

One Step at a Time: A Pilgrim's Guide to Spirit-Led Living

Spiritual Pilgrimage Small Group Facilitator's Guide

Primary Goals of Spiritual Pilgrimage Small Group

- To discuss each chapter of *One Step at a Time*, including the meaning and impact on participants
- To help participants better recognize God's presence and activity in their lives and grow in their relationship with God
- To provide a forum for saying "yes" to the Holy Spirit's leading and for lovingly holding one another accountable for commitments made to seek or follow God in specific ways
- To provide encouragement and support to participants on their spiritual pilgrimage

The Role of the Facilitator—What It Is and Isn't

- To be a humble, others-oriented, gentle facilitator of a meaningful group experience—one who is genuinely seeking to grow spiritually himself or herself—and to be led by the Holy Spirit as a way of life
- To help set an appropriate atmosphere of transparency, emotional safety, and expectancy that the Holy Spirit will work through the group experience in ways that fit with God's purposes for each participant
- To help the group stay on task and true to the purposes of the group
- To facilitate personal reflection and listening to the Holy Spirit by asking appropriate questions and encouraging participants to keep asking God for insight, guidance, courage to face the truth, and patience to wait for God's leading
- To facilitate group sharing and discussion of spiritual principles and practices by asking questions, monitoring the use of time, inviting all to participate, and promoting dialogue that spiritual pilgrims find helpful on their journey
- To help participants identify resources they need and are seeking outside of the group (not to "fix" participants, correct them, steer them, or tell them what to do)
- Not to be the authority on spiritual growth or the Bible, to teach, preach, or lecture

Basic Format for Each Session (Weeks 2–7)

Welcome and introduction of main theme for the session (1 minute)

Warm-Up and Spiritual Preparation (5 minutes)

- Go around the circle and ask each participant to rate—on a scale of 0–10—his/her sense of being led by the Holy Spirit over the past week, without comment. (This is NOT a time for elaboration.)

0 = Is there a God?

5 = Solid week of living by faith, but no special sense of God’s presence or God working in me or through me.

10 = God has been working very powerfully or meaningfully in my life.

- Keep thirty seconds of silence for each participant to ground themselves, open their heart and mind to God, and become fully present to others in the group.
- Someone offers a prayer inviting the Spirit to lead and to guide the discussion and sharing.

Group Dialogue (40–50 minutes)

- Go around the circle again and ask each participant to share briefly what idea, feeling, Scripture text, or experience made the biggest impression on him or her from the chapter. Participants may pass on their turn, offer just a few words, or speak for up to 30 seconds. The goal here is for each participant to begin engaging with the material and to disclose to the group a little about what is stirring within as a result of their reading, thinking, and praying since the last time together. They will have an opportunity to elaborate on their thoughts and feelings when you get to the questions at the end of the chapter. In the first few sessions, it may help for the facilitator to go first and break the ice so that others feel more at ease with sharing (5–10 minutes).
- Discuss questions at the end of the designated chapter. (30–40 minutes).

Sharing and Praying (5–10 minutes)

- Invite participants to briefly exchange specific prayer requests related to the material discussed (time permitting) or simply go to the open-ended prayer time.
- Close with a time of open-ended prayer, inviting whomever would like to pray for themselves or others in the group.

Spiritual Pilgrimage Small Group in Eight-Sessions

Session 1

Reading in preparation for this session: Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 1

Main theme: Intentionally taking the next step in our spiritual journey

Welcome and Introduction to Study (7 minutes)

- Group members introduce themselves and tell the group why they decided to join this small group and/or what they hope to get out of the experience.
- Group facilitator reviews the primary goals of the small group and the basic format for each session.
- The facilitator offers prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to work powerfully in the life of each participant as each one seeks spiritual growth throughout the course of the discussions and the group's time together.

Group Dialogue (40–45 minutes)

- Read quote at the beginning of the “For Further Reflection” section at the end of chapter 1 (page 27).
- Ask the questions listed in the book, one at a time. You can go around the circle, asking each person who is comfortable answering to offer their thoughts on each of the questions. If you use this method, start with someone different for each question. Alternatively, you can throw the question out to the group and let whomever wishes to answer to do so.

Sharing and Praying (5–10 minutes)

- Invite participants to briefly exchange specific prayer requests related to the material discussed (time permitting) or simply go to the open-ended prayer time.
- Close with a time of open-ended prayer, inviting whomever would like to do so to pray for themselves or others in the group.

Session 2

Reading in preparation for this session: Chapter 2

Main theme: Embracing the journey for what it is—for better and for worse

Follow "Basic Format" (Weeks 2–7).

Session 3

Reading in preparation for this session: Chapter 3

Main theme: Facing reality better in every aspect of our life

Session 4

Reading in preparation for this session: Chapter 4

Main theme: Seeking inner change—purification and transformation

Session 5

Reading in preparation for this session: Interlude and Chapter 5

Main theme: Knowing God better

Session 6

Reading in preparation for this session: Chapter 6

Main theme: Following Jesus wholeheartedly

Session 7

Reading in preparation for this session: Chapter 7

Main theme: Living by the leading of the Holy Spirit

Session 8

Reading in preparation for this session: Chapter 8 and Postlude

Main theme: Crossing bridges to live out of our best self and staying the course one step at a time

Welcome and introduction of main theme for the session (1 minute)

Warm Up and Spiritual Preparation (5 minutes)

- Go around the circle to ask each one to rate his/her sense of being led by the Holy Spirit over the past week, on a scale of 0–10, without comment.
- Take thirty seconds of silence for each participant to ground themselves, open their heart and mind to God, and become fully present to others in the group.
- Someone offers a prayer inviting the Spirit to lead and to guide the discussion and sharing

Group Sharing (40–50 minutes)

- Go around circle again for each one to share briefly what idea, feeling, Scripture text or experience made the biggest impression on them from the chapter. Participants can pass, offer just a few words, or speak for up to 30 seconds. (5–10 minutes)
- Discuss questions at the end of chapter 8 (20 minutes)
- Discuss the experience of “spiritual spiraling” from the Postlude. How does the process of spiraling described by the author correspond to the experience of those in the group? (5–10 minutes)
- Invite participants to share how the book and their experience in the small group is going to help them stay the course on their spiritual pilgrimage now that the Spiritual Pilgrimage Small Group will no longer be meeting. (5-10 minutes)

Share and Prayer (5–10 minutes)

- Invite participants to briefly exchange specific prayer requests related to the material discussed (time permitting, or simply go to the open-ended prayer time).
- Close with a time of open-ended prayer, inviting whomever would like to do so to pray for themselves or others in the group.