

TAKE UP & READ



HOSANNA

Gather a Group | Take Up & Read

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GATHER A GROUP
by take up and read

WELCOME

“I’ve always wanted to do a Bible study with a group of young moms,” she said, looking up at an older woman who was long past the stage of juggling journals and juice cups. “But I’m new to the area and I only know two women who might join me.”

“Then you have a group,” said the older woman firmly, with a triumphant smile. “Absolutely. That’s a group.”

And it is. Where even two women are gathered, He is there, delighted to be invited and eager to bless. Whether you are gathering with one friend in a dorm room at 10:00 every Wednesday night or you’re gathering ten women and thirty children at the park on Friday mornings, He’s there.

And He’s so glad you asked. (Matthew 18:20)

TIPS FOR CREATING A GROUP:

Keep it simple. Begin and end the gathering with the same prayer/scripture reading so that no matter who is hosting the gathering, the format remains simple and clear.

Have an established leader for your gathering time. It can be a different individual each meeting, but it helps to have one person to lead the study session.

Set a beginning/ending time for the gathering. Encourage promptness in arrival so that you can utilize the full amount of time you may have to gather. Start on time, even if you have stragglers. They can join in when they arrive. Always be respectful of the hostess’ time.

When it comes to personal sharing, having an egg timer set is a huge help. It may sound rather silly, but when you have a specific amount of time to gather, you want to be respectful of each person present and to not have one voice override the rest.

Send out a reminder 48 and 24 hours in advance, especially if the group is filled with young mothers who are at times easily overwhelmed with the details of daily life and need a little encouragement to leave the house and spend time filling their own hearts and minds with the Word and good fellowship. You may also want to try and get a headcount 24 hours before to assist the hostess for the evening to be properly prepared.

Have someone in the group bring the dessert/snack so that the hostess is simply preparing her home and providing drinks. It makes it easier all the way around to divide up the tasks so no one person carries the full burden.

Remember that people are coming to share in prayer and community, not to judge the state of tidiness in your home. Don't let the clutter stop you from hosting. Simplicity is your friend. You have a spot for sitting and having a productive conversation. If there is a basket of laundry next to the sofa, don't stress. The women gathering are there for you, not your home.

Treat this gathering like a vault. What is shared in small group, stays in small group. This is a place of trust among your spiritual sisters. You must treat the struggles shared and prayers asked for with the utmost respect and discretion.

Keep your eye on the numbers. With a larger gathering (more than five) you will need to break up into smaller groups to discuss the scripture so everyone has an opportunity to share how God is working in their life.

Always try to remain positive in your small group responses. Life is difficult and sometimes one (or more) in your small group may be experiencing a crisis. Remember to listen with your heart and hold judgement, especially in a group setting. If there is something the Holy Spirit has placed on your heart to share with this individual, make time after small group to share it privately. You always want to lift up and encourage each other.

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Bible studies and small groups take time to cultivate. It's OK if there is fluctuation in attendance. We must strive to meet each other right where we are in life. God is pleased that you are making the effort to know Him better, so just keep going friends.

Praying with you,

The Take Up and Read Team

1 As we begin

Let's begin this gathering with gratitude. Once settled in, let's go around the room thanking God for the blessing of each other. Today is a special day because we are here, together.

Dear Lord, I am grateful for this gathering today because...

2 With each other in the Word

As we begin Lent, what are your hopes for this study and for your personal spiritual growth?

3 To share the gospel

When we talk about mercy, what do you believe right now? How do you hope to grow in your understanding of mercy?

4 Before we go

In my prayers

Do you have any prayer petitions we can pray alongside you this week?

Hopeful for this week

What kind of joy are you looking forward to this week?

I need help with

Do you need help this week? Ask and let someone be the blessing you're waiting for.

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This week took a deep dive into the Beatitudes. Which beatitude stood out to you particularly? Which one did you see differently from what you might have seen previously?

3 To share the gospel

What did you notice about Jesus's mercy this week?
How it is transforming your heart?

4 Before we go

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2 *With each other in the Word*

We continued our study of the beatitudes early this week and then went on to discuss anger and almsgiving. Do you see particular themes running throughout this gospel? Which verses were especially important to your study this week?

3 *To share the gospel*

What did you notice about Jesus's mercy this week?
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4 *Before we go*

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We're about halfway through Lent now, and this week's verses seem to call us to the sacraments. Which verses spoke to you and how did the Spirit move you towards the grace His Church provides? Are you struggling to go to confession? How can we help each other to seek reconciliation?

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Jesus speaks to the weary in this week's reading. This far along in the journey, it's so common to feel as if our efforts have been not enough and our time has been so much less than perfect. How do Christ's words call you to continue in faith?

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Jesus asks us to lay down our entire lives and follow Him. He doesn't want us to stubbornly cling to sin (or even our tendency to sin). Sin begets sin. He calls us to consider deeply the states of our souls and not to be distracted by the emotion of the moments. What were your gut check moments in Scripture this week?

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For the last week, could we adapt the "The End" form from the back of the book to make it useful in a group setting?

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