

# LEADER GUIDE — FORMED BY THE GOSPEL

## SESSION 2:1 | A NEW FAMILY

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### Overview for Leaders

This session opens Part 2 of Formed by the Gospel: Gospel-Formed Community. It centers on the Gospel welcoming believers into a new family called the Church. Jesus is the builder and head of this family in Matthew 16:18. Paul describes the church as God’s household, the church of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth in 1 Timothy 3:15. This session guards against three dangers: 1) reducing church to an event, 2) importing unhealthy family expectations into God’s household, and 3) wanting belonging without vulnerability, humility, and love.

### Big Idea

The Gospel welcomes us into a new family, the Church, a people Jesus is building, where we belong by grace through faith and learn to live together as God’s household.

### Your Role as Leader

Create space for honest conversation about church, family, loneliness, and belonging. Some people will be eager for community, while others may feel guarded because church has been painful. Do not dismiss that. Validate the complexity without letting cynicism become the final word. Keep bringing the group back to Jesus: He builds His church, He sets terms for His household, and He welcomes us by grace. You are helping people move from living like guests or consumers to living as brothers and sisters in God’s family.

### Session Flow – *Adjust as Needed*

- Icebreaker
- Scripture Engagement (reading + context)
- Discussion (10 questions) — 40–45 min
- Application Challenge — 5 min
- Prayer & Reflection — 10 min
- Announcements — 2 min

### Key Scriptures

- Matthew 16:18
- 1 Timothy 3:15
- Galatians 3:26–29
- Ephesians 2:19–22
- Romans 8:14–17
- John 13:34–35

## **LEADER NOTES, GROUP QUESTIONS, & COMMENTARY**

*(Use these notes to frame discussion and connect themes)*

**Icebreaker** Purpose – Surface assumptions about family, belonging, home, and church.

Suggested options:

- When have you felt most “at home” with a group of people, and what made it feel that way?
- What comes to mind when you hear someone describe the church as a family?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Jesus Builds His Church – Read: Matthew 16:18**

Question: *Jesus says, “I will build my church.” What does this teach us about who owns the church and where our hope for the church begins?*

Leader Insight: The church is not a human brand, club, or project. It belongs to Jesus and depends on His life, death, resurrection, and ongoing work.

Cue: Help the group distinguish Jesus’ design for His church from painful or imperfect experiences with people.

#### **2. Hope for a Complicated Church – Read: Matthew 16:18**

Question: *Why is it important that Jesus does not say His church will be perfect, but that He will build it? How does that help when church feels complicated or painful?*

Leader Insight: Our hope is not church people getting it right all the time; our hope is Christ faithfully forming His people.

Cue: Validate real wounds without letting disappointment become the group’s dominant lens.

#### **3. A Gathered People With a Mission – Read: Matthew 16:18**

Question: *Jesus pictures His people as an assembly that even “the gates of Hades” cannot overcome. What does this reveal about the strength and mission of the church?*

Leader Insight: Gates are defensive. Jesus is not building a hiding place; He is building a people that death and hell cannot stop.

Cue: Keep this from becoming triumphalistic. The power is Christ’s, not ours.

#### **4. God’s Household – Read: 1 Timothy 3:15**

Question: *Paul calls the church “God’s household.” How does household language challenge the way we often treat church as an event, program, or place to attend?*

Leader Insight: The church is not less than a gathering, but it is more than an event. It is a family formed by the Gospel.

Cue: Ask what changes when people move from attending a place to belonging to a people.

### **5. The Way of God's House** – Read: 1 Timothy 3:15

Question: *Paul says people must know how to conduct themselves in God's household. What expectations, assumptions, or baggage do people often bring from their past homes into the church?*

Leader Insight: God's household has its own way of life shaped by grace, truth, humility, and love - not by our old family systems.

Cue: Keep this tender. Do not pressure people to share family history; invite honest self-examination.

### **6. The Living God Is Present** – Read: 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19–22

Question: *If the church is the household of the living God, what does it mean that this is not "our house" where we set the terms?*

Leader Insight: God is present with His people, so we learn to live together under His authority, His grace, and His truth.

Cue: Challenge consumer expectations gently. Jesus sets the terms for His family.

### **7. Truth Made Visible** – Read: 1 Timothy 3:15; John 13:34–35

Question: *Paul says the church is the "pillar and foundation of the truth." How does a Gospel-shaped family make the truth of Jesus visible to the world?*

Leader Insight: The church does not create truth; it displays and supports the truth as Jesus' life is embodied among His people.

Cue: Connect doctrine and life. The world should see the Gospel, not merely hear it.

### **8. Children Through Faith** – Read: Galatians 3:26–27; Romans 8:14–17

Question: *According to Paul, how do we enter God's family? Why is it good news that we belong by grace through faith, not background, achievement, or cultural fit?*

Leader Insight: Belonging begins and ends in Christ. Adoption means we are not guests on probation; we are children welcomed home.

Cue: Emphasize assurance. The same Gospel that saves us also gives us a place in the family.

**9. One in Christ** – Read: Galatians 3:28–29

Question: *What differences or divisions can still shape how people experience belonging in the church? How does being “one in Christ” challenge those barriers?*

Leader Insight: Differences do not disappear, but they no longer determine access, status, or place in God’s family.

Cue: Do not flatten real distinctions. Gospel unity honors differences without letting them outrank Christ.

**10. From Guests to Family** – Read: Galatians 3:26–29; John 13:34–35

Question: *The video said loneliness loses its grip when we stop living like guests and start living like family. What would that look like in our group or church this week?*

Leader Insight: Gospel belonging becomes visible through presence, vulnerability, hospitality, forgiveness, and ordinary care.

Cue: Land the plane with one concrete next step. “More community” is not a plan; one act of family love is.

## **APPLICATION** **(Leader Version)**

**Application Focus:** This application is about examining how we currently relate to God's household. Some live like guests waiting to be invited, consumers waiting to be satisfied, or self-protectors waiting to be disappointed. The Gospel gives us a better posture: children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ. The goal is to help each person identify one concrete way to live as family, not merely attend church.

**Leader Tip:** Ask: "What is one concrete way this week you will live like you belong to Jesus and to His people?"

### **Examples:**

- **Belonging:** Showing up as a brother or sister, not a guest or consumer
- **Hospitality:** Inviting someone into your home, schedule, or life
- **Vulnerability:** Asking for prayer or help instead of pretending you are fine
- **Humility:** Leaving one unhealthy expectation or assumption at the door
- **Unity:** Refusing to let a preference become a barrier to love
- **Care:** Moving toward someone who may feel lonely, new, or unseen

### **Group Prayer Time at End:**

- Healing for those who carry church or family wounds
- Courage to be honestly known and to know others
- Humility to live under Jesus' authority, grace, and truth
- Unity across real differences because we are one in Christ
- Love that makes the truth of Jesus visible

Close with: "Jesus, thank You for welcoming us into Your family. Teach us to live like we belong to You and to one another. Make Your truth visible through our life together. Amen."

### **Leader Follow-Up Midweek**

1. Move from Guest to Family: Ask how they practiced belonging this week.
2. Encourage Courage: Invite one small risk of hospitality, vulnerability, or care.
3. Gospel Reframe: Remind them that Jesus is building His church and giving His people a home in Him.