

Leader's Guide

This section is to give those who are leading a Bible study group more insight into the purpose and planning of each lesson. These studies can stand alone, so if a person in your group misses a class, they will not be discouraged from returning to the group. As a leader you should decide if the lessons should be done prior to each class. Those attending will get more out of the lesson if they do them ahead of time, but the lessons can be done right in the class and still cover the whole lesson. Everything for the Bible study that was printed in the Leadership Link is reproducible, so feel free to copy the lessons and distribute them as needed.

Suggestions for leading your small group:

- Keep the group to 10-12 so there will be time for discussion.
- As the leader you need only facilitate, no lecture is necessary. After asking a question, be sure to allow ample time for people to think and respond. Do not fear quiet. If no one answers the question try to clarify it by restating it.
- Try to keep things positive, even if a person gives a wrong answer.
- Have extra Bibles in case someone forgot theirs or doesn't have one.
- Stay on the topic and try to keep the group from getting side-tracked into other areas.
- Be sensitive and listen carefully as others discuss issues. Affirm whenever possible. This will encourage others to participate.
- Don't allow one person to monopolize the whole discussion - ask for answers from other members if that happens.
- Set firm guidelines that all sharing within the group remains confidential.
- Keep to your allotted time for the study, particularly if childcare is involved.
- Don't worry if you are asked a question that you can't answer. Simply tell them you don't know and that you will try to find an answer.
- Summarize at the end and close in prayer.

This year's study is called *The Fragrance of Christ*. The lessons examine twelve of Christ's transforming character qualities. An explanation follows to help you understand how to lead your group through the different parts of the study.

The **introductory comments and scriptures** of each lesson are self explanatory. They can be read in class by letting different women read out loud in order to encourage participation. In the beginning of each study a little story about a different fragrance is told. You could use this section as an ice breaker and suggestions of how to do that are given for each lesson.

Scripture's Role Model highlights a woman in the Bible who showcases that week's attribute. For most of the lessons the Bible study is then a more in depth study using that woman to highlight the character trait, however, a couple lessons use another scripture passage for the study.

The **Bible Study** scripture passage should be read aloud in class. There are 3-4 questions in each study and answers to the questions are provided. Sometimes reading the passage in another translation may help to make it easier to understand. This study frequently directs women to examine their emotions and feelings. This is done because the sooner we become aware of our need (body, soul, or spirit) the sooner we can realize what it is that Christ can and will do for us. Jesus wants to meet us at the point of our needs so we can become more like Him.

"Reach In" is meant to help women examine their hearts and move them to a response. These are designed to be discussed in class so women can encourage each other with ways the Lord is working in their lives. Sometimes the answers may be very personal so be sensitive to those who may not want to share during that time.

"Reach Up" is designed for a short prayer time and to give an opportunity to develop prayer partners. If you feel the women in your group would like to pair off as prayer partners perhaps they could choose their own. Again, be sensitive to women who choose not to pray out loud and allow groups to be more than two where needed.

"Reach Out" is meant to foster mentoring in simple ways. Each lesson has an assignment given which suggests including someone else in it. Encourage the women to stretch themselves to do this exercise. You may need to gently nudge some to follow through on this section. Some of the exercises involve a follow-up time during the next session, so be sure to allow time for sharing from this section.

Leader's Guide - Lesson One – The Fragrance of Delightful Surrender

The focus of this lesson is to explore how important obedience to God's will is by living according to God's Word.
Surrender = Obedience.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the introductory paragraph of the lesson out loud with the group, then ask the women to name some fragrances that come with an expensive price tag.

Examples: an expensive car, a pricey perfume, the new house smell, Starbucks coffee, etc.

To start the study time: (this is to help women begin participating in small ways)

- Ask for the women for words that are the opposite of surrender.
Examples: rebellion, self centeredness, disobedience, etc.
- Then ask for words that have a similar meaning to surrender.
Examples: submission, yielding, abandonment, giving way, obedience, etc.

Bible Study Answers: Remember some questions may have more than one correct answer. Be open to others' thoughts and impressions as long as they are scriptural and not personal opinion only. The answers given below are not exhaustive, but rather given as possible answers.

1. Shocked, fearful, maybe wanted to run away or pretend it didn't happen, troubled
2. "Fear not" - "you have found favor with God" and "you are highly favored"
No doubt Mary was fearful and perhaps it even showed on her face. The angel knew that Mary would face many emotions with the news he gave her so he addressed her emotions, which served to calm Mary's heart. The angel told her to not be afraid – he pinpointed her fear in order to help her. He told her that she had "found favor with God." That statement would be the highest compliment any human could receive and could have given Mary confidence to walk forward with surrender to God's plan for the birth of the Messiah.
3. a) Worried about what Joseph, her parents, her family, her friends and her community would say about her and how she would be treated as the news spread.
b) Perplexed as to how she would become pregnant and wondered how she would handle a very unexpected pregnancy.
c) Apprehensive as to how she will cope with the mission given to her.
4. Luke 1:38 – "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Her final resolve was surrender to God's will.

Leader's Guide - Lesson Two – The Fragrance of Forgiveness

The focus of this lesson is to help women realize the freedom and peace of mind they will experience when they practice the act of forgiveness.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the first paragraph of the lesson aloud then ask the women to name fragrances of cleaning products they like.

Examples: their dish detergent, floor cleaner, window cleaner, furniture polish, etc.

To start the study time:

- Ask for words that are the opposite of forgiveness.
Examples: accusation, blame, censure, charge, punishment, sentence
- Then ask for words that have a similar meaning to forgiveness.
Examples: pardon, end of blame, clemency, grace, remission, relieve

Bible Study Answers:

1. The perfume represented her past and her tears represented her present. Using the perfume to anoint Jesus' feet showed her change of heart to leave her sordid past and her tears showed remorse for her sins. The perfume also showed her level of commitment to Christ because it was a costly sacrifice. She could have sold the perfume for a large sum of money, but rather chose to lavish it on Jesus.
2. He was putting the focus on the woman, her state of forgiveness and her willingness to forsake her sins. He wanted to make the Pharisee aware of his need to ask forgiveness of his sins as well.
3. Jesus commended the woman for her hospitality and her love of Him. She went far beyond the normal forms of showing hospitality to a guest in the way she washed his feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair and anointed them with perfume. Her actions said her heart had been changed by Jesus and she wanted to leave her sinful past behind.
4. Allow the group to discuss situations they have faced, but be careful not to use names or to talk about people. Remind the women confidentiality is required. This question is not intended to allow for gossip, but rather to face themselves with real life situations where they need to practice forgiveness and give genuine love.

Leader's Guide - Lesson Three – The Fragrance of Contentment

The focus of this lesson is to explore how important being content with where we find ourselves (body, soul, mind and spirit) is and being content with who we are in Christ.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the introductory paragraph and have women describe what fragrance they think their home has. Examples: a cleaning product, food aroma, air freshener, coffee, paint, a candle, etc.

To start the study time:

- Ask the women to give words that are the opposite of contentment.
Examples: discontent, displeasure, dissatisfaction, misery, sadness, unhappiness
- Ask the women to give words that have a similar meaning to contentment.
Examples: gratification, peace, peace of mind, pleasure, satisfaction

Bible Study Answers:

1. a) Being able to give Zechariah a child, someone to carry on his name
b) Knowing that the Lord had answered her life long prayer to be a mother
c) Knowing that the Lord had chosen her to be involved in the Messiah's coming
2. Zechariah was startled and gripped with fear.
3. Zechariah showed discontent with the answer the angel gave him (verse 18). He questioned the angel asking, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." If he had been content with what the angel told him he would not have questioned the plan of the Lord. The purpose in this question is to alert women not to doubt things the Lord has asked them to do. Sometimes we throw excuses back at the Lord of why we think His plan won't work and in this verse we see that we should not do that.
4. Verse 25, "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days He has shown His favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

Leader's Guide – Lesson Four – The Fragrance of Holiness

The focus of this lesson, as we look at the attribute of Christ's holiness, is to realize that the closer we live to the center of God's will and God's Word, the deeper we will grow in His holiness.

Fragrance ice breaker: Ask the women to share what their favorite kind of cologne or perfume is.

To start the study time:

- Ask the women to give words that are the opposite of holiness.
Examples: sin, unholiness, wickedness, agnosticism, atheism
- Ask the women to give words that have a similar meaning to holiness.
Examples: blessedness, consecration, divineness, Godliness

Bible Study Answers:

1. Jesus' holiness uncovered that the woman was living an immoral lifestyle. Holiness lived out in Jesus was shown through His desire to spotlight the sin in the woman's life and move her to a point of repentance.
2. The woman at the well wanted to experience what Jesus offered. His holiness drew her to God.
3. They believed that Jesus was the Savior of the world.

Leader's Guide – Lesson Five – The Fragrance of Humility

The focus of this lesson is to show that humbleness puts us in a position where we will say “no” to self and “yes” to God and His will for our lives.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the introductory paragraph and ask the women what fragrances they find to be overpowering or unpleasant.

Examples: someone wearing too much perfume, skunk, weeds, sulfur, strong candle, gasoline, car fumes

To start the study time:

- Ask the women to share words that mean the opposite of humility.
Examples: arrogance, assertiveness, egotism, pretentiousness, pride, self-importance
- Ask the women to share words that have a similar meaning to humility.
Examples: lowliness, meekness, submissiveness, unobtrusiveness, unpretentiousness, selfless

Bible Study Answers:

1. Esther was being asked to plead the case of sparing the Jews' lives to King Xerxes (Ahasuerus, Hebrew translation, alternate name used in some Bibles).
2. Esther asked Mordecai and all Jews in Susa to not eat or drink for 3 days and she did the same. Fasting was generally done when the Jews were praying and seeking God's guidance and blessing.
3. Esther feared that she would be killed if she entered the king's presence without him inviting her to do so.
4. “And if I perish, I perish.” Her words showed her humility by laying aside ALL that was to be hers – a life of glamour, leisure, honor and power. She gave up the possibility of all that to be of service to her own people, the Jews, and saved them from annihilation. She was willing to lay her life down for this cause, showing complete humility.

Leader's Guide – Lesson Six – The Fragrance of Jesus' Words

The focus of this lesson is to show how important our words are. Jesus' words were purpose-filled as well as God-filled. Our words expose what's in our heart. If our hearts are right with the Lord, our words will be encouraging, uplifting and Spirit-filled. Negative, destructive words have no place in the life of a believer.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the introductory paragraph and ask the women if they have a "signature scent" and when they started wearing it. If they don't have one perhaps they could name someone they know who does.

Examples: "My signature scent is Estee Lauder and I started wearing it in college when my fiancé gave it to me for our first Christmas together." "My neighbor's signature scent is Cashmere Mist and she started wearing it when a clerk gave her a sample of it at the mall."

To start the study time:

- Ask the women to share words that are the opposite of wholesome talk.
Examples: gossip, hearsay, rumor, scuttlebutt, destructive words, being catty
- Ask the women to share words that have a similar meaning to wholesome talk.
Examples: good news, encouragement, uplifting words, truth

Bible Study Answers:

1. Mary got ready – meaning she probably took care of what she needed to at home and packed her belongings to go to Elizabeth's home. She traveled to Judea in the hill country where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived.
2. She greeted Mary with wonderful words of welcome and affirmation of her pregnancy.
3. The baby in Elizabeth's womb jumped when Mary's voice was heard and then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. God's presence was with them both.
4. Elizabeth confirmed her knowledge of Mary's baby being the Messiah which must have greatly encouraged Mary to keep going in her path of obedience to be the Mother of the Savior of the whole world. Elizabeth didn't doubt God's plan for Mary, but rather confirmed it and fostered belief in Mary's heart by her words.
5. Verse 42 – in the way she greeted Mary -- it says she talked in a loud voice – which showed that she was excited, joyful and blessed Mary with uplifting and comforting words – Verse 58 says her neighbors heard about the favor shown to her by God and that they shared in her joy of the birth of a baby, even at her advanced age!

Leader's Guide – Lesson Seven – The Fragrance of Prayer

The focus of this lesson is to look at the importance of prayer and how Christ used it in His life. We will learn that prayer should be a lifestyle for the Christian woman and not a tag-on at the beginning or the end of a day or at meals.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the introductory paragraph and ask the women to share what kind of air freshener they use at home and why they chose it.

To start the study time:

- Ask for words that are the opposite of prayer, praying, prayerful
Examples: worry, fret, deny God's help, self-dependent
- Then ask for words that have a similar meaning to prayer, praying, prayerful
Examples: appeal, ask, beseech, commune with, cry for, entreat, implore, invoke, petition, request

Bible Study Answers: This study is not from the **Scripture's Role Model**; rather it is a study of the Lord's Prayer. Feel free to go over the passage in Luke 2:36-37 and discuss Anna, but the major time should be spent on the Lord's Prayer passage.

1. a) Do not pray like the hypocrites because they like to be seen in public praying, getting credit and attention from people for their prayers; rather than being in communion with the Lord alone.
b) Do not pray like the pagans by using lots of words thinking that the Lord would answer their prayers because of the volume of their prayers; rather than for their faith in the Lord to answer their prayers.
2. We are to pray to God as "our Father"; we are to pray in reverence.
3. a) God's kingdom come – not furthering our own agenda
b) God's will be done - not our own will or our own desires
c) We are to ask God for "daily bread", to supply our basic needs – not a "wish list"
d) We are to ask forgiveness for our sins done against God and others
e) We are to trust God to lead and guide us, keeping us from evil
4. We are to forgive others who have sinned against us and then God will forgive us our sins. If we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us.

Leader's Guide – Lesson Eight – The Fragrance of Evangelism

The focus of this lesson is to encourage women to become involved in evangelism and to try to take some of the fear and anxiety out of sharing the Gospel with unbelievers.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the introductory paragraph and ask women to name things they like about new babies.

Examples: their soft skin, their tiny fingers and toes, the sounds they make, the way they smell

To start the study time:

- Ask women to share words that are the opposite of evangelism.
Examples: Not sharing the gospel, keeping good news to yourself, withholding the truth
- Then ask for words that have a similar meaning to evangelism.
Examples: spreading the word, giving out truth, sharing the Gospel

Bible Study Answers:

1. Two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning – usually thought to be angels.
Talk about what "clothes that gleamed like lightning" might have looked like! Let the women be creative with this.
2. a) Why do you look for the living among the dead?
b) He is not here, He is risen. Remember what He told you when He was alive.
c) The Son of Man would be arrested, crucified and raised again.
3. First she was grieving as she went to the tomb to put spices on Jesus' body, next she was amazed that the stone had been rolled away, next she was extremely frightened at the angels, then her emotions transitioned to excitement as she went to tell the good news, finally perhaps frustration at not being believed by the disciples.
4. Mary Magdalene's response to the angels was to believe what was said because it matched what Jesus had told them would happen, which moved her to go and tell others what she had witnessed about Jesus' resurrection.

Leader's Guide – Lesson Nine – The Fragrance of Godly Wisdom

The focus of this lesson is to instill in women's hearts the importance of following God's wisdom and saturating themselves with the Word of God.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the introductory paragraph and ask the women to share their favorite food-fragrance/aroma. Examples: fresh baked bread, sautéed onions, coffee, cookies baking, pot roast, cake, etc.

To start the study:

- Ask for words that are the opposite of wisdom.
Examples: foolishness, ignorance, stupidity
- Then ask for words that have a similar meaning to wisdom.
Examples: discernment, enlightenment, good judgment, intelligence, understanding

Bible Study Answers: Earthly wisdom is actually describing what the world considers as being savvy or worldly.

1. a) Earthly wisdom harbors bitterness, envy and selfish ambition, comes from Satan and is considered unspiritual. The world entices us to think that getting even and looking out for yourself is wise. Of course, we know this is opposite of Godly wisdom.
b) Heavenly wisdom is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy, full of good fruit, impartial and sincere.
2. Earthly wisdom will lead to discord and eventual destruction. Heavenly wisdom will lead to a harvest of righteousness. Women may come up with a variety of reasons centered around these two thoughts.
3. Victory for the upright, shield to the blameless, guards the just, protects the faithful, discretion will protect, understanding will guard, wisdom saves from the ways of the wicked and keeps you from walking in darkness

Leader's Guide – Lesson Ten – The Fragrance of Compassion

The focus of this lesson is to examine Christ's compassion and see how He touched peoples' lives with His love. The love of God is expressed through Christ's compassion.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the introductory paragraph and ask the women to tell what laundry detergent they use and why.

To start the study time:

- Ask for words that mean the opposite of compassion.
Examples: cruelty, harshness, hatred, indifference, meanness, mercilessness
- Then ask for words that are similar in meaning to compassion.
Examples: benevolence, charity, consideration, empathy, grace, kindness, mercy, sympathy, tenderheartedness

Bible Study Answers:

1. Death by stoning
2. "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."
Barclay's commentary on John 8 says, "In Jesus there is the gospel of the second chance. Jesus was always intensely interested, not only in what a person had been, but also in what a person could be. He did not say that what they had done did not matter; broken laws and broken hearts always matter; but Jesus was sure that every man has a future as well as a past. . . . The basic difference between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees was that they wished to condemn; He (Jesus) wished to forgive."
3. She received compassion from Jesus in the form of forgiveness. She received encouragement for a better future. She received a second chance for physical life and for spiritual life. She got a "do-over"!
4. Allow the women to share how they may have reacted -- either like Jesus or like the Pharisees.

Leader's Guide – Lesson Eleven – The Fragrance of a Balanced Life

The focus of the lesson is to show how Jesus lived a balanced life physically, emotionally and spiritually, and desires the same for us as Christians.

Fragrance ice breaker: Read the first two paragraphs of the lesson out loud and then ask the women to talk about things that sometimes get out of balance in their lives.

Examples: over eating, watching too much television, shopping too much, sleeping too much, spending too much time on the computer or phone, etc.

To start the study time:

- Ask for words that are the opposite of balance.
Examples: out of balance, unequal, disproportion, imbalance, instability
- Then ask for words that have a similar meaning to balance.
Examples: equilibrium, evenness, harmony, proportion, symmetry

Bible Study Answers:

1. Let the women be creative with this question. Think of things you might say if you were working in the kitchen to put a nice meal on the table for a crowd of guests and your sister sat in the living room talking with the men!
2. She perhaps thought that Jesus would justify her insistence that Mary help her and validate her own plans for the day. Martha was concerned about the success of her meal, not the success of the fellowship of her sister, her guests or Jesus. Martha perhaps thought Jesus would teach Mary a lesson, but quite the opposite happened in the lesson she was given by the Lord.
3. Martha was worried and upset. Her worry didn't lead her to a solution or resolve; instead it led her to becoming upset and self-centered. Secondly Jesus was trying to point out that things were out of balance by her being inattentive to what was going on around her. Jesus was teaching and Mary had clued into the importance of spiritual food, while Martha was thinking solely of physical food.
4. Allow the women in the group to share how they see themselves, either as a Mary or a Martha.

Leader's Guide – Lesson Twelve – The Fragrance of Investment in Others

The focus of this lesson is to discover how deeply Jesus is invested in the lives of people and to realize how much He loves us all. The women will realize how important it is for them to invest their lives and their love in others.

Fragrance ice breaker: Have the women read the first paragraph and discuss things they bought for someone else (or were bought for them) that may have cost more than they should have spent, but were worth the investment.

Examples: college for kids, a special graduation or birthday gift, an engagement ring, a house, a vacation/trip

To start the study time:

- Ask for words that are the opposite of investment.
Examples: wasting resources, poor spending habits, frivolous purchases
- Then ask for words that have a similar meaning to investment.
Examples: something given, contribution, endowment, vested interests, deeply committed

Bible Study Answers:

1. A famine occurred in Israel and Naomi's husband took their family to Moab to escape starvation. Naomi's husband died while in Moab. Ruth and Orpah, Moabite women, married Naomi's sons and then tragically both sons died. When Naomi heard that the famine was over in Israel she decided to return to her homeland and her two daughters-in-law decided to go with her. It turned out that Orpah turned around and went back to Moab and only Ruth followed her all the way back to Bethlehem, the family's hometown.
2. Ruth made a vow that she would go wherever Naomi went and that her people would be Ruth's people, Naomi's God would be her God and that she would stay with her until death parted them.
3. It meant that she left her home and her own people. It meant that she would be dedicated to Naomi's welfare of helping to care and provide for her.
4. Ruth's commitment to stay with Naomi's family meant that she would become the wife of whoever was next of kin in the family line. It turned out that Boaz was that man and their son Obed was the grandfather of King David. When you read the genealogy listed in Matthew 1, you see that from the vow and commitment of a young woman in Bethlehem the family line of Christ eventually came forth. A simple vow became an avenue of blessing for the whole world.