



**GROUP DISCUSSION**  
**LEADER GUIDE**

# INTRODUCTORY NOTES FOR GROUP LEADERS

Thank you so much for using Panic Room for a group discussion class. This guide is designed to help you lead the class and the discussion questions that are available in the Panic Room book.

Panic Room group meetings are designed to be discussion oriented. You'll notice that the lessons focus on a few principles with questions for discussion. You can modify this as much as you want, but most questions are "open-ended."

Generally, there are no right or wrong answers, but the questions are designed to give attendees an opportunity to share experiences from their lives. This way, attendees learn from each other's faith experiences. As a meeting leader, your primary goal is to keep the conversation on track, manage time, and make sure everyone has an opportunity to share. As such, here are some quick tips from our experience:

- Avoid directly calling on a person unless you know he or she is comfortable talking. This includes prayer time as well.
- Watch out for "conversation hijacking." This happens when one person talks too much or tries to dominate the meeting. Also, conversation tends to drift, so you may find that things are getting off track. As the meeting leader, you can gently keep things moving in the right direction as needed.
- Meetings should last about an hour. Generally, meetings that last longer than this tend to lose their effectiveness and people have a tendency to not return. In other words, start on time and end on time. This makes attendees more comfortable knowing they won't be "held hostage" in a meeting.
- Keep an eye on the time. Know about how much time you want to spend on each section of the lesson so that you finish on time.
- Be sure to make yourself available after the meeting for people who may want to talk about personal matters.

- Spend some personal time in prayer. Although the meeting is a group discussion format, you are still the leader. Believe that God wants to use you to speak truth and encouragement into the lives of people.

## A Note about this Guide

This guide contains the same discussion questions that are found in the back of the Panic Room book (beginning on page 255). However, this guide contains additional instructions and helpful tips for you, the group leader. The instructions and tips are in **blue type**. Consider printing your guide on a color printer so you can easily see the group member content but also easily distinguish it from instructions for you. If you must print in black and white, use a yellow highlighter to highlight the instructions before the meeting. This will make your job easier!

## A Note about Videos

Videos segments by Pastor Curt Simmons are available for each lesson. You can download them at <http://www.panicroombook.com>. Click the Resources tab. These short videos are designed to enhance learning segments within the lesson. However, they are not required in order for the lesson to “make sense.” Use them if you want, but if not, just skip over the Video icons in the lessons.

Need a DVD of the videos? We'll make and ship one to you for free. Just email [hello@friendshipchurch.com](mailto:hello@friendshipchurch.com)



Open the meeting with a welcome and an opening prayer. This is also a good time to introduce yourself and see if everyone has a Panic Room book (and if there are any questions). This session covers the content in Chapters 1-4 and the content questions begin on page 255 of the book.



### **Play the Session 1 video**

Once the video has finished, have students discuss and answer Question 1, then after a few minutes, give some students an opportunity to read their lists to the entire group. Afterward, move to the Question 2.

1. With your group, make a list of the top fears you believe most people experience. Discuss why these fears are so common. How are these fears related?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

Consider reading the scripture passage to your group (this helps break the ice if you're working with a new group of people). Answers to this question will vary based on life experience, and that's what you want. Make sure you affirm answers. This helps group attendees know that your class is a safe place to share ideas and thoughts.

2. Read Matthew 6: 25-34. Why do we have so much trouble living out this passage on a daily basis?

Next, have students answer Question 3. You can do this in small groups of two or three, or if your group is less than ten people, you can discuss this question as one group.

3. Our brains interpret fear, and this interpretation often creates physical symptoms. When you're afraid, what are some of the physical symptoms you experience? Discuss this with your group.

As you move to Question 4, you may ask for a volunteer to read the scripture before the discussion begins. The answers you will get to the question will vary. Be sure to point out that Satan most often lies to us about faith. Satan always works to tear down our faith in God so that we won't trust him with our lives. If he can do that, then fear can take over everything.

4. Read what Jesus said about Satan in John 8:44. How does Satan lie to us about fear? Discuss this with your group and write down three specific things Satan lies about regarding fear:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

For Question 5, the section in the book referenced in Chapter 3 is on page 39, paragraph 2, if you want to review it with your group. You should have a personal experience prepared for this question. If you, as the leader, share your experience first, this will encourage others to share.

5. In Chapter 3, Curt mentions that Satan poses a lot of "What If" statements as he uses fear against us. In your group, talk about a time when you were afraid. What were the "What If's" you worried about?

You may have to guide Question 6 a bit. Consider reading Psalm 111:10 as a lead-in. As the group discusses the question, be sure and make these points:

- The fear the Bible speaks of is a deep reverence and respect for God. You can think of it as “awe.” The Bible teaches that we should fear God just because of who he is.
- Being “scared” is different. God never tells us to be scared of him. In fact, Jesus often said to his disciples “do not be afraid” when they were “scared.” We are scared when we believe God is out to “get” us or harm us in some way, and this belief is not consistent with the Bible. God is never out to get us or harm us.

6. In Chapter 4, Curt talks about the difference between “fearing God” and “being scared of God.” Discuss the difference with your group.

For Question 7, consider reading the two scenarios on page 55-56 of **Panic Room** to help students respond to this question.

7. It seems that faith and fear are two opposite things. However, as we think about the “fear of the Lord,” faith and fear are closely tied. How can a correct “fear of the Lord” actually move us to take greater steps of faith? (Hint: It has to do with God’s love for us).

For Question 8, the responses will vary a bit, and that is fine. Be sure to point out that God’s love for us and our love for him will always override fear in our lives. The more time we spend developing our relationship with Jesus and pursuing him, the less room fear has in our lives.

8. Read 1 John 4: 16-19. How does “perfect love expel all fear?”

**For Personal Reflection:** How is fear keeping you from following God? Identify some major stresses or fears you are dealing with right now. Are there some specific steps of faith you can take so that God’s perfect love “expels” these fears in your life?

Encourage students to complete the For Personal Reflection question on their own, and then close the meeting with prayer requests and prayer time.



Open the meeting with a welcome and an opening prayer. This session covers the content in Chapters 5-9 and the content questions begin on page 259 of the book.

If time permits, you may open with this leading question, “What do you remember most from our session last week?”



### **Play the Session 2 video**

As you move to the questions, say, “This session looks at several common fears we all deal with, so we’ll look at several topics. Let’s get started with the first one.”

Ask someone to read the scripture passage. As a group, get some feedback on Question 1. Answers will vary and that’s fine – this question is designed to break the ice.

1. People are often afraid of death, and that fear is really a fear of the “unknown.” Read Revelation 21: 1-4. How does this passage remove the fear of the unknown for you?

Question 2 is a good question for groups of 3-5 people to discuss and brainstorm the list. Give them just a few minutes and then ask a few people to report back to the entire class. Watch the clock because you can easily spend too much time on this question.

2. As you think about heaven and our eternity with God, make a list of five things you know from the Bible that gives you peace and hope about eternity.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

For Question 3, have someone read the scripture passage. Be sure to point out that the passage does NOT say we should “feel” joyful in difficult times – the passage is saying there is an “opportunity for joy.” If you have a personal experience of this to share as the group leader, do so. This will help you get more feedback from attendees.

3. We all want to avoid pain, and the fear of pain can be difficult to manage. Read James 1: 2-4 and discuss how difficult times are an opportunity for “joy.” If you have had an experience where something painful helped you grow in your faith, share your experience with your group.

Keep Question 4 short – get a few quick answers here and move on to save time.

4. Most people fear failure. In the space below, write a sentence or two explaining why people fear failure. Then, discuss your answers with your group.

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Depending on your group, Question 5 can take up the entire class time, or you could be faced with blank stares (in other words, people do not want to share). You should have a personal experience prepared to share here in case you do not get a good response to the question. Often, however, if you share a personal story, someone else will also.

5. Talk about a time when you failed. Yet later, you discovered that this “failure” was actually the best thing for you.

Ask someone to read the scripture passage. You’ll get different responses to this question, and that’s fine.

6. Read Romans 8: 31-39. In your group, talk about this passage together. What speaks to you the most? What encourages you the most? How is this passage important when we deal with rejection and failure in our lives?

For Question 7, you may just answer this question quickly as a group in order to save time. You’ll likely get a lot of quick responses here.



7. List three things you fear about the future.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

For Question 8, you'll get different responses. Be sure to point out / say, "The Bible teaches that God is a being who is outside of our understanding of time. This means that God not only knows the future, but he is already "in" your future. In fact, when the Bible spoke of future events, God often spoke of them as if they had already happened. God's ways and actions are much bigger than we understand, and since we know how much he loves us, we can trust him with the future." If time permits, also read Isaiah 55: 8-9.

8. As you think about your fears, how does the concept of God's "timelessness" build your faith?

For Question 9, you can answer this as a group, or if time permits, have people discuss in groups of 3-5, then report back to the class what they wrote down.

9. Read Matthew 6:34. With your group, think about a few specific things you can do to live out this verse on a daily basis. Write your ideas in the space below.

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**For Personal Reflection:** God's love for you is a love of action—to the cross and back again. As you think about God's love, how is his perfect love working to expel fear in your life? Are there things you can do that will help you trust him more so that the panic room loses its power in your life?

Encourage students to complete the For Personal Reflection question on their own, and then close the meeting with prayer requests and prayer time.



Open the meeting with a welcome and an opening prayer. This session covers the content in Chapters 10-14 and the content questions begin on page 263 of the book.

If time permits, you may open with this leading question, “What do you remember most from our session last week?”



### **Play the Part 3 video**

To begin the discussion, say, “One of the biggest reasons we end up in the Panic Room is our need to control life as well as other people. In other words, we are all “control freaks” in one way or another. The questions we’ll explore have a lot do with the contrast of God’s control in our lives and our fear of losing control.”

Question 1 is “open ended” so you may get a few different responses. You should also have an answer prepared to get the conversation going.

1. With your group, talk about a decision you made in the past that you later regretted. What caused the regret? Was there anything you could have done differently to avoid the regret? How did the regret interact with fear in your life?

For Question 2, be sure to point out that God's will is not about the future – it is about what is happening right now. If we want to be in God's will in the future, then we have to strive to be in God's will today, which often means setting aside the need to control our lives (ie, we need to trade our control for God's control).

2. In Chapter 10, Curt makes the statement, "God's will is everywhere." In other words, God's will is not a future event, but it is happening right now. Talk about this idea with your group. How is God's will at work in your life right now? How does this understanding of God's will impact your fear of regret?

**Question 3 is open-ended. Responses will vary and you should have an experience prepared to share.**

3. When we deal with the fear of hope, prayer and worship are critical keys to finding hope again. Talk about a time in your life when you felt hopeless. How did God move you from a place of hopelessness to a place of peace that was greater than your understanding?

**Question 4 is quick response question, so don't spend a lot of time here. Be sure to point out that "love" requires "trust."**

4. Think about the fear of love and write down three reasons why many people are afraid of love:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 5 is open-ended. You'll get several different ideas and perspectives.**

5. Read Matthew 22: 37-40. How can we live out Jesus' instructions on a daily basis? Write down some things that come to mind and discuss them with your group:

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**Question 6 is also open-ended. You'll get several different ideas and perspectives.**

6. In Chapter 13, Curt mentions that we are all "control freaks." What are some things in your life that you try to regularly control?

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For Question 7, the authority zone graphic is on page 177 of the Panic Room book. Refer to it and review the zones quickly with your group. If you want to display the graphic on a PowerPoint slide, you can download it at [panicroombook.com/resources](http://panicroombook.com/resources).

7. With your group, talk about the zones of authority in Chapter 13. What authority zone do you struggle with the most? How does that struggle create stress and fear in your life?

Question 8, you'll get different responses. You may point out that the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, comforts us, gives us spiritual gifts, empowers us for the Christian life, etc.

8. With your group, brainstorm a list of things the Holy Spirit does in the life of a believer.

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Question 9, have someone read the scripture. For this scripture to “work” in our lives, it requires us to daily give up control and live under the authority of God’s control. Life is always a spiritual battle against fear, and as we seek to live by the Spirit, God’s love and authority over us give us peace.

9. With your group, read and talk about Zechariah 4:6. What are some practical ways that we can daily live out this verse?

**For Personal Reflection:** One of the key issues we have to contend with is our need for “control.” As you think about control, what areas of your life are you trying to control under your own strength and power instead of depending on God’s control in your life? How can you reduce your need to control these areas of life and also reduce the fear that surrounds them?

Encourage students to complete the For Personal Reflection question on their own, and then close the meeting with prayer requests and prayer time.



Open the meeting with a welcome and an opening prayer. This session covers the content in Chapters 15-19 and the content questions begin on page 267 of the book.

If time permits, you may open with this leading question, “What do you remember most from our session last week?”



### **Play the Session 4 video**

As you begin this session, say, “Fear has a lot to do with faith. In this final session, we’ll talk about some ideas concerning faith and following God.”

Question 1 should be quick – get some ideas from your group and then move on to the next question.

1. In Chapter 15, Curt compares “unforgiveness” to radiation—it’s something that is deadly in our lives. With your group, brainstorm a list of personal problems that unforgiveness can create in your life.

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Question 2, you should have something prepared to say. Because this question is so personal, people may be reluctant to share. Also, tell students that if they share an experience, do not give out the names of people involved.

2. As we think about complex forgiveness (the kind where you forgive someone from your past who has never apologized or repented), there is always a “control” issue we have to deal with. With your group, talk about a time when you had to forgive someone who never apologized. How did the need to control the situation play into the process of forgiveness?

For Question 3, explain that the “threshold” is a place where you have to move away from the Panic Room and into “dealing” with the issue that’s creating the fear. A personal experience will help spark discussion.

3. In Chapter 16, Curt says that you often have to step across the threshold of the panic room into the fire—but if you do that, you’ll step out of the fire again. Talk with your group about a time when you had to step into the fire of faith and how God brought you through that experience.

Question 4 is open-ended. Responses will vary based on life experiences.

4. Do you have a threshold buddy? Someone who can help you make the difficult decisions that bring you across the threshold of the panic room door? Talk with your group about a friend who helped you make a difficult decision. How important was that friendship? What difference did he or she make in your life?

Question 5 is open-ended. Be sure to review Chapter 17 for this discussion question.

5. In Chapter 17, Curt says that Jesus is the “door” out of the panic room. In the space below, write down your thoughts. How does the door of Jesus impact your thinking about faith and fear? How does he help you?

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For Question 6, you’ll get a variety of answers, such as prayer, reading the Bible, spending time with the right people, attending church consistently, etc.

6. There's a power in repetition—consistently doing the right things over and over again. With your group, talk about some of the repetitive actions we can take that will help build faith and reduce fear in our lives.

**For Question 7, answers will vary based on life experiences.**

7. Read Matthew 28: 18-20. This passage is often called “The Great Commission.” It's the mission statement for the church and for us as individuals. Jesus reminds us in this passage that he is with us until he returns. How does knowing that Jesus is with you every moment of every day build your faith and confidence? How does this affect problems, struggles, and fears that you deal with?

**For Question 8, answers will vary based on life experiences.**

8. In Chapter 18, Curt talks about the idea of “agents.” Talk with your group about an agent in your life—someone who always helps you follow God and have faith in him. How has this person impacted your life?

**For Question 9, answers will vary based on life experiences. Consider having a personal experience to share.**

9. Living beyond fear is all about your relationship with Jesus. Talk with your group about a time in your life when God led you to take steps of faith in spite of the fear you felt.

**For Personal Reflection:** The panic room is a mind game—it's the place where you struggle with faith and fear. However, the key to living beyond fear is your personal relationship with Jesus. What are some specific things you can do to move closer to God in your daily life? What are some things in your life that are hindering your relationship with him?

**Encourage students to complete the For Personal Reflection question on their own, and then close the meeting with prayer requests and prayer time.**