

Team: *SHE*

Welcome to Team:SHE! A four or five session study based on my book, SHE: A Journey of Faith, Hope and Love with Women of the Bible. So get your copy and then get the girls together and dive deep into God's heart for women. I know as you gather together God will breathe on your study and unleash a band of women who have confidence in their God and their God-mission!

It's all laid out for you below: A proposal (if you need it) that will help you get the study over the line with church leadership; and a session-by-session guide for facilitators.

So... get to it... there's no better excuse for a cuppa and a chat!

I so wish I could be with you, but let me know how it goes... I would LOVE to hear from you jennifer.gibbs@me.com. Your group can purchase copies at a discount from jengibbs.com.

Shine baby, shine!

Love, Jen x

Proposal for Women's Ministry

Aim:

To gather women for four or five sessions over **INSERT TIME PERIOD** to chat, connect and have coffee, with the purpose of reading and then discussing *SHE: A Journey of Faith, Hope and Love with Women of the Bible* by Jen Gibbs.

Purpose:

To strengthen the women gathered by helping them understanding God's heart for women and God's heart for them personally. Participants will consider foundational topics of Christian Faith, Hope and Love and at the same time create a strong community that will encourage and support other women to fulfil their God-given potential. This is a study that will ultimately unite women as they understand their commission to walk boldly into all God has for them.

When:

FOR EXAMPLE: Every Saturday in X-Month from 9-10:30am.

Where:

Insert location.

Structure:

Each woman attending will purchase *SHE: A Journey of Faith, Hope and Love with Women of the Bible* by Jen Gibbs. This book is available via jengibbs.com where there are group discounts on hard copies. It is also available via Christian resellers, Amazon.com and as an e-book for Kindle (via Amazon) and iBooks.

It is expected that each participant will have read ahead on each theme (following the session structure below) so that each woman comes having something to offer to the discussion – this instills a sense of value on each person attending. These discussions will often flow best around coffee and food in a relaxed atmosphere.

The structure will vary depending on the size of the group and the mix of those attending. The session notes below can be used as a guide - they provide a smorgasbord of ideas that the facilitator can pick from depending on the group's needs. Particularly if the group is a large one, the facilitator may choose to include things such as an icebreaker, a short interview with someone they know for each theme, small group discussions on the detailed questions and then a whole group summation of the salient points, an opening and closing prayer, maybe a song item, maybe even have some of the questions written on cards for tables as conversation starters. Some groups may also choose to anoint women with oil to commission them into what God has for them. The leader will judge what is best for their group.

Whether the study is delivered over four or five sessions is dependant on the leader. Session four on Love can be divided in two so that the conclusion, "United", becomes a commissioning session for women into all God has for them.

Videos:

For each of the sessions there is a corresponding video available for free from jengibbs.com and on YouTube, searching “Jen Gibbs SHE”. These videos are approximately five minutes duration and help the participants further consider the theme and what they’ve just read or discussed in *SHE*. The facilitator may choose to use these as an introduction or as a closer – the videos will work equally well both ways.

A note to facilitators:

The following session guides are suggestions and prompts. Facilitators will know what will work best for their particular group - so take some liberties! It is important that the facilitator steers discussion where needed for the sake of the group, balancing the dominant voices with the quieter voices. It is also important to note that a fresh understanding of God’s heart for women is *never* at the expense of men.

With small groups a good structure might be:

Social time - Intro - Video - Key Scripture - Key Questions - Key Excerpt - Conclusion - Prayer. Leave enough time at the end for one on one ministry.

With large groups a good structure might be:

Social time - Key Questions (left on tables for women to chat through together in small groups) - Facilitator then leads for 20 minutes: Intro - Key Scripture - Interview - Key Excerpt - Video - Conclusion - Prayer. Leave enough time at the end for one on one ministry.

SESSION ONE: God and Women (Chapters 1-3)

“SHE does not minimise or hide what God has made her for.”

Intro:

- Set the foundation for how the group will run. Expectations, timings etc.
- We are exploring God’s heart for us - his daughters.
- Jesus’ treatment of women was counter-cultural, both then and now! He trail-blazed a new way of valuing women - not as possessions but as daughters of God! He dignified women with every interaction. This is what we will witness over the coming sessions. He lifts us up as women of valour - capable, courageous, cherished.
- We want women to really connect with how God can use them, so make it personal wherever you can.

Key scripture:

- Jeremiah 1:5 “Before you were formed in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Key excerpt:

- The final paragraphs of chapters 1, 2 and 3. Consider reading one of the paragraphs out depending on what path you want the discussion to go down.
- The excerpt from the introduction (Beginning “By pausing to conscientiously study”... “we would see that in God, we are enough.” (p2-4) sets the scene well for the coming sessions.

Key questions:

- To which woman in the Bible do you most closely relate? Or Who is your favourite woman in the Bible and why?
- Now that you have read the first three chapters of *SHE* what fresh revelations did you have about how God uses women?
- What did you learn from these chapters about how Jesus interacted with women - was he really revolutionary?
- Share a time when God used you. Some women might find this difficult to do. If so, get others in the group to identify the ways in which that person is used.
- How can you bring these fresh revelations of God’s heart for women into your own relationship with God and into your own personal circumstances?

Interview:

- You may wish to interview someone who has an interesting story about how God has used them - in any sphere - it doesn't have to be confined to the walls of the church, but it has to show God's hand and focus on the outcomes of that person being willing and obedient to God's instruction.

Video:

- Jen Gibbs, [Introduction](#)

Conclusion:

- All these women of the Bible were used in vastly different ways, but all were used powerfully. Believe this for the women in your group and encourage them to not minimise or hide what God has made them for.

Prayer:

- Pray that God would reveal to each member of the group the truth of who they are in Him - Get them to listen and then to write it down and if they feel comfortable, share it with someone.

Just for reference: key questions from *SHE* (in case they help formulate your introduction or conclusion)

- What has been your understanding of God's heart towards women?
- Where did this understanding come from?
- As you have been reading these chapters, what has God revealed to you about His heart towards women?
- What in these first three chapters surprised or challenged you?
- Does the way Jesus treated women in the Bible differ to the way you (or other women you know) have been treated? If so, how?

Just for reference: Key women in *SHE* who demonstrate how God uses women (in case they help formulate your introduction or conclusion)

- Midwives, p46
- Moses' mother, p47
- Deborah, p48
- Jael, p50
- Hadassah/ Esther, p51
- Mary Magdalene, p53
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SESSION TWO: Faith - Trust Steadily

(Chapters 4-7 which consider Sarah, Hannah and the woman with the issue of blood.)

“SHE holds fast to her good God.”

Intro:

- This session is on Faith. Sometimes the concept of faith is difficult for people to grasp, but talking about trusting steadily can often open up discussion because trust is a more tangible term that people can relate to more readily.
- We want the session to land on the goodness of God. Get women to consider God’s goodness - how He has been good to them? Can they hand over those areas where they think they can’t trust God?

Key scripture:

- Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”
- Psalm 13:5-6 “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me.”
- Psalm 103:1-4 “Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.”
- Psalm 34:8 “Taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Key excerpt:

- To focus on the “Goodness” of God, refer to the closing paragraphs of chapter 4 beginning “The struggle became less about circumstances and all about faith... It is we who do not.” (p75-6)
- For a short quote: “So what if faith is less about super-human resolve to cope with everything life throws at us, and less about the miraculous answer at the end; and more about the struggle, tears and confusion in the middle, while yet still believing?” (p81)
- I personally love the story of God passing in front of Moses - to a nation condemned to death He first proclaims that He is compassionate (end of chapter 7, p114-5)

Key questions:

- How would you explain what faith is to someone who is not a Christian?
- What is your view on/ experience of faith?
- Is doubt ok? Is wrestling with God ok?
- Having read about Job and Sarah’s lives, what do you think about the problem of pain where we serve a God who is good?
- What do you think about the goodness of God? Do you know God to be good?
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Interview:

- Consider interviewing someone about their journey of faith. Every person has a unique experience. Cherish the story - however bold or quiet. Relevant questions for the interviewee may be: What does faith mean to you? Is doubt something you've struggled with? Has your faith been tested or stretched? Which story of a woman of the Bible has encouraged you and why?

Video:

- Jen Gibbs: [Faith](#)

Conclusion:

- No matter where you are at - know that God is good. He sees the beginning from the end, He is faithful and good and He has not forgotten us, we are His daughters and we can ask Him for what we need.

Prayer:

- Thank God for the faith journeys we are on. Ask God that every woman would come to know His goodness and in His goodness, know He can be trusted. That every woman would hear Him call her daughter.

Just for reference: Key women in *SHE* on Faith (*in case they help formulate your introduction or conclusion*)

- Sarah, p78. God's eternal perspective. We learn how to wait well.
- Hannah, p89. Her prayer that shaped history. God remembers us. Hannah's full surrender.
- Woman with the issue of blood, p100. Faith and healing. God calls her "daughter"!
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SESSION THREE: Hope Unswervingly

(Chapters 8-11 which consider Mary, the Canaanite woman, the widow of Zarephath, and the woman at the well.)

“SHE believes the best is yet to come because her eyes are fixed on Jesus.”

Intro:

- This session is on Hope. Start broad: What is hope? Why is hope included in these top three? Then narrow it to the hope that is Christ Jesus - Saving us from sin and death, the fact that hope in Christ is a hope for ALL - no one is excluded. And narrow it further by bringing focus on the individual - can hope be ignited in our circumstances?

Key scripture:

- Hebrews 6:19 “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.”
- Jeremiah 29:11 “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” See also the commentary on this verse given at the start of chapter 11 (p162)
- Isaiah 40:31 “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wing like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Key excerpt:

- It is through hope that we commune with God. (p124) (refer Hebrews 6:19 above)
- On the weight and the lightness of hope in God read the section titled: Where hope is placed. "Boethius ends his book...lifts us to joy." (P125-6) (Refer Isaiah 40:31 above)

Key questions:

- How does hope relate to or differ from optimism?
- What image comes to mind when you think of hope? eg a relentless budding and blooming plant, or the woman in rags sitting on a globe.
- How does hope operate as part of your relationship with God?
- Consider the chapter on Mary. What from her life can we glean for our lives?
- Think about the types of prayers you were praying during a time of challenge. Did they connect to hope?
- How do you know your hope is in God versus circumstances? Is there a clear distinction to be made?
- What in your life right now requires unswerving hope? Where do you think God is in this challenge?
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Interview:

- Consider interviewing someone about their experience or views on hope. Relevant questions for the interviewee may be: Tell us about a time when you had to cling to hope or where there has been a pivotal moment in your life where hope was ignited. What does Immanuel mean to you personally? Which story of a woman of the Bible has encouraged you and why?

Video:

- Jen Gibbs: [Hope](#)

Conclusion:

- No matter what we are going through we have a good God who knows and who cares, he is a God who is *with* us.

Prayer:

- Thank God that he is our Immanuel - God with us. He is our ultimate hope. Ask God to reassure us of his presence in the circumstances we are battling through now. Know that we can surrender our struggles to Him because of the hope of Christ Jesus.

Just for reference: Key women in *SHE* on Hope (*in case they help formulate your introduction or conclusion*)

- Mother Mary, p118 - Immanuel: God with us
- The Canaanite/ Syro-phonician woman, p148 - Hope for ALL
- The widow of Zarephath and the woman at the well - Life transforming hope
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SESSION FOUR: Love Extravagantly

(Chapters 12-15 which consider Ruth, the sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and Mary of Bethany.)

“SHE receives and then extends to others the extravagant love of God.”

Note: Groups may prefer to extend this session into two sessions: one on Love and another on commissioning the group as a band of women united in Him, focussing on the conclusion in *SHE*, “United”.

Intro:

- There may be “thank yous” that need to be said because it's the final session - choose whether to say these at the start or at the end.
- This session is on Love. He loves us! He can't help himself! The God of the universe - able to do anything he wants, can't help himself - He IS love, He loves us!

Key scripture:

- Jeremiah 31:3 “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.”
- Deuteronomy 33:12 “Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders.”
- Ephesians 3:17-19 “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Key excerpt:

- Contemplate the images of God's love I shared from the conference (Chapter 12, p185-6).
- The final two paragraphs of Mary's extravagant love (Chapter 15, p232).

Key questions:

- Consider the difference between a God who is good and a God who loves you.
- What has been your experience of God's love? How does the knowledge of God's love change things in your life?
- Do you think loving and giving are inextricably linked? Why/ why not?
- How do you see God's love for you extending from you in a practical sense to others?
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Interview:

- Consider interviewing someone about their experience of God's love for them personally. Relevant questions for the interviewee may be: Tell us about a time when you had a revelation of God's love for you. What was the consequence in your life of this revelation? What does God's love mean to you? Which story of a woman of the Bible has encouraged you and why?

Video:

- Jen Gibbs: [Love](#)

Conclusion:

- When we have a revelation of God's love for us it pours from our lives.
- Imagine what we could see as a band of women united by the revelation of God's heart for us.
- Quote Matthew Arnold ("United" chapter, p234).
- Read Psalm: "The Lord announces the word, and the women who proclaim it are a mighty throng."
- Read from the "United" chapter, P235 "And it is stirring to think about it; what if we were to unite in Christ for a revolution of good? What if we gleaned from these women and stood united with women globally, enriching every sphere of life with faith to sustain us, hope to inspire us, and a love that overwhelms us and overflows from us? What if together we shone a light on the heart of God for women?"
- Read also P246 "...with this legacy of formidable women.... those who proclaim The Word."

Prayer:

- Thank God for his love. Thank God for the sisters in the room united as a band of women. Pray over them a prayer of commission to be all they were created to be - without inhibition or fear, but in confidence and strength - assured of their anointing.

Just for reference: Key women in *SHE on Love* (in case they help formulate your introduction or conclusion)

- Ruth, p195 - Redemption through love - the peripity moment of our lives.
- The "sinful" woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, p208 - Honour breeds love.
- Mary of Bethany, p221 - Extravagant love, at the feet of Jesus.