

Shine Your Light

group leader's guide

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How to Use This Guide

This four-week discussion guide is ideal for small groups of six to twelve participants. If you are using this guide with a larger group of women, create multiple small groups of six to twelve that can consistently meet together for these discussions.

Each session includes:

- **Pair Up**—A chance for participants to reflect on their week's experiences with a partner.
- **Tune In**—A brief time of prayer focused on tuning in to God's presence.
- **Talk Through**—Small group discussion questions that open the week's themes.
- **Reflect On**—Small group Scripture exploration and discussion.
- **Live By**—A brief time of prayerful corporate Scripture contemplation.
- **Step Out**—A concluding exercise focused on life application.
- **Offer Up**—A closing prayer to wrap up your meeting.
- **Plan On**—Specifics about preparation for next week's meeting.



Good News!

Before the meeting, encourage participants to journey through days 1–7 in *Shine Your Light*. Make sure each participant brings her copy of *Shine Your Light*, journal, and Bible to the meeting.

Pair Up

Direct participants to form pairs and discuss these questions:

- Which experience or activity from *Shine Your Light* days 1–7 stood out to you the most? Why?
- How have you been personally challenged, inspired, or changed in your spiritual journey over the last week? Explain.

Tune In

Gather together and lead the group in a brief time of prayer. Include a short time of silence in the prayer as participants intentionally set aside worries or distracting thoughts in order to focus on God's presence.

Talk Through

As a small group, talk through these questions:

- What image, idea, or phrase first comes to mind for you when you hear the words *good news*? Why?
- How did your study during days 1–7 grow or reinvigorate your understanding of the gospel? Had your sense of the good news become narrow? Had you taken it a bit for granted? Explain.

REFLECT ON

Invite volunteers to read aloud **John 3:16–17** and **1 John 4:8–10**.

- John 3:16 is deeply familiar to many Christians, but in that familiarity we can easily lose our sense of its life-changing truth. Pause to reflect on its message then share: Why is this passage personally meaningful to you? (Prompt participants to refer to day 2 “Internalize.”)
- “God loves you” is another common Christian cliché, yet it is also one of the most profound truths in the entire Bible! What does it *really* mean to say that God is love and that God loves you? How does the biblical view of God’s love contrast with the cliché version?

Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 4:14–22**.

- What personally challenges you about the way Jesus launched his ministry? (Direct participants to consider their reflections from the day 5 “Journal” experience.)
- How does Jesus’ initial gospel proclamation compare to our modern-day renderings of the gospel?
- How does Jesus’ proclamation give shape and form to the love of God (1 John 4:8)? (Prompt participants to share their sketches from day 5 “Create.”)
- As you consider the good news Jesus proclaimed—and the good news that is true and transformative in your own life—what do you most want to thank God for? Why?

Live By

Invite a volunteer to slowly and expressively read aloud **John 3:16** for a brief time of prayerful Scripture meditation together.

Optional: Lead the group in praying this simple prayer aloud in response to Scripture.

Speak to us, Lord, through your Word.
Inspire us, Lord, with your truth.
Change us, Lord, through your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

STEP OUT

Prompt participants to apply this study to their lives by spending regular prayer time in the upcoming week focused on personally embracing the good news with renewed gratitude. Encourage them to use the listing of passages in day 3 “Internalize” to guide their times of prayer, thanksgiving, and praise. Challenge participants to strip away a calloused, over-familiar, old-hat perspective of the gospel and to instead contemplate the truth of God’s love with a fresh—and grateful—perspective.

OFFER UP

Close by praying in unison the words of the old Russian hymn found on day 7 “Journal.”

Plan On

Remind participants to journey through days 8–14 for next week’s meeting. Make sure each participant brings her copy of *Shine Your Light*, journal, and Bible to the meeting.



GOOD-NEWS WORDS

Before the meeting, encourage participants to journey through days 8–14 in *Shine Your Light*. Make sure each participant brings her copy of *Shine Your Light*, journal, and Bible to the meeting.

Pair Up

Direct participants to form pairs and discuss these questions:

- Which experience or activity from *Shine Your Light* days 8–14 stood out to you the most? Why?
- How have you been personally challenged, inspired, or changed in your spiritual journey over the last week? Explain.

Tune In

Gather together and lead the group in a brief time of prayer. Include a short time of silence in the prayer as participants intentionally set aside worries or distracting thoughts in order to focus on God’s presence.

TALK THROUGH

As a small group, talk through these questions:

- *Evangelist* is generally not a good word in our culture. But even in the church *evangelism* can have negative connotations. What “bad” versions of evangelism have you seen or heard about, or what negative experiences have you personally had with evangelism? (Encourage participants to share their sketches from day 11 “Create.”)
- On a more positive note, when did you first hear the gospel? How were good-news words shared with you?

REFLECT ON

Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 15**.

- What deeper truths do Jesus' parables reveal about God? About the lost? About the gospel? Explain. (Prompt participants to refer to their notes from day 12 "Examine.")
- How should our gospel-proclaiming words better reflect these truths? Provide some examples.
- What pitfalls (attitudes, words, etc.) do you think are most important for a Christian to avoid when she is sharing the good news with others? Why?

Invite volunteers to read aloud **John 4:14; 6:48–51; and 8:12**.

- What deep human needs and longings does Jesus satisfy? How do you observe these yearnings in the lives of non-Christians you know? (Direct participants to refer to day 13 "Ponder" and "Journal.")
- How has Jesus been bread, water, and light in your own life? Share examples.
- How could your words about God be a blessing to others in your life? What good-news messages do you sense God may be prompting you to share with a non-Christian in your life? Why?

LIVE BY

Invite a volunteer to slowly and expressively read aloud **John 8:12** for a brief time of prayerful Scripture meditation together.

Optional: Lead the group in praying this simple prayer aloud in response to Scripture.

Speak to us, Lord, through your Word.
Inspire us, Lord, with your truth.
Change us, Lord, through your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

STEP OUT

Prompt participants to form pairs and to confidentially share with each other the names of a few non-Christian whom God has been bringing to their attention during their exploration of *Shine Your Light*. They could be family members, neighbors, coworkers, friends, acquaintances, or even enemies. Encourage participants to focus on just one or a few people as they share with a partner. Challenge pairs to commit to pray for each other during the upcoming weeks, specifically asking that God would empower and guide them as they seek to share the gospel in words and actions with their non-Christian loved ones.

Offer Up

Close by directing pairs to spend focused time in prayer, right now, for the people they've discussed. Direct them to pray that God would draw those people to him and that they would experience the grace, truth, and love of God.

Plan On

Remind participants to journey through days 15–21 for next week's meeting. Make sure each participant brings her copy of *Shine Your Light*, journal, and Bible to the meeting.



Good-News Actions

Before the meeting, encourage participants to journey through days 15–21 in *Shine Your Light*. Make sure each participant brings her copy of *Shine Your Light*, journal, and Bible to the meeting.

Pair Up

Direct participants to form pairs and discuss these questions:

- Which experience or activity from *Shine Your Light* days 15–21 stood out to you the most? Why?
- How have you been personally challenged, inspired, or changed in your spiritual journey over the last week? Explain.

Tune In

Gather together and lead the group in a brief time of prayer. Include a short time of silence in the prayer as participants intentionally set aside worries or distracting thoughts in order to focus on God’s presence.

Talk Through

As a small group, talk through these questions:

- Who comes to mind for you as someone who proclaims the gospel with his or her life? Whose actions and demeanor proclaim the good news? Describe that person.
- What’s your reaction to the saying, “Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words”? How do you see the interplay between words and actions in evangelism? Explain.

REFLECT ON

Invite volunteers to read aloud **Matthew 5:14–16** and **1 Peter 2:12**.

- Your life is a form of evangelism—it’s a ringing proclamation of who you are, what you believe, and who Christ is. Does this inspire you? Encourage you? Intimidate you? Convict you? Explain.
- What do you see as the key characteristics in a Christian’s life that proclaim the gospel? What are some of the essential attitudes, choices, actions, and traits that point others to Christ? Be specific. (Prompt participants to refer to their notes from day 15 “Journal” and day 16 “Examine.”)
- *Shine Your Light* explores several biblical principles that reflecting the gospel in one’s life: service (day 17), justice (day 18), and hospitality (day 19). Which of these avenues of living out the gospel comes most naturally to you? Why?
- Which is the most challenging to you? How do you sense God may be stretching you to grow in that area? Explain.

Invite volunteers to read aloud **Matthew 25:31–40** and **Luke 10:25–37**.

- Scripture challenges us to embrace a radical degree of love—to embody the miraculous love of God in our interactions with others. How do these convicting passages most directly challenge you? What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to consider and change in your own life (choices, mind-set, etc.)? (Prompt participants to refer to day 20 “Examine” and day 21 “Ponder.”)
- Rather than a desire to accomplish or a need to feel good about oneself or church guilt or some other self-serving reason, ultimately, our motivation to embody the good news in our lives ought to be *love*—love for others and love for Christ himself. How do you desire to focus your heart on love? What other motivations do you need to strip away?

Live By

Invite a volunteer to slowly and expressively read aloud **Matthew 5:16** for a brief time of prayerful Scripture meditation together.

Optional: Lead the group in praying this simple prayer aloud in response to Scripture.

Speak to us, Lord, through your Word.
Inspire us, Lord, with your truth.
Change us, Lord, through your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

STEP OUT

As a group, gather around a whiteboard or poster board to brainstorm together specific ways group members can embody the gospel through actions of service, justice, and hospitality. (Take notes, recording several action steps for each of the three categories.) Challenge women to generate ideas from within the context of their everyday lives (family, home, workplace, neighborhood, etc.). Also invite participants to share details about local or church ministries they are involved in. Ask women to each privately commit to take one of the action steps this week.

OFFER UP

Close by leading participants in a silent prayer of repentance, directing them to ask God's forgiveness for ways they've neglected to proclaim the gospel with their actions. Then aloud thank God for his forgiveness and pray for God to inspire and empower each group member in her desire to embody the gospel in the coming week.

PLAN ON

Remind participants to journey through days 22–28 for next week's meeting. Make sure each participant brings her copy of *Shine Your Light*, journal, and Bible to the meeting.



Created to Shine

Before the meeting, encourage participants to journey through days 22–28 in *Shine Your Light*. Make sure each participant brings her copy of *Shine Your Light*, journal, and Bible to the meeting.

Pair Up

Direct participants to form pairs and discuss these questions:

- Which experience or activity from *Shine Your Light* days 22–28 stood out to you the most? Why?
- How have you been personally challenged, inspired, or changed in your spiritual journey over the last week? Explain.

Tune In

Gather together and lead the group in a brief time of prayer. Include a short time of silence in the prayer as participants intentionally set aside worries or distracting thoughts in order to focus on God's presence.

Talk Through

As a small group, talk through these questions:

- In light of all you've read and studied in *Shine Your Light* so far, what most excites or inspires you about evangelism?
- What still intimidates you about evangelism? What fears, worries, or areas of weakness in your life may make you feel anxious or less-than-confident about evangelism? Why?

Reflect On

Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Acts 1:8**.

- How has the Holy Spirit been at work in your life lately, changing and growing you? (As a group, use the questions in day 22 “Worship” to guide your discussion.)
- What’s the difference between depending on the Holy Spirit’s power and leading in evangelism and relying on your own strength or initiative? If you’re able, share examples of either type of experience from your own life. (Direct participants to refer to day 22 “Examine” and “Interact”).
- Throughout this study, how has the Holy Spirit been leading you, especially in terms of evangelism and outreach? What people, situations, or needs has God been drawing your spiritual attention to? (Prompt participants to refer to day 23 “Ponder.”)

Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Matthew 9:35–37**.

- Use this passage to look at your own immediate context. What needs in your community might God be inviting you to see with Christlike compassion? What is the “harvest”? Is it plentiful? Are the workers few? (Prompt participants to refer to day 27 “Ponder.”)
- What is your reaction to seeing yourself as a missionary? What is your mission field? (Direct participant to reflect on and possibly share their notes from day 27 “Journal.”)

Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Philippians 2:12–16**.

- No one is perfect, and no one can do *everything*! God isn’t calling you to do everything in order to proclaim the gospel; he is inviting you to do what he has uniquely gifted you to do in the specific situations he’s placed you. As a group, reflect on Robert Lupton’s quote in day 26 “Create.”
- How do you sense God leading and equipping you to shine the light of the gospel?

Live By

Invite a volunteer to slowly and expressively read aloud **Acts 1:8** for a brief time of prayerful Scripture meditation together.

Optional: Lead the group in praying this simple prayer aloud in response to Scripture.

Speak to us, Lord, through your Word.
Inspire us, Lord, with your truth.
Change us, Lord, through your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

STEP OUT

Prompt participants to apply this study to their lives by committing to do the prayer walk (or drive) described in day 28 “Act” one or more times during the upcoming week.

OFFER UP

Close by leading the entire group through the day 25 “Pray” experience. Read the prayer prompts aloud, allowing time for quiet reflection and individual prayer after each prompt.

Plan On

Remind participants to complete days 29–30 on their own, being sure to highlight the Go Deeper Ideas.

Optional: As a group, zero in on the “Try It Out” ideas in the Go Deeper section. Mobilize participants to form pairs or trios who can learn about and serve in a specific ministry together for a day. Encourage women to debrief their experience afterward, discussing how the experience helped them understand their unique gifts and calling.