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## SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Unified.  
Empowered.  
Missional.

# Getting Started:

## GOALS FOR THE STUDY:

Welcome to the book of Acts! We are so thankful for your leadership – especially in this season where gathering in person can be more of a challenge. We believe that even in the midst of all the difficulties this fall brings, God has beautiful things in store for our church. We have four foundational goals for our groups this fall which will shape how we approach our study:

- To engender unity across our church
- To grow our people's confidence in and love for reading the Bible
- To grow our people in their reliance on the Holy Spirit
- To empower our people to dream about their role in the church and in the community

**To Engender Unity** – While the study is indeed designed for small groups, our family ministry will also be providing content for kids and students. The hope is that as our adults are learning God’s word, they will be equipped to have discussions with the younger members of their homes. We believe every age is equally valuable in the kingdom of God and equally able to benefit from God’s word. If you have parents in your group, please point them towards these resources located on the Acts landing page right alongside of the adult’s Small Group Study Guide.

Additionally, we recognize we will be talking through some tough topics and that we are in the midst of a tense election season. If tensions arise in your group, continue to point them back to the word of God and the example of unity we see in the early church. Acts is a beautiful picture of ethnically and socially diverse people coming together for the sake of the gospel – our prayer is that we would be able to do the same.

**To Grow Confidence in and Love for Reading the Bible** - You’ll notice we don’t provide a lot of our own material each week. Your members will be given a section of Scripture to read, and we’ll ask the same questions each week. These questions are meant to walk your group through the basic Bible study principles of observation, interpretation, and application in a simple way that is easy to understand and remember. We believe that God’s word is accessible and understandable to every person. We want to build into the people in our small groups a confidence in reading the Bible and listening to the Spirit who guides us into all truth. It’s our belief that equipping our people to read the Bible on their own is one of the most worthwhile tasks we can undertake as small group leaders.

**To Grow in our Reliance on the Holy Spirit** - We also believe the Holy Spirit’s presence and power are imperative to a believer’s comprehension and implementation of the Scripture (1 Cor 2:6-16) and their ability to effectively join Jesus’s mission. Before reading each week, we ask group members to spend time in prayer asking God to speak. Our hope is to grow our group members in both their meditation of the word as well as their listening to the Spirit. In addition, we have a few supplemental gatherings designed to help your group members consider the Holy Spirit in new ways – The Upper Zoom which will be a prayer experience for the entire church and a Spiritual Gifts Workshop designed to help them walk empowered in their gifts.

**To Dream About Their Role** – It would be nearly impossible to read the book of Acts without acknowledging that God’s Spirit empowered believers for good works as they shared the good news of Jesus in both word and action. Together these early believers used their passion and gifts to form diverse communities of worship. Our hope is that our people will realize they aren’t all that different from the very first Christians and that God has given them gifts in order to serve those around them as well.

## HOW IT WILL WORK:

Everything you need will be located at [northway.org/acts](http://northway.org/acts). Each week you can expect:

- A Small Group Guide which includes:
  - A reading assignment and discussion questions
  - A “Going Deeper” section that encourages members to take their studies a little further. Sometimes this will be additional reading, a video to watch or an activity.
  - Some weeks there will also be an invitation to an additional gathering designed to supplement learning in a new or creative way. You can jump into these as an entire group or as individuals.
- A 10-15 minute teaching from a North Way leader to watch together with your group. If you’d prefer to have members watch it before group, that’s fine but encourage them to do their work before going to the video. Our hope is to build their confidence in beginning to read Scripture for themselves.
- A family guide for anyone with children who is participating in the study.
- A weekly leader guide that includes prayer prompts or quick notes you might need for the week as you lead.

## SCHEDULE:

### 1. Week of Sept. 28: Acts 1-2:13

*Sept. 28 – Oct. 9 An Invitation: Upper Zoom*

### 2. Week of Oct. 5: Acts 2:14 – 5:42

### 3. Week of Oct. 12: Acts 6-8:3

### 4. Week of Oct. 19: Acts 8:4-8:40

*Oct. 19 An Invitation: Spiritual Gifts Workshop*

### 5. Week of Oct. 26: Acts 9 – 11:18

*November 1st An Invitation: Baptisms*

### 6. Week of Nov. 2: Acts 11:19-12:25

### 7. Week of Nov. 9: Acts 13 – 15:35

*Nov. 13-14: An Invitation: Imagine Conference*

### 8. Week of Nov. 16: Acts 15:36 – 18:23

*Week of Nov. 23 – Thanksgiving week off!*

*November 24: All Worship Night*

### 9. Week of Nov. 30 – Acts 18:24 – 23:35

### 10. Week of Dec. 7 – Acts 24 – 27:44

### 11. Week of Dec. 14 – Acts 28

## A Few Notes:

- The Invitation dates listed above are for gatherings designed for all campuses to participate together in. Your campus may be adding some additional options specifically designed for the members of your campus. For any campus-specific events, check out [northway.org/acts](http://northway.org/acts).
- If you are an already existing group that doesn't have new people joining, this should be easy to jump right in on week one. Just communicate out to your group ahead of time so they are able to do the work before the first meeting for week one and come prepared.
- If you are a new group or if you have new members joining your group it might be wise to consider building in some margin ahead of your normal group meeting time to get to know each other and explain how the study will work.

## SAMPLE WAY TO STRUCTURE YOUR GROUP MEETING:

**ICE BREAKERS:** 15 Mins - If you are a new group, these will be an important part of your time together. These fun questions help to get people talking and getting to know each other. Check out the app "Questions in a Box" or google "Great Icebreakers" to find some questions to get the conversation started.

**WATCH VIDEO TEACHING:** 15 Mins

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** 45 Mins

**1. Describe what is happening in your own words.**

*Each week ask someone other than yourself to summarize what happened in the text.*

*Summarizing ensures that group members are processing what they've read and then able to recount the message.*

**2. What stood out to you as you read?**

**3. Did these verses raise any questions as you read?**

*Both questions 2 and 3 are designed to give your group members a space to share what struck them during their reading. Regarding questions that are raised, just remember your role is to help facilitate conversation in an open and safe environment, not to teach. As group members ask questions, try to deflect back to the group with comments like, "That's a great question. What do the rest of you think?" If you sense someone is off-track in their interpretations of a topic, suggest the group look for the answer in Scripture. "Where do you see that in the Bible?" or "Let's find another passage that talks about this topic," are a couple ways to redirect the focus to God's word. If your group seems to be stumped on something, don't worry. The goal isn't to provide all the answers but to begin asking the Spirit to reveal truth to you as you read. You can always consult some of the commentaries we have listed under "Additional Resources" or reach out to your campus Discipleship Director.*

**4. What can we observe from this story about God the Father, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?**

*This is our first “observation” question. This one comes first because we want to begin to grow our awareness of the character, promises and heart of God. It is so easy for us to focus on US instead of HIM when we read. In both questions 4 and 5, the goals are to help your people pull direct observations out of the text. You can even encourage them to use a colored pencil or highlighter to mark their Bibles anytime there is a reference to God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit.*

**5. What can we observe from this story about people?**

*Similarly to question 4, you can encourage your group members to mark their Bibles anytime there is a reference to people.*

**6. What can we learn from this story about who we should be as believers and who we should be as a church?**

*Questions 6 and 7 are designed to move us more into interpretation. Based on everything we’ve observed, what should we believe?*

**7. Why is this passage in this particular book of the Bible? What might the Bible lose if this passage was left out?**

**8. What is something you sense the Spirit leading you to do in obedience to this text?**

*Finally, question 8 is designed to help your members consider application. How are they going to allow what they’ve studied to go beyond head knowledge to life transformation?*

**PRAYER:** 15 Mins - You will receive specific weekly prayer suggestions that can be found on the website, but we encourage you to get creative and ask God to give you specific ideas for your group too! Whatever you decide, don’t leave out prayer. Community prayer is critical to your group growing together with each other and with the Father!

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

Commentaries, information about local and global outreach partners, and more can be found under the “Additional Resources” tab. These resources are available to support you as you lead your group. We’re excited for this new journey together, and we’re here to help in any way that we can. If you have any questions along the way, don’t hesitate to reach out to the Discipleship Director at your campus. We are praying for you and your group as you begin!