

## 5 Needed Factors for Leading a Bible Study

Someone just handed you a Bible Study curriculum and has asked you to lead a small group of people through a lesson. You smile and nod and are thankful for the experience but realize, hmm, what am I going to do with this?

Leading a study is both difficult and easy at the same. Difficult because you're trying to teach a lesson from the Word of God with a group of people who are different in ages, personalities, knowledge, and understanding. How do you have an effective lesson that's engaging and thought-provoking and applicable to those learning it? However, it's also easy in that we realize that God is at work and the Holy Spirit is moving among your group, even if you have people who have yet to believe in Jesus. God is working through you so there is nothing to fear.

So, relying on the Holy Spirit to work in you as you teach and lead, what are some factors to be mindful of? Here are 5 necessary features of leading a Bible study group well.

1. **Help your people learn how to study the Bible.** When it comes to studying the Bible, we forget sometimes that it involves study. It may have been some time since the people in your group have had to study. Maybe they have negative feelings when it comes to study because they didn't do so great in school. But giving your people good study skills is a part of leading your group well.

Let's take The Gospel Project curriculum as an example. This study is meant for your group to study and do the lesson during the week *before* group time. If you look at the Scripture portion, there is plenty of space for them to make notes and markings. Throughout your time with your group, reintroduce to them the idea of highlighting key words, circling repeated words, drawing arrows to make any connections, doodling even, if a visual makes the words come alive. This is similar to the inductive style of studying, breaking up the passage into smaller parts and seeing how the sentences connect. Teaching your group to study in this manner will bring to light new insights they might not have seen by just reading Scripture. This is what this page of The Gospel Project is meant for.

2. **Help your people know that context is important.** Whenever we study the Bible, we know context is so important. Greg Koukl, once said, "Never read a Bible verse." What he meant was never read a Bible verse alone without the context passages around it.

Another feature of The Gospel Project curriculum is that there is a context portion that keeps the passages you are examining in context of its surrounding passages. There is also a daily reading plan your group can follow to read surrounding passages and a timeline to see the story in its chronological order. Context is key in reading, observing, interpreting, and applying the Bible to your life. Without context, you may be reading the

Bible poorly or incorrectly. There is a right way and a wrong way to read it. Reading it wrong is how cults and heresies have arisen over the eras.

3. **Welcome all types of people and don't assume their knowledge.** Hopefully your adult group is filled with people from different cultures, all walks of life, with varying backgrounds. That gives flavor and interest to your group and shows how the church is a body of many parts. But as you teach and lead, don't assume that they may know things about the Bible that you might take for granted. Explain your terms, especially "Christian-ese," words like "sanctification" or "fellowship" or people like "Job" or "Titus" that they may or may not know.

The Gospel Project leader guide always starts with an ice-breaker type of question, one that anyone can answer, usually about themselves in some form or fashion. Research shows that when you ask someone a lighter question that they can answer, they are more willing to participate in answering heavier questions. Lead your group by welcoming all answers to these lighter questions. Make them feel confident to answer, enjoy getting to know each other, and make room for laughter. Foster an environment of welcome, one that doesn't have secret lingo or handshakes.

4. **Work together to learn more.** Working in a group is more effective than working solo, although there will be some who might need encouragement to do so. For discussion questions, sometimes breaking up into smaller groups allows people more time to discuss and makes them feel more free to give answers without feeling awkward. Allow for some disagreements or conflicting thoughts in your group (as long as it doesn't go against Scriptural truth). Help your group stay focused if tangents come up. Feel free to tell them, "Let's get back to the main point." Learning together brings up more thoughts and ideas to process that stimulates the mind and the heart as the Holy Spirit works.

The group activity time in The Gospel Project focuses on a group activity to foster learning and discussion. Whether it be a comparison chart or a timeline or a character profile, doing these activities together will spark more interest and learning than a straight lecture would. Keep that in mind when you are teaching and leading. The more you facilitate discussion, the more people learn from each other as well as from you and the Holy Spirit.

5. And last, but not least, **keep it Christ-centered**—Christ-centered in how you talk, listen to, and approach the different people in your group as well as how you approach Scripture. Especially with new people coming to your group, Christ-centered in your approach makes them feel welcomed, allows for wrong answers with correction, and isn't condescending or trying to speak over their heads. Christ-centered conversations allow for doubts, questions, and curiosity. Christ-centered focus also helps your group see the gospel storyline throughout the Bible.

The Gospel Project, for example, is made for just that. Each lesson focuses on a particular part of God's redemptive storyline from Genesis to Revelation. With each lesson, you'll see how God was writing the story to point to His Son, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

People in your group may have religious tradition and knowledge under their belt but helping them see and experience Christ will lead them to Christ if they haven't accepted Him yet or help them grow in their relationship with Christ. Christ and the gospel message really is the center of our faith and discipleship as a believer.

Whatever study you plan to do with your group, know that these are five necessary factors for any group Bible study. Because if not, what you may find is that all you have is a book club or an academic lecture or a social gathering.

You have an amazing opportunity to lead your group into studying the Bible! Make the most of it, letting the Spirit work, as the people you shepherd may grow and be transformed more into the image of Christ. Thank you for being willing to step into such a role even if you may be feeling awkward or ill-equipped to do so. God has you there for a reason!

Be looking for more helps and tips at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com).