

Eternal Impact

Leader Guide

Introduction

This leader guide provides guidance for conducting a 13-session, small-group study of *Eternal Impact: [new subtitle]*, a companion study to *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. You will need both of these resources to lead the study.

This study guide is an adaptation of the seven-session plan outlined in the companion study book. In that member book you'll find seven group study sessions. This plan adapts the seven-week study so that you can deal with the content of *Eternal Impact* in a more intensive, in-depth study covering an entire quarter, or three months.

Using the DVD

Each of the seven sessions includes a DVD segment featuring Ken Hemphill teaching a portion of that session. The best way to study each week is to view the DVD segment at the point designated in the Group Study outline in the learner devotional guide. You will not watch a DVD segment every week but only on alternating weeks.

Accessing Other Resources

Online, in addition to this leader guide, you'll find listening sheets for the DVD segments; a 13-week document with group study plans to replace the seven at the beginning of each week in the member book; an administrative guide with ideas for planning promotion, in-home studies, prayer groups, sermons, etc. [\[\[add web address\]\]](#)

Using the Member Book

Participants will need the member book *Eternal Impact: [new subtitle]*. They would also benefit from reading and studying *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. The two books complement each other, although they do not contain the same content.

Each week's material in the member book uses the following format.

Small-group guide. These two pages provide a small-group guide for learners. These pages form the outline for the sessions you will lead. Sessions will be outlined below. Remember that these sessions were designed for seven weeks and are being adapted in this 13-week plan. You'll find new small-group guides online that you can download and photocopy for members of your group. [\[\[add web address\]\]](#)

Each session begins with questions to get the group to think and interact about that week's topic. You can direct learners to discuss the questions as a group or in twos or threes. Or they may think about the questions and write their answers. Topics discussed correspond to the chapters of the book *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. The end of the lesson directs learners to apply what they have learned to themselves and their church.

Daily devotionals. The next 10 pages are daily devotionals for individuals to use in their quiet times at home. Each daily devotional corresponds to one chapter in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. The devotional and book chapter have the same title, although the numbering of the chapters and devotionals are different. Members in a 13-week study can read the five devotionals during the week after the topic is introduced. You may want to encourage them to read the chapter from *Eternal Impact* one week and related devotions the following week. This will be true after the first week when members are just beginning the study.

Each week you will introduce the topic for the week in the small group. The readings for the week will reinforce the content you introduce. That is, the devotionals follow rather than precede the related topic discussed in small groups. After the first session you may want to include a brief time for group members to reflect on what they have learned during the week. This will be a review of the previous week's study. The final group session wraps up the study and celebrates the changes learners want to make in their lives and in their church.

Seven small-group sessions and 30 daily devotionals are included in learner guides. You may, however, choose another format and adapt the study for that format. This plan offers an adaptation for 13 weeks, and the online group study plans for 13 weeks go along with this plan.

[[add web address]]

For example, church leaders may want to study this resource on a retreat before introducing it to the church. Then the entire church may study it for the seven sessions given or adapt it for use during an entire quarter by using one book session for two weeks as this plan suggests. There is easily enough content to discuss for two weeks in each chapter to *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill.

Using the Daily Readings

Each week's study in the member book provides five daily devotionals that correspond to chapters in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. They are easy to match because the titles and introductory Scriptures are the same, even though the chapter numbers are not the same. Each daily devotional contains a brief quotation from *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. The rest of the devotional in the member book, however, is new content.

The purpose of the devotionals—in fact, the purpose of the entire study—is to help learners develop a personal theology of and appreciation for the church. Many people have never thought about what a church is, how it was formed, or how the contemporary church is alike or different from the church in the New Testament, particularly the book of Acts. They have not thought about Jesus' founding the church and the church as the way kingdom work continues to be done in the world today. This study will lead believers to examine their practices and thinking not only about the church but also about their role in the church and in God's kingdom. The study will think about and set goals for their own kingdom work and for discovering with other believers the directions God wants their church to go.

This study should lead all learners to make changes in their lives. Even people who are already active in the church should enter the study with the expectation to grow as Christian in their biblical understanding of the church and their place in it. So from the beginning, you should encourage group members to read daily, to think about their own church attendance and participation habits and how they would like to change them, to think about family involvement and church goals, and to expect to change as a result of this study. If you encourage members to expect to change during this study, the likelihood that they will do so increases significantly. *Eternal Impact* isn't just about the church; it's about a closer walk with God. It's about transformation to become growing disciples in God's work in the world today.

You may want to ask members to choose accountability partners for this study and to do the daily studies together or to read them separately and then share ideas. Your church may want to provide copies of *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill for all participants or encourage them to purchase and read both books together as they complete this study.

Session 1

1. Read "Section 1: From Foundation to Mission" in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. You will explore this section in session 1 and session 2.
2. If possible, preview the DVD segment for week 1.
3. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
4. Your group may be a mix of people who are not already in a small group together. If so, plan to use name tags for at least the first few weeks of the study. Make sure everyone has a copy of the member book. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils as needed.
5. Keep in mind throughout this study that people are often extremely private about their basic beliefs. They may have held them since childhood, influenced by their parents. They may hold beliefs without having ever thought about them before. When you ask questions, give them time to think. If they give answers that sound like something they memorized in Vacation Bible School when they were children, ask them why they believe or think as they do, even if their answer is right on target. Allow and encourage people to share as they choose without allowing anyone to dominate discussions. Draw out quieter members on low-threat questions. Share as appropriate from your life. You may want to enlist some members in advance to share their thoughts. This will allow them to prepare what they will say while eliminating any embarrassment caused by calling on someone in the session who does not want to talk.
6. Introduce the study by asking, "What kinds of things are making a big impact in our world today?" Write their answers on a chalkboard or white board. After the list is recorded for all to see, briefly discuss why they gave the answers they did. Are most of the things listed technology; items from contemporary culture like movies, famous people, and sports; enduring institutions like families, schools, and churches; or a mixture of these? Point out that the church has endured for two thousand years. It is ever evolving yet has many of the same characteristics of the church Jesus founded. In this study the group will look at characteristics of the New Testament church and what you can learn personally and as a church group about the church then and now. Point out that the study will help participants form their own theology of the church, perhaps for the first time considering the role of the church in their Christian lifestyle and their role in the church as a servant in God's kingdom work.
7. Watch DVD segment 1.
8. In advance enlist people to tell stories about being lost—lost as a child, left behind by parents, lost in a parking lot, lost in a strange city, lost when looking for a particular address. Then ask how they found their way. Enlist someone who has used a GPS to talk about how it helps people find their way or stay on track, moving ahead in the right direction. Point out that the book of Acts is the road map or the GPS to provide direction for the church, to keep it focused on its missions and doing what God directed the church to do.
9. Invite members to recall anything they remember from the book of Acts about the early churches.
10. Tell the group that throughout the next 12 weeks they will be learning more about what Acts says about the early church. They will also use what the book of Acts says about the early church as a lens for looking at their own church today.
11. Ask members what they know about the founding of their church. Listen for someone to talk about Peter's confession. Also listen for

what others say. You may hear comments that you want to address later in the study.

12. Enlist a volunteer to read Matthew 16:13-19. Use the first section of *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill to comment on the importance and meaning of these verses.

13. Provide hymnals with "The Church's One Foundation" and someone to sing "Jesus Is the Cornerstone," or a recording, or the words, available online. Discuss the questions in step two of the group study guide. Be prepared to add to the discussion from your reading of section 1 of *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill.

14. Ask everyone in the group to pull out their keys from their purses or pockets. Ask them to list what the keys represent. The keys are likely to homes, cars, lock boxes, and other possessions. The keys may be to offices. The keys represent something important, something valuable, something costly and of significance to the bearer of the keys. Lead a discussion of step 3 in the leader guide.

15. Pray that members will gain understanding of the early church and receive new insights about the work of their church today.

Session 2

1. Brainstorm types of power. List them on the board. Focus on gas and electric power. Ask members to recall a time they had no power in their home or they ran out of gas in their car. What did they do? How did they feel? Did they realize they had taken for granted their easy access of power?
2. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
3. Enlist volunteers to read Daniel 7:16; Matthew 7:29; 8:9; 28;18-20; and Ephesians 3:8-11.
4. Lead a discussion of the questions in step 2 of the group study. Be prepared to add to the discussion from your study of *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill.
5. Move on to step 3 of the study guide. Enlist members to read these Scripture passages. Lead a discussion of the questions. Do not let this discussion turn into a gripe session about your church with the first question. The focus of that question could be different beliefs among different churches, or within the church it could focus on generational differences, for example.
6. Lead a discussion of the remaining sections and questions in the group study guide or divide members into small groups to discuss assigned questions and to report back to the larger group with their answers.
7. Remind participants to keep up with their reading. Ask them if they have any questions about what they have read so far.
8. Pray, thanking God for the variety of personalities and gifts He provides among your church members. Pray for unity and growth as your community of faith sees to follow God's leadership in the days and years ahead.

Session 3

1. Read "Section 2: From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth" in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. You will explore section two in sessions 3 and 4.
2. If possible, preview DVD segment 2.
3. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
4. In advance, place a map of the world on the wall. As participants arrive, give each one adhesive dots in two colors. Designate one color for where people were born and the other for the farthest they have ever been from home. Ask participants to place the two dots on the map, where they were born and the farthest point from home that they have traveled. Until everyone has arrived, invite them to enjoy casual conversation about where they were born and their travels. When everyone has arrived, invite members to share stories about where they first became involved in a church (perhaps their hometown). Then discuss their travels, especially what they observed about Christianity and how they were able to represent God's kingdom on their journeys.
5. View DVD segment 2.
6. Divide the group into three small groups. Assign each group step 3, step 4, or step 5 of the group study plan. Ask the groups to read the Scriptures and answer the questions. Ask them to plan a way to present the highlights of their discussion to the large group.
7. In the large group discuss the members' awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence and leadership in their church using the questions in step 6 of the group study plan.
8. Pray that God's Spirit and power will be evident in your church and that individuals will respond as God directs.

Session 4

1. Enlist four people to form a panel discussion about reaching people in your community, state, the United States, and around the world. In advance instruct them to be prepared to share how meeting needs in Jesus' name helps people be open to hearing the gospel message. Invite members of your church who have been active in missions and ministry in these four areas. Invite the panelists to share their experiences. Then invite all members to ask the panelists questions. Finally, invite all members to share experiences they have had as members of other churches or to tell about what they've heard other churches are doing.
2. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
3. Divide the group into three small groups. Assign each small group step 2, steps 3, or step 4 in the group study. Ask each group to read the Scriptures and discuss the questions. Ask them to plan a way to present the highlights of their discussion to the large group.
4. Allow groups time to work, making sure to reserve enough time for groups to report.
5. Call the groups back together to give their reports.
6. Affirm their work. Add to discussions from your study of "Section 2: From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth" in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill.
7. Remind participants to continue their reading.
8. Ask members to return to their same small groups to pray. Ask them to share personal requests, then requests for fellow church members and the work of your church. Ask them to pray that each member of their small group will hear God's call to speak to someone about Christ during the coming week.

Session 5

1. Read "Section 3: From Character to Function—the Eight Character Traits of the Kingdom-Centered Church," chapters 11-15 in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. You will explore these chapters in sessions 5 and 6. Chapters 16-20 of section 3 provide the content for session 7 and 8.
2. If possible, preview DVD segment 3.
3. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
4. Bring a stack of newspapers, newsmagazines, tabloids, and popular magazines and place them on tables around the room. As participants arrive, invite them to work in pairs to find stories that indicate character matters or does not matter.
5. Place two large sheets of paper at either end of the room and felt-tip markers. Make sure you can write on the paper without damaging the walls.
4. After everyone has arrived and had opportunity to participate, ask them to separate their stories into those that indicate character matters and those that indicate character does not matter. Then ask them to list subjects or article titles on the appropriate paper on the wall.
5. Compare the two lists. Initiate an informal, mini-debate about whether character matters. Divide people into two teams. Insist that one team take the side that character matters and the other side that character does not matter. Do not try to resolve this issue.
6. Show DVD segment 3.
7. Divide the group into 3 small groups to read Scripture and discuss the questions listed in steps 3, 4, and 5 of the group study guide.
8. Instruct groups to create live news reports related to character as revealed in Scripture and their discussions. Tell them to make their report contemporary, using examples they found at the beginning of this session. Tell them they will report live on CNN, Church News Network.
9. Allow time for the reports. Affirm answers. Refer to the chapters from the book, encouraging learners to continue to read their assigned work during the week ahead.
10. Ask participants to return to their small groups. Ask them to list concerns they have about their church related to the topic of their group's discussion. Some of these concerned may have been voiced during their earlier conversation. List these concerns in the group and pray about each on in the small group.

Session 6

1. Invite participants to talk about church members whose exemplary character and qualities as church members and leaders have had a positive influence on them. These people can be living or dead, relatives or friends, active or no longer serving because of age or declining health.
2. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
3. Offer a brief lecture to address the subject of power-hungry people in the church. Be careful about opening this discussion to specific church situations. Read the Scriptures suggested and discuss how early-church teachings and practices are applicable in the church today.
4. Ask a volunteer to read Acts 11:26. Lead a discussion about the variety of learning opportunities through your church's education ministry, or invite the minister of education to come and lead this discussion.
5. Ask a volunteer to read Acts 2:46-47. Ask participants to discuss how worship has changed in their lifetime. Invite the pastor or minister of music/worship leader to lead a discussion about your church's worship values, how worship is planned, and why different elements of worship are selected. Discuss ways the average church member participates actively in worship.
6. Ask a volunteer to read Acts 4:8. Discuss the questions in step 7 of the group study guide.
7. Remind participants to continue their reading.
8. Ask members to get in groups of two or three to pray. Ask them to share personal requests, then requests for fellow church members and the work of your church. Ask them to pray that each member of their small group will hear God's call to speak to someone about Christ during the coming week.

Session 7

1. Read "Section 3: From Character to Function—the Eight Character Traits of the Kingdom-Centered Church," chapters 16-20 in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. These chapters will provide the content for sessions 7 and 8.
2. If possible, preview DVD segment 4.
3. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
4. Place several large sheets of paper and felt-tip markers around the room on tables. Provide masking tape to attach the paper to the walls when the work is complete.
5. As members arrive, ask them to list old sayings they heard from parents and grandparents along with bits of advice their parents continually emphasized.
6. When everyone has arrived and had opportunity to participate, ask each group to place their lists on the wall. Invite everyone to take a felt-tip marker and to walk around the room reading the sayings and advice. Tell them to write on the paper the character trait represented in the advice. Some of the statements may suggest more than one character trait.
7. Make a list on the whiteboard or chalkboard of all the character traits listed. Point out that most parents and grandparents try to teach their children and grandchildren to have good character traits. Just as individuals seek to instill good character traits into those they love, the leaders of the early church wanted the early church to give evidence of particular character traits. Review the list of character traits from last week's session.
8. View DVD segment 4.
9. Divide into two groups. Assign one group item 3, in the group study for week 7, about fellowship and the other group item 4 about stewardship. Tell them to read the Scriptures and discuss the questions listed in each area. Their reports should include what the Bible says and what your church practice is in each of these areas.
10. Remind members to continue their reading.
11. Ask members to return to their two small groups and to get in circles. Each person will pray aloud for the person on his or her right and pray around the circle until each person has prayed.

Session 8

1. Invite participants to talk about why they joined this church. Which characteristics appealed to them? What are some characteristics they admire in other churches that are not as evident in this church?
2. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
3. Ask volunteers to read Acts 1:8 and Acts 13:1-3. Ask four people to speak to the need to pray, go, send, and give. Have a lighthearted debate about which is most important. Conclude by saying that all are essential.
4. Ask a volunteer to read Acts 11:27-30. Lead a discussion about how churches today give cooperatively to do more than one church can do alone.
5. Ask a volunteer to read Acts 11:26. Ask how your church is growing disciples today and how that relates to the Great Commission.
6. Read Galatians 5:22-25. Write the fruit of the Spirit on a sheet of paper while groups are working so that the list is ready when you get to this point. Lead a short discussion of these qualities that Christians should have in their lives. Which is most difficult? Which is most foundational? Which do members want most to show in their lives.
7. Ask participants to get in groups of two or three to share their struggles and desires to give evidence in their daily lives of these characteristics. Ask them to share one area of life where they struggle to show this fruit, such as home, with a teenager, with a parent, at work, etc. Then ask people in small groups to pray for one another that they will show godly characteristics in their lives this week.

Session 9

1. Read "Section 4: From Leadership to Gifted Membership," in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. You will cover this section in sessions 9 and 10.
2. If possible, preview DVD segment 5.
3. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
4. In advance enlist someone in your church who has received ministry from church members to come and tell about the need and how church members helped to meet that need. Enlist someone in the church who is known from ministering to others to share what it means to have the privilege of providing ministry.
5. As members arrive, ask them to gather in small groups and discuss receiving and providing ministry and what they know about the kinds of ministry your church offers.
6. When everyone has arrived, introduce your two guests to share their experiences of giving and receiving ministry. Conclude this portion of the session by pointing out that members of churches have ministered to one another since the early days of the New Testament church.
7. View DVD segment 5.
8. Divide into two small groups to read the Scripture and answer the questions provided for items 4 and 5 in week 9 of the group study. As part of each group's report, ask them to tell one way your church ministers or can minister in a way that applies the Scripture they read.
9. As groups give their reports, affirm their work and add comments from "Section 4: From Leadership to Gifted Membership," in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill.
10. List types of leaders on the chalkboard or whiteboard (pastor, ministerial staff, and support staff). List various types of ministries of your church.
11. Voice any needs of these groups or ministries listed. Write these on the board beside the minister or group.
12. As the group to voice sentence prayers for these church leaders and for church ministries.
13. As members leave, encourage them to continue their reading.

Session 10

1. As members arrive, ask them to think of God's promises in Scripture. They may want to search for a Scripture to read, but assure them they can recite the promise without knowing the exact reference or repeating it from memory.
2. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
3. Explain that as you look at leadership and gifted members you will once again see what the early church has to offer as an example. Divide into three groups, assigning the groups step 2, 3, and 4 from the group study for week 10.
4. Call the groups back together to read or explain their assigned Scripture passages; the practice, teaching, or example of the early church; and the relevance and application for the church today. End with a general discussion about how your church measures up against New Testament practices.
7. List types of leaders on the chalkboard or whiteboard in addition to those discussed last week (deacons, those who lead church programs and ministries, teachers, and other church leaders). Talk about the needs of these leaders and the areas of the church they represent. List prayer concerns for these leaders and ministries. Call for volunteers to pray for each of the areas listed.
8. As members leave, encourage them to continue their reading.

Session 11

1. Read "Section 5: From Opposition to Victory," in *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill. You will focus on section 5 in sessions 11 and 12.
2. If possible, preview DVD segment 6.
3. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
4. In advance enlist one or two people who have been members of your church for a long time to come and tell briefly about their earliest memories of your church.
5. As participants arrive, direct them into small groups of four or five. Ask them to share personal memories of victorious times in the church. These memories can include seeing a child baptized or married, the fellowship or a retreat or missions trip, receiving ministry during a personal crisis, or a special time for the whole church such as entering a new building, significant growth, etc.
6. Introduce the guests and listen as they share a few victorious moments in the life of the church. Ask each small group to select a few of their best stories to share.
7. Transition to this week's study by saying that they have discussed church victories, but the church has faced some times of opposition too. The early church also experienced both opposition and victory.
8. View DVD segment 6.
9. As groups form to discuss the two segments of this session (steps 3 and 4, ask the group, when they present their reports of what the Bible said, to share one application for your church—either something your church is doing well and should continue or something you'd like to see your church begin.
10. Encourage the group to catch up on their reading the two books. Remind them that the study continues for two more weeks. Ask them to pray this week about their church and to ask God to give them a vision for what He wants them to do in their church.
11. Ask members to voice sentence prayers praising God and thanking Him for specific meaningful times in the church and for the leaders who made those things happen. Conclude the prayer by asking God to inspire this group of believers to continue the good work of this church in ways that He is calling each person to serve.

Session 12

1. As members arrive, ask them to think of times of individual victory, how they achieved the victory, and how they disciplined themselves to reach their goal.
2. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
3. Invite members to share their individual stories of victories in small groups. Then ask them to share in the same small groups times of spiritual victory. Ask them if they had support from other people, from God. How did their relationship with God and the fellowship of believers help them have a personal spiritual victory?
4. Divide into three small groups to look at steps 2, 3, and 4 and to prepare to lead a discussion of Scriptures, answers to questions, and applications for your church. As small groups report, add any additional content from *Eternal Impact*.
5. End this time with eyes-open prayers of praise and thanksgiving for what God has done and is doing in individual members' lives and in the church as a whole

Session 13

1. Review the main lessons from *Eternal Impact: The Passion of Kingdom-Centered Communities* by Ken Hemphill.
2. If possible, preview DVD segment 7.
3. Be prepared to share a goal you have as a result of this study.
4. Provide Bibles and pens or pencils.
5. As members arrive, direct them into small groups of four or five. Ask them to look through their books and to share one truth, one verse or Scripture passage, one thing they read, something from a DVD segment, or something from class discussion that was especially
6. Watch DVD segment 7.
7. Turn the discussion to your church. Use the questions in the group study to guide your discussion.
8. Brainstorm ideas for what you would like to see happen in your church as a result of this study. Record ideas to share with appropriate leadership teams and committees.
9. Share your goal and ask others to share goals they have made regarding their ministry in and through your church.
10. Pray for God's guidance for individuals in your church and for your church, its mission, and God's direction as you implement your dreams resulting from this study.
11. After the study, share the ideas as planned and directed by church leaders.