

The Leaders' Guide

FOR

The Revised Common Lectionary Bible Study

- A Bible Study for teachers who have limited time to prepare lessons.
- Easy-to-use workbook format.
- Follows the Revised Common Lectionary Schedule.
- Theologically sound.
- Excellent for adult or teen classes and for the homebound.

Introduction

- This guide consists of an accumulation of ideas various leaders have suggested to us. Use only the suggestions that will work for your group.
- The *Revised Common Lectionary Bible Study* is designed so that people with very little teaching or Bible study experience can lead a group through the weekly lessons. The following hints will help to make the class attractive to newcomers, permit the group to stay on the subject under discussion and finish in a timely manner. Each leader will have to make adjustments for individual class needs.
- The role of the person in charge of the class is to be a discussion leader.

Preparation for Class

- The location and starting time for class should be published in the church bulletin, newsletter, etc.
- It is best if participants work through the weekly lesson prior to the class and write down answers in their Revised Common Lectionary Bible Study workbooks. The leader should do the same.
- Provide a name tag for each participant. Always have some extra blank name tags available for new members. Name tags are important for the newcomer so that the names of class members can be learned quickly, thus making the newcomer feel welcome and comfortable in the class.
- At Paraklete Press of California, our mission statement is 'To know God, to love God and to make God known to others.'
- We recommend that during the week the leader pray for guidance, assistance and wisdom. Pray that the class may be used by God to address the individual needs of each participant and that an atmosphere be created where God may be known.

How A Discussion Group Works:

- Give the class members an opportunity to share what they have discovered from their study of the Scriptures.
- Use only the Bible as a reference when answering questions. The participant's answer should come from his or her own study of the Bible, not other sources, such as radio programs, someone's sermon or the opinions of other people, etc. If a participant forgets and refers to an outside book, a TV or radio program, remind him/her that the purpose of the study is to discuss what the Holy Spirit has taught him/her from the study of the Bible. Answers should come from a person's personal understanding of the Bible or life experience. Outside references can be used in discussions with class members after class, but during the class, the Bible will be the reference for answers to questions.
- Most leaders report that the class runs smoothly when participants write down answers in their workbook before class begins. A written answer indicates that the person has thought through the question and its meaning. The quality of discussion is better when class members have prepared answers before class.
- At the first session, when books are distributed, no one, except the leader, will have had an opportunity to prepare for the lesson. Plan to read through the questions with the class and find the answers together.
- The study can be completed in about an hour.

Class Room

- The class should have a room or a space that is separated from the distraction of noise or activities from other groups. Chairs, and desks or tables should be arranged before the class begins.
 - You, the leader, or an appointed greeter, should be in the classroom area early to meet, welcome and visit with class members as they arrive
 - If possible, offer coffee, tea or a cold beverage as people arrive. Keep refreshments simple. Encourage a familiar conversational atmosphere while people stand around and drink their beverage before class. Allow participants to bring their cups or glasses into the classroom.
 - Before class begins, introduce yourself to any new attendees. Introduce the newcomer to the class at the beginning of the session.
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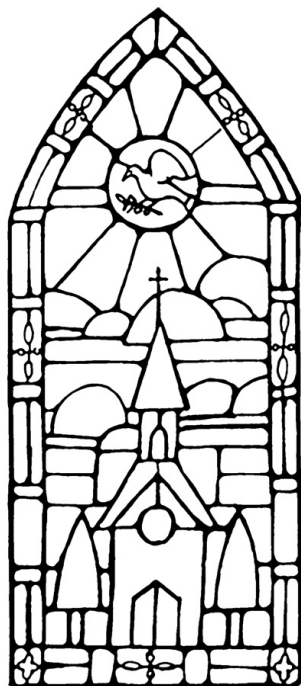
The First Session

- Sit around a table or in a circle if the group size permits. It is best if everyone has the opportunity for eye contact with all other class members.
- Introduce yourself. Have class members give their names and tell something about themselves and why they want to learn more about the Bible. This should be short. It is important for all to participate.
- Start the study with "The Opening Prayer," found at the beginning of each lesson.
- Share the goals of the study with the class:
 - 1) To develop a closer personal relationship with the Lord.
 - 2) To learn about the people and events in the Bible.
 - 3) To understand why these events were significant enough to become part of God's inspired Holy Bible.
 - 4) To have a deeper understanding of the Sunday service, the Scripture readings and the sermon.
 - 5) To experience the application of lessons learned from the Bible to one's personal life. To see first hand how the Holy Spirit works in our lives.

- It is very important for each class member to have a personal copy of *The Revised Common Lectionary Bible Study* workbook, either in print or digital form. Everyone should be encouraged to write out answers in the spaces provided and to add notes from the discussion. Some answers are personal and need not be shared in class.
 - Explain that you want class members to raise their hand to be called upon. This avoids interrupting one another.
 - As much as possible, personal questions should be answered based upon recent life experiences. Try to apply the Scriptures to current needs and circumstances, not to those of the distant past.
 - If an answer is given with a Bible reference that is not listed in the lesson, be certain the participant provides the reference for you and other class members.
 - When sharing something of a personal nature, care should be taken to be loyal to family, friends, clergy and church.
 - Encourage class members to study the Bible and the weekly Lectionary lesson each day during the week. Encourage the use of a daily devotional such as “Forward Day by Day.”
 - Remind members to work on the “Application for Next Week” during the week following the lesson.
 - The leader’s goal should be to have time to complete all discussion of questions and offer the final prayer within the allotted time for the class. Before praying, ask if there are any special prayers that anyone would like to add to the final prayer. Quickly write down the prayer requests and include them at the end of the closing prayer before saying the final “Amen.”
- Start the class on time and end it on time. Most class sessions require approximately an hour.

Hints for Leaders:

- Try to call on everyone. If someone tries to answer too many questions, turn to a quiet person and say, for example, “Ted, we have not heard from you in a while. How did you answer this question?”
- Because time restrictions do exist, it may be necessary for you to politely interrupt a conversation that is straying from the topic. Say something such as, “I can see from the clock that we are going to have to continue with the questions in order to finish on time.” Then simply proceed to the next question. Or you can suggest that the particular topic under discussion is very interesting and can be pursued after class by those who are interested in continuing to explore that particular topic.



- If no one offers an answer to a personal question, go on to the next question. Personal questions do not require an answer in class.
- The leader is not obligated to provide answers for questions. If you are asked a question you are unable to answer, just say that you do not know the answer, but will try to find out the answer before the next class session. It is important not to get bogged down and fail to finish the lesson in the allotted time. After class you can ask your minister/ pastor/priest to help you with difficult questions. Include the answers the following week during the review period.

Please send any questions, comments or suggestions to:

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