



CANNONBALL

BREAK THROUGH

LifeGroup Leader Guide



WHITE OAK
Christian Church

BREAKTHROUGH Study Overview

The BREAKTHROUGH LifeGroup study is intended to guide your group members to discover, discuss, and even wrestle with issues of faith, priority and surrender as they relate to living with an “All In” commitment to God.

The study is 5-weeks long and will go along with the BREAKTHROUGH message series presented on Sunday mornings beginning March 3. It’s essential that your group begins the weekly discussions during the week following March 3 and then meet every week during the series.

Everyone has been encouraged to join a LifeGroup for this BREAKTHROUGH study. Thank you for participating! This Leader Guide will help you create a group experience that is both engaging and challenging.

The group’s discussion questions are included in the BREAKTHROUGH Guide that everyone will get on March 3.*

This Leader Guide does NOT have the discussion questions but does have some suggestions for how to lead through the study.

Read it before your first meeting and then use it as a reference as you lead your group each week.

Each week the same “take away” question will frame up the study...

God, what do you want to do in this world through me?

If you have any questions, please contact your Campus Groups Director:

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* Contact your Campus Groups Director for BREAKTHROUGH Guides for people in your group who don’t get one on March 3.

Weekly Group Format



GATHERING

Give your group time to gather and connect informally as they arrive. Refreshments help create a comfortable atmosphere. Encourage your group members to take turns bringing them. This time is important but be careful to not let it go more than 15 minutes.



OPENING

Start your group time with prayer inviting God to guide the discussion and speak into people's hearts. Give people a few minutes to share any insights or questions they had from the section the week before.

Every week's discussion in the BREAKTHROUGH Guide begins with a paragraph introducing the topic.



DISCUSSION

Read the scripture referenced and then follow the questions and prompts to help everyone ponder how it can apply to their lives.



MESSAGE NOTES

There is a Message Notes section in the BREAKTHROUGH Guide for your group members to use every Sunday during the service as notes. Encourage them to spend time reviewing what they wrote down in the BREAKTHROUGH Guide and bring their thoughts to share at the next meeting.



PRAYER

End your group time with prayer focused on responding to the group discussion and the BREAKTHROUGH Question: **God, what do you want to do in this world through me?** A suggested prayer format is in the back of this Leader's Guide.

Tips for Leading Well

The key for helping your group experience this BREAKTHROUGH study in the best way possible, get all your group members involved, and help them connect the discussion to their lives. This is what leads to life change, and that's the goal! Here are a few tips for leading a great discussion with your group.

Get to know each other. Take some time, especially at the start of a new group, to get to know one another. As relationships develop, group members will be more likely to share authentically, which will help your discussion lead to life change. Share a snack, encourage small talk as people arrive, or intentionally linger after the meeting.

Create a safe environment. Trust makes your group a place where genuine community can form. Group members need to be able to trust that the group is a safe place—a place where they can get real and know that they will not be judged. Let everyone know that what's shared in the group should stay in the group.

Ask follow-up questions. Many people default to staying surface level with their answers, so get in the habit of pressing them a bit. Ask questions that follow up on their responses. Here are some examples of good follow-up questions for the short or simple answers that people often give:

- What makes you say that?
- Can you explain a little more what you mean?
- How do you feel about that?
- How do the rest of you feel about that?
- How has that been true for you?
- Has this brought up any questions from anyone?
- How does that affect you as a follower of Jesus?

Make sure the discussion makes a difference. Remind your group every week that the goal is not just to leave a little smarter, but to be moved toward a changed life. Encourage the group to work through the BREAKTHROUGH Message Notes section questions during the week, and to come the next week ready to share any insights they gained.

Affirm everyone who shares. When people share in the group—no matter how much you may disagree, or how theologically incorrect they may be— make sure they feel affirmed about their answer in the moment. Thank them for sharing. Having the courage to share is a big deal, and you'll want to recognize it.

Lead, don't teach. Empower others to discover the truth of Scripture for themselves by asking questions and refraining from lecturing. Allow the Holy Spirit to move in your group members.

Tips for Leading Well

Wait 30 seconds. While it may be tempting to ask a question and then immediately answer it, doing so will create an unsafe environment for sharing, and group members will come to expect your answers. It takes at least 20 seconds for many people to process a question, so allow them time to think. If there's still no answer, rephrase the question and ask it again.

Use sub-grouping. One of the best ways to get every group member engaged is to form smaller discussion groups for some of the questions. In the large group there will inevitably be several members who are not comfortable sharing in front of so many. There will also be those who allow others to answer and discuss rather than entering the conversation themselves. Sub-grouping will help with both issues. Every week, choose a few questions where you ask people to form themselves into smaller groups of 3-5 to discuss them. You'll be amazed how lively the conversation will become! And it's a guarantee that some of your quieter members will talk more than they usually do. When you bring the group back together you can ask the smaller groups to summarize what they discussed, or simply move on to the next question or prayer time.

Be prepared. Spend time looking over the group session before you lead. Identify what truths and challenges you want the group to explore and apply. Choose which questions would work well for sub-grouping. And pray for your group, individually and for their upcoming time together.

Encourage your group to be prepared. Your group's discussion will be much better if the group has read and considered the questions before they come! Invite them to read ahead in their BREAKTHROUGH Guide and even jot some thoughts down in the lines provided so they can bring them to the group.

Pray together. As you look at God's Word together, be sure to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance. When you're finished with your discussion, pray for one another. Praying together not only brings your group members before God, but also allows your group members to care for one another. See the back page of this guide for suggestions for prayer during this Cannonball study.



Leading the Weekly Sessions

This section contains a few notes for using the BREAKTHROUGH LifeGroup material. It won't walk you through the whole session. Instead, it will suggest a few ideas for helping your group get the most from it.

WEEK 1: BE THE LIGHT

After Sunday Morning – this generosity campaign has been launched. **The #1 goal is full engagement.** There are at least three challenges to assess and encourage this in your group.

1. **Those new to Cannonball** are unsure and unconvinced that this is a good idea and may not be convinced this is anything more than a “fund-raising scheme” which causes them to be reserved. Please challenge them to engage in the studies and pray the prayer every day to see what God will share with them over the next 5 weeks.
2. **Those who made a commitment last year** and worked through the “pain” of surrender and redirecting their life or already committed to Cannonball, may feel that they have been there and done that. For some of them it has been hard, and they are stretched to their limit. Please challenge them to consider that because they did such hard work early, now is the opportunity to breakthrough barriers that they were not yet willing to address before whether it is spiritual or financial. They will make forward progress as they can identify those areas and continue the journey by pressing forward.
3. The third challenge is with the group who were nervous about the first commitment but jumped in and then discovered that God was faithful in providing according to their faith. **They are now in a comfortable groove.** Their breakthrough may be a deeper financial commitment to live a surrendered and trusting life.

Overview: We often get concerned about what others may think and how that may impact everything. It is hard to jump in and be the light when we don't know what the consequences may be after our decision. God asks us to trust Him and see how we can impact those around us if we would only be willing to be the light.

General.

This BREAKTHROUGH study is going to be challenging! Let your group know that up front, and that you expect to be challenged right along with them. Acknowledge that everyone is at a different place in their spiritual journey, and in their CANNONBALL experience so you expect that people will be coming from different perspectives. Remind the group you'll be learning from God, and one another, as you discuss the BREAKTHROUGH topics. Be positive

and enthusiastic about what the group is about to experience! There's great potential for real life change in the weeks to come!

This Bible Study will center on the activities of Peter and Paul in the book of Acts. But, the deeper challenge for every group member will be to identify and understand the motivations, challenges, sufferings, and commitments that flowed from Peter and Paul as they obeyed the leading that God provided. What were they thinking? Why did they do what they did? And then... Am I willing to follow Christ in that way?

Questions 1 through 5.

Every week will highlight an episode from the book of Acts. Before you get started, invite people to ask questions if they're unfamiliar with the beginning of the Church. You might want to do a little research before your first meeting to be prepared for that, as well as to provide any introductory material you think would be helpful (whether they ask for it or not).

I recommend the brief overview in Right Now Media of the ***Book of Acts*** in the **Read Scripture Series** by **Tim Mackie**. If you have never joined or never used these materials, this resource has been purchased for everyone at WOCC. Since this is a resource that is used by members of organizations, it requires an electronic invitation. If you have not received an invitation previously, contact Robbon Heibel at rheibel@thewocc.com with the email address you most prefer with the subject line - **Right Now Media Invitation**, and you will receive an email invitation to join the experience. After you join, all the resources listed are at your disposal as a leader.

Question 6.

Give people a few minutes to wrestle personally with this question. Then invite them to share their answers in pairs.

I would encourage you to read out loud the

Application Points...

Read out loud just so everyone is focusing on the same points. Their sharing of both fears they have in being the light and those they can identify who need the light, will be challenging and helpful to discuss as a group.

To conclude the discussion and the group meeting.

Introduce this BREAKTHROUGH question and verbalize it in your final prayer for the group, ***God, what do you want to do in this world through me?*** This will be part of the conclusion of each study the next three weeks.

Leading the Weekly Sessions

WEEK 2: BEYOND THE LOVE

Overview: The Gospel is for everyone. In this study Peter is told to go to a Roman centurion who is way outside his comfort zone in both position and culture. Peter was a Jewish fisherman and this fellow was a Gentile senior soldier who is occupying his land. God was making a point in sending him.

General.

This week explores reasons why we are uncomfortable sharing with others who are different than us. This might generate some difficult conversation. That's ok – this is a key issue that all believers must wrestle with in their life. Be careful that people's emotions are not answered with platitudes or politics but are instead acknowledged as genuine and sometimes difficult.

Question 1.

While the overall conversation might become serious, you can start it out light-hearted! Food and preferences of it and for it are a safe way to introduce the bigger idea of diversity.

Questions 2 and 3.

#2 will expose the group to a wide range of diverse experiences and #3 will bring into focus the struggle of acceptance that is often experienced.

Questions 4 through 6.

These will uncover a willingness to obey crazy calls by God on our lives, those calls for WOCC and how to make a first step to breakthrough in this arena.

Recognize your discussions may raise more questions than answers during this study. Allow the group to feel this tension, even acknowledging it out loud. Remind the group they are in a safe place, and everyone is learning and being prodded toward life change.

Application Points...

Read aloud the application points and give everyone a few minutes to reflect and write their personal ideas and self-assessments.

Encourage people to bring any discomfort or tension into the prayer time and ask for prayer.

Finally, encourage everyone to ask themselves the BREAKTHROUGH question,

God, what do you want to do in this world through me? End the lesson in a time of prayer.

Leading the Weekly Sessions

WEEK 3: TO ALL THE WORLD

Overview: This session challenges group members to think honestly about the “proclaiming” the Word of God importance for us in the USA and the whole world. The Gospel is not just for me, but for all, approximately 8 billion of us, humans on the earth. What does it take in our hearts to own that?

General.

This week the wrestling of the group will be first around the needs of people different than me and then obeying a call or a sending to go to them around the world. Obeying – in general and then caring for them for the right reasons may all be part of the discussion. Our possessions and our homes and familiar things – purchased with money – are sometimes part of the hindrance beyond just flatly obeying a command. Money is always included in our own personal issues. It is not usually part of the discussion.

Questions 2 through 6.

These questions challenge our obedience and willingness to put up with the difficulties of sharing good news with others. Cultural challenges, opposition, and persecution are all potential parts of crossing into other cultures to share the love of God. Let everyone wrestle with this problem and try to lead to clarity and the challenge before us.

Application Points...

Wrestle with true “dedication”. Help everyone get clarity on this.

Giving financially is a clear action that reflects the heart of commitment to sharing the good news with others who give nothing back until they get it

Dedication does not require results. It is done - no matter what.

Finally, encourage everyone to ask themselves the BREAKTHROUGH question,

God, what do you want to do in this world through me? End the lesson in a time of prayer.



Leading the Weekly Sessions

WEEK 4: STAY FAITHFUL

Overview: This session challenges group members continue a commitment with a steady forward progress through good times and especially bad times. That was Paul's example for us all.

Questions 4 through 6.

These are good for sub-grouping. Come back together and compile all the different answers the groups came up with to discuss. Consider using a large piece of paper or white board to capture the answers so people can see the picture of surrender as it comes together.

Everyone's "work" matters in sharing the gospel and noticing that "everyone matters" takes us down a path to see the strength of our group and church. Helping each other along is a recipe for success.

Application Points...

These are essential points to review so ensure you make time for them. Give everyone a few minutes to think, pray and write about these questions. Encourage the group to be honest here; this is a core issue in the life of a Jesus-follower and it's one we all struggle with on our spiritual journey!

Finally, encourage everyone to ask themselves the BREAKTHROUGH question,

God, what do you want to do in this world through me? End the lesson in a time of prayer.

***Remind the group to do the Reflection for Commitment Sunday section on page 44 of the BREAKTHROUGH Guide BEFORE March 31 ***



Leading the Weekly Sessions

WEEK 5: BE BOLD

Overview: This session follows Commitment Sunday. It focuses on helping people process the commitment decision they've made, and find encouragement as the church begins this journey together.

Questions 2 through 7.

All of us must deal with hindrances we may face in fulfilling our calling and our commitments. Help everyone to look ahead to what God might do because of WOCC's faithfulness in the days ahead. Our hopes for the future are a very positive thing!

Application Points...

Read them aloud and let them sink in with discussion about the impact of each point.

This is a wonderful time of gratitude and celebration! Have a prayer of thanksgiving for what God has done in the church and will do in the church and in us in the future.

What's Next for the Group?

This section is NOT included in the BREAKTHROUGH Guide. Please go through this with your group during Week 5 as you consider what's next for you and them.

If the BREAKTHROUGH LifeGroup decides to continue together, or is already an existing group, discuss what comes next for you.

- 1. How will we help each other grow in the areas we discussed during the BREAKTHROUGH study?**
 - Living generously and trusting God for everything
 - Being the light to those around you
 - Finding ways to share God's love in new ways locally and around the world
 - Staying faithful to God even through hard challenges in life
 - Being bold in your faith and finances to join God in His work
- 2. How can we connect to others at White Oak in unity and purpose?**
 - Invite another LifeGroup to hang out with you.
 - Find regular ways your group can serve together in the church and community.
 - Attend Sunday services every week.
 - Intentionally greet people you do not know. Invite them to sit with you on Sundays.
 - Grow your group by inviting people who aren't yet connected to one.
 - Hold each other accountable for demonstrating openness and humility with others in the church.
 - What else can your group think of?

Practical Matters:

- Will there be any changes to our meeting day, time, and location?
- What will happen in the summer?
- How will each group member contribute to the group? What roles can each person take on?
- Do we have ideas for discussion topics? Do we need help with this? Can we dive deeper into one of the BREAKTHROUGH session topics?
- How will we be on God's Mission together?
- What else do we need to think through?

If your BREAKTHROUGH LifeGroup decides to dissolve, find another LifeGroup to join!

Check the Groups listing on www.TheWOCC.com or talk to your Campus Groups Director listed at the beginning of this guide. Make it a priority to share your journey with others!

Group Leaders, please help your group members get connected!



Leading Your Group in Prayer

A vital part of group life is the time spent praying for one another. In our LifeGroups, we want our prayer time to be intentional and God-centered, focused less on what we want and need, and more on the God who responds to our wants and needs.

So, as we begin our BREAKTHROUGH journey together, we'd like to make sure our prayer time is more than just a sharing of requests. Here is the recommended format for prayer for these five weeks. (It's a good format for all your group meetings!)

1. Sub-group for prayer. Mixed LifeGroups should sub-group by gender. Try to limit the groups to no more than 4-5. Consider keeping the same sub-groups for all 5 weeks.
2. Give each person an index card. (You can cut cardstock from the church office to make some for your group if you'd like.)
3. Instruct each person to write their name on the card and then these two things:
 - 1) Something that is pressing on their hearts that they would like others to come alongside them in prayer. Encourage this to be something about themselves or someone close to them.

Instruct them to write only enough details for people to understand the need.

IMPORTANT: Encourage them to focus less on the details of the circumstances and more on how they're asking God to help them **respond** to their situation.

- 2) Something that God has pressed on them during the group's discussion. Hopefully your discussion has raised some questions and thoughts that need further consideration and prayer. Encourage each person to write down one of these issues that the group can pray for them as they connect to God during the week.
4. After everyone has finished their card, let each person share what's on the card with the sub-group. Again, the sharing only needs to be detailed enough so the group knows how to pray.
5. Have the sub-group members trade cards so they have a specific person to pray for during the week. Encourage everyone to connect with the person they're praying for during the week with a text, email, phone call, etc. (The whole sub-group can pray for each other, too.)
6. Make sure the sub-groups have a few minutes to pray together before leaving.
7. Remind the whole group to pray for everyone in the church as we all connect to God during the BREAKTHROUGH journey.

Encourage your group members to talk before and after your meeting time, and to connect during the week to share "life stuff." Lead your group's prayer time to be about seeking God and responding as his followers no matter what life's circumstances might be, rather than about "what's going on with me."