obedience of His disciples)
2. * **What do we learn about man/us from this passage?** (I try to make it in life on my own strength, I don't want people to interfere with my busy schedule, I don't raise God enough for all He's done.)
3. **What is the result of ordinary disciples filled with the Holy Spirit?**
4. **What is God saying to you specifically through this passage as it pertains to your life, marriage, family, and work?**
5. * **What is God leading you to do? Sum up your “take-away” in a word or short sentence.**

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE This concludes six weeks of the Book of Acts

Acts 3:12 – Acts 4:22 [Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]

PRAYER REQUESTS [Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.]

HUDDLE [As members are leaving gather your team and...

- 1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...
- 2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...
- 3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]

