

INSIDE THE CIRCLE

A 4 part study to begin (or restart!) a group

| Show Up |
| Join In |
| Be Real |

LEADER GUIDE

SERIES OVERVIEW

Inside the Circle is a four-week group launch experience designed to help people move from sitting in rows to sharing life in circles. The big idea is simple: Inside the Circle is where you belong, where faith grows, and where life happens together. Each week builds on the last, creating space for Scripture, story, discussion, and ownership. The goal is to help participants taste authentic community and understand how their presence, voice, and faith make the group stronger.

SERIES OVERVIEW

This guide is meant to be a tool, not a script. Each section you'll find "say something like this" sections to give you a starting point, but you don't have to read them word for word. Let them shape your own voice and flow.

Each week includes:

- **Scripture + Teaching Framework** – a short, focused teaching tied to Jesus and the early church.
- **Discussion Questions** – designed to spark conversation, not complete it. Let people talk. Give space. Follow where the Spirit leads.

Your role isn't to be a teacher with all the answers — it's to be a facilitator who creates an environment where people can connect, share honestly, and grow together. Think of yourself as the one who keeps the circle open, welcoming, and moving forward.

WEEK-BY-WEEK OVERVIEW

Week 1 – Why Circles Matter

Scripture: Acts 2:42–47; Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Theme: God designed us for circles, not rows. Life is better connected. We need people who celebrate with us and carry us through.

Week 2 – Faith Shapers

Scripture: John 13:34–35; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

Theme: God grows our faith through others. Sharing about the people who have shaped us helps us see the body of Christ at work and deepens spiritual connection.

Week 3 – Sharing Our Stories

Scripture: Acts 2 (fellowship and life together); Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Theme: Vulnerability builds community. Each participant shares a snapshot of their story — not the whole biography, just a window into how God has worked in their lives.

Week 4 – Taking Ownership

Scripture: Matthew 7:24–27; John 15:5

Theme: You get out what you put in. Growth happens when we take ownership of our faith outside the circle and take responsibility for contributing inside the circle.

WEEK ONE

Welcome to Week 1 of *Inside the Circle*. Over the next few weeks, we're going to talk about why life is better connected, and why God designed circles like this one to help us grow.

Here's the big idea: *Inside the Circle* is where you belong, where faith grows, and where life happens together. You'll hear me say that a few times, because it's not just a tagline — it's what we see over and over in Scripture.

Like the early church described in *Acts 2:42–47*: 'we see the very first picture of the early church. They didn't just gather in large crowds to listen; they met in homes. They ate together. They prayed together. They shared what they had. They cared for one another's needs. And the text says the Lord kept adding to their number daily. In other words, circles were where the real life-change happened.'

That's the same heart behind what we're doing here. We're not just another group meeting for the sake of filling a calendar. We're stepping into the same rhythm the first Christians lived in — circles of belonging, encouragement, and growth.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 says it this way: *"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: if either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."*

That's real life, isn't it? Every one of us is going to stumble at some point. We're going to hit hard seasons. We're going to face challenges we didn't see coming. The difference is whether or not we've got people in our circle when those moments come. We all need people who will celebrate with us when things go well, and people who will pick us up when things get hard.

That's what this circle is about. Inside the circle, you're not just another face in a crowd — you're known. Inside the circle, your wins are celebrated, your struggles are carried, and your faith has room to grow.

And here's the beautiful thing: nobody here has to be perfect. This isn't about showing up with all the answers. It's about showing up with honesty, and choosing to walk alongside one another.

That's the heartbeat of this series. Over the next four weeks, we're going to keep discovering what God can do *inside the circle*.

LET'S TALK

- 1 What was the best group or team you've ever been a part of? What made it so great?
- 2 Did that group or team help you grow (e.g., physically, mentally, spiritually)? If so, how?
- 3 Take a minute to individually complete the **How You Connect** activity. When you're finished, discuss the following questions as a group.

In order to relax and re-energize...

How did you rank yourself?

How does this play out in your life?

In a group conversation...

How did you rank yourself?

In this group, how can we make sure everyone has the chance to speak?

When processing new ideas...

How did you rank yourself?

In this group, how might this affect you when you are studying something new?

When experiencing emotions...

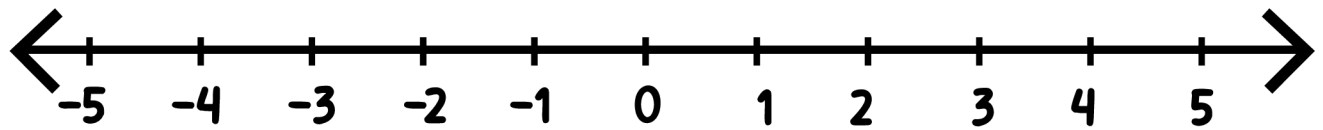
How did you rank yourself?

When you're excited about something, how will the group know?

ACTIVITY: HOW YOU CONNECT

Indidcate where you fall on the scales below. There are no right or wrong answers – just think about your own tendencies when it comes to connecting with others

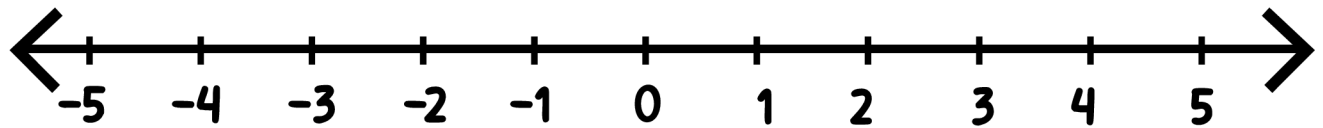
In order to relax and re-energize...



I prefer
to be alone

I prefer to be
around people

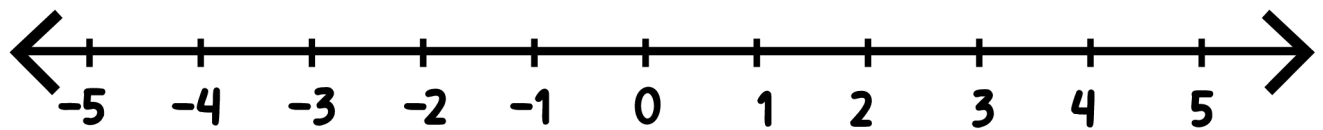
In a group conversation...



I am the last
to speak

I am the
first to speak

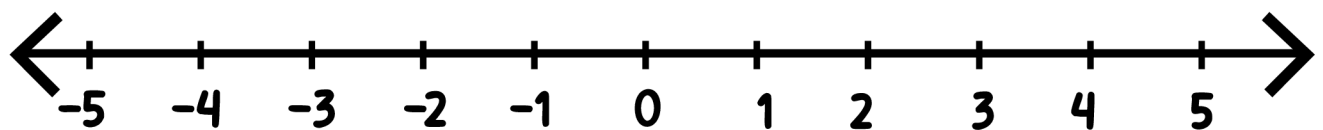
When processing new ideas...



I need time
to process

I process
out loud

When experiencing emotions...



I am reserved

I am expressive

LET'S TALK

4

This would be a great opportunity to cover any final details or logistics regarding your group. Communication plan, meal menus, group roles, etc.

5

Conclude your group meeting with a time of prayer for the week ahead. Be sure to document any prayer requests so you can follow-up later.