

# FIRST GATHERING

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### LEADER NOTES

Whether your group is completely new or has met in previous seasons, it's a good idea to start with a meeting dedicated to launching well for the fall semester. And if you have anyone who is new to the group, it is important that you treat this like a new group! To them it will be new, and you don't want them feeling left out. Below is a guide to help you launch well, say hi to everyone, share the plan, and set expectations.

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### WELCOME

During this first group meeting, our goal is to give all of us a chance to connect (or re-connect), laugh, talk, and set the stage for the semester ahead. Don't be afraid to speak up, ask questions, or share thoughts.

Since some of us may not know each other, we're going to go around the room (or Zoom) with a few fun questions (ask one or two of the ice-breaker questions) to get all of us talking. Before you answer, **say your name and a little about yourself** (how long have you been at Chase Oaks, what do you do for a living, are you originally from North Texas, etc.)

#### Ice Breaker Questions:

- What was your favorite job from your youth? Why?
- What do you miss most about pre-pandemic life?
- What has been an unexpected positive you've experienced because of this strange season?

### SET THE STAGE

Groups at Chase Oaks are all about developing and deepening friendships so that we can take the next steps in our relationship with Jesus together. That's what we're here to do together this season. And because this is a group and not a class, I/we are not the teacher(s). We're all in the same boat and all of us will be learning, growing, laughing, and journeying together. So, let's talk about how we can create a great group experience together.

- Based on your personality and previous experiences, what helps you develop and deepen friendships? What does it take?
- We all participate in group discussions a little differently. That's great. So, tell us about how you tend to jump into conversations. Are you the type of person that if you have an opinion, everyone will know it? Or are you a person who likes to quietly simmer on a question for a while before answering?

#### For this group to work well, there are three things we all need to commit to doing this season:

- **Show Up:** Make group time a priority this season—we need you!
- **Join In:** Do your best to participate in discussions—your voice matters!
- **Be Real:** You don't need to bear your soul—be yourself!

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### SHARE THE PLAN

Groups at Chase Oaks meet for one semester at a time; and each semester, every group has a plan to grow together. We do that through our meetings, getting together or talking with one another between meetings, and doing a study to help us pursue our goal.

Share your meeting **schedule**: day, time, and rhythm. Share about your **study**. What are you doing together? Is there any homework? Do any materials need to be purchased? Share about any **outside of group activities** you'd like to do together: social gatherings, service projects, one-on-one connections, etc. Share your **heart**. Why are you excited about group this season?

- For this semester to be a success in your mind, what does this group time need to look like or do? What are you hoping to get out of it?
- The best groups are “owned” by everyone, where we each help make it happen and use our gifts and strengths. Which of the following would you be open to doing?
  - Organizing a prayer list
  - Praying out loud during group time
  - Organizing a way to serve together
  - Leading a discussion sometime
  - Leading a game activity sometime
  - Planning a social activity

### CLOSE

Let's pray together, asking God to meet us in a powerful way this semester.