



LIFE GROUP
STUDY GUIDE

FALL 2026

REAL FORMATION HAPPENS TOGETHER

These weekly guides follow our fall sermon series: four weeks of Built For This followed by eleven weeks of The Church IRL.

HEAD

Stay close to the Scripture. Notice what the text says, what Jesus or the biblical writer emphasizes, and what the passage reveals about God and His people.

HEART

Move from observation to formation. Name what the text exposes, comforts, confronts, or invites within our actual lives.

HANDS

Choose a faithful response. Keep application concrete, relational, and realistic enough to practice this week.

IRL PRACTICE

Each week rotates through the Spiritually Vibrant Home rhythms of Spiritual Conversations, Hospitality, and Spiritual Disciplines. These are not extra homework; they are ways to practice life with Jesus together.

FACILITATION NOTE

If one question opens a meaningful conversation, stay there. If someone shares vulnerably, do not rush to finish the page. Read the text carefully, listen well, pray specifically, and let the group practice being the Church in real life.

You Were Never Meant to Do This Alone

WEEK 1 | Genesis 2:18

BIG IDEA

From creation, God names isolation as “not good.” Christian life is not designed for self-sufficiency but for dependence on God and life with others.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What does God call “not good” in Genesis 2:18, and why does that matter before sin even enters the story?
2. What does this verse reveal about God’s design for human relationship and dependence?
3. How does this text challenge the idea that faith can remain mostly private or self-sufficient?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. Where are you most tempted to handle life alone instead of letting others know you?
2. What makes receiving help or depending on others difficult for you?
3. Who around you may be experiencing isolation or vulnerability right now?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What is one relationship you can intentionally strengthen this week?
2. What would it look like to ask for help instead of carrying something alone?
3. How can our group notice and move toward someone who may feel unseen?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Ask one person this week, “How is your soul, really?” Listen without rushing to fix the answer.

From Crowds to Community

WEEK 2 | Acts 2:42–47

BIG IDEA

The early Church moves beyond a crowd into shared rhythms of teaching, meals, prayer, generosity, worship, and care.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What repeated practices hold the community together in Acts 2:42–47?
2. How is this community different from simply attending the same event?
3. What do these verses show about mutual dependence within the Body of Christ?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. Where are you more comfortable being part of a crowd than being truly known?
2. Which shared rhythm in this passage feels most life-giving to you? Which feels costly?
3. What might you be protecting that keeps you from deeper community?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What could you rearrange so community becomes a rhythm instead of an occasional extra?
2. How can you contribute to this group rather than only consume from it?
3. Who could you welcome into your life or group more intentionally?

IRL PRACTICE

HOSPITALITY

Share a meal, dessert, or coffee with someone from church you do not normally spend time with. Keep it simple; make room, not a production.

Formed for More

WEEK 3 | Romans 12:1–2

BIG IDEA

Everyone is being formed by something. Jesus invites His people to be renewed rather than conformed to the patterns around them.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What contrast do you see between being “conformed” and being “transformed” in Romans 12:1–2?
2. How does Paul connect worship, the body, and the renewal of the mind?
3. What does this text suggest about the relationship between formation and identity?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. What voices, habits, or patterns most shape your day-to-day thinking?
2. Where do you notice the world’s patterns pressing most strongly on your life?
3. How is Jesus inviting you into a deeper kind of formation right now?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What is one influence you need to limit so your mind can be renewed in Christ?
2. What practice could help you be more intentionally formed by Jesus this week?
3. How can our group help each other become people who are being transformed together?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Choose one daily practice this week—Scripture, prayer, silence, or gratitude—and share next week how it shaped you.

Choosing People

WEEK 4 | John 15:12–17

BIG IDEA

Jesus calls His friends to remain in His love and to love one another. Spiritual growth takes shape in chosen, Christ-centered relationships.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What does Jesus command in John 15:12–17, and how is His own love the model?
2. What changes when Jesus calls His disciples “friends” rather than merely servants?
3. How do these verses connect love, friendship, and being chosen for fruitfulness?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. Who are the people helping you walk closely with Jesus right now?
2. Where are you tempted to settle for relational comfort instead of Christ-centered friendship?
3. How has God used community to shape your faith in a significant season?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What relationship could you invest in more intentionally for the sake of spiritual growth?
2. How can you become the kind of friend who helps others remain in the love of Jesus?
3. What would it look like for our group to choose growth together instead of drifting apart?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Ask someone, “How have you experienced the love of Jesus lately?” Make space for a real answer.

Follow Me (Not Just Watch Me)

WEEK 5 | Matthew 4:18–22

BIG IDEA

Jesus does not call spectators. He calls ordinary people to leave what they know and follow Him with their actual lives.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What do Peter, Andrew, James, and John leave behind when Jesus says, "Follow me"?
2. What stands out to you about the immediacy of their response?
3. How does this passage show that following Jesus is more than watching from a distance?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. Where are you tempted to admire Jesus without actually rearranging your life around Him?
2. What feels hardest for you about moving from consuming faith to practicing it?
3. What might Jesus be asking you to loosen your grip on in order to follow Him more closely?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What is one concrete step of obedience Jesus may be inviting you to take this week?
2. How can you move from passively watching to actively participating in the life of the Church?
3. Who could encourage or challenge you to keep following Jesus in everyday life?

IRL PRACTICE

HOSPITALITY

Invite one person into your ordinary life this week—a walk, coffee, dinner, or errand—and make room for real conversation.

Be With Me

WEEK 6 | Mark 3:13–15

BIG IDEA

Before Jesus sends His disciples out, He calls them to be with Him. Presence with Jesus comes before purpose for Jesus.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. According to Mark 3:13–15, what comes before Jesus sends the disciples out?
2. Why does it matter that Jesus appoints them first “to be with him”?
3. What can only be learned through closeness to Jesus rather than mere information about Him?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. When does your relationship with Jesus start feeling like another task to complete?
2. What distractions most often keep you from being present with Jesus?
3. How have you seen busyness crowd out intimacy with God?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What would it look like to build regular time with Jesus into the rhythm of your week?
2. How can our group encourage one another not to outsource our faith?
3. What change would help you prioritize presence before productivity?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Set aside ten undistracted minutes with Jesus each day this week. Read Mark 3:13–15 and simply pray, “Jesus, help me be with You.”

The Church IRL

WEEK 7 | Luke 5:17–26

BIG IDEA

The Church becomes real when people help one another get into the room with Jesus—bringing burdens, believing together, and making space for healing.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What do the friends in Luke 5:17–26 do that the paralyzed man cannot do on his own?
2. Why is it significant that Jesus sees “their faith” before He heals the man?
3. What does this story teach us about the role of embodied community in bringing people to Jesus?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. Where do you most feel the temptation to settle for convenient or distant connection instead of embodied presence?
2. When have others helped carry you toward Jesus in a difficult season?
3. Who in your life may need help getting “into the room” with Jesus right now?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. How can you help remove obstacles that keep someone from showing up in faith?
2. What burden do you need to let others help carry this week?
3. How can our group become more tangible in the way we show up for people?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Share one burden you are carrying and let the group pray specifically for it. Ask, “How can we help get you in the room with Jesus this week?”

Around the Table

WEEK 8 | Luke 7:36–50

BIG IDEA

Jesus forms people at the table—through presence, honesty, grace, and truth. Church is not only rows on Sunday but lives shared around a table.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What happens at the table in Luke 7:36–50, and how does Jesus respond to the woman?
2. How does Jesus reveal both truth and grace in this encounter?
3. What does this story show about tables as places of transformation?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. What keeps you from inviting others into your actual life?
2. How have meals or unhurried conversations shaped your faith or relationships?
3. Who might assume they do not belong at the “table” unless someone makes room for them?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What table, meal, or ordinary moment could you open up this week for deeper connection?
2. How can our group make conversations around the table more spiritually meaningful?
3. What would it look like to treat hospitality as a ministry rather than a performance?

IRL PRACTICE

HOSPITALITY

Plan one simple meal, dessert, or coffee this week and use it as space for spiritual conversation. Ask, “Where have you seen God at work lately?”

In the Dark

WEEK 9 | Psalm 42; 1 Corinthians 13:13

BIG IDEA

The Church is a place where dark corners can be named honestly because the light of Christ is near. Real faith makes room for honesty, hope, and love.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What emotions and tensions do you hear in Psalm 42?
2. How does the psalmist speak honestly to God without giving up hope?
3. How does 1 Corinthians 13:13 reframe what remains most essential in the midst of darkness?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. What parts of your life or faith are easiest to keep hidden?
2. Do you tend to hide the dark places or expose them without wisdom? Why?
3. How is Jesus inviting you to bring something hidden into the light with trust?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What is one honest prayer you need to speak to God this week?
2. How can our group become safer for truth-telling without becoming a place of judgment?
3. Who might need patient love and hopeful presence from you right now?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Pray Psalm 42 aloud sometime this week. Journal one honest sentence to God about what feels dark, and one sentence of hope in Christ.

When It's Inconvenient

WEEK 10 | Luke 10:25–37

BIG IDEA

The way of Jesus is not built around convenience. Real life is found as we move toward people in costly, interruptible love.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What do the priest, Levite, and Samaritan each do when they see the wounded man?
2. What costs does the Samaritan willingly bear?
3. How does Jesus redefine the question, "Who is my neighbor?" through this story?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. What kinds of interruptions most frustrate you?
2. Where have comfort or convenience shaped your love for others?
3. When has someone gone out of their way for you in a Christlike way?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. Where could you create margin this week so you can love people more attentively?
2. Who might God be placing in front of you that is easy to overlook?
3. What is one inconvenient act of love you can offer this week?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Leave margin for one interruption this week and ask God to show you your neighbor. If the moment comes, stop and be present.

When I'm Busy

WEEK 11 | Luke 10:38–42

BIG IDEA

Anxious busyness can keep us from the better portion. Jesus calls His people to receive His presence rather than live scattered and distracted.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What is Martha doing, and what does Jesus say is happening beneath the surface?
2. What has Mary chosen, and why does Jesus call it “the good portion”?
3. How does this story expose the spiritual danger of distraction?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. What usually drives your busyness—responsibility, anxiety, control, or something else?
2. How does hurry affect your attentiveness to Jesus and to other people?
3. Where do you most feel scattered or divided right now?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What is one thing you can say no to this week so you can say yes to presence?
2. How can you build a pause into your daily or weekly rhythm?
3. What would choosing the “better portion” look like in your current season?

IRL PRACTICE

HOSPITALITY

Slow one ordinary moment this week—dinner, bedtime, coffee, or a walk—and give unhurried attention to the people in front of you.

Face to Face

WEEK 12 | Matthew 18:15–20

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches His people to move toward conflict directly and lovingly. Real community is not conflict-free; it is committed to reconciliation.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What is the first step Jesus gives when there is sin or conflict between believers?
2. Why is going directly to the person so important in this passage?
3. What does this text show about Jesus' concern for restoration within His people?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. When you are hurt, what is your default response—withdraw, vent, gossip, avoid, or confront?
2. What makes face-to-face conversations feel risky for you?
3. Is there an unresolved relationship where Jesus may be calling you to move toward peace?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What is one conversation you need to stop avoiding?
2. How can you prepare your heart to pursue truth and gentleness at the same time?
3. How can our group model healthier patterns than gossip, triangulation, or avoidance?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Before a hard conversation, pray Matthew 18:15–20. Ask Jesus for courage, humility, and a desire for restoration.

Abide in the Algorithm of Life

WEEK 13 | John 15:1–11

BIG IDEA

Artificial things can imitate life, but only connection to Jesus can nourish it. Joy and fruit grow as we abide in Him.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. Why does Jesus describe Himself as the vine and His followers as branches?
2. What does Jesus say happens when we remain in Him—and when we do not?
3. How do verses 9–11 connect abiding with love, obedience, and joy?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. What are you being fed by most right now?
2. Where are you tempted to look for life, joy, or answers in things that cannot nourish you?
3. How can you tell when a useful tool or habit has become a substitute for abiding in Jesus?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What is one practice that would help you remain in Jesus more intentionally this week?
2. What influence or input may need to be pruned back in your life?
3. How can our group help one another stay connected to the true vine?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Ask someone in your group, “What are you being fed by right now?” Listen for where they need encouragement to abide in Jesus.

Sent, Not Searching

WEEK 14 | Luke 10:1–9

BIG IDEA

Jesus sends His people together. We are not left searching alone for meaning or mission; we are sent by the One who is the answer.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. Why does Jesus send the seventy-two ahead of Him in pairs?
2. What posture of trust and dependence does Jesus call for in this passage?
3. How does this text show that mission is communal, not merely individual?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. When you think about living on mission, what feels exciting and what feels intimidating?
2. Where are you tempted to keep searching for purpose instead of receiving the mission Jesus has already given?
3. Who helps you live more courageously and faithfully in everyday life?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. What is one place or relationship where Jesus may be sending you this week?
2. How can you go together rather than trying to do mission alone?
3. What could our group do to bless someone or someplace in Jesus' name?

IRL PRACTICE

HOSPITALITY

Share a table, front porch, or coffee with someone outside your normal circle and pray for an opportunity to bring peace and encouragement.

New Commandment, Same God

WEEK 15 | John 13:31–35

BIG IDEA

Even when culture shifts, Jesus' command remains the same: love one another as He has loved us. The Church becomes visible through this kind of love.

HEAD

What does the text say?

1. What makes Jesus' commandment "new" in John 13:31–35?
2. How does Jesus define the standard of love His disciples are to show?
3. Why does Jesus connect our love for one another with the world recognizing His disciples?

HEART

What is this forming in us?

1. Where have you seen the love of Jesus embodied by another believer?
2. What gets in the way of loving others as Jesus has loved you?
3. How might our relationships tell the truth—or fail to tell the truth—about Jesus to the world?

HANDS

How will we practice it?

1. Who needs to tangibly experience the love of Christ through you this week?
2. What is one way our group can make the love of Jesus more visible together?
3. What do you want to carry forward from this whole series into the life of your group?

IRL PRACTICE

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Pray each day this week, "Jesus, teach me to love as You have loved me," and look for one concrete way to live that prayer.