



PREPARING YOUR BIBLE STUDY LEADER'S GUIDE

VISION

Bible studies have three main goals: Divine Intimacy, Authentic Friendship, and Spiritual Multiplication. The purpose of this resource is to prepare the disciple to lead an excellent first Bible Study and support them in achieving these goals.

KEY CONTENT

- Spiritual preparation for Bible study
- Making great invitations
- Selecting a study and preparing the content
- Practicing hospitality
- Getting the Bible study set up in ACTS



PREPARING YOUR BIBLE STUDY DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Scripture is powerful, for “the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12). By putting people in contact with the Word of God, we set out on an adventure that can and will change lives forever.

“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:47

Discuss: As we begin, what are you most excited about and most nervous about regarding leading your first Bible study?

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

A fruitful Bible study is not primarily about our amazing hospitality, our skill at answering questions, or our careful preparation. Those are important, but the secret to a great Bible study is God and our own intimacy with Him. Jesus tells us, “Apart from me, you can do nothing” and that with Him “all things are possible” (Jn 15:5, Mk 9:23). Our commitment to growing in holiness, personal prayer, reading Scripture, trusting in God, and fostering zeal for His mission, these are the most important elements of a great study.

In addition to your own transformation, the next most important thing you can do is pray for the people you are inviting to Bible study. Remember that God loves them even more than you do, and by asking for His grace, you pave the way for their lives to be transformed.

Discuss: Are you spiritual prepared for leading a Bible study? Why or why not? Have you prayed for the members of your group? If so, how? If not, what could you do?

INVITATIONS

Good invitations can be the difference between having a group of two and having a group of ten. They include the following components:

- **Name-storming:** Who should you invite? Who does God want to be there? Who are you afraid of inviting but you probably should invite anyway? Take 5 minutes now to write down as many names as possible that come to mind when considering these questions. Make sure to have 10 or more names, but aim for close to 30. Come back and name-storm each week until you have 30 names. See lines on next page.

PREPARING THE DISCUSSION

Part 1: Prayerful Reading

Prayerfully read the scriptures referenced in your Bible study chapter. You can read more about praying with Scripture in the article “Prayer: Spiritual Breathing” at <https://focusequip.org/prayer-spiritual-breathing/>.

Discuss: Why is praying through the study material necessary? How will it help you lead a better Bible study?

Part 2: What is the Main Point?

Great Bible studies drive home one main point for their participants. Each time you meet, your goal is that the entire discussion builds up to and reinforces this point. Ask yourself, “What do I hope people come away with?” or “What do I want them to know about God?”

To discern the main point of the study, you can review the following:

- Look at the title of the Bible study chapter
- Read the intro paragraph
- Skim through some of the content
- If provided, watch the leader’s video attached
- Consider the whole of the Bible study (all the chapters). How does this session’s main point fit into the whole of the Bible study?

Discuss: What do you believe is the main point you want to reinforce for your next gathering?

The main point I am going to reinforce in this Bible study chapter is:

Part 3: Ask Good Questions

FOCUS Bible studies include four basic types of questions.

- Launching – These questions are open-ended starting questions to break the ice and are always used at the beginning of Bible studies.
- Observation – These questions help establish basic understanding of the reading, and typically answer the question: “What is going on?”
- Understanding – These questions probe the deeper significance of the text, and typically answer the questions: “What does it mean?” or “Why does this matter?”
- Application – These questions encourage participants to *apply* the lessons from the text to their own lives. These are the most important and should take the most time. Circle these questions ahead of time!

Noting the main point and the allotted time, review the questions written in the Bible study. Seek to understand why these questions are being asked and what points the study is hoping to make. Feel free to adjust the questions slightly to make the study flow smoother, be more personal, or keep the discussion timely. Don’t be shy about rewording questions to help your group have a great conversation.

Discuss: Review the questions for your next Bible study. Do you understand the purpose of each question? If not, what clarifications do you need? Where do you want to spend most of your time in discussion? Take some time to reword questions (if necessary), circle key questions, or make other adjustments.

HOSPITALITY

Discuss: When have you felt most welcome? What made that event so hospitable and what could it teach you about preparing the environment of your Bible study?

We not only want to have a great discussion prepared but also create an atmosphere of warmth and welcome where that discussion can thrive. A hospitable atmosphere can persuade someone to come back to our study again or open up during the discussion.

Here are some keys to great hospitality:

Build Excitement: What would make people more excited to come?

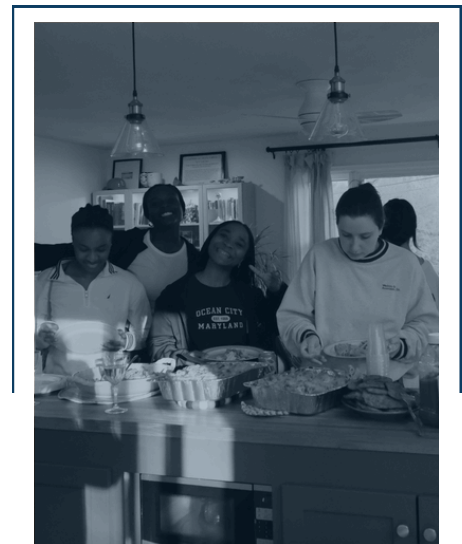
- Send a “pump-up” reminder: “Can’t wait to see you all. Connor is bringing the best snack ever—gotta come to find out what it is!”
- Have a group chat where people can express their enthusiasm.
- Always have a fun group chat name. (“Push Pull Praise” for the gym boys? “DOGS: Daughters of God” for the ladies, perhaps?)
- Ask for food/drink requests: What are we going to drink? Coffee anyone?

Choose the right space: Ask yourself...

- Are you going out to meet people where they naturally gather?
- Is it accessible to everyone?
- Is it familiar and approachable for first-time attendees?
- Does it lend itself to conversation?
- Is it too crowded? Too loud? Too cold? Too hot? Too 1960s Church-basement-y?
- How can you make the space more comfortable?
- Where will everyone sit?

Timing: Consider...

- A time that can be consistent! If your time frequently changes, people will not be able to come as often.
- Begin and end on time. Aim for one hour. If you want to spend time hanging out before or after, make that known, but keep the study itself timely.
- Pick the best time for everyone as much as possible. An easy way to do this is to put times in a group chat and ask people to “heart” the times that work. You can also use tools like Doodle to help.



To build excitement for my study, I will: _____

I will host my Bible study at: _____

And to prepare the space, I will: _____

Food and drinks will include: _____

I will host my Bible study on _____ (day) at _____ (time).

ACTS

ACTS is a coaching tool that FOCUS uses to care for the people we serve. It allows us to track Bible study attendance so that we can better support everyone involved: participants, leaders, and missionaries alike.

We use ACTS for several key reasons:

1. **Prayer:** ACTS helps us know who is involved so that we can pray for them.
2. **Intentionality:** ACTS allows us to understand who is involved, who has been absent, and which leaders might need more support. *“Never permit the children of this world to show greater care and interest in the things of time than you show for those of eternity.”* – St. Ignatius of Loyola
3. **Coordinating Mission:** What if someone can’t attend Bible study at the same time next semester? What if a new person is looking to join a Bible study mid-semester? Or, what happens when a missionary leaves or a leader graduates? By recording our Bible study, it gives us the information we need to best coordinate mission and ensure everyone is taken care of.

Discuss: Does this vision make sense to you? Do you have any questions about ACTS or why FOCUS uses it? How will using ACTS help you lead a transformative Bible study?

Take some time to log into ACTS and set up your bible study. To do so:

- Log into Acts (your missionary can help you get an email invite if you don’t yet have one).
- On the left side of the screen, click “Bible Studies.”
- In the top right corner, hit the blue “plus” icon.
- Enter in the basic Bible study information: group name, day, time, location, start date, as well as any participants you hope to come (reference the invite list you’ve already made!).
- Pro tip: You can also sign up for text reminders to log Bible study attendance from your phone!

FINAL THOUGHTS

God can do incredible things through your Bible study. By taking the time to carefully prepare your first study, you are giving Him an opportunity to impact people’s lives. A great Bible study will require effort. But as you are praying, making invitations, preparing the discussion, and practicing hospitality, remember that God is at work and wants to change hearts—including yours—through your “yes” to His mission as Bible study leader.