SPIRITUAL MISFITS

THE COMMONS

Listener Groups

A starter guide for facilitators

Spiritual Misfits has always been made with the goal of building community, not just creating content. One way we're doing this is by supporting the start-up of listener groups — similar to a book club, but using the podcast as a conversation sparker.

Listener groups are small, local gatherings where people explore the questions Spiritual Misfits raises together, face to face (or online). You don't need to be an expert, a theologian or a pastor to run one. You just need to hold the space well.

What You Need to Start a Group

A few people

Two or three people (including you) is enough to begin. If you've got more, great — but there's no reason to wait for a crowd.

A place to meet

A pub, a café, a library, someone's home. A church can work, but we'd generally recommend somewhere more neutral — for many misfits, walking into a church building is a big ask. If you're gathering people you don't know yet, start somewhere public. You can also meet online if that works best for your group.

A regular rhythm

Weekly, fortnightly or monthly — it's up to you. Whatever you choose, commit to it for a set period, like a 10-week term or a six-month block. Treat it as a pilot, but give it long enough to find its feet. At the end, review together whether to keep going.

The Postures We Ask You to Carry

Warm and welcoming

Hospitality is the whole point. People drawn to Spiritual Misfits may question whether they belong anywhere; our insistence is they absolutely do. Learn names, notice the newcomer, and make it easy to come back. Everyone is welcome to explore, wherever they're at.

Humble and curious

Listen without judgement and ask more questions than you answer. Your job isn't to land the group on a shared conclusion. It's to help people think and speak honestly, and to stay open to learning together.

Aware of power dynamics

Some people find it easy to share; some are used to being handed the microphone. Notice who's speaking and who isn't, and make room: go around the circle, try pairs first, invite (but never force) quieter voices. That includes watching your own airtime.

At ease with the unresolved

Not every question needs an answer. Resist the urge to tidy things up. Many misfits have been rushed to answers before. Let this be a place where questions can breathe.

Tips for Success

- **Share the load.** Where possible, have two facilitators — someone to co-host, debrief with, and cover for you when life happens.
- **Keep the bar low.** No one needs to have listened before they arrive. Lean on the resources from The Commons so anyone can join the conversation.
- **Set group agreements early.** Agree together: what's shared here stays here; speak from your own experience; no fixing or advising; it's always okay to pass.
- **Know your limits.** A listener group is not a church, and a facilitator is not a pastor (unless you happen to be one). If something's beyond your scope, acknowledge it with care and refer on.
- **Stay connected.** You're not doing this alone. Feel free to share with Will and Caro what's working and what isn't — we're learning this together.

Keep these handy: Lifeline 13 11 14 · Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 · QLife (LGBTIQ+) 1800 184 527

Questions or support: hello@spiritualmisfits.com.au