

It is our joy to welcome you to the InterVarsity family! You have been a part of starting a movement of God on your campus and in a few weeks, you will take the important step of hosting a Launch Gathering. Over the next two sessions you will plan a launch gathering where you will invite your friends to hear about your InterVarsity community and hear the stories of how God is moving in and through you! This guide will step you through the process of preparing for your launch.

Your Story

Witness

Launch
Party

To any new believers in your group, welcome to the family of faith! We consider this a team effort. Welcome to the team! We believe that every believer is adopted into God's family and invited to be a witness and a host. This pattern of witnessing and starting new Encounter groups will be at the heart of your community. Today, we would like to focus on the family of God.

John 9:6-25, 35-38 (NIV)

⁶After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷"Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed and came home seeing. ⁸His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." ¹⁰"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. ¹¹He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." ¹²"Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said. ¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. ¹⁷Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet." ¹⁸They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹"Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" ²⁰"We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. ²¹But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." ²⁴A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." ²⁵He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" ²⁶Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ²⁷"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." ²⁸Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." ²⁹Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

Here we have story about a man that has been blind since birth (imagine the hardships that caused) who encounters Jesus. Jesus miraculously heals the man's sight, which leads to his worship and following of Christ. At first, he is fuzzy on who Jesus is. But the more people ask, and the more he explains, the more passion and clarity arises about Jesus. By the end of the chapter, he sees and worships Jesus fully. He is transformed as he tells his story. We hope this is true for all of us. We need to tell our story for our own good and our friends need to hear our stories!

Discuss. First, read the passage aloud. • This man has a series of very intense experiences in this chapter. Describe his encounter with Jesus. What else happens to the man in this chapter? • Everyone has an opinion about this man's healing. Describe how each group reacts to his healing. • He is different at the end of the chapter. What internal and external transformations have taken place in this man's life? • What do you like about Jesus in this chapter?

Take a minute to remember your decision to follow Jesus with your life, in what ways has he brought hope and new possibilities to you? Jesus's healing in this man's life has led to his worship of Christ and speaking about his decision to others. As we tell our stories, either the story of our decision to follow Jesus or stories of his work in our life today our faith is strengthened. Let's take some biblical steps to strengthen your faith! Many decisions we make change our lives: what school to attend, who to date, where to live. How do you anticipate following Jesus will shape your life?

YOUR SIMPLE STORY OF FAITH

There are many kinds of faith stories. If you are a new believer, please tell the story of how you decided to follow Jesus. If you have been following Jesus for a while and have recently joined InterVarsity, tell a story of how Jesus has shaped you this semester. If you are the student planter(s), please tell the story of how Jesus lead you to plant this new campus.

[BEFORE] Many things shape and define us. Begin with 2-3 sentences that describe your life before making a commitment to Jesus. Before joining InterVarsity. Before deciding to plant.

[ENCOUNTER] Write 2-3 sentences about how God is working in your life.

[TODAY] How does God's love change how you view yourself and your identity? How are you different? How does following Jesus shape how you live and how you see your future?

RESPOND ACTIVELY

SOLIDIFY YOUR FAITH - REFLECTIVE PRAYER: Take 30 seconds to ask God to solidify your identity in Jesus. "God, what do you want me to know about being your child?"

LIVE YOUR FAITH - We tell the story of Jesus through our actions and character. What practical steps can you take this week to share the story of Jesus with our life (deeds) living out your new faith and obedience to Jesus.

TELL YOUR STORY - Think of a few people who should hear your story. REFLECTIVE PRAYER: "God, who do you want me to share my story with this week?"

DEBRIEF

You just finished telling your story. How was this worksheet for you? How are you feeling?

Next week we will move on to the next step, WITNESS. Witness is when you invite your friends to the launch party where they will hear some of the stories your group created. They will have an opportunity to consider joining your InterVarsity movement and have a chance to explore faith for themselves.