



starting  
point

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**NEW LEADER  
ORIENTATION**



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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from: The Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV).

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# WELCOME TO STARTING POINT NEW LEADER ORIENTATION! THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO LEAD.

You, the leaders, are the most important component of the Starting Point environment. Since Starting Point is designed to be a series of conversations, it's essential to have leaders who are comfortable facilitating discussions.

Group members are free to ask questions and have frank and open discussions about faith. That's radically different from Sunday school or most other small groups. It takes some getting used to. Starting Point New Leader Orientation (NLO) is designed to help you lead well in a dynamic environment.

## A TYPICAL NLO GROUP SESSION

### **Social** (10 minutes)

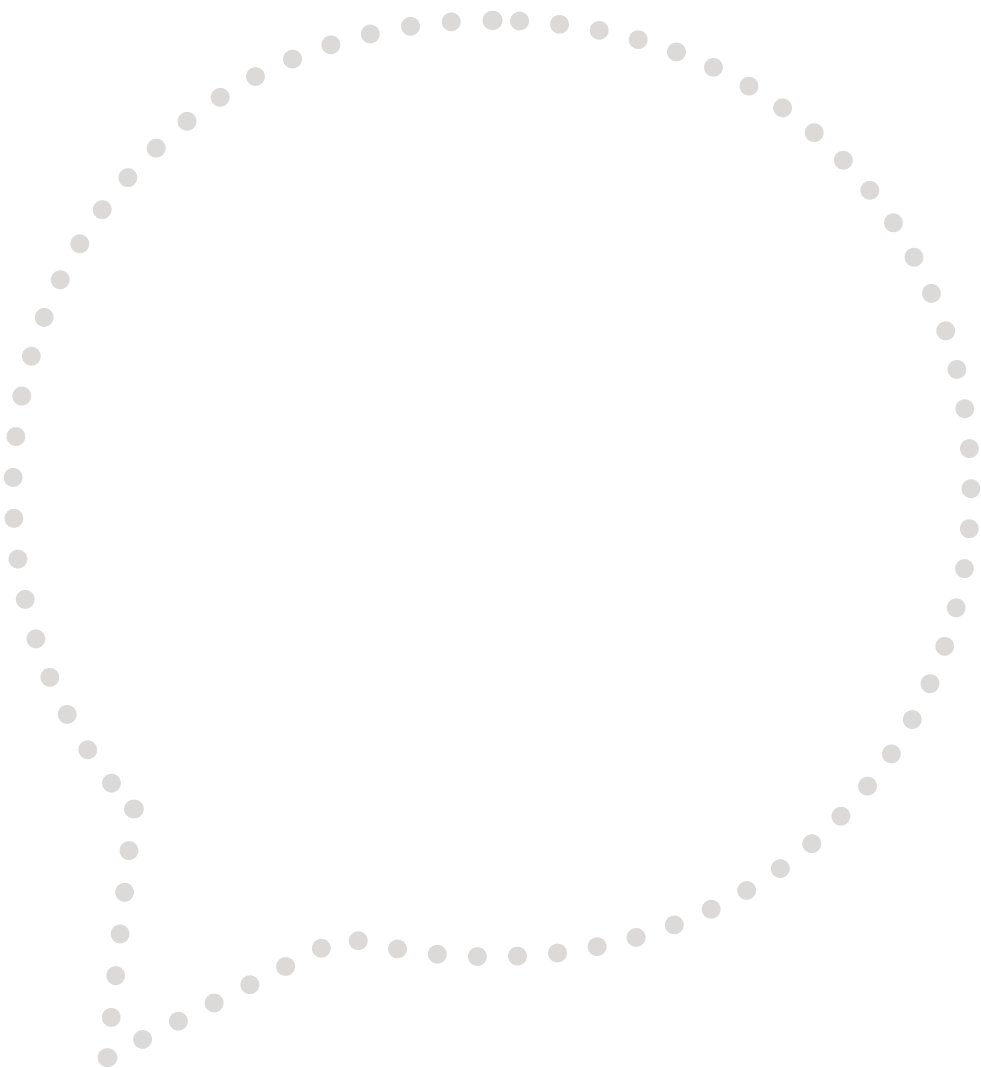
Unstructured time when you connect relationally and talk about what's going on in your lives

### **Study and Discussion** (60 minutes)

Conversation time based on the discussion questions and scenarios in this guide

### **Prayer** (5 minutes)

Time to pray for your leadership and the people who will join your Starting Point groups



# SESSION 1

## WHAT IS STARTING POINT?

### ICEBREAKER

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#### What are Story Cards?

Story Cards are a way to get people talking. You'll be surprised by how photos help people begin an easy, interesting conversation.

#### If you have Story Cards...

1. Spread out the cards so they're visible to everyone.
2. Ask each person to pick a card that describes their response to this question:  
**Which picture best represents your life right now?**
3. Go around the room and have everyone explain why they picked the card they did.

#### If you don't have Story Cards...

Do any of the following words or phrases describe how you're feeling about leading a Starting Point group?

- ☐ Excited
- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Nervous
- ☐ Unprepared
- ☐ "Can't wait!"
- ☐ "Do I have what it takes?"
- ☐ "What am I getting myself into?"
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

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## 1 Discuss.

What does the word “evangelism” mean to you? How have you experienced it in the past?

## 2 Watch.

The *Five Faith Thresholds* video (6 minutes)

[startingpoint.com/materials/leaders/nlo-1](http://startingpoint.com/materials/leaders/nlo-1)

## 3 Discuss the video.

What was your initial reaction?

## 4 Discuss Scripture.

**Read these Scripture passages and discuss the question that follows each.**

1 Corinthians 3:5-7

*What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.*

**What does this passage reveal to us about our role in Starting Point?**

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

*Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*

**What do you think it would look like to “become all things to all people” as a Starting Point leader?**

# WHAT IS STARTING POINT?

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## 1 Read as a group.

Starting Point exists because we believe that people want to have conversations about faith. Unfortunately, they don't view the church as a safe place to ask their questions about God, Jesus, or the Bible.

Starting Point aims to change that by creating a conversational environment where people can explore faith and experience community.

### **When we use the phrase *explore faith*...**

We mean allowing people to ask questions and voice their doubts, free from pressure and judgment. Starting Point is not a class or presentation; it's a conversation.

### **When we use the phrase *experience community*...**

We mean showing curiosity about and care for others, regardless of their viewpoints. Relationships marked by that kind of genuine acceptance can be transformative.

Starting Point is different from what most Christians think of when they hear the word "evangelism."

.....  
: Evangelism is not a task to complete. It's much messier than  
: that. It is a journey. Our job as leaders is to be guides and fellow  
: journeymen, rather than the ones with all the answers.  
: .....

## 2 Discuss.

Based on the *Five Faith Thresholds*, where do you think the people in your Starting Point groups might be on their journeys to faith?

### **The Five Faith Thresholds:**

1. Trusting a Christian
2. Becoming Curious
3. Being Open to Change
4. Seeking After God
5. Entering a Relationship with God

## 3 Wrap up.

Thinking about everything we've covered, what is one of the most important things you can do as a Starting Point leader?

# PRAY AS A GROUP.

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Spend the last few minutes of your meeting praying for your leadership and for the people who will be in your Starting Point groups.

# BEFORE NEXT SESSION (OPTIONAL)

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Watch *The Moral Circle* video (3 minutes).  
[startingpoint.com/materials/leaders/nlo-1](http://startingpoint.com/materials/leaders/nlo-1)



# SESSION 2

## WHAT MAKES A GREAT LEADER?

### WHAT'S THE RIGHT POSTURE?

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#### 1 Read as a group.

It's a common misconception that group leaders have (or should have) all of the right answers. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We've found the most effective Starting Point leaders have the right **posture**.

They are:

- **Humble** – They understand they are on a journey; they're not experts sharing their wisdom.
- **Teachable** – They actively pursue growth and invite feedback from others.
- **Curious** – They enjoy getting to know and care for other people.
- **Intentional** – They view every interaction as a chance to help someone take a step in their faith journey.

#### 2 Discuss the questions.

How does the encouragement to have the right *posture*—not the right answers—change your feelings about being a Starting Point leader?

Which one of those four qualities would your loved ones say comes most naturally to you?

Which do you think you might need to work on as a Starting Point leader?

### 3 Discuss Scripture.

**Read these Scripture passages and discuss the question that follows each.**

**Luke 10:25–26**

*On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

*“What is written in the Law?” [Jesus] replied. “How do you read it?”*

**If you were asked the same question Jesus was asked (which might happen in your Starting Point groups), how would you respond? How did Jesus respond?**

**Luke 20:1–8**

*One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things,” they said. “Who gave you this authority?”*

*He replied, “I will also ask you a question. Tell me: John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?”*

*They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.”*

*So they answered, “We don’t know where it was from.”*

*Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”*

**Jesus did not provide an answer to the men’s question. What do you think he gained by responding in this way?**

### 4 Discuss the scenarios.

These scenarios are designed to give you a sense of some of the tensions you’ll navigate as a Starting Point leader. Discuss how you might respond, keeping in mind what we’ve talked about so far.

#### **Scenario 1**

During the fourth meeting, you ask if anyone has a prayer request to share before closing in prayer. A group member responds, “What’s the point? God doesn’t really care about our issues anyway. He has bigger things on his mind than our requests.”

#### **Scenario 2**

A member in your group loves science and says if you can’t prove it, it can’t be true. He wants to know why you believe.

#### **Scenario 3**

You notice some group members are completing their homework while others come to group unprepared.

# PRAY AS A GROUP.

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Spend the last few minutes of your meeting praying for your leadership and for the people who will be in your Starting Point groups.

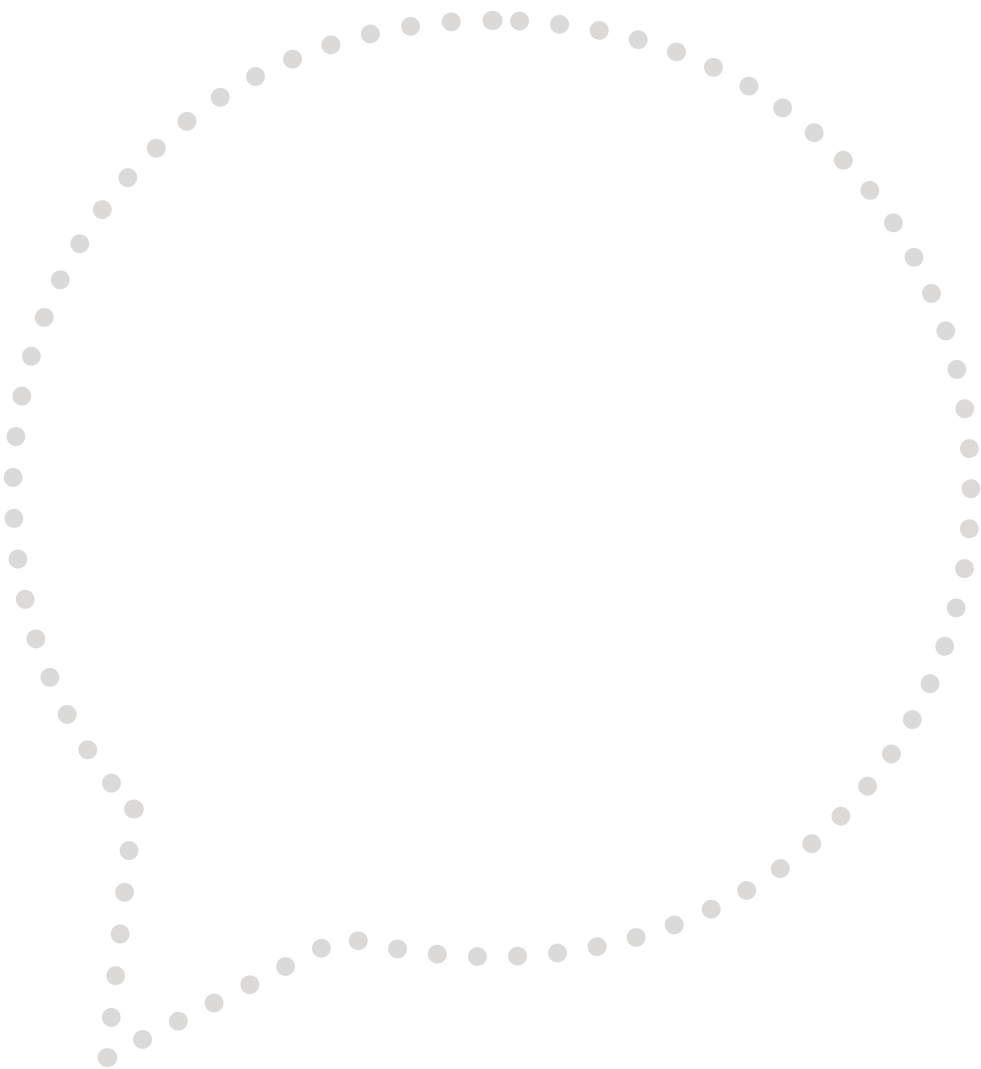
## BEFORE NEXT SESSION (OPTIONAL)

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Grab a copy of the *Starting Point Conversation Guide* and spend some time exploring it.

Here's a great way to do that:

1. Review Session 2 (“Problem”) in the *Starting Point Conversation Guide*. Note the flow of the session and think about how you could work through the content in your Starting Point group meetings.
2. Visit [spleaders.com](https://spleaders.com) to find the Weekly Leader Guides. Click on “2/Problem” and read the additional information available to you as a leader.





# SESSION 3

## CONTENT AND LOGISTICS

## EXPLORE THE MATERIALS.

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### 1 Review the book.

As a group, spend a few minutes flipping through the *Starting Point Conversation Guide* and discussing the following questions:

- Did anything stand out to you?
- Was anything confusing?
- Each session includes three sets of questions for reflection as well as three sections to read. That's a lot to cover! How will you work through this content in your Starting Point group meetings? (For example: Will you discuss all of the questions or choose only your favorites?)

### 2 Review the Weekly Leader Guides.

We want you to feel equipped as leaders, so we've gathered helpful resources in one spot to make it quick and easy to get ready for each group meeting.

Visit [spleaders.com](https://spleaders.com) (on your own or as a group) and click on "2/Problem" to browse the additional information. For each of the eight sessions, you'll find:

- A brief video overview
- Weekly Leader Guide (PDF)
- Weekly wins and bottom lines

### 3 Explore the Starting Point member resources.

Starting Point group members will have the option to access additional videos and content for each Starting Point session at [spmembers.com](https://spmembers.com). It may be helpful for you to see what

your group members will have available to them.

- Visit [spmembers.com](https://spmembers.com).
- Click on “2/Problem.”
- Browse the content.

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## Discuss the scenarios.

Discuss how you might respond in light of all you’ve learned in this training.

### Scenario 1

During a group meeting, a member informs the entire group she’s had a spiritual experience with God. She believes there are many ways to God and insists Christianity is narrow-minded.

### Scenario 2

After the second meeting, one of the group members stays behind to talk privately with you. He tells you he’s gay, but he isn’t ready to let the group know because he’s not sure if he’ll be allowed to stay.

### Scenario 3

A couple comes to the first meeting together. You notice the man is not interested in joining the conversation. The following week, the woman emails you and asks you to try and get her husband to participate.

## PRAY AS A GROUP.

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Spend the last few minutes of your meeting praying for your leadership and for the people who will be in your Starting Point groups.

## ONCE YOU’RE LEADING A GROUP...

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We’ve created a document with a recap of everything we’ve covered in this training. Before you begin leading your first Starting Point group—or if you ever need a refresher between groups—take a look at these reminders and best practices.

To access this tool, visit [splleaders.com](https://splleaders.com) and click “Introduction to Leadership” in the first paragraph.

