

▲ Bible Study Prep Handout ▲

OPENING THOUGHTS

1. It is expected that we grow to become teachers (Hebrews 5:12) and that "older women" teach "younger women" (older in maturity, not always in age, Titus 2:3-5)
2. It is a privilege to have and be able to share God's Word. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to understand where God's Word comes from and how it is relevant to our lives.
3. Teaching God's Word is a serious responsibility. Read 2 Timothy 2:15 and James 3:1 to find out about this responsibility.
4. In light of our responsibility, we must enter into our preparation of Bible study prayerfully and diligently.
5. In order to be effective teachers, we must personally interact with the passage. We need to let God speak to us before we speak to others. The result will be excitement and a true desire to share the message with others.
6. Find a quiet, uninterrupted place in which to prepare. Bring a note pad on which to write any stray thoughts that come in that you need to remember. Bring your Bible, pen, notebook and any necessary study aids.

BEGINNING YOUR STUDY

1. Pray for God to show you what He wants taught.
2. Read the passage in context. This will prevent misunderstanding and wrong conclusions.
3. Read through the passage at least three times.
 - a. First time - get the general idea or the main theme of the passage.
 - b. Second time - read the passage and answer the following questions:
 - i. **who** is the author writing to and **who** are the characters involved?
 - ii. **what** happens? **What** is being said?
 - iii. **where** and **when** is this taking place? **how** does this impact what is said?
 - iv. **why** do events occur? Is an explanation given in the text or elsewhere in the Bible?
 - v. **how** do the events happen? **How** might this apply to us/me?
 - c. Third time - look for keys to the thought structure
 - i. Connections between thoughts. Look for words such as: but, because, therefore, however, yet.
 - ii. Look for parallel ideas repeated and/or contrasting ideas
3. Answer the question: **What does it say?** Restate the passage in your own words.
4. Consider the facts and answer: **What does it mean?** Write down the SINGLE Main Point.
 - a. If you are using more than one passage, write what each one means, then use your summaries to build one statement about what the Bible says about that subject.
5. Consider your life and answer: **What does it mean to me?** Write down a possible APPLICATION *for you*.

PREPARING YOUR MAIN POINT (SPECS Model)

To be most effective at helping people learn, teach only ONE main point. Find the main point of the passage(s) and summarize it in one short sentence.

Your main point may be (SPECS model):

1. Sin to be repented of (attitude or action to get rid of)
2. Promise to claim (assurance or benefit God offers)
3. Example to follow (good attitudes or actions to imitate)
4. Command to be obeyed (directions from God)
5. Stumbling block to avoid (things God warns against)

Note on emotions: we cannot every choose to FEEL, so feeling a certain way should never be your main point.

DRAWING OUT THE APPLICATION

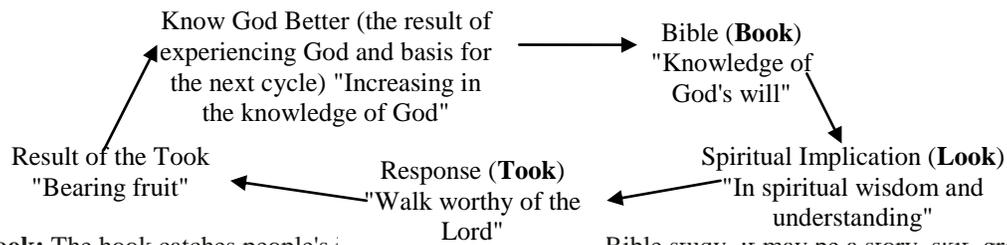
If the group leaves the study without a tool for life-change in their grasp and motivation to use it, the time has been wasted. Once you have a main point, consider your own life and those of your group in light of the main point.

1. In what real, practical ways should this truth impact my life / their lives?
2. HOW do I / we start to make this change?

This is intensely personal and will not be complete until the group has met and discussed the Main Point, but the leader must arrive prepared with ideas to help the group get specific and personal.

STRUCTURE OF A BIBLE STUDY (or LESSON)

Colossians 1:9-10 shows 3 of the 4 key parts of the cycle of spiritual growth: *book, look, & took*.



1. **Hook:** The hook catches people's attention. It may be a story, skit, group project, video or anything else which relates to the lesson and catches people's attention. It should relate to your Main Point and provide a basis for the rest of the study.
2. **Book:** Read the Bible passage(s). See "Active Involvement" below for suggestions on how to do this in different ways. Encourage the group to listen for what the passage says: who, what, when, where, why, how, etc.
3. **Look:** After gathering the facts (who, what, etc.), guide the group such that they arrive at the Main Point. See "Learning Tasks" below for ideas. If they discover this for themselves, it will have far more meaning than if the leader simply tells them.
4. **Took:** This is application part of the lesson. *If people leave with no practical, do-able application, the time has been wasted!* From the Main Point, continue the discussion into possible applications until people are able to complete the sentence, "Today I will..." or "This week, I will..." etc. This gives them an opportunity for response. Most applications are individual, but they can sometimes involve the group. For example, if the lesson was on helping others, your cabin group might decide to do something to help someone else in camp (such as helping the kitchen aids set tables). Remember, only the Holy Spirit can bring about change in people's lives. You can provide the opportunity by bringing them to a possible, practical application, but they still need to make the choice to put that application into practice and only the Holy Spirit can work in them so that they do.

As you prepare your Bible studies, include as much "Active Involvement" in each part of the lesson as possible. Remember, telling is not teaching.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE BIBLE STUDY

Participation is the key to your Bible study success. Ideally communication flows to, from and between everyone in the group, including the leader. There are unlimited ways to maximize participation. Some ideas are listed below.

There are two keys to keeping the study on track toward the Main Point as you increase participation:

1. The leader must be prepared. You must know your Main Point and your material in order to keep any discussions on track and lead the participants to the desired end.
2. The leader motivates by example. How you approach the Bible study and your openness mixed with discretion (emotional/social intelligence) will greatly affect how the Bible study will go.

The following are ideas for increasing participation:

1. Methods of Reading Scripture:
 - a. Dramatic reading by the leader
 - b. People in the group take turns reading
 - c. Read in unison or responsively
 - d. Read silently
 - e. Dramatic reading people in the group taking different parts
 - f. Act it out either while reading, or while a narrator reads
2. Ask questions to generate a Guided Discussion, rather than lecturing. This provides structured, step-by-step processing.
 - a. Ask open questions (cannot be answered by "yes" or "no").
 - b. Ask clear and unambiguous questions. Clarify the question if necessary.
 - c. If no one answers, take a breath and wait. If still no one answers, re-phrase the question or give an example.
 - d. Common Mistakes:
 - i. Questions are too simple or too hard

- ii. The leader fishes for one right answer
 - iii. The leader embarrasses people
 - iv. Questions asked for the sake of questions
 - v. The leader panics when there is no response
 - vi. The leader allows one person to monopolize the answers
3. Even out the participation
 - a. Curb the over-talker: gently, creatively, with humor, request that they let other people talk
 - i. If it continues, talk to them offline outside of the meeting time
 - ii. Affirm them and their ideas, but help them see the impact their domination has on the group
 - b. Draw out the quiet: ask them by name, or ask "those we haven't heard much from", etc.
 - i. If it continues, talk to them offline outside of the meeting time
 - ii. Affirm them and their ideas; explain that often the quietest people have the best things to say
 4. If emotional arguments arise, focus the group on the ideas, not on the people
 - a. Do not allow people to speak negatively about another person/people, either directly or implied
 - b. Focus on the ideas or subjects; if it is still too heated, drop it and return to the lesson / Scripture
 - c. Asking the group how the issue helps us love each other and love God better may also work

LEARNING TASKS

Learning tasks are exercises that involve the entire group and get them interacting with the material. The benefit of Learning Tasks is that the group comes to the conclusion, and will therefore be more likely to remember it.

Follow these guidelines when designing Learning Tasks:

1. Simple is best.
2. Have a clear goal and communicate it.
3. Give clear and complete directions with a time limit if there is one.
4. Leave extra time. Most Learning Tasks take longer than you think.
5. Ask if anyone has questions before releasing the group to do its Task.
6. Give them a 1 or 2 minute warning before the end of it.

Below are some suggestions for Learning Tasks. Possibilities are limited only by your creativity.

1. Types of discussion-based Learning Tasks:
 - a. Neighbor Nudge: partners work on assignments then report back to the group
 - b. Buzz Groups of 3-4 people: give an assignment and time limit, groups discuss then report
 - c. Brain Storm: list as many ideas as possible, accept all ideas, build on ideas
 - d. Circle Response: go around the circle and get input from everyone
2. Visual, Audio or Tactile Aids: increase breadth of participation for each person through use of multiple senses
3. Role Play: A skit or dramatization where you state the situation and participants play the role of another person
 - a. Think it through carefully to the end to avoid dangers (below)
 - b. Don't allow emotions to be taken too far; drop roles once it is over
 - c. Benefits: Increases participation; Forces people to think from another view point
 - d. Dangers: Don't type-cast or stereotype; Don't let the acting or emotions go too far
4. Story-Telling: You tell the story or have the group tell it in parts
5. Creative Writing: stories, poems, newspaper articles, etc.
6. Research: Have worksheets with questions, etc.
7. Drama: Act out the story
8. Projects: making or doing something

▲ Bible Study Preparation, Part 1 ▲

BEGINNING YOUR STUDY

1. Pray for God to show you what He wants taught.
2. Read the passage in context.
3. Read through the passage at least three times.
 - d. General idea or main theme: _____
 - e. Second reading:
 - i. **Who:** Author: _____ Audience: _____
Characters: _____
 - ii. **What** happens? **What** is being said? _____

 - iii. **Where** and **when?** _____
How does this impact what is said? _____
 - iv. **Why** do events occur? Explanation? _____
 - f. Parallel ideas repeated and/or contrasting ideas _____

6. **What does it say?** _____

7. **What does it mean?** _____

8. **What does it mean to me?** _____

PREPARING YOUR MAIN POINT (SPECS Model)

Fine-tune your Main Point by considering whether there is a(n):

1. Sin to be repented of (attitude or action to get rid of)
2. Promise to claim (assurance or benefit God offers)
3. Example to follow (good attitudes or actions to imitate)
4. Command to be obeyed (directions from God)
5. Stumbling blocks to avoid (things God warns against)

Write your Main Point: _____

DRAWING OUT THE APPLICATION

1. In what real, practical ways should this truth impact my life / their lives? _____

2. **HOW** do I / we start to make this change? _____

▲ Bible Study Preparation, Part 2 ▲

Book: What verse reference(s) will you use: _____

Main Point: _____

Hook: Sometimes it helps to begin the Book/Look then find an idea for a Hook.

Book/Look: Sketch out the general flow of Discussion Questions and Learning Tasks

Took: Sketch out how you will help the group arrive at specific, do-able applications

Once you have your ideas sketched out, fill in the lesson plan on the next page(s).

▲ Bible Study Preparation, Part 2 ▲

Objectives: Group participants will (what you want them to be able to do / know when they leave the study):

Plan ahead: (Anything that needs to be done ahead of time)

- Time required:
-
-

Supplies: (Anything you need to bring)

- -
-

❖ **Get Started (hook, time required: minutes)**

❖ **Learn / observe (book / look, time required: minutes)**

❖ **Get Practical (took, time required: minutes)**

Remember:

- Be well prepared but flexible
- Make the Bible alive and meaningful
- Look for feedback from the group, if they understand or need more info
- Summarize often, repeat your main point many times, in many ways