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242

GROUPS

4 WEEK GROUP LAUNCH & RESOURCE GUIDE

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**THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES
TO THE APOSTLES' TEACHING
AND TO FELLOWSHIP,
TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD
AND TO PRAYER.**

ACTS 2:42

242
GROUPS



WEEK 1

FELLOWSHIP (15MIN)

FOOD (30MIN)

STUDY (60MIN)


PRAYER (15MIN)

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE



**WHEN YOU BEGIN A NEW
JOURNEY, IT'S HELPFUL TO HAVE A
MAP FOR THE ROAD AHEAD.**

As your group begins, this four week study will help you plan your course, get to know the people you are with and ensure that everyone is headed in the same direction.



WELCOME

TO GROUP LAUNCH!

We want you to know what you can expect from future 242 group meetings. We hope this group is a place where you connect relationally and grow spiritually. Today is all about getting to know one another.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A 242 GATHERING?

Read Acts 2:42 together as a group.

**THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES
TO THE APOSTLES' TEACHING
AND TO FELLOWSHIP,
TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD
AND TO PRAYER.
ACTS 2:42**

DISCUSS: What were the four priorities that the early church devoted themselves to?

As you can see, 242 Groups take their cue from Acts 2:42. A great group includes time for both relational connection and the study of scripture that challenge you to grow spiritually.

While amounts of time and what we study will change from week to week, each meeting should include the following:

FELLOWSHIP (15min)

The social time at the beginning of a gathering is a chance to get to know one another and catch up on what's happened since your last meeting.

FOOD (30min)

Groups typically gather around a meal or refreshments. Your group can decide what they want to do from week to week. From time to time a group may also share communion together to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus.

STUDY (60min)

This is the majority of your group discussion time. You will read a passage of scripture and study it using the 242 Bible Study Method or the 242 Divine Listening Guide. This is a moment to hear from God's word and receive the invitation Jesus has for you.. This is a moment to hear from God's word and receive the invitation Jesus has for you.

PRAYER (15min)

This is a time to share how your group can pray for you over the next week. In the coming weeks, your leader may ask if anyone would like to pray. While you won't be required to pray, we hope that over time you will feel comfortable doing so.

WHY 242?

It is important for a group to begin in agreement about why they exist. **The goal of 242 is to provide a community environment to Seek, Serve, and Send disciples of Jesus.** It is our desire that this is an atmosphere for you to be known and grow as a follower of Jesus.

There are things that can happen in circles that cant happen in rows. That's by design. You can't grow spiritually unless you're connecting relationally. God created us for community.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 out loud in your group.

How would you express this verse in your own words?

How have you experienced this principle?

**"TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE,
BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GOOD
RETURN FOR THEIR LABOR: IF EITHER
OF THEM FALLS DOWN,
ONE CAN HELP THE OTHER UP. BUT
PITY ANYONE WHO FALLS AND HAS
NO ONE TO HELP THEM UP."
ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10**

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GROUPS

In an effort to provide the best experience possible for your group we encourage you to limit the size of your group to between 3 and 12 people following the example Jesus set with His disciples.

Keeping your group small will make for better conversations, deeper relationships and will be all around easier to coordinate schedules for consistent gatherings. Once you have established a group we also recommend that it be a closed group unless all members agree to add members.

Ownership is also pivotal to a great group experience. Getting off the sidelines and joining in is what owning your group experience looks like. It will take a little time and effort—and may be a little awkward at first—but it's worth it. If you make the effort, your group experience will be much more worthwhile. Helping other people grow their faith grows yours too.

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER ACTIVITY

Spend the remainder of your group time getting to know one another. Complete three rounds of the questions below, inviting each person to answer one or more questions from each round.

ROUND 1 – SHARING THE BASICS

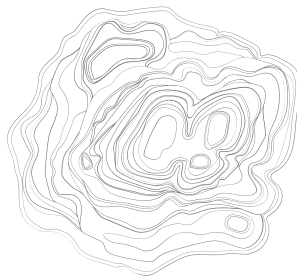
- Where were you raised?
- How long have you lived in this area?
- What do you like to do in your spare time?

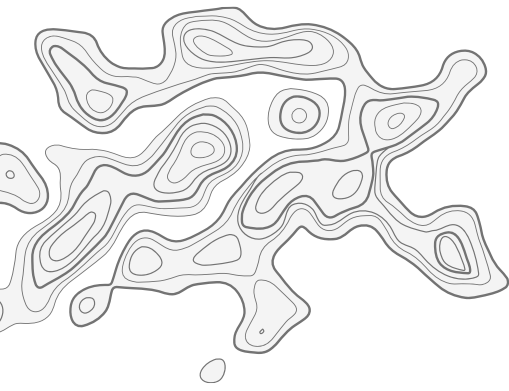
ROUND 2 – CHURCH, GROUPS, AND EXPECTATIONS

- How long have you been connected to our church?
- Have you ever been in a group like this before?
 - If yes, what was your experience?
- In your opinion, what would make this a great group experience?

ROUND 3 – GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- If you could take a vacation tomorrow, where would you go and why?
- If you were the brand representative for a company or product, what would it be and why?
- If you could have dinner with any famous person in history, who would it be?





WHAT'S NEXT?

Before you leave, take some time to discuss when and where you will be meeting for the next three weeks.

OUR NEXT THREE MEETINGS WILL BE...

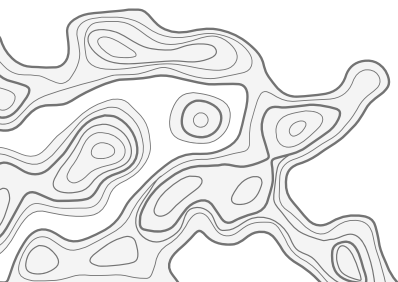
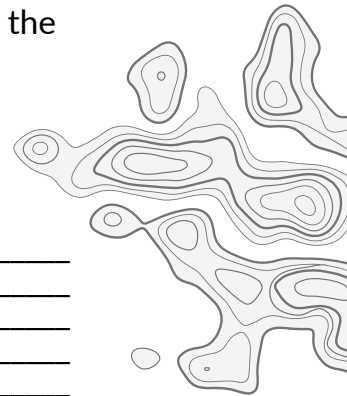
| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| DATE: _____ | DATE: _____ | DATE: _____ |
| TIME: _____ | TIME: _____ | TIME: _____ |
| LOCATION: _____ | LOCATION: _____ | LOCATION: _____ |
| FOOD: _____ | FOOD: _____ | FOOD: _____ |

During the next three sessions, each group member will have the opportunity to share a little about their background as well as the people and circumstances that have been influential in their life. You can use the “**About Me Activity**” as a guide for what to include in your story. (See 242 Resources)

DECIDE THE ORDER IN WHICH EACH OF YOU WILL SHARE.

At your next group meeting, you will also discuss the **242 Group Agreement** to clarify expectations for your group and logistics for future meetings. This is found at the end of your 242 Launch Guide. You will wait till week 4 to sign the 242 Group Agreement together as a group to give enough time for everyone to make a decision about committing to 242 for 12-24 months. (See 242 Resources)

If you haven't already done so, exchange contact information and set up a **GroupMe** or **group text** so you can stay connected between group meetings.





END WITH PRAYER...

We suggest that you end group time with prayer. This provides an opportunity to ask God for His guidance. Specifically, center your prayer on the relationships that will form and the spiritual growth you hope to experience during your time together. In future weeks, you can share ways the group can be praying for you.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

(WEEKS 2-4)

WEEK 2

- FELLOWSHIP (15min)
- FOOD (30min)
- STUDY (60min)
 - About Me Activity (Give time for 2-3 group members to share)
 - Talk through the 242 Group Agreement (Remind group that they have till week 4 to make a decision whether or not they would like to commit to 12-24 months together as a group)
 - Study the first suggested passage using the 242 Bible Study Method or the Divine Listening Guide.
- PRAYER (15min)

WEEK 3

- FELLOWSHIP (15min)
- FOOD (30min)
- STUDY (60min)
 - About Me Activity (give time for 2-3 group members to share)
 - Remind the group to pray over the 242 Group Agreement and that next week they have the decision to make about committing to 12-24 months together as a group.
 - Study the second suggested passage using the 242 Bible Study Method or the Divine Listening Guide.
- PRAYER (15min)

WEEK 4

- FELLOWSHIP (15min)
- FOOD (30min)
- STUDY (60min)
 - About Me Activity (Give time for 2-3 group members to share)
 - Talk through the 242 Group Agreement and let each person decide whether or not they would like to commit to 12-24 months together as a group.
 - Study the third suggested passage using the 242 Bible Study Method or the Divine Listening Guide.
- PRAYER (15min)



ABOUT ME ACTIVITY

This activity is a tool that will help you communicate a 7-10 minute snapshot of your life to the group. You may use it as a step by step guide when you present.

Remember, this time will pass more quickly than you think. Your goal isn't to share your entire life story, but to give your group a foundational understanding of who you are.

Where are you from?

What is something few people may know about you?

Describe your family.

Describe your faith background.

Describe a person or event that influenced who you are today.

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BIBLE STUDY METHOD

1. TALK

To begin the study, discuss these questions as a group:

- What are you thankful for?
- What is causing you stress?
- Who needs our help? How can this group help them?

2. REVIEW

Retell the story from the previous meeting.

- What did you do differently because of this story?
- Who did you tell and what was the reaction?

(Through this time the leader will review commitments made in the last session.)

25%

4. LOOK DOWN

- Discuss what this passage says about humans.
- Depending on the passage you can ask:
 - Is there a command to obey in this passage?
 - Is there a sin/temptation to avoid in this passage?
 - Is there a promise to claim in this passage?
 - Is there an example to follow in this passage?

25%

5. LOOK IN

- Based on this passage, what do I need to do/change?
(The leader writes commitments down to talk about at the next gathering)

3. LOOK UP

Have one person read the Bible passage out loud, and the rest follow along.

- Have someone else retell the passage by memory, if possible. Others can fill in what is missing.
- Discuss what this passage says about God.
 - (His attributes, character, actions)
- Discuss how this passage points us to Jesus and the Gospel.

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6. LOOK OUT

- Who do I know that needs to hear this?
- How can I tell them?
- Write down assignments.

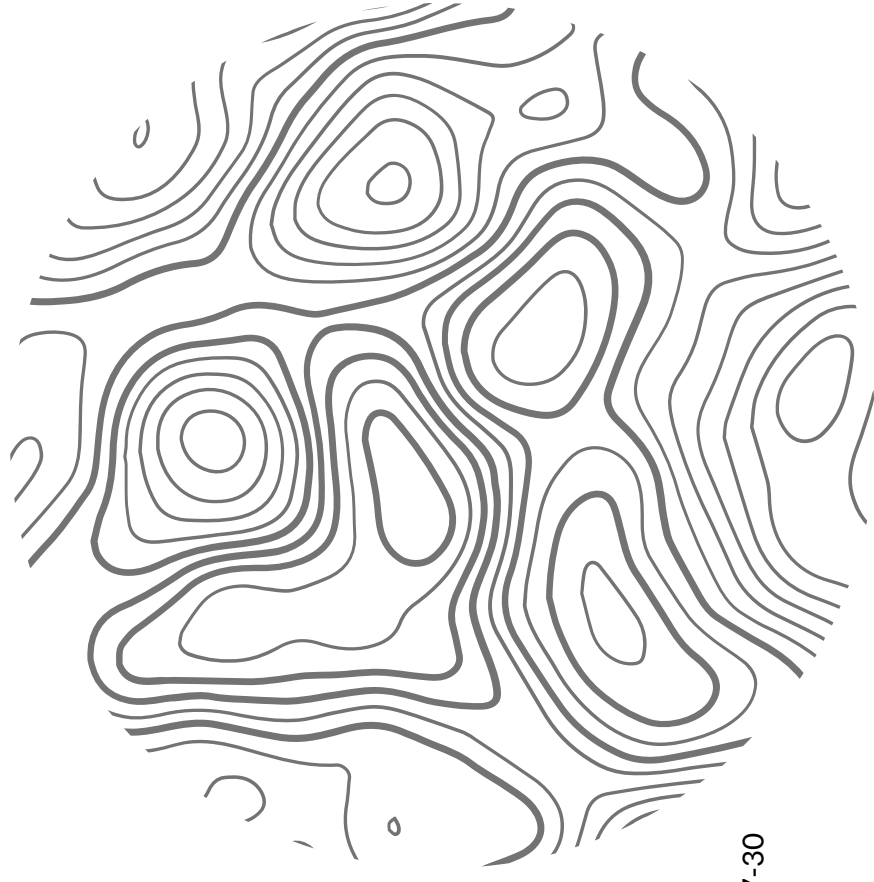
7. PRAY

- Pray together for one another as a group using the ACTS method.
 - Adoration
 - Confession
 - Thanksgiving
 - Supplication

25%

SUGGESTED BIBLE STUDY PASSAGES

- God Creates – Genesis 1
- God Creates Man and Woman – Genesis 2
- The Fall – Genesis 3
- Cain & Able - Genesis 4
- God Regrets His Creation – Genesis 6:5-8
- God Saves Noah and His Family – Genesis 6:9-22, 7:1-24, 8:1-14
- God's Covenant with Noah – Genesis 8:15-22, 9:1-17
- God's Covenant with Abram – Genesis 12:1-8, 15:1-6, 17:1-7
- Abraham Gives His Son as an Offering – Genesis 22:1-19
- God Spares His People – Exodus 12:1-28
- The Commands of God – Exodus 20:1-21
- The Sin Offering – Leviticus 4:1-35
- God's Righteous Servant – Isaiah 53
- Jesus is Born – Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20
- Jesus is Baptized – Matthew 3; John 1:29-34
- Jesus is Tested – Matthew 4:1-11
- Jesus and the Religious Leader – John 3:1-21
- Jesus and the Samaritan Woman – John 4:1-26, 4:39-42
- Jesus and the Paralyzed Man – Luke 5:17-26
- Jesus Calms the Storm – Mark 4:35-41
- Jesus and the Man with Evil Spirits – Mark 5:1-20
- Jesus Raises a Man from the Dead – John 11:1-44
- Jesus Talks about His Betrayal and the Covenant – Matthew 26:17-30
- Jesus is Betrayed and Faces Trial – John 18:1-40, 19:1-16
- Jesus is Crucified – Luke 23:32-56
- Jesus is Resurrected – Luke 24:1-35
- Jesus Appears to the Disciples and Ascends to Heaven – Luke 24:36-53
- Enter into the Kingdom God – John 3:1-21



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DIVINE LISTENING GUIDE

1. OPENING PRAYER SEEKING GOD

One thing I have asked of the Lord, this is what I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple. -Psalm 27:4

2. SILENT PRAYER OF SEEKING

3. DECLARATION OF FAITH

To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God. -John 6:68

4. SCRIPTURE READING, LISTENING & MEDITATION

- **Reading One: STICKS**
 - Q. What word or phrase sticks out to you?
- **Reading Two: STARS**
 - Q. How do you feel about that? What stirs you emotionally?
- **Reading Three: SIGNS**
 - Q. What is the invitation Jesus has for you?

5. CANTICLE (PRAYERFUL POEM)

*Christ, as a light illumine and guide me.
Christ, as shield overshadow me.
Christ under me; Christ over me;
Christ beside me; on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me, lowly and meek, yet all powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
In the mouth of each who speaks unto me.
This day be within and without me, lowly and meek, yet all powerful.
Christ, as a light; Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.*

6. SILENT PRAYER FOR THOSE ON YOUR LEFT AND YOUR RIGHT

7. CLOSING PRAYER

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. -Ephesians 3:20-21

SUGGESTED DIVINE LISTENING PASSAGES

- EXODUS 3:1-14, I AM WHO I AM
- 1 KINGS 19:9-18, THE LORD SPEAKS TO ELIJAH
- PSALM 1:1-6, THE RIGHTEOUS & THE WICKED
- PSALM 5:1-12, LEAD ME IN YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS
- PSALM 23:1-6, THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD
- PSALM 27:1-14, MY LIGHT & MY SALVATION
- PSALM 63:1-11, MY SOUL THIRSTS FOR YOU
- PSALM 92:1-15, HOW GREAT ARE YOUR WORKS
- JEREMIAH 1:4-10, BEFORE I FORMED YOU
- MATTHEW 3:13-17, THE BAPTISM OF JESUS
- MATTHEW 4:18-25, JESUS CALLS THE DISCIPLES
- MATTHEW 5:14-16, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
- MATTHEW 5:19-21, TREASURES IN HEAVEN
- MATTHEW 11:25-30, COME TO ME
- MATTHEW 14:13-21, LOAVES AND FISHES
- MATTHEW 14:22-33, JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER
- MATTHEW 16:24-28, TAKE UP YOUR CROSS
- MATTHEW 22:1-14, THE WEDDING FEAST
- MATTHEW 26:36-46, JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE
- MATTHEW 28:16-20, THE GREAT COMMISSION
- MARK 5:1-13, JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH A DEMON
- MARK 10:17-31, THE RICH YOUNG MAN
- MARK 10:46-52, BLIND BARTIMAEUS
- MARK 13:3-13, SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE
- LUKE 2:41-52, TWELVE YEAR OLD JESUS
- LUKE 6:27-36, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES
- LUKE 7:40-50, PARABLE OF TWO DEBTORS
- LUKE 8:4-15, PARABLE OF THE SOWER
- LUKE 10:1-12, THE SEVENTY SENT OUT
- LUKE 10:38-42, MARY AND MARTHA
- LUKE 16:1-15, THE UNRIGHTEOUS STEWARD
- LUKE 17:11-21, TEN LEPERS CLEANSSED
- JOHN 1:1-15, THE WORD BECAME FLESH
- JOHN 2:1-11, THE WEDDING AT CANA
- JOHN 5:1-9, THE HEALING AT THE POOL
- JOHN 8:2-11, THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN
- JOHN 13:1-11, WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET
- JOHN 15:1-17, I AM THE TRUE VINE
- JOHN 21:15-19, JESUS & PETER
- ACTS 2:1-13, PENTECOST
- ACTS 8:26-40, PHILIP & THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH
- ACTS 10:34-48, GENTILES HEAR THE GOOD NEWS
- ROMANS 5:1-10, OUR HEAVENLY DWELLING
- GALATIANS 6:1-10, DOING GOOD TO ALL
- EPHESIANS 2:1-10, BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH
- EPHESIANS 4:17-32, THE NEW LIFE
- PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11, CHRIST'S EXAMPLE
- COLOSSIANS 3:1-17, PUT ON THE NEW SELF
- JAMES 4:1-12, WARNING AGAINST WORLDLINESS
- 1 PETER 3:8-22, SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS
- JUDE 1:17-25, A CALL TO PERSEVERE
- REVELATION 21:1-8, NEW HEAVEN & EARTH





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RESOURCES



ABOUT 242 GROUPS

242 Groups are made up of 3-12 people who devote themselves to 1-3 years of teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer together.

HOW ARE 242 GROUPS LEAD?

242 groups are led by individuals or couples. They will commit to leading a group for 1-3 years for the purpose of disciple making and multiplication.

The disciple-making leader will lead the overall group in regards to direction, facilitation and be responsible to hold other members of the group accountable to commitments of obedience that are made.

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2

WHEN & WHERE DO 242 GROUPS MEET?

242 groups gather throughout the week at times and locations agreed upon by the whole group. We recommend that a group meet weekly in one another's homes but each group can decide on their own schedule and location. Some groups will not be able to meet on the same day each week so will need to coordinate schedules for success.

Commitment, communication and consistency to gathering is key to positive and enriching relationships in 242.

With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, Acts 2:46

WHAT HAPPENS AT A TYPICAL GATHERING?

A typical gathering begins with enjoying fellowship, and sharing a meal with one another. The group will then gather together to study the Bible and pray together. We recommend that each group begin using the **242 Bible Study Method** or the **242 Divine Listening Guide**.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22

242 GROUP LEADER OVERVIEW

WIN FOR GROUP LEADERS

To provide a community environment to Seek, Serve, and Send disciples of Jesus.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR GROUP LEADERS

- Have a personal, growing relationship with Jesus Christ (preferably for two years or more).
- Be a member of the church.
- Have group experience (preferably).
- Have the time, emotional health, and moral discernment to lead a group.

EXPECTATIONS OF GROUP LEADERS

- Recognize the influence associated with group leadership.
- Lead the group by facilitating the group meeting, monitoring its health and duration, and promoting participation among group members.
- Commit to engaging in leadership development opportunities provided by the church.

242 GROUP LEADER ESSENTIALS

STAY CONNECTED.

- This essential reminds us to stay spiritually nourished as we encourage spiritual growth in our group members.
- In John 15, Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and branches to instruct his followers to “abide.” When we stay connected to Jesus in this way, we welcome God’s work in us and through us.
- Are you first staying rooted in your relationship with Jesus, realizing that apart from him you can do nothing? How are you encouraging those in your group to stay connected to Jesus?

CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS.

- This essential is focused on how we build community.
- By encouraging and facilitating connections outside of regular group meetings, you demonstrate the priority of relationships.
- How are you and your group members connecting outside of group time?

SHARE OWNERSHIP.

- This essential focuses on how you involve your group members.
- Shared participation (facilitating the study, hosting the meeting, preparing the meal/snack, leading prayer time, planning socials, guiding the curriculum choice discussion, etc.) creates broader ownership of the group.
- How are you involving your group members in supporting the group?

PROVIDE CARE.

- This essentially focuses on the big and small ways we can provide care for one another.
- People often don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- Do you make it a priority for your group to support and care for one another?

DIVINE LISTENING LEADERS GUIDE

INTRODUCTION:

Divine Listening is all about creating space to hear from and listen to God through His word. As you practice this with your group it is important to create a relaxed and quiet atmosphere for extended times of silence as you encourage your group to slow down and listen. Along with having a Bible it is helpful for each one to have a journal to write down their reflections.

CIRCLE UP IN SMALLER GROUPS:

If your group is larger than 6 people, as you gather, encourage them to form smaller groups of 3-4 people. This will allow enough time for each member to share what they are hearing from the Lord through the three readings.

ASK FOR THREE READERS:

Instruct the group to the passage of scripture you will be reading and ask for three volunteers to read the passage. (Note: It helps to read it each time in a different translation.)

PREPARE YOUR HEART:

To begin, encourage your group to seek the Lord and prepare your hearts for the scripture reading by following the opening instructions as follows. (Note: The text that is italicized is meant to be read as a group.)

OPENING PRAYER SEEKING GOD (PSALM 27:4)

One thing I have asked of the Lord, this is what I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.

SILENT PRAYER OF SEEKING

(Silently pray seeking God's heart)

DECLARATION OF FAITH (JOHN 6:68)

To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.

SCRIPTURE READING, LISTENING & MEDITATION

Instruct the group that they are going to be reading today's scripture passage all the way through three times, following the instructions for each individual reading.

READING ONE: STICKS

- Leader: *As we listen to the Word of God for the first time I invite you to be aware of any word or phrase that sticks out to you or catches your attention.*
- Read the passage **slowly** with appropriate pauses.
- Allow some minutes of silence for reflection.
- Invite the group to share out loud to the whole group what word or phrase stuck out to them in the reading?

READING TWO: STARS

- Leader: *As we listen to the Word of God for the second time I invite you to be aware of any reflection or thought that you become aware of as you listen. Imagine the scene, sights, sounds, characters. With whom do you identify? How does this passage make you feel? What emotions are rising to the surface?*
- Read the passage **slowly** with appropriate pauses.
- Allow some minutes of silence for reflection.
- Invite the group to share out loud to the whole group the reflections, thoughts or emotions and a few sentences as to why with the group.

READING THREE: SIGNS

- Leader: *As we listen to the Word of God for this third time I invite you to listen for the invitation that God has for you. What is the truth that God wants you to embrace? What is the direction He would have you take? What is the call that he would have you obey? Write that invitation down and if you receive the invitation right away ask the Lord "and what else?"*
- Read the passage **slowly** with appropriate pauses.
- Allow some minutes of silence for reflection.
- Invite the group to share out loud with the whole group the invitation Jesus has for them.

CLOSING:

Lead the group in the closing canticle (prayerful poem) and instructions for silent prayer.

CANTICLE (ADAPTATION OF ST. PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE)

Christ, as a light illumine and guide me.

Christ, as shield overshadow me.

Christ under me; Christ over me;

Christ beside me; on my left and my right.

This day be within and without me, lowly and meek, yet all powerful.

Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;

In the mouth of each who speaks unto me.

This day be within and without me, lowly and meek, yet all powerful.

Christ, as a light; Christ as a shield;

Christ beside me on my left and my right.

SILENT PRAYER FOR THOSE ON YOUR LEFT AND YOUR RIGHT

CLOSING PRAYER (EPHESIANS 3:20-21)

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

242 GROUP AGREEMENT

PURPOSE

The goal of 242 is to provide a community environment to Seek, Serve, and Send disciples of Jesus.

LEADER ESSENTIALS

Successful Leaders...

- **STAY CONNECTED**
 - While prayer and discussion are key elements, the main emphasis of the group is the building of relationships to foster connection with Jesus and one another.
- **CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS**
 - Group members demonstrate the priority of relationships as they intentionally invest in each other inside and outside of regular group meetings.
- **SHARE OWNERSHIP**
 - Group members agree to encourage one another to participate in broad ownership of the group.
- **PROVIDE CARE**
 - Group members choose to be fully present and provide care and support for one another.

GROUP ESSENTIALS

Successful Groups...

- **FOSTER AUTHENTICITY**
 - The atmosphere should encourage openness and transparency among members. This is an environment where people should feel free to be themselves.
- **PROVIDE CONFIDENTIALITY**
 - For authenticity to occur, members must be able to trust that issues discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.
- **DEMONSTRATE RESPECT**
 - Group members should never say anything that will embarrass their spouses or other members of the group.

GROUP DETAILS

The group will meet from _____ (mm/yyyy) through _____ (mm/yyyy).

The group will meet on _____ (day of week) and begin at _____ (am/pm) and end at _____ (am/pm).

This group will be a closed group unless all members agree to add members.

Group members will attend and participate on a regular basis.

MEMBERS SIGNATURES



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GROUPS