

Invitation Samples

Making the invitation can be one of the greatest obstacles in starting a group for spiritual seekers. Tips in the Q Place resource “Invitation Best Practices” can help you meet the challenge, but seeing real life examples may be just what you need to think through the way that you would stir up interest to come and see what a Q Place discussion about God is like.

FACE-TO-FACE OR PHONE INVITATIONS

Face-to-Face/Phone Sample 1: Interested in fitness

Fitness is a popular topic, and activity. Some very healthy, strong Q Places have formed among groups of people who also work out together. Talking about our overall well-being can be a great starting point for inviting friends to a Q Place group—whether physical workouts are part of the mix or not!

Hey Chris, you know how we were talking the other day about needing to work out more? I’ve been thinking how I want to get a group together that is also interested in spiritual fitness.

A couple of us have heard of a great way to do this with people where there’s no judging, no experts, no lectures, but where we discuss our questions about life, God, and the Bible honestly and openly in a low-key way.

In fact, I understand that it’s even helpful for a group like this to have people from different backgrounds to share their perspectives.

We’re going to try it out a week from Tuesday at 7:30-9 p.m. at the Starbucks across town.

Can you join us?

Face-to-Face/Phone Sample 2: Going through hard stuff

When you meet people where they are, they are more likely to accept your invitation.

Hey Joe, I know you’ve been going through a lot of stuff lately, and I’m wondering if you would like to meet with a few of us at the office to encourage each other and discuss questions about life, God, and the Bible.

You know, people have looked to the Bible for thousands of years for wisdom about life. I’d love to have you come once and try it out to see if it’s something that you might like.

We’re going to have a dry run on Tuesday during lunch in the conference room. We will start right at noon and finish before 1. Bring your lunch and let’s see how it goes!

Face-to-Face/Phone Sample 3: Interested in faith issues

Alex was an atheist, and yet she responded to this face-to-face invitation from Fran. She came to the first meeting; she became part of the group; and over time she saw the reality of God for herself, saying, “We could write a book about the answers to prayer in our group.”

Hey, Alex, what would you think about coming to my house Tuesday night around 7 for dessert to get to know some neighbors who are all interested in faith issues?

We’re from different religious backgrounds, but I know a few of us would like to have a safe place where we can discuss and process what we believe about life, God, and the Bible—without anyone telling us what to believe.

Lisa is coming and so is Sue. We’re going to try this out once and see if people would like to keep doing it for a few weeks.

Would you be open to coming this once to check it out? No pressure to keep coming.

E-MAIL INVITATIONS

Email Sample 1: Coffee and Questions

This emailed invitation refers to meaningful conversations in the recent past and communicates the idea of providing a place where ongoing spiritual conversations can feel natural and safe.

Subject: Coffee and Questions

Hi Jenny,

I am taking a total shot in the dark, but somehow I thought you might be interested. If not, absolutely no worries! I keep thinking about the conversation that you and I had early in the spring, and just wanted to follow up with this invitation.

A week from Thursday evening, I am hosting something called Coffee and Questions at my house. Two of my friends and I are trying this because we each have friends who we think might be interested in exploring matters of faith. This is an opportunity for spiritually minded women to “try out” a discussion about God without a long-term commitment. Our desire is to provide a safe forum for tough questions to be asked and discussed in a non-judgmental, non-preachy, hopefully fun, manner.

If you can’t come, but are intrigued, let me know and I will keep you in mind for anything like this we may do in the future. If you are not interested at all, tell me that too (and I hope you will still sit with me on the bleachers!!) I have enjoyed the conversations that you and I have shared and would look forward to more of the same. Either way, I hope you will take a look at the invitation attached.

And please keep us posted on the . . . [personal closing].
xox Kim

Kim attached a PDF invitation with this information:

What: Coffee and Questions (decaf and regular!)
When: Thursday, April 16, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Where: 123 Main St.

Bring the question about life, God, or the Bible
that matters most to you right now.

Feel free to share this invitation
with another friend you know who might be interested.

Email Sample 2: Wondering if you can come

Almost short enough to text as a follow up to a conversation. When “less is more,” this says just enough.

Subject: Wondering if you can come...

Hey bud—

Just following up... I am pulling together a discussion with some guys. I am reaching out to you because I am really curious about what you think about this stuff. The discussion will be: Questions about God—Tuesday 2/21 at 7:30p - 9:00p. We will probably discuss this question: If you could ask God one question and you knew you would get an answer, what would you ask?

I would love to have you there. Let me know if you can make it.

Have a great day!

[name]
[address]
[cell phone]
[home phone]

Email Sample 3: Check it out—a discussion group about God

This is a casual invitation approach, especially good for young adults, that addresses a number of barriers—this isn’t a church program, there won’t be a speaker, coming doesn’t commit you, and this will be a really great time together!

Subject: Check it out

Hi Parker, Happy New Year to you!

My friends Taylor, Kai, and I are inviting several friends over to my place on Tuesday, January 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m. We will start with some fantastic appetizers, and the purpose is to check out the possibility of participating in a spiritual discussion group about God. This past year I was in a group like this and it was great!

Here's how it works. There is no church affiliation or speaker. It's not that type of thing. The group is fun! It's a safe, non-threatening place to discuss questions about God. Taylor will facilitate and I will provide the place to meet on Tuesday, but no one will be teaching.

The question for the night will be "What was your first recollection of God?"

Let me know if you want to come so I have a head count.

After the first night, we will see if everyone wants to continue. If so, we would plan on getting together for about 6-8 weeks with a new question about God each week. We would most likely meet on Tuesdays right after work, but that's up for discussion.

If there isn't enough interest, at least we will have checked it out and enjoyed each other for the night. My address is 123 Front Street, Apt. 5B.

Let me know if you have questions, too!

Thanks!
Jamie

Email Sample 4: Coffee and Questions (3-week)

In the Clyde Hill area of Washington State, a group of three women had a Q Place group going, but they wanted to start fresh with participants who weren't already in their group. In their particular situation, they were confident that a 3-week group, with the option of coming to "just one or all three weeks" would be appealing to people whom they were inviting.

[This is similar to Email Sample 1, but shows how you could modify it as needed.]

Subject: Coffee and Questions

Dear Georgia,

I am taking a total shot in the dark, but somehow I thought you might be interested. If not, absolutely no worries!

Next week, on Thursday morning, I am hosting something called "Coffee and Questions" at my house. I would like to invite you to join me for one or all three of the next three Thursday mornings. This 3-week group is starting because many women are spiritually curious, but didn't want to commit to a weekly group. This is an opportunity for spiritually minded women to "try out" a study without a long-term commitment. If their desire is kindled, then we hope to create a group for them after this 3-week mini-study is complete, but there will be no pressure to join anything. Our authentic desire is to provide a safe forum for tough questions to be asked and discussed in a non-judgmental, non-preachy, hopefully fun, manner.

I realize that you are a very busy working mom and this is smack dab in the middle of the work day. If you can't come, but are intrigued, let me know and I will keep you in mind for anything like this we may do in the future. If you are not interested at all, please feel free to tell me that too. Either way, I hope to hear back from you soon.

XOX, Cindy

An attached invitation could include the following information:

What: Coffee and Questions
When: Thursday, February 5, 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.
Where: [address]

Bring the question about life, God, or the Bible
that matters most to you right now.

Feel free to share this invitation
with another friend you know who might be interested.

Two encouraging responses received by a facilitator of this group:

"I feel very honored that you would think of me. It is a subject that I have wanted to explore, but life somehow gets in the way! I will make time to attend for the next three Thursdays. Thank you. Count me in!"

"I will attend the Coffee and Questions. It sounds like a nice introduction and opportunity for exploration. Thank you for inviting me AND creating this group, especially for women like myself."

Email Sample 5: Want to hear your perspective

This email invitation sample works well for someone who has communicated a negative response to the Bible in conversation. It's very specific about what you will discuss when you get together.

Subject: Want to hear more of your perspective

Hi Nate—

I am still remembering the conversation you and I had while waiting to pick up our kids from basketball practice. I really appreciated your thoughts about spiritual things and especially about the Bible. You were asking questions that I would really like to discuss more.

Now here is a question for you: Would you be willing to continue the conversation?

On Thursday, March 5, 7-8:30 p.m., a couple friends and I are inviting folks to come over for coffee and questions about God and the Bible.

It's a one-time event.
All comments and questions are welcomed.
No previous knowledge of the Bible is necessary.

Click here for a 9.5 minute video to hear the perspective of others about the reliability of the Bible. (I thought of you when I saw it.) We will use this video to springboard the conversation. But if you don't have time to watch it, no worries...I hope you will come anyway!

We want to hear the perspectives people have about the Bible. We want to hear your frustrations with attempting to read this book or reasons why you hesitate to pick it up and read at all. We also want to hear if the Bible has ever been of help to you.

We have invited six friends who have expressed a desire to explore spiritual things. All of you live right here in the neighborhood. I look forward to having you be part of the conversation!

See you soon,
Mariano
cell #555-123-7777

Email Sample 6: We are all asking questions

An emailed invitation when the people you're inviting have a common experience of asking "Where's God in this?"

Subject: Can you come?

Hi Natalia,

This holiday season I have been especially aware of questions people are asking about God. Some questions have been full of hope. Some have been full of sadness or frustration. But one common question people seem to be asking is "Where's God in all of this?" I decided to invite some friends to come to my house next Thursday morning, spend some time together, and relate the important questions that are in our minds right now.

Do you have next Thursday morning available to join me and some other friends for coffee and conversation about God? You can bring friends, too.

Logistics
When: Thursday, Jan 10, 9:30-11am
Where: My house (123 Main Street)
What: Coffee and conversation about God

This will just be a time of getting to know each other better over a cup of coffee or tea...all who are invited live right here in the neighborhood. (I was even able to find a few baby sitters so that everyone can come!) If we find this helpful, I'm hoping we can discuss spiritual questions on a regular basis—with no experts around, no gimmicks, and no judging! Can you come this once and check it out?

I look forward to connecting with you and sharing our stories!

Susan

Please feel free to send your questions or hesitations... or just hit reply and say "Yes!" cell: 555-123-7777

Email Sample 7: Your words stuck with me...

This sample shows how you can build on a previous conversation—about doubting the existence of God—as you invite someone to a Q Place. It shows that you put a lot of value on the spiritual questions that other people are thinking about, and it also addresses the fear that you have an agenda of getting people to come to church.

Subject: I've been thinking

Dear Sandy,

Awhile ago, you and I bumped into each other at the grocery store. I still remember the conversation we had in the aisle that day. Your words really stuck with me when you said that you wondered if God even existed. I have decided to take a big leap and invite a few friends to bring their questions about God and have some "real" conversation. Do you have next Thursday morning available? I'm just inviting you to come once to check it out and see if it's something you'd like to do on a regular basis.

Here are the details:

When: Thursday, Jan 10, 9:30-11am

Where: My house (123 Main St.)

What: Coffee and conversation about God

This will just be a time of getting to know each other better over a cup of coffee or tea. All who are invited live right here in the neighborhood. Just so you know, this is not some gimmick to get you to go to church. My intention is to invite friends with whom I love spending time, and create a safe place to discuss questions that we all have.

I hope you will join us and bring your honest question—and a friend, if you wish.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Pat

cell: 333-333-3333

LETTER INVITATIONS

Letter Sample 1: A men's Bible discussion group that's not for experts

This invitation is written for men in an established neighborhood who are likely to be open to exploring the Bible for themselves. It provides great reasons for examining the Bible, clearly communicates what to expect out of the group, and emphasizes that the group is not for experts and that everyone will be able to make discoveries.

[Date]

To the men of the 400 block of East Forestwood Street,

My family has enjoyed living in the 400 block of East Forestwood and feels privileged to have you and your family as our neighbors.

For some time I have been thinking about having a short neighborhood Bible discussion just for the men in the 400 block, because men through the ages have found the Bible to be full of wisdom and encouragement for life. Many of us may have a desire to read and understand the Bible but are uncertain of just how to do it. Many of us have never been to a discussion about the Bible before. This is a good place for us because this group is not for experts (i.e. no lectures allowed). The only requirement is that we believe the Bible is worth studying. Neither religious background or Bible knowledge matter and our goal each time we meet will be to stick to one specific chapter of the biography of Jesus written by Mark, a young man who personally witnessed the events of Jesus' adult life. We hope this simple informal study (guys only!) will be interesting to all of us. If you have a Bible in your home, bring it with you. If not, Bibles will be available for use here at 444 E. Forestwood.

Come on Thursday, November 21, 7:00-8:30 p.m., to check it out and see what it would be like to explore the life of Jesus together in a group where no one is teaching and everyone gets to make discoveries while we're looking for answers together. At the end of the night you can decide if you liked it enough to be in the group and keep going through the book of Mark together.

Looking forward to being with you.

Sincerely,

[signature]

[phone number]

Letter Sample 2: Tough questions about faith

This is adapted from the letter that former Q Place President Mary Schaller sent to everyone she invited to her first group in 2002, shortly after the death of the talented Beatle George Harrison. It shows how you could use a relevant quote from a well-known person in an invitation letter.

Dear Katrina,

The other night I watched a documentary on the life of George Harrison, the talented Beatle who had such an impact on so many of us in our early adolescence. A spokesperson for the Harrison family said, “He left this world as he lived in it, conscious of God, fearless of death, and at peace, surrounded by family and friends. He often said ‘Everything else can wait, but the search for God cannot wait....’”

I believe that many people are searching for God and answers to tough questions about faith right now. Over the next few months Judy Squier, Kristin Day, and I are going to be exploring these tough questions about God with a group of women in Portola Valley on Tuesday mornings. Here are some of the questions we’ll be discussing:

How does anyone know God exists?
Is Jesus the only way?
How reliable is the Bible?
How could God allow suffering and evil?
Don’t all religions lead to God?
Do science and the Bible conflict?

Theologian and author Francis Schaeffer said, “It is not more spiritual to believe without asking questions. It is not more biblical. It is less biblical and eventually it will be less spiritual because the whole man will not be involved.” Both believers and seekers have questions. Sometimes people grow up in a faith and later realize that their beliefs are shaky. Some have never had the opportunity to explore. Others have trouble defending their beliefs to those that have questions. Sometimes churches don’t feel like the safest place to have doubts and ask questions.

We’d like you to join us on Tuesday, Feb. 26 at 10:30 a.m.—noon at my house (6 Applewood Lane) to check it out. For those interested after the first time, we will continue on a weekly basis. Call us if you have any questions. Otherwise, see you then!

Mary [phone number]
Judy [phone number]
Kristin [phone number]

INVITATIONS FOR AN ONLINE GROUP

Widespread crises bring about new challenges but also open new doors of opportunity to talk about spiritual matters with people who are more aware of their vulnerability and spiritual need. Sometimes people are also starved for community and find that a group meeting online will work well for them. Here are a few sample invitations that you can adjust to fit your own situation and current events.

Online Sample 1 (In Person/On the Phone): In the middle of hard times

Hi Susie, how are you doing? Hey, I'm wondering . . . because we're in the middle of hard times and many people are fearful and anxious (and even bored), my friend ____ and I are putting together an online group for connection and also comfort from the Bible. Would you be interested in coming once to check it out? I can send you the link for this meeting. It's on _____ [day] at _____ [time]. _____ will be there too. We'll see if the group wants to meet again after this first time. What do you think?

Online Sample 2 (In Person/On the Phone): Finding encouragement from the Bible

Hi Joe. How are you doing? I've been thinking of you. . . .

Hey, I've decided to start an online group because of these difficult days. The group would focus on where we can find encouragement and hope from the Bible. I have invited our neighbors and we'll meet online next Wednesday at 7 pm and then see if we want to meet again. Would you come try it out?

Online Sample 3 (In Person/On the Phone/Email): Discussion group in this crisis

Subject Line: Hope you can come!

Sam and I are hosting an online discussion group regarding the current crisis this Monday, 6-7 pm. The open forum will be discussing the impact of this crisis on our lives and what the Bible may have to say to the emotions we are ALL feeling. This is what it will be like:

- Discussion format, no preaching, teaching or arm twisting.
- A place to listen and hear one another's perspectives.
- You can come one time and try it out. There's no obligation to keep coming.
- Participate safely in your own surroundings.

We'd love to have you join us. If you are interested in this coming Monday, let me know and I'll send you the link.