

Small Group Home Bible Studies

Small groups are perfect for Bible study, developing friendships, meeting personal needs, discipleship, and transitioning students into your local church life and fellowship. In addition, your Discover Bible School team can form a small group of members working together on a weekly basis.

DISCOVER BIBLE SCHOOL TEAM SMALL GROUP

Most local church Discover Bible Schools will follow the two methods of correspondence Bible studies and personal, one-to-one Bible studies. The church members participating in these two areas can meet together on a weekly basis at the church or someone's home. The specific purpose is to pray for the students, grade/mark Bible lessons, formulate letters and responses, and prepare Bible lessons to be mailed.

This group of members will become a close-knit community that bonds with each other through prayer, Bible study, and ministry. As they work together with the pastoral team, the group can expand as more individuals become involved in serving Jesus through the Discover Bible School.

HOME-BASED SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES

Here are some pointers to assist you with beginning and leading a small group Bible study.

Defining a Small Group

A small group is an intentional face-to-face gathering of 3-12 people who gather at a regular time, with the common purpose of developing relationships, meeting personal needs of group members, growing spiritually, and laying plans to lead others to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives.

Characteristics of a Small Group Meeting

1. Set up chairs in a circle rather than in rows. A living room or kitchen table is an excellent location.
2. It is key that no one sits outside the circle, or the dynamic will be lost.
3. Good lighting is necessary for study and for developing a warm atmosphere.
4. Choose a location that will provide the fewest distractions and interruptions. Children, pets, phones, TV, video games, other devices, etc., can disrupt your study group.
5. Usually the group is 3-12 people. If there are more than 12 people, divide the group into several groups in the home, or start a new home group.
6. Group meetings are usually once a week for about 90 minutes. It is important to begin and end on time or some members may stop attending.

FORMAT OF A SMALL GROUP MEETING

A small group is a leader-guided discussion rather than a prepared lecture by a teacher.

Nevertheless, preparation is still essential. Some group leaders make the mistake of not studying the material before the meeting.

The meeting agenda is similar to the following but can be adapted for a particular group:

- Sharing time: 20 minutes (talk about what has been happening in your lives since you last met together).
- Bible study time: 1 hour (study a printed lesson or watch a DVD with an accompanying study guide.)
- Prayer time (the group shares prayer requests and has a prayer time, and at times may discuss other issues related to group life, such as a birthday party for a group member, an outing together, etc.): length varies.

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The three key leadership positions are Group Leader, Assistant Group Leader, and a Host/Hostess. A small group can function with only one person leading; however, it is best to have at least two, with three being best of all. A brief job description for each is as follows:

1. Group Leader • Oversees all details of group life inside and outside the weekly meeting. • Facilitates the weekly group meeting. • Models and encourages participation, sharing, acceptance, and understanding among the members. • Makes sure the needs of the group members are being met—spiritually, socially, and personally.
2. Assistant Group Leader • Supportive prayer partner of the leader. • Leads the group meeting when the leader is absent. • Assists in recruiting new members, follows up with absent members, and makes spiritual visits as needed. • Assists with group life management. • Is an apprentice-in-training to lead a group of their own in the future.
3. Host/Hostess • Takes care of physical needs of the group, such as seating, Bibles, pencils, phone, doorbell, etc. • Prayer partner and source of support for the leader and assistant leader.

STUDY MATERIALS

1. Printed Lessons • It is best for the group to use a set of Bible lessons specially prepared for small group study. • Using a printed lesson provides a guideline to follow and gives the group members something to take home for continued study.
2. DVD/Satellite Programs • Many people will watch a DVD or a television program when they won't read a printed lesson. Use the DVDs of your choice. • Watch the program and discuss any questions. • Give each member a printed study guide or short pamphlet on the topic.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The key to success in a Discover Bible School is personal contact with your students. If you are delivering Bible lessons or DVDs to someone or sending them lessons by correspondence, the next step, once they complete the study guides, is to have them participate in a small group Bible study. From the home-based small group, it will be easier for them to transition to church services.

These methods can be interchanged as needed.

The Method

Next Steps to Follow

CORRESPONDENCE.....	Personal delivery, one-to-one Bible studies, small group, church attendance, reaping meeting
PERSONAL DELIVERY....	Small group, church attendance, reaping meeting
SMALL GROUP.....	Church attendance, reaping meeting

Once the student is baptized, the home-based small group is perfect for their spiritual growth. Continued discipleship takes place in a healthy small group. Also, in the small group setting, the newly-baptized members and others can invite their network of friends to attend. This is a non-threatening atmosphere for those who would not attend a church service.

SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Resources for Small Group Bible Studies are available from the Voice of Prophecy and Adventist Book Centers.

From the Voice of Prophecy, some small group resources include:

1. **Successful Small Groups** by Kurt Johnson. This is a book on how to organize and lead a small group. Available from the Voice of Prophecy or Adventist Book Centers.
2. **Talking Points** are 26 guides that parallel the topics in the Discover Guides.
3. **Peace Is an Inside Job** includes six studies on the topics of stress, worry, fear, guilt, and the plan of salvation.
4. **Prayer Works** features 13 studies on the topic of developing a personal prayer life.
5. **Face to Face With Jesus** contains 13 studies on the life of Jesus, based on the Gospels.
6. **LifeLine Books 1 & 2**. Each booklet contains 13 studies covering the major doctrinal teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
7. **Revelation Speaks Peace** DVDs and study guides. Shawn Boonstra clearly unlocks the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation—using the Bible itself as the key.
8. **Shadow Empire** DVD and study guides. Shawn Boonstra explores the life of Constantine in this documentary-style series that looks at religious liberty.