

At the Counter
Leader Guide



LAURA SHARP-WAITES

Small Group Leader Guide Companion to
At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life

by Laura Sharp-Waites

Pull up a chair. Slow down. Notice God in everyday life.

Welcome

Sometimes the most meaningful spiritual conversations happen in ordinary places.

Around a kitchen counter.

Over a cup of coffee.

In a circle of people who are willing to slow down and listen.

This Leader Guide was created to accompany the devotional **At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life**. Together, the readings and conversations invite participants to notice where faith is already present in everyday life.

Each week participants read the devotional during the week and gather to reflect on what they noticed, what stirred their hearts, and where they experienced God in ordinary moments.

The goal is not to rush through the material.

The goal is simply to **notice grace together**.

Pull up a chair. The conversation begins here.



How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to be flexible and simple for group leaders.

Participants read the devotional during the week and gather together for conversation and reflection.

Leaders do not need to teach or prepare lessons.

Instead, leaders simply host the conversation, guiding the group through the reflection questions and creating space for honest sharing.

This guide follows the chapters of the devotional and offers simple prompts to help the group reflect together.

A Note About Pacing

Every group moves at its own rhythm. Some groups choose to meet weekly throughout the year, while others pause during busy seasons or church calendar transitions.

If your group takes a break, participants are welcome to continue reading the devotional on their own if they wish. When your group gathers again, simply remind everyone which chapter the discussion will resume on and continue from there.

Because *At the Counter* contains 52 chapters, some groups may complete the devotional within a year, while others may take longer depending on their schedule. Both approaches are perfectly welcome. The goal is not speed, but meaningful conversation and shared reflection.



A Note for Leaders

I'm delighted you have chosen to use *At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life* with your Sunday school class or small group.

This devotional was written to invite people into honest reflection, gentle conversation, and the simple practice of noticing God in everyday life. My hope is that your group will discover meaningful moments of connection as you share stories, reflect on the Soul Pause questions, and listen for where grace is already present.

Participants are encouraged to have their own copy of the devotional so they can read the reflections during the week and bring their thoughts into the group conversation.

Copies of *At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life* are available in paperback, hardcover, Kindle, and Kindle Unlimited. Also, a companion *Soul Pause Journal* is available in paperback for those who would like dedicated space to write, reflect, and engage more deeply with each chapter.

For groups, I offer bulk ordering and I'm happy to help you think through what will work best for your group. I can coordinate ordering and shipping directly to you, which often makes things simpler. You can learn more or request an order here: [Start the Conversation](#)

If it is easier, copies are also available on Amazon for individual purchases, and groups are always welcome to order through a local bookstore using the information provided on page 7.

If it would be meaningful for your group, Laura is available for group conversations or virtual visits upon request.

Leading a group with *At the Counter* does not require teaching expertise. Your role is simply to create a welcoming space where people can listen, reflect, and share.

The most important thing you bring to the group is not information.

It is **hospitality**.

So take a deep breath, pull up a chair, and trust that God is already present in the conversation.



A Note About Recipes and Reflection

Throughout *At the Counter*, you will notice recipes woven into the devotional. These recipes are offered as a gentle reminder that faith is often nurtured in ordinary moments — around tables, in kitchens, and through shared hospitality.

Some groups enjoy preparing a recipe from the devotional to bring and share during a gathering. This is entirely optional, but it can add a warm and memorable element to your time together.

You will also notice **Soul Pause questions** throughout the book. These questions are designed to help readers slow down and reflect more deeply during the week.

For those who enjoy journaling, a companion **Soul Pause Journal** is available, offering space to sit with these questions and record personal reflections.

Whether your group chooses to cook together, journal individually, or simply share conversation around the table, the goal remains the same:

to notice God’s presence in the ordinary moments of life.

Pull up a chair. The conversation is just beginning.



Local Bookstore Ordering Information

At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life

by Laura Sharp-Waites

At the Counter is a warm and reflective devotional that invites readers to encounter God in the ordinary rhythms of daily life. Through storytelling, spiritual reflection, and meaningful recipes, it creates a welcoming space to slow down, reflect, and discover grace in everyday moments.

Ideal for individual reading, small groups, and meaningful gift giving.

A free Leader Guide is available to support group discussion.

Available Formats from Dare to Live Again Publishing:

Paperback ISBN: 979-8-9952325-0-6

Hardcover ISBN: 979-8-9952325-1-3

Soul Pause Journal ISBN: 979-8-9952325-2-0

A companion journal based on the Soul Pause reflections, providing space to write, reflect, and engage more deeply.

Ordering Information

All titles are available through Ingram and may be ordered through standard bookstore distribution channels. Wholesale discounts are available through Ingram.

About the Author

Laura Sharp-Waites is a licensed minister, writer, and the voice behind The Baking Pastor. Through storytelling, hospitality, and spiritual reflection, she invites readers to discover faith in the ordinary moments of everyday life.

She is also available for bookstore events, author conversations, and speaking engagements.

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At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life, Leader Guide

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Weekly Gathering Format

Each gathering can follow the same gentle rhythm.

Opening Prayer

Soul Pause

Sit quietly for a moment and reflect.

Ask:

Where did you notice God this week?

Soul Notes

Invite participants to share something from the week's reading that stayed with them.

Conversation

Discuss the Soul Pause questions from the chapter.

Around the Counter

Share stories from everyday life connected to the reflection.

Optional Recipe Connection

Practice for the Week

Closing Prayer



Before Your First Gathering

Before your first meeting, take a few minutes to read the opening chapter and become familiar with the rhythm of the devotional. You don't need to prepare a lesson or have all the answers. Your role is simply to welcome people, guide the conversation, and create space for reflection. Encourage participants to read the devotional during the week so they can bring their thoughts into the gathering. Some groups enjoy bringing a recipe from the book to share, though this is entirely optional. Try to keep the conversation gentle and unhurried so everyone has space to speak and listen. If a question leads somewhere unexpected, allow the group to explore it with curiosity rather than rushing to conclusions. Trust that God is already present in the conversation and will meet your group in ordinary moments.



Sample Invitation

This can be copied it into an email, bulletin, or message.

Invitation to Join Our Small Group

You're warmly invited to join a small group conversation using the devotional **At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life** by Laura Sharp-Waites.

Each week we'll read a short devotional reflection during the week and then gather together to share conversation, reflection, and prayer. Through storytelling, Soul Pause questions, and everyday experiences, we'll explore how God meets us in the ordinary moments of life.

No expertise is required — just a willingness to listen, reflect, and share.

Bring your cup of coffee or tea, pull up a chair and join the conversation.

Location: _____

Date / Time: _____

Contact: _____



Chapter 1

Soul Pauses

What does your counter look like right now?

What might it mean to invite God into the ordinary moments of your day?

Conversation Starters

- Which line from this chapter stayed with you most?
- What does “pulling up a chair” mean to you spiritually?
- Where did you notice grace this week?

Around the Counter

Share a small ordinary moment from the week that felt meaningful.

Practice for the Week

Pause once each day and ask:

Where is grace showing up right now?



Chapter 2

Soul Pauses

What makes up most of your ordinary days?

Where might holiness be quietly present, even if you haven't noticed it yet?

Conversation

- Which Soul Pause stayed with you most?
- Did anything in the reading surprise you?
- Where do you notice God in everyday life?

Around the Counter

Share an ordinary moment that became meaningful.

Practice

Notice one moment of gratitude each day this week.



Chapter 3

Soul Pauses

When was the last time you noticed a deeper kind of quiet?

What might it be inviting you to hear or feel?

Conversation

- What part of this chapter resonated with you?
- Did anything feel challenging or uncomfortable?
- What does slowing down look like for you right now?

Around the Counter

Share something simple that brought you peace this week.

Practice

Take one intentional moment of stillness each day.



Chapter 4

Soul Pauses

What simple tools or traditions carry meaning for you?

Where might God be present in the ordinary things you reach for each day?

Conversation

- Which question stayed with you this week?
- Did the reading help you notice something differently?
- What helps you slow down and listen?

Around the Counter

Share a moment where you felt especially present this week.

Practice

Choose one activity this week and do it slowly.



Chapter 5

Soul Pauses

Where are you being asked to hold space rather than offer answers?

What might it look like to stay present, even when the outcome is unclear?

Conversation

- Which reflection spoke most deeply to you?
- Did this chapter shift how you see ordinary moments?
- What feels nourishing for your soul right now?

Around the Counter

Share something that nourished your spirit this week.

Practice

Notice one moment of grace each day.



Chapter 6

Soul Pauses

Where are you releasing the need to be perfect?

What broken or unfinished places in your life might be telling a deeper story of grace?

Conversation

- Which Soul Pause stayed with you this week?
- What part of the reflection brought comfort?
- Where have you recently noticed God's presence?

Around the Counter

Share a moment this week where you felt hope or peace.

Practice

Take a few quiet breaths each day and ask:

What is God inviting me to notice today?

Optional Closing Conversation

As you conclude your time together, take a few moments to reflect on the past weeks.

- Which Soul Pause question stayed with you the longest?
- Did any ordinary moment during these weeks feel especially meaningful?
- What have you begun to notice differently in your everyday life?
- What practice or reflection do you want to carry forward?

You might close by inviting each person to share one word that describes what they are taking with them from this study.

End your time together with a simple prayer of gratitude for the conversations you have shared and the ways God has been present in your ordinary moments.


Pull up a chair again anytime.



Permission to Share

Churches and ministry leaders are welcome to print and share this guide within their group or congregation.

Please do not reproduce it for commercial use.

 *Faith grows in ordinary conversations.*