

Leader's Note

Thank you for saying "yes" to leading a **Still Waters, Quiet Strength** small group. Whether this is your first time facilitating a Bible study or you have years of experience, I want to assure you that leading a discussion group is probably easier than you think.

Your primary responsibility is **not to teach**—it is to **facilitate**.

A teacher primarily shares information, explains concepts, and provides answers. A facilitator, on the other hand, guides conversation by asking thoughtful questions, encouraging participation, helping the group remain focused, and creating an environment where people can discover biblical truth together. Your role is to help participants engage with God's Word, share their insights, and consider how Scripture applies to their daily lives.

As you guide the discussion, remember that you do not have to know every answer. In fact, some of the richest moments of spiritual growth occur when group members explore Scripture together, learn from one another, and seek God's wisdom as a community. Relax, trust the process, and allow the Holy Spirit to do what only He can do.

One of the greatest gifts you can offer your group is creating an atmosphere where everyone feels welcomed, valued, respected, and safe to participate.

Preparing for Each Session

Because this Bible Study Guide is designed to accompany the **Still Waters, Quiet Strength** devotional, encourage participants to read the daily devotionals that correspond with each week's study before coming to the group meeting. Reading the devotional throughout the week will enrich the discussion and help participants arrive prepared to engage more deeply with God's Word.

Spend time praying for your group before each meeting. Ask God to prepare hearts, guide your discussion, and help each participant experience His presence through His Word.

Suggested Session Structure

Each lesson is designed as a **60-minute discussion**, although I recommend scheduling a **90-minute meeting** whenever possible. The additional time allows conversations to develop naturally without feeling rushed. If you schedule a longer meeting, adjust each section accordingly. However, always honor the amount of time you first announced to participants. People's schedules are important, and respecting their time builds trust and encourages consistent attendance.

Around the Stream (5–10 minutes)

Begin with one opening question from **Around the Stream** to help participants relax, connect, and become comfortable talking with one another before reading the Scripture. You may select the question yourself or invite participants to choose one from the list. Depending on the size of your group and the conversation, this section can be shortened or expanded.

At the Water's Edge (Approximately 40 minutes)

This is the heart of the study.

Select one or two of the featured Scripture passages for the week and guide participants through the **Look Closer**, **Dig Deeper**, and **Living It Out** questions. These questions are designed to help participants understand God's Word, reflect on their own lives, and discover practical ways to apply biblical truth.

Remember, your goal is not to complete every question. Instead, encourage meaningful discussion that allows participants to thoughtfully engage with Scripture.

Beside the Still Waters (Approximately 10 minutes)

Transition from Bible study into community.

Invite participants to share praise reports, prayer requests, and ways they have seen God working throughout the week. Conclude your meeting by praying together as a group.

Your First Meeting

The first gathering sets the tone for the weeks ahead.

Before beginning **Around the Stream**, allow time for participants to introduce themselves and share what they are most looking forward to during the study. This simple "meet and greet" helps people become comfortable with one another and begin building relationships.

Take a few minutes to explain your role as the group's facilitator. Let participants know that your purpose is not to lecture or teach a class but to guide discussion and create opportunities for everyone to participate.

Beginning and Ending Well

Begin each meeting by warmly welcoming everyone.

Invite a volunteer to open the meeting in prayer, or lead the opening prayer yourself. Prayer is an important part of your group's experience but be sensitive to each participant's comfort level. Never call on anyone to pray publicly unless you know they are comfortable doing so. Allow volunteering to remain the norm.

At the conclusion of each meeting, thank everyone for participating, remind them of next week's devotional readings, and let them know you look forward to seeing them at the next meeting.

Group Size

For the richest discussion and meaningful participation, I recommend limiting your group to **10–15 participants**. Groups of this size provide enough diversity of thought while still allowing everyone an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Announcing Your Group

When inviting others to join your study, be sure your announcement includes:

- Your name and contact information
- The day and time your group will meet
- The meeting location and address or the virtual meeting link
- Meeting ID and passcode (if applicable)
- The starting date and expected ending date
- A reminder that participants should have both the **Still Waters, Quiet Strength** devotional and this **Six-Week Bible Study Guide**

Healthy groups begin with shared expectations. During the first meeting, consider getting consensus from the group to adopt the following Group Covenant:

Our Group Covenant

As members of this group, we commit to:

- **Be Present.** We will make our group meetings a priority and communicate with the facilitator if we must be absent or will arrive late.
- **Build One Another Up.** We will encourage one another, pray for one another, and seek to cultivate genuine Christian fellowship.
- **Practice Biblical Reconciliation.** We will avoid gossip and address concerns directly, respectfully, and prayerfully, following the guidance of **Matthew 18:15–17**.
- **Protect Confidentiality.** We will respect the privacy of everyone in the group by keeping personal matters shared during our meetings confidential, except in situations where someone's safety may be at risk.
- **Create a Safe Place.** We will listen with grace, extend compassion, avoid judgment, and remember that our role is to support one another rather than criticize, debate, or offer simple answers to complex life experiences.
- **Practice Quiet Strength.** We will seek to reflect Christ in the way we speak, listen, encourage, and respond to one another, allowing our conversations to be marked by humility, patience, gentleness, and love.

A Final Word of Encouragement

Thank you again for investing your time in the spiritual growth of others. God often uses ordinary people who are willing to create space for His Word to be read, discussed, and lived out. You do not have to be an expert in the room. Simply prepare, pray, listen well, ask thoughtful questions, and trust the Holy Spirit to guide your group.

My prayer is that as participants grow deeper in God's Word, they will also grow closer to one another—and that together they will discover the quiet strength that comes from lives firmly rooted in Christ.

Grace and Peace,

Dr. Paula S. Newman