

# GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

## What Now?

Finding Freedom from the Hardships of Life

---

Leader, thank you for taking the first step to lead a group through *What Now?*!! I pray that the Holy Spirit will lead and guide you as you help others break their chains. The ultimate goal is to lead others into a growing relationship with the Lord, while tearing down the walls of hardships in their lives, by applying the truth of God's Word.

Please hear my heart with this study: It is all about the MISSION - showing the love of Christ to others and guiding them to the Word to bring healing in their lives. I strongly encourage conversations to start in a group study with each devotional. Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." None of us are alone in our struggles and Satan will try to isolate each one of us, trying his hardest to convince us that we are.

I hope that right now in this moment you check your heart, confirming that God has told you to lead this study. Do not proceed out of obligation or guilt to serve. Lead because you are convinced the Word of God is LIFE and HEALING to us, and because God has called and equipped you for this role. I am here for you if you have any questions! Never hesitate to email me at [ashleyakers@gmail.com](mailto:ashleyakers@gmail.com).

### Leader Guidelines for the Sessions:

- Make it a safe place. Keep the participants answers confidential and ask others to do the same. All responses need to stay within the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves, others, or are being harmed.
- Encourage the participants not to rush the questions but to truly do some self-reflecting. Give them time between the devotional and the questions to write down their responses to the questions before sharing.
- Don't allow any participant to interrupt when someone else is speaking. When a person talks over another person, it can make the person feel like what they are saying is not valuable.
- Give the participant a reasonable amount of time to answer the question and let them pour their heart out. This usually will take approximately 3-5 minutes. If they start to veer off topic, try to redirect them back to the question in a loving way.
- Allow yourself to be vulnerable; answer the questions yourself—this will build trust.
- Encourage the participants to share the answers to their questions, one by one. If they don't feel comfortable sharing out loud, it's okay; they may eventually.

- Be sensitive to their needs—before, during, and after the session. Make yourself available.
- PLEASE don't allow the questions that are suggested by me stop you from asking different ones. The Holy Spirit will always take precedence over what I have suggested. He may give you a question specifically to ask or not to ask. Remember, that He is the One who knows hearts, and He is the One who will bring the healing to them. At the end, you can even ask if any participant would like to share anything additional on that topic. If you need help with additional questions, email me.
- Everyone will need a Bible. It doesn't matter to me what form the Bible is in—printed books, or on ipads, kindles, tablets or smart phones. All scripture will be typed out within the lesson, but on occasion there is scripture to look up in the questions. As a leader, please keep in mind that some participants may not be familiar with the location of each book in the Bible. You may need to show them basic things, such as: The Bible consists of 2 sections (Old and New Testament), and how to look up scripture, with the general structure, like it is written by chapter and verse [ex. Matthew (Book) 14 (Chapter):16 (Verse)].

### Rules:

1. This is a safe place. This is a judgement free and condemnation free zone.
2. Being anonymous and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves, others, or are being harmed.
3. There is no room to gossip! This includes with participants within the group and people outside of this class. Any participant caught gossiping will be removed from the class immediately.
4. Focus on your own struggle, not other's issues—do some self-reflecting. Stay on topic of the question. We will limit the sharing to approximately 3 minutes per person.
5. Do not interrupt a participant while speaking. Each person is free to express her feelings without interruptions.
6. While we highly encourage you to participate in answering the questions, if you do not feel comfortable sharing, simply say “pass” when it is your turn.

### Things to prepare before the FIRST Session:

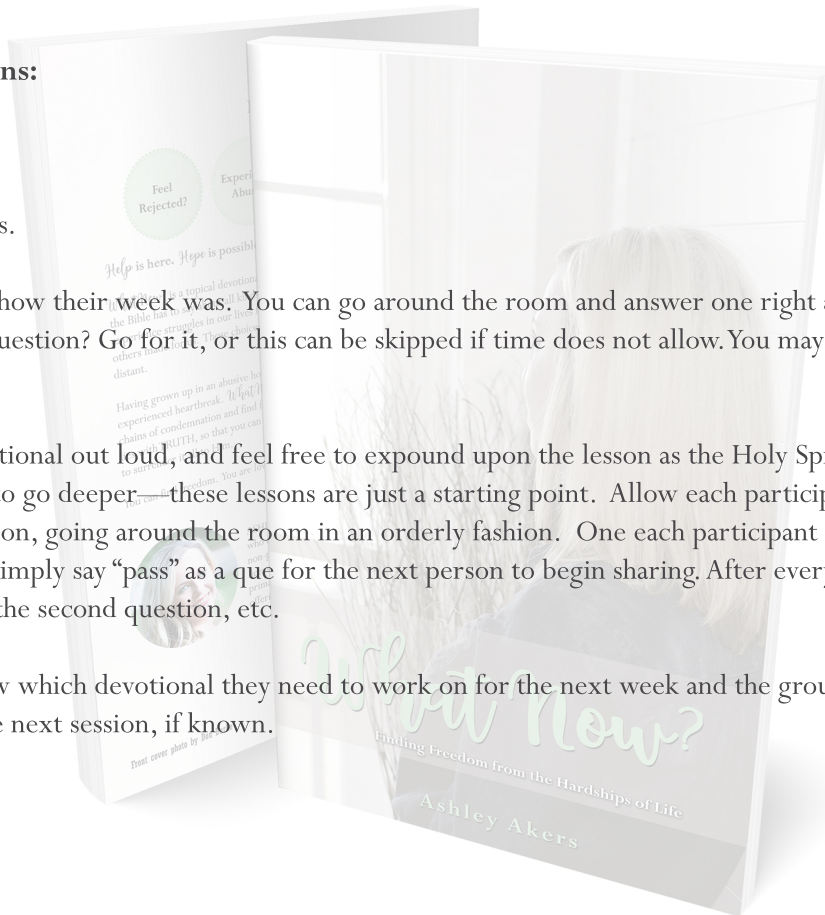
1. A copy of the book OR a printed copy of the devotional for each participant, if you purchased the electronic file. Ask the Holy Spirit which devotional to do, they do not have to be done in order. In my experience, doing only one a week is best, but always use your own judgment. Some topics may not take as long as others.
2. An ice-breaker game or a get-to-know-you activity.
3. A box of Kleenexes, pens and or pencils. A journal for the participants to write in is also helpful.
4. Girls usually love chocolate—buy some to set out.

## Beginning the FIRST Session:

1. Always start with PRAYER! We can do nothing without the Holy Spirit.
2. Get to know one another! This can be in the form of introductions, why they wanted to join this group, or an ice breaker game.
3. Read the Introduction in the book.
4. Read the Rules.
5. Go over the first devotional together, including the questions.
6. If the Holy Spirit has given you direction, you can let them know which devotional they need to work on for the next week. If you do not know yet, it is ok.
7. End in Prayer!

## Remaining Sessions:

1. PRAY!
2. Read the Rules.
3. Ask everyone how their week was. You can go around the room and answer one right after another. Got another question? Go for it, or this can be skipped if time does not allow. You may go straight into the lesson.
4. Read the devotional out loud, and feel free to expound upon the lesson as the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Feel free to go deeper—these lessons are just a starting point. Allow each participant to answer the first question, going around the room in an orderly fashion. Once each participant is done sharing, have them to simply say “pass” as a cue for the next person to begin sharing. After everyone has finished, proceed with the second question, etc.
5. Let them know which devotional they need to work on for the next week and the group will go over it together at the next session, if known.
6. End in Prayer!



## Resources:

Some women may open up about some extremely painful situations. Additional resources are listed below that will guide them to the Bible for healing, based upon the struggle. Go the extra mile and help them get started, if needed.

**Celebrate Recovery** – Freedom from any hurt, habit or hang-up. This isn't just recovery from addictions. Go to [www.celebraterecovery.com](http://www.celebraterecovery.com) to find a group near you.

**HOPE (Healing Our Past Experiences)** – This is a 7-week study to find healing from sexual trauma, use, or misuse. There are licensed facilitators that can guide others through the program, or one can do it in the convenience of their own home. [www.2tryhope.com](http://www.2tryhope.com)

**Surrendering the Secret** – A ministry designed to help women (and men) heal from the hurt of abortion. [www.surrenderingthesecret.com](http://www.surrenderingthesecret.com)

**Grief Share** – This support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. Through this 13-week group, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way. [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)

