

Leader Guide, Week 1 | A Renewed Mind!

I. Objective: Allow God to be the transformation in your life and don't be consumed by the information around you.

Use this objective as a guide for your group time and let it be the main takeaway for the week. While you may not get to every component of the study guide during your group time, if you've accomplished the objective, it's a win!

In this first session, we will set the stage for the next seven weeks by casting vision for our time together. We will create a warm and inviting atmosphere where honest and vulnerable sharing is encouraged, and we will establish guidelines to foster a safe and enriching small group experience.

As we begin, we will explore the gift of our God-given intellect and the importance of renewing our minds with His truth. Together, we will discover how Scripture calls us to think differently, surrendering worldly patterns of thought and asking God for wisdom that leads to life. This week is an opportunity to invite God to reshape our thinking, redeem our wisdom, and prepare us for the transformative journey ahead toward becoming whole in Christ!

II. Checklist

What should you do before, during, and after group time?

Before

- ☐ Follow up with everyone who signed up, welcome them, & give them the details!
- ☐ Review materials beforehand (leader guide, study guide questions, & video teaching)
- ☐ Set up the room (chairs, food, worship music, lighting, etc.)

During

- ☐ Review & agree to the Group Agreements with your group (appendix 1)
- ☐ Make sure to have updated contact info for group members and share yours
- ☐ Confirm group roles for the next week (host, location, etc)
- ☐ Stay open-handed. Things might not go exactly as you planned—and that's totally okay!

After

- ☐ Send communication to the group regarding next week's meeting (individual communication is encouraged for a new group)
- ☐ Submit group attendance

III. Intentional Prayers

Every spiritual battle calls for spiritual weapons. As you get ready for each gathering, make sure to intentionally put on the Armor of God (Eph. 6) and stand firm in prayer. Below, you'll find specific ways to pray over your group—covering your time together, aligning your hearts with God's will, and inviting the Holy Spirit to move powerfully. Let's pray with boldness and expectation, believing God for real transformation!

- For **God to meet you** as you lead this group—expanding your capacity and increasing your trust in Him. To disciple the people in your group well and with intentionality.
- For those who may feel anxious about the group to find the **peace of God**.
- For the hearts of your group members to **be ready to receive what God has** for them and increase their ability to understand. Pray that hardened hearts will be softened!

IV. Group Time

*Here's a suggested timeframe for a two-hour meeting. Feel free to adjust for shorter or longer sessions—this is just a suggestion. Don't feel like you have to stick to it minute by minute. Be open to how the Spirit leads, and if the group needs to go off script, **let it flow**. Every group has its own rhythm, so just roll with it and find what works! We are following the Acts 2:42 model (Acts 2:42 – And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”).*

Welcoming, Connecting, and Breaking Bread (30 mins)

- This will vary for each group, but there is a benefit to breaking bread together. During this time, you can nurture friendships and truly cultivate a sense of belonging for the people in your group. Meaningful connections are just as important as thought-provoking conversations.

Icebreaker (10 mins)

- This will be important as group members are getting to know one another. The opportunity to connect over a question that brings down walls will allow for greater connections in your group. Some people need a warm-up, even if your group is established.

Group Engagement | Talk About It (45 mins)

- Use the questions as a guide for leading the conversation, but this is your permission (if you need it!) to not answer every question. Allow them to serve as a foundation for thought-provoking conversations and facilitate a healthy dialogue that is life-giving and bible-based for your group.

Group Time Continued**Group Prayer Time (10 mins)**

- Make this a priority each week! This is a great opportunity to allow others in your group to grow by letting them pray.
- This week, pray for renewed minds and repentant hearts for ways we have conformed this world.

V. Be Diligent With Follow Up

Keep in mind that your role as a group leader is not truly just one day a week. While it does not fall all you, this is a great opportunity to step into greater discipleship and increase your intentionality with the people in your group throughout the week/the span of your group.

- Contact those who missed the meeting (or ask someone in the group to help)
- Follow up on issues that came out at the meeting...be a friend & a shepherd
- Look for your group members (and say hi) during weekend worship and events
- Be on the lookout for ways to care for each other

MIND

Appendix 1 | Group Agreement

Our group agrees to meet together for seven weeks beginning _____(Date).

The group will meet every _____(Day of Week)

from _____ to _____(Start & End Time).

As a group, we value (below will get you started, but craft it to your group):

Confidentiality - Whatever is said in the group will be held in the strictest confidence and will not be discussed outside of the group. Group members should also honor the confidentiality of others. When a member shares, they should only speak about their own life, sinfulness, doubts, concerns, and worries and will not share any of these things on behalf of another group member or anyone outside the group.

Openness - Our group is a place to get real with each other. Good discussions can't be built on churchy answers. We aim to hit where the rubber meets the road. Group members are encouraged to be vulnerable, open up, and share their lives and experiences with the group.

Courtesy - We will not interrupt others when they are talking, but will wait for them to finish. We will also extend courtesy by making sure people feel heard. We will avoid quick fixes to anyone's issues or advice-giving of any kind unless it's first asked for.

Staying on Topic - The group meetings are built around lessons. We ask that everyone's comments remain on-topic during the group discussion time. We will stay away from controversial issues, politics, and rabbit trails in general that detract from the topic of discussion. If the discussion gets off track, the group leader will redirect the discussion.

Group Attendance - Every group member is expected at every group meeting. If for some reason a group member is unable to attend, the member should contact the group leader to let them know about their absence before the group meeting.

Group Participation - This group is not just the leader's group. This is our group. Everyone is expected to take turns in leading the discussion, hosting in their home, leading the prayer time, bringing refreshments, or some other aspect of ownership in the group.

Appendix 2 | Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How long should we plan for the meeting?

You should plan for a 90-minute to 2-hour meeting to allow for sufficient time for socializing, discussion, and prayer. Start your meeting on time, even if a few people are running late. By starting on time, the late group members will figure out that the group is serious about starting on time. If you wait for them, then you are reinforcing their behavior – they will learn that the group will wait for them, so they don't need to show up until 15 minutes after the intended start time.

You also want to end the meeting on time. If your group meets on a "school night," then parents will be anxious to get the children home and to bed -- not to mention they need to go to work in the morning. After the discussion and prayer time, let people know that if they need to go, then they are welcome to. But, if they'd like to stay, then they can do that also. This doesn't make it awkward for people if they need to get going.

2. What if we don't cover all of the questions?

The goal of the group meeting is not to cover all of the questions, but to use the question as a tool for facilitating fruitful group discussion. As the group leader, take time before the meeting to pick out five or six questions that will be core to your group discussion. If you have time to get to the rest of the questions, feel free to do so, but don't feel obligated to ask and answer every question in the lesson.

3. Should the leader ever interrupt a group member who is sharing something?

This is a tricky one that depends on what is being shared and why. If it's clear that the person is going down a rabbit trail, then you should redirect them when they take a breath. Say something like, "That's a very interesting thought, but we'll have to save that discussion for another time" or "I'm really interested in what you're saying, maybe we can continue that conversation after the meeting."

Be sensitive. If the group member is sharing something personal, you might want to give them some space to talk about what's on their heart. If this turns into a pattern every week, then you should redirect the discussion. Before you cut them off, say a quick prayer and ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance in how to handle the situation. If you're unsure about what to do, reach out to your coach or the Groups Pastor, Cristina Campbell, at ccampbell@centerpointmurrieta.com.

Appendix 2 | Continued

4. Is it okay to serve alcoholic beverages in the group?

The simple answer would be “no.” Serving alcoholic beverages is really not a good idea in small group meetings. Since the church is a place where broken people come for healing, some of that brokenness centers around substance abuse. In the case of the small group, it's best to practice what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 8 and abstain for the sake of others.

5. How should the room be arranged?

The furniture should be arranged so everyone in the group can see each other. Couches can be a challenge, in that, if three people are sitting on the couch, then the people on either end can't see each other. It's better to add more chairs than to create blind spots in the meeting room.

Also, groups do better meeting indoors rather than outdoors. Unless the group meeting is in a very remote location, meeting outdoors might stifle the discussion if group members are afraid of being overheard by the neighbors.

6. What happens if the group is too big for the room?

If your group is larger than eight people, you should subgroup for the discussion. This will not only make the seating arrangement more comfortable, but it will also allow everyone to get a word in. The group can crowd in to watch the video together, then break up into smaller groups for the discussion. Just make sure each subgroup has access to the discussion questions. You might even break into yet smaller groups of three or four people for prayer time.

Appendix 3 | Resources

Care Team

Our Care Ministry Team provides a personal and physical connection between a member of our Care Team and individuals and families in the community at large. Whether through emotions, relationship issues, or physical or financial trauma, we all sometimes need the support of others to help get us through the tough times. If someone from your group is in need of support through our Care Team, have them fill out this form on the website: <https://mycenterpoint.tv/CareRequest>

Freedom Prayer

Freedom Prayer will help you to find freedom and inner healing at the deepest levels. If you have struggled with deep wounds, spiritual darkness, distortions about God, or other internal hang-ups that are holding you back, Freedom Prayer may be just what you need! If you are interested in receiving deep-level healing prayer through our Freedom Prayer team, please fill out the application form and you'll be on your way to freedom! <https://mycenterpoint.tv/Ministry/freedomprayer>

Good Samaritan Fund

Are you or someone you know in the midst of a financial crisis? The Centerpoint Good Sam Fund can help by stepping in to pay a bill, providing gift cards for groceries, etc. Our level of support includes only essentials such as food, some basic household goods, or referred services. Good Sam requests are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Simply fill out the form and you will be contacted as soon as possible. <https://mycenterpoint.tv/CareRequest> (Select "Benevolence/Charity" under area of support requested)



Freedom Prayer



Care & Good Sam