



WINTER 2026

ENCOUNTER & FOLLOW

GUIDE

a guide for following Jesus in everyday life





you're invited.

We are stepping into a journey of encountering and following Jesus together. This is the heart of our mission at Orchard Hill Church: helping next generations encounter and follow Jesus to bless a broken world. You're invited into this journey — not to walk it alone, but to discover more of who Jesus is and what it means to trust Him in your everyday life. This *Encounter and Follow Guide* is meant to come alongside you, offering practical ways to take your next step with Jesus.

The pages of this booklet are centered around how we live out this mission through four key strategies: engaging the Bible, belonging in community, investing in others, and worshiping God. Our prayer is that as you lean into these practices, you will **encounter** God's presence in fresh ways and **follow** Jesus in your everyday life.

table of contents.

01 Engage the Bible

- Acts Bible Reading Plan
- Inductive Bible Study
- Additional Resources

05 Belong in Community

- Ordinary Moments
- Supporting Others
- Bake a Treat

11 Worship God

- Musical Worship
- Spiritual Gift Assessment
- Scripture Meditation

15 Invest in Others

- Missions
- Serve The Church
- Serve The Community
- Serve The World

ENGAGE

the bible



The Book of Acts: Reading Plan

Our Sunday morning teaching series is focusing on Acts chapters 13-28. We invite you to read along — whether through the plan provided, at your own pace, or by listening on an app. The Book of Acts tells the story of the early church: ordinary people empowered by the Holy Spirit to share the good news of Jesus. We invite you not only to read about what God did **then**, but to notice how God is still alive and active **today**.

Our hope is that as you consistently spend time in God's Word, your faith will grow, your love for Jesus will deepen, and your awareness of His presence in your everyday life will increase. Don't worry if you miss a day. The goal isn't perfection, but consistency. Let's walk through Acts together and see how God uses His Word to shape us as a church family.

Want **daily text reminders** of what to read + a reflection question?
Text **ACTS** to 319-553-6690 ***Text reminders will be sent January 12 - February 9.

Week 1

- Day 1: Acts 13:1-25
- Day 2: Acts 13:26-52
- Day 3: Acts 14
- Day 4: Acts 15:1-21
- Day 5: Acts 15:22-41
- Day 6: Acts 16:1-15
- Day 7: Reflection / Catch-up

Week 2

- Day 8: Acts 16:16-41
- Day 9: Acts 17:1-15
- Day 10: Acts 17:16-34
- Day 11: Acts 18:1-17
- Day 12: Acts 18:18-28
- Day 13: Acts 19:1-20
- Day 14: Reflection / Catch-up

Week 3

- Day 15: Acts 19:21-41
- Day 16: Acts 20
- Day 17: Acts 21:1-16
- Day 18: Acts 21:17-40
- Day 19: Acts 22
- Day 20: Acts 23
- Day 21: Reflection / Catch-up

Week 4

- Day 22: Acts 24
- Day 23: Acts 25
- Day 24: Acts 26
- Day 25: Acts 27:1-26
- Day 26: Acts 27:27-44
- Day 27: Acts 28
- Day 28: Extra reflection/catch up days or re-read favorite sections

The Book of Acts: Inductive Bible Study

The Inductive Bible Study is a method that helps you deeply engage with Scripture through observation, interpretation, and application—asking what the text says, what it means, and how it applies to life. Try this method out as you read Acts to see if it leads you to new insights!

Pray | Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your study

Observe | What does the text say?

1. Ask Investigative Questions

Who is speaking?

Who are the main people?

Who is being spoken to?

What is happening?

What is the scene?

What is the cultural context?

Where is the passage taking place?

When did or will the events take place?

2. Look for Grammatical Questions

*Repeated Words, Comparisons, Contrasts,
Cause & Effect*

3. Identify Keywords & Phrases

Interpret | What does the passage mean?

1. Develop questions based on the text. Ask what is the significance of your main observations.

3. Answer your questions from the text.

2. Imagine the perspective of the people in the scene. If Jesus spoke, why did he say what he said?

4. Summarize the passage in one sentence. What is the main point the author is communicating to the audience?

Apply | What does the passage mean for me?

1. How do you respond to what this passage is saying? Does it challenge how you see the world?

3. Going forward how does this passage help us move forward in our mission?

2. How can you put this into practice? Is there a central truth that you need to apply?

4. Pray that God will help you believe and obey.

The Book of Acts: Additional Resources

The Bible Recap Podcast

The Bible Recap Podcast is a helpful tool as you journey through reading the Bible.. It offers a clear & accessible summary of chapters in the Bible. It's a practical tool to help you understand God's greater story as you read!



Orchard Hill Church Teachings

This past fall, our church went through Acts Chapters 1-12, and now this spring, we will be wrapping it up by going through Chapters 13-28. You can watch these teachings online anytime that works best for you!

orchardhillchurch.org/watch



Small Group Questions

Each Sunday, our teachers create small group questions tailored to that week's teaching. We encourage you to use these questions to spark meaningful conversation with your family, friends, or a small group — whether around the dining room table, in the car, or over a cup of coffee. orchardhillchurch.org/watch



A graphic featuring a lime green brushstroke shape. Inside the shape, there is a black silhouette of three stylized human figures in a triangular formation, with their heads pointing upwards. Below this, the word 'WORSHIP' is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Underneath 'WORSHIP', the word 'God' is written in a smaller, elegant, cursive script.

WORSHIP
God



Worship God: Scripture Meditation

Meditation isn't just a quiet activity- it's a form of worship that draws our hearts into deeper awareness of God's presence. When we slow down, linger over a passage, and let it speak to us, we are actively engaging with God, offering Him our attention, affection, and surrender. Instead of rushing through a chapter, meditation invites us to sit with a single verse or phrase, allowing it to shape our thoughts and transform us from the inside out.

Read | Psalm 134 "Praise the Lord, all you servants of the LORD who minister by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who is the Maker of heaven and earth."

Understand | This short psalm invites us to pause and remember that worship is not confined to a time or location. Worship is an ongoing posture of blessing God with our whole lives. When we meditate on Scripture like this, we're not just reading about worship; we're *practicing it*. We're letting our hearts be formed by the words we repeat, the truths we ponder, and the God we encounter in the quiet.

Reflect:

1. What word or phrase from Psalm 134 stands out to me, and why might God be highlighting it?
2. What does it mean for me to "bless the Lord" in my everyday life?
3. How does this psalm invite me to bring my attention, emotions, or desires before God today?
4. Where in my life do I sense God calling me to slow down and intentionally worship Him?



Worship God: Musical Worship

Musical worship has always been central to the life of God's people. From the psalms sung by ancient Israel to the songs we sing today, music has a unique way of lifting our eyes to God, shaping our faith, and reminding us of His presence. When we worship together through music, we join our voices as one body, declaring God's goodness and encouraging one another in truth.

Still, entering into musical worship isn't always easy. Maybe you don't feel confident in singing out loud, the songs are unfamiliar, or your heart feels distracted. But musical worship isn't about perfection—it's about offering yourself to God just as you are.

Here's a playlist of songs we often sing together on Sunday mornings:



Try listening to one or two on repeat this week as a reminder of God's promises. You might play the playlist on your drive home from school, while doing the dishes, or even as you wind down before bed—simple moments where worship can draw your heart back to Him.



Worship God: Spiritual Gift Assessment

This Spiritual Gifts Survey is more than just a tool for discovery. It can also be a meaningful act of worship. As you thoughtfully answer each question, you're intentionally reflecting on how God has uniquely created and equipped you. This process becomes a way of offering your time, attention, and honesty back to Him. The survey highlights nine practical ministry gifts and, through self-reflective questions, helps reveal your dominant strengths. There are no right or wrong answer. This is an invitation to see yourself through God's gracious design. When you finish, you'll receive a clear breakdown of your gifts and personal insights to help you grow and use them to serve others. In this way, taking the assessment becomes an opportunity to honor God by recognizing His work in you and stepping more fully into the calling He's given you.

Here's how to learn your Spiritual Gifts:

Take the assessment | Spend a few minutes completing the spiritual gifts assessment to identify the unique ways God has equipped you to serve.

orchardhillchurch.org/spiritualgifts



Understand | Read through the descriptions of your top gifts and consider how God might use these strengths to build up others and support the church.

Connect | Begin putting your gifts into action. Try one or two simple opportunities at a time, stay patient, and pay attention to where you notice God working through you.



BELONG

in community



Belong in Community: In Your Ordinary Moments

"In the everyday rhythms of life, we learn that we can't follow Jesus alone - community is the place where we are formed, supported, and taught how to love."

- Liturgy of the Ordinary by Tish Harrison Warren

One of the most meaningful ways to practice **belonging** is simply to show up for others. Not just for big events, but for the small, everyday moments in someone else's life. When you step into another person's world, even briefly, you make them feel like their life matters to you. These shared moments build trust, create shared stories, and remind us that community is something we actively build together.

Jesus modeled a life of **presence**. He celebrated weddings, wept with friends, ate meals, walked dusty roads, and entered the everyday experiences of the people He loved. When we show up for one another, we reflect His heart. These moments don't have to be big to be meaningful; often, it's the simple act of being there that creates belonging. Showing up says, I see you. I'm with you. You're not walking alone.



Belong in Community: In Your Ordinary Moments

Put Into Practice:

Look for small opportunities to step into someone's moment:

Notice the little wins and the big ones. Send a quick “I’m proud of you” text, drop off a treat, or simply show up to cheer them on, smile, and share the joy.

Support them in a challenge:

Bring a coffee before a hard appointment. Sit with them when they’re stressed. Check in right before the thing they’re nervous about. Small gestures steady people in big moments.

Say yes to ordinary invitations:

Join them for a walk, a grocery run, or a study session. These everyday and ordinary moments build unexpected closeness.

Offer help when needed:

Babysit for an hour. Help carry something heavy. Run an errand together. These simple acts remind people they don’t have to handle life alone.

Mark important dates:

Remember birthdays, anniversaries, or meaningful moments. Celebrate the joyful ones, acknowledge the hard ones. A text, a note, or a small gesture says, “I see you, and I’m with you.”



Belong in Community: Bake a Treat

Baking a treat to bring to someone is a simple and heartfelt way to practice intentional community. A homemade cookie or warm loaf can remind a neighbor, friend, or even someone you're just getting to know that they're seen and valued. Whether you use the recipe we've provided or make a favorite of your own, let this small act of kindness open the door to connection. Dropping something off, checking in, or simply saying, "I was thinking of you." Sometimes belonging begins with something as simple as showing up with something sweet.

Chocolate Chip Cookie Bars

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) melted butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Line an 8x8 pan with parchment or lightly grease it.
2. In a bowl, whisk together melted butter and brown sugar until smooth.
3. Add the egg and vanilla; mix well.
4. Stir in flour, baking powder, and salt until just combined.
5. Fold in the chocolate chips.
6. Spread the dough evenly into the pan.
7. Bake for 20–25 minutes, or until the top is golden and the center is set.
8. Let cool completely, then cut into squares for easy sharing.



INVEST

in others



Serve: Invest in Others

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Where are you already investing in others? Take some time to think through this and write it below.

(Sometimes investing in others looks like baking bread for your neighbor, coaching your kids' sports team, phone calling a home bound friend, or being a classroom parent.)

We invite you to join us on a mission to **Invest in Others** in our church, in our community, and across the globe through trusted partners as a church body. Whatever season of life you find yourself in, there is something for you.

If serving is new to you, we've highlighted a few options for "first serve opportunities" [**look for ****] that might be a little easier to step into.

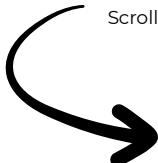
Here's your challenge: circle one option that you will say yes to this winter/spring or stretch yourself and say yes to one from each category!

Some of the options have a QR code to connect you directly with the serving opportunity. If there is not a QR code, feel free to connect with a member of our Missions team to learn more about that specific opportunity.

Want regular Missions Updates? Text **MISSIONS** to 319-553-6690 to get continued updates for serving opportunities in our community and abroad.

Missions Information

Scroll to bottom for Staff Contact Information





Serve: The Church

Serving in small, everyday ways within the church matters more than we often realize. Simple acts such as greeting someone at the door, stacking chairs, holding a baby in the nursery, or checking in on a newcomer, create the kind of warmth and consistency that help a community feel like home. These quiet, often unseen efforts build trust, foster belonging, and reflect the heart of Jesus, who modeled humble service. When everyone offers what they can, even in small ways, the church becomes a place where people are known, supported, and drawn closer to God through the love they experience.

**** Hospitality Team:** help make Orchard a friendly place by welcoming guests before each Sunday morning service.

**** Coffee House:** make & serve coffee on Sunday mornings during either worship service.

Kids Ministry: rock babies, play with toddlers, or hang out with elementary aged kids on a Sunday morning.

Community Meal: join a cook or clean up team to assist with monthly community meals.

Scan here for serving opportunities & get signed up





Serve: The Community

**** Try Pie:** purchase a pie from Try Pie or become a student employee mentor when their next batch of students join this summer

Sign up here



**** Youth Art Team:** participate in a biannual cleaning day at YAT's Headquarters in March or help cut & sand wood for their next art project this winter

Love Inc: drive neighbors to and from community transformation classes on Tuesday evenings this spring, make phone calls connecting neighbors to assistance they are needing, serve a meal to neighbors alongside other Orchard individuals on February 3

Habitat for Humanity: join the Orchard building crew (no experience needed!) or offer to make/purchase lunch for the crew - the 3rd Saturday of each month

Sign up here



Learning Group: Join our community learning group's events as we investigate books, films, and participate in small groups to listen to marginalized perspectives and grow deeper in our faith.



Serve: The World

**** Pray for our international partners:** Orchard has partnerships with UCI in Haiti and Food for the Hungry in Mozambique. Watch this video from Mozambique or Join UCI's newsletter to learn how to specifically pray for the ongoing needs in these two amazing countries.

UCI Newsletter



**** Donate an old suitcase:** We ship gifts to our sponsored kids in Haiti each fall and we pack them in old suitcases (the bigger, the better - They only need a working zipper!). Families in Haiti can reuse the suitcases for storage in their homes.

Sponsor a child: Child sponsorship is a monthly donation that allows a child to attend school, receive steady meals, and learn more about Jesus.

Impact Video



Contribute to hurricane relief efforts in Jamaica: BASIC (our college & young adults ministry) visits CCCD every spring break. Your donation will help with the recovery after the devastating hurricane this fall.

Jamaica Giving Link



Notes:

Notes:
