



START
HERE

Six Foundational Lessons
for Growth in Christ

LEADERS GUIDE

LORI JOINER

LEADERS GUIDE

START HERE

SIX FOUNDATIONAL LESSONS
FOR GROWTH IN CHRIST



BY LORI JOINER

A Note from Lori

I am so thrilled you have downloaded (and maybe printed) this leaders guide to Start Here Six Foundational Lessons for Growth in Christ.

This means that you are most likely going to walk through this material with another person or a small group in the near future. I want to applaud you for being brave, taking a step of faith, and allowing God to use you in the life of another. Way to Go!

I want you to know that I am here for you. If at any point you hit a roadblock, have a question, or just need some encouragement in your discipleship efforts please do not hesitate to contact me! I want you to feel successful and equipped in helping others spiritually.

In Christ,

Lori Joiner

Please Note: There are now TWO sizes of Start Here. The first version is a 9x6 size. The second (newer) version is 11x8.5 size. Throughout this Leaders Guide I will reference both by size so depending on which Start Here you are holding you will be able to follow along.

Lori@LoriJoinerMinistries.org

<https://lorijoinerministries.org/>



CHAPTER 1

Jesus Demonstrates God's Love

Many women have made mistakes in their past and wonder about God's love for them. They feel shame more than love. Many women did not have a good father figure. Perhaps their father was demanding, aloof, flaky, an alcoholic, etc., and these men did not demonstrate and show love the way they should have. So for women in these situations, love has been distorted in their lives and sadly they project those feelings onto God. **Don't underestimate the necessity of this lesson and take care not to rush through it.**

Pause here to pray. *“Lord, use me in the lives of women to help them know your love. Speak through your Word and use me to help them see You as You are—our loving, kind, generous, faithful, loving Father. Please guide my preparation time—help remind me of examples in my life where you have shown your love so I can share that with the women in my group.”*

As you prepare to go through the lesson—make sure you look at the **Answers and Explanations** section in the back of the book. All the correct answers are contained in this section and often there is extra insight and examples to explain a point more clearly. Feel free to use your own life examples or illustrations and even write these directly into the book for you to see as you lead your lesson.

The 9x6 book—There are a few type-o's throughout this version of the book. These have been eradicated with the new larger (11x8.5) second edition.

On page 10 of the 9x6 book—there is a larger type-o I wanted to make you aware of. On the last sentence of the page it should read, “God sent his son from heaven” (*NOT* God desires that his son from heaven).

In Your Own Words Section—Have the ladies spend 3-5 minutes answering these questions on their own, then all can share their answers out loud (the leader should share as well). If the group is running late because of good discussion, then simply have each woman share just one of the three she answered in that section.

Action Steps for Next week Section—Read each of these out loud.

Prayer—After reading what this says you could share when you pray. You may have a time each day when you pray. You may also pray as you are driving, washing dishes, etc.

Bible-If a person does not have a Bible, the Life Application Study Bible in either NIV, NASB, or NLT is recommended. This is the Bible I have and bring to Bible study each week. I show them my Bible and how it has extra information at the bottom of each page to give insight into the scripture and how it can be applied to a person's life.

Attend-As a leader, use this action point to invite the ladies in your group to come with you on Sunday morning to your church if they do not already belong to one.

Others-You could share what this looks like in your life or simply read and move on to the next action point.

Memorize-Memorize the key verse in this chapter. Let the ladies know that you all can review the verse together the next time you meet.

Prayer Journal Section-At this point, depending on time and how well the ladies know each other, you have a few options.

- Ladies can share prayer requests and you as the leader can pray for each one out loud as you close the Bible study in prayer.
- You can have the ladies pray for each other.
- No exchange of prayer requests-just leader closes in prayer.

Say, "Next week we will be studying what Jesus taught about salvation and spending eternity in heaven with Him. Feel free to do the lesson on your own this week if you would like. We will talk through it together at our next meeting."

Some women need extra time to study and understand the lesson. Others may not have time to do this. Either way, go through the lesson line by line having women share their answers and take turns reading the lesson segments out loud each week.

I am here for you and so proud of you for taking this step of faith to invest in other women with Start Here. If you run into any roadblocks as you teach this material please reach out to me as I would love to help.

 CHAPTER 2

Jesus Is the Way to the Father

After establishing God's love for us in lesson one, we now progress to Jesus being the way to the Father. This entire chapter is the gospel with a specific focus on how salvation is a gift from God not as a result of good works.

Pause here to pray. *“Lord, use me in the lives of women to help them come to know you personally if they have never placed their faith in you. And for those who are confused about their salvation, help this Bible study clear up any confusion. Please guide my preparation time—help remind me of examples in my life where you lovingly drew me to you so I can share that with the women in my group.”*

Launching in. Start this time by saying, “Last week we learned that God loves us. Even if we don't feel that love sometimes, even if we have never been loved completely and unconditionally, the Bible can be trusted and God wanted us to know without a doubt of His love toward us. This week we will study more about God's love. Matter of fact by studying how Jesus is the way to the Father we will see God made a way for us to spend eternity with Him in heaven. So let's jump in.”

As you prepare to go through the lesson—make sure you look at the **Answers and Explanations** section in the back of the book.

All the correct answers are contained in this section and often there is extra insight and examples to explain a point more clearly. Feel free to use your own life examples or illustrations and even write these directly into the book for you to see as you lead your lesson.

In the Digging Deeper Section—is a simple open ended question about heaven. There is no right answer here, just an opportunity for the women to answer as they wish. My personal answer is: clean, bright, with Him.

After John 14:6 is broken down, a couple of sentences about the Old Testament sacrificial system are included. Spend time here explaining in detail the sacrificial system. That God had a system for sins to be dealt with. Unblemished animals were used as sacrifices (their death and blood shed) to atone for the sins of people. This system was completely fulfilled by Jesus. He was an unblemished (perfect) sacrifice (He is called the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world). His blood was shed for our sins. Jesus met the demands of the sacrificial system.

This is why no 'other system or way' will work. Nothing (no good work, no other religion) but the blood of Jesus meets the requirements God set forth. That is WHY He is the ONLY WAY.

In the **Pitfall Section**-After reading the 2nd pitfall I give the illustration of relationship security by mentioning how I am my mother's daughter. We may have an argument and not talk but she will always be my mother. In the same way, once a person has put their faith in God they are His. The relationship is secure. Our fellowship can be broken. And just like in the illustration with my mother, I would need to say I am sorry and ask her forgiveness so our fellowship can be restored, but the relationship of mother/daughter cannot be broken.

If a person says they have NOT trusted Christ as their Savior...

- You can ask-"What do you think is holding you back?" Then address their hesitation the best you can. You can also ask-"Is anything holding you back from making that decision today?"

You can offer to pray with them. Say, "If that prayer expresses the desires of your heart we could pause and pray together right now. I could pray and you could pray after me, or you can pray on your own. You can pray the prayer in the book."

Reiterate that the most important thing is not the words a person says but the desire of their heart to place their faith in Christ.

In Your Own Words Section-Have the ladies spend 3-5 minutes answering these questions on their own, then all can share their answers out loud (the leader should share as well). If the group is running late because of good discussion, then simply have each woman share just one of the three she answered in that section.

Action Steps for Next week Section-Read each of these out loud. I just want to give an extra thought on two of these for you-

Bible: From week 2-6 of Start Here they will read 4 chapters a week of the Gospel John. You could ask the women each week- "Ok, this past week we read chapters 1-4 of the gospel of John-did anything special stand out to you personally?" Or "Before we jump into the chapter of Start Here, did anyone have any questions about the book of John reading this past week?" You don't have to do this-but could if you wanted to add it in.

Memorize: Make sure you and the ladies are memorizing the key verse for each chapter. You could suggest they use index cards or post-it notes to memorize the verse. Perhaps see if anyone would like to say the previous week's verse from memory!

Say, "Next week we will study what Jesus taught about the Holy Spirit-how He is God and lives in us! Feel free to do the lesson on your own this week. We will talk through it together at our next meeting."



CHAPTER 3

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

After establishing Jesus is the way to the Father we now explore what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit. Jesus specifically taught that He would send a ‘Helper’ to His followers. This chapter explores Jesus’ teaching on the Holy Spirit as well as the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives today.

Since this chapter is the longest in the Start Here book, it can be easily divided into two weeks. If you choose that option, begin the chapter and study through the top of page 31 and stop before you get to the heading ‘The Ongoing Role of the Holy Spirit.’ The next week start with ‘The Ongoing Role of the Holy Spirit’ and finish the chapter.

Pause here to pray. *“Lord, use me in the lives of women to help them come to know more about the Holy Spirit and how He leads, guides, convicts and directs us daily according to Your plan for our lives. Help me to have Your wisdom as I teach and use me and this Bible study to help dispel any myths or wrong beliefs about the Holy Spirit.”*

Launching in. Start this time by saying, “Last week we learned that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament sacrificial system and thus declared He was the only way to the Father. We studied that it is by faith in Christ, not good works, a person is saved.

We had an opportunity to think seriously about when we placed our faith in Christ individually and had an opportunity to make this decision to trust in Him if we had not previously.”

You can ask, “As you have reflected on this lesson this past week, did any new thoughts or questions arise?” Spend time here, if needed, on salvation (chapter 2) questions before moving on.

Then you can say, “Today we will begin to study and learn about the Holy Spirit. (If you are dividing this chapter into two weeks add- “This is a longer chapter so we will actually only cover the first part of the chapter today.”)

As you prepare to go through the lesson-look at the **Answers and Explanations** section in the back of the book. All the correct answers are contained in this section and there is extra insight to explain a point more clearly. Feel free to use your own life examples or illustrations as well.

In the Just to be Clear Section-We are introduced to the term 'trinity.' Before moving on, turn to the glossary and read the definition of trinity and then go to the next page (pg. 72 of the 9x6 book, same pg. in 11x8.5) and show the diagram and read the paragraph explaining the Holy Spirit is God.

After reading the first paragraph under the heading '**Asking to be Directed and Empowered by the Holy Spirit**,' I typically share a concept called 'spiritual breathing.' This is not a biblical term, just an illustration. Like physical breathing we exhale the bad air (carbon dioxide) and inhale the clean air (oxygen). So spiritually, at any point we can confess sin 'exhale' and ask to be filled 'inhale', directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. I originally learned this concept through my years on staff with Cru.

This sample prayer can also be used for a person who can identify if they truly have trusted Christ as their Savior (perhaps at a young age) but need to reinstate Him as LORD. A fresh surrender to Christ, asking Him to direct and empower their lives. Some people call this a 'rededication.'

In Your Own Words Section-Have the ladies spend 3-5 minutes answering these questions on their own, then all can share their answers out loud (the leader should share as well). If the group is running late because of good discussion, then simply have each woman share just one of the three she answered in that section.

Action Steps for Next week Section-Read each of these out loud. I just want to give an extra thought on two of these for you-

Bible: Since this lesson is divided into two weeks you may have extra time to talk about the John reading the participants are doing each week. You could ask, "How are each of you doing reading 4 chapters a week in the Gospel of John? Do you have any questions? Has anything in particular stood out to you or encouraged you from your reading?"

Memorize: Recite the verses from previous weeks as a group or individually. Remind the ladies we are memorizing the key verse for each chapter of Start Here.

Say, "Next week we will learn about prayer and how talking to God is something Jesus taught his disciples (and you and I) how to do."



CHAPTER 4

Jesus Teaches About Prayer

At this point in our Start Here journey we have now looked in-depth at God the Father (and His love for us), God the Son (and His death for us) and God the Holy Spirit (and His Role in our lives). The next two chapters explore communication between God and us. Prayer is our communication line TO God and the Bible is His communication TO us.

Pause here to pray. *“Lord, use me in the lives of women to help them come to know more about our communication line to you—through prayer. Help me to have Your wisdom as I teach and use me and this Bible study to help these women know they can talk to you at any time about any issue.”*

Launching in. You could say, “Last week (or over the past two weeks) we learned the Holy Spirit is God and lives in each believer. We learned we can stay in step with the Spirit and let Him lead us and produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

You can ask, “As you have reflected on these lessons this past week did any new thoughts or questions arise?”

Then you can say, “God has given us a direct line to Him through prayer. We can talk to Him any time day or night wherever we are: driving, cleaning, walking, etc! Today, we will talk more about prayer and what Jesus taught His disciples on this important topic.

This is a very straight forward chapter without anything tricky to explain. Included in this chapter are some open ended questions that don’t necessarily have a right or wrong answer. These types of questions are good for new people, or younger believers, to feel comfortable answering.

As you prepare to go through the lesson—look at the **Answers and Explanations** section in the back of the book. All the correct answers are contained in this section and there is extra insight to explain a point more clearly. Feel free to use your own life examples or illustrations as well.

Page 37 of the 9x6 book—In the Passage Background section, the second line should read, “He prayed when he was baptized Luke 3:21 (*NOT* Mark 1:21).

In Your Own Words Section-Have the ladies spend 3-5 minutes answering these questions on their own, then all can share their answers out loud (the leader should share as well). If the group is running late because of good discussion, then simply have each woman share just one of the three she answered in that section.

Action Steps for Next week Section-If there is time, I read through each of these out loud each week and pause at the end of the list and ask if there are any questions. I may say, "Some of these things you may already have done-are there any you feel you need help on?"

Say, "Next week we will study about God's main source of communication to us, the Bible, and we will see numerous reasons why the Bible can be trusted-word for word!"

A few extra notes on prayer for the discipler:

- Pray out loud with them. Your disciple will see you not using eloquent language, strange or repetitive words. Instead she will hear you are simply talking to God.

That is what prayer is-talking to God.

- Encourage your disciple to pray out loud with you. You are a safe person, it will help grow her confidence to pray out loud by doing it with you. If she is nervous then ask her to just say-AMEN at the end. Next time encourage her to say one thing they are thankful for, etc.

- Teach that God always answers prayers. He either says: Yes, No, or Wait. Having God say 'yes' to a prayer is always great! When He says 'no', it can be disappointing but at least we know the answer. The harder one is when He says 'wait'! Waiting can be tough but His timing is perfect. This is where you join your disciple in the wait by praying with her-perhaps God to restore a marriage, a person to trust Christ, a child to turn to Christ, or a relationship to be restored.

Say, "Next week we will learn about how Jesus used scripture and why we can trust the Bible."



CHAPTER 5

Jesus Uses Scripture

God's Word, the Bible, is the primary way God communicates His love for us, His overall purpose, the redemption of mankind back to Himself, His encouragement to His followers and His instructions for life of earth. Reading it we get a glimpse of eternity past, eternity future, and help in the present. What we hold in our hands and read it trustworthy. This chapter explores why we can trust the Bible and how it is useful in our lives on so many levels.

Pause here to pray. *“Lord, please use me in the lives of women to help them come to know more about your Word and how You speak to us through it! Thank you for preserving your Word so followers can gain wisdom and insight into your purpose for mankind. Thank you that in it we can find encouragement in our darkest moments and guidance throughout our days on earth.”*

Launching in. You can say, “Last week we learned that we can talk to God at anytime and anywhere through prayer. Prayer is just talking to God.”

You can ask, “As you have reflected on this lesson this past week did any new thoughts or questions arise?”

Then you can say, “Talking to God through prayer is the primary way we communicate to God. God's primary way of communicating to us is through His Word—the Bible. He has revealed much about Himself, how He works among mankind, and His love for us in His Word. It is important for any woman growing in Christ to understand how His Word came to be and to trust what He says to us in it. Today, we will talk more about scripture and why it is absolutely trustworthy.”

As you prepare to go through the lesson—look at the **Answers and Explanations** section in the back of the book. All the correct answers are contained in this section and there is extra insight to explain a point more clearly. Feel free to use your own life examples or illustrations as well.

For Further Study Section—Be ready with an example from your own life as to how God may have corrected you with scripture.

Pitfall #1 of this chapter has been updated and this new text was included in the 11x8.5 version after the first paragraph. The second paragraph was removed.

"When reading the Bible, translations (such as The New American Standard Bible and The New International Version) are slightly different from one another. For example, one translation may say the words 'really small' and another simply use the word 'tiny.' There are two reasons for this:

1. Translation Technique: When the Bible is translated from the Hebrew and Greek languages they were originally written in, they are either translated WORD FOR WORD or THOUGHT FOR THOUGHT. So an example of a word for word translation would be a New American Standard Bible (NASB). Great for deep studying. The New International Version (NIV) is a thought for thought version and is great for general reading. So some small minor differences will show up depending on the technique used for translation.

2. Textual Variants: There are over 5,000 manuscript copies of the original letters and documents of the Bible. These are hand written copies as there were no printing presses at that time. So there are a few small variants when you compare the manuscript copies.

For example, one copy says: "Jesus and his disciples went down to Bethany."

And another copy says: "They went to Bethany."

They mean the same thing. The person copying the manuscript simply copied it slightly different.

But one thing we can be sure of-No foundational Christian doctrine is in jeopardy because of a textual variant."

In Your Own Words Section-Have the ladies spend 3-5 minutes answering these questions on their own, then all can share their answers out loud (the leader should share as well). If the group is running late because of good discussion, then simply have each woman share just one of the three she answered in that section.

Action Steps for Next week Section-If there is time, I read through each of these out loud each week and pause at the end of the list and ask if there are any questions. I may say, "Some of these things you may already have done-are there any you feel you need help on?"

Say, "Next week we will learn about The Great Commission and how it gives focus to our lives."



CHAPTER 6

Jesus Gives the Great Commission

The Great Commission gives purpose, direction and focus to the lives of Christ followers. The Great Commission is not just a suggestion, or a good idea, it was Jesus' last instructions to His followers and as such should be taken seriously. As long as we have breath in our body, we are to be about making disciples. Of course we have already studied how much God loves us and how He has given us a helper, the Holy Spirit, in this endeavor. Matter of fact, making disciples is one of the greatest joys in living the Christian life!

Pause here to pray. *“Lord, thank you that you did not leave us wondering about what do as we await your return. You gave clear instructions. Help shave off anything in my life that would hold me back from being a disciple maker. Help me inspire and spur on the women you have placed in my life to be a part of your Great Commission.”*

Launching in. “Last week learned God’s Word, the Bible, is God’s primary way of communicating with us and teaching us who He is and how we can know Him personally. We studied how Jesus used scripture when tempted by the Devil in the wilderness.

Further, we examined a few of the reasons we can trust the Bible—such as internal, external, and prophetic evidence.

You can ask, “As you have reflected on this lesson this past week did any new thoughts or questions arise?”

Then you can say, “Today, in our final lesson, we will learn of one of the most important instructions Jesus gave His followers (and you and me) before He ascended into Heaven. It is called the Great Commission.

As you prepare to go through the lesson—look at the Answers and Explanations section in the back of the book. All the correct answers are contained in this section and there is extra insight to explain a point more clearly. Feel free to use your own life examples or illustrations as well.

For Further Study Section–On Question #2 the differences between the two verses Mark says “Preach the *Good News*.” I use this as an opportunity to restate the Good News/The Gospel. Have ladies write these four points in their book that clearly explain the 4 main points of the Gospel Message:

- God loves us
- We are sinful
- Jesus Christ died for our sins
- We must individually trust Christ as our Lord and Savior

A Simple Steps to Sharing Your Faith Section–I add a bit from my life personally on each step. Feel free to give examples from your life as to how you do each one.

Pray–I share the prayer I pray each day. “Lord, I pray you would give me divine appointments and open doors of opportunity. Help me see the people you are putting in front of me and give the faith and boldness to step into those opportunities to help others.”

Look–For ways to care such as get well and sympathy cards. I have a friend who owns a business and keeps books on different topics in his desk to give away on parenting, marriage, finances...

Tell–Using the word ‘sometime’ is a great way to prop the door open for a future conversation about Christ.

Offer–Invite them to church, their kids to VBS, Christmas/Easter services can be good reason to invite, a women’s Christian function, to a Start Here Bible study.

Realize–This journey can take time and there is no need for a relationship to feel undue pressure by you. God is drawing people to Himself and He is in control, not us. Rest in 2 Peter 3:9 which states, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

In Your Own Words Section–Have the ladies spend 3-5 minutes answering these questions on their own, then all can share their answers out loud (the leader should share as well). If the group is running late because of good discussion, then simply have each woman share just one of the three she answered in that section.

Action Steps for Next week Section–If there is time, I read through each of these out loud each week and pause at the end of the list and ask if there are any questions. This being the last lesson you could go back and review each of the key verses for the chapters and remind the women to commit them to memory.

