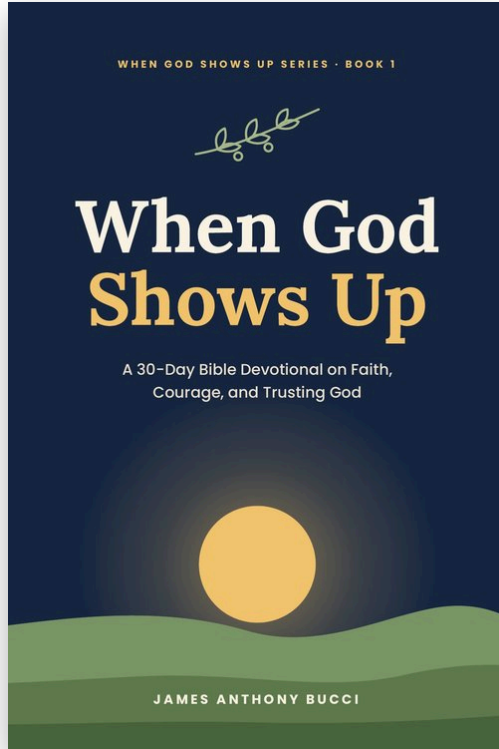


SMALL-GROUP LEADER GUIDE

When God Shows Up

Book 1 of the When God Shows Up series



Six weekly sessions for churches, home groups, and friends
reading the 30-day devotional together

James Anthony Bucci · jamesanthonybucci.com

How to use this guide

The book has 30 days. This guide splits them into **six weekly sessions of five days** each. Group members read one day at a time on their own, then meet once a week to talk about what they read.

Each session takes about 45 to 60 minutes and follows the same simple pattern:

- **Open** (5 minutes): one easy question to get everyone talking.
- **Review the week** (5 minutes): name the five stories. Ask someone to retell one in their own words.
- **Read together** (5 minutes): read the key verse aloud, then the full passage if you have time.
- **Talk about it** (25 to 35 minutes): pick the questions that fit your group. You won't get to all of them, and that's fine.
- **Live it and pray** (10 minutes): a simple challenge for the week, then close in prayer.

TIPS FOR LEADERS

- You don't need to be a Bible teacher. Your job is to ask good questions and let people talk.
- Let silence happen. People often need a few seconds to think.
- Never pressure anyone to share. Some of these questions are personal.
- If someone hasn't done the reading, they're still welcome. The stories are short enough to read together.
- Every story points to a King James passage. Encourage people to read the passage itself, not just the retelling.

The questions in this guide come from the journal prompts in the book, so group members will have already thought about them during the week.

Week 1

OPEN

Which story this week surprised you the most, and why?

REVIEW THE WEEK

Day 1: Hiding in the Winepress (Judges 6:1–24)

Day 2: The Fourth Man in the Fire (Daniel 3)

Day 3: When the Donkey Spoke (Numbers 22:1–35)

Day 4: Life from a Prophet's Grave (2 Kings 13:14–21)

Day 5: Four Outcasts and an Empty Camp (2 Kings 6:24–7:20)

READ TOGETHER

*“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him,
The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.”*

Judges 6:12 (KJV)

TALK ABOUT IT

Day 1: Hiding in the Winepress

1. What is your “winepress,” the place where you’ve been hiding or playing it safe?
2. What label have you put on yourself that God might see differently?

Day 2: The Fourth Man in the Fire

1. What “furnace” are you facing right now?
2. Can you pray “even if You don’t” about it? What makes that hard?

Day 3: When the Donkey Spoke

1. Is there a closed door you’ve been pushing against? What might God be saying through it?
2. What “reward” might be clouding your vision right now?

Day 4: Life from a Prophet's Grave

1. Whose faithful life still affects yours today, even if they're gone?
2. What would you like your life to leave behind for others?

Day 5: Four Outcasts and an Empty Camp

1. Have you ever felt like an outsider "sitting at the gate"? How did God meet you there?
2. What good news from your own life could encourage someone else?

LIVE IT

Pick one story from this week and tell it to someone in your own words before you meet again.

PRAY

Close by praying together, or let the leader pray this prayer from Day 5:

Lord, thank You for fighting battles I could never win on my own. Forgive me for the times I've kept Your goodness to myself. Show me who needs to hear what You've done for me, and give me the courage to tell them. Amen.

Week 2

OPEN

Which person in this week's stories did you relate to most?

REVIEW THE WEEK

Day 6: The Answer at the Door (Acts 12:1–17)

Day 7: Armor That Doesn't Fit (1 Samuel 17:31–50)

Day 8: The Day the Sun Stood Still (Joshua 9:1–10:14)

Day 9: Bring Me Another Jar (2 Kings 4:1–7)

Day 10: An Ordinary Man Who Prayed (1 Kings 17:1–7; 18:41–46; James 5:17–18)

READ TOGETHER

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”

Acts 12:5 (KJV)

TALK ABOUT IT

Day 6: The Answer at the Door

1. What are you praying for that feels impossible right now?
2. Has God ever answered a prayer in a way you almost didn't recognize?

Day 7: Armor That Doesn't Fit

1. Is there “armor” you've been wearing that doesn't fit who God made you to be?
2. What “smooth stones” has God already placed in your hands?

Day 8: The Day the Sun Stood Still

1. Is there a commitment you're tempted to walk away from? What would integrity look like?
2. What decision in front of you needs prayer before you act?

Day 9: Bring Me Another Jar

1. What “small jar” do you have that you’ve overlooked?
2. In what area of your life have you been expecting too little from God?

Day 10: An Ordinary Man Who Prayed

1. Do you ever feel too ordinary for your prayers to matter? Why?
2. What have you stopped praying for because you didn’t see an answer?

LIVE IT

Choose one journal question you skipped this week and write out your answer.

PRAY

Close by praying together, or let the leader pray this prayer from Day 10:

Lord, thank You that prayer isn’t only for the super-spiritual. Teach me to pray earnestly and persistently, like Elijah. When I see no sign of an answer, help me keep looking toward the sea. Amen.

Week 3

OPEN

Was there a verse this week that stuck with you? Read it aloud to the group.

REVIEW THE WEEK

Day 11: The Still Small Voice (1 Kings 19:1–18)

Day 12: More Are With Us (2 Kings 6:8–23)

Day 13: The Second Time (Jonah 1–3)

Day 14: Songs at Midnight (Acts 16:16–34)

Day 15: Buying a Field in a War Zone (Jeremiah 32:1–27)

READ TOGETHER

“And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”

1 Kings 19:12 (KJV)

TALK ABOUT IT

Day 11: The Still Small Voice

1. Are you running on empty? What would real rest look like for you this week?
2. What “noise” might be drowning out God’s voice in your life?

Day 12: More Are With Us

1. What situation makes you feel surrounded right now?
2. How might things look different if you could see God’s presence in it?

Day 13: The Second Time

1. Is there something God asked of you that you’ve been avoiding?
2. What “storms” have you faced while running in the wrong direction?

Day 14: Songs at Midnight

1. What does “singing at midnight” look like in your current season?
2. Who might be watching how you handle your hardest moments?

Day 15: Buying a Field in a War Zone

1. What situation in your life looks “surrounded” right now?
2. What would it look like to “buy a field” there, to act in hope?

LIVE IT

Write this week’s key verse on a card and keep it where you’ll see it every day.

PRAY

Close by praying together, or let the leader pray this prayer from Day 15:

Lord, nothing is too hard for You. When everything around me says it’s over, help me trust Your promises over what I see. Give me the courage to invest in the future You’ve promised, even when it doesn’t make sense. Amen.

Week 4

OPEN

Where have you seen God at work in your own life since we last met?

REVIEW THE WEEK

Day 16: Who Am I? (Exodus 3:1–14)

Day 17: Death in the Pot (2 Kings 4:38–41)

Day 18: The Borrowed Ax (2 Kings 6:1–7)

Day 19: It Is Well (2 Kings 4:8–37)

Day 20: One Thing I Know (John 9)

READ TOGETHER

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

Exodus 3:14 (KJV)

TALK ABOUT IT

Day 16: Who Am I?

1. Where in your life are you asking “Who am I?”
2. How does knowing God as “I AM” change that question?

Day 17: Death in the Pot

1. Is there an honest mistake you’re still carrying guilt over? Give it to God.
2. How do you usually respond when someone else’s mistake affects you?

Day 18: The Borrowed Ax

1. What “small” worry have you not bothered bringing to God?
2. Have you lost something like peace, joy, or confidence? Where did it fall?

Day 19: It Is Well

1. Is there a loss or disappointment you need to bring directly to God?
2. What would it mean for you to say “it is well” right now?

Day 20: One Thing I Know

1. Finish this sentence: “One thing I know, that once I was _____, but now _____.”
2. Who in your life might need to hear your story?

LIVE IT

Pray for one person in the group by name every day this week.

PRAY

Close by praying together, or let the leader pray this prayer from Day 20:

Jesus, thank You for opening my eyes. Give me courage to tell my story, even when I don't have all the answers. And when following You costs me something, remind me that You always come looking for me. Amen.

Week 5

OPEN

Which of this week's stories would you most want to tell a friend who doesn't read the Bible?

REVIEW THE WEEK

Day 21: Singers at the Front (2 Chronicles 20:1–30)

Day 22: The Impossible Deadline (Daniel 2)

Day 23: The Perfect Opportunity (1 Samuel 24)

Day 24: Spread It Before the Lord (2 Kings 18:13–19:37)

Day 25: Called by Name (John 20:1–18)

READ TOGETHER

“O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.”

2 Chronicles 20:12 (KJV)

TALK ABOUT IT

Day 21: Singers at the Front

1. What battle are you facing where you honestly don't know what to do?
2. What would it look like to put “praise at the front” in that situation?

Day 22: The Impossible Deadline

1. What problem feels impossible to solve right now?
2. Who are the “prayer friends” you can call on in a crisis? If you don't have any, who could you ask?

Day 23: The Perfect Opportunity

1. Is there someone you've wanted to "get even" with? What would mercy look like?
2. Have you ever mistaken a tempting opportunity for God's leading?

Day 24: Spread It Before the Lord

1. What "letter" have you received lately that filled you with fear?
2. Write it out or name it, and spread it before the Lord in prayer.

Day 25: Called by Name

1. Do you believe Jesus knows you personally, by name? What makes that hard or easy to believe?
2. Is there grief where you need to "stay" and wait for Jesus to meet you?

LIVE IT

Read one of this week's passages in full from your own Bible, slowly, out loud.

PRAY

Close by praying together, or let the leader pray this prayer from Day 25:

Jesus, thank You that You know my name. Thank You that my past doesn't disqualify me from Your love or Your purposes. When I'm weeping and can't see clearly, speak my name and help me recognize You. Amen.

Week 6

OPEN

Looking back over all 30 days, what is one thing God has been showing you?

REVIEW THE WEEK

Day 26: A Great Work (Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 6:1–16)

Day 27: The Well She Couldn't See (Genesis 21:8–21 (see also Genesis 16:7–13))

Day 28: Just a Shepherd (Amos 1:1; 5:21–24; 7:10–15)

Day 29: The Lost Book (2 Kings 22:1–23:3; 23:21–25)

Day 30: Let Him Alone (2 Samuel 16:5–14; 19:16–23)

READ TOGETHER

“I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?”

Nehemiah 6:3 (KJV)

TALK ABOUT IT

Day 26: A Great Work

1. What “great work” has God given you in this season?
2. What distractions keep calling you “down from the wall”?

Day 27: The Well She Couldn't See

1. Have you ever felt rejected or cast out? How does it feel to know God sees you there?
2. What provision might God have already placed near you that you haven't noticed?

Day 28: Just a Shepherd

1. Do you ever feel “not qualified” to serve God? What does Amos's story say to that?
2. Is there an area where your faith and your treatment of others don't line up?

Day 29: The Lost Book

1. Has God's Word been "lost in the house" of your life lately? Be honest.
2. What has Scripture shown you recently that you need to act on?

Day 30: Let Him Alone

1. Is there someone whose words have hurt you? What would it look like to "let him alone" and trust God?
2. Is there someone who has asked for your forgiveness, or needs it, even if they haven't asked?

LIVE IT

Write a short note to God thanking Him for one thing He did during these 30 days.

PRAY

Close by praying together, or let the leader pray this prayer from Day 30:

Lord, when I'm insulted or treated unfairly, help me leave my defense with You. Give me the strength to hold back when I want to strike back. Thank You for the mercy You've shown me. Help me show that same mercy to others. Amen.

After the six weeks

Thank you for leading your group through *When God Shows Up*. If your group would like to keep going, the *When God Shows Up* series has more 30-day books, each with its own free leader guide.

- All the books and free leader guides:
jamesanthonybucci.com/leaders
- Read Bible stories free by topic:
jamesanthonybucci.com/topics
- A free 7-day devotional for anyone in your group:
jamesanthonybucci.com/free

You're welcome to print and copy this guide for your group. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV).