

Leader's Guide for Desolate Places: A Pastoral Formation Journey



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Purpose of this Guide

To equip leaders to **facilitate spiritual formation groups** using *Desolate Places* as a four-week journey into pastoral surrender, obedience, and legacy. This is not a teaching curriculum — it is a space-making tool for transformation and shared processing among leaders.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

❖ Format Options:

- Weekly meetings (60–90 minutes)
- Retreat weekends (2 sessions per day)
- One-on-one mentoring over 4 weeks

❖ Ideal Group Size:

- 2–6 participants max for maximum vulnerability and depth

❖ Materials Needed:

- A printed copy of the participant booklet for each person
 - A Bible for each leader
 - Journal or notebook
 - A quiet, private meeting place
 - Optional: communion elements, worship songs, fasting plans
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FACILITATOR ROLE

You are not the teacher — you are the **guide and atmosphere setter**. Your role includes:

- ✓ Modeling transparency (share your own wilderness stories)
 - ✓ Keeping time and discussion flowing
 - ✓ Protecting the environment (keep it safe and Spirit-led)
 - ✓ Challenging leaders to obedience, not just insight
 - ✓ Praying over each person by name
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WEEKLY SESSION FLOW (Suggested)

Total time: 75–90 min

1. Welcome & Check-In (15–20 min)

- Ask: “How are you showing up today?”
- Invite short personal updates, including how they practiced last week’s *action step*.

2. Opening Prayer (5 min)

- Invite the Holy Spirit to guide the conversation and reveal hidden places.

3. Read the Devotional Aloud (10 min)

- Assign one person to read the week’s section aloud.
- Listen slowly — this is sacred ground.

4. Group Reflection & Discussion (30–40 min)

Use the printed **Reflection Questions** as a guide, but prioritize **spirit-led conversation**. Ask follow-up questions like:

- “Why do you think God allowed that season?”
- “What did you believe about God during that breaking?”
- “What does obedience look like on the ground for you this week?”

Allow silence. Let the Holy Spirit do the heavy lifting.

5. Prayer & Ministry Time (15–20 min)

- Pray **out loud** for one another — one leader at a time.
- Lay hands if appropriate culturally.
- Ask the group to wait in silence and listen — then share what they sense God saying.

6. Commitment to Action (5 min)

- Ask: “What is one step of obedience you're taking this week?”
 - Write it down and agree to **follow up** next week.
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FACILITATOR TIPS BY WEEK

WEEK 1: The Invitation to the Wilderness

Focus: Normalizing the wilderness

Watch for: Shame, isolation, burnout

Encourage: “You’re not alone — God *leads* people into the wilderness.”

Suggested prompt:

“Describe a time when you felt forgotten or invisible in ministry. What was God doing under the surface?”

WEEK 2: Brokenness Before Usefulness

Focus: Embracing surrender, not avoiding it

Watch for: Fear of failure, ministry wounding, disillusionment

Encourage: “God breaks what He intends to multiply.”

Suggested prompt:

“What have you lost in ministry that you thought was essential?”

WEEK 3: Authority Through Obedience

Focus: Connecting obedience to authority

Watch for: Leadership striving, burnout, spiritual warfare fatigue

Encourage: “Obedience builds spiritual weight you can’t fake.”

Suggested prompt:

“Where are you leading without God’s authority right now? What needs to be surrendered?”

WEEK 4: Releasing Legacy from the Wilderness

Focus: Multiplication, generational impact

Watch for: Control issues, legacy anxiety, unmet dreams

Encourage: “Your ceiling is meant to be someone else’s floor.”

Suggested prompt:

“Who is the next generation leader God wants you to pour into?”

FOLLOW-UP OPTIONS

After 4 weeks, guide your group into one of these paths:

Option 1: Start a Foundry Group

Transition into *The Foundry* (52-week pathway) for long-term discipleship.

Option 2: Begin Mentoring Multiplication

Encourage each participant to take *one person* through *Desolate Places* as a mentor.

Option 3: Launch a Prayer & Fasting Initiative

Organize a 21-day prayer focus for your region, birthed from wilderness hunger.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE OPENING PRAYER

“Father, we thank You for leading us into places where only You remain. We confess our dependence on You. Today, speak through each story, expose what needs to be surrendered, and remind us that You never waste a wilderness. We welcome Your forming hand. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

FACILITATOR CHECKLIST

- ✓ Print participant booklets
- ✓ Choose time and location
- ✓ Prepare each week with prayer and your own reflection
- ✓ Model transparency before expecting it from others
- ✓ Protect the atmosphere from distraction, comparison, or debate
- ✓ Always point back to the voice and presence of God
- ✓ Send reminders and follow-up messages midweek
- ✓ Help each participant complete their “YES Declaration”