

Invitation

Chapter Summary

Weekly Win

The win is that participants would understand that God has designed them with a purpose for a purpose.

Bottom Lines

- Your uniqueness finds its fullest and best expression when connected to God's divine purpose in the world.
- The church began as a growing gathering of men and women who believed Jesus was the Son of God.
- We have the opportunity to do for others what others did for us by joining our generation's Jesus gathering.

Before the Meeting

Pray

Pray for each of your group members to finish well. Pray that this will truly be a *starting point* and that God will begin a new chapter in their lives.

Communicate with Co-leader(s)

As leaders, you should address the following items:

- Evaluate the previous meeting with your co-leaders soon after it's over.
- Decide who will be facilitating which parts of the discussion.
- Determine if you want to do anything special for your last group meeting as a way to celebrate your time together. Feel the freedom to be creative.
- Review the Ending Well section during the Wrap-Up for this week and decide together how you want to end well.

Contact Group Members

Encourage your group members by acknowledging the growth you've seen in them during your time together. Engage in conversations with your group members individually by email, phone, or text about the right next step after Starting Point. Talk with your church staff if you are not clear on what options are available. Generally, joining a Community Group or serving on a team at church are the best next steps for group members.

We've created this [email template](#) to use as you contact your group members each week. We recommend sending an email a few days before your group to serve as a reminder.

Prepare the Environment

Prepare a welcoming environment for the group members by being available before and after group.

Schedule Social Gathering

Schedule a date for a social gathering. This will be a time of encouragement for your group members and a recap of the Starting Point experience.

Discussion | Section One

New Purpose

Section Win

The win is that participants understand that Christians believe meaning in life is found when we discover and embrace the role God has for us.

Section Summary

Part of the common human experience is a desire to find meaning in life. Christians believe that meaning is found by knowing the God who designed us and discovering the unique purpose he created us for.

Expanded Leader Notes

Questions for Reflection

- When have you felt the need for deeper meaning in your life?
- What do you see as your gifts and talents?
- What do you think of the idea that God has a plan for your life?

Leading the Discussion

Question 1: Many participants were ultimately driven to a Starting Point group by circumstances that ignited or reignited their desire for meaning. Having heard their stories by this point, you may be able to draw from past discussions.

Question 2: Some participants do not see themselves as having much to offer. This discussion gives you the chance to encourage them by sharing your own observations. Others will see giftedness primarily associated with public functions like preaching and teaching. You may need

to help broaden their understanding. Everyone has something to offer in the Body of Christ.

Question 3: Some participants may be encouraged by this idea but have a hard time accepting it as reality. It may be helpful to share from your own journey in this area.

Discussion | Section Two

Ekklesia

Section Win

The win is for participants to understand the original definition of the church—*an assembly of people with a unified confession*.

Section Summary

The *church*, as defined by Christ, is simply a growing gathering of people who are united around the confession that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.” It is not how culture has come to define the *church* centuries later as a building, a political movement, or a set of traditions and rituals.

[tippy title="Leader Tip!"]Ekklesia is pronounced *ek-klay-see-ah*.[/tippy]

Expanded Leader Notes

Questions for Reflection

- What do you associate with the word "church"?
- Do you feel like the "church" has drifted from what Jesus originally intended? If so, how?
- What would your response be if Jesus were to ask you, "Who do you say I am?"

Leading the Discussion

Question 1: Unfortunately, many participants have had bad church experiences. This discussion gives you the opportunity to hear what, if any, obstacles to faith those experiences created. Be prepared to affirm those experiences, express empathy, and encourage them going forward. For example, you might need to state some version of the following: “I’m so sorry to hear that. I, too, would have a hard time believing if I had experienced that. I can tell you that God desires the church to be a place of life, freedom, and healing. As imperfect as church can be, I hope your experiences are different moving forward.”

Question 2: This discussion allows participants to compare their church experiences to Jesus’ original definition.

Question 3: This question allows you to hear where the group is regarding Jesus. If the group dynamic is safe enough, you may consider following up with, “What would Jesus have to do to convince you that he is the Son of God?”

Discussion | Section Three

Your Next Step

Section Win

The win is for participants to have a chance to reflect on what these eight weeks have meant to them and talk about specific next steps.

Section Summary

While the church has not always had the best influence or reputation, there are always people who have represented the Christian faith in an authentic and attractive way. We hope this group has been a positive experience and that it has encouraged you to take a next step in your faith journey. Consider sharing the [60 Seconds on Why We're Together](#) video.

Expanded Leader Notes

Questions for Reflection

- Where could you see your gifts and passions being used in the church?
- What will you take away from this Starting Point group experience?
- What feels like the very next step for you in your faith journey?

Leading the Discussion

Question 1: This is a chance for you to affirm and even suggest some possible options. Having gotten to know the participants over the last eight weeks, you are probably well positioned to suggest some options. Since God knows these people best, we encourage you to spend time praying for each group member in preparation for this discussion, asking him to guide you in this process.

Question 2: Their answers to this question should help you shape the last question. Be careful not to make this question about your skill and ability as a facilitator. Remember, all we can do is create an environment that is conducive to allowing God to do what only he can do—create life change.

Question 3: Be sure to use this final discussion as an opportunity to encourage community as a vital part of their continuing spiritual growth process. Hopefully, their Starting Point group experience has demonstrated the value of community. Be prepared to help them get connected

to a new group or take an appropriate next step.

Wrap-Up

Review Bottom Lines

- Your uniqueness finds its fullest and best expression when connected to God's divine purpose in the world.
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- We have the opportunity to do for others what others did for us by joining our generation's Jesus gathering.

Ending Well

Thank the group members for coming and for sharing. Here are some ideas for ending your group well:

- Using the Story Cards, ask your group to share about one of the following:
 - "Pick a card that represents what the past eight weeks have meant to you."
 - "Pick a card that represents your relationship with God."
- Ask your group to share any "aha" moments from Starting Point.
- Review the questions your group members wrote down in Chapter 1 in response to Question 2 of Section Three: "What one question do you hope to have answered by the end of our eight weeks together?" You can ask if they feel like their questions were answered or if their questions changed during the eight weeks. (Since these questions were anonymous, don't address anyone in the group in particular, but keep it general.)
- Ask your group members, "Now what?" Since they've been through Starting Point, now what are they going to do? Having others hold them accountable helps people determine their next steps and then take them.

Due to time constraints, you may want to save these conversations for your last social.

SOCIAL PLANNING

If you haven't already, set a date for your social gathering and cover any details related to it (location, food, time, date, etc.). This will be a time of celebration and remembering your Starting Point experience.

PRAYER

This is a wonderful time to thank God for bringing your group together. At this point, you know your group best. You may want to open it up and see if other people want to pray. Thank you for modeling how to pray in your group.