



Group Leader Guide Instructions

1. Start Here—The Overview → is a bottom-line recap of the message. It serves as a transition from your previous group activity, such as worship or prayer, into the group discussion.

2. Connection
This is designed to get people talking. If you already have good conversation going, you may skip this and get right to the discussion.

3. Quick Recap
This is not the discussion time but a foundation for the discussion time. In some cases, a group member may not have heard the message. This will allow them to have some context for the discussion. It also gives others a time to refresh and remind themselves of the major points of the message. Read through this with your group, but don't spend too much time here.



What Test? Robert Morris

OVERVIEW

We are not supposed to test God; however, when it comes to tithing, God says, “Try me now in this.” God desires His children to bring their tithes and offerings into the storehouse of the church. When we do this, God says He will pour out His blessings upon us, and He will rebuke the devourer for our sakes. Tithing is a test of the heart.

CONNECTION

Play “Two Truths and a Lie.” Have each person make three statements about themselves: two true statements and one false statement. For example, “I’ve never broken a bone. I’ve been tackled by a black bear. I was born in Yugoslavia.” The group tries to guess which statement is not true. This is a fun way for a new group to get to know each other.

QUICK RECAP

Key Scriptures: Malachi 3:6–12; Genesis 14:18–20; Deuteronomy 26:1–2, 13–15

- ***Tithing is a test.***
The word *tithe* means a “tenth part.” Throughout Scripture the number ten represents testing. God tests our hearts through the tithe, and tithing is the only area where God says we can test Him too. If we tithe, we are under blessing. If we don’t tithe, we are under a curse.
- ***Tithing is biblical.***
Leviticus 27:30 says, “All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s. It is holy to the Lord.” Moses said: I have removed the holy tithe from my house and taken it to the place where You have chosen to make Your Name abide. Jesus takes it further by scolding the Pharisees and saying they should do more than just tithe; they should show mercy, justice, and faith.

4. Group Discussion

This is where you begin to facilitate conversation. Remember, you are first and foremost a facilitator, not a teacher. Let the question guide the conversation and responses. It may take a few seconds for people to hear the question and think of a response before saying anything—that's ok, it's normal.

These questions are designed to be done in order, though you may skip a question or two for time.

5. Personal Application

God has called us all to be fruitful, so this section is designed to help us consider ways to take what we learned and apply it to our lives for our benefit and the benefit of others. As a leader, use your own personal testimonies to encourage others to do the same.

- ***Tithing is a blessing.***

God gave the command that all His people are to tithe; however, with our obedience comes a blessing. The believer's tithe helps support the work of the church, the priest, and the ministry to people. The place where we receive our "spiritual food" is the place where we are to pay our tithes. Obeying God's word through tithing breaks the curse and invites God's blessings and provision for our lives and finances.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. When you think of tithing, do you cringe or do you feel excited? Explain.
2. Do you believe tithing is for believers today? Why or why not?
3. Read Deuteronomy 26:1–2 and Deuteronomy 26:13–15. According to these verses, what is the tithe and who or what are we to give it to?
4. Read 2 Chronicles 31:9–10. Pastor Robert shared that tithing is a blessing for the believer. Do you agree or disagree? Explain. If you agree, how is the tithe a blessing for the believer? Have you experienced this firsthand? Share.
5. Many believers struggle when it comes to tithing. Why do you think this is? What are some of the barriers or misunderstandings that hinder believers from tithing? If you are comfortable, share your personal experience with tithing.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This week, take time to really think about and honestly reflect on these three areas of your life as they relate to tithing: treasure, time, and talent. As you think seriously about these things, journal your responses to these questions:

- ***Treasure***

Are you currently tithing? If not, what are the reasons? How can you overcome the things in your heart that keep you from tithing? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you and make a plan to begin tithing.

- ***Time***

What would a tithe of your time awake be for one day? Do you currently spend a tithe of your time with the Lord, helping others, or investing in God's kingdom? If not, what are some practical ways you could give a tithe of your time awake to the Lord each day? Do you

think God also blesses your time the same way He does when you tithe money?

- **Talent**

What do you think a tithe of your talents would look like? Do you think it would be possible to give a percentage of your talents to building God's kingdom? If so, what would that mean for you? What are some trade skills, professional knowledge, talents, gifts, or abilities you could use to invest in God's kingdom?

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Jesus and salvation through grace that You have freely given to us. You are the perfect example of generosity and love. Please continue to teach us how to be more like You. Continue to make us into givers. Change our hearts. We want to be givers like You are. Help us to not only give of our tithes and offerings but give of our lives daily for You and Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

6. Closing Prayer

This is just a sample of how you can close your group in prayer. Feel free to use your own version of a closing prayer.

Tip Of The Week

Compassion Is Contagious

Wherever your group meets, remember this: Hospitality breaks down barriers. One key to a hospitable environment is showing compassion. Compassion is contagious. If someone is having a bad day, try showing compassion and watch their countenance change before your eyes.

Bless A Life

Share Stories

"Five out of the seven couples meeting with us have never been in a life group, and we've gotten texts and calls saying it's already changed their life in *one group night!* That's only God! So cool!" –Jason & Bonnie Rolf

Share your stories and pictures with us on Facebook at: facebook.com/gatewaygroups.

Group Leader Thoughts

As leaders, our focus is on preparing for our group and getting things ready for people to arrive. But have you ever stopped to think about what your group *visitors* may be thinking? Keep in mind, people who visit your group may have thoughts of excitement or even nervousness. Consider this chart:

What Group Leaders Think

- Prepare for the group
- Learn people's names
- Establish a safe environment

What Visitors Think

- Do I fit here?
- Are these people authentic?
- Will they accept me for who I am?