

Group Discovery Bible Study

When you meet with your group for Discovery Bible Study, go around the room and have everyone share one thing they are thankful for and one thing that is causing anxiety or fear (stressing them out). Point out to the group that one aspect of prayer is just telling God the things we are thankful for and talking with Him about what worries them or stresses them out. Transition this interaction from a group share time to an open, interactive prayer time. This form of prayer is very interactive and will get the quietest people involved in group prayer.

The Holy Spirit

Right after you pray, ask the group to share what God said to them in their personal time (devotions) with Him since your last meeting. Asking this question at the beginning of every meeting encourages group members to have a personal time with God. It also reinforces and affirms every member's ability to hear God's voice. Giving them an opportunity to share allows room for the Holy Spirit to take the group study in a completely different direction than you planned. Be sensitive to the group and make sure they have this time.

Scripture

After everyone has a chance to share, have someone read the selected scripture out loud while everyone follows along in their Bible (or listens carefully for those without Bibles). When they are done, have someone else read the same passage out loud again. This time have everyone listen to the reading. When they are done, ask for a volunteer to retell the passage in their own words. When they finish, ask the group to fill in any points they feel were left out. Reading, listening, and retelling Scripture is more important than you might think.

This pattern allows different learning styles to engage (interact with) Scripture. Everyone has time to think about the passage and ask the Holy Spirit to speak through God's Word. Retelling the passage allows them to think through how they can share this passage with someone from outside the group. Allowing the group to add to the retelling encourages everyone to think about the main points in the passage. Even though going through the passage multiple times seems repetitive and time consuming, the process helps develop reproducing disciples.

Discovery Study

After your group retells the Scripture, you can study the passage. Your discussion should be filled with questions. Questions facilitate the discovery process. Questions allow your group to wrestle with (consider deeply) Scripture and grow spiritually. Below are some sample questions to encourage interaction with Scripture:

- Did anything in this passage capture your attention?
- What did you like about this passage?
- Did anything bother you? Why?
- What does this passage tell us about God?
- What does this passage tell us about Man?
- What does this passage tell us about living to please God?

Keep discussion focused on Scripture. If you or someone else in your group is knowledgeable of the Bible, it will be hard to avoid introducing outside materials into the study. You, as the facilitator, need to work hard to limit the discussion of extra-Biblical or other Biblical materials. These materials are not bad, but they don't facilitate interaction with Scripture. In most cases extra-Biblical materials emphasize the intelligence of the one introducing the materials rather than keeping Scripture at center stage. Sometimes this is not the case, but those moments are rare. Do your best to keep discussion focused on the Scripture that is the focus of the study.

Commitment

Knowledge of God's Word must translate into obedience or it is wasted. This next step begins with a statement and a question:

"Since we believe God's Word is true, what must we change in our lives to obey God?"

Everyone in the group must answer this question before they leave. If they already obey this Scripture, have them share how they obey it. Ask them if there is anything else they need to do to increase their obedience to God's Word in this area of their life. Keep this part of your time focused on specifics. For example, realizing that there is only one God is awesome, but how does that lead to action? In this case you might encourage them with a follow up question: "Now that you believe there is one God, what do you need to change in your life? What will you do differently?" Encourage your group to identify specific things to do to obey the passage.

After everyone shares how they are going to obey Scripture, have them identify someone who needs to hear what God said to the group. Encourage them to share what they learned with that person. Before you finish, ask the group to identify people they know who are in need. Ask the group to identify ways to meet those needs in the next week. Finally, close in prayer.

Summary of Group Discovery Bible Study

- Begin by having the group share one thing they are thankful for and one challenge that is stressing them out (worrying) in a group prayer process.
- Ask the group to share what God told them through His Word since the last meeting.
- Ask them to share how they were obedient to the previous week's Scripture.
- Read the week's portion of Scripture out loud while people follow along in their Bibles.
- Have someone else read the same passage out loud while the group listens.
- Have someone else in the group retell the passage in their own words. Allow the group to add to the retelling, if necessary.
- Use discovery questions to encourage the group to interact with the passage.
- Challenge the group to obey God's Word.
- Have each person share what they are going to do to obey the passage over the next week.
- Have the group identify people they will share the passage with during the next week and write down their names.
- Have the group identify people in need and commit to meeting those needs.
- Close in prayer.