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How-To Lead a Bible Study

# Bible Study Vision and Goals

**GOAL**

To understand the vision and goals for leading a FOCUS Bible study.

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# BIBLE STUDY VISION AND GOALS

## Optional Lectio

Before we get started, take some time to pray over a Scripture passage about God's word.

- **First**, read Psalm 1:1–6.
- **Second**, reflect on the words that caught your attention.
- **Third**, pray from your heart and respond to what Jesus is saying to you.
- **Fourth**, rest in what God has told you and in His presence.

**Discussion Questions** *(These are sample questions; feel free to develop your own.)*

1. What jumped out at you as you read Psalm 1:1 – 6?
2. What are the effects on the man who meditates on the law (God's word) day and night?
3. How do we become like this man? How do we help others be like this man?

## **Vision for Leading Small-Group Studies**

Imagine you want to reach as many people with the faith as possible. Would you make small-group Bible studies part of this new outreach program? Why or why not? It's an important question to ponder. Often you don't realize the importance of something until you imagine not having it at all.

There are many reasons why small-group studies are important. Jesus Himself kept a small group of men around Him during His ministry. Though He had many disciples, Jesus specifically chose these twelve to entrust with His teachings.

Psychologists and researchers have observed that there is distinct change in the nature of communication based upon a group's size. Within larger groups, people tend to broadcast their views, with louder and more opinionated people tending to dominate the conversation. However, within small groups of ten or less, people tend to engage in face-to-face conversations. They feel more comfortable expressing their viewpoints and engaging in dialogue. Small groups allow relationships to grow through direct contact and personal interaction.

Ultimately, it is through relationships that real, life-changing events can happen. In the company of friends, people are much more likely to open up and share what is going on in their lives — difficult situations, struggles with sin, life victories, spiritual realizations, etc. Friends feel more comfortable challenging one another and keeping each other accountable to the goals they set out to accomplish. In essence, we share our lives through relationships, and this sharing provides the support we need to become better Christians who can change the world.

So, now that you understand the reasons why you should lead a Bible study, it's important to know what you are trying to accomplish within your small group. The three goals below can give you a reference point if someone raises the question, "How is your study going?"

### **The Three Goals of a Bible Study**

Lots of things can be accomplished within a small group — but as the leader, concentrate on three specific goals: divine intimacy, authentic friendship and spiritual multiplication.

*Divine Intimacy:* Through interaction with God's word and one another, the lives of our Bible study members can be profoundly conformed to Jesus Christ. The purpose of a Bible study is not simply to learn information or be part of a club, but to allow the Lord to transform our lives. We want participants, through the Scriptures, to be drawn more intimately to our Lord not only in the study, but also in the sacraments and liturgy of the Church where they can most fully receive the gift of God's grace in their lives.

*Authentic Friendship:* In and outside of formal Bible study, it is important to share life with your participants through virtuous friendships, meeting them where they are and making ourselves fully available to their needs so that we may encounter them on a deeper level. If people are going to be deeply transformed, they will need others along the way — not only to help their transformation now, but 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 personalities and help them form authentic relationships with one another.

*Spiritual Multiplication:* This is the method of “win, build, and send” by which we imitate Jesus, who invested in a few and commissioned them to do the same. Bible study plays a key role in spiritual multiplication as it allows you to raise up members of your small group to become leaders and eventually spiritual multipliers. Remember, you aren’t just leading a Bible study for the sake of a Bible study; the goal is to make disciples who will teach others also.

Keep in mind, you don’t have to be a Scripture scholar or have an electric personality to be an effective leader. Anyone who is following Jesus in divine intimacy, who is willing to build authentic friendships and who is committed to the method of spiritual multiplication can be effective. While it may not be easy, if you are committed to these goals and are willing to grow, you can have a successful study.

## **Conclusion**

Knowing the vision and goals for your Bible study is important both for developing it in the beginning and for checking in as you go along. Return to these concepts as you evaluate what the Lord is asking you to do with your group.

**Discussion Questions** *(These are sample questions; feel free to develop your own.)*

1. Has a small group (a Bible study, close group of friends, tightknit sports team, etc.) changed your life? If so, how? In particular, how have others modeled the three goals for you in the context of a Bible study?
2. What are some ways to ensure that Bible study members continue to experience divine intimacy?
3. What can a leader do to encourage authentic friendship in a Bible study?
4. How does your goal of spiritual multiplication within your Bible study change the way you lead?



