

Personal Delivery of Bible Lessons

VISITING THOSE WHO HAVE REQUESTED THE BIBLE COURSE

The primary goal of a Discover Bible School is to make personal contact with those requesting Bible studies. A visit can be made when a person first receives their Bible studies. Visits to correspondence and online students will also need to be made eventually. All students must be visited in order to develop personal friendships and to obtain decisions for acceptance of Jesus, biblical teachings, and baptism.

VISITATION ETIQUETTE

Our Headquarters Bible School periodically receives telephone calls, emails, and letters from individuals regarding the etiquette of making a visit. Your area of the country, location of the home (city or countryside), etc., will dictate visitation protocol. Here are some suggestions. Adapt these visitation suggestions as deemed appropriate—they are not written in stone.

1. In a subdivision, stay on sidewalks. Do not walk across lawns. (In some situations, it may be appropriate to walk across yards, so use your good judgment.)
2. Respect “No Soliciting” signs. Check with local ordinances regarding if the signs apply to religious visits. This varies per community.
3. Be respectful of a person if they are eating a meal when you knock on the door. Ask when a better time would be for you to return.
4. Do not put literature in a mailbox unless it is legal in your country. It is against postal regulations in the United States. In Canada, it was legal the last time we checked Canadian Postal Regulations. Always check the regulations in your country to make sure it is OK, as regulations do change.
5. If it is dark outside, keep in mind that someone knocking on a door may frighten people in the home. You may hear someone inside, but if they do not come to the door, do not keep knocking. Come back when it is light out. Do not visit too early or too late. The Voice of Prophecy has received complaints from people sharing that someone knocked on their door before 9 a.m. or after dark, and they did not appreciate it.

Your goal is to establish a friendship, gain mutual respect, have an opportunity to introduce a person to Jesus Christ and the truths of the Bible, and assist them in becoming a baptized Seventh-day Adventist church member. If the person is upset with you because of your visitation technique, a barrier has been established that may be impossible to overcome. Always err on the side of carefulness, rather than carelessness.

PREPARING FOR THE VISIT

1. Dress appropriately for the community/locale and situation.
2. Be respectful of the property owner. Always remember you are a guest on their personal property. Note: Many homes now record videos of anyone coming to their front door, so be sure to keep in mind that you may be on camera and anything you say on the front porch may be recorded.
3. Depend on the Lord. Prepare with prayer and pray before, during, and after the visit.

4. Your objective is to be brief, encourage the person to receive and study the Bible guides, gain the right to return, and make friends. Do not argue about anything. Your goal is to build bridges, not walls.

5. Know the basics of what you are going to say.

6. When you knock on the door: Smile and be cheerful! When you knock on someone's door, the person inside the home wants to know three things: (1) Who is it? (2) What do they want? (3) How long are they going to stay? You can answer those questions in your first few words at the door by saying, "I am _____ and this is _____. We are with the Discover Bible School. We have stopped by to bring you the Bible guides you requested. Do you have a few minutes?"

MAKING THE FIRST & SECOND VISITS TO THOSE REQUESTING BIBLE STUDIES

In this section, we will share with you suggestions for what to say as you visit the person who has requested the Discover Bible Guides. These suggestions have been used by many people with success. Adapt the approach to your own personality, but these are some ideas to get you started.

SUGGESTED APPROACH #1 | Visiting a Person Who Requested Bible Guides

Take the enrollment card the person returned in the mail and a copy of Guide #1. Show them the card filled out in their handwriting and say, "Hi! I am your name with the Discover Bible School. We received this card from name of that person requesting the Bible Guides. Are you name of person requesting guides? Do you have a few minutes? I will explain to you how to get started studying the Bible guides.

(Adapt this statement according to the method by which the person requested the course.)

- "I have stopped by to bring you the first Discover Bible Guide to get you started. What I normally do is leave Bible Guide #1. I'll come back in a week with the next Bible Guide, at which point we can discuss any questions you might have. How does that sound to you?"
- If they say, "I thought the lessons would come in the mail," respond by saying, "I usually stop by to explain the process. However, I can send the lessons in the mail or I can come by each week. Which do you prefer?"
- If the person shows some resistance to having you come to their home, arrange to have them return the Answer Sheet to the Discover Bible School by mail. Give the person a return envelope with the Discover Bible School address on it. Then tell them that future guides will be sent to them by mail.
- If they ask what denomination is sponsoring the lessons, say, "The lessons are from the Voice of Prophecy media ministry sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The study guides are designed for people of all faiths and are based only on the Bible."
- If they say, "I am a (religion or denomination), so no thank you," respond by saying, "These lessons are designed for people of all faiths and are based only on the Bible. Why not try the first couple of lessons? If you don't like them, you can always stop." (If they say "no" again, then thank them for their time and let them know that they can always get in touch if they change their mind.)
- If it seems appropriate, before leaving, ask the person if you can have a brief prayer with them to ask God to bless them as they study the guides. "Our Heavenly Father, thank you for Mrs. _____, who has a desire to study the Bible. Help her as she opens Your Word to understand the Bible more fully. Please meet her every need and guide her life. In the name of

Jesus, Amen.”

SUGGESTED APPROACH #2 | Visiting a Person Who Requested Bible Guides

• **Introduction:** “Good afternoon.” (Hold up the request card or form). “Are you name of the person requesting the Bible guides?” (Make presentation only to that person.) “I am your name, and this is name of person visiting with you. We can’t stay long, but we came in answer to your request for the free Discover Bible Guides.”

• **Presentation:** “Millions of people have taken and enjoyed these beautiful study guides (hold up Guide #1 and open the cover); they answer life’s greatest questions. The guides are beautifully designed and each section is supported by Bible texts” (point and keep turning pages and talking to the end). “Name of your visiting partner and I are enjoying these so much, and we are happy to share them with you. When you finish reading these few pages, there is an Answer Sheet to help you review what you have read” (hand it to them). “I know you’ll really enjoy these guides. I studied them and really learned a lot about what the Bible has to say on many topics.”

“We are planning to be in the area next week about this time and we’d be happy to drop off the next study guide then. If you have any questions at that point, we can discuss them.”

“Perhaps we can compare our answers. Would this time be the best for you? Or another time?” (Wait for them to respond.) “Great! Be sure to have the Answer Sheet ready and we’ll leave you another lesson when we return. We’ll look forward to seeing you next week at mention the time of your next visit.” (Have prayer only if it will increase their interest and not hinder it.)

• If they ask, “Who sponsors these study guides?” Say, “The Voice of Prophecy, one of the oldest continuous religious broadcast ministries in North America. Their Discover Bible School was one of the first national Bible correspondence schools and is sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and our listening audience.”

• **If they want the lessons by mail.** If they say, “I thought the lessons would come in the mail,” respond by saying, “I usually stop by to explain the process and answer any questions. However, I can send the lessons in the mail or I can come by so that if you have any questions, we can discuss them. I would be happy to do whichever you prefer.” If they request lessons by mail, take a return envelope from your pocket, put a stamp on it, and say, “I’ll be looking forward to receiving your Answer Sheet. God bless you.”

Visiting Radio, Television and Magazine Interests Who Have Requested and Received Booklets, but Not Bible Guides

Follow the same procedure as outlined previously but adapt the introduction. Smile and ask, “Are you the person’s name you are visiting? I am your name and this is your visiting partner’s name. We are associated with the mention the media ministry or publication by name. In the past, you have requested booklets from the broadcast and we’re stopping by today to offer you free Bible guides from the program.”

Visiting Door-to-Door with Guide #1

1. Follow the steps above. (Be gracious but positive.)”
2. Hold up the Discover Guide (or other lesson) for them to see.
3. Say, “It is good to find you home. I am your name and this is your visiting partner’s name. We

are volunteers (or we are associated with [media ministry or publication]).” Or say, “We are with the Discover Bible School.”

4. “We can’t stay long, but we did want to give you your free copy of the new Discover Guide.”

5. Follow the presentation above, adjusting the last line to: “We’ll look forward to seeing you next week at say the time, when we’ll give you another Discover Guide.”

Helpful Observations

Jim Zackrison, retired personal ministries director of the General Conference, and special assistant to the Voice of Prophecy Bible School, shares the following suggestions from his personal experience:

Much of the success of personal visitation has to do with attitudes and interpersonal relationships. Friendship evangelism is the foundation of every visit, including:

1. **Attitude toward people.** As a Discover Bible School Instructor, you are not a salesperson selling a product. You are the herald of an everlasting gospel with eternal consequences. Ellen White wrote: “In every human being, (Jesus) discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace.” (Education, p. 80)
2. **Respect social conventions.** It is taken for granted that people who visit others will be acquainted with the normal social conventions of the people they are visiting and will practice expected politeness and courtesy.
3. **Commitment.** Don’t start and then stop. Once you begin the cycle of handing out, receiving back, grading, and returning lessons to an individual or a family, don’t stop! It is vitally important to commit yourself to this activity until such a time as the person or people make a decision for or against what is taught in the lessons. Even then, keep in friendly contact with the individual or family.
4. **Dress appropriately.** This means attire appropriate for a Discover Bible School Instructor, yet not so different that you seem strange to the people you are studying with. Modesty is always in style.
5. **The power of a smile, vocabulary, and conversation.** When you approach people, smile, be polite, and be respectful. Don’t make unwarranted remarks about the social status or demeanor of the home or person. People who are underprivileged, or who are victims of vices and habits, already know their situation—you don’t have to point it out to them. There may come a time to discuss these situations when the time is right to do so.
6. **Be brief.** Your objective is to be brief and to get the person to receive and study the lessons, gain the right to return, and make friends. Don’t argue about anything; build bridges, not walls.
7. **Be security conscious.** People today are very security conscious. If the visit is to a home, it is always best for people of the same gender as the household to make the visit, or a husband and wife team. Two men appearing at the door of a woman’s home may be frightening. Two ladies are much less intimidating. Social ethics of a country or locale will dictate what is best. And always go in groups of two, as that provides security for you as well.

MAKING THE SECOND OR RETURN VISIT AFTER THE FIRST VISIT

SCENARIO: You received a request from someone for the free Discover Bible Guides. A week ago, you visited them at their home and left them Discover Guide #1. You made an appointment to return today and review their

completed Answer Sheet and bring them Discover Guide #2.

Unless you established a personal Bible study appointment during the first visit, when you arrive at the home, there are a couple possible scenarios that will most likely take place. The person will (a) invite you into their home or (b) not invite you into the home. This means you will have either a sit-down 15- to 20-minute visit in their home or a 5- to 10-minute visit on their front porch.

If the person has not completed the Bible lessons, you can ask them if they would like you to study the lesson with them. Sometimes they will say “yes.”

Because of these possible scenarios: (1) doorstep Bible study, (2) sit-down review of the Bible guide in the home, and (3) the person has not studied the lesson but invites you to study with them, you must be ready for all three scenarios. Remember that the goal is to eventually have in-home Bible study time.

PREPARING THE BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE

Steps to Follow:

STEP #1: Read Discover Guide #1 and fill out the Answer Sheet.

STEP #2: Make a three or four-point outline from the Discover Guide.

STEP #3: Choose several texts in the Discover Bible Guide to look up in the Bible.

The Outline:

- The Introduction (opening story/illustration)
- The Body (the three or four points from the Discover Guide and Bible verses)
- The Conclusion (appeal)

Read through the Bible Guide:

- Write down your key points.
- Select two key Bible texts.

Once you have prepared in this manner, when you arrive at the home, you can briefly review the outline in your marked study guide and expand the presentation as needed. Next, review the person’s Answer Sheet with them using the Answer Sheet you have personally marked. Here is a suggested approach. Adapt it to fit your personality.

“Hi Fred, how are you today? As you might remember, last week we agreed that I’d stop by at this time to review your Discover Bible Guide with you. Did you have time this week to complete the guide? (Wait for their response. If they say “yes,” then here’s how to continue.) Excellent! Why don’t you get your Discover Guide and we can review it together? (Fred gets Discover Guide.) Fred, as I studied the Bible lesson this week, there were several points that I appreciated. (Review the points with Fred.) Were there any points in the study guide that you especially appreciated? (Let Fred respond). Very good! Let’s now review our Answer Sheets together.” If Fred has marked an answer incorrectly, do not tell him his answer is wrong.

Instead, say, “We seem to have different answers for this question. Let’s go back to that section in the Discover Guide and see if we can figure it out together.”

Once you come to the end of reviewing the Discover Guide together, you always want to obtain a response (decision) from Fred. This will be the case for each lesson. For Discover Guide #1, I would respond in the following way: “Fred, I would like to end our time together in prayer. As we pray, I would like to tell God ‘thank You for creating the world for us to enjoy.’ Would you like to tell God ‘thank You’ too?” (Wait for Fred to respond.)

“Our Heavenly Father, thank You for the opportunity to study the Bible. Fred and I really appreciate the Bible study on the topic of creation and Your love for us. Tonight, we want to thank You for creating the world for us to enjoy, and thank You for Your love for us. As we study the next Bible topic this week, we ask that You guide us in our Bible study. Thank You, in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

BASIC STEPS

Follow these basic steps and God will guide you as you study the Bible with others. As you first begin to give someone a Bible study, you might not feel as comfortable as you wish. But as you obtain experience, you will relax more. Remember, everyone has to begin somewhere, and we learn each time we meet with someone. However, it is not our skill in presenting a Bible study that convicts someone’s heart to follow Jesus. It is the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. God goes before you and prepares the person’s heart. So go in faith, trusting in His power.