

INTERVARSITY®

GIG

G U I D E



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ENDORSEMENTS



"Groups Investigating God (GIGs) are being used today by God in an exploding movement to reach pre-Christian people. If you take only one step forward in reaching people, start a GIG. Nothing could be more strategic and life-changing for you and your pre-Christian friends!"

RICK RICHARDSON, *EVANGELISM OUT-SIDE THE BOX*

"Through GIGs, your seeking friends will have the opportunity to discover Jesus in a safe community. You will not only experience the joy of introducing your friends to Jesus, you will also encourage others in your group to get more involved in evangelism."

DANIEL HILL, EVANGELISM LEADER FOR WILLOW CREEK'S AXIS MINISTRY

"We in InterVarsity have made Groups Investigating God (GIGs) the centerpiece of our efforts to reach people who don't know Jesus yet. I encourage you to consider launching and leading GIGs too."

ALEC HILL, PRESIDENT OF INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP/USA



GIG
GUIDE

AN INVITATION TO YOU

**TERRY ERICKSON, NATIONAL DIRECTOR
OF EVANGELISM - INTERVARSITY
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP/USA**

"I am so pleased that you want to be trained in leading a Group Investigating God. GIGs are one of the most effective ways to share Jesus with your friends. This handbook contains all of the information that you will need to become a well-equipped leader of a GIG. I hope you will join the increasing number of church leaders, lay people, and university staff and students who are choosing to lead GIGs. May God give you the joy of seeing one of your friends come to Jesus as you lead your GIG."





THE LOST SHEEP

¹Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

WHY DO WE WANT TO REACH OUR FRIENDS?

³Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

HOW DOES JESUS REACH THE LOST?

LUKE 14:1-7

WHY REACH OUT?

We want to share in God's heart for the lost. **SHARE IN GOD'S HEART**

We want to reflect Jesus' priority for seeking the lost. **REFLECT JESUS' PRIORITIES**

We want to respond to God's command to reach and teach the lost. (Matt. 28:18-20) **RESPOND TO GOD'S COMMAND**

We want to receive the joy of finding the lost. **RECEIVE THE JOY**

We want to see more and more people worshipping and loving God. (Rev. 7:9-10) **BRING GOD GLORY**







THE FIRST GIG

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT PHILIP?

WHAT STRIKES YOU ABOUT THE EUNUCH?

²⁶Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." ²⁷So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." ³⁰Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. ³¹"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ³³In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." ³⁴The

eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" ³⁸And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea. **ACTS 8:26-40 NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION**

THE FIRST GIG



HOW IS GOD INVOLVED IN THIS STORY?

WHAT SURPRISES YOU?

THE BASICS



THE BASICS

THE FIRST GIG

Through listening and responding to the Spirit's leading, Philip approaches the eunuch. He then asks the eunuch a question. He also knows the Scriptures enough, so that he can respond to the eunuch's question.

PHILIP

The eunuch was seeking. He was already in the Scriptures, trying to know the truth.

EUNUCH

God is at work before we get there and after we leave. He orchestrates divine appointments and cares for those who haven't heard the gospel.

GOD

What truth or example in this passage is most helpful or challenging to you?

WHAT IS A GIG?



A GIG is a group investigating God. It is an opportunity for 2 or more people to have a discussion flowing from a passage of Scripture. It is a time for friends to be together, ask questions, and talk honestly about their lives.

GROUP

A GIG is an investigation. It is intended for people who want to "check it out." The majority of people in the group have not made a commitment to follow Jesus. But it is not a group meeting just for conversation; its purpose is to find out more about Jesus from the Bible, helping our friends become his followers.

INVESTIGATING

A GIG is focused on God. It is intended to help people learn more about Jesus from the eyewitness reports in the Bible. In a GIG, God speaks for himself through his Word, which always calls for our response.

GOD

THE BASICS



THE BASICS

WHY THE GIG?

GIGs are designed with your seeking friends' needs and concerns in mind. These days, when Christian groups are sometimes perceived as judgmental, narrow-minded, and inflexible,

GIGS ARE SAFE GIGs help people feel heard and included.

GIGs don't require any prior knowledge of or commitment to biblical precepts. Your friends may easily come and enter a spiritual discussion. GIGs are a comfortable, relaxed and safe way of giving seekers the opportunity for God to speak to them through his Word.

GIGS ARE ACCESSIBLE

Because GIGs sincerely discuss the questions of your friends, GIGs stay relevant to their lives. GIGs keep it real and meet

GIGS ARE RELEVANT people at their own level.

WHY THE GIG?



GIGs also provide people of every ethnicity and culture with an opportunity to explore biblical beliefs in a way that answers their questions. Currently, Bible study materials are being used and developed for ethnic specific groups and international students. For more on this, see page 35.

GIGS ARE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE

God is faithful, and he will meet our friends and speak to them where they are. You will be amazed at how God's Word will directly address situations in people's lives. God's Word is powerful! It reveals who Jesus is and how to follow him.

GIGS ARE GOD SPEAKING

Leading a GIG will deepen your faith. Your understanding of Scripture will be challenged by your friends' questions. God will not only reveal himself to your friends, he will also make himself more known to you! You can experience the joy of seeing your friends' lives change as they study and apply Scripture.

GIGS ARE GOOD FOR YOU

THE BASICS



THE BASICS

WHY THE GIG?

Think of two friends. What might they gain from a GIG?

How might I grow from leading a GIG?

TESTIMONY



THE BASICS

Sara, my co-leader, and I had been feeling that Tom (a friend attending our GIG for the past 6 weeks) needed to enter the Kingdom. This conviction came through a variety of channels: prayer, a sermon on spiritual authority, and the reality that Tom's life literally hung between life and death. Today, in the course of our GIG (healing of the blind man in John 9,) Tom was struck by the blind man's testimony: "We know that God does not listen to sinners, but He does listen to the one who worships Him and obeys His will." In particular, Tom felt convicted that his sins were a barricade to Jesus. As he discussed that verse, he also confessed his fear that Jesus might let him down. I remember him asking: "What if I choose for Jesus, and He doesn't come through?" This had been a repeated question throughout the six weeks. Sara and I had mulled over that question, and I responded, "Tom, the way I see it, choosing for Jesus is probably the smartest thing you could do right now." He agreed to that, and then Sara said, "I believe that Jesus wants to heal you. Do you believe that?" Tom said he agreed. Finally, we asked Tom if he wanted to invite Jesus to be his leader and coach. When he said yes, I think I replied, "Really?" (So much for my spiritual confidence, right?) Sara and I prayed with Tom, and it was a powerful experience. During that time, we also invited the Holy Spirit into his life to be his comforter and sole strength. Afterward there was a marked change in Tom, and he said so. All I said was "Really?" (O, Leader of Little Faith!) Do I believe God uses GIGs? You bet I do!

CAMPUS PASTOR (NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY)



Mike,
It was great spending time with you
and what you said and have shared
I think it's crazy that they killed
a lot of how people
of comfort
Well, if it's real
Anyways, I'm sure
people have put
national. Anyways,
your next week
for me.

to read Mark to find out
I'm for no good reason. A
I can't figure out why I
has experience
read a book
at least it will
really well and I look
yourself and give you a
your friend,
Eoin.



HOW TO LAUNCH

WHERE DO WE START?

At work:

At school:

In your family:

In your neighborhood:

Friends/ other:

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW WHO
DO NOT YET FOLLOW JESUS?

What are some characteristics of Christians that most turn off these friends?

What things might be key for you to do in order to build trust with them?



DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIPS

How do we develop our friendships? We pursue Prayer, Care and Share evangelism. Choose a couple of people from the previous page to focus on:



What will you pray for this friend? When could you pray with them?

WE PRAY FOR AND WITH OUR FRIENDS

What is your next step in caring for your friends?

WE CARE FOR OUR FRIENDS

How and when will you let your friends know how much Jesus means to you?

WE SHARE WITH OUR FRIENDS

HOW TO LAUNCH



HOW TO LAUNCH

TESTIMONY

Cathy met Matt through a Spanish class offered at the local college. Matt had decided to use his Spanish class as his forum to share about Jesus. Each week, they would be assigned a 1 page paper to write in Spanish - like who their hero is, what they want to do career-wise, etc. And for each paper, Matt would write about his faith. So, because they would read their papers aloud in class, each week Matt got to talk about Jesus! Cathy began to ask Matt questions about his papers, and he invited her to a GIG. As they studied passages about Jesus' power to heal one week, Cathy and Matt prayed for Jesus to heal her uncle who had suddenly been hospitalized. The next day, Cathy excitedly shared with Matt that God healed her uncle. Apparently his condition had drastically improved over night and he was able to be released from the hospital. Talk about God backing up his witness! We were eagerly awaiting her conversion soon after that, but when they met a few days later, Cathy shared that another uncle had suddenly died in a freak accident. She was obviously heartbroken and began to seriously struggle with God. That was about a month ago. We were really praying for her, because it seemed like Satan was aggressively trying to steal the Word from her. Her atheist boyfriend was also not much help in the process. But after a few weeks of wrestling with God, and coming to our service for the first time last week, Cathy decided that she needs Jesus! JEN CHOU (PASTORAL LEADER)

INVITING YOUR FRIENDS

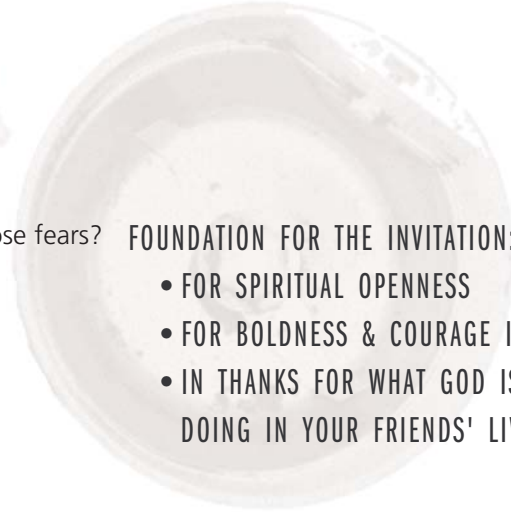
What are my fears about inviting my friends?



What might help me overcome those fears?

FOUNDATION FOR THE INVITATION: PRAYER...

- FOR SPIRITUAL OPENNESS
- FOR BOLDNESS & COURAGE IN INVITING
- IN THANKS FOR WHAT GOD IS ALREADY DOING IN YOUR FRIENDS' LIVES



HOW TO LAUNCH



HOW TO LAUNCH

INVITING YOUR FRIENDS

MAKE A LIST OF SUBJECTS THAT FREQUENTLY COME UP IN CONVERSATION WITH YOUR TWO FRIENDS. BRAINSTORM WAYS TO BRIDGE NATURALLY TO A SPIRITUAL CONCERN.

This is not the first time God has ever shown love to our friends. He created them and has been at work in their lives, in different ways, since before they were born. God is profoundly at work in the lives of our friends, and that may be why he has us in relationship with them. It is unbiblical to assume that God has not been at work in their lives before we met them. It is important, however, to take the risk and invite people to a GIG and then see who God brings. You may be shocked by who comes (as well as who doesn't).

When you really listen to your friends, you will find all kinds of issues and ideas that connect with spiritual concerns. The best GIG invitations come out of the interests already expressed by your friends. "Last week when we were talking you mentioned that...and I was wondering if you would be interested in getting together and looking at how Jesus dealt with that?"

INVITING YOUR FRIENDS

As you invite friends, here are some suggestions for introducing them to a GIG:

- This is a spiritual discussion.
- You don't need to know anything about the Bible, just be curious and open.
- We will be looking at stories from Jesus' biographies.
- This is where, when and for how long we will meet.
- You can invite a friend.

Think of a person you would like to invite to a GIG. Have they expressed an interest in spiritual matters? Write out an invitation that begins with their interest and bridges to an invitation. Now practice your invitation.

THE BEST GIG INVITATIONS COME OUT
OF THE INTERESTS ALREADY
EXPRESSED BY YOUR FRIENDS



HOW TO LAUNCH

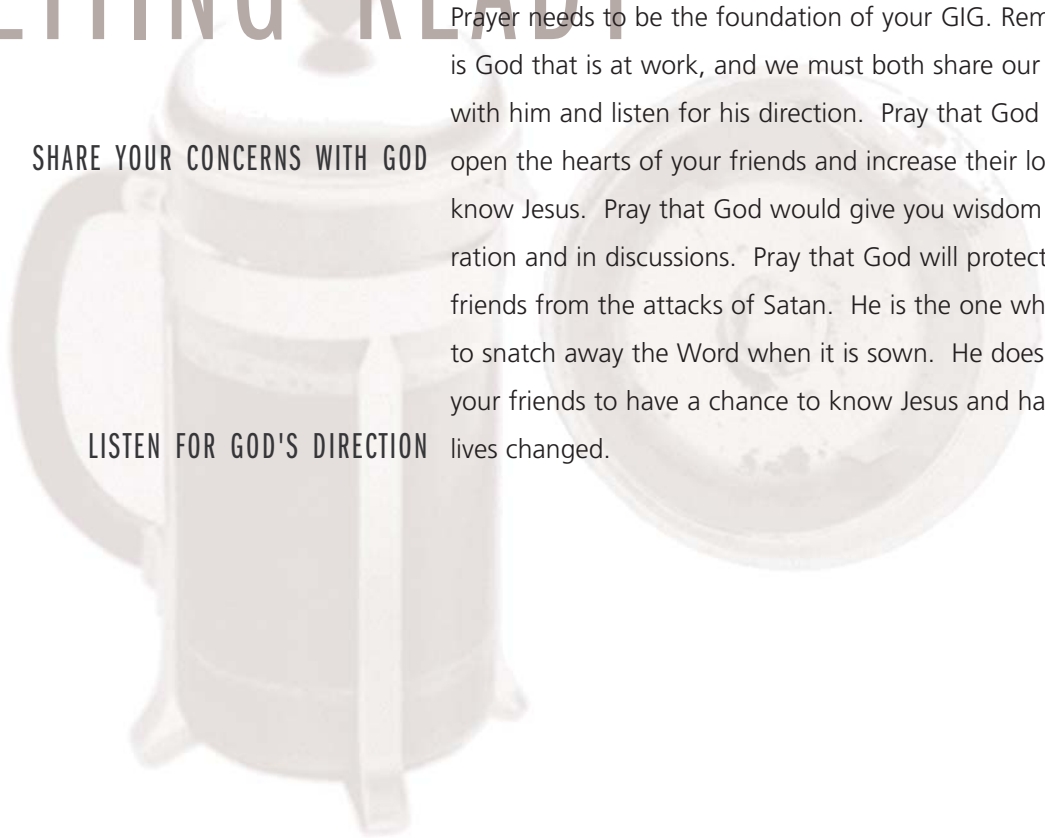


GETTING READY

SHARE YOUR CONCERNS WITH GOD

LISTEN FOR GOD'S DIRECTION

Prayer needs to be the foundation of your GIG. Remember, it is God that is at work, and we must both share our concerns with him and listen for his direction. Pray that God would open the hearts of your friends and increase their longing to know Jesus. Pray that God would give you wisdom in preparation and in discussions. Pray that God will protect your friends from the attacks of Satan. He is the one who desires to snatch away the Word when it is sown. He does not want your friends to have a chance to know Jesus and have their lives changed.



GETTING READY



Pick a passage from the Gospels. They provide an engaging and personal way for our friends to meet Jesus. Think carefully about the spiritual interests already expressed by your friends. What stories from Jesus' life might be most relevant?

PICK A PASSAGE OR THEME

There is one more important step—preparing your study. Plan on spending about twice as much time preparing for the study as you will take to lead it.

PREPARE FOR LEADING

First, study the passage yourself. Get to know the passage. Listen carefully for how God speaks to you through the passage and how it applies to your life. (1-2 hours)

CONSIDER USING THE FOUR SAMPLE STUDIES IN THE BACK OF THIS GUIDE, OR GET THE GIG BIBLE STUDY SERIES PUBLISHED BY INTERVARSITY PRESS AND WILLOW CREEK ON SEX, SPIRITUALITY, FINDING GOD, AND FOLLOWING GOD AT [HTTP://WWW.IVPRESS.COM](http://www.ivpress.com)

Then try to remove yourself from your Christian mindset. Don't make assumptions about what your friends will know. What questions might they have? What issues might they run into as they study the passage for the first time?

HOW TO LAUNCH



GETTING READY

Next, if you are using a Bible study guide, review the questions prepared for your study and put them in your own words. Or, if you are developing the study yourself, write out the questions.

REVIEW OR WRITE OUT THE QUESTIONS

Then, think through a vulnerable story of struggle applicable to the passage that you can share with your friends. You will probably end with this story.

END WITH A VULNERABLE STORY

Finally, think of a thought-provoking question to ask at the beginning of the study that relates to the text. Try creating a question that helps people become more acquainted with each other. Look at the studies in the back for examples.

THINK OF A THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTION

GETTING READY



You need to meet somewhere. It could be your apartment, dorm room, a restaurant or the place you work. Here are some suggestions for creating a friendly atmosphere:

- Provide snacks and drinks and have them available at the beginning of your meeting.
- Make sure the room is friendly to a non-Christian, keeping in mind posters, signs, etc.
- Try to turn down or off the phone ringer, the TV, etc.

How might you overcome distractions in your GIG?

As you prepare to lead a GIG, how do you need to trust God?

How are you praying for your friends?

WHERE DO YOU MEET?

FIND A PRAYER PARTNER AND COMMIT
TO PRAY REGULARLY FOR YOUR FRIENDS.

HOW TO LAUNCH





LEADING A GIG

Welcome people and do the necessary introductions.

THE GIG MEETING

Begin the GIG with your opening question.

Introduce your group to the ground rules:

- Respect one another in the discussion.
- Be curious, honest and ask questions.
- Express your ideas.
- Stay focused on the story from Scripture.
- Have fun!

Hand out a copy of the passage or turn to the passage in the Bible. Give everyone a few minutes to read the text on their own, or have someone read it aloud who you know would feel comfortable doing so. First, help people get a feel for what's going on. Ask, "What about this passage stikes you?," or "If you had been there, what would you have seen?"

LOOK AT THE BIBLICAL PASSAGE

LEADING A GIG



Next, you will want to explore the meaning of the story. For example, "How did the people in the story understand what happened?" or "What would this event be like if it happened today?" Often the best discussions start with observations, followed by a thought-provoking discussion question.

Finally, ask about applying the passage. "What do you learn about Jesus," "What do you think Jesus might want you to do," or "How does this passage speak to your life?" It is crucial that you share honestly how you respond to the passage and how it relates to your life.

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE

INDEX CARDS - TRY PASSING OUT INDEX CARDS AT THE END OF THE GIG. HAVE EACH PERSON WRITE A QUESTION THEY ARE GRAPPLING WITH. IT CAN BE FROM THE BIBLICAL TEXT, ANYTHING GOING ON IN THEIR LIVES, OR ANY QUESTIONS THEY HAVE ABOUT GOD AND RELIGION. THE CARD OFFERS THEM A WAY TO ASK QUESTIONS PRIVATELY. AND IT WILL GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND TO THEM PERSONALLY. AT SOME POINT, YOU MAY WANT TO HAVE A GIG MEETING THAT DEALS WITH THEIR QUESTIONS.

HOW TO LEAD



HOW TO LEAD

LEADING A GIG

From the beginning we have said that GIGs are about what God is doing. Expect the unexpected. Laundry runs, loud roommates, phone calls, no-shows and totally rude comments may be part of your GIG.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

We are not responsible for changing peoples' hearts towards God. Rather, we are to care for our friends. God, who loves our friends more than we do, will continue to work in their hearts to produce fruit (Matthew 13:1-23).

GOD WILL CONTINUE TO WORK IN OUR FRIENDS' HEARTS

Don't be afraid of silence when you ask a question. This study will be a new experience for your friends; it may take them time to warm up to conversation.

DON'T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE

LEADING A GIG



GIG leaders face several key challenges:

- Inviting their friends
- Persevering when seeking friends aren't committed
- Asking friends to become followers of Jesus

CHALLENGES

Here are some suggestions for overcoming challenges:

- Find a prayer partner
 - Participate in a GIG leaders nurturing group
 - Request prayer from a weekly prayer group
- One additional challenge: *The discussion dynamics and style that are most helpful for any group depend a lot on the cultural background of the participants. The instructions for preparing and leading GIGs that we have given you in this guide work well for many ethnically white, Asian-American, Native American, and International groups. People from Latino, African-American and Korean-American ethnic backgrounds often appreciate a more passionate, direct, and strongly led approach. So if you are preparing these studies for people from those backgrounds, you will want to speak more directly from your heart all along the way. In these cultural contexts, the leader's authority is much more important. Therefore, the leader should challenge participants directly, speak passionately, and exercise authority. It is still very important to ask great questions and leave time for sharing. You will learn a lot as you listen, but you will need to be stronger at taking the lead and not letting anyone in the GIG dominate. It is also very important to learn about the church background of these participants, since many African-American, Latino, and Korean-American people have strong church traditions which will deeply affect how they need to hear and respond to the gospel. So become a learner here, and God will use you!*

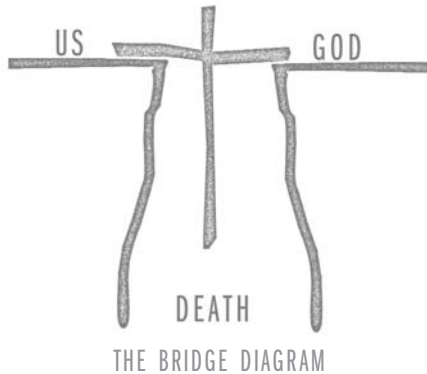
HOW TO LEAD

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES



LEADING A GIG

HELPING OUR FRIENDS CROSS THE LINE



4 KEY TRANSITIONAL QUESTIONS

If a friend of yours wanted to make a commitment to God, would you know how to help her? Have you memorized a simple way to share the good news of God's love so that you are ready to be used by God to lead someone to faith?

Do you know the four key transitional questions to ask to help your friend respond to God?

- 1 Would you like to hear a simple summary of the message of God's love?
- 2 Where do you see yourself in relation to the summary I just shared?
- 3 Is there anything that keeps you from crossing over to be with God right now?
- 4 Would you like to ask God to be your forgiver and leader? Would you like my help in doing that, or do you want to do that on your own?

If you will "pop the question" and leave the results to God, you might be surprised at who responds!

PLAN YOUR NEXT STEPS



Is God leading you to start a GIG? 1

Who might you invite? 2

What resources will you use? 3

When and where will you lead it? 4

What's your next step? Who might you seek out to provide encouragement and accountability? 5

How do you want to pray? What do you want God to do? 6

HOW TO LEAD



RESOURCES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW MANY PEOPLE SHOULD I HAVE IN MY GIG?

Many GIGs are a one on one discussion. If you have more than one seeker, make sure to have at most two Christians.

HOW CAN I HAVE AN AGENDA FOR EVANGELISM AND AT THE SAME TIME CARE FOR MY FRIENDS?

Jesus did it well. So can we. If we genuinely love people, listen, earn the right to be heard, and then share honestly about our faith, people will respond. Then we stay committed to the friendship, however they respond.

WHEN IS IT TIME TO INVITE MY FRIENDS INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS?

There is no easy answer to this. However, it is usually sooner than you think. If your friend trusts you and you have had some good spiritual conversations, take the risk and ask if you can share a simple summary of the message of God's love. Then go for it! (see page 37).

WHAT BIBLICAL BOOKS OR STORIES WOULD BE GOOD TO STUDY IN MY GIG?

John's Gospel is excellent! So is any story within the Gospels that has deeply affected your life.

HOW DO I DEAL WITH MY FEARS?

Get help in prayer and accountability from a friend. It helps a lot to meet with others who are leading GIGs, to learn from each other and to encourage one another.

HOW DO I HAVE A "DISCUSSION" WHEN MY GIG IS ONE ON ONE?

Treat yourself like one of the two participants. Ask questions, and then go back and forth with the other person, sharing your thoughts and feelings and asking that person to share his or her thoughts and feelings.

RESOURCES



WHEN SHOULD I END MY GIG?

When your seeking friends want to or when they become followers of Christ. After the conclusion of a GIG, try to get your friends involved in a small group.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I SHARE IN MY GIG? WHEN SHOULD I TEACH IN MY GIG?

Your friends want to hear what you think and have experienced. So plan on sharing important truths and a vulnerable story each time. Then ask your friends if they can relate to the story. The one thing you want to avoid is becoming the expert answer person right away. Let God use their questions to help create an environment in which any question is okay, and in which people can seek answers at their own pace. Let God use the Bible passage to speak truth into people's lives.

WHEN SHOULD I PRAY WITH MY FRIENDS IN MY GIG?

Generally, you will not want to pray in your GIG during the first few sessions. But after 4 or 5 weeks, it can be a very important step if your friends are open. In general, a short pastorally caring prayer is the most appropriate in these situations.

HOW DO I USE THE GUIDE TO TRAIN OTHERS?

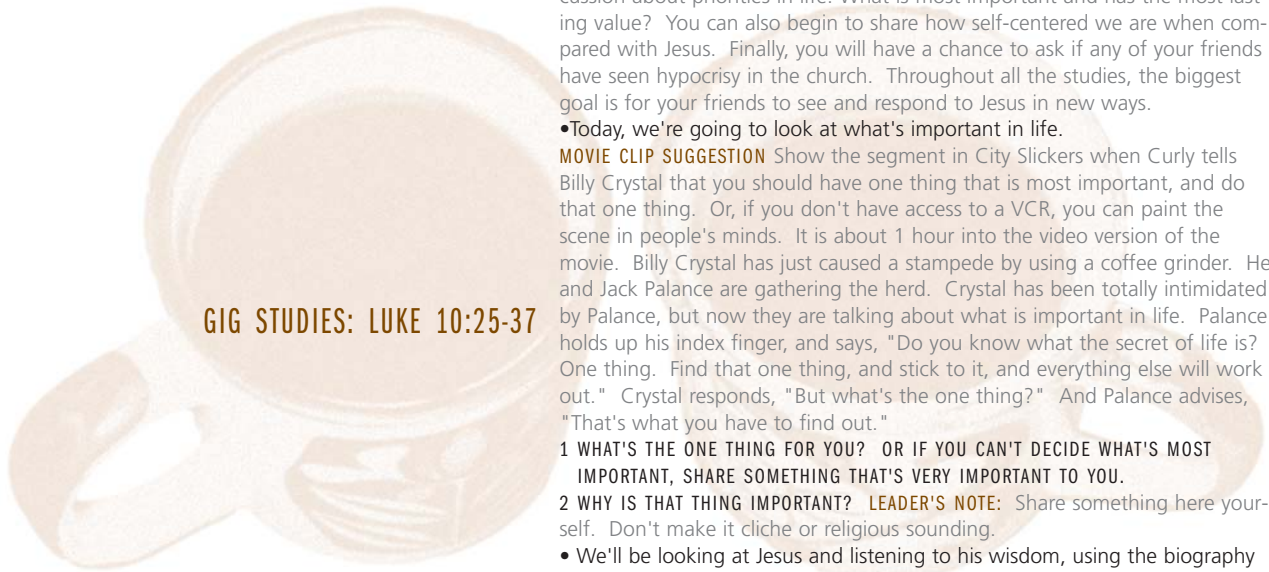
This guide is designed to enable you to sit down with somebody for an hour and a half and walk through it. The guide is also useful for a weekend training event or 4 weekly sessions. Each session can be developed by you so participants can interact and respond to the material more deeply. You can get the Leader's Guide for those who train others in GIGs by calling toll free: 1.866.265.4823

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW TO LEAD



RESOURCES



GIG STUDIES: LUKE 10:25-37

1 MADE FOR RELATIONSHIPS: LUKE 10:25-37.

LEADER'S NOTE: Your goal in this study is to have a good initial spiritual discussion about priorities in life. What is most important and has the most lasting value? You can also begin to share how self-centered we are when compared with Jesus. Finally, you will have a chance to ask if any of your friends have seen hypocrisy in the church. Throughout all the studies, the biggest goal is for your friends to see and respond to Jesus in new ways.

•Today, we're going to look at what's important in life.

MOVIE CLIP SUGGESTION Show the segment in *City Slickers* when Curly tells Billy Crystal that you should have one thing that is most important, and do that one thing. Or, if you don't have access to a VCR, you can paint the scene in people's minds. It is about 1 hour into the video version of the movie. Billy Crystal has just caused a stampede by using a coffee grinder. He and Jack Palance are gathering the herd. Crystal has been totally intimidated by Palance, but now they are talking about what is important in life. Palance holds up his index finger, and says, "Do you know what the secret of life is? One thing. Find that one thing, and stick to it, and everything else will work out." Crystal responds, "But what's the one thing?" And Palance advises, "That's what you have to find out."

1 WHAT'S THE ONE THING FOR YOU? OR IF YOU CAN'T DECIDE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT, SHARE SOMETHING THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU.

2 WHY IS THAT THING IMPORTANT? **LEADER'S NOTE:** Share something here yourself. Don't make it cliché or religious sounding.

• We'll be looking at Jesus and listening to his wisdom, using the biography of Jesus that Luke wrote. Luke was an excellent writer for non-religious people, and he was a very careful investigative reporter (see Luke 1:1-4). He would have been a great reporter for the *New York Times*. Let's look at Luke 10:25-37 on page X to get Jesus' wisdom on what that one thing might be. Let's each read a few verses.

3 FIRST, LET'S LOOK AT THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE LAWYER AND JESUS. THE

RESOURCES



- LAWYER ASKS, "HOW DO I INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?" WHAT DO YOU THINK ETERNAL LIFE IS? **LEADER'S NOTE:** "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." John 17:3
- 4 WHY DOES JESUS ANSWER A QUESTION WITH A QUESTION?
- 5 SO WHAT DOES JESUS THINK IS THE ONE THING (VERSE 27-28)?
- 6 WHAT DO YOU THINK OF JESUS' PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND HOW DOES YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE COMPARE? **LEADER'S NOTE:** Here is the main point of the study- Jesus believes the One Thing, the most important thing in life, is loving God and loving other people. You can share about how that inspires you, but also convicts you.
- Now let's look at the story Jesus tells. Just for background, a priest would be like a pastor today, a Levite would be like a committed churchgoer and leader, and Samaritans are a despised ethnic group who are thought to have an inferior religion.
- 7 WHAT STRIKES YOU ABOUT THE STORY?
- 8 HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED PEOPLE THAT ARE RELIGIOUS BUT NOT VERY LOVING? **LEADER'S NOTE:** This story can help you talk about any hypocrisy your friends have experienced. Hypocrisy can be a big barrier for your friends.
- 9 WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S THE DESPISED MINORITY PERSON WHO IS THE HERO IN THIS STORY?
- 10 CAN YOU SHARE AN EXPERIENCE OF BEING IN TROUBLE OR NEED AND HAVING SOMEONE COMPASSIONATELY CARE FOR YOU? **LEADER'S NOTE:** Here is a key opportunity for you to share vulnerably.
- 11 DOES JESUS EVER ANSWER THE LAWYER'S QUESTION?
- 12 HOW MIGHT YOUR LIFE CHANGE IF JESUS' ONE THING, LOVING GOD AND OTHERS, WAS MORE IMPORTANT AND CENTRAL TO YOU AND YOUR LIFE? WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT ABOUT YOUR LIFE? **LEADER'S NOTE:** Be ready to share honestly here.

GIG STUDIES: LUKE 10:25-37

HOW TO LEAD



RESOURCES



GIG STUDIES: LUKE 12:22-34

GETTING PERSPECTIVE: LUKE 12:22-34

LEADER'S NOTE: Your goal in this study is to discuss things we sometimes worry about that keep us from focusing on what's important: seeking God and God's ways in our lives.

- Last time, we looked at what Jesus thought was most important: loving God and loving other people. This week we want to look at the things that we can get focused on. We'll start with a clip from the movie *There's Something About Mary*.

MOVIE CLIP SUGGESTION: Watch the scene from *There's Something About Mary*, when Mary confronts all the guys who have been obsessed with her. Start where the two guys are running in the door to save her from "Woogie". It starts at about one hour and 55 minutes into the video version of the movie. Stop when Woogie asks Brett Favre to autograph Mary's shoe. What hits you from this clip?

LEADER'S NOTE: When Ben Stiller talks about how none of them really love Mary, they only love how she makes them feel, that's a great illustration of how we get focused on our own needs and don't genuinely care for others. These guys all got obsessed with Mary. They got so obsessed, they would do anything to anybody, tell any lie or make up any story, to try to get her. They lacked perspective! Most of us may not be obsessed at their level, but all of us have anxieties, concerns and priorities that sometimes keep us from focusing on what's important.

1 CAN YOU THINK OF SOMETHING OR SOMEONE THAT YOU THINK OR WORRY ABOUT MORE THAN YOU WANT TO? LEADER'S NOTE: Share something here you are anxious about.

- Let's each read a few verses aloud from Luke 12:22-34. Jesus talks about how people worry about food, drink, clothing and basic needs of life.
LEADER'S NOTE: relationships, dating, marriage- is there somebody for me?-career, future....Here's where the movie clip comes in again. Be ready to share more vulnerably some other things you worry about.

RESOURCES



- 2 WHY DO YOU THINK WE TEND TO WORRY ABOUT OUR LIVES?
- 3 JESUS HAS SOME OBSERVATIONS HERE ABOUT WORRY- THE PURPOSELESSNESS OF WORRYING AND PERSPECTIVES THAT CAN HELP OUR ANXIETY. WHAT DOES JESUS SAY ABOUT WORRY, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHAT HE SAYS? **LEADER'S NOTE:** Jesus points out that life is more than the things we worry about, that worrying doesn't do any good anyway, and that we are so valuable to God that God will take care of us. Share about something you worry about.
- 4 THE KEY IN THIS PASSAGE IS THAT WE ARE TO SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM, AND ALL THESE OTHER THINGS WILL BE GIVEN TO US AS WELL. WHAT DO YOU THINK GOD'S KINGDOM IS, AND HOW MIGHT ONE SEEK IT?
- 5 WHAT WORRIES IN OUR LIVES KEEP US FROM SEEKING GOD?
- 6 JESUS TELLS US TO GIVE TO THE POOR, AND THEN HE SAYS THAT WHERE OUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL OUR HEART BE ALSO. WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU TREASURE MOST IN LIFE? WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT YOUR HEART?
- LEADER'S NOTE:** Share honestly that you want your treasure and heart with God, but also how in specific ways you struggle with that.
- 7 WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HELP YOU GET THE KIND OF PEACE AND PERSPECTIVE THAT JESUS TALKS ABOUT IN THIS PASSAGE?

GIG STUDIES: LUKE 12:22-34

HOW TO LEAD



RESOURCES



GIG STUDIES: LUKE 7:36-50

FINDING LOVE AND BELONGING LUKE 7:36-50.

LEADER'S NOTE: Your goal in this study is to see that Jesus and his Father are loving, accepting and forgiving toward people that have messed up. And when we know we're accepted and forgiven, we are free to love God and people.

• In our first study, we talked about what was most important in life and saw that Jesus taught the most important thing. The "One Thing" was loving God and loving people. In the second study, we talked about our tendency to let other things become too important and to lose perspective. Today, we want to look at Jesus' wisdom about how to get perspective back and how to have such a sense of being loved, affirmed and forgiven by God that we are free to focus on what's important.

1 SO, LET'S FIRST SHARE OUR OWN EXPERIENCE OF FEELING LOVED AND AFFIRMED. THINK ABOUT A GROUP, CLIQUE OR ORGANIZATION YOU KNOW OR ARE PART OF. WHO IS ACCEPTED AND VALUED, AND WHO IS NOT? WHY?

LEADER'S NOTE: Alternative question to use if trust has been growing among the group and you want to go a little deeper: Did you experience a sense of acceptance and belonging growing up in your family or with classmates? Why or why not? Also, be ready to share vulnerably about a time in your life when you didn't feel accepted or like you belonged.

- Let's turn to Luke 7:36-50, and each read a few verses aloud.
- 2 IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE AT THIS DINNER PARTY. (FOR INFORMATION, JESUS WOULD LIE SIDEWAYS, FACING TOWARD THE TABLE AND THE GUESTS, WITH HIS LEGS GOING SIDEWAYS AND OUT.) THE WOMAN HAS A VERY TROUBLED PAST. SHE IS PROBABLY A PROSTITUTE, AND "DECENT" PEOPLE DESPISE HER. WHAT STRIKES YOU ABOUT WHAT SHE DOES? WHY DO YOU THINK SHE ACTS LIKE THIS?
- 3 PHARISEES ARE LIKE SELF-RIGHTEOUS RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WE KNOW. WHY DO YOU THINK THE RELIGIOUS HOST OF THE PARTY RESPONDS TO THE WOMAN THE WAY HE DOES?
- 4 DO YOU KNOW ANYONE IN YOUR LIFE WHO IS LIKE THIS HOST? IF SO, HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN AROUND THIS PERSON?

RESOURCES



- 5 WHAT ABOUT JESUS ELICITS THIS WOMAN'S RESPONSE?
- 6 IS THE WAY YOU SEE GOD DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY JESUS ACTS IN THIS ENCOUNTER?
- 7 WHAT DO YOU THINK JESUS MEANS WHEN HE TELLS THE WOMAN THAT HER SINS ARE FORGIVEN AND HER FAITH HAS SAVED HER?
- 8 AT THIS POINT, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO BECOME CLOSER TO GOD, LIKE THIS WOMAN?

MOVIE CLIP SUGGESTION: You could end by showing the clip from the second part of Jesus of Nazareth where Mary comes in and washes Jesus' feet. It is a powerful visual rendering of this story, combining a few quotes from some other stories out of Jesus' life. It starts at about one hour and 12 minutes into part 2, right after John the Baptist's funeral.

GIG STUDIES: LUKE 7:36-50

HOW TO LEAD



RESOURCES

COMING HOME TO GOD LUKE 15:11-32.

Today we want to look at the most famous story Jesus ever told.

MOVIE CLIP SUGGESTION: *Show the segment from the movie Jerry Maguire, where Tom Cruise comes to his senses and returns to Renée Zellweger and asks her to take him back. It is about two hours and ten minutes into the video version of the movie. Set it up by summarizing the movie as follows. Tom Cruise is a sports agent. He wrote a mission statement for his company stressing the need to value clients. In response to this statement, the company fired him. He and Renée start their own company with one client. They get married, but Tom Cruise is too busy trying to become successful, and he's not very good at intimacy. Finally, they split. Just before this scene, Tom Cruise finally becomes successful again, and he realizes how empty the success is because he doesn't have Renée to share it with him. He comes to his senses about what's important in his life.*

GIG STUDIES: LUKE 15:11-32

1 WHAT STRUCK YOU FROM THIS CLIP?

- Jesus talked often about how we can lose our way spiritually and forget what's important. We end up feeling empty. Jesus wants to help people come to their senses and find their way back to God and to what's important. So he tells this story. Let's each read a few verses aloud from Luke 15:11-24.

2 SO, TELL ME WHAT HAPPENS HERE FROM THE FATHER'S POINT OF VIEW.

3 HOW DO YOU THINK THE FATHER FEELS WHEN THE SON ASKS FOR HIS INHERITANCE? HOW DOES THE FATHER RESPOND?

4 HOW DOES THE FATHER RESPOND WHEN THE SON RETURNS, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HIS RESPONSE? LEADER'S NOTE: IF YOU SHOWED THE MOVIE CLIP, YOU CAN POINT OUT THAT THE FATHER BASICALLY SAYS, "YOU HAD ME AT HELLO," JUST LIKE RENÉE DID.

5 JESUS IS MAKING A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE FATHER AND GOD. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS PICTURE OF GOD?

6 TELL ME THE STORY FROM THE YOUNGER SON'S POINT OF VIEW. WHY DO YOU THINK THE SON ASKS FOR HIS INHERITANCE?

RESOURCES



HOW TO LEAD

7 THE SON SEEMS TO WANT TOTAL FREEDOM. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SON LEARNED ABOUT REAL FREEDOM?

8 HAVE YOU EVER HIT BOTTOM AND COME TO YOUR SENSES LIKE THIS SON? WHAT HAPPENED, IF YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE SHARING?

9 THE FATHER GIVES THE SON A ROBE, SANDALS, A RING, AND A FEAST. THE ROBE REPRESENTS THE WELCOME BACK INTO THE FAMILY; THE RING REPRESENTS THE FATHER'S AUTHORITY; THE SANDALS REPRESENT FREEDOM; AND THE FEAST REPRESENTS CELEBRATION AND JOY. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SON LEARNED THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE? **LEADER'S NOTES:** The son learned that the things he really wanted (freedom, real partying and celebration, acceptance and love) he found by coming home to his father and not by running out and just doing his own thing. The passage challenges us that what we most deeply want we will find by coming back home to God.

• Well, there's another son, and some people identify more with that son. Let's each read a few verses aloud from Luke 15:25-32.

10 THE ELDER BROTHER IS LIKE A LOT OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY ALREADY ARE CHRISTIANS BUT DON'T HAVE MUCH LOVE OR ENJOYMENT IN LIFE. DO YOU KNOW PEOPLE LIKE THAT, OR DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE THAT?

11 WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS IN THIS STORY FOR PEOPLE LIKE THAT?

12 LET'S TALK ABOUT WHO WE IDENTIFY WITH MORE: THE YOUNGER SON OR THE OLDER SON.

13 BOTH SONS NEEDED TO COME TO THEIR SENSES (JUST LIKE TOM CRUISE NEEDED TO). WHERE DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU MIGHT NEED TO COME TO YOUR SENSES IN YOUR LIFE? **LEADER'S NOTES:** You can end with your own story of coming to your senses and finding God. This last study would be a great time to share the good news about Jesus with your friends, or you could invite the group back for one more week and say, "Next week, we'll have a party to celebrate our time together, sum it all up, and decide if we want to meet any more." You may share the gospel using Circles of Belonging, "the bridge diagram" or some other good gospel summary. You can get the Circles of Belonging booklet from IVP, and the training notes for Circles of Belonging from Rick Richardson at Rick_Richardson@ivstaff.org.

GIG STUDIES: LUKE 15:11-32

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