

# Begin a New Life

## Six-Week Program for Small Groups

### Week 1 Group Meeting

#### Step 1: Examine Yourself

#### Leader Guide

##### Meeting notes:

1. For a full description of how to run this meeting, go to the *Begin a New Life* website ([www.BeginaNewLife.info](http://www.BeginaNewLife.info)) ⇒ *Group Activities* ⇒ *Six-Week Small Groups*. Scroll down and click on the *Overview of Weekly Meetings*.
2. This outline is an example of a one-hour meeting that starts at 7:00 PM. Groups that want more time for *Group Sharing* can lengthen that part of the meeting and adjust the meeting's end time accordingly.

##### 7:00 PM Opening activities

1. Opening prayer
2. Reading:

Lord, You have searched me and known me.  
You know my sitting down and my rising up;  
You understand my thought afar off.  
You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.  
For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.  
You have protected me behind and before,  
And laid Your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
It is high, I cannot attain it.  
Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?  
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;  
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
Even there Your hand shall lead me,  
And Your right hand shall hold me.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"  
Even the night shall be light about me....  
Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my thoughts;  
And see if there is any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:1-11, 23-24)

3. Check-in
  - a. One highlight from each person's day or week, or one opening comment.
  - b. No cross talk or conversation during this part of the meeting.
  - c. Acknowledge each person's contribution with the words, "Thank you," before moving on to the next person.
  - d. Groups larger than eight are broken into groups of four to eight.
4. Group business
  - a. Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made.
5. Task for this meeting (to be read out loud)
 

**Step 1: Examine Yourself**

  - a. Choose one or another issue in your life that you'd like to work on.
    - 1) Note: For those who've recently attended a *BNL Seminar-Workshop*, it could be the same issue you worked on there.
  - b. Do *one* of the following:
    - 1) Use a new set of worksheets and go through all four steps of the *BNL* process for the issue you've chosen.
    - 2) Use a new set of Step 1 worksheets and go through Step 1 only.
    - 3) If you've recently attended a *BNL Seminar-Workshop*, review the Step 1 worksheets you filled in there, and fill them in more fully.
  - c. Read the article titled, *Three Ways to Become Aware of Your Thoughts* (go to the *Begin a New Life* website ([www.BeginaNewLife.info](http://www.BeginaNewLife.info)) ⇒ *Sourcebook*. Scroll down to "Extras" near the bottom of the page).
  - d. After completing Step 1 of the process, proceed to the next worksheet titled, *A Prayer from the Heart*, and do the spiritual work it asks for.
  - e. Come to the next meeting ready to share your experience of Step 1 of the *BNL* process; also your experience of "*A Prayer from the Heart*."

### 7:15 Group sharing

1. People share their experience of doing the task. Sharing is initiated by the question, "What was your experience of doing the task for this week?"
2. Note: In the event that sharing lags, there is a set of additional questions that can help. It appears at the end of this meeting outline. As group leader, you can listen during *Group Sharing*, decide which questions you think would be useful for the group, and ask them when appropriate. (Note: Some of the questions may have already been answered during initial sharing.) Continue in this way as needed until *Group Sharing* is over.

### 7:45 Closure

1. Task for the next meeting (to be read out loud)
 

**Step 2: Recognize and Acknowledge Your Sin**

  - a. Do *one* of the following:
    - 1) Using a new set of worksheets, go through all four steps of the *BNL* process for the issue you're working on.
    - 2) Using a new set of Step 1 and Step 2 worksheets, go through Steps 1 and 2 for the issue you're working on.

- 3) Review the Step 1 worksheets you've filled in so far, then go through a set of Step 2 worksheets for the issue you're working on.
  - b. Read *Section E* of the *Sourcebook*, titled, *When You're at Fault for a Wrongdoing...and When You're Not* (go to the *Begin a New Life* website ([www.BeginaNewLife.info](http://www.BeginaNewLife.info)) ⇒ *Sourcebook*).
  - c. Come to the next meeting ready to share your experience of Step 2 of the *BNL* process—*Recognize and Acknowledge Your Sin*.
2. Leader for the next meeting
    - a. If the group will have multiple leaders, decide who will lead the next meeting.
  3. Closing comments
    - a. One closing comment per person.
    - b. No cross talk or conversation during this part of the meeting.
    - c. Acknowledge each person's contribution with the words, "Thank you," before moving on to the next person.
    - d. Groups larger than eight are broken into groups of four to eight.
  4. The Lord's Prayer
    - a. The group stands, holds hands, and says *The Lord's Prayer* together. Those who prefer to listen may do so.

**8:00 End time**

## Additional Questions for Sharing

1. What was your experience of filling in column 1 of the Step 1 worksheets—*Actions & Words*? Please explain.
2. Same question for each of columns 2, 3, & 4— the *Thoughts, Intentions, and Desires & Will* columns?
3. As discussed in the article titled, *Three Ways to Become Aware of Your Thoughts*, did you try any of the methods described there—ask for God’s help to become aware of your thoughts, review what you’ve written in the *previous* column, and *Speak with the Enemies in the Gate*? If so, what was your experience of the method(s) you tried? Please explain.
4. What was it like for you getting started on self-examination? Please explain.
5. Did you hesitate or procrastinate when getting started on self-examination? If so, why did you hesitate or procrastinate, and what did you do to overcome these things? What happened when you *did* overcome them and moved forward through self-examination?
6. Did you experience grief of mind, heart, or conscience as you went through self-examination? Please describe. What impact did this have on you?
7. Did you sense God’s presence during self-examination? Please explain. Similar question: Did you have a sense of connection and/or working together with God during this part of the process? Please explain.
8. As described in the article, *Three Ways to Become Aware of Your Thoughts*, part 2, were there any “positives” that showed up during self-examination? If so, how did you “hold” them or regard them, relative to other things you were seeing/discover-ing/uncovering during this part of the process?
9. Following Step 1 of the process, you had an opportunity to offer “a prayer from the heart.” What was this like for you? What impact did it have? What value did it hold?