

# **St. Gabriel At-Home Connect Group Resource Guide**

## **1. Purpose of Your Group**

Your small group is a space to foster:

- Spiritual growth
- Authentic community
- Encouragement and prayer
- Open discussion and reflection

## **2. Getting Started - Before the First Meeting**

- Pray for your group – Ask God to prepare hearts and lead the group in truth and unity.
- Review materials in advance – Familiarize yourself with the video content, study guides, and discussion questions.
- Set a schedule – Choose a consistent day/time each week and communicate it clearly to all members.
- Prepare your space – Offer a clean, welcoming, and comfortable environment (snacks and drinks are a plus!).

## **3. Hosting Best Practices**

### **Hospitality Tips**

- Be warm and genuine – Your presence sets the tone.
- Greet each person – Especially newcomers; help them feel seen and included.
- Keep it casual but focused – Let your space be relaxed while keeping the group purposeful.

### **Group Guidelines**

- Start and end on time – Be respectful of everyone's schedule.
- Confidentiality is key – What's shared in the group stays in the group.
- Everyone participates, no one dominates – Encourage balanced sharing.
- No judgment zone – Create space for honest, grace-filled conversation.
- Keep things Christ-centered – Focus discussions around building relationship with Christ and one another.

## 4. Leading the Discussion

### Facilitating (Not Preaching)

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Allow silence – Sometimes people need a moment to respond.
- Affirm responses – A simple “Thank you for sharing” goes a long way.
- Redirect if off-topic – Gently steer the conversation back when needed.

### Handling Challenges

- Someone overshares – Thank them for being open, then move on.
- Awkward silence – Rephrase the question, ask another question or share a personal example.
- Doctrinal disagreements – Stay calm, acknowledge different perspectives, and keep the focus on building relationships. It is not about winning the argument but rather encountering the person and respecting each individual's journey of faith.

### Encouraging Community

- Consider optional group prayer or worship.
- Create a group chat or email thread to stay connected.
- Celebrate milestones (birthdays, answered prayers, etc.).
- Suggest optional ways to serve together or reach out to others.

**Final Encouragement** - You don't have to be a Theologian—just a willing host with a heart to serve. Trust that God will work through your hospitality, your faithfulness, and the power of His Word. Your role is simply to open the door—He will do the rest.

*“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others...”*

—1 Peter 4:9–10

## Small Group FAQs for Hosts & Guests

### For Hosts

- 1. What if I don't have a lot of space?** That's okay! Your home doesn't need to be big—just welcoming. Get creative with seating and keep it cozy.
- 2. What if someone talks too much?** Gently redirect by thanking them and inviting others to speak: *"Great point! Let's hear from someone else too."*
- 3. What do I do about awkward silence?** Give it a moment. If needed, rephrase the question or share your own thoughts to break the ice.
- 4. Do I have to serve food?** Not required! But a few snacks or drinks can help people feel at home. Some groups rotate snack duty.
- 5. What if I can't answer a tough question?** Just say, *"That's a great question—let's look into it together or ask a leader."* You don't need all the answers.
- 6. What if the group gets off-topic?** Kindly steer back: *"Let's bring it back to outlined questions or what the Scripture/video was saying."*
- 7. Can kids come?** That's up to the group. Set a clear plan: childcare, family-style, or adult-only.

### For Guests

- 1. Do I have to share?** No pressure! You're welcome to listen and share when you're ready.
- 2. What if I miss a week?** No problem. Let your host know and jump back in when you can.
- 3. What kind of group is this?** It's a mix of study, prayer, and community. Grow spiritually and connect relationally.
- 4. Can I bring a friend?** Yes! Just let your host know so they can plan ahead.
- 5. Do I need to bring anything?** Just yourself! A Bible or notebook can help, but they're not required.
- 6. What if I disagree with something?** Disagreements are okay—just be respectful and listen well. We grow through learning about others experiences, stories and meaningful conversation.