

SWITCH: EASTER CHANGES EVERYTHING

Facilitator Guide



INDEX

Introduction to Series Companion.....	page 2
Conversation Covenant.....	page 3
General Tips for Guiding Conversations.....	page 4
Weekly Session Guide.....	page 5

WHAT IS THIS GUIDE? | Tips, tricks, and additional context for facilitators who are directing small group discussion week to week. Corresponds with *Switch: Easter Changes Everything* Sermon Series Companion.

WHAT IS IT FOR? | For group facilitation or use on your own. The Weekly Session Guide section gives facilitators an outline to work from during small group discussions.

Introduction to Series Companion

Overview of Switch: Easter Changes Everything

This is a facilitator's guide that corresponds with the *Switch: Easter Changes Everything* sermon series companion, which is a six-week small group study that corresponds with Highrock's six-week *Switch: Easter Changes Everything* sermon series. Sermons can be viewed on Highrock Online's [YouTube channel](#).

April 24	Week 1. Excluded to Included
May 1	Week 2. Death to Life
May 8	Week 3. Divided to United
May 15	Week 4. Darkness to Light
May 22	Week 5. Household Chores
May 29	Week 6. Vulnerable to Prepared

In the Sermon Series Companion, there are four main components: LISTEN, READ, REFLECT, and RELATE. The Listen and Read sections are intended to be done by individuals prior to a small group meeting. Participants should come to the small group meeting prepared to share their thoughts/observations from the Listen and Read sections.

Overarching Goals of *Switch: Easter Changes Everything* Sermon Series Companion

The primary objective of the *Switch* sermon series companion is that people will engage with the scripture text and the sermon individually, deepen/explore that engagement further through conversation with small group partners, and apply their reflection(s) to their lived faith out in the community.

Approx. Session Length | 60 minutes

Materials Needed

- *Switch: Easter Changes Everything* Sermon Series Companion
- Bible
- Writing utensil

Conversation Covenant

About

We hope that all small group discussions are lively and enriching, but sometimes conversation topics that are tough will be discussed, too. The Conversation Covenant* is an agreement to hold respect and grace toward all participants within a small group, no matter the conversation. Please adhere to the Conversation Covenant, or think about how to create one that fits your context.

*Adapted from <https://conversational-leadership.net/conversation-covenant/>

I pledge:

To act in good faith, with curiosity. *I will assume the best about my conversation partners when entering into our groups. I will give the benefit of the doubt, recognizing that they may know something I don't.*

To show respect. *I will show respect. I will be polite and give due regard for the feelings and traditions of others. I understand that I do not have to agree with someone to show them respect.*

To speak the truth. *I won't use rhetorical tricks to try to win an argument. I will speak what I genuinely believe is the nuanced truth.*

To aim to discover the truth. *I will not enter into a conversation with the purpose of changing the mind of anyone to my way of thinking.*

To focus on what we can change. *I will focus on what we can do differently in the future since we cannot change what we did in the past.*

To take responsibility for the conversation. *I will take responsibility for the quality of the conversation and the abidance of the rules both in principle and in spirit.*

To follow the covenant even when others fail to do so. *I will abide by the rules regardless of whether another person breaks them.*

To lighten-up and approach the conversation in good humor. *I recognize that humor is a hallmark of a constructive, generative conversation and take the conversation in good humor.*

General Tips for Guiding Conversations

- **Allow everyone space to share.** It's ok to ask what people are thinking even if they don't volunteer to share right away. But always give people the option to decline to share. Example: "Hey, Fred, you've been a little quiet and I'm curious to know what you think. Would you like to share anything?"
- **Remember there aren't necessarily "right" answers.** Encourage participants to simply be curious about what came up for them or others without the pressure of feeling like they "should" have thought or felt anything in particular. Example: Instead of asking "what is this story supposed to be communicating?" ask "what did you notice?"
- **Embrace the differences.** Affirm that different people can come to different conclusions regarding the same thing. Example: "It is really interesting that the text reminded Susie of ABC, while it reminded José of XYZ. Both can be present and true."
- **Adapt to suit your group's needs.** Sometimes conversation is free-flowing and sometimes it's easier to move through discussion questions one at a time. Do what feels right for your group, but don't feel pressured to answer/discuss every single question.
- **Encourage curiosity by modeling curiosity!** Asking someone "Tell me more about XYZ" can be a really simple but effective tool to go deeper in conversation.
- **Don't be afraid of silence.** It's natural to want to fill silences or pauses in a conversation. But don't be afraid to sit in silence with your group members. Sometimes thoughts just need time to percolate, so don't feel like you have to rush to another question if no one shares immediately.
- **Refer back to the Conversation Covenant.** This is the posture that we as Highrock hold as we gather in groups. When the conversation gets tough, you can always refer back to the Conversation Covenant to remind the group that everyone has agreed to abide by this covenant in small group meetings

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Weekly Session Guide

KICKOFF | Jumpstart your time together with one of these “icebreaker” questions

- *What was a small win from your week?*
- *On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing coming into this meeting?*
- *If you were to describe yourself as a weather forecast today, what would you be? Example: sunny, partly cloudy, rainy with a chance of snow, etc.*
- *Share a High/Low from your day or week.*
- *If there were a soundtrack to your day, what would the music be?*

KICKOFF (5-8 min)
OPENING PRAYER (1 min)
(re)READ, optional (1-2 min)
REFLECT (30-35 min)
RELATE (15-20 min)
CLOSING PRAYER (1 min)

OPENING PRAYER | Begin with this prayer or one of your own.

Holy and gracious God, we thank you for this time of discussion and fellowship. We invite you into this space, even as we know that you are already here before us preparing our way. May our conversation be pleasing and glorifying to you. Amen.

(re)READ (optional) | If the group finds it helpful, take a couple of minutes to read aloud the Ephesians scripture passage for that week. You can have one reader or break up the text with multiple readers.

Week 1: [Ephesians 1:1-14](#)

Week 2: [Ephesians 2:1-10](#)

Week 3: [Ephesians 2:11-22](#)

Week 4: [Ephesians 4:1 - 5:20](#)

Week 5: [Ephesians 5:21 - 6:10](#)

Week 6: [Ephesians 6:10-17](#)

REFLECT | Spend the majority of your time discussing the following prompts. You may have time to only discuss 3 or 4 of them, which is ok! Also, see “General Tips for Guiding Conversations.”

1. Discuss with the group the observations/curiosities/questions that came up during the Listen and Read sections. People can share their one-sentence summaries.

Here are the questions from the LISTEN and READ sections that you can go over/share together:

- *What are your initial reactions to the sermon? Note any curiosities, questions, or interesting points (anything surprising? controversial? mysterious? life-giving?):*
- *Themes (What were the main topics touched upon?):*
- *My one-sentence summary of the sermon/text:*

OBJECTIVE: For group members to show what they have been able to identify, interpret, and summarize from both that week’s sermon and scripture passage.

WEEKLY SESSION GUIDE (continued)

<p>2. Are there connections between this scripture and your life today? What are they?</p> <p><i>TIP: You can use what people have already named as themes of the text (what stood out to them) as a jumping-off point to begin drawing connections.</i></p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: For group members to identify and relate aspects of that week’s scripture text with aspects of their present-day life.</p>
<p>3. Are there connections between the themes of the sermon and your life today? What are they?</p> <p><i>TIP: You can use what people have already named as the “main point” or what stood out to them as a jumping off point to begin drawing connections.</i></p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: For group members to identify and relate aspects of that week’s sermon with aspects of their present-day life.</p>
<p>4. SERMON-SPECIFIC QUESTION:</p> <p>Week 1: Share your own experiences of inclusion and/or exclusion.</p> <p><i>TIP: Saying “Thanks for sharing” can go a long way to fostering an environment where people feel comfortable sharing/listening.</i></p> <p>Week 2: What leads to death (either literal or figurative/spiritual)? What leads to life?</p> <p><i>TIP: Different people might have different answers to this question – that’s ok!</i></p> <p>Week 3: Share experiences of both division and unity. What was it like to be divided? What was it like to be united?</p> <p><i>TIP: If people are struggling to answer the “what was it like...” questions, try reframing the question as “how did YOU feel in the moment of division/unity?”</i></p> <p>Week 4: In what way(s) have you experienced transformation personally? Can you name a way you hope to grow in maturity in the future?</p> <p><i>TIP: The discussion from this question could be great to revisit during the RELATE section.</i></p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: For group members to identify, explain, and/or interpret aspects of the themes brought out in the sermon and/or scripture text.</p>

WEEKLY SESSION GUIDE (continued)

<p>Week 5: In this passage, Paul is writing about what it means to be faithful to the vision of the Kingdom of God in a particular context. What does it mean to be faithful to the vision of the Kingdom of God in your own context?</p> <p><i>TIP: This particular passage may generate a lot of feelings in people. Historically, it has sometimes been used in oppressive ways that do not fully honor the image of God in everyone – and it might even be helpful for you to explicitly acknowledge that. Be gentle in this discussion and always refer back to the Conversation Covenant if/when things get tough.</i></p> <p>Week 6: How do you understand Paul’s final call at the end of this letter? What attitudes and actions is Paul encouraging the Ephesians to take? What do you think Paul would say to your community of faith?</p> <p><i>TIP: Remember there isn’t necessarily a “right” answer.</i></p>	
<p>5. Does this week’s scripture, sermon, or discussion shift/expand/change your picture of God? of others? of yourself? If so, how?</p> <p><i>TIP: If there is something particular that has generated a lot of discussion within your group, reference that topic/theme and then ask if that has caused people’s view of God/others/themself to shift, expand, or change.</i></p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: For group members to 1) identify aspects of the scripture text, sermon, and/or discussion and apply those aspects of their understanding of God, others, and/or themself; and 2) analyze and conclude if those aspects shift, expand, or change their understanding of God, others, and/or themself.</p>

BIG QUESTIONS? | Discussions in small groups can often bring up some big questions theologically, personally, and biblically. Highrock pastors and staff are available to listen and talk through any of these with you and or your group. There may not be clear answers, but we are here with you on the journey! Don’t hesitate to reach out!

WEEKLY SESSION GUIDE (continued)

RELATE | Transition the group to the following prompts to conclude your small group time. You can discuss them aloud or give participants a few minutes on their own to consider their response and then share. Remember, the aim is to intentionally consider any real implications of the text, sermon, or discussion in our daily lives as people of faith.

<p>1. What might God be inviting you to do/pray/consider through this week’s reading, sermon, or discussion? A next step might be:</p> <p><i>TIP: If people are struggling to come up with something, remind the group of something (a theme, topic, or question) that came up during discussion and then ask people to consider how God may be moving in that.</i></p> <p><i>TIP: A “next step” is not about ticking off a box. Rather, it is an invitation to remember that because our faith is a lived reality it’s important to think of how that might manifest in concrete ways in our lives.</i></p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: For group members to 1) assess and conclude what actionable items God might be inviting them into; and 2) formulate a plan for concrete steps to take.</p>
<p>2. What is the implication of this text for our lives? How do we think, feel, and act in light of this text?</p> <p><i>TIP: It’s ok to struggle with finding the real-life implication of scripture for our lives. Sometimes it jumps out at us and sometimes it doesn’t. Affirm that it’s also ok to still wrestle with a text.</i></p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: For group members to 1) determine concrete implications of the scripture text to everyday life; and 2) imagine how to think, feel, and act because of those implications.</p>
<p>3. Someone (else) I’d like to talk to about this with is:</p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>TIP: It might be helpful to frame this step not as a “You have to do this” but as an “Out of an abundance of your own joy, who would you want to share this with? Who might the Spirit be leading you to?”</i></p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: For group members to identify and plan to talk to a person outside their small group with whom they would like to further discuss their learnings.</p>

WEEKLY SESSION GUIDE (continued)

CLOSING PRAYER | Conclude with this prayer or one of your own.

Week 1

INHALE: *God, may we draw in others*

EXHALE: *As you draw us in*

Week 2

INHALE: *God, gather us in*

EXHALE: *And make us your own*

Week 3

INHALE: *God of all,*

EXHALE: *Bring us together*

Week 4

INHALE: *Living God,*

EXHALE: *Fill us with your Spirit*

Week 5

INHALE: *God of the Covenant,*

EXHALE: *Move us to your mission*

Week 6

INHALE: *God who freely serves,*

EXHALE: *Free us to serve*