

4G

LEADERS GUIDE

Evergreen Valley Church



Small Group Leaders:

I so much appreciate the ministry you have taken on. The Elders of Church cannot possibly shepherd the flock alone. By leading a small group you are Shepherding the Flock that God has given into your care.

At the same time, I do not want you to feel a burden to do any of it alone. Your Small Group is a body and together they are to encourage, support, share and pray for one another.

Even the teaching that goes on in your group is more about sharing than teaching. Of course you and others in your group will face many teaching moments in conversations. Always let the Word of God be your Truth and let the Holy Spirit be your guide during these discussions.

The main goal of Small Group is to build eternal relationships. It requires trust, honesty, and love for one another.

Five Aspects of a Small Group:

As a Small Group it would be good to try to incorporate the following elements into your meetings. However not every aspect will be a part of every meeting.

1. Bible Study (time spent studying the Word of God together as a group)
2. Prayer (time spent interceding for one another by calling out to God in prayer)
3. Worship (time spent praising God in song, prayer of thanksgiving and praise, sharing testimonies of praise, and even sharing in communion together)
4. Fellowship (time spent eating together, playing together, getting to know one another)
5. Service (time spent doing things together as a group or portion of the group as a service to the Church, to the community, or to the world through mission outreach)

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

4G Study Materials:

Each person in your group must have a 4G Workbook. At your very first meeting ensure that everyone understands that they have a responsibility to spend time during the week going through the book each day. That way, when you come together on your meeting day most of your small group time is spent around discussing what they have read and thought about that week.

In that workbook each week on the last page of the session is a small group lesson with questions. Go through them as you are led. Look, I write way more questions that you can probably get to in one night. So pick and choose what you want to talk about and don't feel bad if you don't get through them all. I never do.

You should also have a copy of the DVD for the series. On that DVD you will find an Introduction button and then the same circle that you see on the cover. Each button will take you to the presentation on that topic. The DVD is a starter for your small group that night. Each lesson is just few minutes long presented by one of the Pastors to encourage your discussion that night.

And of course this leader's guide is just in the event you need help in leading your group on any given night. You may or may not choose to refer to it as needed. And keep in mind that most of the questions in the small group lesson are personal in nature and so there is likely no one right or wrong answer. I use red print to identify my comments on a given question.

Again the purpose is to build relationships and to get people talking with one another. So when you meet together try to engage everyone. Ask open ended questions (those that can't be answered with a yes or no). Ask questions that invite people to share from their past experiences and offer up their opinions on topics.

For example: You might ask, "How do you pray?" rather than, "do you pray?" You might ask, "What keeps you from praying in all circumstances?" rather than, "do you pray in every circumstance?"

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

Leaders Guide for Session #1 - Introduction:

If you are a new group, you will want to go through the introduction in its entirety. Even if you have been meeting for a while it will help focus your group and can improve your meetings. Unlike the rest of this book, the Session #1 Introduction is meant to be done as a group and there is no daily work in this session.

The introduction deals with helping the group get to know one another (page 5). It will help them set and agree on some really important principles (page 6).

The Small Group lesson for Session #1 will introduce you to the focus verse (2 Peter 3:18) and the topic of 4G (page 7).

Start out your group with prayer.

Show video segment “Introduction” (Dennis Hadley).

Small Group Discussion:

Read 2 Peter 3:18

1. What if anything is God saying to you through that verse?

Ask the group to share what the verse says to them. Refer them to the inside cover of their workbook for some of my thoughts on this verse.

2. What does it mean to you to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

I believe that growing in grace and knowledge means I am coming to know Jesus in a real and personal way. This entire study is for that purpose. God wants us to know Him personally and to fall deeply in love with Him as we come into a realization of how much He has loved us and what He has done for us in Jesus Christ.

3. What does it mean to you to glorify God with your life?

Let people share thoughts. It is OK if we have differences of opinion on what it means to glorify God with our lives. Part of this study is to take us on a journey of what this means.

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

4. As you look over the next seven topics of 4G Spiritual Formation, which one do you think will be the most difficult subject for you to wrestle with and why?

Use this as a get to know one another, break the ice question.

4G Text Messaging: Save time for this 4G exercise with your group. Even if you have to skip a question or two take a few minutes to do this together. Introduce the group to the 4G Text Messaging box on page #7. Everyday you will see a box like this with a scripture. Each person in their private study time during the week should read the scripture and meditate on it until God shows them something from those verses then write down How God has spoken to them through His Word. Next, write down how they intend to respond to God. This may be in prayer, in attitude or in action.

Today, take a moment as a group to read Jeremiah 18:1-6 together and then complete and discuss the two questions as a group. This will help prepare the members of your group to move forward daily in their “4G Text Messaging with God”.

Remind the group about the next meeting details: Location, time, snack person, whatever is needed...

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

Leaders Guide for Session #2 - Confessing Jesus as Lord

View and discuss video clip for Session #2 (Ryan Hunt)

Begin your group session by reflecting on our 4G study memory verse, 2 Peter 3:18 and this week's focus verse Philippians 2:11. **We don't want to pressure people into memory and we certainly do not want to embarrass anyone but we do want to encourage people to memorize scripture. Having said that, don't put people on the spot to quote what they memorized but just reinforce the importance of learning scripture.**

Small Group Discussion:

1. What do you think it means to confess Jesus as Lord of your life?

Refer to Romans 10:9 and Philippians 2:11 as you discuss what it means to confess Jesus as Lord. On page 10 of the workbook I share the meaning of the word Kyrios translated Lord. It says we belong to Jesus when we confess Him as Lord. Confessing is so much more than words or a prayer. It is a commitment. It is as Jesus puts it, losing this life and the world to gain eternal life and Jesus Christ.

2. Why do you think confessing Jesus Christ as Lord brings glory to God?

Ask people to share. This question will help move us to an understanding of what it means to glorify God with our lives.

3. On day #2, you were asked to reflect on the first time you believed in your heart and confessed with your mouth Jesus as Lord and what was going on at the time and how that did or didn't change your life. Share with the group your experience.

This is a time for people to share from the heart. Don't pressure anyone but encourage everyone to share.

4. On day #3, I challenged the Church to humbly submit to Christ. What do you think would happen to our Sunday morning worship experience, to our Church fellowship, to your small group if each and every one of us humbly submitted our lives over to Jesus as Lord?

I don't know about you, but I anticipate an amazing time of worship to God as the Spirit of the Lord takes over our hearts and our minds. See you all Sunday!

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

5. Share one thing that you read and reflected on this week in which God spoke to you?

This is important to do in your group. You may even want to start with this question so that people have opportunity to share what they are reading. This also is a good time to reinforce the importance of daily time with God and to hold one another accountable for doing the work. I have learned that a close personal relationship with God is only gained when I spend private time every day with God. My small group and our Sunday morning worship time will enhance my relationship with God but I must have a private time as well.

6. How is God asking you to respond to His Word to you?

You may want to have people look at some of the responses they wrote in their 4G Text Messaging and share as they feel led.

7. Share one thing that your group can pray about for you this week?

Go around the room asking for each person to share a prayer request. There is a place on page #15 to write down those requests so everyone can pray during the week for the group members.

Some groups prefer to send out an email of prayer requests. If that is your choice, then ask someone to be responsible for that job.

Some groups may choose to off into prayer partner groups for more intimate prayer time and so that individuals can specifically for one another. Again, that is your choice as a group to do as you feel led.

Remind the group about the next meeting details: Location, time, snack person, whatever is needed...

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

Leaders Guide for Session #3 - Trusting God for Everything

View and discuss video clip for Session #3 (Galley Molina)

Begin your group session by reminding everyone of our 4G study memory verse found in 2 Peter 3:18 and this week's focus verse, Proverbs 3:5-6.

Small Group Discussion:

1. Back on day #1 of this week you were asked how Psalm 20:7 speaks to you about trusting God. Share what you came up with and wrote down with the rest of the group.

Ask people to turn to page #16 and share what they wrote in the column at the beginning of this week's study. This would be a good time to try to engage those who may be quiet however try not to embarrass anyone if they did not answer the question.

2. As you read about the faith of Abraham this week, what challenged you the most about your own trust in God?

I will be honest, I don't know if I could have left so easily as He did when God said "go to a place I will show you". Sometimes we want God to reveal every step before we take the first one. He doesn't work that way. We must trust Him. Even more is when God asked Him to take his son to make a sacrifice of him. I could not have done that. So I pray as the disciples of Jesus did, "Lord, increase our faith".

3. Which issues do you find it the most difficult for you to trust God with; your children, your finances, your home, your job, your health...?

This is personal but everyone should be able to share if they will just open up. It would be best if you as a group leader went first as an example. Share what is most difficult for you to just trust God with.

4. Have you ever faced an issue that seemed hopeless that you had to rely completely on God to come through for you? What was that like?

A few weeks ago we heard Hiram's testimony of God's healing power. Overnight that first week when we thought we were going to lose Him I came to a complete understanding of what it means to rely on God. The Doctor said to us around 2:00AM,

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

“I have done everything I can do.” So we prayed hard and we trusted in God and He showed up!

5. How much would things change in your life if you suddenly quit worrying about things; your life, your health, what you will eat or drink, what you will wear or where you will live, where you will work or what you will do? Is it possible that you are not trusting God for everything?

This is a really tuff but good question to wrestle with. I hope you will take the time to discuss this. It may very well lead you into prayer.

6. Trusting God for everything also means you believe He can and will use your life to do great things in His kingdom. Do you believe God can use you?

This is an opinion question to ask people to share.

7. Share with your group how they can pray for you regarding your trust in God and make a note of how you can pray for others in your group.

Use this to capture the prayer request of your group. Page 22 has space for you to write them down if needed.

Remind the group about the next meeting details: Location, time, snack person, whatever is needed...

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

Leaders Guide for Session #4 – Bearing Fruit

View and discuss video clip for Session #4 (Dennis Hadley)

Begin your group session by reminding everyone of our 4G study memory verse found in 2 Peter 3:18 and this week's focus verse, John 15:5

Small Group Discussion:

1. What did you read this week that most impacted you?

Get people to share what they have been reading from pages 23 through 27

2. Since you have read studied John 15 this week, how would you explain what Jesus is teaching us?

This is a good exercise to really understand what people are grasping from John 15. It is important to let this be a teaching opportunity as God will have given some people will have some amazing insight from these words of Jesus.

Jesus has really revealed to me that I cannot do anything of value to Him unless it is through my connected relationship with Him in which He is working through me. Then when I remain in Him and He in me I do things that bear fruit and bring Him glory.

3. Have you ever thought about bearing fruit in your life before this week? How has this week's study affected your thoughts about fruit in your life?

This is a personal question for people to reflect on and share thoughts.

4. "God doesn't want you to do more for Him, He wants you to be more with Him." What does that statement mean to you?

Share thoughts from that statement.

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

5. What do you think God is trying to prune from your life so you might become more fruitful?

This is a very personal question that could be hard for some to open up to. For others, this is a chance to become transparent with areas of our lives that are not lined up with God's will. It may require you to go first if no one opens up right away.

6. On day two you were asked, if you think your heart is good soil? How did you respond to that question?

You may want to go back to my comments on page 24 and also read Matthew 13:1-23 for a discussion around this subject of breaking up the soil and allowing seed "The Word of God" to grow.

7. Before we move onto the next section of obedience, pause a moment and review what you have been writing down in the 4G text messaging with God notes and share with the group what one thing God has been saying to you in your quiet time with Him so far in this study and how you feel Him leading you to respond.

Ask everyone in the group to share something they have written in the 4G messaging.

Close out in prayer as you feel led.

Remind the group about the next meeting details: Location, time, snack person, whatever is needed...

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

Leaders Guide for Session #5 – Obedience to God

View and discuss video clip for Session #5 (Ryan Hunt)

Begin your session by asking someone to say the **4G** memory verse, 2 Peter 3:18.

This week we also asked you to memorize a simple verse in John 14:15. Ask someone who remembers it to recite it and explain it in their own words what they have come to learn from these words of Jesus.

Small Group Discussion:

1. At the beginning of this week you were asked to write down whatever thoughts come to your mind when you stop and think about the word, “obedience”? Where your thoughts negative or positive?

See comments under #2

2. Where the restrictive or freeing?

Use these first two questions as an opportunity to get a discussion started about the meaning of obedience and the emotions it raises. You may want to direct the group to the exercise on page 31.

3. Have your thoughts toward obedience changed during your study this week?

For some they may have a new appreciation for obedience. Encourage and reinforce the idea that learning to obey God is a good thing not only to please God but to receive His best life for us.

4. Have you ever thought of obedience as an outward expression of love for God?

In the memory verse this week, Jesus says, “if you love me you will obey what I command”. It would be an interesting exercise to find out how many times God tells us to obey Him. I believe it is one of the most overlooked and ignored parts of the Bible. You cannot read the Bible without a clear message being called to obey. I express my love to God through obedience, even more than the words I use in praise to Him.

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

5. On day #3 you were asked, based on this truth in John 14:15, if you are struggling with disobedience what should you be your next step to overcome disobedience? How did you respond to that question?

See comments under #6

6. What is God revealing to you to adjust in your life?

This is really personal. It is my hope that by now your group is getting comfortable enough to open up. You may however want to consider breaking into smaller groups to discuss these two questions (5 & 6).

7. What did you read that most impacted you this week?

If you have time you may ask people to share from their reading.

8. How does the 4G theme of “Growing in Grace; Glorifying God” fit with the topic of obedience?

It would be interesting to see how people make the connection between obedience and the 4G topic. For me, part of growing in grace is obeying and God is only glorified in me when I obey.

Close out in prayer as you feel led.

Remind the group about the next meeting details: Location, time, snack person, whatever is needed...

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

Leaders Guide for Session #6 – Praying in Faith

View and discuss video clip for Session #6 (Bill Hayden)

By now hopefully everyone knows our 4G memory verse, 2 Peter 3:18. What is that verse revealing to you?

Small Group Discussion:

1. Did you spend some time alone with God as assigned this week? How was that for you?

Ask people to share their experience (see assignment on page 37). For those who didn't do it. Make a plea to encourage them to do it this coming week. We all need time alone with God.

2. How is your prayer life? If you struggle with a regular prayer life why do you think that is?

Some people find themselves too busy to pray. Others think they don't know how to pray. You and others in your group need to help those who are weak to be encouraged that God hears their prayers. It is not about the words we use but to whom we pray (see comments on page 38). And encourage people to pray. We can't afford not to pray. We are missing the power and presence of God in our lives when we choose not to pray.

3. How have you experienced God through your prayer life? How has God responded to your prayers?

This is a great time to share testimonies and let the words of those who have experienced God's power and presence through prayer lead those who have missed out.

4. Jesus seemed to say often, as He did in John 14, that we could ask for anything. Is that our ticket to use Jesus as a sort of Genie to supply our wants?

God wants us to ask according to His will. This means that as a part of my prayer life, I have to love God and love His Word and be in a constant connection with Him through obedience and love. Otherwise I will become (or should I say remain) self-centered and my prayers will reflect that.

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

5. On day #1 of this study you read a quote from Avery Willis, “We need to hear God’s voice so that we will know what to pray.” What do you think of that comment?

Once again this has to do with remaining connected and hearing from God and knowing His will.

6. What do you think Jesus means when He says “you may ask anything in my name, and I will do it?”

Ask people to share their opinion and let the conversation build into an understanding of the freedom and purpose of prayer. We are free to go to Jesus with any need. We are not meant to carry our own burdens or to fix our own problems. We are called to be connected to Christ and be His ambassadors. He has called us into a Divine partnership with Him in which we ask and He does those things He desires for us.

I also want to comment on the words “in my name”. This has to do with the way we approach God in prayer. We are only worthy to pray because we have been made clean through the blood of Jesus Christ and He has made peace for us with God through His life, death, and resurrection. So we can call on God through the name of Jesus because of Him, not us.

7. Read Romans 8:26-27. What does that verse teach you? How does that help you in your prayer life?

When I don’t know how to pray, I can trust the Holy Spirit to intercede for me. It really leads me to know that God wants what is right in my life and if I will just let go and let him lead me, even in prayer, He will gladly take over.

8. Jesus indicated in John 14:13-14 that our answered prayers bring glory to God. How can your prayer life glorify God?

Let people share thoughts on this question.

Take some time praying together this week in the Word, the Will and the Name of Jesus Christ.

Remind the group about the next meeting details: Location, time, snack person, whatever is needed...

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

Leaders Guide for Session #7 – Living in the Word

View and discuss video clip for Session #7 (Tim Wood)

Small Group Discussion:

1. What has God been saying to you this week? What has He been saying during this study?

This week it is really important to focus time on what they have been hearing from God in the reading time each day. God speaks to us directly by the Holy Spirit through the Bible.

2. How does knowing that God is speaking directly and personally to you when you read the Word change the way you approach Bible study?

If I can grasp this truth then I will have a much greater desire to spend time in the Bible and when I read the Bible I will take the time to ask God to speak to me. I also will be convicted to respond in obedience. When I know God is speaking to me and I respond with an open, repentant, responsive heart I will experience transformation.

3. Read 2 Peter 1:16-21 and discuss what message you get about God's Word from this text.

It reminds me that the Bible is Truth, filled with eyewitness accounts of experiences with God. It also reminds me that the words of the Prophets were not the thoughts or words of man but directly from God. The work of the Holy Spirit was to carry along God's words to the Prophets and to you and me.

4. How do you feel about memorizing scripture? How does it prepare you for what is to come?

I believe that memorizing scripture is so very important because when I am faced with lies from Satan or with trials and troubles of life I can claim the Truth that I have in my heart and God will bring the verse of Truth to my mind that I need to hear at that moment.

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

5. On day five we read about being prepared for the battle. Are you prepared for battle? If you are not how are you going to begin training and putting on the armor of God?

Let people share thoughts about this question and being ready for battle. This may lead into a discussion on Spiritual Warfare. Living in the Word (Truth) is the best way to battle against Satan (The Prince of Lies).

6. Share what you read and wrote about regarding your reading from Psalm 119.

On day #4, (page 47) you were asked to read a large portion of scripture, Psalm 119. Ask each person to share a verse that spoke to them and what God told them in that verse.

As time allows you may want to review the interesting facts about the Bible. found at the end of the small group lesson on page 49.

Close out in prayer as you feel led.

Remind the group about the next meeting details: Location, time, snack person, whatever is needed...

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

Leaders Guide for Session #8 – Gifts of the Spirit

View and discuss video clip for Session #7 (Greg Trapp)

Small Group Discussion:

1. What did you discover this week about your Spiritual Gifts?

If anyone in your group has not yet taken a Spiritual Gifts test either this week or in the past, then you should really encourage them to do it in the next couple of days. You can use a number of free online tests (see some websites on page 56) or you can take a manual test which I included in the workbook on pages 58-61.

2. Going back to the gifts listed in day #2, which of those gifts did Jesus demonstrate in His earthly ministry?

When I was writing this study it occurred to me that Jesus demonstrated all of the gifts listed on Romans 12. We may not have all of these gifts but we are a body and through us together as the body of Christ we have all the gifts as well.

On a side note, Jesus also demonstrated all of the character traits from the “Fruit of the Spirit” found in Galatians 5:22-23. It should be noted that fruit of the Spirit and Spiritual Gifts are not the same. Fruit of the Spirit is the Character of God in us through the working of the Holy Spirit. It comes from our remaining in Christ and Christ remaining in us. Gifts of the Spirit are the ministering gifts God places in us to build up and serve the body of Christ.

3. What does that tell you about Spiritual Gifts?

They definitely come from God and please God when used for His Glory.

4. What attitude should we have in the use of our gifts?

We must have an attitude of love and humility when we use our gifts. These gifts are not ours to keep but God’s to share. I also should understand that if I do not use my gift, I am hurting the body of Christ.

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

5. How does love fit into the use of Spiritual Gifts?

As you read in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, Paul teaches us that if we have not loved then our gifts are of no value. We must use our gifts in love. It is the only way to please God and to bring Him glory. You can speak with tongues of men and angels, but if you have not loved you are but a resounding gong. Not a pretty sound, maybe even a little annoying.

6. What did God reveal to you in His Word this week?

Ask people to share on what they read.

7. What Spiritual Gift do you think God has given to you?

Ask people to reveal what they have discovered about their own gifts. Most often our gifts are rather evident to everyone around us. You may need to encourage one another on this matter.

8. If you have already taken the Spiritual Growth Evaluation in this book, or one online, share with the group what you discovered.

Share

9. How does God want you to use your gift?

Make people be honest about how God wants them to put their gift to use. Pray about it and encourage one another.

10. What fears do you have about using your gifts?

Let people share.

11. What reservations do you have about using your gifts?

Let people share.

4G – Spiritual Formation

Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

12. Now that you have reached the end of 4G, what would you like to see happen within your small group going forward?

It is time to discuss what you will do next as a group. I hope and pray you will continue to meet together. If your group has grown large, maybe you need to multiply and make two groups. Talk about it.

Keep in mind, every week we write small group notes to go along with the teaching topic on Sunday morning. I will print them in the bulletin and email the leader notes for the week like these you have been using. Make sure I have your small group information and your email contact as the leader.

13. Share with the group how they have been an encouragement and help to you during your gatherings together.

Share

Before you depart today, pray for one another as you continue on your journey of Growing in Grace and Glorifying God with your life.

4G – Spiritual Formation
Growing in Grace; Glorifying God

SO WHAT'S NEXT?



4G Spiritual Formation
Written and created by Pastor Dennis Hadley
Inspired by God's Word
August 2010

Evergreen Valley Church
2750 Yerba Buena Road
San Jose, CA 95121
408-274-7422
www.evergreenvalleychurch.org