

Thank you for previewing this *youthministry360* Small Group Leader's Guide for *NEW*. We're pumped you're considering utilizing this lesson plan with your *NEW* student journals.

We designed this 4 session Leader's Guide to help give you a more relational framework to help your students work through *NEW*. To help you evaluate this sample, below you'll find an overview of the structure of the lesson plan.

Function:

- These Leader's Guides should be used **the week following** the corresponding week in *NEW*.
 - For example, the Leader's Guide for Week 1 should be used to facilitate a small group gathering **after** students have completed the first week of *NEW*.
 - The Leader's Guide for Week 2 should be used to facilitate a meeting **after** Week 2, and so on.

Structure:

- The *NEW* Leader's Guides are designed to provide you with at least half an hour of meeting time content. Most groups will find that there is enough content (with the addition of student input and interaction) to go well beyond a 30-minute time slot.
- The first component of each *NEW* Leader's Guide is a time for students to share what they've learned that week in their personal study of *NEW*.
- The second component of each *NEW* Leader's Guide is a Bible study activity that takes one aspect of the previous week's content and goes more in depth in a fast-paced discussion.
- The final component of your *NEW* Leader's Guide is a section that previews the week to come.

If you have any questions about your Leader Guide/Student Guide preview PDF, please do not hesitate to email (feedback@youthministry360.com) or call us (888.96.ym360).

NEW: First Steps For New Christ-Followers

>>>>Week 1 Lesson Plan

Notes

Getting Started (5-10 minutes)

FIRST, begin this first small group session by setting the stage for the unique nature of this group.

If you have a group of *new* Christ-followers, consider saying something like:

- **Since the first Christ-followers met in small groups in Jerusalem in the first century, Believers have been gathering like this to grow together in their faith. What an awesome opportunity we have over the next few weeks to walk together along this part of our faith journey!**

If you have a group of *young* Christ-followers, consider saying something like:

- **All throughout the Bible, we can see the call to grow and mature in our faith. Salvation is about belief. But living the Christ-life is about growing in our knowledge of God and looking to let that knowledge shape our lives. This group is going to be an exciting time where we grow together, watching each other's lives grow to look more and more like Christ.**

THEN, remind students of how this group will function over the next few weeks. Explain that every student will be expected and encouraged to spend time each day working through *NEW*. Each week's meeting will cover the material from the most recent week they've completed.

Challenge students to invest themselves in this group as much as possible, helping them understand that the overall experience will be stronger the more they engage with the material. Remind them that it's OK to miss a day or two (it happens!), but that the important thing is to commit as much as possible to sticking with it over the next four weeks. Ask if anyone has any questions

FINALLY, transition into an opening prayer time. Seek to make this prayer related to this new spiritual journey your students are on. As much as possible, encourage students to share personal prayer requests with the group. Maybe not this first session, but over the next three sessions, give students the chance to pray for one another. After your prayer time, transition into a time of looking back over the last week of *NEW*.

Looking Back (10-15 minutes)

FIRST, explain to students that you'll start each meeting with a time of reviewing what they've learned in the previous week.

As a reminder, this is an unstructured time of review. In other words, there's no specific day you'll be asking students to look back at. **There's no prescribed activity.** This time of review flows purely from each individual's interaction with the content in *NEW*. Your goal for this time is to have students share their reflections and engage in a dialogue around any questions or thoughts that may arise.

Lined writing area for student responses.

Having said this, we've provided you with a set of questions to help prompt students to think about the past week, and to help encourage them to participate. *(And don't worry: they'll open up more with each session!)*

Consider asking questions similar to the following to help students open up about what they're learning in *NEW*:

- **Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
 - If possible, lead students to go deeper in fleshing out their answer to this question. It would be ideal if you could help them grasp how their answer practically applies to their daily lives.
- **Overall, was your response positive or negative to Week 1? If positive, why? What did you like about it? If negative, what rubbed you the wrong way?**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **What questions do you have? Was there anything you didn't understand?**
- **What did you encounter that was completely new to you? Were there concepts that you hadn't run-in to before? How did it make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**

FINALLY, transition into your time of Bible study using the "Going Deeper" activity.

Going Deeper (10-15 minutes)

FIRST, inform students that because Week 1 was sort of a general look at the new life they have in Christ, this "Going Deeper" will look at more of a big-picture view of one aspect of this new life.

NEXT, explain to students that they'll be going deeper into the concept that was covered on Week 1, Day 5. Consider saying something like: **Day 5 was all about God being "knowable." This is a pretty big deal if you think about it. We wouldn't feel really good about serving a god we couldn't know. So the fact that God has chosen to make Himself known to us is really kind of amazing.**

Ask students to think for a second of the different ways we can encounter God. After you've given them a moment to process, ask them to stand up (or raise their hand) if they think God uses more than one method of making Himself known to us. Ask them to keep standing if they think He uses more than two. More than three. More than four. At this point, if anyone is still standing, ask him or her to name a few of the different methods God uses to reveal something of Himself to us.

Allow students to answer, then explain that your point isn't necessarily to come up with a comprehensive list of all the ways God makes Himself known, but merely to get them thinking about this concept.

Lined writing area for student responses.

THEN, explain to students that you're going to be looking at a few different ways God chooses to make Himself known to us. Instruct students to go to Psalm 19:1 in their Bibles. Remind them that David wrote most of the psalms, and that this psalm is one of the many he penned.

Read or have a student read Psalm 19:1. Then, ask something like:

- **This verse speaks to the idea that we can know God through a certain means. What is it?** (Answer: Nature. Creation. Specifically in this case, "the heavens.")
- **What does it say we can learn about God from the skies, the stars, the planets, etc.?** (Answer: God's glory; God's role as Creator.)

So, as students are thinking about ways we can encounter God and learn something about Him, creation is one of those ways.

NEXT, have students turn to Matthew 18:20. Read or have a student read the verse. Then, ask something like:

- **This verse speaks to another way that we can encounter God. What is it?** (Answer: Through other people.)
- **This verse speaks to the idea that when we're with other Christ-followers, we can experience aspects of God's character and nature in them. Can you think of some examples of how this might look?** (Answer: Other people's love and/or kindness toward us or others; wisdom from other Christ-followers; seeing others serve the needy, and so on.)

If students are keeping score, that's two ways they can encounter God and in the process learn more about His character.

THEN, have students go to John 14:25-26. Read or have a student read the verse. Then, ask something like:

- **These verses speak to yet another way that we can know God more. What is it?** (Answer: Through the Holy Spirit)
- **How does this verse say that the Holy Spirit helps us know God more?** (Answer: When the verse says, "teach you all things," it's not talking about algebra or baseball trivia. The Holy Spirit leads us into a deeper understanding of God and His ways.)

This makes a third way the Bible says we can experience God!

NEXT, have students go to Psalm 119:9-11. Read or have a student read the passage. Then, say something like:

- **These are the last group of verses we'll look at. They too speak to a way we can know God and His ways. What are they referring to?** (Answer: God's Word; the Bible.)
- **Of all the ways we've listed, do you have an idea what might be the most complete way of learning about God?** (Answer: The Bible)
- **Why is this the case? Why isn't experience, or other people the most complete way of discovering who God is?**
- **What has been your experience in reading your Bible? Positive? Neutral? Negative? Explain why you think this is the case.**

Explain to students that the Bible can sometimes be challenging. But it's God's main way for helping us know Him. And to follow Him we have to know Him.

