

START

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

START CURRICULUM: FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

The *Start* curriculum exists to help people who are new to their faith in Christ strengthen and grow in their understanding of the basics of Christianity and to help them take their first steps. This material is critical for us as a church as we continue to grow and make disciples, as we want to help people remove as many barriers as possible that keep them from Jesus. We know that some of those barriers are things we can help with: being intimidated by the Bible, hesitancy to pray, not knowing how to take their first steps with God, etc.

This facilitator's guide is a brief cheat sheet for leading engaging discussion into lasting change and character development for its participants. Keep in mind: while this is designed with a new believer in mind, there are benefits for anyone—no matter how long they've been following Jesus—to go through it. If nothing else, it's a great refresher for the foundations of our faith in Christ and how to live that out in the real world.

OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTS

Find a kitchen table, coffee shop corner, or meeting room that is a good fit for your group. Commit to and schedule six meeting times (six consecutive weeks is suggested), and don't overlook the power a good environment can have on the depth of your discussion. Participants will share more authentically and with more depth in a place they feel comfortable and safe.

The nature of the curriculum is personal, so make sure to lay ground rules up front that allow people to be themselves and ask any questions they have. There's no such thing as a dumb question.

DOING THE WORK

The quality of your discussion will depend on how prepared you as a leader when you show up. Make sure you set aside time to work through the material, take your own notes, and think through ways you keep dialogue going before working through the material with your group. Have high standards for your discussion time – preparedness on everyone's part will have a direct impact on how fruitful the discussion is!

TIPS FOR LEADING GREAT DISCUSSION

Start will only ever be as beneficial as the discussion you facilitate. This time together is the only way for these ideas to get practical. As your group grows closer, encourage honesty and vulnerability that leads to healthy growth. Remind those in your group as often as possible they will get out of the program as much as they are willing to put into it. Here are some reminders:

- Spread questions around. Don't let any one person dominate the discussion.
- Build trust. Make sure everyone understands what is said stays within the group.
- Ask follow up questions, like:
 - Can you tell me more about that?
 - Will you give me some examples?
 - Why do you think this is?

Follow-up questions are often just as, if not more important than, the initial questions. Don't be afraid to ask people to go deeper.

LIVE IT OUT

The very best way to facilitate *Start* is to actually live these principles out. Learn the material well before you try to walk others through it, and find people to hold you accountable to this model of following Christ.