

Leader Copy

“GATHER”

[Please remember to forward your group attendance to the church office!]

Ice Breaker (Target time: 10 minutes – Allow time for introductions)

Who were your best friends in childhood? Which of them are still close to you?

Centering on Jesus' Presence (Target time: 5 minutes)

[Ask the group to close their eyes and focus on God's greatness. Then, after a moment, read Psalm 8 aloud and ask them to make it the group's prayer.]

Psalm 8

Applying the Scriptures (Target time: 40 minutes)

[Play the DVD...Session I...GATHER...5 minutes]

Read Matthew 4.12-25

According to this Scripture, what was the first thing Jesus did after beginning His preaching ministry? *[Leader: He called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him.]*

What did Jesus' first followers hear and see as they followed Him? *[Leader: They heard Jesus' teaching and preaching, and they saw Him heal every disease and sickness among the people.]*

What does it mean to follow Jesus? How can a follower of Jesus “hear and see” Him today? *[Leader: In a non-intrusive way, relate the essentials of the Gospel if anyone in the group may not understand them or may simply be exploring what it means to be a Christian.]*

Read Mark 3.13-15.

What did Jesus appoint the twelve apostles to do? *[Leader: They were to be with Him and to be sent out to preach.]*

Why do you think Jesus wanted the apostles to follow Him in the context of a group? *[Open Discussion]*

How does gathering together in a small group help followers of Jesus “hear and see” Him today? *[Leader: We can see and hear about His work in the lives of others; we can gain a better understanding of what the Bible says about Jesus by studying it with others.]*

How does gathering together in a small group help followers of Jesus go into the world and continue His ministry? *[Leader: We can experience others praying for us; we can receive others’ wisdom with regard to setting our life priorities and discovering our gifts for ministry.]*

Have you ever been (or are you currently) a part of a small group of this type? What were the best things about your experience? Did you experience anything negative? What are some things that might keep individuals from joining or attending a small group? *[Open Discussion]*

Take a few moments of silent prayer and ask God’s leading on this question: “Are you calling me to participate in a small group? Are you leading me to host or help with a small group? Are you leading me to grow into a small-group leader?”

Prayer time:

* How can we specifically pray for you this week? *[Leader: You may want to write down the concerns and offer a specific prayer for each of them, or you may want to ask a group member to be prepared to do so prior to the gathering.]*

Vision Moments (Target time: 5 minutes)

[Let the group members know about upcoming topics; explain the way the lessons are tied to the Sunday sermons and to the church’s mission/vision of making disciples of Jesus. Don’t hesitate to let the participants know your level of excitement about God’s work in and through the congregation, and be sure to refer anyone who is struggling with the basics of the Christian faith to the pastor.]