

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



**THIS
INVITATIONAL
LIFE**

risking yourself to align with God's heartbeat for humanity

STEVE CARTER

David©Cook®
transforming lives together

THIS INVITATIONAL LIFE FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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LETTER FROM STEVE CARTER

Dear Group Leader,

Thank you for your willingness to lead this study! God's redemptive potential is brimming all around us. Over the last few decades, many have been compelled by fear and have lost the urgency and desire to risk themselves to align with God's heartbeat for humanity. Today, I believe there is a growing passion to invite people into the greatest story ever told. Your desire to step up to lead a group through this curriculum is proof of it!

As your group learns and prays together, you will all be inspired to live This Invitational Life in such a human and winsome way that others will be drawn to know who Christ is. This curriculum will invite each of you to live deeply with Jesus, show up with expectancy, spark ongoing relationships, and risk it all on what matters most to God. Keep encouraging your group to lean in and risk. Our God is so kind, gracious, and faithful. He wants to use every person in your group to proclaim his goodness.

Thank you for your leadership. Please join me in prayer for God's wisdom and guidance as we all reach out to the hurting world around us. By God's grace, our families, neighbors, and coworkers will come to know Jesus personally, and one by one, we'll reach the nations with his love.

*Honored to serve with you,
Steve Carter*

PREPARATION TIPS

BEFORE YOU LEAD

The video presentations your group will see are about ten to fifteen minutes long. Take some time to preview each session so you are familiar with what your group will experience. Review the questions in the Video Conversation, Bible Investigation, and Our Life Response sections in the *This Invitational Life Study Guide*, and select those you believe are best suited for your group.

STUDY SESSION OVERVIEW

Each study session is intended to be forty-five minutes in length. As the group leader, you will need to pace your group so that you can complete the study in the allotted time. For your convenience, suggested time frames for each portion of the study are noted in this guide.

If your group has a longer period of time to meet, consider allowing additional time for discussing the video, developing a more biblically focused view of God's big story that includes us, or considering how we can be more intentional when engaging people in conversation that leads to sharing our faith. Your group could also work through the Take Action section provided in the *This Invitational Life Study Guide*.

CONSIDER THE INVITATION

The brief text and discussion questions in the *This Invitational Life Study Guide* will help participants transition from the realities of their lives into the topic of each lesson. This will help provide a context for what study participants will experience and discover for themselves as they watch the video and absorb both a biblical foundation and practical ideas for talking about what they believe and why. You may want to read aloud the introduction text from the study guide and then work through the discussion questions as a group. Beginning the session with prayer is important, and a brief suggested prayer is provided should you decide to use it.

VIDEO

Before starting the video presentation, remind participants that their study guide provides space for taking notes. Remind them that they can not only record the highlights but also write their thoughts, ideas, and responses to what they see.

Following the video presentation, you will lead the group in a series of discussion questions to help them process what they have seen and heard in the video.

BIBLE INVESTIGATION

The Bible study portion of each session brings the bigger picture of God's character, his Word, and his story—of which we all play a part. If we are to live an invitational life, we must allow the Bible to inform our thinking, feelings, and actions.

Not every group will have time to complete all the Scripture reading and questions provided. As a group leader, you may want to review the questions and select those that will be most helpful to your group.

OUR LIFE RESPONSE

These wrap-up discussion questions will help viewers consider what they have heard and studied. This section will help them formulate an appropriate level of response—in terms of their personal relationship with God, how they feel about sharing their faith, and how they might show up for, relate to, and risk for the people in their lives. It can provide an opportunity for study groups to talk about how they can become involved in the lives of the people in their communities—from loved ones to complete strangers.

TAKE ACTION

There is always more to learn and discover in our walk with God and living an invitational life. These sections will help group members live changed lives when they walk away from the study experience. With probing questions and practical suggestions, these sections encourage group members to take the next steps of growth and commitment to serve God and others. These sections are optional, and leaders may want to encourage group members to complete the studies before the next meeting.

FOR A BETTER GROUP EXPERIENCE

It is always best for a leader to prepare ahead of time by viewing the video, reviewing and prioritizing discussion questions, and becoming familiar with the Bible study portion.

Preparation of the study location is important. Arrive early to ensure that all equipment is working. Bring extra pens or pencils in case group members come without them.

Watch the time! Make sure you have access to a timepiece to keep the group session on schedule. Of course, you may adjust time allotted for particular portions of the study, but you don't want to run out of time to properly conclude your study time.

Be sensitive to the discussion process. Try to give everyone an opportunity to speak, and when necessary, gently redirect the focus of those who tend to dominate a discussion.

SESSION 1: GOD'S STORY, OUR STORY

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17–19

Consider the Invitation (4 minutes)

Introduction to “God’s Story, Our Story”

Prayer

Video (21 minutes)

Video Presentation (15 minutes)

Video Conversation (6 minutes)

Bible Investigation (15 minutes)

Our Life Response (4 minutes)

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Take Action

Look, listen, and prepare for opportunities!

Benediction (1 minute)

SESSION 2: CARRIERS OR BARRIERS?

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14

Consider the Invitation (4 minutes)

Introduction to “Carriers or Barriers?”

Prayer

Video (21 minutes)

Video Presentation (15 minutes)

Video Conversation (6 minutes)

Bible Investigation (15 minutes)

Our Life Response (4 minutes)

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Take Action

Break down those barriers!

Benediction (1 minute)

SESSION 3: SHOWING UP FOR EVERYONE

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Romans 10:13

Consider the Invitation (4 minutes)

Introduction to “Showing Up for Everyone”

Prayer

Video (21 minutes)

Video Presentation (15 minutes)

Video Conversation (6 minutes)

Bible Investigation (15 minutes)

Our Life Response (4 minutes)

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Take Action

Show up!

Benediction (1 minute)

SESSION 4: SCATTERING SEEDS OF GRACE

*How can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

Romans 10:15

Consider the Invitation (4 minutes)

Introduction to “Scattering Seeds of Grace”

Prayer

Video (21 minutes)

Video Presentation (15 minutes)

Video Conversation (6 minutes)

Bible Investigation (15 minutes)

Our Life Response (4 minutes)

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Take Action

Look for the good!

Benediction (1 minute)

SESSION 5: IT'S JESUS OR NOTHING

No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:11

Consider the Invitation (4 minutes)

Introduction to “It’s Jesus or Nothing”

Prayer

Video (21 minutes)

Video Presentation (15 minutes)

Video Conversation (6 minutes)

Bible Investigation (15 minutes)

Our Life Response (4 minutes)

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Take Action

Focus on potential, not differences.

Benediction (1 minute)

SESSION 6: AMBASSADORS OF HEAVEN

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though
God were making his appeal through us.*

2 Corinthians 5:20

Consider the Invitation (4 minutes)

Introduction to "Ambassadors of Heaven"

Prayer

Video (21 minutes)

Video Presentation (15 minutes)

Video Conversation (6 minutes)

Bible Investigation (15 minutes)

Our Life Response (4 minutes)

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Take Action

Hide or seek—your choice.

Benediction (1 minute)

SESSION 7: RISK IT ALL TO LOVE

If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others?

Matthew 5:46–47

Consider the Invitation (4 minutes)

Introduction to “Risk It All to Love”

Prayer

Video (21 minutes)

Video Presentation (15 minutes)

Video Conversation 6 minutes)

Bible Investigation (15 minutes)

Our Life Response (4 minutes)

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Take Action

Not on my watch!

Benediction (1 minute)

SESSION 8: YOUR INVITATIONAL LIFE

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Romans 8:18

Consider the Invitation (4 minutes)

Introduction to “Your Invitational Life”

Prayer

Video (21 minutes)

Video Presentation (15 minutes)

Video Conversation (6 minutes)

Bible Investigation (15 minutes)

Our Life Response (4 minutes)

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Take Action

Live. Show up. Relate. Risk!

Benediction (1 minute)

THIS INVITATIONAL LIFE COMMITMENT PRAYER

Father God,

You have given me the unsurpassed gift of redemption and restoration to a life-changing relationship with you. Thank you for giving me a front-row seat to your story, so that my story may become part of it.

I ask that you would now empower me to effectively

Live. Go deep with Jesus and get swept up in my relationship with you.

Show up. Become an ambassador for your kingdom by watching for opportunities, listening for prompts from the Holy Spirit, and responding without hesitation.

Relate. Engage with people by being interested in them and being transparent with my own life story.

Risk. Dive into uncertainty, regardless of how scary it seems, and make the difference I was created to make in this world.

Lord, thank you for helping me display who you are to a world that desperately needs you. In Jesus's name I pray, amen.