

# 2020-2021 HOUSE CHURCH HANDBOOK

## **THE PURPOSE OF HOUSE CHURCH:**

The purpose of the House Church program to "build up the body"- to build a sense of community and belonging among our adult members. This program is not under the "Education Commission" but the "Fellowship Commission." Thus, House Church is not primarily a "learning time" or a Bible Study time. Yet there is meaningful content to House Church. We want what we do at House Church to help people interact and begin to know one another. The warmth and joy of being together is always to be promoted.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THIS TIME:**

Until we enter phase 3 and are given some directions on larger groups meeting inside, house churches should continue to not meet in person inside. **It is certainly possible to gather outside with appropriate social distancing if your house church would be interested in that.**

There are ways to continue to connect to and support one another:

- 1) House churches can use our church Zoom accounts to meet. If you would like to do that Maren or Cathy Wingfield are happy to provide support and training on how to use Zoom. We have got some ideas below about what to do in Zoom gatherings.
- 2) House churches can send regular group emails to check in on everyone.
- 3) House church members can make regular phone calls or send cards to one another.

## **PROGRAM MATERIALS:**

Consider beginning each meeting with a set of questions for each person to answer if they choose:

- What is challenging right now?
- What is giving you life right now?
- How have you seen God in your life in the past few weeks?

Certainly, take some time to share prayer requests and pray together.

Since each house church is different, here are a couple different options for each month's gathering.

Track 1: Enjoy each other's company. Have a relaxed time of conversation and games. House church is one of those increasingly rare times to visit with friends old and new, to learn about one another and develop spiritual friendships and to connect more deeply to the body of Christ.

There are a lot of fun and meaningful ways to connect in Zoom gatherings (see instructions under "resources" below):

Get-to-know-you activities: Two Truths and a Lie, Never Have I Ever, Show and Tell, Scavenger Hunt, Would You Rather (Bible edition)

Game Nights: There are so many simple ways to have a Zoom house church game night (especially using the whiteboard feature of Zoom) – Pictionary, charades, Scattergories, bingo, hangman, trivia

Sharing Opportunities:

- "Share an Image" – each person can select a picture or image to share with the house church that describes their faith, or some aspect of God, or gives them hope or joy, etc.

- “Talent night” - where members share a music gift or a craft with everyone
- “Share a Skill Night” - where a member might share how to do something
- “Cooking Class” – a recipe can go out ahead of time and everyone can make and eat the same thing
- “Sing along” – a group sing along is a possibility using Google Meet (instead of Zoom) but it does require that everyone have a Gmail account to join

### Track 2: Spiritual Conversations

How is your spiritual life?

Where have you seen God at work in your life?

How have you felt God’s presence in your life?

Where are you seeking guidance from the Lord?

What did you receive from God this week?

What of God have you passed on to others?

*Can also include group Lectio Divina on a Gospel reading.*

### Track 3: Choose Your Own Adventure!

- Members of the house church can take turns providing a short devotional of their own choosing.
- A house church could pick a book or curriculum with topics they find interesting.

## **RESOURCES:**

### Two Truths and a Lie

Jot down two real facts about you and one that is fake. Read them to your house church and they must guess which one is the lie! It is a great way to learn new things about each other and to see how well you know one another.

### Never Have I Ever

All you need to play this game are your fingers! Hold up five or 10 fingers and share something you have never actually done. If someone HAS done that thing, they put a finger down. Take turns sharing until someone has no fingers left to play with.

### Show and Tell

Select a theme for each month: a memento from a trip, something you have kept since childhood, something cheap that is priceless to you, something that was a gift, something you would love to give away to someone who wanted it, etc.

### Scavenger Hunt

Compile a list of 10 or so items that you want your friends to find in their homes during the meeting. Get creative with it! Some ideas:

A baby photo

A VHS tapes

Something tie-dye or rainbow-colored

Something from your childhood days

The biggest book you can find (longest page count wins!)

Your favorite mug

Something that reminds you of your parents

Something that starts with the first letter of your name

An item that is older than you are

A foreign coin  
Your go-to breakfast  
The softest thing you own  
Something with buttons on it  
Something that floats  
Something that sinks  
A scented candle  
A shell  
Something that lights up  
Something smaller than your fingernail

### 30 Would You Rather Bible Questions

Sit at the feet of Jesus while he teaches, or prepare supper for Jesus and the disciples in the kitchen?  
Face Goliath with only a stone and a slingshot or wander in the desert for 40 years?  
Carry the ark of the covenant across the Jordan River or carry Jesus's cross to Golgatha?  
Name the animals or build the ark?  
Betray Jesus or deny Jesus?  
Be a fisherman or a tax collector?  
Be a sheep or a shepherd?  
Marry Boaz or marry King Xerxes?  
Collect leftover grain in the wheat fields or help convince the king to reverse his edict to kill all the Jews?  
Be present at Jesus' birth or his resurrection?  
Be a shepherd or a magi?  
See Jesus walk on water or see him heal a blind man?  
See Jesus feed 5,000 or see him raise Lazarus?  
Be imprisoned for over 2 years or be swallowed by a whale?  
Have God add 15 years to your life or be carried to heaven in a chariot of fire?  
Know what type of fruit Adam and Eve ate or know what Jesus wrote in the sand when people wanted to stone the woman who'd committed adultery?  
Be thrown into a furnace or into a lion's den?  
Have the strength of Samson or the wisdom of Solomon?  
Live as long as Methuselah (969 years) or as long as Jesus (33 years)?  
Have a plague of locusts or a plague of frogs?  
Spend an hour in heaven or a week with Jesus on earth?  
Have dinner with Moses or Paul?  
Have dinner with Ruth or Ester?  
Accompany Moses on Mount Sinai or Jesus on the mountain of his transfiguration?  
Live on only bread (manna) for 40 years or be struck dumb for 9 months?  
Would you rather experience Pentecost or be with the disciples when Jesus appeared to them after the resurrection?  
See the burning bush talk to Moses or see the fire consume Elijah's alter in front of the prophets of Baal?  
Have heard one of Jesus' sermons or seen one of his miracles?  
Have heard Moses read the 10 commandments or Jesus preach the sermon on the mount?  
See Jesus dry up a fig tree or see him flip tables in the tabernacle?

### Pictionary

This requires using the whiteboard feature of Zoom. You can figure out how to make team, or if the whole house church guesses and each person gets points for how many drawings are guessed right during their turn. Here is a great website that will give Pictionary words based on how difficult you want the game to be: <https://randomwordgenerator.com/pictionary.php>

### Charades

Split Zoom attendees into two teams. Then, one person from each team will select a word or phrase using the Charades words and phrases generator: <https://www.wordgenerator.net/charades-generator.php>. That person has to act out (no talking or sounds permitted!) their assigned phrases for their teammates to try to guess. Each team takes turns guessing, and the more words and phrases a team guesses correctly, the more points they receive. The team with the most points wins!

### Scattergories

Randomly choose a letter and five categories. Then, players have a set time to think of things related to each category that start with the assigned letter. Players score zero points for an answer that duplicates another answer in that round, and one point for an answer no other player has given. Here's a generator to help you choose categories and letters and it has a timer: <https://swellgarfo.com/scattergories/>

### Trivia

Designate someone to lead the question asking and have everyone drop their answers in the chat or just say them out loud. Here is a great source of questions: [www.randomtriviagenerator.com](http://www.randomtriviagenerator.com)