

# HOW-TO LEAD A BIBLE STUDY

Serving Your Group with Purpose



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# HOW-TO LEAD A BIBLE STUDY

Serving Your Group with Purpose

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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?







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## How-To Lead a Bible Study

# Skills

### GOAL

To understand the skills necessary to run an effective small-group.

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# SKILLS

## Optional Lectio

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

- **First**, read Matthew 25:31 – 40.
- **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 Matthew 25:31 – 40?
2. What is the relationship between the stranger you greet and Jesus Himself?
3. How does this change the way we approach others as we welcome them into our studies?

## **Traffic Cop**

Have you ever watched a traffic cop in action? Whether it's due to a broken street light or because of a busy sporting event, traffic cops step into some intense situations. Their ability is almost an art form as traffic cops smoothly direct hundreds and thousands of vehicles in an hour with just the power of their hands and a whistle.

Leading a Bible study can sometimes feel a bit like being a traffic cop. There are numerous obstacles and traffic jams that can cause your study to not flow properly. To avoid these challenges, you need to develop some simple skills that will allow your Bible study to go well. While your study members may not always notice all the time and effort that you put into these skills, they will notice the obstacles that arise if you don't set up your Bible study for success.

In this article, we will cover four skills to help you lead a Bible study:

- Foster Hospitality
- Facilitate an Encounter
- Generate an Engaging Conversation
- Model Leadership

## **Foster Hospitality**

What is the best party you have ever been to? What made it so great?

Parties are great, but Bible studies are so much more important. They allow us to communicate God's word to others. It's so important to make your Bible study hospitable and take the time to create a fantastic environment.

*Consider and discuss these questions together for your Bible study:*

- When will you meet?
- Where will you meet?
- What food and drinks will you bring?

Don't worry — you don't have to come up with all the answers on your own. We've provided some suggestions below.

*Location, Environment and Timeliness*

As the day of your first meeting draws near, set up the right meeting spot for your Bible study — a place that is inviting and comfortable for your group to come to each week. Here are some tips to help make this happen:

- Find an accessible and informal location that can be used or reserved each week. Dorm rooms and possibly hall lounges can work well, as long as they are free from distractions and noise (and if your roommates approve). Be sure there is enough room for all the members to be comfortable and to see one another.
- Provide food and refreshments, especially the first few weeks. (People love free food!) It also gives the participants a natural activity as they begin to arrive and chat with one another.
- Schedule a time when all your group members can attend. As a rule of thumb, Monday through Thursday nights usually work the best. Also, be sure to let your participants know how long the Bible study will last (usually between 60 and 90 minutes) and then stick to that time. Some Bible study members will fall off simply because they don't know how long the study will go and how this might affect homework or other activities they might have.

- Bring extra Bibles in case a member doesn't have one.

Mastering the art of hospitality will allow you to avoid several pitfalls that can hurt Bible study attendance and the Bible study itself. Take the time to make sure you set your Bible study up for success.

### **Facilitate an Encounter**

It's important that we remember the goals of a Bible study: divine intimacy, authentic friendship and spiritual multiplication. Each week, you want to facilitate an encounter for your participants — an encounter with our Lord and with each other.

At World Youth Day, Pope Francis said, "Be servants of communion and of the culture of encounter! I would like you to be almost obsessed about this. Be so without being presumptuous, imposing 'our truths,' but rather be guided by the humble yet joyful certainty of those who have been found, touched and transformed by the Truth who is Christ, ever to be proclaimed" (Homily, World Youth Day, 27 July 2013).

One of the best ways to help make this encounter happen is to pick out a material that fits your group. It's important that you know where your group is at and where they are going. The Bible studies on [focusequip.org](http://focusequip.org) fall into three different categories: WIN, BUILD and SEND.

WIN studies are for those who need to commit or re-commit their lives to Jesus Christ and His Church or who are in the initial stages of this relationship. Caution: Just because your study members can speak about the faith or seem further along in their faith journey doesn't mean these studies would not be helpful. The basics are always good for people, no matter where they are at. *We recommend*

*that all participants, no matter where they are in their faith journey, go through The Crux and The Story of Salvation during their time in FOCUS Bible studies.*

BUILD studies are for those who have a relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church, but who want to learn more about the faith or how to live out the faith in their daily lives.

SEND studies are for those who want to share the faith with others. Whether the people in your study are disciples who lead Bible studies or are only getting started, these studies can help the members of your group realize that all Catholics are called to be missionary disciples.

For more on these studies, check out [focusequip.org](http://focusequip.org).

Once you choose a study that will best help your group encounter the Lord, it is important that you know how to use the materials to get your group to a point of encounter. Normally, a leader's ability to do this starts with how they prepare for their Bible study. We will cover this point in greater depth in another article in this series, *How-to Lead a Bible Study: Preparation*.

### **Generate an Engaging Conversation**

Several difficulties can arise during a small-group conversation. Perhaps someone in your study rarely participates, or another participates too often. What can you do?

As the facilitator, your job is to direct the conversation. In some ways, you become a traffic cop: At times, you will need to hold off certain traffic, especially if one or two members are dominating the conversation. You can say something like, "We've heard from this

side of the room; what does this side of the room think about the question?"

At the same time, just like a traffic cop, you can use one hand to "stop" one side of the room and the other to invite someone else to "go." This allows quieter members the chance to speak up, which can help balance out the group. You may also want to take a more vocal member of the study aside, telling them how much you appreciate their participation and asking if he would be willing to hold off on some of their comments to help you encourage the others to participate more.

If you experience a total lack of participation, try to keep a few things in mind. As the leader, don't be afraid of silence; people need time to process the question and think about what they will say. If you are always quickly answering your own questions, the group will get used to not having to participate. Feel free to count to 15 or say a slow Hail Mary while you wait for a response. After waiting, if no one responds, consider asking the question in a different way or make sure everyone understood you.

One image that can help with facilitating a Bible study conversation is a captivating, well-played volleyball game: As the leader, you serve the ball by asking a good question. Then someone answers, setting the ball up for someone else in the group, who then passes it along to another. When the volley is dead, you serve up another question. The goal is not to simply keep the discussion going but to achieve the goals of divine intimacy, authentic friendship and spiritual multiplication.

Also, use discussion starters and time outside of the study to build up the relationships within it. People are more comfortable sharing when they know one another. The skill of effectively leading a conversation does not happen overnight. Continue to work hard, practice and read

up on how you can do a better job. For more on how to ask great questions to get a good conversation going, check out our article [How-to Lead a Bible Study: Preparation](#).

### **Model Leadership**

One of the best ways to learn the skills needed to become a master Bible study traffic cop is to learn from others' examples. Take some time to go to your discipler's Bible study and/or the Bible study of a FOCUS missionary. Watch them lead the study, and then stay afterward and ask questions. This way, you can learn not only what they did, but why they did it.

Also, if you've led a Bible study before, ask other people to sit in on your study and give you feedback. Leading a study is an art form, and we can always get better. We all have blind spots; having others attend our study can help us learn how to become even better leaders.

### **Conclusion**

In Bible studies, little things can go a long way to making your small group a success. Through preparation and practice, you will begin to master the skills needed to lead a Bible study well. Continue to learn and be open to getting better.

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

1. What is the best party you have ever been to? What made it so great? How can we make Bible studies have amazing hospitality that brings people back week after week?
2. When have you truly encountered the Lord or others during a Bible study? What did the leader do to create this encounter? What can you learn from this?
3. What does it mean to be a traffic cop in your study? Do you think this will be easy or hard to do? What can you do to be better in this role?
4. If you've been in a Bible study before, what did you learn from the leader? What did they do well? What could they have done better?





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## How-To Lead a Bible Study

# Preparation

### GOAL

The goal of this article is for you to know how to prepare a Bible study.

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# PREPARATION

## Optional Lectio

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

- **First**, read Matthew 6:25 – 33.
- **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 Matthew 6:25 – 33?
2. In the Gospels, Jesus asks more than 100 questions. Why do you think He uses this method so often?
3. What do you think about the questions He asks here? Did they have an impact on your own life?
4. What are some ways you can use questions with others?

## Trail Guide

If you've ever gone hiking, you know how helpful it can be to have a guide who has been on the trail before: They know which way to go, when to stop and where all the good views are. With your Bible study, you need to be a trail guide — someone who has been through the material before and who knows where to go. You won't be able to lead a good discussion if you haven't taken the time to properly prepare for your study.

In this article, we are going to cover three topics to help you:

- Personal Prayer
- Determining the Truths
- Selecting Questions for Encounter

## Personal Prayer

Prayer is the best place to start as we prepare our Bible studies. Before we assume our Bible studies will be successful simply because of our hard work, we must recognize the spiritual dimension that occurs. Scripture tells us, "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rules of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

When you are leading a Bible study, you are engaging in a spiritual battle for the souls that God entrusts to you. Be sure to be using your Spiritual Multiplication Depth Chart to be praying for the members of your Bible study on a daily basis. Ask God how He can use you to serve the people in your care.

Next, pray over the material you will present at Bible study. As the saying goes, "You can't give what you don't have." If you don't have an

ongoing relationship with Jesus, where you are encountering Him in your life, how can you give this to others? As a leader, you should have time each day in quiet meditative prayer. All of this applies to the Bible study material itself. If you take time to pray with the material and allow the Lord to use the content to work on your own life, two things happen: First, you are more aware of how to apply the materials to someone else's life; and second, your Bible study members will be more open to sharing their own lives when you share yours.

### **Determining the Truths**

Your devotion to praying with the material leads right into your ability to determine the truths of the study. Going back to the trail guide analogy, what are the key "views" you want to share with your group? What spiritual truths emerged in your prayer, and what do you think will have the greatest impact on your group? Knowing the one to three truths you will share can help you know where you hope to take your study. (Note: Some FOCUS studies have a goal for each chapter. Take a look at these before you determine the truths you want to share.)

To return once more to the trail guide analogy, all this preparation can help you avoid wasting time in the "trees" instead of "great mountain views" — in other words, to not spend time on parts of the Bible study that may not be helpful and instead spend time on the places where you are ultimately hoping to lead others. Looking at the context of the passage or going on tangents aren't always a bad thing, but if they get you off course and don't allow you to get to the heart of what you need to share, then ultimately, they aren't going to be helpful.

When you understand where you want to take people, knowing when to stop and when to move on will become so much clearer. Take time to prepare your study so that you can lead your group well.

So, if you've prayed with the material and determined the truths, how do you get people to those truths? The key is asking good questions.

### **Select Questions for Encounter**

Proverbs 20:5 tells us, "The purpose in a man's mind is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." One of the best ways to draw out the thoughts of your group is to ask good questions. As a small-group leader, your goal is to facilitate a conversation with your group. Questions encourage this facilitation because they help the group members respond and interact with each other.

At times, it can be tempting to simply act like a teacher and lecture to your group, but one of the best ways people learn is by discovering the answers for themselves (also known as self-discovery learning). Asking questions allows the members to reflect on the information and retain it in a personal way.

As the leader, try not to simply tell information that could be learned through questioning. For example, someone might ask you, "What do you think this passage is saying?" Turn the question back to the group by asking, "That's a great question. What do you *all* think this passage is saying?" While certain topics or situations will call for you to do some teaching — whether it be clarifying the Church's teaching on a subject or moving the group through the material — you ultimately want your group to feel like it is their study, not your study. Asking good questions will help you achieve this goal.

#### *Four Types of Questions*

Once you have your truths in mind in preparation for your study, you will want to brainstorm what questions to ask. FOCUS materials have questions to guide your reflection, but you are free to ask the questions in ways that might be more meaningful for your specific

group. Try to avoid rhetorical questions and yes-or-no questions (an example of both: Did John the Baptist baptize people?). You can find more information on how to use FOCUS materials within each study.

Here are some ideas of what questions to ask:

*Launching Questions*

How do I begin? Launching questions are designed to get the discussion started. It can be something as simple as, “What stood out to you in this chapter?”

*Observation Questions*

What are the details? These questions help to recall what was read. You might ask: “Could someone summarize what happened in this section?”

*Understanding Questions*

What does it mean? These types of questions will help the reader understand the ramifications of what they are reading. For instance, “How would you state the theme of this chapter?”

*Application Questions*

How should I respond? These questions help apply the material to their lives. For instance, “How do you see yourself in the story we just read?”

Ultimately, these questions should all work off one another and help you build toward the point of truth you want to share. For instance, if you are leading a Bible study on the Prodigal Son and a truth you want your group to encounter is the way the heavenly Father looks at them when they sin, you can use the four types of questions to build to that moment of encounter.

Perhaps you could start off with a launching question at the beginning of the study that would ask about a time when members of your group

had to ask for forgiveness from someone. This gets them thinking about sin and forgiveness even before you dive into the material.

Then, you could ask an observation question: When the son came home, when did the father see him? Here you are just trying to make sure everyone is tracking with what is going on in the story.

Next, you could ask an understanding question: Since the father saw the son at a distance, what do you think this says about what the father was doing while the son was gone? What does it say about the character of the father?

Finally, after asking these questions, you can ask an application question that gets right to your truth: When you sin, how do you think our heavenly Father looks at you? How does that image match up to the image of the father in the story?

Notice that if you asked the application question without the rest of the questions, it wouldn't have packed the same amount of punch. Your ability to ask all four types of questions can help you build to a truly meaningful moment in your Bible study.

## **Conclusion**

It is amazing when someone encounters the truths of the Gospel. As a leader, remember that the first step in this process is your commitment to prayer. It is God's work first. However, He wants us to participate by discerning the most important truths to share with our group, asking good questions and navigating the most effective path to help them encounter those truths in a powerful way. It can be tempting to take shortcuts in your preparation or not really prepare at all. But taking the time to prepare effectively can make all the difference for your Bible study.

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

1. How have you been praying for the people you want to invite into your Bible study, as well as the people already involved? Is there anything else you can do to intercede on their behalf?
2. How can you be a more effective trail guide for your group? How can you create effective paths that will lead your group to encounter the most important truths?
3. What type of question (launching, observation, understanding, application) do you think is the most important? Which one is the easiest for you to ask? Which one is the hardest?







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## How-To Lead a Bible Study

# Investment

### GOAL

To understand how to invest in your small group.

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# INVESTMENT

## Optional Lectio

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

- **First**, read John 1:1 – 5, 14 – 18.
- **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 John 1:1 – 5, 14 – 18?
2. What do you think about Jesus' being called "the Word"?
3. Why is it significant that this Word became flesh?
4. Through Bible studies, how can you practice incarnational evangelization?

## **Raving Fan**

I recently saw a video of Hungarian soccer fans. As the match ended and their team came over to their section, they exploded with cheering. The fans, almost all of them dressed in the rich red and green of the Hungarian flag, waved flags and banners for their team as they clapped and chanted to show their deep admiration. By the looks of it, you would think that they had just completed an amazing victory or that they won a tournament. In reality, they had just lost a soccer game 4 – 0 and had been knocked out of the tournament they were playing in.

These fans had paid good money on travel, lodging and tickets. They had taken time out of their work schedules and family life to travel across the continent to see the match. They were decked out in the colors of their country and they cheered as loud as they could for the entire match and even afterwards as well. These fans were invested in their team through thick and thin.

As Bible study leaders, we want you to invest in the members of your group. We aren't primarily talking about a financial investment as much as an investment of your time, energy and care for the people who find themselves in your group. The members of your group should know that you'd go to great lengths for them, just like these Hungarian fans did for their team. They should know that you believe in them and are cheering them on.

In this article, we are going to look at several ways you can invest in the members of your Bible study. Specifically, we will cover the following:

- Why people come (and stay) in your Bible study to begin with
- How to start, grow and invest in your Bible study

- How to connect Bible study participants with one another
- How to reinforce truths from your study outside of formal Bible study time

### **Why People Come (and Stay) in Your Bible Study to Begin With**

Let's think a little bit about why people come to (and stay in) Bible studies in the first place.

There are lots of reasons, but let's look at three:

#### *Friendship*

I like friends. You like friends. Everyone likes friends. A Bible study is a great place to start or grow friendships, and people are drawn to that — plus, they don't want to miss out on something that the rest of their friends are doing.

#### *Knowledge*

You have something they don't know. Many people recognize they don't know their faith very well, and they have questions. Maybe they were challenged by someone. Maybe something in their class made them doubt their faith. Maybe they have a great relationship with Jesus but want to learn more. Bible study is a concrete way for them to move forward and gain understanding.

#### *Growth/Life Change*

In a secular culture, people realize that they need like-minded friends to help them live out the faith. They are also looking for a spiritual guide for their life.

Whether your participants are aware of these reasons or have no idea that they apply, these factors are key reasons why many people

join and stay in a Bible study. Now, how do you become an raving fan of the members in your study? Check out the three ways below.

## **How to Start, Grow and Invest in Your Bible Study**

It's obvious that you need people for your study, but sometimes attracting members can be more difficult than you think. Here are four steps to getting people to join your study. All these tips work for growing your study later on and investing in your Bible study as you go.

### *1. Start and build relationships*

- Learn to ask great questions: On campus, people are constantly meeting others. They get lots of bland questions and rarely have quality conversations. In your interactions, try to go beyond bland questions and get to the heart of others' lives. For example, use questions that ask *why*: Instead of asking, "What's your major?" try, "Why did you choose your major?" Instead of asking, "Where are you from?" try, "What do you like about being where you are from?"
- Think about utilizing affinity groups. An affinity group includes people with a common interest: They could share the same major, sport, club, dorm — you get the idea. Often it is easier to invite people with similar interests into a Bible study; that way, the study becomes an extension of their friendships rather than something completely new or foreign.

### *2. Keep track of contacts*

Use your Spiritual Multiplication Depth Chart to record and pray for the new and meaningful contacts that you've met. (If you aren't familiar with the Depth Chart, check it out at [focusequip.org](http://focusequip.org).) Get phone numbers

and email addresses to stay in contact. You can also use social media. Keep praying for these people and ask the Lord how you can continue to invest in them outside of your Bible study.

### *3. Face-to-face invitations*

As you make contacts and develop relationships, eventually you will need to invite people into your Bible study. It can be easy to shoot someone a text message or email, but it is definitely worthwhile to meet with them in person to explain why they should join your study. Face-to-face invitations greatly increase the number of people who join your study, and it deepens their commitment to it.

When you meet with potential study members, consider sharing your testimony and telling them why you are leading a Bible study. From the friendship that you have developed, try to talk about why they might enjoy the study in terms they are familiar with. Use plain language instead of Catholic or FOCUS jargon.

You may need to be persistent. Don't worry if someone can't attend the first gathering or seems too busy to find time for your study. Keep praying for that person. Invite them to attend each week and try to develop a friendship with them outside of Bible study.

### *4. Schedule a time and place to meet*

Use a tool like Doodle to coordinate when you will meet. Doodle allows people to mark the times they are available so you can easily see when the majority people can meet. It beats asking everyone individually, over and over, until you find a time that works.

Also, it often helps to give people a reminder about when study is happening. Try contacting participants the morning of the study or a few hours before, reminding them where you are meeting and what time to be there. It can also be helpful to meet with participants for other events before and after study to encourage attendance. You can ask if someone would like to get dinner together before Bible study or attend a social event afterward.

### *5. Practice*

Invitations can be hard to make, so try practicing first with a friend. A few practice attempts will boost your confidence and help you make better invitations.

All these steps also work for making invitations to other events outside of Bible study, such as a conference or a mission trip. Don't underestimate the power of a face-to-face invitation!

## **How to Connect Bible Study Participants with One Another**

Remember one of the three goals of a Bible study is authentic friendship. If you help the members of your Bible study become friends, you are much more likely to have people stay in your Bible study and even to bring their friends as well. So, how do you connect people?

Making connections between people many times comes down to asking good questions to learn about the members of your study, remembering the information and then putting two and two together when you are interacting with them. Maybe two people both played the same sport in high school or share the same major.

Also, use some discussion starters so members of your group can get to know one another and begin to build relationships. Here are some examples:

- *Best/Worst* (also known as Highs/Lows; Sunrises/Sunsets; Peaks/Valleys, etc.)

Have each person share their best and worst moment from the past week.

- *Two Truths and a Lie*

Have each person come up with three statements about his own life: two factual statements and one false statement. For example, "I've never seen Star Wars. I've visited Taiwan. I've ridden an elephant." The group then tries to guess which statement is false.

- *Physical Challenges*

Who can do the most push-ups? Who can balance a spoon on their nose the longest?

- *Additional Questions*

What do you do for fun?

If you could go out to lunch with any three living people, who would they be?

What would be your ideal vacation?

What is a good thing happening in your life right now? What makes it good?

What quality do you appreciate in a friend?

## Reinforce Truths

As you get to know the members of your study — and as they get to know one another during and outside of formal Bible study time — it is also your job as a leader to reinforce what they have learned. Oftentimes, we separate our lives into different spheres. In *this* part of my life, I have my friends; in *this* part of my life, I have my school work; in this part of my life, I go to Church and Bible study; etc.

When you are investing in the members of your study outside of your formal Bible study time, it is important to show them and discuss with them how the truths you have learned within the study affect their daily lives. Truth has consequences. We don't want our members to simply learn information or to think profound thoughts in our Bible studies; we want them to learn how to take these truths and apply them to how they think about the world and live their lives. As you invest in them, as you get to know them, as you live life with them, take moments to talk about how the truths from your study affect how you live your life and ask them how they are connecting the dots as well. This can make all the difference in having a Bible study that is truly transformative.

## Conclusion

Investing in your study is hard work. You don't always see the fruit right away, but it is important to take the chance in investing in those around you and seeing what God can do in their lives during your time with them. Being a Bible study leader can often be a ministry of unrequired love. Don't be afraid to give of yourself!

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

1. What does it look like to be an raving fan of the people in your Bible study? What's one thing you can do to help encourage and support the members of your group?
2. What can you do to invest in your group outside of formal Bible study time?
3. How are you at making invitations into your Bible study? Are there any ways you can improve?



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## **FOCUS Equip**

'FOCUS Equip' is based on Ephesians 4:12 "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ." These materials seek to equip you for lifelong Catholic mission. We would love to hear your feedback at: [focusequip@focus.org](mailto:focusequip@focus.org)



# HOW-TO LEAD A BIBLE STUDY

