

Leadership Meeting Agenda

Studying the Bible—All Leaders Together

Prepared by:

Wayne Poling, Senior Lead Sunday School Specialist, Leadership and Evangelism Training and Events, LifeWay Christian Resources

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources:

- Nametags, markers, large sheets of paper, masking tape, Bibles
- CD Player and appropriate Christian praise CD
- Prepare a handout with the following information:
 - 9 Practical Suggestions
 - 1) Read the Bible prayerfully.
 - Ask God for a receptive and disciplined heart.
 - Ask Him to speak to you through the Word.
 - 2) Read expectantly and joyfully.
 - Expect to hear from God, being joyful and thankful for what you find in the Scriptures.
 - 3) Meditate on what you are reading.
 - Slow down and think about what the passage means as well as its implications for belief and practice.
 - 4) Read for transformation.
 - Expect that you will hear from the Lord.
 - Think about ways to apply God's truth to your life as you read.
 - Read for personal transformation.
 - 5) Read with perseverance.
 - Commit to being consistent in your personal Bible study.
 - 6) Be realistic about the personal Bible study goals you set, and have a good plan.
 - The key is not the volume but the consistency.
 - 7) Set aside a consistent time and place to read and study the Bible.
 - Set a time and place that guards you from distractions and allows you to be consistent.
 - 8) Read with a few good tools at hand.
 - Study Bible like the *HCSB Study Bible*
 - 9) Bible dictionary like the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Read with pen in hand.
 - Underline key passages and make notes in the margin as you read.
- Prepare a handout with the following questions:
 - Questions to Ask as You Read Scripture
 - Is my heart open and ready to hear what God wants to say to me through this passage?
 - What did God say in passage to those who first read it or heard it?
 - What is God saying to me through this passage about my life situation?
 - What is God saying to me through this passage about how I should think, feel, and live today?
 - What ways are how I think, feel, and live in conflict with this passage? What life questions, problems, issues, or struggles do I have with these truths? How is God leading me to find answers in His Word?
 - What new truth is God leading me to make a part of my life? How is the Holy Spirit leading me to change how I think, my values, or the way I live?
 - To what extent will I love, trust, and obey the Lord in how I think, what I value, and the way that I live?

Display the following resources:

- *HCSB Study Bible* or another study Bible if not available
- *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* or another Bible dictionary

Prepare the room for learning:

- Place the chairs in groups of three.
- Place nametags and markers on a table near where people will enter the room.
- Play an appropriate Christian music CD in the background.
- Place a large sheet of paper and marker in the middle of each group. At the top of each sheet, write this question: *What does Ezra 7:10 say to us about the importance of a strong commitment to personal Bible study?*

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION (20 min.)

Ask each person to complete a nametag as they enter the room. Then direct participants to one of the groups and instruct them to begin responding to the question on the paper. Ask them to write their answers on the paper. Allow five minutes to complete this activity.

State that this session will focus on strengthening personal Bible study skills and practices.

Read aloud Ezra 7:10—“Now Ezra had determined in his heart to study the law of the Lord, obey it, and teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel.”

Ask groups to share the responses. Then ask: *Is personal Bible study just an act of preparing the content for a lesson to be taught? Why or why not?* Point out that personal Bible study is opening the Word of God and asking Him to speak to our hearts and lives. Only then can we truly teach for transformation.

Point out that Ezra’s greatness is seen in his resolve to study the Word in order that he might obey it first and then teach it.

2. SHARE (15 min.)

Provide the handout you prepared with nine practical suggestions for conducting personal Bible study. Acknowledge that these steps are given by George Guthrie in the *HCSB Study Bible*. Guide participants through the handout, discussing each suggestion as time allows.

3. ACTIVITY (20 min.)

Provide the participants with the handout entitled “Questions to Ask as You Read Scripture.”

Instruct them to open their Bibles to the passages of Scripture they will teach next Sunday. Instruct them to read the Scripture and then begin to answer the questions on the worksheet. State that these are questions they should ask themselves when doing personal Bible study. These questions will also help them bring greater focus to their teaching.

4. CONCLUSION (5 min.)

Pray asking God to help leaders present strengthen their own personal time with God in His Word—not only preparing them to teach but listening for what He wants to say to them.

Leadership Meeting Agenda

Studying the Bible—Adults

Prepared by:

David Apple, Adult Ministry Specialist, Leadership Training and Events Department, LifeWay Christian Resources

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources:

- Nametags, markers, pencils
- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- *Read the Bible for Life* by George Guthrie (B&H Publishing)
- Copies of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis (available for free download at www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis)
- If Internet is available, set up computer/screen and connect to www.MyStudyBible.com.

Display the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Provide display of the following resources: Sunday School Leader Guides and Learner Guides for curriculum used by your classes; Study Bible (*The Holman Illustrated Study Bible*), Bible Dictionary (*Holman Bible Dictionary*), Concordance (*Comprehensive Concordance of the Holy Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible*)

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in large semi circle facing focal wall with large markerboard or large sheets of paper, markers, and eraser.
- Place nametags and markers on a table close to the door.
- Prepare placard with the following quote from page 22 of *Missionary Sunday School*: “There is no argument: the centerpiece of the Sunday School movement is Bible study.” Attach placard to focal wall.
- Prepare Scripture placards, one each with the following:
 - God has a purpose for His Word—Isaiah 55:6-11
 - Study God’s Word to know Him—John 5:37-40
 - Study God’s Word to direct us in each life stage—Psalm 119:105-112
 - Study God’s Word to seek Him—Psalms 9-16

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)

As participants arrive, encourage everyone to make a nametag.

Reveal the placard with the statement from page 22 from *Missionary Sunday School*. Distribute copies of *Missionary Sunday School* and ask learners to read “The Bible: The Textbook of Sunday School” (p. 22). Guide a discussion by asking: *Why is it important for us to study God’s Word individually and in groups?* Record responses on the marker board or large sheet of paper.

Explain that this session will help us identify ways to strengthen Bible study as individuals and in small groups. Lead in prayer.

2. STUDYING THE BIBLE WITH PURPOSE (10 min.)

Reveal or distribute Scripture placards (see Prepare). Invite individuals or teams to read the passage and discuss individual and group benefits of studying God's Word.

Emphasize the importance of prayer, Bible reading, taking notes, and having a life-changing attitude that causes us to seek God through His Word.

3. READ THE BIBLE FOR LIFE (15 min.)

Call attention to significant factors to keep in mind as individuals study God's Word. Be prepared to briefly explain highlights on pages 47 and 61-62 of *Read the Bible for Life*.

Emphasize the importance of studying the literary context, cultural context, historical context, and theological context of any passage.

Also be prepared to overview the importance of using translation(s) that accurately communicate God's Word to individuals and groups.

4. USE RESOURCES TO HELP STUDY THE BIBLE (10 min.)

Call attention to the display of selected resources designed to help individuals and groups study the Bible. Be prepared to briefly explain the benefits of using these kinds of resources: Commentaries—including those in Sunday School Leader Guides and Learner Guides; Study Bible (*The Holman Illustrated Study Bible*), Bible Dictionary (*Holman Bible Dictionary*), Concordance (*Comprehensive Concordance of the Holy Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible*).

Call attention to the opportunity for individuals to use www.MyStudyBible.com. If available, invite participants to overview the site and discuss ways to use this tool.

5. STUDY THE BIBLE FOR LIFE (10 min.)

Review the Scripture placards used earlier. Invite participants to review their assigned passage using one of the study helps displayed and examined in Step 4.

Be prepared to lead participants to identify ways to improve how they study and apply God's Word using a variety of appropriate study helps.

5. CONCLUSION (5 min.)

Invite individuals to share brief testimonies of what they do personally to enhance their study of the Bible or how they encourage their class members to develop good Bible study techniques.

Review the statement on the placard (page 22 of *Missionary Sunday School*). Emphasize the opportunity we have to help people study and apply God's Word through the Sunday School.

Lead in prayer of commitment.

Leadership Meeting Agenda Studying the Bible—Student

Prepared by:

G. Dwayne McCrary, Editorial Project Leader, Church Resources Division, LifeWay Christian Resources

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources:

- Nametags, markers, pencils, notebook paper
- Bible study tools including a Bible dictionary, atlas, commentary, study Bible, and various translations. (Note: If possible, provide these digitally using an online study Bible like www.MyStudyBible.com. Project the resource on a screen.)

Display the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Bible study curriculum being used by your student leaders

Prepare the room for learning:

- Create a display of the Bible study tools and the Bible study curriculum being used by your leaders.
- Arrange chairs so that all participants can easily see the display of resources or view the online products displayed on a screen.
- Place nametags in chairs.
- On a large sheet of paper, record the Bible passage(s) that will be examined in an upcoming lesson. If different groups are studying different passages, record each passage on a different sheet.

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)

As student leaders arrive, direct their attention to the display of Bible study tools. If using an online study tool, point them to the site so that those with the mobile capabilities (tablets and many smartphones) can view the online site on their devices.

Encourage them to create a nametag, listing their favorite Bible study tool. Invite them to share with others why the Bible study tool they identified is their favorite tool. Call attention to any of the items mentioned that are included on the display table.

2. KNOWING THE TOOLS (10 min.)

Call attention to the display table and explain the use and value of each item. Help the leaders understand that they can benefit from the work of many people as they study in preparation for leading a Bible study group.

Call attention to a large sheet of paper on which you have written the following: *I believe that every Bible study group deserves a prepared leader who can help the group examine the Bible as a group.* Explain that the statement includes two elements—prepared leaders and groups examining the Bible. Help them understand that the tools available make it possible for both of

these elements to happen. Lead in a short discussion of how prepared leaders and groups examining the Bible could and/or should work together.

3. HAVING A PROCESS (20 min.)

Call attention to the passages you wrote on the large sheet of paper. Direct half of the group to read the passage and look for people, places, and things included in the passage. Direct the other half to read the passage and look for actions that were taken or are commanded or suggested. (Note: Remind them to include actions taken by God in the passage or actions inferred as taken by God.) After allowing time to complete the assignment, invite them to share their lists. Record the responses on the large sheet of paper.

Point to the tools and the leader guide of the curriculum used by your leaders and show them how they can identify the people, places, and things that were listed. (Option: Hand a volunteer a resource and allow him or her to locate the person, place, or thing in that resource.)

Review the actions listed. Add other actions if needed from your own personal study. Lead the group to form questions based upon the actions listed that point to our application of the command or example discovered in the passage. (Example: The magi worshiped Jesus by bringing gifts worthy of a King. Questions might be: How does my worship compare to the worship given by the Magi? What can I offer to God that is worthy? What roadblocks keep me from worshiping Jesus with extravagance? How does my worship of Jesus demonstrate my beliefs about His identity? What other examples of worship of Jesus help me understand how I should worship Him?) Generate as many questions as possible that grow out of a selected action. Lead the group to identify the action question(s) that they believe would best define the needs facing the teenagers in their Bible study group.

Ask: *How do the people, places, and things give life to the action taken and the make-it-personal question?*

4. MAKING THE CONNECTION (15 min.)

Call attention to the teaching suggestions included in the curriculum your church provides. Briefly review the suggestions, describing each step. Ask: *How could the information and questions we just generated help you customize the teaching suggestions for your class?* Allow for discussion.

Help them understand the keys to customizing a lesson are understanding the Bible content and knowing the individuals in the Bible study group.

5. CONCLUSION (5 min.)

Review the steps you led them through in this meeting (gathering your resources; reading the Bible text; identifying the people, places, and things; listing the actions found in the passage; creating questions based on the actions discovered; customizing a teaching plan based upon what you discovered). Challenge them to use this process or another similar process to prepare themselves to lead a Bible study group.

Call attention to the "I believe..." statement, reminding them of the opportunity they have of providing this kind of group to teenagers in your community.

Close with a time of prayer, asking God to help you and others to continue to provide Bible study groups where teenagers can be a part of a Bible study group led by a prepared leader.

Leadership Meeting Agenda Studying the Bible—Childhood

Prepared by:

Bill Emeott, Lead Childhood Ministry Specialist, Childhood Ministry Training and Events,
LifeWay Christian Resources

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources:

- On 2' x 2' construction paper, create letter tiles of the following words: *strength, assurance, understanding, blessing, guidance, revelation, truth, teaches*. Place each separate word in its own small zipper bag.
- On index cards print the following:
 - Day 1: As you begin your personal Bible study preparation, read the text from your own Bible.
 - Day 2: Take the opportunity to read through the “Personal Bible Study” in your Leader Guide.
 - Day 3: Mid-Week Prayer is a Must! Re-read the text in a different translation ask God to teach you new and fresh.
 - Day 4: God has blessed men and women with great insight into His Word. Choose a favorite commentary to read and consider regarding this week’s Bible passage.
 - Day 5: Read and review the Bible story as it will be presented in Sunday School this week.
- Provide next Sunday’s “Personal Bible Study” from your curriculum.
- Two balloons for each expected participant
- Permanent markers

Display the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Samples of current Sunday School curriculum
- Bibles in various translations (electronic manuscripts can be a fun alternative to the actual printed Word)
- A favorite commentary of next Sunday’s scripture passage

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle facing the front of the room.
- Secure prepared index cards under various chairs.

PRESENT:

1. REMOVING THE HINDRANCES (15 min.)

To each conferee give two balloons and a permanent marker. Instruct conferees to blow up and tie off both balloons. Participants are to print on each of their balloons a “hindrance” to personal Bible Study (too busy, not committed, already know that story, etc.). Allow these suggestions to lead the brief discussion. Using a thumbtack, bust/remove each hindrance as it is discussed.

2. UNSCRAMBLE THE BENEFITS (15 min.)

To eight participants/teams, give the prepared word tiles. Encourage teams to unscramble the letters to form a word that is a benefit to personal Bible Study. As the teams discover their words, lead a discussion on that benefit.

Use the following scripture to reinforce the eight suggested benefits:

Strengthens	...in times of fear—Isaiah 41:10; ...the weary—Isaiah 40:29-30
Comforts	...in grief—Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 23
Guides	...our daily walk—Psalm 119:105; ...us toward success—Joshua 1:7
Provides	...instruction—Psalm 1:1-3; ...all my needs—Philippians 4:19
Reveals	...God's plan—Jeremiah 29:11
Teaches	...us the truth and freedom—John 8:31-32
Transforms	...the mind—Romans 12:2
Assures	...of salvation—1 John 5:13

3. A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY (20 min.)

Ask participants to check under their seats for one of five index cards. Explain that these are practical ways for personal Bible study preparation. Discuss how each aspect of preparation will strengthen the teacher as well as the children they teach.

Ask: *What would it take for you to prepare using these guidelines?* Lead the group to consider actually doing the suggested Bible Study preparation for each day.

4. THE SOAP CHALLENGE (5 min.)

Challenge participants to spend time in personal Bible study each day. Suggest that in addition to the five steps modeled previously, another optional guide to Bible study might include the SOAP model.

- S stands for Scripture: Take the time to read the Scripture, pray over it and then slowly read through it again. God will direct your attention to certain verses or sections. Write these down in a journal and focus your study there.
- O stands for observe: What is God showing you in this passage? Jot down any words or events that stand out. Are there any truths God wants you to learn? Record those. Ask what is the overall message God has for you in this passage?
- A stands for apply: How does this affect your life? Does God have instruction for you today? Write down God's personal message to you.
- P stands for pray. Prayer is a two-way conversation with God. You may find that as you pray over what God has shown you, He will reveal even more. Be listening and journal your prayers.

5. CONCLUSION (5 min.)

Thank participants for attending the session. Invite them to the next training session.

Close with prayer.