



# START

1

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

### WEEKLY WIN

Get to know your group members and create a safe environment that makes them want to come back the next week.

### BOTTOM LINES

- Faith has a starting point.
- The starting point for the Christian faith is a question: Who is Jesus?
- The Christian faith isn't about what Jesus said before he died. It's about what happened after he died—he rose from the dead.

## BEFORE THE MEETING

Refer to Preparing to Lead notes ahead of time. Do the following:

- Meet with your co-leaders.
- Contact each of your group members by email and phone.
- Prepare the physical environment.

Remember: You may have signed up to lead for eight weeks, but every member of your group has signed up for just one. The goal of the first week is to make the group useful and inviting so they come back the next week.

Use the email template for Week One found at [startingpoint.com/leaders](http://startingpoint.com/leaders)

## START THE CONVERSATION

You'll feel a tension between developing relationships and devoting enough time to the content. Relationships should take priority for Week One. It's important that group members feel safe, heard, and encouraged.

### INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND OTHER FACILITATORS.

Welcome everyone and briefly introduce yourself. Don't go into a lot of detail. You'll have a chance to do that in the Story Card section and later when you share your story with the group.

### GIVE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF STARTING POINT.

#### Podcast and Conversation Guide

Introduce the Starting Point Podcast and the Conversation Guide and explain how they will guide the discussion for the entire Starting Point experience. Group members should know they have freedom to ask questions in the midst of that discussion—even questions that don't fit neatly into one of the themes.

Remind them that listening to the podcast episode and reading the chapter prior to the group meeting make the discussion better. But it's not a requirement. We want them to come even if they are unprepared. Their presence is what matters most.

## STORY CARDS

Start getting to know your group by using Story Cards. When people use an image to describe the answer to a question, they tend to share far more than they would otherwise. Remember: Story Cards offer an introduction to one another. You'll have other opportunities to get to know one another better.

## INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS (ALTERNATIVE TO STORY CARDS)

If you don't have Story Cards, ask a couple of simple get-to-know-you questions. For example:

*What is your name?*

*Tell us about your family.*

*In what area of town do you live?*

*What is your occupation?*

*What is your favorite movie, music, or type of food?*

Choose nonthreatening questions that everyone would feel comfortable answering. If you want to get a sense of where they are on their faith journeys, ask questions like:

*What brought you to Starting Point?*

*If you could ask God one thing, what would it be?*

## DISCUSS SECTION ONE:

# A STARTING POINT

## SECTION WIN

Participants understand that you're excited to have them in the group.

## LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1:** What kind of faith or religion was part of your upbringing, if any?

This question invites the participants to begin sharing the contexts for their personal faith journeys. Listen closely to what they share. Don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions to gain greater insight and clarity, but be careful not to pressure participants who aren't ready to share.

**Question 2:** How would you describe where you currently are with faith (curious about faith, new to faith, returning to faith, or something else)?

This question allows participants to clarify where they see themselves at this point in their explorations of faith. Their answers may shape the way you approach future discussions.

## DISCUSS SECTION TWO: ROOTS OF FAITH

### SECTION WIN

Participants begin to realize that the most important question to ask when exploring Christianity is, “Who is Jesus?”

### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1: What comes to mind when you hear someone talk about “The Bible”?**

This discussion allows participants to express their experiences with and perspectives on the Bible. Participants may be reluctant to share negative experiences or perceptions because they may wonder if it will offend you or other group members. Model the way by sharing from your story, if you can. You don’t want to encourage bashing the Bible, but offer an opportunity to demonstrate how the Starting Point environment is a place where they can share authentically.

**Question 2: What comes to mind when you hear someone talk about Jesus?**

The central question for our adult starting point is “Who is Jesus?” This question allows participants to articulate their current thoughts and feelings about Jesus.

## DISCUSS SECTION THREE: ONLY ONE PERSON

### SECTION WIN

Participants say what they hope to get out of Starting Point, as well as ask any questions they want answered during your time together.

### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

The questions for Section Three are not tied to the content of that section. The questions are designed to provide an opportunity for participants to articulate some of their expectations to the group before the end of the first meeting.

**Question 1: What do you hope to get out of your Starting Point experience?**

This question gives participants a chance to share their expectations for the group. Pay close attention to the answers shared.

### NOTE CARD QUESTION EXERCISE

A great way to end the discussion is to give participants note cards so they can write down any specific questions they hope to have answered during the group. Using anonymous note cards allows them to ask tough questions.

Let the group know this will help you as you facilitate the conversation over the next eight weeks. Make sure to address the questions when it is most appropriate in the conversation.

## WRAP-UP

### REVIEW THE BOTTOM LINES

- Faith has a starting point.
- The starting point for the Christian faith is a question: Who is Jesus?
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## PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read Chapter Two in the Conversation Guide and complete the questions.
- Listen to Episode Two of the Starting Point podcast which can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or [startingpoint.com/podcast](http://startingpoint.com/podcast).

## SOCIAL PLANNING

Make plans for the first social gathering:

- Let group members know that the purpose of this gathering is to get to know one another better.
- Put a date on the calendar.
- Two hours is a good length of time for this gathering.
- For purposes of confidentiality, only group members are invited to this gathering.
- Remember to communicate the date and time to group members who are not present.

## STORIES

Explain that leaders will tell their stories the following week. All group members will share their stories during the eight weeks. No one will be called upon without notice. Let the group members know “*What’s Your Story?*” in the appendix of the *Conversation Guide* can help them get started.

## PRAYER

Every time you pray in the group, you model the nature of prayer and your relationship with God. Keep it short and simple. Avoid using “churchy” language. Be authentic. And hold off on taking prayer requests in the group setting until you sense that people are comfortable sharing personal matters.