

LEADER GUIDE

All Who Draw Near

A 25-Day Journey
to Christmas

LIFEWAY WOMEN

LEADER GUIDE

Welcome! Before you read any further, we want to say how thankful we are for you, the leader. Thank you for taking the lead in helping women grow together in the Word. Bible study groups are where discipleship becomes personal, practical, and powerful. It doesn't happen from a distance; it requires proximity, shared life, and real relationships. Thank you for your willingness to dive into Scripture, brew the coffee, place the chairs, and set aside the time regularly to meet with other women. Your investment is invaluable to the women in your group, your church, and God's kingdom.

All Who Draw Near is a 25-day journey to Christmas, but we've structured it so that you and your group can complete the study together in four weeks. Christmas travel is our theme for this study, with specific focus on the first Christmas travelers who descended upon Bethlehem so many years ago. May their journeys inspire you to freshly behold the wonder and magnitude of Christ's entrance into the world and challenge you to be diligent in your own joyful journey to know, love, and reflect the Savior.

Our goal is for this leader guide to help you feel equipped to facilitate and guide your Bible study group gatherings in a way that fosters genuine community, deep conversation, and transformational learning for you and the women you're leading. Use it however it works best for your group. We are certain God has ordained your time with your specific group in your specific setting, and are grateful for you and praying for you as you lead this study.

Lifeway Women

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

4-Week Study

5 Group Meetings (includes optional meeting)

Meeting Length: 1 hour

OPTIONAL KICK-OFF MEETING—Distribute Bible study books if participants don't have them yet, get to know one another, and discuss the questions found on page 7 of this leader guide.

WEEK ONE—Discuss the Week One personal Bible study using questions found on page 9 of this leader guide.

WEEK TWO—Discuss the Week Two personal Bible study using questions found on page 11 of this leader guide.

WEEK THREE—Discuss the Week Three personal Bible study using questions found on page 13 of this leader guide.

WEEK FOUR—Discuss the Week Four personal Bible study using questions found on page 15 of this leader guide.



HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR GROUP TIME

Each group session contains the following elements. We've included a suggested amount of time based on a one hour group meeting. Adjust as you need to for the time you have together!

GATHER (10 MINUTES) This is a time to greet and welcome everyone and get them talking. In the first session, you're provided with some icebreaker and general discussion questions to help group members get to know each other and introduce the study. In the subsequent sessions, you'll find one or two icebreaker questions that set the tone for the study.

DISCUSS [40 MINUTES] You'll find a suggestion of questions for each week in this Leader Guide. Pick and choose the ones you want to discuss with your group. These questions are designed to help you facilitate conversation around the previous week's Bible study and personal reflection. As you go through your own study during the week, put a star by any questions or statements you might want to discuss with your group.

CLOSE (10 MINUTES) Brief closing activity ideas and/or prayer prompts have been provided. You can use this however you wish to enhance or close the session.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU LEAD.

GET THE WORD OUT. Be sure to advertise the study early and utilize all methods for getting the word out. Post it on your church's website, send emails to potential attendees, and promote it on all forms of social media. It's best to start advertising the study four to six weeks before it begins. Visit lifeway.com/allwhodrawnear for free promotional materials to help get the word out about your study.

SCHEDULE. Be sure to make everyone aware of the schedule ahead of time and start promptly each week to honor everyone's time.

STAY IN TOUCH. Prepare a sign-up sheet with space for names, email addresses, and phone numbers. You may also include information like birthdays, social media handles, and favorite candy so that you can foster community among group members.

GET COZY. Make an effort to create a comfortable environment for group meetings. Arrange chairs in a circle to encourage conversation. If your group is large, you may want to do the **GATHER** and **CLOSE** sections together, but split into smaller groups for the **DISCUSS** time. If you choose to do so, enlist discussion leaders for each group to keep the conversation moving and focused.

CHILDCARE. Be sure to check with participants to see if childcare is needed and organize leaders and space for the children in advance.

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS. Each participant will need a Bible study book. Make sure you leave plenty of time for all the books to be ordered and received between announcing and starting your Bible study. Consider offering a scholarship or buy one-give-one option for those who cannot afford a study book on their own.

EARLY PREP. We encourage you to read through the entire leader guide before the first session and evaluate how this will work best for your group. Highlight specific questions from the leader guide you want to make sure you cover during your group time. Be sure you stay on top of your personal study between each meeting! We've left room in the leader guide for you to write down additional talking points and questions you want to pull in from the personal study.

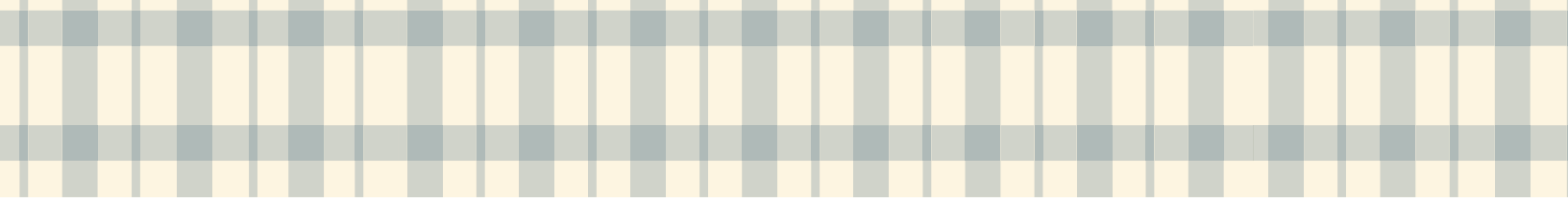
PERSONAL STUDY. Between each meeting, there are six days of personal study to complete in the Bible study book.

PRAYER. Most importantly, be sure to pray for the women who attend the study. And pray for yourself as you prepare to lead. Ask God to draw the women closer to Him as they study the journeys taken by the main characters in the Christmas story—Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men—to discover their shared thread of obedience and faith.

EVALUATE. At the end of each group session, ask yourself: What went well? What could be improved? Did you see women's lives transformed? Did your group grow closer to Christ and to one another? Also, do a final evaluation at the close of the study.

CONNECT. Find ways to interact and stay engaged with each member of your group throughout the study. Make use of social media, email, text messages, and handwritten notes to encourage them. Continue these connections even after the study ends.

Next, we've provided a discussion guide for each session. Remember these are simply suggestions for how to use your time together. We want to empower you as you lead to do what is best for your group!



DISCUSSION GUIDE

OPTIONAL INTRODUCTORY SESSION

GATHER

Welcome women to the introductory session of the *All Who Draw Near* Bible study. Provide name tags and distribute Bible study books if participants don't have them yet.

Meet and greet one another! This will be the main point of today's meeting, so spend as much time getting to know one another as you can. (We highly recommend snacks, coffee, and tea!)

DISCUSS

Here are a few discussion questions and prompts to introduce the study and generate discussion. These will be especially helpful if you're leading a brand-new group.

Are you a fan of traveling? Why or why not? If so, what's your very favorite place you've traveled to? Why is it your favorite?

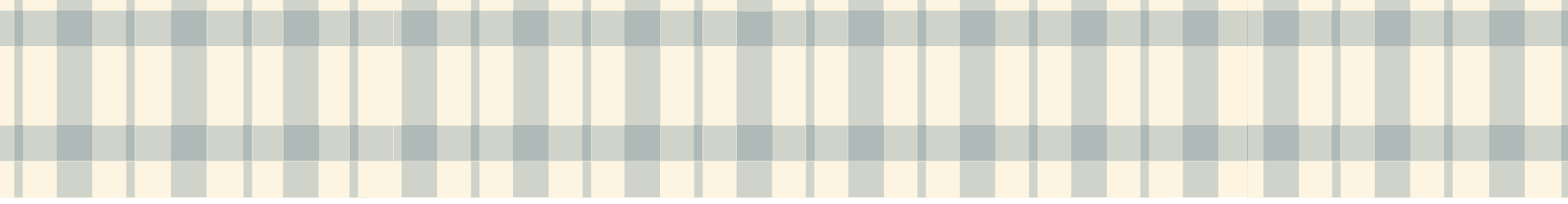
When you were growing up, did your family travel during the Christmas season? If so, how often and where did you go? Is travel part of your Christmas schedule this year? If so, what are your holiday travel plans?

What do you love most about this time of the year and why?

Are you looking forward to this Christmas season? If so, why? If not, what seems to be hindering your joy and anticipation?

Why do you want to be a part of this study and this group? What are you hoping to contribute and receive from this experience?

The title for this study is *All Who Draw Near*. What does that title mean to you? What comes to mind when you hear it?



CLOSE

Provide a few moments for group members to ask questions or share other thoughts about this session.

Take a few minutes to preview the study. Explain that this study has some unique and fun components to enhance their personal study and the group experience.

Walk through the “How to Use” pages (pp. 4–5), and note how the study is formatted. Point out the six days of study and how the first and last days are different from the the rest of the days. Also draw attention to the fun extras provided for each week, along with a closing celebration day. Encourage women to do as much of the personal study as they can. If they are unable to finish all six days of the personal study, they should still plan to attend the group time each week to learn and contribute to the group experience. Brainstorm specific times when they might try to complete their personal study each day.

Remind your group to complete Week One of the Bible study book before your next group gathering.

Close with prayer. Ask God to prepare you for what you’re going to learn and experience in this study. Ask Him to make your heart tender to His voice and teachable and moldable by His truth.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK ONE

JESUS: JOURNEY OF RESCUE

GATHER

Welcome participants to the study. Allow a time of introductions for any newcomers. (If your group didn't gather for the optional introductory week, begin with the questions and information from the optional first meeting. Then ask the following question to get your group talking.)

What are your travel plans for this Christmas?

If you're not traveling, will you be hosting friends or family for the holidays?

Which would you rather do: travel for Christmas or stay at home? Why?

DISCUSS

Encourage discussion by asking some of the following questions, along with any you flagged in the days of personal study.

What was your favorite day of study last week and why?

Review the "Prepare Your Heart" section of the Day 1 Trip Planner (p. 15). Give group members an opportunity to recite their memory verse for the week and discuss their thoughts on the "Questions to Consider."

Read Philippians 2:5-11. In verse 5, Paul said we should adopt the attitude of Christ Jesus. What did Paul mean with this instruction? Is your life currently reflecting Jesus's attitude? Explain.

What is the significance of Jesus coming to be with us and to be like us?

Read John 3:14–18. What comes to mind when you think about God’s heart toward you? Do you imagine Him as angry and annoyed with your sinful failures? Or do you see Him as loving, kind, and merciful? Explain.

How does knowing Jesus will return encourage and challenge you?

What lessons did you learn from Jesus’s journey? How will you apply what you learned to your own spiritual journey?

CLOSE

Provide a few moments for group members to ask questions or share other thoughts about this session, including the Day 6 Rest Stop.

Close your group meeting with a time of prayer. Consider using the prayer prompt found below and on the Group Discussion Guide (p. 48). Lead your group through this prayer or enlist another group member to lead the prayer time.

Prayer: Thank the Lord for leaving heaven behind and coming to be with us, to love us, and be a sacrifice for us. Ask Him to point out where you’ve grown comfortable in your faith walk. Confess what He reveals and ask Him to give you courage and boldness to be on mission for Him as you anticipate His return.

Remind your group to read and complete the Week Two personal Bible study (pp. 46–85) before your next group meeting.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK TWO

MARY AND JOSEPH: JOURNEY OF OBEDIENCE

GATHER

Welcome group members back to your gathering. Use the following question to get your group conversation going:

Most of us have had some kind of travel disaster—missed flight, car trouble, wrong reservations, etc. Share what happened, how you resolved it, and any lessons learned in the process.

DISCUSS

Encourage discussion by asking some of the following questions, along with any you flagged in the days of personal study.

What was your favorite day of study last week and why?

Review the “Prepare Your Heart” section of the Day 7 Trip Planner (p. 53). Give group members an opportunity to recite their memory verse for the week and discuss their thoughts on the “Questions to Consider.”

Read Luke 1:39–45. Why did Mary hurry to see Elizabeth? Should we be in a hurry to obey God? Is urgency critical to obedience? Explain.

How does the story of Jesus’s birth show you God’s sovereignty over worldly and political events? How does that comfort and encourage you?

Read Matthew 2:13–15. How did Joseph respond to God’s instructions? When has God called you to a difficult assignment and how did you respond? Did you wrestle with that decision? Explain. What did you learn from this experience?

Name some ways you’ve seen the Lord go before you and provide for you. How do you see the Lord’s kindness to you as part of His purpose and plan for your life?

What lessons did you learn from Joseph’s and Mary’s journey? How will you apply what you learned to your own spiritual journey?

CLOSE

Provide a few moments for group members to ask questions or share other thoughts about this session, including the Day 12 Rest Stop.

Close your group meeting with a time of prayer. Consider using the prayer prompt found below and on the Group Discussion Guide (p. 88). Lead your group through this prayer or enlist another group member to lead the prayer time.

Prayer: Thank God that He still calls and equips people to serve Him. Submit your life to Him and express your desire to follow where He leads you and go where He sends you. Ask Him for strength to live obediently and faithfully regardless of the assignment, big or small.

Remind your group to read and complete the Week Three personal Bible study (pp. 85–125) before your next group meeting.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK THREE

SHEPHERDS: JOURNEY OF WONDER

GATHER

Welcome participants back to another week of study. Ask the following questions to get your group talking:

What travel destinations are on your bucket list and why?

Which type of travel do you prefer, domestic or international? Why?

DISCUSS

Encourage discussion by asking some of the following questions, along with any you flagged in the days of personal study.

What was your favorite day of study last week and why?

Review the “Prepare Your Heart” section of the Day 13 Trip Planner (p. 93). Give group members an opportunity to recite their memory verse for the week and discuss their thoughts on the “Questions to Consider.”

Read Luke 2:10–12. How did the angel both comfort and guide the shepherds? Who first told you how to find Jesus and what directions did they give you?

Have you ever felt your role in God’s work to be ordinary and insignificant? Explain. Though it may seem mundane, why is what you do for God’s kingdom important and meaningful?

Read Luke 2:15–16. What does the shepherds response to the angel’s words indicate? What does our quickness to obey God’s call indicate about our faith in Him?

How is it that being worshipers and witnesses sums up what God is calling all of us to do and be, regardless of our station in life?

What lessons did you learn from the shepherds' journey? How will you apply what you learned to your own spiritual journey?

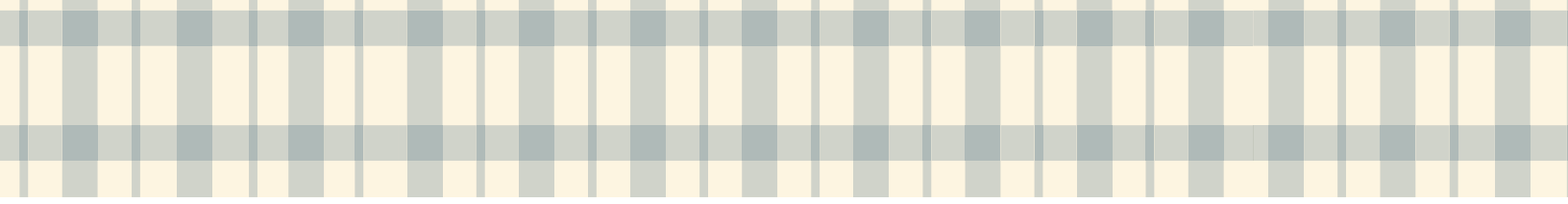
CLOSE

Provide a few moments for group members to ask questions or share other thoughts about this session, including the Day 18 Rest Stop.

Close your group meeting with a time of prayer. Consider using the prayer prompt found below and on the Group Discussion Guide (p. 128). Lead your group through this prayer or enlist another group member to lead the prayer time.

Prayer: Express wonder and praise for God's awesomeness. Thank Him for the ways He reveals Himself to you. Confess any feelings of insignificance to Him and ask Him to help you see all He's doing in and through you. Rest in His love and grace and know you are important to Him and His work in the world.

Remind your group to read and complete the Week Four personal Bible study (pp. 126–156) before your next group meeting.



DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK FOUR

WISE MEN: JOURNEY OF SEEKING

GATHER

Welcome participants to the final group meeting. Ask the following question to get your group talking:

Define the kind of traveler you are on the scale below:

[Need a line scale with the label “Details, details, details,” at one end and the label “Throw caution to the wind!” at the other end.]

Explain why you think your way is best.

DISCUSS

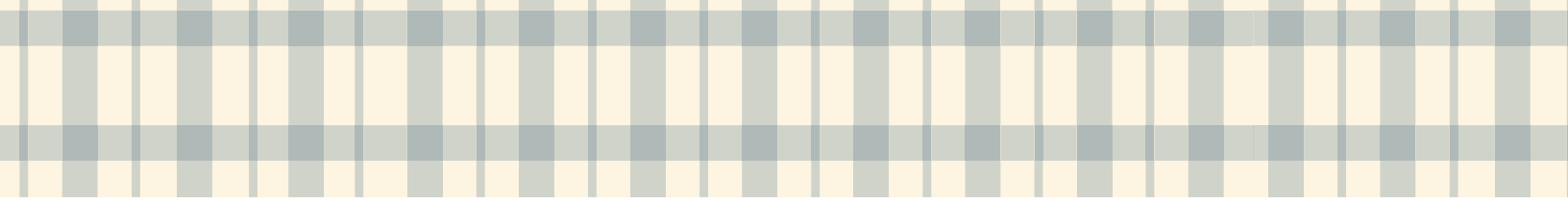
Encourage discussion by asking some of the following questions, along with any you flagged in the days of personal study.

What was your favorite day of study last week and why?

Review the “Prepare Your Heart” section of the Day 19 Trip Planner (p. 133). Give group members an opportunity to recite their memory verse for the week and discuss their thoughts on the “Questions to Consider.”

The wise men journeyed a long time and a long way. Share about your journey with Jesus and explain some of the ups and downs along the way.

Read Matthew 2:1-3. How did Herod respond when he learned the news of a new king being born and why did he respond this way? How do you respond when your “kingdom” is threatened—when your plans go awry, your agenda is interrupted, and you feel out of control?



Read Matthew 2:9–11. How did the wise men express their worship toward Jesus? How were their actions a recipe for proper worship of the Lord?

How does knowing God is sovereign—that He controls all things—bring you comfort? How does it give you courage to trust and obey Him?

What lessons did you learn from the wise men’s journey? How will you apply what you learned to your own spiritual journey?

CLOSE

Provide a few moments for group members to ask questions or share other thoughts about this session, including the Day 24 Rest Stop.

Close your group meeting with a time of prayer. Consider using the prayer prompt found below. Lead your group through this prayer or enlist another group member to lead the prayer time.

Prayer: Thank the Lord for your journey with Him, regardless of the length. Thank Him for the lessons learned along the way and for His constant presence and guidance. Commit to keep walking with Him and toward Him all the rest of your days.

Encourage your group members to do Day 25 Celebration Day, if they’ve not already done so. See the following page for options on how to use Day 25.

A NOTE ABOUT DAY 25: CELEBRATION DAY

Day 25 of this study is created to be a day of celebration and reflection. Here are some options on how to use this day:

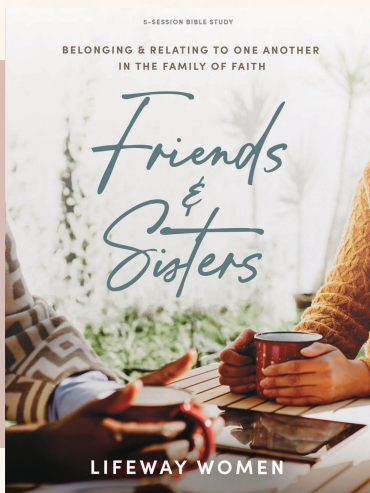
Option 1: Let this be a personal study day for your group members. Just be sure to point it out and encourage them to do it individually.

Option 2: Encourage your group members to do Day 25 before coming to the last group meeting, and discuss it together as you close the study.

Option 3: Do Day 25 together during your last group meeting, or schedule an extra group meeting focused just on this day of celebration and reflection. Consider including some of the snacks, games, and/or crafts featured in this study as part of your closing meeting.

FINISHING WELL

NEXT STEPS Even after the study concludes, follow up and challenge women to stay involved through another Bible study, church opportunity, or anything that will continue their spiritual growth and friendships. Provide several options of ministry opportunities the members can participate in individually or as a group to apply what they have learned through this study.



What's Next?

If you enjoyed this study, check out *Friends and Sisters* by Lifeway Women.

lifeway.com/friendsandsisters



Prepare Him Room

VIRTUAL EVENT

With Melissa Spoelstra

Worship with Lindsay McCaul

Prepare Room for Jesus This Christmas

Join Melissa Spoelstra for the Prepare Him Room Virtual Event, an invitation to intentionally make space to seek Jesus amid the holiday rush.

Throughout this event, you'll be immersed in an atmosphere of worship, encouragement, and teaching that will inspire you to create room in your heart, home, and community for the transformative power of Jesus Christ.



Join individually for \$15 and host at
your church for as low as \$199!

Streaming November 13
- December 31, 2026.

Lifeway Women

Event subject to change without notice.