

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a white ceramic coffee cup. The cup is wrapped in a light brown, textured wooden sleeve. The person's hands have dark nail polish, and a diamond ring is visible on the left ring finger. A colorful plaid scarf with shades of blue, red, and white is draped around the neck, framing the cup. The background is softly blurred.

embrace

CAMPUS

Leaders Guide

We're so excited that you're embracing *Embrace Campus*.

We want to help you remember and understand a few things about *Embrace Campus* as you move forward. We'll just call it *EC* from now on. *EC* is designed to connect a variety of young women from your college campus (or in whatever community you reside!) in a new way. There are two parts to *EC*. Bible Study sessions and Embrace sessions. Each Bible Study sessions will cover one session from the study. There are eight Bible Study sessions to schedule throughout one semester. Embrace sessions are once a month discussion sessions—to occur on different days than Bible Study sessions. Which means your should meet twelve times in one semester. During Embrace sessions, as the leader you'll bring four questions (that you'll receive on the first of the month from us) about a theme and your group will meet and discuss them on the day you've selected as a group to meet. It's that simple! (*12 weeks is an example, it can vary*)

Leading a *EC* group at first it might be awkward or uncomfortable and take some getting used to. So here are a few tips, principles really, we've come up with based on conversations with a number of existing *Embrace* groups and what it took to really make their groups work. For you to know and to share:

Commit - Commit to whoever is in your group. You may not be friends yet and it will take sometime to warm up. Understand that going in. Give each of them a full chance, as I'm sure you'd want that in return.

Consistency - Do everything you can to not skip/and or cancel a meeting time, even if only two or three of you can meet, go get coffee somewhere.

Trust The Process - When meeting for your monthly Embrace session, use the provided Embrace questions (even if it's just two of you!) that will be emailed to you on the first of every month. **I repeat, use the provided questions.** You will be surprised how guided conversation can open doors of conversation that you wouldn't necessarily arrive at organically. Dive right into those questions even on the first meeting, everything that each person is willing to share will come out as the questions will take you there. You do not have to go around and do the typical intros, believe me, you'll learn about each other—but at each person's own pace. **Trust the process!**

Buy-in/Invest - The buy-in occurs when **you** feel that this type of group is beneficial for the health of your campus (community) and for you. You buy-in when you see the kingdom building that happens when we invest in each other.

If these elements can be embraced, each group will work.

Here's some steps to creating groups and *embracing* the process (see above!):

- 1) Share *EC* with the girls in your sphere of influence: on the dorm floor, in classes, your roommates, corps, job etc. Plan a promo event/meeting - a brunch, or coffee time. Make it public and welcoming to all interested. Use the posters included in the welcome email. I have a firm belief that everyone reserves the right to say, yes or no. Give all women the opportunity to be involved in *EC*. Making *EC* truly inclusive and a place to *belong* and experience community.

2) Use this time (Embrace to do a demo Embrace session. Give out numbers at the door or under plates or cups, or count off by numbers - so that groups are random. Pass out the four questions to each group (you should receive these questions in your welcome email). Avoid putting the questions up on a screen or written on a board—otherwise everyone will be turning to read the questions, which can be distracting. You can also introduce the Ruth Bible Study and give details about meeting dates and location. See the Ruth Bible Study for more instructions on leading the study.

3) Have a hard copy sign up form or follow-up email survey for those in attendance to sign up to join an EC group.

4) If you have enough interested and are able to form more than one group, select groups at random. This helps ensure the groups are mixed well. You may not even have enough girls to select groups or mix it up as described. And that's ok! Start wherever you are. Prayerfully as you meet, growth will occur.

5) If another group does develop, select a leader. You can ask for a volunteer, if no one steps up, ask an individual if they are willing. If they're hesitate offer to walk them through it and maybe even be the temporary leader until someone is available. That leader should go to www.uscwomensministries.com/embrace-campus/ to sign up as a registered leader.

Like we've been pressing, we've seen groups work out best when the process and directions given, were implemented and trusted. That's what I mean by trust the process. I've seen a leader disregard the questions on the first Embrace session meeting and choose to go around and have each individual share about themselves. And that group ended up not functioning well because the leader didn't trust the process. Some people aren't ready to share their life story right away. If they feel that's required they will pull away quickly and won't make time to be at the next meeting. As you continue to meet you'll learn about each of their lives at each individuals pace. If you need a ice breaker/get-to-know you time to feel acquainted, try something simple and safe like this:

Choose one word to express how:

- you describe yourself
- someone else would describe you
- you would like to be described

Be the first to go you give an example. Here's an example: 1) assertive 2) bossy 3) kind.

Regarding the questions you'll receive, cut them out and answer them in any order. Questions can take place during the meal, or after the meal. That's really up to you. If your group decides to meet in a restaurant/coffee shop (*meeting in a home-type setting should be first choice*) then sharing during the meal would be best. You can read one, one at a time and take turns answering. You can read off all four and let the members take turns choosing which one to answer. There isn't one way to do this. But I prefer reading one question at a time and letting the women answer as they feel compelled to. **Don't insist that everyone answers every question.** But give those quiet ones opportunities to share. Such as, "*Mary, we haven't heard from you yet, was there a question that you wanted to share about?*" Some people need helping getting there, or need to know you want to hear from them. Especially if you have a few talkers in the group. But she might simply respond, that's ok. Or, no I'm good. And that's ok! Just say, "no worries" and smile and move on to the next question or prayer.

Creating a safe sharing space is made when you let the members get a sense of the group, at their own pace. **As the leader, your personal vulnerability and openness will encourage your members to share, because you just made it safe to share.**

Use the questions and **allow the awkward silence**. Resist the temptation to fill quiet moments with your voice just to stop the quietness. A well known leader once told me (regarding small groups) "embrace the awkward silence, someone will talk." Also resist the temptation to respond and affirm after every sharing. I know it feels necessary but it can cause a digression, respect the time of group members, leaving space for everyone to respond and **not be there longer than 2 hours**. Others might naturally affirm after each sharing, and that's fine, allow those bonds to form and for members to minister to each other. But if you know that affirmation is needed, or immediate prayer and comfort, **go for it**. After all, it's your group and you'll learn and know their needs.

About meeting spaces and meals. The idea for the traditional Embrace groups is to meet in each others homes to share a meal and talk about life and Jesus. Being an Embrace: Campus group the setting may look a bit different. You might meet in dorm rooms, common rooms or coffee shops or outside under a tree. Just find a safe, private setting to meet. Try to incorporate eating together. During the Embrace Sessions, some might just talk about life, and that's ok. You may have girls in your group that do not know Jesus! What a great way for them to learn about Him through your experience. Regarding meals: It can be pizza you ordered, chili and corn bread you made (if you have a kitchen!), it could be cafeteria brunch with pancakes and eggs, it might just be coffee and treats. Again is traditional Embrace groups, hosting ideally would rotate through the members, the hostess is responsible for the food (unless they can only host and you go potluck style) and **the leader is responsible to bring the questions and facilitate the discussion time**. You are free go to a restaurant, I think home type settings are best. The idea is to experience life and Jesus together in the everyday.

More questions may come up, when they do, please email me at: sarah_micula@usc.salvationarmy.org and we'll walk through this together.

I will have more ideas and suggestions in the future, when I do, I'll email you!

***God will create a new thing in this land:
A transformed woman will embrace the transforming God!"***

Jeremiah 31:22 The Message

And may it be so!

embrace Your goals

Share a goal that you currently have.

embrace Your goals

Are you living in a way that fulfills
your hopes?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

embrace Your goals

Share a method that you have found
useful in keeping you on track to ac-
complish your goals.

embrace Your goals

Has Jesus placed anything on your
heart lately that He wants you to ac-
complish?



THE SALVATION ARMY USA
Central Women

Website:

www.uscwomensministries.com

Facebook:

Central Women - The Salvation Army USA

Instagram:

@centralwomen

Pinterest:

Central Territory Women's Ministries

Twitter:

@TSACentralwomen