



BEYOND THE PAGES

STUDY GUIDE



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LEADER'S GUIDE:

This study guide is here to help you lead a fun and transformative eGroup study over the next few weeks that will see each person progress and grow.

Use this guide, along with the DVDs and weekly Study Guides, for a life-changing, interactive experience.

BEFORE YOU MEET:

Ask God to prepare the hearts and minds of the people in your eGroup. Ask Him to show each of you how to apply what you learn to your own heart to see growth and to move forward.

Preview the DVD and read through the study guide for that week. Think about what you might answer for each question. Make notes in your study guide if you want to.

SETTING UP:

Take time before everyone arrives to prepare some snacks to share with everyone, set up the room you will use, check that there are enough seats, and try to create a relaxed and comfortable environment to meet in. You might want to play music quietly to create a relaxed atmosphere when everyone arrives, or move the furniture in your living room to make the space inviting.

Have a Bible handy for verses that you might want to look up during discussion.

HOW TO HOST YOUR GATHERING AND USE YOUR STUDY GUIDE:

ENGAGE: Welcome each person as they arrive. Spend time chatting, getting to know one another, or just sharing about the week. Your relationships as a group are as important as the time you spend watching the DVD or in discussion. A relaxed and friendly environment is an easy place to learn and hear from God.

RECAP: After the first session you may wish to spend a bit of time each week recapping how your last seven days has been, inviting members to share any opportunities they had throughout the week to apply what they learned and how their individual activation went.

WATCH: After you have spent some time engaging with each other watch the DVD for the week.

DISCUSS: Read out each question in the study guide, allowing time for everyone to share their thoughts or experiences if they desire.

When a question arises, ask the group for their input, and resist the urge to answer it yourself straight away. Your primary role is to create an environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves and participate, not to provide all the answers to all of their questions. Don't be afraid of silence as participants think of their response to the questions.

Remember, the goal is not necessarily to 'get through' all of the questions. The main priority is for each person to learn and engage in dynamic discussion.

PRAY: Ask the group to pray for each other from week to week, especially about key issues that arise during your discussion time. This is how you begin to build authentic relationship, and encourage spiritual growth within the group.

ACTIVATE: As a group, read out and talk about the action in the study guide for that week. Decide together to commit to doing this action during the week to help you each grow and engage with God individually.

SUGGESTED TIME FRAMES FOR YOUR GATHERING:

ENGAGE: 15 minutes

RECAP: 10 minutes

WATCH: 10 minutes

DISCUSS: 30 minutes

PRAY: 5-10 minutes

ACTIVATE: 5 minutes

(Please note that these are just suggested times, you may wish to take longer in certain areas. However, we do recommend keeping your gathering to a maximum of one and a half hours in consideration of others' time)

KEYS TO A DYNAMIC eGROUP

Relationships: Meaningful, encouraging relationships are the foundation of a dynamic eGroup. Discussion and prayer are important elements of a gathering, but the depth of each part is often dependent upon the depth of the relationships between members.

Availability: Building a sense of community within your group requires members to prioritise their relationships with one another. This means being available to listen, care for one another, and meet each other's needs.

Mutual Respect: Mutual respect is shown when members value others' opinions (even when they disagree) and are careful to never belittle or embarrass others in the group (including their spouses, who may or may not be present).

Openness: A healthy group environment encourages sincerity and transparency. Members treat each other with grace in areas of weakness, allowing each other room to grow.

Confidentiality: To develop authenticity and a sense of safety within the group, each member must be able to trust that things discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

Shared Responsibility: Group members will share the responsibility of gatherings by using their God-given abilities to serve at each meeting. Some may greet, some may prepare food, some may pray, etc. Ideally, each person should be available to care for one another as needed.

Sensitivity: Dynamic eGroups are born when the leader consistently seeks and is responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, following His leading throughout the meeting as opposed to sticking to the “agenda”. This is especially important during the discussion and prayer time.

Fun! Dynamic gatherings take the time to have fun! Create an atmosphere for fun, and be willing to laugh at yourself every now and then!

WEEK ONE: SOAP

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other

WATCH: Watch Session One of the DVD

DISCUSS:

The Bible is not just one book, it's a library! It is full of incredible stories, wisdom, history, poetry, and even mysteries.

Question 1: What are some of the craziest things that you have read in the Bible? What did you find confusing or surprising when you first read it?

When we read just one verse of the Bible, without reference to the rest, it is like reading one line in an eight year old email, without even looking at the rest of the email.

Question 2: Discuss the importance of context. Have you ever read parts of the Bible like single lines out of an email? Did you find out later that there was more to the story?

Question 3: What is your goal when you read the Bible?

Now we are going to take the tools we have learnt and look more closely at the book of Luke. In particular a story told by Jesus in Luke 15:3-7. The S.O.A.P principle is a useful method to read and apply scripture to our daily lives. Below is an exercise to practise S.O.A.P as a group:

Scripture: Read a portion of scripture together

Ask someone to read Luke 15:3-7

Observation: Take time to discuss what you observe

What are your first thoughts when hearing this passage?

Who is this story talking about?

Who are the characters; the man, the 99 sheep, the 1 sheep?

Now, to get some context to this passage, ask a group member to read Luke 15:1-10.

What did you notice about the context of this passage? What else did you find out?

Who is Jesus telling this story to?

Who do you relate to in the story?

Application: Take time to discuss how your observations can be applied

How would you apply this to yourself?

How might this passage impact the way you think?

What do you think Jesus wanted people who heard this to do once they had heard it?

PRAY: Break into pairs and pray that the Holy Spirit would help each of you to understand him better as you read the Bible. Ask that He would use His word to transform you and shape you from the inside out.

ACTIVATE: Practise SOAP in your daily Bible reading this week. Journal what you observed, applied and prayed about.

WEEK TWO: CONTEXT

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other

RECAP: How did you find using the S.O.A.P. principle during the week? Did you learn something new from the Bible that you didn't know before?

WATCH: Watch session two of the DVD

DISCUSS:

We are learning that context is so important when understanding the heart and intention of the Bible. When we discover more about the context, we gain a richer and deeper understanding of what God is speaking to us.

Question 1: Have you ever used a Study Bible or Bible commentary to help you read the Bible? Share how this helped you or what it taught you.

There are many different 'authors' to the different books of the Bible. Each writer had a different perspective and some had different purposes for writing.

Question 2: Do you know anyone who has written a book and had a chance to talk to them about it? How can knowing the authors of the Bible help us gain a deeper understanding?

The books of the Bible are all unique and are written in many different genres; history, poetry, prophecy, letters, genealogies and more...

Question 3: What is the difference between a history book and a poetry book? How does knowing the genre affect the way you read a book?

Using the S.O.A.P. method we are going to take a closer look at the book of Luke, to discover more about the context of this book, and to help us get more insight into God's word.

Scripture: Read a portion of scripture together

Ask a member of your group to read Luke 1:1-4

Observation: Take time to discuss what you observe

Who wrote the book of Luke and who were they writing to?

What do you know about Luke and his perspective?

What was Luke's purpose in writing his account?

Now, to get some context to this passage, ask a group member who has a Bible to read the 'Introduction' section at the beginning of the book of Luke. You might have another version of the Bible nearby and can read a second 'Introduction' section or some study notes to get even more context to Luke.

What did you learn about the book of Luke from reading the Introduction section?

What are some of the 'themes' or main subjects within the book of Luke?
How do you think knowing this will affect your reading of Luke?

Application: Take time to discuss how your observations can be applied

What do you think Luke wanted people to get out of reading his account of Jesus' life?

What do you feel God is teaching you so far in this series about his Word?

PRAY: Pray for each other that God would reveal more of himself and his heart for people to you. Ask that He would teach you and lead you as you read his Word this week.

ACTIVATE: Practise SOAP in your daily Bible reading this week. Journal what you observed, applied and prayed about.

WEEK THREE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other

RECAP: Ask your group to share thoughts from what they journaled this week. How has the series impacted their reading of the Bible so far?

WATCH: Watch session three of the DVD

DISCUSS:

The bible is not just one book but it is a historical manuscript; 66 books, written by 40 different authors across hundreds of generations. There are many different ways you can approach reading the bible.

Question 1: How do you approach reading the bible? What method do you find works best for you?

Each book of the bible was written by an author; to a specific audience, for a particular purpose, during a unique time in history.

Question 2: How do you think understanding the historical context of the bible affects your interpretation of scripture?

The bible is full of real stories about real people who experience the same celebrations and challenges that we do. The bible comes alive when we can personally relate to the experiences of these men and women.

Question 3: How can we better relate to the characters in the bible? Who is one character that you relate to and why?

Today we are going to take the tools we have learnt and look more closely at the book of John. In particular the conversation that takes place between Jesus and Peter in John 21:15-17. The Below is an exercise to help us continue to practise S.O.A.P as a group:

Scripture: Read a portion of scripture together

Ask someone to read John 21:15-17

Observation: Take time to discuss what you observe

What are your first thoughts when hearing/reading this passage?

Who is Jesus referring to as "sheep"?

What is the connection between loving Jesus and caring for his "sheep"?

Why was Jesus repeating his question?

Now, to get some context to this passage, ask a group member to read John 21:1-14

What did you notice about the context of this passage? What else did you find out?

Why was Peter back at the lake fishing after having been with Jesus?

What does this story tell us about Jesus and his relationship with Peter?

Application: Take time to discuss how your observations can be applied

How would you apply the message of this story to your own life?

How might this passage impact the way you think?

What do you think Jesus wanted people who heard this to do once they had heard it?

PRAY: Break into pairs and pray that the Holy Spirit would help your relationship with Jesus grow as you read from His word. Ask that He would use His word to transform you and shape you from the inside out.

ACTIVATE: Practise SOAP in your daily Bible reading this week. Journal what you observed, applied and prayed about.

WEEK FOUR: TRANSLATIONS

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other

RECAP: What has been your biggest eye opener so far? Are you growing in your understanding of the Bible?

WATCH: Watch session four of the DVD

DISCUSS:

Across the last 4 sessions we have discussed ways in which we can understand the bible more clearly and see our relationship with Jesus grow as a result.

Question 1: How has this study helped you in your own reading of the bible?

The bible is not just a book but an ancient manuscript which has been translated to a language which can be understood in a modern english society.

Question 2: What are some practical challenges you experience while reading the bible?

In this session we hear Ps Jordan share a personal experience of how God can speak through scripture.

Question 3: Why is the Word of God such an important part of our relationship with Him?

Today we are going to use tools we have learnt in the book of Matthew. In particular the conversation that takes place between Jesus and Peter in Matthew 16:13-20. Use the S.O.A.P principle to look more closely at this as a group:

Scripture: Read a portion of scripture together

Read Matthew 16:13-20

Observation: Take time to discuss what you observe

What are your first thoughts when hearing/reading this passage?
What is the significance of the question asked by Jesus "But who do you say I am?"

Why does Jesus refer to Peter as being "blessed"?

What is Jesus referring to when he says “...on this rock...”?

Now, to get some context to this passage, ask a group member to read Matthew 7:24-27

What did you notice about the context of this passage? What else did you find out?

What does it mean to “build your house upon the rock”?

How does a “foolish” person differ from a “wise” person?

Application: Take time to discuss how your observations can be applied

How would you apply the message of this story to your own life?

How might this passage impact the way you think?

What do you think Jesus wanted people who heard this to do once they had heard it?

PRAY: Pray for each other; that God would help us to have a teachable, humble heart when we read His word. Ask that he would continue to reveal things to us by his Spirit so that we can grow and know him better.

ACTIVATE: Continue to make daily Bible reading a habit in your life, and explore other tools and methods of reading the Bible to help you engage with it in a real and impacting way.



EQUIPPERS 