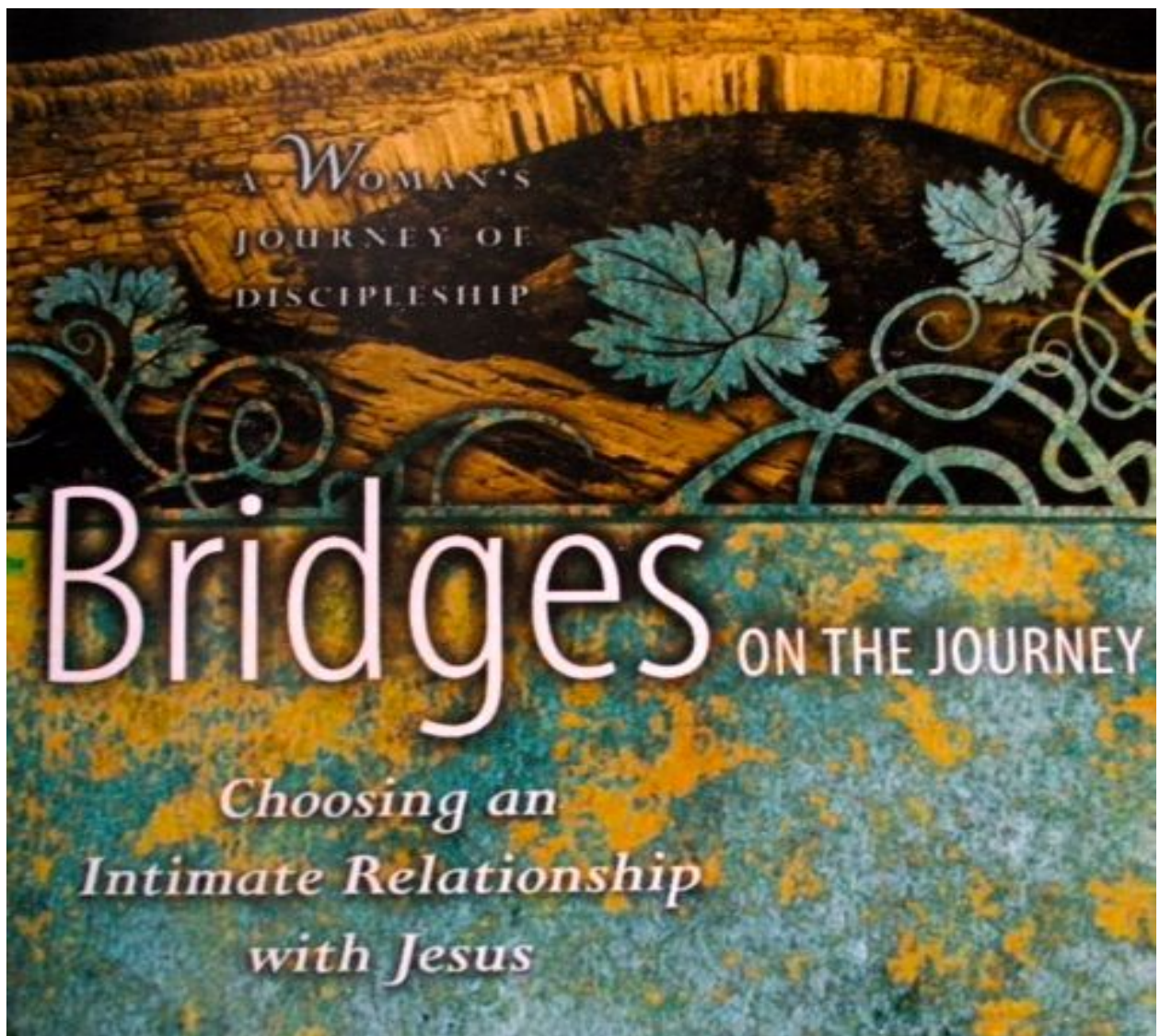


Bridges

Leadership

Manual



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Focus Tips for Leaders

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Focus Tips for Leaders

Bridges on the Journey

Focus Tips is a tool to help you, the leader, take other women through *Bridges on the Journey*. The purpose is to enhance and give direction to the discussion of each session. It is not meant to take away from the discussion questions, but to stimulate thinking and discussion as you go through each chapter. Please familiarize yourself with Guidelines and Essentials on the Journey in Appendix C, pages 81-84.

As you lead your group through *A Woman's Journey of Discipleship*, remind them that this is more than a Bible study. It is a discipling process, which includes a Bible study. This journey with Jesus gives opportunity to wholeheartedly follow him in discipleship as well as to capture his heart and vision for discipling others.

Bridges extends an invitation for a woman to cross the bridge of trusting in Christ for salvation and establishing a relationship as God's child. She will come to understand who Jesus is and why He came to earth. She will discover more about herself and her relationship with God as she gets to know Jesus. Women will be introduced to journaling a daily time with God, scripture memory, and studying and applying God's Word to their lives.

Bridges can be used with both seekers and in training women to disciple others through learning to share the gospel and begin to grow in their Christian life.

It's important to the process that you as the leader cover each of the seven components (listed below) with your group. This will enable the women to grow in their spiritual journey and help them develop spiritual disciplines.

- MY DAILY JOURNEY...sharing highlights from the Word draws the group closer.
- OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER...reviewing lessons learned reinforces the discipling process
- REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY...helps women relate as they read encouraging stories from ordinary women about their encounters with an extraordinary God.
- THE TRAVEL GUIDE...brings deeper understanding through exploring and experiencing the truth of the Bible.
- LEARNING THE ROUTE BY HEART...changed lives happen through memorizing scripture.
- NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY...enables the women to see progress as they complete each assignment.
- MY JOURNEY FRIENDS...(initiated in the first lesson.) Encouraging one another beyond the group brings encouragement and accountability.

Focus Tips are written for each of the six sessions in *Bridges on the Journey*.

Included are:

1. Key Point/Focus of the Session
2. Overall tips for the Session to emphasize and highlight
 - Background of scripture where relevant
 - Questions to choose to enhance discussion
3. Take away/Application) from the Session

Starting each session:

Here are some suggestions to help you start each session of *Bridges on the Journey*.

Open with prayer

The scripture memory component begins with Session 2, *Learning the Route by Heart*. The tear-out memory verses are in the back of the book. At the beginning of each session review the scripture memory verse either by pairing up with someone or by reviewing it as a group. You can be creative and vary how you review the verses.

Another important part of the lesson is *My Daily Journey*, which begins as part of the assignment for Session 3. The introduction to *My Daily Journey* is on page 60, and the reading and journaling begins on page 61. This is an important part of growing in the Christian life as it encourages the women to spend daily time with God through His Word and helps form the habit of journaling. During *Our Journey Together* encourage the women to share what they have recorded from one of the five days of *My Daily Journey*. This will help your group get to know one another better, and also learn how God is working in their lives through the scriptures.

We encourage you to pray regularly for your group, that their hearts would be ignited to follow Jesus Christ, and in turn disciple others, leaving a legacy of spiritual generations.

Bridges on the Journey

Session 1

God's Invitation to The Journey *"Where Am I On my Spiritual Journey?"*

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the "take away," highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to share about themselves and where they are on their spiritual journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 1:**
 - As our creator, God has lovingly planned our lives with great care because we are precious to Him and He has a purpose for our lives.
3. **Journey Components.** It's important to the process that you as the leader cover each of the components included in this session:
 - My Daily Journey
 - Our Journey Together
 - Reflections on the Journey
 - The Travel Guide
 - Learning the Route by Heart
 - Next Steps on the Journey
 - My Journey Friends
4. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight**
 - A. Leader: Be sure to read through the Leader's Guidelines on pages 82-83 so you are familiar with the principles and format of *A Woman's Journey of Discipleship* prior to the study. **Reminder: The scriptures are written out for you in Bridges.**
 - B. To give the women a picture of what to expect in the *Bridges on the Journey* process, take turns reading the introduction on pages 8-11.
 - C. Ask the ladies to share a little about themselves and their spiritual journey. Start with yourself to set the tone. This will help you get to know your women and see where they are in their spiritual journey.
 - D. On page 13 in *The Travel Guide*, read Psalm 139:1-4, 13-18. Discuss the three questions about the scriptures, and ask the group members to share the following:
 - New things they learned from these scriptures about God's knowledge of them.
 - First memory about God and when they were first aware of God.
 - Express why they joined this study and what they hope to gain from it.
5. **Take Away/Application) from this Session:**
 - To gain a deeper understanding of and be encouraged with the value God places on our lives.
 - To have a desire to grow in intimacy with Jesus on our journey of discipleship.

6. **Next Steps on the Journey (page 14)**

- Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:17 for the next session. Tear out verse bookmarks are in the back of the book. Encourage the participants to be prepared to review the verse at the next group meeting.
 - **Note:** The women can choose to memorize the scripture in the version of their choice.
- Read and complete Session 2.

Bridges on the Journey

Session 2

The Bridge to A Relationship With Jesus

“How do I come to Know Jesus?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 2:**
 - Jesus Christ is the bridge to eternal life through placing our faith in Him. He invites us to respond to an invitation to enjoy a personal relationship with Him.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight**
 - A. Review the memory verse together or in pairs.
 - B. In *Reflections on the Journey*, Diane talks about “Divine Appointments.” Ask the ladies how they might relate to Diane’s story.
 - C. Read through the introduction to ***The Travel Guide*** on page 17, which explains the purpose of this session.
 - D. As you discuss Questions 1-3, draw out from the group discoveries and questions about God’s love, attitude, and actions toward us as individuals.
 - E. Go over *The Bridge Illustration*TM on page 19 with the participants. Be sensitive to the group dynamics. This is a good training tool for leaning to share the Gospel. If you are sure that your group members are all believers, ask the women to practice the illustration with someone in the group. If you sense that some of the participants are not believers then the leader should go over *The Bridge* making sure all participants understand how to come to Christ. Remember that it’s the work of the Holy Spirit. We are simply his messengers.
 - F. Go over the believer’s prayer on page 19. Read through the explanation on page 20 about the believer’s prayer. Offer to talk privately with anyone who might have questions or want to talk further.
 - G. From Question 4: Discuss I John 5:11-13, *Assurance of Salvation*. Ask how you can be sure of eternal life. Ask someone to read the verse in their own words, and by using their name.
 - H. Go over the explanation of ***My Daily Journey*** on page 60. Point them to Pages 61-64 for the devotional time and for writing about their time with God, and explain how the quiet time journaling will begin as part of their assignment to share in Session 3. Give a personal example.

4. **Take Away/Application from this Session:**

- To fully understand the message of salvation through Christ's love and sacrifice on the cross, and by faith respond to Jesus Christ as the bridge to eternal life and a personal relationship with him.

Bridges on the Journey

Session 3

Believing the Bible

“Why is the Bible important in my relationship with Jesus?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
 2. **Key Point of Session 3:**
 - The Bible is God’s Word, written by man, through God’s inspiration.
 3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight**
 - A. Go over the ***My Daily Journey*** paragraphs on pages 23- 24, which states the importance of a daily time with God in His Word. Beginning with yourself, share a highlight from one day of your five days of journaling on pages 61-63.
 - B. ***In Reflections on the Journey***, Ask how the Bible became important to Gigi. Discuss why the Bible is life giving and vital.
 - C. In **Question 1** (page 26): 2 Peter 1:20-21 explains how the Bible was written through the prophets. Ask the group if they think prophecy in the scriptures was interpretation or revelation. Then ask why it is important that it is revelation rather than interpretation. **Definitions:** *Interpretation* – “to have or show **one’s own** understanding of the meaning of something.” *Revelation:* “to make known by **supernatural** or **divine** means, origin, and actual giving of truth.”
 - D. **Question 2** (page 26): Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17
“God-breathed) - translation of the Greek word theopneustos, meaning “Inspired.”
Paul talks about different ways in which God’s Word is profitable and useful. Discuss how these definitions can help give deeper meaning to the scriptures, and ways in which God’s Word can be useful in our lives.
These definitions may help in your discussion:
 - *Teaching:* To instruct believers in God’s truths
 - *Rebuking:* Those in sin
 - *Correcting:* To set right wrong thinking or actions
 - *Training in righteousness:* To guide in how to live a holy life
 - *Equipped for every good work:* To be prepared for the work God has called us to do in living the Christian life
- Suggest to the women that they make a list of key ways the Word has changed their lives and ways they would like to see it change their lives in the future.
- E. Jesus is the Living Word of God. In Questions 3 and 4, the name of “Jesus” and “the Word” are synonymous. Looking at the last paragraph on page 30, ask the women to take time to reflect on what they know and believe about God’s Word. As suggested,

encourage them to ask the Lord to help them see how the Word can give them all they need for life.

4. **Take Away/Application from this Session:**

- To choose to spend daily time in the Bible, God's personal message to His children. Reading, studying, applying, memorizing, and meditating on his Word are primary ways that we come to know and understand who He is and who we are. As we travel on our journeys with Him, His written Word teaches us how to respond to the pressures and demands of daily life.

Bridges on the Journey

Session 4

Experiencing Change in My Life

“How does transformation happen?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God’s Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 4:**
 - Transformation is a lifetime process of growing into Christ-likeness from the inside out as our lives become God-centered rather than self-centered.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight**
 - A. In ***Reflections on the Journey*** on page 33, Gigi asks the question, “Have you ever been controlled by fear?” Ask for volunteers to share how fear or worry has been something they are dealing with now or perhaps in the past. Discuss how to deal with fear and worry, even though circumstances may not change? What did Gigi do?
 - B. As you discuss the Galatians 5:16-23 on page 34, describe characteristics of the “old life” and the “new life.” What does it mean to “live by the Spirit?”
 - C. Looking at the chart on page 35, what are ways in which your life is being changed from your old nature to the new life in Christ?
 - D. In 1Thessalonians 1:5, Paul was able to make the statement to young believers, “In imitating us, you imitated the master,” because his life, and also Silas and Timothy lives were lived out in consistency with the message of the gospel they were preaching. Ask the ladies to think about a mature believer they know who might help them grow in their spiritual walk.
 - E. From **Question 3**, the Romans 12:1-2 passage describes some decisions and actions to make in order to change from the inside out. Discuss with the group, decisions and actions needed for life change, some of which may be challenging to them.
 - F. The scriptures used in **Questions 4-6** are significant in describing spiritual transformation through the power of God. From these scriptures, ask the women to list the promises God makes to us.
 - G. From **Question 6**: We can’t assume that in becoming a Christian we will never sin again. Discuss why it is important to confess sin and how un-confessed sin creates a barrier in our relationship with God. What does confessing sin really mean? Ask the women to identify one area to pray about for God’s help in surrendering it to God.
4. **Take Away/Application from this Session:**
 - To become transformed into the image of Jesus in every way. The more we are like Him, the more clearly we will reflect Him to others.

Bridges on the Journey

Session 5

Living in Relational Community

“What is my place in God’s family?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 5:**
 - Just as Jesus loved others, we too, are to love others. Living in fellowship as part of a Christian community is an expression of that love and care for others.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight**
 - A. From *Reflections on the Journey*, discuss as a group ways in which Christian friendships impacted Gigi and her family. Ask the group how others have reached out to them to make a difference in their lives.
 - B. Some questions and insights to reflect on and ask as you discuss John 15:12-15:
 - What was the primary command Jesus gave to believers? How were they to love? *(Love one another as He has loved them. This kind of love involves seeking God in prayer and asking Him to give you the kind of love Jesus had for others.)*
 - What was the qualification for Jesus calling the disciples His friends? To do what He had commanded them? *(They are called to be his disciples, just as all believers are.)*
 - What kind of relationship did Jesus have with them? *(He had kept nothing back from them, but had revealed to them what God had made known to Him. They were on a different level of confidence with him than that of servants. We also as believers have God’s truth revealed to us through His Word and are called His friends.)*
 - How did Jesus model the ultimate love for others? *(Jesus gave everything, even His own life for others. There is no greater proof of His love than the price He paid on the cross.)*
 - C. Looking at the passages for Questions 2 & 3 on pages 44-46, consider using these additional questions:
 - What were some vital ingredients that made both authentic community and individuality happen?
 - Why do we need other believers in our lives in order to grow as a Christian?
 - Relational community can be both fulfilling and challenging. Why did it work for the early church?
 - How do you see community working in your church? How important is it for you to be involved with other believers in your Christian walk?

- What dangers do you see in trying to walk the Christian walk alone?
- D. From Questions 4 and 5: Ask how Jesus gave direction in solving conflict with others?
How might these passages help us during conflicts?
4. **Take Away/Application from this Session:**
- To actively seek fellowship with other believers, and to contribute to serving in a local church and in the community.

Bridges on the Journey

Session 6

Sharing My Faith

“Do I know how to tell the story of Jesus?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 6:**
 - God has entrusted the message to believers to share the Good News of the Gospel with others. The longer we walk alongside Jesus, the better we get to know His story, and the more confident we become in telling His story to our friends.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight**
 - A. In ***Reflections on the Journey***, Sarah's life was changed by some people who reached out to her in loving ways in contrast to what she was experiencing in her own home. Ask the group what it was about Matt and Wendi that drew Sarah to the Lord? Ask the women who might be someone they could reach out to.
 - B. From **Questions 1 & 2** on pages 52- 55:
 - *The woman was shocked that Jesus, a rabbi, would speak to her, being a woman from the territory of Samaria. These were the days when Jews had no dealings with Samaritans and would not speak to a woman in public, yet Jesus did both.* Ask the group to share observations that stood out to them about the way Jesus dealt with both the Samaritan women at the well and the blind man.
 - *The Samaritan woman and the blind man each shared what Christ had done in their lives.* Discuss the response of the people with whom they shared their conversion experiences. Ask the group members how this encourages them to share their experience.
 - C. From **Questions 3-5:**
Your Story: This is a good opportunity to have the women share their story with the group. As they read their answers this will help in learning how to briefly share. Writing down several sentences for each question will help them be concise and share pertinent points to their story. It will help clarify their spiritual journey and how to share it with others. If someone hasn't already made a commitment to Christ, this might be an opportunity for you to meet with her, and encourage her to take this step of faith.
 - D. **Question 6** emphasizes the message of the Gospel. Have the women personalize what John 3:16-17 means to them.
4. **Take Away/Application from this Session:**
 - To better understand the Gospel and how to share your story with others.

Congratulations! We hope this journey through *Bridges* has been an encouragement to you as the leader, and to the women you have led through the first book of this discipleship process.

- Page 83 describes how to celebrate what God has done in the lives of your group members. With your group, set the date for a special time to celebrate together. Organize a luncheon or dessert party, and have the women come with prepared hearts to share about their journeys with the Lord.
- At the celebration share with one another the greatest blessings you received by going through the *Bridges on the Journey* process...in your relationship with the Lord, in your relationships with others, and in your friendships within the group.
- Invite the group members to take the next discipleship step in Book 2, *Crossroads on the Journey*. As new steps often lead to crossroads on your journey, book 2 of this series will inspire you and your group to search deeper within the Bible, the source for making decisions. *Crossroads on the Journey* gives opportunity to develop lifelong convictions and grow even deeper in relationship with Christ, as well as being able to develop new skills for sharing God's love with others. You won't want to miss this life-changing opportunity.