

One Gathering Away from Eternal Life | LEADER GUIDE

This week's lesson digs into the idea that we could be one gathering away from choosing to make Jesus our Lord and surrendering our lives to Him. This lesson will dig deeper into what it looks like to publicly confess that faith through baptism and through sharing our stories with others.

The **Small Group Interactive** this week challenges us to think about our own stories of who we were before following Jesus and what has changed in our lives.

Supplies Needed: [“Once I Was” Cards](#)

What you'll do: Spend time filling out the card separately and then have members of your group share what they wrote down about how following Jesus has impacted their lives.

Ice Breaker/ Weekly Check-In:

“Describe a moment when you were doing something you felt like you were made to do. Why did you feel that way?” This question can lead into the point that today's lesson is about an action we were made for: having a relationship with God, symbolizing that commitment to making Jesus our Lord through baptism, and being able to share our stories with others.

Scripture and Discussion Questions:

The flow of this week lesson is:

- It is what Jesus did for us on the cross that “justifies” us.
 - Justification can be a “churchy” word, but it really means that: *God pronounces guilty sinners, who have turned to Jesus Christ and have faith in him, acquitted of all charges and declared morally upright in God's sight; they are forgiven.*
- We live out our faith in what Jesus has done by choosing to be baptized as a symbol of dying to our own selves and following after Jesus.
- We also live out our faith by sharing our stories of what Jesus has done in our lives.
 - Be mindful that you may have people in your Small Group who do not have faith in Jesus yet:
 - Let them know that they are in a safe place to hear about the stories of individuals who have made that decision to follow Jesus.
 - Let those reservations help open up the rest of your group for encouragement and understanding.
 - Make sure that this conversation does not make them leave feeling judged by the group for their current decisions.

Small Group Interactive:

This Small Group Interactive gives space for your group to practice crafting and sharing their story of how they were before and after choosing to follow Jesus. (If doing this online, you can share the link above with your group or just have them grab a blank piece of paper.)

A powerful question to ask that is fitting this week is “Is baptism a part of your story?”

Next Steps:

We have two next steps. First, praying about with whom to share your story and second for the person still examining their relationship with God to spend time in the Bible this week to learn more about Jesus. It might be good to come prepared to Small Group already with a YouVersion Bible plan picked out to read along with someone still searching for answers about what they believe.

Extra Info: Please bring your Making Waves booklets with you to share with anyone who has questions about baptism.

If you (or others in your group) want to learn more about justification, check out [this essay](#).



242 small groups

Week of September 26 | One Gathering Away from Eternal Life

Ice Breaker Question:

Describe a moment when you were doing something you felt like you were made to do. Why did you feel that way?

Weekly Check In

What has God been showing you in your Daily Encounter Time?

This Week's Big Idea: Baptism symbolizes your commitment to enthrone Jesus as the Lord of your life and live like Him.

What do you remember most, or what stuck with you from the weekend's teaching?

Scripture and Discussion Questions:

Galatians 3|23-29

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word "justified"?
2. What are the byproducts of being justified by faith?
3. How does putting on Christ bring unity to people who are different from one another?

Acts 2|36-41

4. What are ways you currently show your faith to others?
5. For those in the group that have been baptized, take a moment to each share your experience and what it was like when God called you to take that step:
 - a. When did you get baptized?
 - b. What led you to make that decision?
6. If you haven't been baptized, what is a reservation you have about getting baptized?

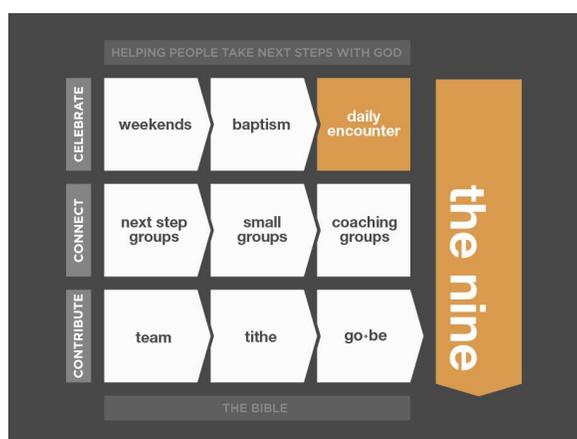
Small Group Interactive: 30 minutes or more

This Small Group interactive is to create space to practice sharing your story of how you've decided to follow Jesus. What things have changed in your life since saying yes to Jesus?

Spend time individually writing on the card how you "once were" on the top portion of the card and how you "are now" on the bottom portion of the card.

Then practice sharing that story! Have volunteers share what they wrote on that card with the rest of the group.

Next Steps:



Daily Encounter: Prayer & Scripture Reading

Commit for the next week, daily prayer over opportunities to share your faith story with someone you know.

If you are considering baptism, spend time in God's Word examining who Jesus is and what he has done for you. Feel free to talk to your small group leader or anyone you trust spiritually about taking that next step.