

THE BIBLE FLOW • SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM



FOUR WEEKS OF BIBLE DISCOVERY

Imperfect People, Meaningful Lessons

A Turnkey 4-Week Curriculum for Lay Leaders & Adult Beginners

★ **COMPLETE 60-MINUTE TURNKEY SESSIONS** ★

W1: Peter (Failure) · W2: Jonah (Mercy) · W3: Sarah (Waiting) · W4: Thomas (Doubt)

Facilitator Guide · Participant Journal · 16:9 Slides · 30-Member License

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The Lay Facilitator's Field Guide

Essential Principles for Leading Low-Stress, High-Impact Adult Gatherings

You Are a Host, Not a Lecturer

Your role is to open the door, ask thoughtful questions, and keep the conversation safe and focused. You do not need a theology degree or answers to every difficult mystery. Saying 'I don't know, let's explore that text together' builds more trust than pretending to know everything.

Respecting Emotional and Spiritual Boundaries

Never pressure a participant to disclose deeply private sins, past trauma, or marital friction. Keep reflection questions focused on general human tendencies and biblical principles. Participation must always be voluntary.

Handling Disagreements with Grace and Charity

Adults come from diverse church backgrounds and life stages. When interpretations clash: (1) Affirm the person's participation; (2) Redirect attention to the specific wording in the open passage; (3) Differentiate between essential Christian truths (creedal gospel) and secondary historical or denominational nuances; (4) Agree to disagree warmly without permitting argumentative debates.

The 60-Minute Guardrail

Adult beginners value punctuality and predictability. Honor busy schedules by starting on time and ending on time. If a vibrant discussion is cut short, encourage them to continue over coffee or during the weekly reading plan.

The 60-Minute Master Time Budget

Phase	Time	Primary Goal
1. Hospitality & Opening Icebreaker	10 min	Warm arrival, coffee, low-barrier opening question to help everyone speak once.
2. Guided Scripture Reading & Observation	15 min	Reading the passage aloud in 2 different translations, noting historical details and surprising actions.
3. Thematic Discussion (6 Questions)	20 min	Unpacking comprehension, character motives, God's nature, and everyday life parallels.
4. Participatory Group Activity	10 min	Engaging hands-on reflection (card sort, paired observation, or timeline exercise).
5. Application & Closing Benediction	5 min	One actionable takeaway, brief shared prayer, and preview of the week's daily reading plan.

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WEEK 1: PETER

Confidence, Failure, and Responsibility

Scripture: Luke 22:31–34, 54–62; John 21:15–19

Session Objective: To help participants recognize how overconfidence leads to sudden failure, how Jesus meets us in our sorrow, and how true restoration restores responsibility rather than harboring shame.

Key Verse: "The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him... And he went outside and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:61–62)"

Facilitator Theological Briefing

CONTEXT & HISTORICAL SETTING: Simon Peter was an energetic, outspoken Galilean fisherman who frequently served as the natural spokesman for the Twelve. When Jesus warned the disciples in the Upper Room of coming trials, Peter proclaimed absolute loyalty ('Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!'). Yet within hours, shivering by a charcoal fire in the high priest's courtyard, Peter denied knowing Jesus three separate times, swearing under oath to save himself.

THEOLOGICAL NUANCES: 1. Sifting as Wheat (Luke 22:31): In ancient agrarian culture, grain was shaken violently through a sieve to separate grain from chaff. Jesus did not promise to prevent Peter's fall, but promised, 'I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.' 2. The Charcoal Fire Parallel: Notice the deliberate literary and sensory link in John's Gospel. Peter denies Jesus beside a charcoal fire (anthrakia, John 18:18). After the resurrection, Jesus prepares a charcoal fire on the shore of Galilee (John 21:9). The site of his deepest shame becomes the place of his tender restoration. 3. Agape vs. Phileo: In John 21, Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him, mirroring his three denials. Each time Peter responds, Jesus does not demand penance; He gives him a pastoral assignment: 'Feed my lambs... Tend my sheep.'

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID: - Do not paint Peter as uniquely cowardly; every disciple fled. - Do not let the group moralize Peter's denial into simple 'try harder next time' advice. The passage shows that restoration comes entirely from Christ's initiative, not human grit.

Icebreaker: The Overconfident Moment

Share a lighthearted time in your life when you were 100% sure you could do something easily (assembling furniture, cooking a dish, fixing a car, predicting a game)—only for it to go completely sideways!

Preparation Checklist:

- Print Participant Handout: Week 1 for each attendee.
- Cut and place Week 1 Activity Cards on the central table.
- Ensure bibles or printed texts are available for Luke 22 and John 21.
- Prepare coffee/water and nametags for newcomers.

Guided Scripture Observation (10 Minutes)

Ask two volunteers to read: Volunteer 1 reads Luke 22:31–34 and 54–62. Volunteer 2 reads John 21:15–19.

- Notice the shift in Peter's location: from the intimate table to the dark courtyard shadows, then to the sunlit morning shore of Galilee.
- Look at verse 61: 'The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.' Imagine the silence of that glance immediately after the rooster crowed.

- Underline what Jesus asks Peter in John 21:15–17. Does Jesus bring up the courtyard denial or the rooster? What does He focus on instead?

Six Thematic Discussion Questions (20 Minutes)

Question 1 [Observation]: What specifically did Peter claim he was ready to do in Luke 22:33, and what happened when pressure actually arrived in the courtyard?

Leader Guidance: Direct the group to notice the contrast between Peter's bold verbal pledge and his fear of an inquisitive servant girl.

Question 2 [Observation]: In John 21, how does Jesus approach Peter on the beach? How does the atmosphere differ from their last encounter in Jerusalem?

Leader Guidance: Highlight Jesus cooking breakfast, serving food with his own hands, and creating a warm, safe setting.

Question 3 [Interpretation]: Why do you think Jesus asked Peter the same question ('Do you love me?') three times in a row?

Leader Guidance: Help the group connect the three questions to Peter's three denials, providing complete, three-fold closure.

Question 4 [Interpretation]: After each time Peter says 'You know that I love you,' Jesus tells him to 'Feed my lambs' or 'Care for my sheep.' Why does Jesus give him work to do instead of a probationary period?

Leader Guidance: Show that grace does not just forgive past guilt; it re-entrusts purposeful responsibility to the broken leader.

Question 5 [Life Reflection]: Why is it often harder for people to forgive themselves after a moral failure than it is to believe that God forgives them?

Leader Guidance: Encourage reflection on pride and regret without asking anyone to name a specific personal sin.

Question 6 [Life Reflection]: When someone in our community or family has failed and feels disqualified, what does healthy, Christ-like restoration look like in practice?

Leader Guidance: Focus on practical empathy, patience, welcoming back, and avoiding toxic gossip or suspicion.

Group Activity: From Accusation to Assignment: The Grace Audit (10 Min)

Distribute the 4 'Perspective Cards' (The Promise, The Collapse, The Glance, The Recommission). In pairs, participants discuss which moment in Peter's journey feels most relatable to modern people today, and why.

Activity Debrief: Ask 2 pairs to share a 30-second highlight of what resonated with them.

Core Takeaway: Failure is an event, not an identity. When we fall, Jesus does not look upon us with contempt; He invites us back to breakfast and restores our purpose.

Closing Prayer: "Lord God, thank You that You see our weakness before we even feel it, and You love us still. When we stumble through pride or fear, turn our eyes back to Your grace. Grant us the courage to receive Your forgiveness and the humility to care for others as You have cared for us. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Commissioning Word: This week, remember: You are not defined by your worst afternoon, but by God's enduring call on your life.

Weekly Follow-Up Reading Plan

Day	Scripture	Daily Reflection
Day 1	Luke 22:31-34	Jesus prays for our faith before trials even begin.
Day 2	Luke 22:54-62	Reflect on how sudden pressures expose our hidden vulnerabilities.
Day 3	John 21:1-14	Notice the quiet patience of Jesus waiting on the shore with breakfast.
Day 4	John 21:15-19	Grace restores broken people by entrusting them with care for others.
Day 5	1 Peter 1:3-7	Read Peter's own mature reflections on being refined by trials like gold.
Day 6	1 Peter 5:6-11	'Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.'