

Facilitator's Guide for Iron Rose Sister Ministries' Bible Study Books written by Michelle J. Goff

As presented in the *Iron Rose Sister Ministries Bible Studies Format*, each Iron Rose Sister in the group is encouraged to rotate who leads the discussion each week.

Even if you do not feel equipped to facilitate the discussion or feel that you lack adequate experience to do so, it is a rich opportunity for growth and blessing. You are among sisters and friends who are supporting you in this part of your journey, as well.

Tips or reminders, especially for new teachers:

- Make it your own and **allow the Spirit to lead**—these books are a resource, not a script.
 - Often, for time reasons, you will not be able to cover every question in the entire chapter together each week.
 - You are welcome to add questions of your own or highlight portions of the chapter that most impacted you, whether they were designated for discussion or not.
 - Select which questions you would like to discuss, and plan for ones you might need to skip if you are running short on time.

- Include additional **examples from Scripture** and encourage others to do the same.
 - Online Bible programs such as BibleGateway.com or BlueLetterBible.org provide excellent resources such as multiple versions of the Bible, concordances (to look up the occurrences of a word), Bible dictionaries, and commentaries.

- Be willing to answer the designated discussion questions first, using your own examples, but **avoid the temptation to do all the talking**.
 - Allow for awkward silence to provide the opportunity for others to share. Tip: Counting to 10 in your head gives others a chance to think about their answers. Feel free to reword the question, as well.
 - It's okay to call on someone and encourage them to answer a specific question.
 - “Why or why not?” or “Can you add to that comment?” are good follow-up questions for discussion.

- Leading is about **facilitating the conversation**, not about having all the answers.
 - When someone brings up a difficult situation or a challenging question, you can always open it up to the group for answers from Scripture, not just personal advice.
 - The answer may merit further Bible study or the consultation of someone with more experience in the Word and/or experience regarding that type of situation. That's okay! We're digging deeper.

- Affirm and encourage **group participation**.
 - One of the best ways to facilitate continued conversation and discussion is to affirm the others in the group. Even if you don't agree with what is stated, you can appreciate their willingness to share their thoughts.
 - Thank those who were willing to read passages of Scripture, to pray, and to ask questions in order to dig deeper. And don't forget to thank those who participated by sharing their answers and input during the discussion.
 - If someone is talking too much or over-sharing, you can gently interrupt and thank her for sharing. It may be appropriate to lead a prayer over her or the situation in that moment in order to move forward with the week's topic.

- **Accommodate for larger groups**, as needed.
 - The ideal small group size is 6–8 women. If your group is larger, more reserved women will be less likely to share.
 - For groups larger than 6–8 women, in order to facilitate a deeper connection with one another and with God through that week's discussion, here are a few suggestions:
 - Choose a section of the chapter or specific questions that can be answered in mini-groups (2–3 people).
 - Allow for time in those mini-group discussions and then bring the entire group back together. This can be done multiple times during the week's study.
 - Also, the mini-groups can be a good way to share in the Common Threads and in more intimate prayer.

- Give a practical wrap-up **conclusion** or “take-home” **application** from the week as you close with the Common Threads.

- Be sure to budget time for **prayer**.

- Remember our purposes as **students of the Word and daughters of the King**. We are striving to deepen our relationships with God and with one another—to be Iron Rose Sisters that serve as iron sharpening iron as we encourage one another to be as beautiful as a rose in spite of a few thorns.