

LEADER'S GUIDE

EXODUS 33 → REVELATION 22

THE RETURNING GLORY

Everything the two of us need to host six nights of presence — what to say, what to do, and how to stay standing while we do it.

LEADER'S GUIDE

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HOW TO READ
THIS

LEFT PAGE = TEACH IT. RIGHT PAGE = LEAD
THE ROOM.



YOUR HOST KIT, ONLINE

thereturningglory.com/start-a-room

Print the Table Charter, set your six dates, and copy a ready-to-send invitation.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Each week is a two-page spread — **the Teaching on the left, The Room on the right**. Tabs down the edge jump you to the week; this page tells you where everything lives. Beyond these pages, the full research, your host kit, and the weekly devotional all live at thereturningglory.com.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

03 **Before You Lead**

04 **How to Hold the Room**

05 **The Covenant & Safety**

06 **The Night's Rhythm**

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THE SIX WEEKS · TEACH LEFT, ROOM RIGHT

08 **Week 1 — The Weight**

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12 **Week 3 — Ichabod** *the honest week*

14 **Week 4 — And Dwelt Among Us**

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AFTER

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21 **Don't End It. Multiply It.**

22 **When It Gets Hard**

ONLINE

➤ thereturningglory.com *the research · host kit · devotional*

YOU ARE NOT THE SOURCE

You cannot make God show up — settle that before night one. You are not the furnace; you are the ones who clear the room and open the window. Lead from your hunger, not your competence. Most weeks the most useful thing you'll do is teach less, talk less, and get out of the way.

THE TWO OF YOU, CO-LEADING

Go first, and go honest — the room only goes as deep as you two do. Decide each week who opens the hard question, and answer it like a participant, not a host. Play to your own gifts; you don't have to lead like anyone else.

DO THESE TWO THINGS FIRST

1. Run one mock night, just the two of you, start to finish. You'll feel exactly where it wobbles. **2. Pray Exodus 33:15 over yourselves:** "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here." Your first need is the group's first need.

FOR YOUR OWN SOUL

Feeling unqualified is the right starting place — it keeps you leaning on the One who actually does the work. Stay fed across these six weeks; you can't pour from empty.

HOW TO HOLD THE ROOM

THE FOUR MOVES THAT MATTER MOST

- MOVE 1** **Hold the silence.** Count to ten before you rescue a quiet. It is usually working — don't fill it because it's uncomfortable for *you*.
-
- MOVE 2** **Don't fix.** Receive pain; don't solve it. "Thank you for trusting us with that" is a complete response.
-
- MOVE 3** **Go first.** Answer the hard question yourself before the room does. Your honesty sets the ceiling.
-
- MOVE 4** **Tend the edges.** Invite the quiet one by name; gently turn the talker — "let's hear from someone who hasn't yet."

THE LINE — SAY IT TO YOURSELVES EVERY WEEK

- **Invitation, never pressure.** You make room; you do not manufacture results.
- **You host — you never harvest.** A committed silence is a win. A performed tear is not.

THE COVENANT

OUR COVENANT

What is said here stays here. · We don't fix each other. · Everyone participates; no one performs. · The table is for everyone. · *We cannot schedule God. We can only make room.*

ONE LIMIT: SAFETY — SAY IT OUT LOUD, NIGHT ONE

- "What's said here stays here" has a single exception. **If someone is in danger — abuse, self-harm, harm to another — we will care beyond this room and get the right help.**
- Naming the exception up front is what makes the confidentiality *honest*. Don't promise a secrecy you shouldn't keep.

Trust is built by what you promise — and by the one thing you refuse to promise.

THE NIGHT'S RHYTHM

Roughly ninety minutes. Hold it loosely — if the Circle is alive, let it run and cut the rest. The clock serves the room, never the other way around.

0 : 00 · 15m **The Table**

Eat first, no agenda. People open up over food, not over an icebreaker.

0 : 15 · 10m **Tuning**

Sing a little, then sit in the silence. Teach them silence is allowed.

0 : 25 · 12m **The Word**

Teach from the left-hand page. Ten minutes, not a sermon. Land one idea.

0 : 37 · 35m **The Circle**

The booklet questions. This is the night — protect it. Honesty over coverage.

1 : 12 · 12m **The Encounter**

The response — run it from the right-hand page. Pick one option, or the floor.

1 : 24 · 6m **The Send**

Bless them out loud and send them. Don't end on a summary.

SET THE ROOM

→ A circle or one table — everyone can see every face. Food and a candle. Music cued before they arrive.

→ Booklets and pens out. Phones face-down in the middle. Tell them they can't ruin the booklet.

THE ARC YOU'RE WALKING THEM THROUGH

Keep the whole road in view. Every week is one step of a single story: God has always wanted to dwell with people — the presence defined, departed, returned, indwelling, and finally filling everything. When a week feels small, name where it sits on the road.

Week 1	The Weight	Define it. Glory is <i>kavod</i> — weight, not shine. And not safe.
Week 2	Make Me a Place	God asks to move in — <i>mishkan</i> , to dwell, not visit.
Week 3	Ichabod	The honest week. The glory departs — slowly, eastward.
Week 4	And Dwelt Among Us	It returns in a Person — the Word <i>tabernacled</i> .
Week 5	You Are the Temple	The fire rests on people. <i>You</i> (plural) are the <i>naos</i> .
Week 6	The Latter Glory	Forward and greater — until "The LORD is there."

THE WEIGHT

TONIGHT, IN A SENTENCE

Glory is *weight*, not a worship mood — and we want the Giver, not just the gifts.

THE TEACHING

~10 MIN · PREACH FROM THIS

OPEN "We say 'glory' all the time. We almost never mean weight." Ask: ever felt a presence in a room before a word was said? *That's kavod.*

POINT 1 **Glory is weight, not shine.** Hebrew *kavod* = heavy — the felt, undeniable nearness of God. Moses asks the boldest thing: "show me your glory" (Exodus 33:18).

POINT 2 **And it is not safe.** No one could touch Sinai and live (Exodus 19:12); Uzzah died steadying the ark (2 Samuel 6:7). Weight has teeth.

TURN **So the mercy is staggering.** God answers not with fire but with goodness and a name (Exodus 33:19). The dangerous weight chose to come close.

LAND The question we carry six weeks: *do we want what God gives — or the weight of God Himself?*

IF YOU FREEZE

Read the Lesson page from their booklet aloud, then ask Circle question 1. That is a complete teaching. You never have to perform.

RESEARCH YOU CAN LEAN ON

IF ASKED

kavod (heaviness) → Greek *doxa* → Paul's "eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17) — weight the whole way through. The danger thread keeps it honest: Sinai (Exodus 19:12), Uzzah (2 Samuel 6:7), Nadab & Abihu (Leviticus 10:2).

More than you'll need — full sources for every week at thereturningglory.com/go-deeper

THE ROOM

WK 1

THE ENCOUNTER

~12 MIN · THE RESPONSE

We just talked about wanting the Giver, not the gifts. Now let it become a prayer.

A **Sit in silence 2-3 minutes.** Then invite anyone to say one word — aloud or in their heart — for what they're really hungry for. No discussion.

B **Pray Exodus 33:18 together, slowly** — "show me your glory" — two or three times, then quiet.

THE FLOOR & THE RULES · 1 COR 14:26

- **Floor:** if in doubt, shared silence + one spoken prayer is a complete Encounter.
- Ask before you lay hands. Never single anyone out. **You host — you never harvest.**

WATCH FOR

- It's night one — read the covenant *and* the safety limit before the Circle.
- Resist over-teaching. Ten minutes. The Circle is where it lands.
- You go first on "Giver or gift?" Your honesty sets the ceiling.

FOR YOUR OWN SOUL

Before you lead, pray **Exodus 33:15** over yourselves: His presence first. You're setting a table, not generating the fire.

MAKE ME A PLACE

TONIGHT, IN A SENTENCE

God asks to *move in* — so the honest question is: what room have you kept closed?

WK 2

THE TEACHING

~10 MIN · PREACH FROM THIS

OPEN God asks for something almost too much: not a visit. A home.

POINT 1 **Dwell, not visit.** "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Exodus 25:8). *mishkan* = a tent you settle into and stay.

POINT 2 **He rescues first, then moves in.** Presence is the point of the rescue, not the reward for behaving.

TURN **He's been trying to move back in since a garden.** The tabernacle is a portable Eden.

LAND The quiet, hard question: *what room have you kept closed?*

IF YOU FREEZE

Read the Lesson page from their booklet aloud, then ask Circle question 1. That is a complete teaching. You never have to perform.

RESEARCH YOU CAN LEAN ON

IF ASKED

Exodus 25:8 pairs *mishkan* ("dwelling") with *miqdash* ("sanctuary") — nearness and holiness in one breath. Read backward, the tabernacle is a portable Eden: God trying to move back in since the garden.

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THE ROOM

THE ENCOUNTER

~12 MIN · THE RESPONSE

Tonight was about the closed room. Don't make anyone open it out loud — let them open it to God.

A Silent surrender. Each person pictures the one closed room and, in the quiet, tells God He can come in. You close with one sentence.

B Open hands. Everyone turns palms up — "the whole house is Yours." Hold the silence a full minute.

THE FLOOR & THE RULES · 1 COR 14:26

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WATCH FOR

- This gets personal fast — restate "we don't fix."
- Don't pry if someone won't name the room aloud; the booklet lets them keep it private.
- Push gently from confession to one concrete step before they leave.

FOR YOUR OWN SOUL

Open your own closed room to God this week **before** you ask them to. Lead from a real place, not a clean one.

ICHABOD

TONIGHT, IN A SENTENCE

The honest week. Let people tell the truth about absence — and do *not* rush to fix it.

THE TEACHING

~10 MIN · PREACH FROM THIS

OPEN A woman names her dying-breath baby *Ichabod* — "no glory" (1 Samuel 4:21).

POINT 1 **You cannot weaponize the presence.** Israel hauled the ark into battle like a good-luck charm. It doesn't work that way.

POINT 2 **The glory leaves slowly — by inches, eastward** (Ezekiel 10–11). Every step a chance to turn back.

TURN **The danger is the quiet** — a room people keep singing in after God has gone.

LAND *Don't rush to the good news. That's next week. Tonight, sit in it.*

IF YOU FREEZE

Read the Lesson page from their booklet aloud, then ask Circle question 1. That is a complete teaching. You never have to perform.

RESEARCH YOU CAN LEAN ON

IF ASKED

Ezekiel stages the departure deliberately (Ezekiel 10–11), eastward — the exact direction it returns in chapter 43. Hold up the lament psalms as permission: **Psalm 88 ends in the dark and is still Scripture.** Absence named to God is not unbelief; it's prayer.

More than you'll need — full sources for every week at thereturningglory.com/go-deeper

THE ROOM

THE ENCOUNTER

~12 MIN · THE RESPONSE

Do not fix tonight. The Encounter is to grieve honestly in God's presence, not to resolve it.

A Read Psalm 88 aloud, slowly. Don't comment. Let the silence after it sit longer than is comfortable.

B Name it. Invite anyone to say one true sentence about where God has felt absent — received with "thank you," never answered. Long silence between each.

THE FLOOR & THE RULES · 1 COR 14:26

- **Floor:** if in doubt, shared silence + one spoken prayer is a complete Encounter.
- Ask before you lay hands. Never single anyone out. **You host — you never harvest.**

WATCH FOR

- **This is the week that needs you most. Do not fix.** No verse-bandage, no "but God."
- Hold the lament longer than feels comfortable. You can close with nothing but "we're still here, God."
- Heavy is not failure — that's the week working. Even the booklet's color drains tonight, on purpose.

FOR YOUR OWN SOUL

This may surface your own grief — that's allowed. If you're the one in the dark, lead anyway, and tell each other the truth afterward. Don't fake a light you don't have.

AND DWELT AMONG US

TONIGHT, IN A SENTENCE

The glory came back — in a Person. So stop climbing and start receiving.

THE TEACHING

~10 MIN · PREACH FROM THIS

OPEN The glory that walked out came back — wearing skin.

POINT 1 **The Word "tabernacled."** "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) — *eskenosen*, pitched a tent, the old tabernacle word.

POINT 2 **The holy let itself be touched.** For centuries kept at arm's length; then close enough to hold.

TURN **Moses saw God's back; we saw His face.**

LAND Stop climbing. Start beholding. *This is the receiving week — don't let anyone earn it.*

IF YOU FREEZE

Read the Lesson page from their booklet aloud, then ask Circle question 1. That is a complete teaching. You never have to perform.

RESEARCH YOU CAN LEAN ON

IF ASKED

"Dwelt" is *eskenosen* — same root as the tabernacle. Jewish tradition kept God's presence at a reverent distance ("the Word," "the Glory," the *Shekinah*); John takes that careful, far-off language and detonates it: that Word *became flesh*.

More than you'll need — full sources for every week at thereturningglory.com/go-deeper

THE ROOM

THE ENCOUNTER

~12 MIN · THE RESPONSE

After last week, this is relief. The Encounter is to receive, not perform.

A Behold. Read one Gospel scene slowly (John 1:14, or a healing in Luke 7) and just look at Jesus together. Three minutes, no notes.

B Receive a word. In pairs, or you two over the room, speak one line of grace over each person: "Christ came near to you."

THE FLOOR & THE RULES · 1 COR 14:26

- **Floor:** if in doubt, shared silence + one spoken prayer is a complete Encounter.
- Ask before you lay hands. Never single anyone out. **You host — you never harvest.**

WATCH FOR

- Let it breathe relief after week 3. Don't manufacture it — just don't fight it.
- Model "behold" yourself in the Encounter: a long, unhurried look, nothing to produce.
- Catch anyone trying to earn it — gently hand it back as a gift.

FOR YOUR OWN SOUL

Receive before you give. Spend ten quiet minutes beholding Christ yourself this week — you can't hand out what you won't take in.

YOU ARE THE TEMPLE

TONIGHT, IN A SENTENCE

The fire that could have consumed now *rests* on people — and the "you" is plural.

THE TEACHING

~10 MIN · PREACH FROM THIS

OPEN The fire that could have consumed came down at Pentecost — and *rested*.

POINT 1 **The dangerous weight now rests on people** (Acts 2). The same Sinai-fire, a new resting place — and no one burns.

POINT 2 **You are the temple — and the "you" is plural.** "you are God's temple" (1 Corinthians 3:16). *naos* = the inner sanctuary.

TURN **The presence isn't somewhere you go; it's something you, together, are.**

LAND And fire never stays where it falls. *Where does it need to go that only you can carry it?*

IF YOU FREEZE

Read the Lesson page from their booklet aloud, then ask Circle question 1. That is a complete teaching. You never have to perform.

RESEARCH YOU CAN LEAN ON

IF ASKED

naos — not the temple complex (*hieron*) but the inner sanctuary, the holy of holies. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 the "you" is plural: the whole gathered church is one sanctuary. At Pentecost the Sinai-fire came to rest on people (Acts 2) — same fire, new resting place.

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THE ROOM

THE ENCOUNTER

~12 MIN · THE RESPONSE

The fire rests on people. Tonight, ask it to rest on these — gently, with consent.

A Lay hands — with consent. Ask first. Pray the Spirit's fire to rest on each willing person, by name. No spectacle.

B Send-prayer. Each names one place they'll carry the presence; the group prays one short line for them.

THE FLOOR & THE RULES · 1 COR 14:26

- **Floor:** if in doubt, shared silence + one spoken prayer is a complete Encounter.
- Ask before you lay hands. Never single anyone out. **You host — you never harvest.**

WATCH FOR

- Keep it corporate, not just "me and Jesus." The temple is the group, together.
- **Ask consent before any touch.** Some won't want hands — that's completely fine.
- Push toward sending: where does the presence need to go that only they can carry it?

FOR YOUR OWN SOUL

You're a temple too, not just a host. Name where *you* need to carry the presence this week.

THE LATTER GLORY

TONIGHT, IN A SENTENCE

Restoration never goes backward — they leave homesick for the future, and they commit to what continues.

THE TEACHING

~10 MIN · PREACH FROM THIS

OPEN Restoration in the Bible never goes backward.

POINT 1 **Greater, not lesser.** "The latter glory of this house shall be greater" (Haggai 2:9). From one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18).

POINT 2 **The road ends at "an eternal weight of glory"** (2 Corinthians 4:17) — the very weight of week one, made permanent.

TURN **It ends where it began, only more** — Eden's river runs again; the last city is named "The LORD is there."

LAND You're not homesick for the past. You're homesick for the future. *Go.*

IF YOU FREEZE

Read the Lesson page from their booklet aloud, then ask Circle question 1. That is a complete teaching. You never have to perform.

RESEARCH YOU CAN LEAN ON

IF ASKED

Haggai 2:9 ("greater") meets 2 Corinthians 3:18 ("from one degree of glory to another") and lands at 4:17 ("eternal weight of glory") — *kavod to doxa to baros doxes*. Ezekiel ends with a city renamed "The LORD Is There" (48:35); Revelation has no temple "because God is the temple" (Revelation 21:22).

More than you'll need — full sources for every week at thereturningglory.com/go-deeper

THE ROOM

THE ENCOUNTER

~12 MIN · THE RESPONSE

The last night. Bless them forward — and don't let it end as a nice study.

A Bless by name. Speak Numbers 6:24–26 over each person, using their name, slowly.

B Out loud. Each says one thing they'll keep; the room answers, "We'll go with you."

THE FLOOR & THE RULES · 1 COR 14:26

- **Floor:** if in doubt, shared silence + one spoken prayer is a complete Encounter.
- Ask before you lay hands. Never single anyone out. **You host — you never harvest.**

WATCH FOR

- **This night also launches Week 7.** Get a verbal commitment to what continues before anyone leaves.
- Name who in the room could host the next table. Set the first date tonight.
- End on a sending, not a recap.

FOR YOUR OWN SOUL

Six weeks of pouring out — get refilled. Before you send them, let someone bless you *two*. Then rest.

HOW TO BLESS THEM OUT LOUD

End every night with a blessing, not a summary. Speak the Aaronic blessing over the room — and when you can, by name. A blessing spoken over you in your own name lands somewhere a general "amen" never reaches.

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."

NUMBERS 6:24-26 (ESV)

HOW TO DO IT

- Name — eyes — slow. "[Name], the LORD bless you and keep you..."
- Make the last words of the night a **sending**, not a recap. Then actually send them.

DON'T END IT. MULTIPLY IT.

The goal was never the booklet, and it was never even this group. It was the room — a people who know how to make space for God and for each other. So the last act of leading is to give it away.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|
| 01 | Keep the rhythm | Eat · sing then sit · read one passage · ask one honest question · pray by name · bless and send. |
| 02 | Name a host | Who in this group could open their own table? Tell them you see it. |
| 03 | Set the date | Put the first new gathering on a calendar before momentum fades. |

WATCH FOR

- People will want to keep *this* group exactly as-is. Bless that — and still send one or two out to start another.
- You don't need a curriculum to keep going. You need a table and the nerve to ask one honest question.

A temple was never built to keep the glory in.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Nobody's talking. Ask something smaller and more concrete. Then wait — longer than is comfortable. Go first if you must, then stop.

One person won't stop. "Thank you — let's hear from someone who hasn't yet." Warmly, every time.

Someone breaks down. Stop. Receive it. Don't fix, don't quote, don't rush. Let the silence hold them; follow up after.

A question you can't answer. "I don't know — let's find out." Honesty builds more trust than a confident guess.

A flat night. Not every night burns. Faithfulness is showing up and making room again. The quiet counts too.

WHEN IT'S BIGGER THAN THE ROOM

→ If someone discloses abuse, self-harm, or danger, **care beyond the room** — involve a pastor or professional help. Don't carry it alone, and don't keep a secret that needs more than you.

You are not responsible for the outcome. You are responsible for the room. Make it — and get out of the doorway.

FOR THE TWO OF YOU

NOTES

A large rectangular box with a black border, containing 15 horizontal lines for writing notes.

THE RETURNING GLORY

THE LORD IS THERE

EZEKIEL 48:35 · REVELATION 21:22



Keep the room going
thereturningglory.com

Send your group here to follow along — a short weekly
devotional keeps the presence near between gatherings.