

(in)courage Bible Study Leader Guide

(in)

WELCOME!

We are so grateful to link arms with you and learn more about the kind of heart God wants to create in each one of us and how that will help us to live more like Jesus in a hard and hurting world.

THE GIFT OF A GROUP

As a facilitator of this Bible study, you have a special opportunity to encourage and lead others into a deeper understanding of Scripture and relationship with Jesus. **Don't worry about teaching; the workbook will do that!** Your role is to invite your group into reflection and conversation about what God is teaching them.

Get to know the people in your group. Where are they coming from? Where are they in their faith journey? Give each woman time to respond thoughtfully and apply the questions to their current contexts. **Model this by "going first"** and sharing honestly from your own life. Your authenticity and vulnerability will go a long way in setting the tone for group members to feel free and safe to participate. Remind them about confidentiality. Ask God to give you a genuine love and sensitivity toward each member.

AS YOU LEAD

We know each group situation will be unique. You might be meeting with one or two friends or gathering a group of 8-10 women from your church or neighborhood. Whether you're meeting online or coming together in a living room or around a table, make this time meaningful. Never underestimate the power of praying for discernment as you lead. The Holy Spirit can and will guide you along the way!

Be sure to choose the length of time to meet, and communicate the meeting dates with your group. This will help people plan ahead and know the commitment from the start.

Here are some more quick tips for meaningful small groups:

- When you meet, focus on main themes and how God is working in individual hearts.
- Sometimes one woman may dominate the conversation. You might give her a job to help you or enlist her help to get others to participate.
- Ask questions and allow for silence to engage the quieter women or women who need some time to process.
- If someone shares something deep and personal, even emotional, take time to look her in the eye and thank her for taking that risk and sharing.

HOMework & Scripture Memory

When you find that women have not completed the homework, **offer them grace**. There are all kinds of reasons people cannot get to the homework. Continue to gently encourage them to carve out time daily to complete the study. We encourage you to read the passages aloud in your group and then answer the questions together to help guide group members if they are new to Bible study or didn't get to the questions. This experience isn't about checking off boxes but about digging into God's Word together!

Take time to meditate on the Scripture memory verse(s) together each week. Many believe they are not good at memorizing, but some encouragement from you goes a long way in cultivating a practice of hiding God's Word in their hearts so He can do a transforming work!

BE CREATIVE

You have the freedom to make this study your own. **Do what works well for you and your group**. Do women need help opening up? Spend time talking through one of our ice-breaker questions. Are women walking through heavy circumstances? Save more time for prayer. You can get the ball rolling by asking a simple question like, "What made an impact on you from the study this week?"

Have fun and be creative on how you get comfortable and cultivate friendships with your group each week. **The idea is to help get to know the women in your group, to build trust and deeper connections.**

Icebreaker suggestions:

1. What is one thing close friends know about you?
2. If you could live anywhere in the world for a year, where would it be?
3. What's your favorite flower or plant?
4. What's the best Christmas present you've ever received and why did you love it?
5. If you had to delete all but 3 apps from your phone, which 3 would you keep?
6. If you had to eat one meal every day for the rest of your life, what would it be?
7. What movie could you watch again and again?
8. As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
9. What is your favorite dessert? Or do you prefer something savory?
10. What do you wish people understood about you?

THANK YOU

Thank you for partnering with us in the Gospel. We're so expectant for what God is going to do in and through your shared time studying His Word.

We are praying for you and cheering you on!

Your friends at (in)courage