

LEADER GUIDE

WHITNEY CAPPS

*The
Melody
of
Grace*

Delighting in the Saving,
Sanctifying, & Sustaining
Grace of God

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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.

The Melody of Grace is a video- and discussion-based Bible study from Whitney Capps. The videos were filmed in Social Circle, Georgia.

In this study, Whitney brings her biblical insight, engaging story-telling, and lived experience to help you and your group members better understand, embrace, and extend the goodness of God's grace. We highly encourage women to do the personal study and watch the video teaching sessions. If you don't have time to watch the videos as a group, encourage women to watch them during the week. The videos can also be streamed and listened to, like a podcast. We want to encourage you to use this study however it works best for you and your group.

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. 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

7-WEEK STUDY

7 Group Meetings • Meeting Length: 1–1.5 hours

This schedule accounts for seven weeks of group meetings, completing one session of *The Melody of Grace* per week. With this schedule, groups may choose to watch the videos together or individually, depending on how much time is intended for fellowship and discussion.

WEEK 1—Distribute Bible study books, get to know one another, watch the Session One video, and discuss the questions provided.

WEEK 2—Discuss the Session Two personal Bible study and watch the Session Two video.

WEEK 3—Discuss the Session Three personal Bible study and watch the Session Three video.

WEEK 4—Discuss the Session Four personal Bible study and watch the Session Four video.

WEEK 5—Discuss the Session Five personal Bible study and watch the Session Five video.

WEEK 6—Discuss the Session Six personal Bible study and watch the Session Six video.

WEEK 7—Discuss the Session Seven personal Bible study and watch the Session Seven video.

Schedule Options

If you would like to extend the number of weeks your group meets, here are a couple of options to consider:

ADD IN WEEKS FOR REVIEW. Complete two or three weeks of the Bible study on a normal schedule and then add in a week for review and catch up. This helps to reinforce the content they've learned or gives the learners extra time to complete some of the personal study they've missed. Think of it as including a mid-term exam or small reviews along the way.

BUILD IN WEEKS FOR PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP. This is much like adding in review weeks except the group spends additional time in prayer and an extra activity to help the group to get to know one another better. You might invite women in advance on these weeks to share a testimony or enlist someone to lead in a time of worship.



HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR GROUP TIME

Each group session contains the following elements. We've included a suggested amount of time for each element based on a 1.5 hour group meeting. Adjust the times as needed for your group.

GATHER AND DISCUSS (30 MINUTES). This is a time to greet and welcome everyone and to get them talking. You'll notice a list of questions to help participants review the previous week's personal study. 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. Feel free to adapt, skip, or add questions based on the needs of your group.

WATCH (25 MINUTES). During this time play the teaching video, encouraging the women to take notes on the Viewer Guide page for that specific session.

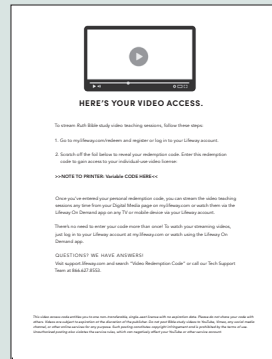
DISCUSS (25 MINUTES). You'll find a list of discussion questions designed to help you facilitate conversation around each teaching video on the Viewer Guide pages in the Bible study book and in this Leader Guide. We encourage you to preview each teaching video, then choose the questions you want to discuss with your group. Feel free to add other discussion questions to the list.

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

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU LEAD.

HOW TO WATCH AND LISTEN TO YOUR VIDEOS. The videos for this study are available for streaming through the digital access code on the last page of your Bible study book. Look for the cardstock page labeled “Here’s Your Video Access” and follow the two steps that prompt you to enter your unique redemption code to gain your video streaming access.

Each video (except for the first one) is intended to be viewed or listened to after completing the accompanying week of personal study. We strongly recommend you use the teaching videos as a part of this study. If you can’t watch the video together, encourage women to watch or listen before they come to the Bible study meeting.



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. The study is seven sessions long, which means you will meet seven times. Visit lifeway.com/melodyofgrace 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. In your group time, you will watch the teaching video together and discuss what you’re learning. You’ll also be encouraged to spend a good bit of time in prayer.

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 watch the teaching video together and then split into smaller groups for the discussion 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. We recommend watching the teaching video sessions prior to your meeting, taking note of anything you may want to discuss from the teaching. And be sure you stay on top of your own 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 five days of personal study to complete in the Bible study book. Because this study builds on itself from week to week, it's important for participants to complete each week of personal study. If needed, consider stretching out your study to additional weeks in order for everyone to have time to complete all the personal study.

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 learn more about their identity and purpose in Him.

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.



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Session One

Introduction

GATHER: Welcome participants to the study and distribute Bible study books to each group member. Encourage discussion using the following prompts and questions:

Invite each woman to introduce herself and share basic get-to-know-you information.

Icebreaker: What is the best gift you've received and what makes it the best?

WATCH: Play the video for Session One. Note: The Session 1 video is different from the teaching videos in Sessions 2–7. It tells the story of Whitney's cancer journey through several interviews with family, friends, medical personnel, and Whitney herself. It's not technically a teaching video, but it will lead to meaningful discussion in your group. (See **NOTE TO LEADER** below.)

DISCUSS the video teaching, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

How would you define grace?

Why did you choose to do this study and what do you hope to learn from it?

What stood out to you from the Session One video?

How do you see God's grace at work in Whitney's experience with cancer?

What stood out to you about Whitney's story?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:10. How has God's grace met you in your story?

What is your most pressing question about grace?

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

Take time to do a quick walk through the Bible study book. Share about the weekly structure and the five days of personal study to complete in each week. Encourage women to do what they can. If they are unable to finish all five days of the personal study, they can still learn and contribute to the group time each week. Brainstorm specific times when they might try to complete their personal study each day.

Set the commitment and time expectations you have for your group, and take the opportunity to cover any important housekeeping notes. Remind your group to complete Session Two of the Bible study book before your next group gathering.

Close with prayer. Ask how the group can be praying for one another over the coming week, and then pray together.

NOTE TO LEADER: Whitney's story is a moving testimony that might lead to deeper discussion and some challenging questions concerning suffering, God's will, death and dying, and so forth. In fact, the discussion might be more than time allows or you feel equipped to lead. If this is the case, consider scheduling a bonus session to address issues that arise. Ask your church leadership for help in leading the session and for a list of trusted Christian counselors women could be referred to if they need to process similar themes in their own lives.



Session Two

The God of Grace

GATHER: Welcome participants back to the study. Allow a time of introductions for any newcomers. Use the following questions to get your group talking and to review the personal Bible study from Session Two.

Icebreaker: Who is someone you know or have met that seems larger than life? What is it that makes that person so unforgettable, impressive, or extraordinary?

What was your favorite day of study and why?

How is the parable of the prodigal son a revealing picture of the grace of God?

Read Genesis 3:15,21-24. How do we see God extending grace in these verses?

How are you currently enjoying God's grace in His promises and provision?

Read Exodus 34:5-7. How does God describe Himself in this passages and how have you experienced these characteristics of God?

Close this part of the session by allowing group members to share some of their answers to the questions found in Grace in Review on page 34.

WATCH: Play the teaching video for Session Two. Encourage group members to take notes on the Session Two Video Viewer guide (p. 36).

DISCUSS the video teaching, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

What stood out to you in the Session 2 teaching and why?

Read Exodus 3:1-4. What does it mean to be looking and listening for the activity of God? Do you do that well? Explain.

Do you view interruptions as annoyances or as invitations? Explain.

Read Exodus 3:5-6. How did Moses respond to God in this moment? What causes us to get too comfortable with God at times? How does that distort our view of Him? How does that hinder our relationship with Him?

Why do we sometimes treat God's grace as transactional, where receiving His grace is based on whether God is pleased with me or I do what's right? How is this a distorted view of grace?

Whitney said "Grace isn't a thing we look for. Grace is a Person we pursue." What does that mean and do you agree? Explain.

How did this video teaching help you better understand, receive, or extend grace?

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

Close with a popcorn-type prayer, encouraging group members to voice aloud praise or thanks to God for being a God of grace.



Session Three

Grace that Saves

GATHER: Welcome participants back to the study. Use the following questions to get your group talking and to review the personal Bible study from Session Three.

Icebreaker: What's your favorite movie or book in which the hero saves the day? Why are those stories so appealing to us?

What was your favorite day of study and why?

How would you define the gospel and why is it important to have a solid grasp on what the gospel is all about?

Read Titus 3:4-7. How is every member of the Trinity involved in the plan of salvation? What does this plan say about the character and love of God?

Read Psalm 145:9. What is common grace and what does God's expression of common grace say about His character?

How does saving grace differ from common grace?

Close this part of the session by allowing group members to share some of their answers to the questions found in *Grace in Review* on page 60.

WATCH: Play the teaching video for Session Thre. Encourage group members to take notes on the Session Three Video Viewer guide (p. 62).

DISCUSS the video teaching, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

What stood out to you in the Session 3 teaching and why?

Have you had moments when you struggled with assurance of your salvation? Why did you struggle and how did you settle the doubts?

Read 1 John 5:1. What is the doctrinal test and how does it help you know whether your salvation is secure?

Why is it spiritually dangerous to say Jesus plus something is the gospel or Jesus minus something is the gospel? How do we stay within the guardrails of orthodox doctrine?

Read 1 John 5:2. What is the relational test and how does it help you know whether your salvation is secure?

When you think of sacrificially loving God and loving one another, what does that look like?

Read 1 John 5:4. What is the perseverance test and how does it help you know whether your salvation is secure?

How did this video teaching help you better understand, receive, or extend grace?

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

Extend a clear invitation for any group member who is not a Christian, or has doubts about her salvation to talk with you or a another trusted Christian friend about this vitally important decision. Close with prayer.



Session Four

Grace that Sanctifies

GATHER: Welcome participants back to the study. Use the following questions to get your group talking and to review the personal Bible study from Session Four.

Icebreaker: What was a life lesson you learned from the “school of hard knocks”?

What was your favorite day of study and why?

Summarize Paul’s discussion of sanctification in Romans 6.

Read John 8:1-11. How does this story show the expectation that comes with grace?

What does it mean to grow in grace?

How have you experienced grace in the Lord’s discipline?

Close this part of the session by allowing group members to share some of their answers to the questions found in Grace in Review on page 84.

WATCH: Play the teaching video for Session Four. Encourage group members to take notes on the Session Four Video Viewer guide (p. 86).

DISCUSS the video teaching, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

What stood out to you in the Session 4 teaching and why?

Whitney stated that her life had become gospel adjacent rather than gospel centered. What did she mean by that? Would you say your life is currently more gospel adjacent or gospel centered? Explain.

How would you define regeneration, justification, and sanctification? How does Titus 3:3-8 speak to all three? How is sanctification different than the other two?

Why does God want a deader version of you rather than better version of you?

What does it mean to live in the balance of regeneration, justification, and sanctification? And what happens if we lean too much to one of these experiences?

What's the difference in lamenting sin and repenting of sin? What's the danger of only lamenting sin?

Read 1 John 1:9. Why is confessing and repenting of specific sins better than confessing and repenting of general sins?

How did this video teaching help you better understand, receive, or extend grace?

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

Divide your larger group into smaller groups of three or four women. Direct them to briefly discuss together their sanctification journeys and how they can pray for one another as each one grows to be more like Jesus. Encourage one person in each group to close their group time in prayer.



Session Five

Grace that Sustains

GATHER: Welcome participants back to the study. Use the following questions to get your group talking and to review the personal Bible study from Session Five.

Icebreaker: Besides Jesus, who's your favorite Bible character and why?

What was your favorite day of study and why?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16. Where do you see God's sustaining grace in this passage of Scripture? How have you experienced it personally?

What did you learn about grace that sustains from Joseph's and Job's stories? Do you relate to their stories? If so, how?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:6-10. How was Paul able to boast about and take pleasure in his weaknesses and difficulties? Are you able to make the same testimony? Explain.

Ephesians 1:20-23 says that everything is subjected under the feet of Christ and that He has authority over everything. How is that truth a measure of sustaining grace for us?

Close this part of the session by allowing group members to share some of their answers to the questions found in Grace in Review on page 112.

WATCH: Play the teaching video for Session Five. Encourage group members to take notes on the Session Five Video Viewer guide (p. 114).

DISCUSS the video teaching, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

What stood out to you in the Session 5 teaching and why?

What does it mean to compare pain? Why do we do it and why is it unhelpful? What attitude should we take instead?

Read Romans 8:5-6. Why is our mindset so important during times of suffering? How do we submit our minds to the Spirit and allow Him to move the focus of our eyes off our present circumstances onto God?

Why does it seem that God shapes us the most is during seasons of suffering and pain? What is it about those times of trials that makes us pliable in His hands?

Read Romans 8:28-30. How has God shaped you through your times of suffering and difficulties? How do you look more like Jesus through those experiences?

The passage in Romans 8 is so encouraging and comforting and shows clearly the sustaining grace of God. Which verses or verses mean the most to you in this chapter and why?

How did this video teaching help you better understand, receive, or extend grace?

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

Invite any group members going through a current struggle or difficulty to briefly share what they are experiencing. Close your time by circling around those who share and ask for volunteers to pray for them.



Session Six

Grace for One Another

GATHER: Welcome participants back to the study. Use the following questions to get your group talking and to review the personal Bible study from Session Six.

Icebreaker: If you had to survive for six months on a deserted island, what three people would you want with you and why?

What was your favorite day of study and why?

Read John 13:34-35. How does Jesus say we are to love one another? Who's the best example of showing this kind of love in your church? How are you doing at showing this kind of love?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9. What applications did you take from this text and how are you going to put them into practice?

Where are you seeing grace displayed in your church through people using their spiritual gifts? How are you spiritually gifted and how are you using your giftedness to serve in your church?

What was your overall impression with the "one another" list on Day 5? Which of these do you think you best exemplify?

Close this part of the session by allowing group members to share some of their answers to the questions found in Grace in Review on page 140.

WATCH: Play the teaching video for Session Six. Encourage group members to take notes on the Session Six Video Viewer guide (p. 142).

DISCUSS the video teaching, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

What stood out to you in the Session 6 teaching and why?

Why is it we are sometimes most reluctant to show grace to the people we're closest to? How have you experienced that in the body of Christ?

In today's teaching, Whitney said Zechariah asked for certainty and Mary asked for clarity. What's the difference and why was Zechariah rebuked and disciplined, but Mary was answered with an explanation?

Read Luke 1:30-38. How was the news of Elizabeth's pregnancy a measure of grace to Mary?

Read Luke 1:39-45. How did Elizabeth extend grace to Mary and how have people in your faith community extended grace to you?

Whitney stated, "Biblical community reframes our hardest stories to see the glorious story God is writing." What does that mean and how do you see God's grace in this experience?

How can sharing your story of what you've walked through and how the Lord has worked in your life be an extension of grace to someone? Name a time someone did that for you.

How did this video teaching help you better understand, receive, or extend grace?

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

Instruct group members to think of people in the church who have extended an extraordinary measure of grace to them. Encourage them to reach out to those people through a call or hand-written letter to express their gratefulness. Close with a few moments of quiet and lead your group to thank God for their community of faith.



Session Seven

Grace for the World

GATHER: Welcome participants back to the study. Use the following questions to get your group talking and to review the personal Bible study from Session Seven.

Icebreaker: What was the most difficult assignment or project you had to complete when you were in school and why?

What was your favorite day of study and why?

Once the list of “enemies” was expanded to those you find difficult to love, people groups you look down on, and so forth, was the Luke 6:27-36 passage more applicable? Explain.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? What is our assignment as His ambassadors and what are your joys and difficulties in carrying it out?

Read Colossians 4:2-6. What does it mean for our speech to be gracious, seasoned with salt? Why is what we say and how we say it so critical in extending grace to the world?

How are you shining the light of Christ in your neighborhood?
How is your church shining Christ’s light in your community?

Close this part of the session by allowing group members to share some of their answers to the questions found in Grace in Review on page 165. (Don’t discuss the questions that follow the Grace in Review section. You’ll work through those to close the session.)

WATCH: Play the teaching video for Session Seven. Encourage group members to take notes on the Session Seven Video Viewer guide (p. 170).

DISCUSS the video teaching, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

What stood out to you in the Session 7 teaching and why?

Read John 4:1-7. We are to be grace givers to the world. What does your world look like? Who are the people in your sphere of influence outside the church? How are you currently extending grace to them?

Why is it so important that we be people of grace toward those who don't know Jesus?

Read John 4:25-26. How do you see Jesus extending grace to the Samaritan woman throughout this story?

How does the way Jesus interacted with the Samaritan woman provide a great example of how we are to reach out with the gospel to those who don't know Him?

Whitney stated, "May we never be the kind of women that lost women don't want to have anything to do with." Have you ever been that kind of woman? Explain. What can you do to be a woman of grace that cultivates relationship with women needing Jesus?

How did this video teaching help you better understand, receive, or extend grace?

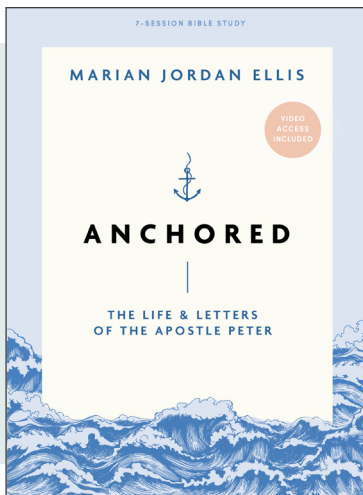
CLOSE: Provide a few moments for group members to ask questions or share other thoughts about this session.

Following the Grace in Review section on page 166, you'll find several questions to help you and your group review the whole study. Choose to discuss any or all of these to close your study of *The Melody of Grace*. After the discussion, provide time for prayer, allowing group members to voice prayers of thanksgiving for what they've learned and experienced in this study.

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.

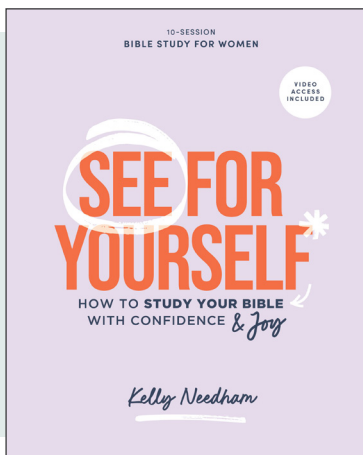
What's Next?



ANCHORED BY MARIAN JORDAN ELLIS

If you enjoyed this study, check out
Anchored by Marian Jordan Ellis.

lifeway.com/anchored



SEE FOR YOURSELF BY KELLY NEEDHAM

If you enjoyed this study, also check out
See for Yourself by Kelly Needham.

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INTRODUCING BIBLE STUDIES with VIDEO ACCESS INCLUDED!

As trends in media consumption change from DVDs to streaming video, Lifeway made the decision to invest in technology that would allow for Bible studies to be accessed through mobile devices and smart TVs in addition to our website.

The concept of a Bible study book with video access allows us to use the technology to give all participants easier access to teaching videos. This will alleviate a concern we have heard from many group leaders of members who stop coming to their group after they miss a week of study.

How will customers access the videos that come with their Bible study book with video access?

There is a unique access code printed in each Bible study book. They will access their video content at my.lifeway.com or through the Lifeway On Demand app.

How long will they have access to the videos that come with their Bible study book?

There is no expiration date on the video access that comes with their Bible study book. They'll be able to access it as long as it is available through our Lifeway On Demand video apps.

What if participants want to listen to instead of watch the videos?

Want to listen on the go? Play your video through the Lifeway On Demand app, lock your screen, and enjoy the audio teaching like a podcast.

What are the benefits of video access being included in each Bible study book?

- This provides more flexibility for group meeting time. Groups now have the option to have group members watch video sessions outside of group meetings to allow more time for discussion.
- If a group member misses a weekly group meeting due to sickness or travel, they will be able to access the video content on their own and continue in their study.
- Group members can re-watch video sessions that were particularly impactful on their own time.
- This simplifies what a group leader needs to facilitate Bible study. You'll now get everything you need with just the Bible study book.
- Our goal is to provide an affordable option for both individuals and churches who are looking for Bible study options.

What do churches and individuals need to lead a group?

Each group member will need a Bible study book, which will include video access. There is also a DVD option for groups who want a non-streaming viewing option. In addition, select studies provide a Video Streaming - Group option for groups who choose not to use the Bible study books. For the best experience, we recommend each group member have a Bible study book.

When do group leaders need a DVD Set?

Because the Bible study book includes video streaming access, the purchase of the DVD set is optional (not essential) for group leaders. This option is for groups who may not have reliable streaming internet access.