

# LEADER GUIDE — READ THIS FIRST

*Seriously. This should only take a few minutes.*

**THE BIGGEST THING TO KNOW** You do NOT have to teach everything in a lesson. The core is the path. The extra material is your safety net.

**OUR MOTTO** KNOW IT. LIVE IT. DEFEND IT.

## WHY EQUIP EXISTS

EQUIP Clubs help students think clearly about the ideas shaping their faith, identity, morality, purpose, and view of reality. We want students who can say not only “This is what I believe,” but also “Here is why I believe it.”

## WHAT YOUR CLUB SHOULD FEEL LIKE

- Safe enough to ask hard questions.
- Serious enough to examine answers.
- Respectful enough to disagree.
- Honest enough to say “I don't know.”
- Biblical without assuming every student starts there.
- Confident without being combative.

**YOUR JOB** You are not there to win arguments. You are there to help students pursue truth.

## THE BASIC EQUIP RHYTHM

**OPEN** Start with a question, experience, story, image, or demonstration.

**LET THEM TALK** Hear what students actually think before explaining.

**TEACH** Give the core idea clearly.

**EXAMINE** Ask why they believe it and what supports it.

**CONNECT** Show how Christianity and Scripture address the issue.

**CHALLENGE** Give them one thing to think about or practice.

## HOW TO READ A LEADER LESSON

The lesson is intentionally bigger than the time you have. That is a feature, not a problem.

 **BLUE — CORE** Teach this. Normal path of the lesson.

 **GREEN — ACTION / EXPERIENCE** Do this. Activities, demonstrations, questions, student interaction.

 **YELLOW — BACKUP / IF NEEDED** Use this if needed. Objections, extra examples, alternate explanations.

 **ORANGE — CAUTION / LEADER NOTE** Slow down here. Nuance, common mistakes, sensitive areas, things not to oversimplify.

 **PURPLE — DEEP DIVE** You don't have to teach this. Extra background so you feel prepared if someone goes deeper.

 **GRAY — QUICK REFERENCE** Scan this. One-minute answer, key Scripture, takeaway, shortcuts.

**REMEMBER** If you only teach the BLUE and GREEN sections and have a good conversation, you have done the lesson correctly.

## IF STUDENTS TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE ELSE

- GOOD DETOUR: Related and useful? Follow it for a while.
- TOO BIG: Say, “That’s a great question. Let’s put a pin in it so we don’t lose today’s question.”
- UNRELATED: Respectfully bring the group back.
- YOU DON’T KNOW: Say, “I don’t know. Let’s find out.”

**IMPORTANT** A student asking an unexpected question is not a failed lesson. Sometimes it is the best part of the lesson.

## ASK BEFORE YOU ANSWER

When a student asks a hard question, try one of these first:

- “What makes you ask that?”
- “What do you think?”
- “What have you heard?”
- “What part of that is hardest for you?”

Sometimes the intellectual question has a personal question underneath it. Listen before you launch into an answer.

## A FEW RULES THAT MATTER

**DON'T BLUFF** Never invent facts, statistics, history, or Scripture. “I don’t know” is a legitimate answer.

**DON'T BUILD STRAW MEN** Represent opposing views fairly. We don’t need a weak argument to defend Christianity.

**DON'T CONFUSE BELIEF WITH TRUTH** A person can sincerely believe something and still be wrong.

**DON'T CONFUSE FEELING WITH FACT** Feelings matter, but feelings do not automatically prove a conclusion.

**DON'T TURN IT INTO A DEBATE CLUB** The goal is truth-seeking, not humiliation or winning.

**DON'T SHUT DOWN HARD QUESTIONS** Hard questions are exactly why EQUIP exists.

## THE LEADER'S TONE

- Curious, not dismissive.
- Confident, not arrogant.
- Clear, not unnecessarily academic.
- Biblical, without assuming everyone accepts the Bible.
- Apologetic, not combative.
- Serious about truth and gentle with people.

## USE THE STUDENT GUIDE

- It is intentionally simpler than your leader guide.
- Let students write, question, and reflect.
- “Something I Still Wonder About” can reveal what you should address later.
- Don’t turn every blank line into homework.

## USE THE SLIDES

- Slides support the lesson; they don’t replace you.
- Don’t read paragraphs from the screen.
- Let a question or image create curiosity before you explain it.
- Use the visual experience when the lesson calls for one.

**THE RULE** The leader teaches. The student thinks. The slide supports.

## SAFETY

Leaders are not therapists, investigators, or crisis professionals. If a student discloses abuse, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, sexual exploitation, serious danger, or another safeguarding concern, follow your organization's procedures and involve the appropriate responsible adults. Never promise secrecy.

## YOUR 60-SECOND PREP

Before students arrive, answer these seven questions:

1. What is today's BIG QUESTION?
2. What is the ONE IDEA I want them to leave with?
3. What is the opening experience?
4. What will I ask before I start explaining?
5. What backup material might I need?
6. What Scripture are we using?
7. What is the week's challenge?

**RUNNING SHORT ON TIME?** Ask the Big Question → hear students → teach the Big Idea → take one objection → connect to Scripture → give the challenge.

## YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE THE EXPERT

You may not know the answer to every question. Good. Model what a thoughtful Christian does when they don't know.

- “I don't know.”
- “That's a good question.”
- “Here's what I do know.”
- “Let's look at the evidence.”

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

A successful EQUIP meeting is not one where you finish every paragraph. It is one where students leave thinking more carefully, asking better questions, taking Christianity seriously, and knowing they are allowed to pursue truth honestly.

**THE EQUIP PROMISE** We give you more preparation than you normally need so you are ready when a student goes deeper.

## KNOW IT. LIVE IT. DEFEND IT.

**KNOW IT** Understand what Christianity teaches and why you believe it.

**LIVE IT** Let truth shape the way you think, choose, speak, and live.

**DEFEND IT** Learn to explain and defend Christian truth with reasons, evidence, humility, and grace.

## WELCOME TO EQUIP CLUBS USA

*You don't have to know everything. You just need to be willing to pursue truth with your students.*