



Leader Guide

Lesson 1: Living with the Longing

Discussion Roadmap (based on 2-hour meeting)

Prayer and Memory Verse (10 minutes)

1. **PRAY:** Open your time in prayer.
2. **MEMORY VERSE:** Starting with leaders, go around room having each participant quote the memory verses she chose for the week, why she chose it, and how God used it to encourage her this week
 - Take notes on the verses each participant chose, so that you can pray that verse for them and/or use it in a note of encouragement for them later in the week.
 - Take note of anyone who is struggling with their verse, so you can follow-up to help or encourage them.
3. **EMPHASIZE:** Encourage participants to keep reviewing the verses they are learning even as they choose a new one this next week.

Day 1: page 6 (10 minutes)

1. **ASK:** What did you get out of or particularly appreciate about the four chapters of “When Empty Arms Become a Heavy Burden?”
2. **ASK:** How did these chapters help you understand how others may be feeling?
3. **EMPHASIZE:** The importance of these chapters is for unity and empathy within the group. Encourage them to go back and read them if they have not yet; it will make a difference.

Day 2: pages 7-9 (35 minutes)

1. **REVIEW:** The grief cycle. (page 7)
2. **ASK:** Where in the grief cycle are you now?
3. **ASK:** Which coping suggestions from the list on pages 8 and 9 did you check?
4. **ASK:** How can this group best minister to you? Be as specific as possible.
 - **Ask everyone to answer this question.** Have participants take notes as everyone shares so they can know how to serve, pray for, and minister to one another.
 - Remind participants that this group is a source of support and encourage them to reach out to one another via email, phone call, or text during the next week.

Day 3: pages 9-13 (10 minutes)

1. **ASK:** What verses did you put stars next to on pages 9-12?
2. **READ:** “It seems that we accept the most comfort from those who have been in our shoes and can understand our pain, grief, and fear.” (page 12)
3. **ASK:** Discuss the three questions at the bottom of page 12. Open up discussion related to the article on pages 19-20.
 - Encourage participants to go back and read the article this coming week if they have not yet.

Day 4: pages 13-15 (20 minutes)

1. **ASK:** Which verses related to God's comfort on page 13 touched you most?
2. **SHARE:** "Do you have the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, living inside of you? From Scripture, how can you know?" (page 14) **Leaders**, share your personal testimony of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Keep it brief, but include a clear gospel message.
3. **ASK:** Discuss questions on page 14.
 - Read John 11:1-45 as a group if participants don't have much to share on these questions because perhaps they didn't get to read this passage during the week while completing the workbook. This is a key passage!
4. **ASK:** How did God comfort the people noted on page 15? How have you personally experienced God's comfort?
5. **EMPHASIZE:** He comforts us directly and He comforts us through others.

Day 5: pages 15-18 (25 minutes)

1. **ASK:** "Do you think you have wasted time "sitting out" or living life "on hold"?" (page 16)
2. **ASK:** "What does "bear fruit" mean? What lasting "fruit" is he talking about?" (page 16)
3. **ASK:** Discuss examples of people who waited, endured hardship, or faced uncertainty. (pages 16-17)
 - If time allows, review each example individually. If time does not allow, review only Hannah's example.
4. **READ:** The paragraph at the bottom of page 17.
5. **ASK:** Discuss questions at the bottom of page 17 and top of page 18.

Conclude (10 minutes)

1. **EMPHASIZE:** Take a brief look at lesson 2 and encourage participants to start the lesson work right away. Encourage participants to look up each verse referenced and to mark or highlight them in their Bibles.
2. **PRAY:** Close your time in prayer.
 - Decide ahead of time how you'd like to lead this time. You can have just group leaders pray or "popcorn" pray as a group, or have participants share prayer requests and pray for one another. Be sure to end on time, so choose a prayer style that fits the amount of time left at the end of group time and that respects participants, leaders, and host home's schedules. Also consider the size of your group and participants' comfort with praying out loud.
 - One idea is to have participants write prayer requests for the week on an index card. Those cards can either be collected and compiled into a list that is distributed via email to the entire group, or cards can be passed one participant to the right so that each participant is getting prayed for by another participant throughout the week.