

Open

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

The Holy Spirit is present in the life of every Christ-follower. He wants to transform us into persons who reflect the love, grace, and justice of Jesus. He wants to empower us to restore God's dream for this world. The question is: Are we open to the Holy Spirit?

To be "open" means both that we are receptive to the transforming presence of God and willing to be empowered by God. This three-week series challenges us to be open to all God wants to do in us and through us.

Open Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic
1	5/17	Open to the God in Us
2	5/24	Open to the God Who Transforms
3	5/31	Open to the God Who Empowers

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Open to the God in Us

The Big Idea

We have to be OPEN to the God that is IN us to experience all of his benefits and blessings.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: Tell us about an experience or activity that you weren't open to at first, but later came to really enjoy or appreciate.

Move #1: Let's begin by reflecting on this week's sermon.

1. What stood out to you most from this sermon on being Open to the God IN us, the Holy Spirit?
2. How much did you hear or learn about the Holy Spirit in your past experience with church?
3. What level of openness do you feel like you've had to the activity of the Holy Spirit in you?
4. What role does receptiveness play in our relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Move #2: We have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit. Let's take a closer look at the role the Holy Spirit plays inside of us.

Read John 14:15-20 (NIV)

15 "If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

5. What comes to mind when you hear the word "advocate" (verse 16)? How and why is the Holy Spirit an advocate for us?
6. Think about a person that you've tried to help, but they wouldn't listen to you or accept your guidance. What was that like for you? How might that relate to the Holy Spirit's relationship with us?
7. In what ways has the Holy Spirit been real in your experience?
8. What's the difference between knowing *about* the Holy Spirit and *knowing* the Holy Spirit? How are we able to *know* the Holy Spirit (verse 17)?
9. Pastor J.D. Greear has said, "The Jesus INSIDE you is better than the Jesus BESIDE you." Why do you agree or disagree with his statement?

Move #3: Although the Spirit is a gift, we must receive it. Being filled with the Spirit is a moment-by-moment choice.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

10. How is our body like a temple? What purpose does an empty temple have?
11. What other things might we choose to be filled with rather than the Holy Spirit?
12. How can we as humans focus on the Spirit within when we can only see the physical body?

Next Steps:

1. Be open to receive the Holy Spirit. If you have not yet made the commitment to follow Jesus, you can do that today.
2. Be open to respond to the Holy Spirit. Spend time each day praying a prayer of openness and trusting in the presence of the Holy Spirit (see the prayer below).

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but start by praying this prayer together:

Holy Spirit, I am OPEN to you. Thank you for sealing me as a child of God and giving me access to him. Make me ever-aware of your presence dwelling in me. Speak to me, transform me, empower me to become more like Jesus. I OPEN myself up to you. Amen.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

On John 14

16 Jesus' bodily presence was about to be withdrawn from them. Never again would they know the warm intimate companionship of the days of his earthly ministry. But this does not mean that they will be bereft. "Another Counselor" will be with them. Traditionally the noun has been translated "Comforter," but its modern associations render this word unsuited to conveying the meaning of the Greek term. The thought is rather that of the advocacy of one's cause than of comforting in our sense of the term; modern translations favor "Advocate" (Rieu, REB) or "Counselor" (as NIV). The word means a friend, especially a legal friend.... The Counselor will be with the disciples "forever." The new state of affairs will be permanent. The Spirit once given will not be withdrawn.

17 The Advocate is now called "the Spirit of truth" (cf. 15:26; 16:13). It is interesting to see the Spirit associated with truth, for we have just had Jesus describe himself as "the truth" (v. 6), and we earlier learned that those who worship the Father must do so "in truth" (4:23–24). Clearly truth is very closely associated with the Godhead. The expression probably means "the Spirit who communicates truth" (Barrett). Jesus then proceeds to contrast the world with the disciples in their attitudes to the Spirit. First he tells them that the world "cannot accept" the Spirit. This is a strong expression. It is further explained as that the world neither sees nor knows

him. “Sees” is equivalent to “perceives.” The world is quite unaware of the Spirit’s activities. Therefore it does not know him. It enters into no personal relations with him. But it is not so with the disciples. They do know him. The present, “he lives with you,” indicates a continuing reality, just as “will be in you” means a future certainty. (Leon Morris, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to John*)

On 1 Corinthians 6

In referring to the body as the temple of the Spirit, Paul has taken the imagery that properly belongs to the church as a whole (cf. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21–22) and applied it to the individual believer. On the imagery itself, see on 3:16. The use of the possessives reflects something of the difference. The church through the Spirit is God’s temple in Corinth, in contrast to all the pagan temples and shrines. Through the phenomenon of the indwelling Spirit, Paul now images the body as the Spirit’s temple, emphasizing that it is the “place” of the Spirit’s dwelling in the individual believers’ lives. In the same way that the temple in Jerusalem “housed” the presence of the living God, so the Spirit of God is “housed” in the believer’s body....

That passage makes it clear that the imagery here is that of slavery; the verb “bought” with its accompanying genitive of quantity, “at a price,” places it squarely in the slave market. In contrast to the use of this metaphor elsewhere in the NT, where redemption for freedom is in view (e.g., Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Rev. 5:9; 14:3), this passage images their new position as “slaves” of God, bought with a price to do his will. Although some have argued otherwise, the related usage in Galatians and especially the liturgical passage in Rev. 5:9 indicate that Paul has the cross in view, whereby at the “cost” of his life (“by your blood,” Rev. 5:9) Christ purchased us for God. His point here is that even the body is included in that purchase. Thus at the end of the argument he joins the cross to the resurrection, along with the present gift of the Spirit, as evidence that the “body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” (Gordon D. Fee, *NICNT: 1 Corinthians*)