



Group

Real. Bold. Love.

ACTIVATING GOD SPACE

EQUIPPING YOUR PEOPLE
TO BE THE CHURCH
IN EVERYDAY LIFE

LEADER **GUIDE**

FEATURING
**DOUG
POLLOCK**
AUTHOR OF *GOD SPACE*

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Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:

Relational—Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential—What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable—The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based—Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

ACTIVATING GOD SPACE: EQUIPPING YOUR PEOPLE TO BE THE CHURCH IN EVERYDAY LIFE Leader Guide

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Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16

ACTIVATING GOD SPACE

CONTENTS

	Introduction.....	4
SESSION I	Start From the Heart.....	9
SESSION II	Noticing	18
SESSION III	Serving	31
SESSION IV	Listening.....	42
SESSION V	Wondering	51
SESSION VI	Telling Stories.....	60

Introduction

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

You're in for a couple of surprises...the *good* kind!

Your first surprise: The six sessions in *Activating God Space* do more than just share new information. You and your group members will also develop or sharpen key skills you'll use to improve the quantity and quality of spiritual conversations in your lives. Specifically, you'll learn how to *Notice, Serve, Listen, Wonder*, and *Tell God's Story*—the five essential skills for carrying on spiritual conversations.

A second surprise: You and the other participants will sharpen your skills *together*. You'll pause often to talk, to explore, to apply what you've learned—together. No longer can churches simply launch their people alone into the world with a message about Jesus. More and more it's clear that **the church itself** must become the message—one of hope, love, and concern—lived out by people who follow Jesus together.

That's why the practice segments are incredibly valuable parts of these six sessions. They're where you'll build competence and confidence as you prepare for encounters God's eager to send your way.

Together you'll drill down into your church culture to transform how your congregation relates to your community and the world—an approach that includes listening as much as telling.

So don't be surprised if participants soon report they're suddenly bumping up against all sorts of opportunities for spiritual conversations. That's God at work, using the people in your group to continue reaching out to a broken world in his name.

Now, get ready...you're launching an adventure! One that will transform you, your participants, your church, your community, and beyond.

SOME HINTS AND HELPS FOR LEADING

You'll see that, at times, we encourage participants to pair up or form groups of four. That's intentional—it guarantees everyone will have the chance to both speak and listen, and to practice using the tools they've received.

Each session will run 65-75 minutes for an average group. Your mileage may vary—some people and groups are naturally talkative, so adjust your expectations and schedule accordingly. *Activating God Space* is designed for six sessions, but you can customize it to last longer. In any case, take your time to be thorough. Real change sometimes takes awhile.

You can lead these sessions with nearly any number of participants. The ideal number would be between 8 and 32. If your group is any larger, you might need to adapt some of the activities so that everyone stays involved.

Activating God Space is designed for the entire church. We suggest going through the course first with your church leaders. These might be the pastoral staff, or the church board members, or your church's evangelism or outreach teams, or an ad hoc action team composed of members from each of these groups.

A second phase of equipping would occur when members of the first group replicate the course with the rest of the church. Meet with existing small groups, Sunday school classes, or special short-term groups dedicated to *Activating God Space*. This will help ensure that the message permeates the entire congregation.

If you belong to a very large church, consider a middle step. Have leaders who complete the course lead their ministry groups through the course. After this, the rest of the congregation would participate in what would be a third rendition of the course.

You can maximize this equipping by inviting Doug Pollock, the author of *God Space*, to speak at your church, either for a launch event, or as a follow-up to the course. See page 69 for details.

SOME TOOLS FOR LEADING

Here are the tools you'll find for leading your *Activating God Space* adventure:



- **Leader Guide**—This guide offers easy-to-follow instructions for what to say and do, what questions to ask, and how and when to use the video clips and handouts—and generally prepares you to be an awesome leader and discussion facilitator.



- **Source Book**—Read your copy of the *God Space* book by Doug Pollock alongside your Leader Guide to be fully prepared to lead. Each session's group discussions and activities depend on this, so get a copy for each participant, too.



- ***Activating God Space* Resource CD**—This easy-to-use tool includes pdf files of all handouts. Just click on the session and handout number you want, and then print as many copies as you need.

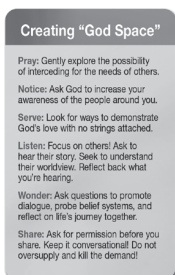
- Two DVDs—



- The *Activating God Space* Session DVD contains video segments for all six sessions. Segments are excerpts taken from a live workshop led by Doug Pollock, the author of the *God Space* book. To use them you'll need a DVD player, a projector, and a screen so everyone can see and hear well.



- The *Activating God Space* Bonus DVD provides just that—free bonus video clips! Play the Promo video to recruit and inspire participants from the congregation. The 2-minute Faith Adventure Challenges feature Doug Pollock describing helpful hints and tips for incorporating God Space into your life and congregation. Use them to enrich the course sessions or send them out after the course has ended to keep participants fired up about having spiritual conversations with friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Post them on your church website or send them as attachments in emails...use them however you'd like to encourage God Space!



- God Space Pocket Card—Imprinted with the core elements of God Space on one side and a thumbnail description of each God Space practice (*Noticing, Serving, Listening, Wondering, Sharing*) on the other side, this card makes a great take-away for *Activating God Space* participants. One card comes with this kit, and you can order more in packs of 25 for \$6.99 by visiting Group.com or your favorite Christian resource provider.

A PRAYER AND A PROMISE

God has chosen you and your church to create a culture of God Space. You're part of God's people through the ages who answered the call to be a witness and a blessing to their neighbors and their world. It's our prayer that *Activating God Space* will help your congregation members grow in their ability to fulfill that calling in your community and beyond. To be better able to listen to people who have questions to ask, stories to share, and needs to be met. To become the church in their everyday lives by creating God Space where others encounter Jesus.

You are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

SESSION II:

Noticing

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session participants will discover how to take their eyes off themselves and focus on God and other people. They'll learn how to notice and pay attention to God's work in the world and to see people as people rather than mere targets for evangelism or potential new church members.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- *God Space* book for each person
- Pens and/or pencils
- Copies of handouts printed from the *Activating God Space* Resource CD
- *Activating God Space* Session DVD
- DVD player and video screen large enough for the group to view
- Computer access to the Internet and video screen for optional activity in Section 1B

LEADER PREPARATION

- Read through all the instructions for this session to get an idea of the content and timing.
- Make enough copies of the handouts to provide one per participant.
- Preview the video segment so you're aware of the start and stop cues.
- Arrange the seating. These equipping sessions will work best if participants are seated at tables in groups of four persons each (small, round café-style tables are ideal). If tables are not available, use chairs that can be easily moved from rows to a circular grouping during the smaller group discussion times.
- If you plan to use the online “Whodunnit?” awareness video, navigate to the correct URL and have the video cued up and ready to play.

1A. WELCOMING ACTIVITY OPTION A: QUICK CHANGE

Open this session by performing an awareness exercise to discover how aware we generally are—or are not—of our surroundings and other people. There are two options; Option A can be done with no preparation or props.

To play Quick Change, ask participants to find a partner, stand face to face, and introduce themselves to each other. Allow up to 30 seconds for introductions.

Then—without saying why—ask that the person in each pair wearing the most blue raise his or her hand. Ask people with their hands raised to turn their backs to their partners and close their eyes. Announce that people with their eyes closed will play the part of a “Noticer.”

Ask the other people to change their appearance in as many ways as they can within 60 seconds. For example, they could add or remove eyeglasses or jewelry. Don't mention specific changes that could be made; that will tip off Noticers as to where to look for changes. Big or small, every change is good.

After the minute is up, ask Noticers to turn to their partners and, in 30 seconds, identify as many changes in their partner's appearance as they can. Then ask those who changed their appearances to point out any missed changes.

Next, have the partners reverse roles and repeat the steps. Debrief this game by asking partners to respond to these questions:

- **What kind of changes were most noticeable, and which were most difficult to detect?**
- **In general, how well do you notice your surroundings? Why do you answer as you do?**

1B. WELCOMING ACTIVITY OPTION B: WHODUNNIT?

For a fun, optional welcoming activity, play the online “Whodunnit?” video, which mimics a scene from an old-time murder mystery movie. During the short scene, numerous changes are made in the set and costumes, which viewers must identify. This video clip can be found on YouTube by typing “awareness test: Whodunnit?” in the search box (or type this URL into your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubNF9QNEQLA>).

Don't tell the group anything about the video. Simply play it until you see the screen caption (around the 0:56 mark) that says, “Did you notice the 21 changes?” Pause the video and ask your participants to call out which changes they noticed.

Now that participants know they are supposed to look for changes, play the video again from the start to the 0:56 mark. This will help build your group's “noticing” muscles.

When participants have exhausted their ideas and are ready to view the solution, play the remainder of the video. Feel free to stop at the 1:42 mark; what follows is a public service advertisement for bicycle safety.

Debrief this exercise by asking your whole group to respond to these questions:

- **Once you knew to look for changes, how difficult was it to spot more changes during the second viewing? Why do you think that is?**
- **In general, how well do you think you are able to notice your surroundings?**

2. VIDEO: NOTICING COMMON GROUND

In your own words, say:

For this session we're focusing on noticing others and noticing God working in the world and in us. We probably consider ourselves pretty observant—we make it through the day without bumping into too many walls. But perhaps our exercise just now pointed out there's also a lot we *don't* notice... because we're not looking for it.

Let's hear from our friend Doug Pollock about how noticing fits into building stronger relationships that can lead to creating God Space.

Play Session 2, Video Segment 1 from the *Activating God Space* Session DVD.

After Doug finishes the story of his encounter with the camera man, stop the DVD and ask participants to find a partner. Ask participants to take turns sharing with their partners their responses to each of

the questions below. Allow up to 2 minutes for the pairs to respond to the first question before you ask the second one.

- › **Doug and the man with the camera found common ground by comparing their experiences in writing and publishing. What are some of your skills, interests, and experiences that might help you find common ground with another person?**
- › **Doug mentioned having a “holy hunch” about what to say. Have you ever had a holy hunch? If so, did you act on it or not? What happened then?**

3. NOTICING NEEDS THROUGH JESUS’ EYES

After this discussion, lead the group in exploring some biblical foundations for the ministry of Noticing. Distribute copies of Session 2, Handout 1: “Noticing Needs Through Jesus’ Eyes.”

Have participants form groups of four for this discussion. Ask that one person in each group read aloud the Bible passage from Matthew 9:35-38 while the other participants follow along on their handouts. Then ask the foursomes to take about 3 minutes to share with each other their responses to each of these questions, which are also printed on the handout:

- › **In Matthew 9:36, what two action verbs do you notice that describe Jesus’ response to human need? Why do you think these two actions are linked together in this verse?**

- **In Matthew 9:37–10:1, Jesus tells his disciples to pray for workers in the fields of human need, and then sends them out as the answer to their own prayers. How could this approach be applied to our topic of “noticing”?**

After about 8 minutes, ask someone from each of the foursomes to summarize for the larger group how they answered the last question. Ask which, if any, of these ideas could be practiced in your congregation. (You might want to write down any ideas that will need to be developed further before your church can implement them.)

4. THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Next, have the foursomes read Luke 10:25-37 from the handout, and then share with each other their responses to these questions, which are also printed on the handout. Allow about 6 minutes for this activity.

- **What words or phrases do you notice in this story that describe the *feelings* or emotions of the Samaritan?**
- **What words or phrases do you notice that describe the *actions* of the Samaritan?**
- **Based on your past behavior, which do you think is your stronger point: *feeling* compassion, or *acting* compassionately? Give an example of why you answer as you do.**

5. VIDEO CASE STUDY: CANDACE AND THE HITCHHIKER

Thank participants for sharing their stories with one another. In your own words say:

The Good Samaritan is not only a classic Bible story, but a real scenario we can live if we learn how to notice. Let's check out this example that happened to a woman named Candace.

Play Session 2, Video Segment 2 from the *Activating God Space* Session DVD, in which Candace tells about her Good Samaritan situation.

After the video, ask foursomes to take 6 minutes to respond to these questions:

- **What reasons were there for not helping?**
- **What were the signs that she should help?**
- **Candace had to overcome conflicting emotions before she took action. How can we learn to look beyond people's outward appearance and (possibly sinful) behaviors to see the human needs and fears beneath?**

6. NOTICING GOD

When the 6 minutes are up, say the following in your own words:

Candace noticed the hitchhiker's distress and took action. She wasn't the only one. God notices human needs way before we do. In fact, God doesn't wait to show up when we *begin* to have spiritual conversations with people. Often God is already present and active *before* we arrive on the scene.

Think of a situation in which you intended to minister to someone else—mission trip, service project, Bible study, or whatever—and noticed God already at work when you got involved.

Ask participants to each find a partner and share their responses to the questions below. Read the first question aloud, and then allow about 2 minutes for the pairs to talk. Repeat with the other two questions, allowing 2 minutes per question.

- **Tell about a time you noticed God was already at work when you chose to do ministry in a situation...or hasn't that happened to you?**
- **What signs did you notice that told you God was already at work in this situation?**
- **In what ways, if any, did this experience help sharpen your awareness of God's grace at work ahead of you?**

7. GOD SPACE CONTINUUM

In your own words, say:

The ministry of noticing can be practiced by groups as well as by individuals. How perceptive and aware is our church? Let's explore how well our church does as a whole when it comes to noticing its surroundings.

You'll need to clear some space in your meeting area so that you can designate an imaginary line or continuum stretching from one side of the room to the other (for a large room, choose a Point A and a Point B that are suitably far apart). The line must be long enough for all the participants to stand on it at one time. Identify one end of the line to represent 100 percent of your congregation. The opposite end will represent 1 percent of your congregation. Then explain the activity:

I'm going to read a series of questions. After each question, please stand on the continuum at the point you think best answers that question.

For example, if I ask, "What percentage of our congregation drives a Toyota vehicle?" you'll stand on the imaginary line at a point that represents your best-guess answer. One percent will be at one end of the line and 100 percent will be at the other end.

After you ask each of the following questions and participants have positioned themselves on the continuum, ask the follow-up question provided with each main question. Aim for 2 minutes for each question and its follow-up discussion. If your church does not own property or a building, adjust the wording in the questions accordingly.

- **What percentage of people in our congregation know or have met the families that live next to our church property? Move to the place on our continuum that you think is the correct percentage.**
 - **Do you have any idea what our church is known for in the community? How would you know that?**

- **What percentage of people in our congregation know what businesses are closest to our church building—and have done business there?**
 - **If any nearby businesses share common values or goals with us, how can we help each other?**

- **What percentage of people in our congregation know the names of the nearest schools and know someone who works or attends there?**
 - **What needs do those schools have that we could help meet?**

- **What percentage of people in our congregation know the names of the nearest churches, or the names of those churches' pastors, or someone from those congregations?**

- **What are those churches' roles in our community?**
- › **What percentage of people in our congregation are aware of our church ministry or policy for helping hungry or homeless people who come to us?**
 - **Who are the needy and poor in our neighborhood or community? Where do they live?**

After you've asked these questions, have participants return to their seats and then take 3 minutes to ask the whole group these questions:

- › **What did this exercise tell you about your own awareness of the community just beyond our church property? about the awareness of our congregation concerning that community?**
- › **What will it take for us to become more aware and more outwardly focused as a church?**

8. NOTICING GOD SPACE PARTNERS

Transition to this activity by saying the following in your own words: **One step toward becoming more aware is to discover how we can join with our neighbors, nearby businesses, or other churches to minister to our community.**

Divide the group into three equally sized teams. If you have a large group—more than 40 people or so—form six groups and assign each group a different geographical area so that community organizations won't be contacted by multiple teams from your church.

Ask each team to research community agencies during the coming week and identify those that God is already using to meet human needs. The goal is to explore how your church could partner with one or more of these agencies. Ask the groups to bring a report of their findings to the next session. Here are assignments for each team:

- Team 1: Other churches and faith-based organizations nearby
- Team 2: City and county programs and projects
- Team 3: Private, non-church agencies and organizations

Distribute copies of Session 2, Handout 2: “Noticing God Space Partners” and pens or pencils. Allow 10 minutes for the teams to use this handout/worksheet to plan how they will go about gathering the information needed (steps 1 to 4 on the handout).

For example, Team 1 could brainstorm a list of churches within a mile of your church. Each team member could be assigned to contact one or two churches the following week to ask questions generated by the team. A team recorder could combine the findings into a report to deliver at your next session.

Team members may act independently or all together; a “field trip” might be a possible way to gather the needed information, if appropriate. Teams 2 and 3 could follow a similar approach for learning about their assigned organizations.

After 10 minutes, ask everyone to continue practicing noticing skills between now and your next session in these ways:

- Pray daily for eyes to see people as God sees them.

- Keep a daily journal or list of needs you notice during the week. Add those each day to your prayer list. Prepare to share at the next session any insights you receive. And note what happens if you choose to get involved in meeting one or more of the needs you notice.
- Research your assigned community organization and send your findings to your team reporter.
- Read Chapter 4, “Serving Your Way Into Spiritual Conversations,” from the book *God Space* by Doug Pollock.

Close this session in prayer, asking God for new eyes to see people and the world as God sees them, and for the compassion to connect what we see with our eyes to what we feel in our hearts.

ACTIVATING **GOD** SPACE

EQUIPPING YOUR PEOPLE TO BE THE CHURCH IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Activating God Space leads churches step by step through the culture shift from an inward to an outward focus. Six encouraging sessions provide vision and practical coaching to church leaders and congregation members alike.

Use this Leader Guide in conjunction with the media resources to mobilize individuals and the church as a whole for more effective outreach and mission.

LEADER GUIDE INCLUDES:

- Introduction with How to Use this resource
- Resource list for each session
- Leader Preparation tips for each session
- Clear, simple instructions for leading each step of the session
- Easy-to-read comments and questions the leader says to the participants
- Cues for using printed handouts and for playing DVD video segments from the media pack

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THIS IS A SAMPLE

The number of pages is limited.

Purchase the item for the complete version.

