



Small Group Discussion

What can group leaders do to make lessons even better?

Two Major Things

Life change comes from meeting God

- _____ encounter: meet and follow God in Bible study and lesson preparation
- _____ encounter: lead the class to meet God in Bible study and live for Him

Hosea 6:6, ESV

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Jeremiah 33:3, ESV

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Matthew 4:19, ESV

Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

3 Critical ACTIONS

- Preparation
- Presentation
- Continuation

CRITICAL ACTION ONE: PREPARATION

STEP ONE: Encounter God Personally

- The first encounter is the time the teacher has set aside to _____ God in Bible study. It's the teacher's experience with God of personal change. This encounter is more important than the _____.
- For the teacher, time with God is the _____. The first encounter is the time God uses to prepare a teacher to _____ others through the landscape of His Word and the truth contained therein that learners need to hear and obey.

Four Experiences of an Encounter

First Experience: Bible Study—Listen to Him

When we open God's Word, He speaks.

Focus on two questions:

1. What did God say in this verse/ passage (context)?
2. What is He saying to me?

Second Experience: Prayer—Respond/Talk to God

When God speaks, He expects a response.

Answer this question:

- What is my response to what God has said in Bible study?

Third Experience: Commitment—Agree & Commit

Consider response and commit to follow.

Answer these two questions:

1. What does He want me to do?
2. Am I willing to do what He wants me to do?

Fourth Experience: Obedience—Walk with God

Obedience is living out the truth. It is keeping our commitment as a result of the encounter.

Accountability encourages us to ask:

- What did I do as a result of what God said? (journaling helps)

STEP TWO: Prepare to Lead Them to Encounter

- Prepare as if Jesus will be there. He will!
- Invest in preparation daily.

Review Appendix 1: *First Encounter Preparation Outline*

STEP THREE: Rest Well & Arrive Early

- Invest 167 previous hours well
- Rest well to give your best
- Arrive _____
- Prayerwalk
- Prepare the classroom
- _____ members and guests

Review **PREPARATION**. What three adjustments can you make this year to give God and His people your best effort?

CRITICAL ACTION TWO: PRESENTATION

Three Critical Moments (see Appendix 2)

Early Moments (20 min.)

1. Capture Interest (2-5 min.)

- Get their minds in the room and on God and His Word
- Focus _____ on the topic/truth of the day
- Ask a key question, tell a story, read a headline, show a movie clip, etc.

2. Review (2-3 min.)

- Review the point/_____ from the previous lesson
- Ask how they did at living out that truth
- Ask for testimonies of obedience

3. Preview (2-3 min.)

- Give a quick overview of where the lesson is heading
- Talk about the _____/importance of what will be studied

4. Read the Scripture (2-3 min.)

- Use the Bible and lead them to do the same
- Get them _____
- Read the entire passage to set verses to be examined into context

Middle Moments (25 min.)**1. Use the Bible**

- Hold the Bible to teach from it (rather than the teacher's book—write notes)
- Lead them to use their Bibles (rather than the learner's book)
- Communicates you prepared and that God and the Bible are _____

2. Set Scripture in Context

- Help the group understand the historical _____: author, audience, events, location, customs, terms, etc.
- What was the point being made to the original audience?
- Don't overspend your time on context

3. Use Varied Teaching Methods

- Discover your learners' preferred learning styles
- Which methods would best communicate the scripture and truth?
- Plan methods which best capture _____ and increase retention

4. Involve Everyone

- Involvement increases attention and enjoyment

- Get them talking early, move them into smaller groups, ask questions, etc.
- Help them to “_____” the learning experience

5. Allow the Holy Spirit to Work

- Allow Him to guide the preparation process, our relationships, teaching and learning, and _____ the Word.
- Stay sensitive to the Him in your encounter with God in His Word and in guiding learners to do the same.

Closing Moments (15 min.)

1. Review/Summarize (2-3 min.)

These are some key questions:

- What was learned?
- What was the _____?
- Why was it important?
- How is it relevant to today?

2. Apply the Truth

- Help learners consider the personal relevance of the truth discovered.
- What response does God _____ as a result of the lesson?
- Challenge them to consider what God wants them to change or do as a result.

3. Lead to Commit and Pray

- Commitment to obey Him is the next step of application.
- This is _____ with God and choosing to adjust to His way.
- This should be communicated to God in a written, silent, or verbal prayer.

4. Preview/Make Assignments

- What is next week’s lesson about?
- Why is next week’s lesson important?
- What do they need to do to (1) _____ _____ on this week’s lesson or (2) to prepare for next week’s?

5. Close in Prayer/End on Time

- Thank God for His Word.
- Thank Him for this lesson/truth.
- Ask for His help in _____ it out.
- Close on time to give time for relationships and transitions.

Review **PRESENTATION**. What three adjustments can you make this year to give God and His people your best effort?

CRITICAL ACTION THREE: CONTINUATION

Continue the Second Encounter

1. Trust and Follow God

- Your call, gifts, passion, and abilities are from Him
- The sheep are His
- Spend time with Him, pray for guidance and help
- _____ where He leads

2. Keep in Contact with Members

- Help them obey and/or prepare for the next encounter
- Contact by visit, call, mail, & electronic
- Make _____, ask questions, remind about obedience
- Reinforce quiet time and spiritual disciplines

3. Encourage Discipleship Accountability

- Consistent groups (2-4 same gender)

- Brief meeting by phone/in person
- Share prayer requests (write them)
- Pray together (then and later)
- _____ on application of lesson and spiritual disciplines
- Encourage one another

4. Measure Discipleship Differently

- Consistent group attendance
- Consistent _____ time
- Caring contacts (members & prospects)
- New group members
- People in service
- _____ leaders enlisted & trained
- Testimonies of _____ shared
- Guests attending group, fellowships, projects, meals
- _____ making progress
- Spiritual conversations
- New _____ started

5. Ask for Testimonies of Obedience

- Lead them to commit and pray
- Remind them to obey
- Ask how they did at living out last week's lesson/truth
- Share your _____

Review **CONTINUATION**. What three adjustments can you make this year to give God and His people your best effort?

Appendix 1

FIRST ENCOUNTER PREPARATION OUTLINE

If your group meets on another day or time than Sunday morning, adjust the preparation outline to fit your schedule. Times are suggested minimums.

SUNDAY (30 minutes)

Example and daily quiet time
listen

Read scripture several times,

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY (30 minutes each day)

Example and daily quiet time
Keep eyes open for life illustrations
Read scripture several times, listen

Examine the passage and historical
context

Listen for God's message/truth to you
Commit to respond/obey

THURSDAY-FRIDAY (30 minutes each day)

Example and daily quiet time
Keep eyes open for life illustrations
Read scripture several times, listen
Apply scripture to today's context

Seek specific application of the truth to
group members

Determine adjustments God desires in
the lives of group members

SATURDAY (30-60 minutes)

Example and daily quiet time
Keep eyes open for life illustrations
Read scripture several times, listen
Develop several critical questions
Choose methods which best communicate the truth
Decide on how to create interest and about use of an icebreaker
Put together a written second encounter plan
Gather needed resources
Preview next scripture for importance/assignments
Rest well

SUNDAY

Example and daily quiet time
Pray, arrive early

Prayerwalk and prepare the classroom
Greet members and guests

(See **Appendix 2** for more for Sunday)

Appendix 2

SECOND ENCOUNTER CLASS OUTLINE

Assumes 60 minutes. Adjust if less time is available.

PRE-MOMENTS (15-30 minutes prior)

- Daily quiet time
- Pray
- Arrive early
- Prayerwalk and prepare the classroom
- Greet members and guests
- Fellowship

EARLY MOMENTS (20 minutes)

- Start on time
- Welcome and announcements
- Prayer in care groups
- Create interest
- Review
- Preview

MIDDLE MOMENTS (25 minutes)

- Expectancy and good attitudes
- Use the Bible: scripture reading and examination
- Set scripture into context
- Use good teaching methods to address learning styles
- Make assignments to smaller groups
- Call for reports of groups
- Recognize the relevance of the truth for the original audience
- Allow the Holy Spirit to work

CLOSING MOMENTS (15 minutes)

- Summarize and review
- Apply
- Invite and identify
- Commit and pray
- Preview/make assignments
- Thank guests
- Closing prayer/end on time

Appendix 3

Learning Style Preferences

*Check phrases that **best** describe the way you enjoy learning. Total checkmarks.*

| | |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Verbal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy listening to stories</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Talk a lot</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy discussions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Like listening to debates</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy word games</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Like writing and reading</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy listening to music</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Total Checked _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Visual</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy viewing artwork</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Like watching TV & videos</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Can read maps well</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Like taking pictures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy drawing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Easily distracted by movement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Like to see demonstrations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Total Checked _____</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Active</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy drama and acting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Like to walk and hike</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Want to touch/feel things</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy physical activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good at sports/athletics</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good hand-eye coordination</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cannot sit still for very long</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Total Checked _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Rational</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Like to solve puzzles</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy numbers and math</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good at problem solving</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to work from a list</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Like to go by the rules</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Can calculate in your head</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Asks a lot of questions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Total Checked _____</p> |

Appendix 4
BIBLE STUDY JOURNAL QUESTIONS

Write your responses as you go through each of the steps.

Date: _____ Passage: _____

BIBLE STUDY: *read, listen, examine*

Original context: What did God say back then in this verse/passage?

My context: And what is He saying to me?

PRAYER: *praise, agree/confess, request*

What is my response to what God has said in Bible study?

COMMITMENT: *agree, commit to change*

Am I willing to do what He wants me to do?

What does He want me to do?

OBEDIENCE: *check back over the next few days*

What did I do as a result of what God said?

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