

Living in the Light: Leaders Guide

The Living in the Light study has been proven to be very effective in helping women deal with sexual brokenness issues in their lives. The study focuses on the heart issues that are at the root of many of our personal struggles. As you think about leading a study there are a few things that will be helpful to know.

How to introduce the study:

There are two ways you can invite someone to the study, personally or in a group setting. When offering the study to an individual or a group you can say something like:

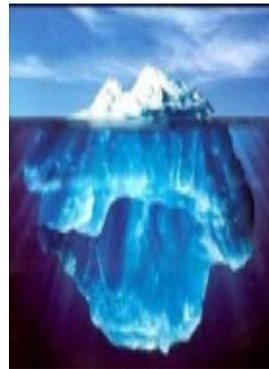
“I have decided to start a women’s group. It will be called Living in the Light (or any other way you would like to identify it). We will have a guided study and have the opportunity to share our stories, bring our sexual struggles into the light and minister to one another.”

“The goals and objectives of the group will be:

- 1) To provide a safe place to gather together and acknowledge struggles in the area of sexual purity and other compulsive behaviors
- 2) To be a Christ-center environment for community and support
- 3) To help us learn more about the underlying spiritual, relational, and psychological issues in our struggles – and to walk the path to freedom
- 4) To equip us to battle sexual temptation and to break the compulsive cycle
- 5) To encourage our capacity for intimacy with God and to learn how to invite Jesus into our painful places**.”

The Iceberg Illustration can be very helpful when introducing the study. It helps for women to understand that we usually only see the tip of all that is going on in our lives. There is so much more below the surface in our deep hearts. The study is designed to help us take a look at the “stuff” in our lives that is “below the water line”. We all have it, and we all struggle with it in one way or another.

Explaining the illustration helps women understand that we all struggle and that we are not alone. It sets the groundwork for establishing a safe environment.



This is just an example of information you would give someone you want to invite to be a member of the study.

** The concept of inviting Jesus into the painful places of our lives should be one of your major themes as you lead the study. Learning to invite Jesus into our painful places is done primarily through listening prayer. There are many good resources available to help you understand listening prayer. If you are not familiar with it you can find information on the Navigator website under Missions/PRT/Listening Prayer.

A basic way to explain it is: when you feel tempted (lonely, angry, like a failure, etc.) simply say “Lord, please help me with this”. It can also be helpful when emotions arise to ask the Lord “what am I really feeling and why am I feeling this way”?

Encourage the women to take the time to ask the questions then listen for the answer.

The ability to invite Jesus into our painful places is something we all need, all of our lives. By helping the women learn how to do this you are equipping them for a lifetime, not just through the course of the study.

Group guidelines:

1. Each group is a “closed” group. The community you develop, and the safe environment would be greatly impacted if new people came and went from the group. After the first week it is not a good idea to add anyone else. If others hear about the group and show an interest you can start another group at that time, or begin another one after you complete the current study.
2. The study is 13 weeks long. It is helpful to have a “get to know you” as the first session.
3. Confidentiality is to be taken very seriously. The participants need to know that they will not be free to share other people’s stories outside the group.
4. The study can be done by people preparing in advance or during the time you gather together. But, they will get much more out of the study if they take the time to do it ahead. Most lessons can be completed in about an hour or so. The one exception will be chapter 12 on Spiritual Warfare.
5. Sharing in very deep and personal ways is part of the study. You, as the leader, should be prepared to share and be vulnerable as well. You may not struggle with the level of sexual brokenness as the women in the study, but, we all struggle.
6. It is helpful to be aware that for most people their sexual struggle is just a symptom. You will often encounter underlying issues such as: physical, emotional or sexual abuse in their past; issues of unforgiveness; lack of awareness of their identity in Christ; anger towards God, to name just a few. If you feel comfortable doing so you can provide assistance to a woman in her area of need. If you feel it is beyond your ability or desire you can encourage the person to seek help from someone more skilled or a professional.

Leading the study:

- Encourage participants to underline and mark what stands out, including adding their own questions.
- During the study go paragraph by paragraph and ask what stands out, also adding your insights and thoughts.

- Read each question and share answers. Do not compel someone to answer if they are not comfortable. If you feel prompted by the Holy Spirit you could ask them about it later in private.
- Women will connect at varying degrees with the study and concepts in the chapters. Do not press them to go deeper than they can at that time. You need to be ok with the pace of the Spirit in each person's life.
- Make sure they have others in their life as “**battle buddies**” who know they are struggling. It is not necessary for them to share every intimate detail of their story with the person. A “battle buddy” can know generally what is going on and still provide support and prayer. The women in the study will need more than just you to turn to for support and prayer when they are tempted.

Chapters 1–3: these chapters are generally fairly easy to lead. The first few weeks the participants will be getting adjusted to the format of sharing their struggles. It may take some women longer than others to be open and vulnerable. Also, some women may connect on what appears to be a superficial level. Do not be discouraged by this. They are being exposed to ideas that will help them someday, if not right now.

Chapter 4: In the list of compulsive behaviors intercourse is not listed. Be sure to include that as you discuss the chapter.

Accountability: This is a good time to emphasize the value of accountability. If the women are interested in accountability you can ask them to write on a card things they want to be accountable for and give it to you the following week. If they share a card with you tell them you can ask them at any time about the behaviors, but the burden is on them to let you know when they fail. They need to be aware that they need to want to change for accountability to be effective.

Chapter 5: The book Who Am I by Jerry Bridges is a good addition to this chapter.

Chapter 6: This chapter can stir some emotional responses from the women. If you have struggled with control issues your story may really help them.

Chapter 7: For question 3 “make a plan” you can give each person a 3x5 card (or encourage them to use a journal) and ask them to come up with a plan for meeting with God. Practicing the presence will look different depending on maturity. We want them to learn how to invite Jesus into painful places, but some will need to start by having a quiet time or grow in their prayer life.

Chapter 8: This chapter may trigger some deep emotion. For some women it might be helpful to meet with them individually after the study. It is very helpful to affirm the value of the grieving process. It is something God has given us so we can deal with painful things in our lives, and then be free to move forward.

Chapter 9: This chapter begins to set the stage for looking at the effects of the family environment. Reassure the women that this is not “parent bashing”. Our parents are broken people just like us and, for the most part, did the best they could. But, we all deal with the effects of the environments we grew up in.

Chapter 10: The women will have different capacities for processing this chapter. Allow them to be just where they are. If they cannot connect with it now they may at a later time. A good book to suggest is The Mom Factor by Townsend and Cloud.

Chapter 11: The idea of their earthly Father forming their view of their heavenly Father may be new information for some women. Give them time to adjust to this concept.

Chapter 12: This chapter was added after the study had been used for a few years, thus the somewhat different format. Below are some helpful hints for facilitating chapter 12:

- make sure the women know they need additional time for this chapter
- the chapter is best covered individually with the women, it can be difficult to get through everyone if you have a large group
- there will be a wide range of responses to the chapter – just be ok with where the woman is – only God knows when she is truly ready to deal with some things
- some of the things covered in this chapter may be beyond what your experience has been or your comfort level. It is most important to cover breaking soul ties and getting rid of items/gifts.
- don't be overly concerned about "my past in the present"– you can explain it like "hanging on to the past"
- help them understand that each question is a three step process: you are asking God the question about your present then listen and writing down what you hear, next you will ask God the question about your past then listen, etc.
- dealing with sexual images will be more of an issue with people who have viewed a lot of pornography

Chapter 13: Some women may realize at this point that they would benefit from doing the study a second time. That is perfectly acceptable and should be encouraged.