

# Discovery Bible Reading

## Church@Home

- You do not need to be an expert to be able to share the gospel.
- You do not need all the answers to be able to share the Bible.
- You can encourage people to discover God's Word for themselves.
- You can guide people to discover what Jesus is really like.
- You can multiply your witness.

*Discovery Bible Reading* allows the Holy Spirit to be the primary teacher. Even before a person has made a full commitment to Jesus Christ they can facilitate a *Discovery Bible Reading* group with friends, and come to know Jesus as they go.

### Connecting with people.

Jesus outlined a simple process to connect with people. If you can eat, you can share faith and make disciples (Luke 10:1-9)–

1. Eat with people – and listen to their story.  
Share a 'coffee'/meal, listen and you will identify the desperate needs of people.
2. Heal them – using your story as a bridge.  
Share a one sentence testimony of your story as a bridge to healing.
3. Introduce God's story – God cares (*'the kingdom is near'*).  
Share that God will walk with them through the 'valleys'.

Let people experience God. This is not time to prove anything.

[See Peter Roennfeldt, *If You Can Eat, You Can Make Disciples* (Signs, 2018)]

### Where to start?

Today many know little or nothing about Jesus and it has been found that encouragement to read the Gospel of Mark opens the way for them to learn of Him as well as share His story into their relational streams.

If as you connect, eating and healing, there is some receptivity to the reality of God's call to acknowledge him, perhaps pressed upon them by their need and your prayer for them, you could explain that they may come to know God and what he is like by reading the Gospel of Mark.

Building a relationship with a person to the point where you can do this may not take long. In fact, experience shows it is best to sow gospel seed early in the relationship. Suggest–

1. A store or sites where they could buy or download a Bible.

2. The value of getting together with their friends or family to read.

### **What is *Discovery Bible Reading*?**

The method is simple. Meet with two or three friends, and here are the steps—

- Pray: *Dear God, guide us as we read your Word. Thank you. Amen.*
- Start at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark.

Read one story at a time.

1. One reads the story.
2. Another reads the same story—in another translation if there's one in the group.
3. Then one tells the story in their own words without looking at the text.

#### FIVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

1. What is new to us?
  2. What surprises us?
  3. What do we not understand?
  4. What will we each apply/obey this week?
  5. Who will we share with—and what will we share, this week?
- Pray for each other: *Dear God, thank you for your Word. Help us to follow you. Amen.*
  - If you do not understand something:  
Don't argue—you will read more.

Tell others of this Bible reading plan:

Invite people to join you!  
Give each person a bookmark!  
Encourage others to form groups.

- Plan the time to meet to read again and when you meet, ask each other—
  1. How did we go obeying?
  2. How did we go sharing?

Then, follow the above process for the next story—next time.

### **For those coaching *Discovery Bible Reading* groups**

Indicate that you could be in touch to listen to what they are discovering, and to read other stories about Jesus Christ. It is important that you do not impose yourself nor try to control them. The seed is the story of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark and you are following a process by which the Holy Spirit can cultivate growth 'all by itself' whether you are awake or asleep! (Mark 4:26-29)

Grow people by entrusting them to the Holy Spirit: Unless in a country or place where it is extremely difficult to buy or download a Bible, give people the freedom and responsibility to do this themselves. Remember, ‘persons of peace’ (Luke 10) usually take initiative and could be key to reaching and planting a church within their relational streams. Mentor and encourage these key people, even before they come to Jesus. Call, visit and spend time eating and sharing life with them. Learn of their progress and model Bible reading, spiritual discovery and personal application; but do not take over as the expert teacher, making them dependent.

Here is an approach that has proved effective—

1. **VISITS:** Ask how their Bible reading in the Gospel of Mark is going. What have they discovered that they have applied to life or shared with another? How are those in their circle of influence reacting to their journey of spiritual discovery?
2. **ELEMENTARY TEACHINGS:** Sow more gospel seed by reading another story about Jesus. Explain that the Bible says there are ‘elementary teachings about Christ’ (Hebrews 6:1-3)—repentance, faith, baptisms, ‘laying on of hands’, resurrection and judgment; and you would like to read stories that explore these. For example, if it is your first visit you could read the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) or the woman of Samaria (John 4:1-42) to discuss repentance – the first elementary teaching.

Again follow a discovery rather than academic-study approach. Invite one person to read the story or chapter. Then have another re-read the whole story—maybe from another translation if someone in the group has one. This can be followed by them retelling the story in their words and sharing what they have discovered. Finally, ask one question: What does this tell you about repentance (or the elementary teaching being explored in that visit)? Almost no comment is needed from you—and the visit can end with simple prayer in conversational language.

3. **OTHER TEACHINGS:** Week by week they will read the Gospel and you will visit to explore stories from the life of Jesus, whole chapters as they relate to the elementary teachings of Jesus Christ. As they grow you could suggest other chapters on prayer (Luke 11:1-13), receiving the Holy Spirit (John 14:1-23) the second coming of Jesus (Matthew 24), or his/her relationship to distinctive doctrines that you wish to feature. Ensure you inquire about their relationship to Jesus. Regularly discuss, ‘How is the story of Jesus impacting your life and your circle of friends?’ It may not take long for the Holy Spirit to convict them to follow Jesus. It is usually about this stage that people ask to be baptized.

4. **GOSPEL OF JOHN:** When they are ready to explore the Bible doctrines of faith suggest they read the Gospel of John, for it covers all fundamentals.

5. **SEMINARS:** Because of the complexity of competing teachings of Christian faith today, you may suggest a series of 5-6 small group Bible classes or evangelistic seminars to assist new believers with answers to specific questions, clarifying concerns and allaying fears. You could cluster a number of *Discovery Bible Reading* groups in a home or seminar room. Suggestions—

- a. Do this as a special teaching series to explore more difficult distinctive Bible teachings or prophetic understandings.
- b. Do not continue for more than 5 or 6 sessions – and then encourage the groups to return to *Discovery Bible Reading* groups.

All care must be taken to ensure new believers are not made dependent, such programs of teaching have been found to help gather new believers into new churches, especially when scheduled for the times when it is planned that the new group of believers will gather as a church.

After some weeks/months in *Discovery Bible Reading* groups, a further seminar series could be included in the spiritual journey of the groups.

### **Discovery Bible Reading in churches**

This method of Discovery Bible Reading is being used in churches—either replacing preaching or as an integral part of the sermon time. Following worship music, prayer and the collection of offerings/tithes, special features, etc., the scripture for the day (selected or the next story if the church is working through a Bible book) is read—

1. One reads.
2. Another reads the same story.
3. Then in small groups of 2 or 3 seated together, one tells the story in their own words.
4. The FIVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS are then used in small groups—or by the whole congregation if it is small.
5. What is discovered could be shared with others in the church.

The worship service ends with sharing, worship, and prayer.

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