

Good News For Those Trying Harder, by Pastor Alan Kraft

A circular logo with a red outer ring and a blue inner circle. The text "Small Group Leader Insights" is written in white inside the blue circle.

Small
Group
Leader
Insights

Understanding Where We're Headed... This is going to be an exciting and powerful study as we discover ways of living out the timeless message of the Gospel in our relationship with Christ. Each week we'll be advancing you copies of the discussion questions, designed to help your group experience meaningful discussion, interaction and application. We'll also be sending along this sheet, designed to help you facilitate each week's group and think through some things in advance. Each week will contain the following elements ...

Getting Connected

This portion of the study is designed to help group members connect relationally, familiarize the group with each week's topic, and to invite some initial conversation.

Highlights and Insights

This portion of the study will begin with an open-ended question to invite initial responses to the chapter. Please encourage these responses to be brief! And, as a leader we encourage you to use this time each week to see how group members are processing the chapter's topic. It might give you insight into questions you might want to spend more time on. After the initial, open-ended question, will be a question or two designed to have people reflect on the topic as it applies to their life.

Biblical Focus

This is the main focus for each week's session, and designed to have individuals and your group wrestle with what the Bible has to say about the week's topic. We don't just want your group to just be able to regurgitate what Pastor Alan says about the topic, but what God says about it in His Word. In this section each week there will usually be a group exercise to work together in identifying key points and their implications.

The Heart of the Matter

This time will be devoted to pointing each person to look inward to particular things God may be wanting to teach them through this week's discussion.

In Conclusion ...

This time will usually direct each person to think very specifically about how this week's discussion impacts their relationship with Jesus, and what they desire from the members of your group as they live for Him.

Finally ... Each week's discussion questions are written with three assumptions in mind: 1) That each person has read the designated chapter prior to the group meeting; 2) That each person has received the questions sent to them in advance by you; and 3) That each person has a copy of the Bible with them each week. Since not all people may remember to bring the questions with them, you probably want to print out a few sheets to have on-hand.

Thanks for sharing this journey with us! We're grateful to be partners in the Gospel with you here at Christ Community. We love you.

--Pastor Alan and Pastor Bruce

Chapter One: *The Struggle to Make It Work*

The goal of this chapter is for people to be able to clearly articulate what “the Gospel” is. Also, how well-meaning Christians have subtly distorted the message of the Gospel, and the way this subtle distortion has affected them.

Getting Connected

As you invite people to share in this section, put some time limits on how long each person is given (we recommend 60 seconds each). You might want to either use a stop watch or appoint a time-keeper to keep things on track. You might also want to counsel people to share as objectively as possible in talking about churches, people or ministries that have impacted them negatively, so it doesn’t degenerate into church- or ministry-bashing.

Highlights and Insights

A reminder that these open-ended questions are designed to invite initial responses to the chapter. Please encourage these responses to be brief! And, as a leader, to listen to people’s responses to see how they’re processing this week’s topic. Don’t insist on everyone sharing.

Biblical Focus

The three things that are most essential for people to grasp in this week’s study are:

1. The Gospel isn’t just the beginning of our Christian life, it is the Christian life.
2. We are to embrace our brokenness and our inability to live for Christ on our own.
3. Christ is our sufficiency, and only our faith in Him enables us to live life as a Christian.

Spend significant time completing the section in the blue shaded area. You might begin by brainstorming together and then coming up with a concise definition. Afterwards, guide your group in distilling the core elements of this definition. These should probably reflect the three things above in some way, shape or form.

The Heart of the Matter / In Conclusion ...

In these two sections, seek to guide people in making specific life application. In other words,

And remember a key small group leadership principle ... vulnerability and authenticity! Share openly with your group how you are processing and applying this week’s topic. As you read the chapter and prepare for leading this week’s group, be sure to think through and complete the following question in advance: *“In my relationship with Jesus, I long for _____.”*