

LEADER'S INTRODUCTION

The Big Picture

God's word is alive and it should be embodied in our lives.

St. Ignatius of Loyola was the founder of the Jesuits and is one of the great saints of the Church. During his lifetime, thousands of men joined the Jesuits. As he would form them for their work to evangelize the world, he would end every meeting with one phrase: "Go, set the world on fire."

The fire that Ignatius is talking about is, of course, the fire of the Holy Spirit. Jesus commanded His apostles to make disciples of all nations. Our Lord gave them the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to accomplish this mission. In the Acts of the Apostles, we get to see some amazing examples of how the Holy Spirit works through the apostles to reach people throughout the world.

The purpose of this study is to give an introduction to evangelization through the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles. We have determined three areas of introduction that can be gathered from Acts:

First, evangelization requires some foundational principles. Specifically, we will cover the Church, the Holy Spirit, and prayer.

Second, evangelization is strategic in nature. The Acts of the Apostles reveals several gems of evangelistic strategy that we can apply today. Throughout this section, your group will actively strategize how you can evangelize on your campus.

Finally, the Acts of the Apostles reveals practical ways to evangelize that we can put to use in our own life. We do not want you to finish this study just knowing about evangelization; we want you to be able to evangelize. The practical section will give you tools to lead your group in developing evangelistic skills. As the leader, you will need to know how to perform these practical skills yourself so that you are able to teach them to your group.

These three sections are outlined below in the Table of Contents.

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Chapter 1 – Evangelization in the Context of the Church

Chapter 2 – Evangelization and the Holy Spirit

Chapter 3 – Prayer as the Heart of Evangelization

Part 2 – Strategies for Evangelization

Chapter 4 – Preparing to Share the Faith

Chapter 5 – What’s God’s Mission for Your Life?

Chapter 6 – ‘Win, Build, Send’ Evangelization and the Spiritual
Multiplication Depth Chart

Chapter 7 – Learning to Articulate the Faith

Part 3 – Practicals for Evangelization

Chapter 8 – How-to Share Your Testimony

Chapter 9 – How-to Give a Gospel Presentation

Chapter 10 – Sharing the Gospel and Fear of Suffering

Introduction

Blessed John Paul II once said, “The saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult moments in the Church’s history.” The Acts of the Apostles Bible study is meant to provide examples of evangelization so that we are able to set the world on fire even in these difficult moments in Church history. We need the examples of the apostles and the saints to live out evangelization, and your campus needs your example of evangelization to live it out as well. If you need any help using this Bible study format, please see the article below.

How FOCUS Equip Studies Work

Each FOCUS Equip study highlights one particular passage of Scripture. As the leader, you guide a discussion about the passage, which allows participants to discover truths within the passage for themselves. This process is called self-discovered learning. Its format can help participants learn about Scripture and the way to discover Scripture on their own.

At the same time, you are not left alone to understand the Scriptures by yourself. Each chapter will contain a section titled “What Do I Need to Know about This Passage?” It will provide you with details about the passage, along with summaries about the passage’s big picture, how it applies to Jesus, and how it can apply to your group.

UNDERSTANDING

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PASSAGE?

The discussion guide supplies you with an opening question, some background information to share about the passage, and a set of example questions and answers on each passage to use with your group.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY

Prepare by studying “What Do I Need to Know about This Passage?” before the Bible study, and then use the discussion guide to direct the conversation with your group.

How to Prepare Your Study

With all of this information at your disposal, you are all set and ready to go. You just need to pass out the notes, ask each question as it is written, and read the answers to the questions, right? Well, not exactly. It would not make for a very engaging Bible study. This material is a Bible study in a can: It is meant to preserve good-quality Biblical content and allow for a broad distribution, but someone still needs to take the material out of the can, spice up the content, and serve it to your study. That person is you.

This is where the audience for your study is crucial; these are the people for whom you are “cooking.” Whether you have a group that has never heard the Gospel before or a group that attempts to live out the Gospel each day, you can adapt the Bible study to the group.

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The flexibility of this format is what can make it so effective.

Most likely, however, you will have a group with both kinds of people. Follow the example of my dance lesson: try to create a Bible study where beginners can learn the basics while the experts can be rejuvenated. Scripture is a great way to do this. St. Gregory the Great once said, "Holy Scripture is a stream in which the elephant may swim and the lamb may wade." Both groups should be able to discover something meaningful in the Scripture passage.

For more on How to Lead a Bible study, check out our resource on FOCUSEquip.org. As a review, FOCUS Bible study leaders have 3 roles and 3 goals in each study.

Your 3 Key Roles

With all of the above information in mind, remember that you have 3 key roles in this study. These 3 roles are your contribution to the study, and doing these 3 things well will make the study successful.

1. Prayer: Ultimately, it will be God Who changes the lives of the participants. By personal prayer and praying for your participants, you open the door for God to accomplish great things. Please take time to pray for your group, talking with God about each participant.
2. Hospitality: Effectively welcoming participants, getting to know them, meeting them outside of Bible study, and becoming real friends will be a great asset to the study. Create an environment that is open and personal, allowing

participants to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and experiences.

3. **Facilitator:** A good discussion really enhances the fruitfulness of a Bible study. Take the time to review the study and ask good, relevant questions to your group. Guide the discussion, allowing everyone to participate. Bring the discussion back if it gets too far astray.

Your 3 Key Goals

There will, no doubt, be many questions and discussions that come up throughout the study. You may even find yourself a bit lost here or there. However, the goals listed below are what you are ultimately trying to accomplish. Keeping these in mind throughout the study will help you stay on course.

1. **Deep Transformation:** Through interaction with God's word and one another, it is our hope that the lives of your Bible study members will be profoundly changed. The purpose of a Bible study is not to simply learn information or to be a part of a Bible study club, but allow the Lord to transform our lives. Specifically, we hope that students, through Scripture, are drawn more intimately to our Lord in the sacraments and liturgy of the Church where they can most fully receive the gift of God's grace in their lives.
2. **Intimate Fellowship:** If people are going to be deeply transformed, they will need others along the way, not only to help this transformation, but also to make sure they continue this transformation in the future. Your goal as a leader is to take a group of people with various backgrounds and

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personalities and help them form authentic relationships with one another.

3. **Spiritual Multiplication:** Another important dynamic of small groups is their ability to be reproduced. As you lead, pray that the Lord will raise up members of your small group to go on to disciple others and to lead Bible studies of their own.

Final Note

One of the best ways to learn how to lead a Bible Study is to learn from others. Consider observing someone else's Bible study to learn how they have been successful. Also, ask a missionary or your discipler to come to your study and give you feedback on how you are doing.

The Challenge

To properly lead this study, you will need to prepare in advance and apply God's word in your own life.

