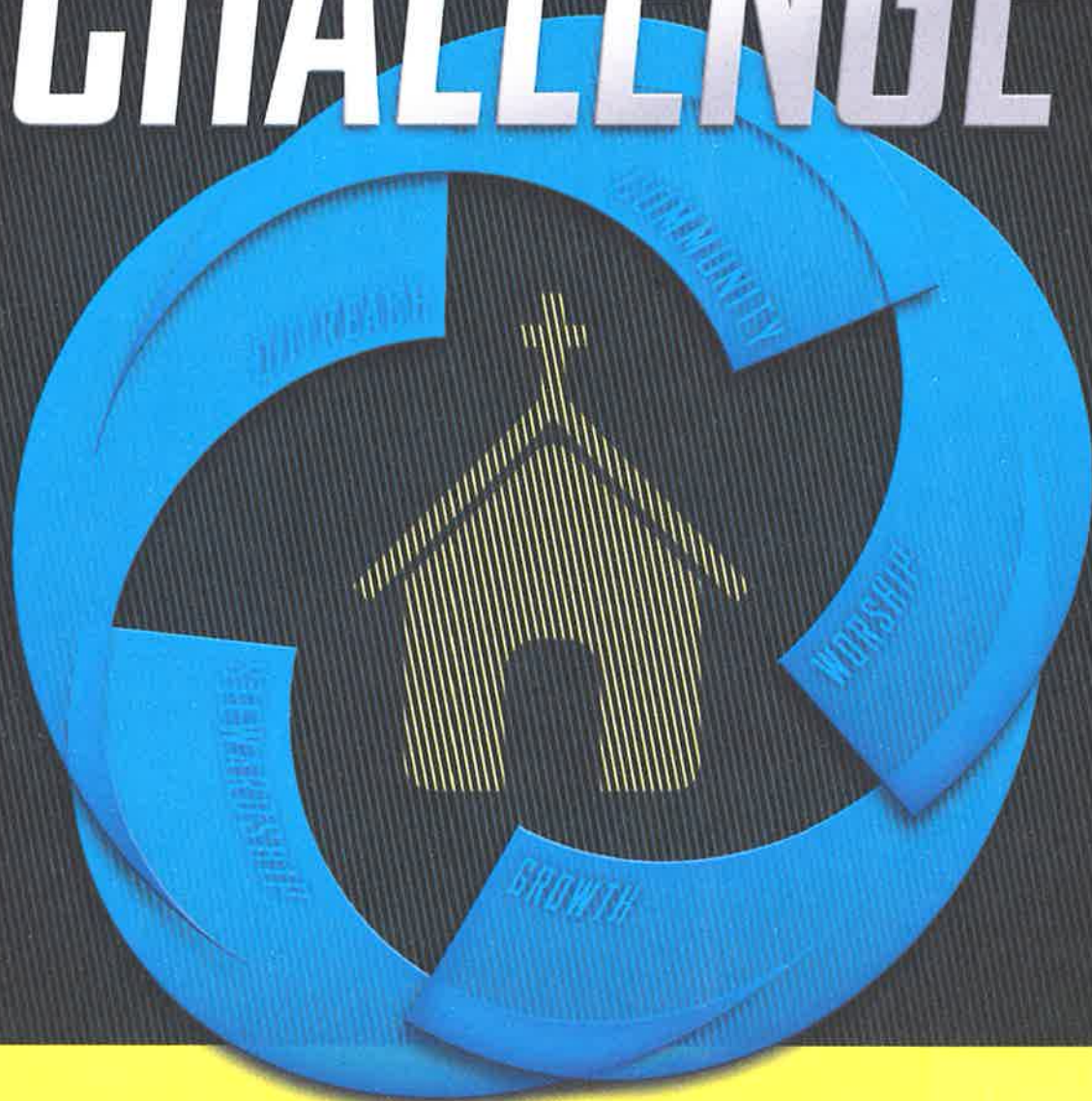


*SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE*

# **30-DAY CHURCH CHALLENGE**



**DISCOVER** HOW YOU CAN REACH  
YOUR **GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL**



*30-Day Church Challenge* Small Group Leader's Guide  
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# GETTING STARTED

Thank you for choosing the *30-Day Church Challenge DVD-based Study*. Our prayer is that, in the next five weeks, you and your group or class members will have the opportunity to discover and engage in the five purposes of the church and, in doing so, take forward steps in reaching your full, God-given potential.

This *Small Group Leader's Guide* will focus your attention on the DVD-based study, the resources inside the kit, and how to use them to be successful.

## STEPS FOR SUCCESS

### **#1 Read This Small Group Leader's Guide.**

It will give you an overview of the *30-Day Church Challenge DVD-based Study* and provide guidance for leading discussions with your group.

### **#2 Review the 30-Day Church Challenge Book.**

Review the *30 Day-Church Challenge* book to become familiar with the daily devotional lessons and each week's small group discussion questions.

### **#3 Invite People to Join Your Group.**

Even if you already have an established group with plenty of members, the *30-Day Church Challenge DVD-based Study* provides you with an opportunity to invite other people to join you. There are many in your community who are searching for joy and purpose in their lives, but who don't know the truth about Jesus Christ. Prayerfully consider who you might invite to join in your *30-Day Church Challenge* study, and encourage your current members to do the same. Your invitations could make an eternal difference!

### **#4 Communicate With Your Group Members.**

Contact your group members to let them know when your meetings will start and what to expect. Determine whether your church is providing the *30-Day Church Challenge* books to each small group member, or if you're going to purchase the book for your members and have them reimburse you, or whether your members will purchase the book on their own.

Once you begin your sessions, communicate with your members every week—to encourage them, remind them of the weekly challenges, and provide prayer and support.

# WHAT'S IN THIS KIT?

The *30-Day Church Challenge DVD-based Study* contains a DVD with short video stories for each of the five week's purposes, this *Small Group Leader's Guide*, and a *30-Day Church Challenge* book. Below, you will find a brief description of each.

## SMALL GROUP DVD

The DVD contains at least two video testimonies for each of the five weekly topics in the *30-Day Church Challenge* and a PDF copy of this *Small Group Leader's Guide*.

The testimonials are between 3-5 minutes each.

### **30 Day Church Challenge**

#### **Week 1: Community**

- *Quay's Story*
- *Ailina's Story*
- *Justin's Story*

#### **Week 2: Worship**

- *Adam's Story*
- *Rob's Story*

#### **Week 3: Growth**

- *Cyrus's Story*
- *Julia's Story*

#### **Week 4: Stewardship**

- *Jim's Story*
- *Jennifer's Story*

#### **Week 5: Outreach**

- *Brae's Story*
- *Kevin's Story*

## SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

This *Small Group Leader's Guide* offers tips on how to successfully lead a small group or class. It also includes notes on each of the five *30-Day Church Challenge* sessions covered in the book.

## 30-DAY CHURCH CHALLENGE BOOK

The *30-Day Church Challenge* book features daily devotional lessons and weekly small group discussion questions. On Monday through Saturday, group members will read the daily devotional and teaching lessons for each week's topic, take simple application steps (called Simple Steps), and journal an answer to the question in the daily journal section. Then, every week, you and your small group members will gather together to answer the small group discussion questions on that week's purpose that are found in the book after each Saturday's entry. Each member of your group or class will need a copy of the *30-Day Church Challenge* book. You will need to bring the DVD that is in this *30-Day Church Challenge DVD-based Study* so that your group can watch the video stories for that week.

# WHAT IS THE *30-DAY CHURCH CHALLENGE*?

The *30-Day Church Challenge* is based on the foundational Scriptures in the book of Acts and is specifically designed to help every small group member discover how they can fulfill their God-given potential ... through the church! This five-week campaign will help every church member understand and engage in the five purposes of the church, and how together you can transform your community and the world! This powerful campaign will challenge your church members to:

1. Devote themselves to authentic community and learn that church is not a building you go to, but a family you belong to. (Acts 2:44)
2. Develop a worship lifestyle and discover a closer relationship with God. (Acts 2:46-47)
3. Commit to spiritual growth through Bible study and prayer. (Acts 2:42)
4. Embrace stewardship and a generous lifestyle and learn to manage their God-given resources—time, talents and treasure. (Acts 2:44-45; Acts 4:32-35)
5. Engage in reaching out to others with the Gospel through their words, their love and their life. (Acts 2:47)

The *30-Day Church Challenge* is designed to be a multitiered discipleship program that can have up to three components:

- A churchwide component (including a church kit) that gives the pastor everything he or she needs to implement a five-week campaign. This includes the pastor preaching a sermon series on the five purposes of the church, with a weekly challenge from the pulpit at the end of each sermon.
- An individual component (the *30-Day Church Challenge* book) that takes about 15 to 20 minutes daily, where each church member reads a devotional lesson that includes a short teaching, Scriptures, a prayer, a simple application step and personal journaling.
- A small group component (*30-Day Church Challenge DVD-based Study*) where the small group members use the targeted small group discussion questions in the *30-Day Church Challenge* book and also watch a DVD that has short video stories and testimonies on that week's topic.

# HOW TO USE THE 30-DAY CHURCH CHALLENGE BOOK

**Note:** If your pastor is doing the churchwide component using the church kit, then he or she will kick off the five-week series on the first Sunday by preaching a sermon on the first purpose of the church: community. At the end of the sermon, he or she will also issue the weekly challenge that goes with that week's purpose.

The readings in this *30-Day Church Challenge* book begin on Monday (Day 1), the day after the official first Sunday launch of the campaign. Six daily readings are provided for each week—Monday through Saturday; there are no Sunday readings.

To help your small group members get the most from this experience, encourage them to set aside a specific time every day to use this book. Each day's readings and simple application steps should take no more than 15 to 20 minutes. Encourage them to take their time and not read ahead or try to complete more than one day's readings at a time (they are designed to build on each other and will have the maximum effect if they are read once a day—ideally, in the morning) to allow time to process and meditate on the topic throughout the day. Also, each person will draw the most benefit from the experience if they don't skip readings or place themselves in a position to have to "catch up" after missing a day or two.

Each day in the *30-Day Church Challenge* book contains the following content:

## **Reading**

Each day's content begins with a short reading. Most readings won't take more than three or four minutes. They are designed to get the participant thinking about a particular aspect of the week's topic.

## **Scriptures**

A selection of Scriptures follows the daily reading. Sometimes these are drawn from the reading itself, and other times they are intended to add to the content of the reading. These Scriptures can be read directly from the book, or the participant can look them up in their Bible and read them in their larger context.

## **Prayer**

After the daily reading and the selections of Scripture, a prayer is suggested. We encourage everyone to not only read this daily prayer, but to actually pray it—even out loud. They can add to it or further personalize it, making it their own heartfelt prayer. The key is for the participant to engage their heart and talk to God.

## **Simple Step**

Another component of each day in this book is the "Simple Step," a small but impactful challenge to help participants immediately apply the truth or lesson of the day's reading. These action steps are crucial to making the *30-Day Church Challenge* a part of the participant's life-changing experience.

## **Journal Page**

The final daily section is a journal page with a question or prompt for the participant to think about and respond to, along with space to write. We encourage the participant to take their time with this, as this activity often produces great insight and important breakthroughs.

## **Weekly Challenge**

At the end of each week, there is a summary of that week's challenge, which is designed to help the participant have a clearer understanding of the challenge and how it contributes to their fulfilling their God-given potential.

### **Weekly Small Group Study and Discussion Questions**

At the end of each week, after the Saturday entry, and the Weekly Challenge page, there are two pages with a series of study and discussion questions that will lead the small group members through the main principles of this week's lesson. They will also help them engage in discussion regarding the personal impact of the two or more video stories your small group will watch each week during the small group DVD session.

Please note that we've given a complete list of small group study and discussion questions that address each week's topic. As the small group leader, you will want to review the questions ahead of time. In order to stay within the time limits of your small group meeting, you may need to choose which questions you want your group to focus on.

You and your group are on the verge of a growth experience like you've never known before! As you apply yourself to the content in this study, may God's Holy Spirit give you insight to help you apply these truths, develop a closer relationship with God, and experience what it means to fulfill your God-given potential ... through the church!



# GUIDELINES FOR LEADING A SMALL GROUP OR CLASS

## **Leaders Cast a Vision.**

Leaders are critical to the success of any group. As a small group or class leader, your enthusiasm and example can inspire your members to:

- Consistently attend group meetings
- Openly participate in discussions
- Faithfully complete individual lessons
- Draw closer to God
- Invite others to join your group
- Go on a weekly journey to learn about the five purposes of the church

So cast a vision for your group! Those who follow you will rise only as high as the expectations you set, so cast a vision of complete participation.

## **Leaders Follow God.**

*David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied” (1 Samuel 17:45).*

Leading a group can be time-consuming, but be sure to set aside enough quiet time for you to be strengthened and encouraged by God. The foundation for your leadership will come from the peace and wisdom you find in your own relationship with God.

## **Leaders Pray.**

*“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right” (1 Samuel 12:23).*

Pray for guidance about who to invite to your group and for God to encourage their participation. Once your group begins, ask for prayer requests and encourage all of your members to pray for each other. God’s mighty hand moves in response to our prayers!

## **Leaders Encourage.**

*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:4–6).*

Encourage your members to come to each session, be involved, pray and complete each section of their *30-Day Church Challenge* books. Encourage them to be receptive to God continuing His work in them and in their families.

## **Leaders Invite and Include.**

*I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some (1 Corinthians 9:22).*

The *30-Day Church Challenge* study is intended for both Christians and those who have not yet entered into a relationship with Christ. This study has the power to unleash their God-given potential and will help people discover and engage in the five true purposes of the church. At the end of the five weeks, they will have learned that church is not just a building that one goes to on Sunday! Pray for God to bring to your mind the names of people you can invite to your group. Be conscious of how to make new members feel comfortable and welcome at each session. Encourage your members to invite their friends and neighbors to join them in the group.

As you lead each session, be sensitive to personality types (i.e., introvert and extrovert). Gently draw out quieter members by asking nonthreatening questions. Talkative members may need to be reminded to allow everyone to participate.

## Guidelines for Your Group

During your first session, review group guidelines with your participants. Some suggested guidelines are below. You can read these to your group, or write your own guidelines using these as a starting point.

- **Priority:** Make the group meeting a priority in your schedule. If you are unable to attend or are running late, contact the group leader.
- **Preparedness:** Prepare for the lesson each week and come ready to share. What you put into the lesson is what you'll get out of it.
- **Participation:** Participate in the discussion, but keep answers brief so others may share, as well.
- **Respect:** Remember that everyone has a right to their opinion, and all questions are encouraged and respected. Listen attentively to others without interrupting them.
- **Confidentiality:** Anything of a personal nature that is said in the meeting should not be repeated outside the meeting. This group is intended to be a safe place for open discussion and sharing.
- **Honesty:** Strive to be real and honest as you share with the group. If you have suggestions about how to improve the group sessions, discuss them with your leader.
- **Connectedness:** Seek to know and care for other group members, as well as share transparently regarding your own emotional, spiritual and physical needs.
- **Support:** Actively support the mission and values of the small group study, and refrain from gossip and criticism. Communicate directly and privately with anyone with whom you have an issue.

# 30-DAY CHURCH CHALLENGE

## FORMAT AND SCHEDULE

The *30-Day Church Challenge* study is organized into sections as described below.

### **Prayer**

We recommend that you open and close each lesson with prayer.

### **Starting Point**

The *30-Day Church Challenge* begins with your Sunday service, where your pastor will preach the sermon on one of the five purpose topics, and then he or she will issue the weekly challenge for that topic. Each member of your small group will then interact with the book for the next six days (Monday through Saturday). There will be daily lessons on that week's topic, simple steps and personal journaling. When your weekly group meets, you will watch the videos on the Study Resource DVD and discuss the weekly discussion questions that are located after the Saturday entry found in each week of the book.

### **Small Group Session**

During your weekly study, your group will watch the video testimony based on the current week's purpose. This is located in the Study Resource DVD. Your group will then open the *30-Day Church Challenge* book—so you'll want participants to bring their book—and turn to the "Small Group Study and Discussion Questions" section for each week (located after each week's Saturday entry). You will all answer a few questions relating to the video stories, so encourage your group members to pay close attention during each video story. The videos are between three and five minutes in length. There will also be a series of questions designed to engage your group with the principles of that week's purpose and study.

During Week 1, your first group session, you will watch at least two video testimonies based on the first purpose of the church, which is community.

Also, during the sessions, encourage members to share what they have done to fulfill the Weekly Challenge.

Remember that the *30-Day Church Challenge* should help each of your group members seek God and learn the truths contained in that week's purpose. Your small group will help members dig deeper into the purpose for that week, and the video testimonies will help illustrate the principles and truths.

### **Session Timing**

Each *30-Day Church Challenge* session is designed to be approximately 90 minutes. The length of the session will vary depending on the level of group participation and on how well the discussion stays focused.

You can manage your group by encouraging everyone to participate in the discussions, but also by reminding them to keep their answers brief and allow everyone to contribute. Keep the discussion focused on the topic and on the specific question the group is addressing. Small group meetings are a great time to share conversation and build friendships, and you can arrange for snacks and social time after the group discussion is completed. If the conversation strays to other topics, gently redirect the group back to the *30-Day Church Challenge* book questions.

If you have less than 90 minutes available for your group, or if the discussion tends to take longer, you can carefully select which questions to cover. As you grow to know each of the group members, you'll gain a feel for which questions will most benefit your group.

# WEEK 1: COMMUNITY

**Session's Main Point:** All of us need to be a part of a small group within the church, so that we can experience authentic community through the love, support and encouragement of others.

**Weekly Challenge:** Commit to joining a small group, class or ministry so that you can experience real community.

## Week 1 Video Testimonies

1. Quay's Story
2. Ailina's Story
3. Justin's Story

**Encourage Your Members** to really think about the different ways in which they can become involved in the church (and how that will impact their lives and their relationship with God) and serve other members in the body of Christ. Take time to discuss the video testimonies and see if the group can come up with different ideas for experiencing authentic "community" within the church.

# WEEK 2: WORSHIP

**Session's Main Point:** God's sacrificial love motivates us to give all of ourselves to Him and live our lives completely for Him. That is the basis of real worship. Church is a great atmosphere to cultivate a spirit of worship.

**Weekly Challenge:** Commit to worshiping God by giving your life completely to Him and making regular attendance at church a cornerstone of your worship lifestyle.

## Week 2 Video Testimonies

1. Adam's Story
2. Rob's Story

**Encourage Your Members** to think about the different ways to worship. Have they experienced the joy of singing praises? Have they learned that worship is a lot more than just the music? You might want to read Romans 12:1 in various translations. Encourage your group to share some of their personal experiences.

# WEEK 3: GROWTH

**Session's Main Point:** Growing more like Christ through Bible study, prayer and attending church enables us to reach our God-given potential.

**Weekly Challenge:** Commit to spending time with God every day.

## Week 3 Video Testimonies

1. Cyrus's Story
2. Julia's Story

**Encourage Your Members** to talk about people they know who have grown or matured through some combination of Bible study, prayer, and spiritual mentoring. Discuss different ways that we can experience the maturity of growing in Christ. Ask each person to write down how they believe God is challenging them to grow spiritually and what that entails.

## WEEK 4: STEWARDSHIP

**Session's Main Point:** When you faithfully manage the resources God has given you (time, talents and treasure), He blesses you and uses you to change the world.

**Weekly Challenge:** Commit to increasing your stewardship through giving and serving.

### Week 4 Video Testimonies

1. Jim's Story
2. Jennifer's Story

**Encourage Your Members** to open up about their feelings when it comes to giving money. Discuss what the Bible says about it. Finances are a subject that many don't feel comfortable discussing. Start by sharing the following facts: The Bible has less than 500 verses on faith, about 500 verses on prayer, but more than 2,350 verses on money!

Explain that we are only stewards of all that God has given us. Discuss what that means, and that "giving" doesn't always mean giving money. Ask group members to share other ways of giving and serving. Discuss how using one's time, talents and treasures is pleasing to God.

## WEEK 5: OUTREACH

**Session's Main Point:** God has called us to share the Good News of the Gospel through our words, our love and our lives.

**Weekly Challenge:** Commit to sharing your faith with someone or reaching out by inviting them to church.

### Week 5 Video Testimonies

1. Brae's Story
2. Kevin's Story

**Encourage Your Members** to discuss different ways of reaching out to others in the community. Talk about how the Gospel is meant to be shared and how God does not want us to keep it to ourselves. We are called to share the Good News and help others experience eternal life through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

### Final Thoughts

The *30-Day Church Challenge* is an all-church campaign designed to stir and stretch everyone in the church. It is designed to correspond to the other facets of the five-week *30-Day Church Challenge* campaign. Together with your church's weekend worship experiences and the weekly small group curriculum, these next 30 days have the potential to change many lives and help people to become everything that God has created them to be. As one of the leaders in your church community, pray that each member of your church will experience the benefits of becoming an engaged, active member of the body of Christ. Thank you for taking the time to lead others on this amazing journey.

