

Personal Evangelism Training Manual

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www.discipleshipcourse.org

Every Believer Called to Share the Gospel

Matthew 28:18-20

Mark 16:15

“No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus.” (The Desire of Ages, 141)

„Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver.” (The Desire of Ages, 195)

“The Saviour’s commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time.” (The Desire of Ages, 195)

It is God's plan for every believer to share the gospel in their environment. This plan is as ingenious as it is simple. Much is achieved at the same time:

- It is the most beautiful way to thank God for your own salvation and spread joy throughout heaven.
- When followers of Jesus share their faith with others, their own faith will grow as a result.
- When every believer actively spreads the Gospel within their community, it ensure that a greater number of people will hear it.
- When these people decide for Jesus, they have the support of their believing friends right from the start.
- Those who find Jesus learn to share their faith right from the start. This increases the number of laborers for the harvest.

My response to Jesus’ call

I personally accept Jesus’ call to share the Gospel and pledge to give Him my time, my talents and my strength. I am willing to learn whatever it takes to effectively fulfil this mission.

Date and place

Signature

Notes/Questions

What did Jesus command his disciples to do?

How many believers are called to spread the Gospel?

Why has Jesus called every believer to share the Gospel!

Mission in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8

Acts 4:13.18-20

Acts 4:29-31.33

Acts 5:42

Notes/Questions

How did the Holy Spirit empower the disciples to share the Gospel?

The early Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaimed the Gospel with boldness and authority. Their hearts were so filled that they could not help but talk about Jesus. Their example shows that the most important prerequisite for successful mission is not the right methods, but hearts filled with the Holy Spirit. Without this spiritual foundation, the best missionary methods will fail. However, if our hearts are filled with the love of Jesus, we will naturally talk about Him and see people turn to Him. That's why it is vital that we surrender our lives to Jesus and ask daily for the Holy Spirit to change and empower us.

Recommendation: Steps to Personal Revival by Pastor Helmut Haubeil

(<https://steps-to-personal-revival.info>)

"After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were so filled with love for Him and for those for whom He died, that hearts were melted by the words they spoke and the prayers they offered. They spoke in the power of the Spirit; and under the influence of that power, thousands were converted." (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 22)

"The presence of the Spirit with God's workers will give the proclamation of truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give." (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 51)

Mission starts with us!

Mission always starts with us and our own personal relationship with Jesus. The closer we are to Him, the more power we have to share the Gospel. As you pray, let the Word of God remind you, what Jesus wants to accomplish in and through you so that your whole life is a witness for Him. As you use these Bible passages in your prayers, you will pray with confidence and assurance. Pray with these promises that God will

- daily fill you with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:13; Ephesians 5:18)
- help to abide in Jesus so that you will be fruit to His glory. (John 15:5,8)
- give you the power of the Holy Spirit and make you His witness. (Acts 1:8)
- make you a blessing for people around you. (Genesis 12:2)
- help you to be salt and light so that the people will see your good works and glorify the Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16)
- fill you with the Holy Spirit and help you to speak His word with boldness. (Acts 4:13,29,31)
- help you to witness the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power. (Acts 4:33)
- pour out His love in your heart through the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:5)
- help you to be kind and forgive others as He has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)
- help you to always be ready to give the reasons for your faith with meekness and fear. (1 Peter 3:15)
- help you to never be ashamed of the Gospel. (Romans 1:16)
- help you to be a worthy ambassador for Christ and implore others in Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- help you to faithfully confess Jesus before men and never deny him. (Matthew 10:32-33)
- love others as you are loved by Jesus. (John 13:34)
- give you opportunities to do good to people around you. (Galatians 6:10)
- give you the right words to share the Gospel boldly as you ought to speak. (Ephesians 6,18-20)
- help you to be bold in God to speak to others the Gospel of God even in conflicts and difficulties. (1 Thessalonians 2:2)
- give you wisdom to reach people. (James 1:5)
- give you the right words to speak to those who are weary. (Isaiah 50:4)

Notes/Questions

How can praying with Bible promises give more power to our prayers?

Oikos Evangelism

It is a fact that most people get to know Jesus through personal relationships. The single most effective method of evangelism is witnessing among our family members, relatives, colleagues, neighbours, and friends. These personal networks were in New Testament times called *oikos* which literally means “house”. We find many examples in the New Testament of how the Gospel spread through these personal networks.

John 1:35-51

John 4:28-30,39-42

“With the calling of John and Andrew and Simon, of Philip and Nathanael, began the foundation of the Christian church. John directed two of his disciples to Christ. Then one of these, Andrew, found his brother, and called him to the Saviour. Philip was then called, and he went in search of Nathanael. These examples should teach us the importance of personal effort, of making direct appeals to our kindred, friends, and neighbors.” (The Desire of Ages, p. 141)

“One of the most effective ways in which light can be communicated is by private personal effort.” (Christian Service, p. 118)

Notes/Questions

How did people find Jesus in these stories?

The Five Steps of Personal Evangelism

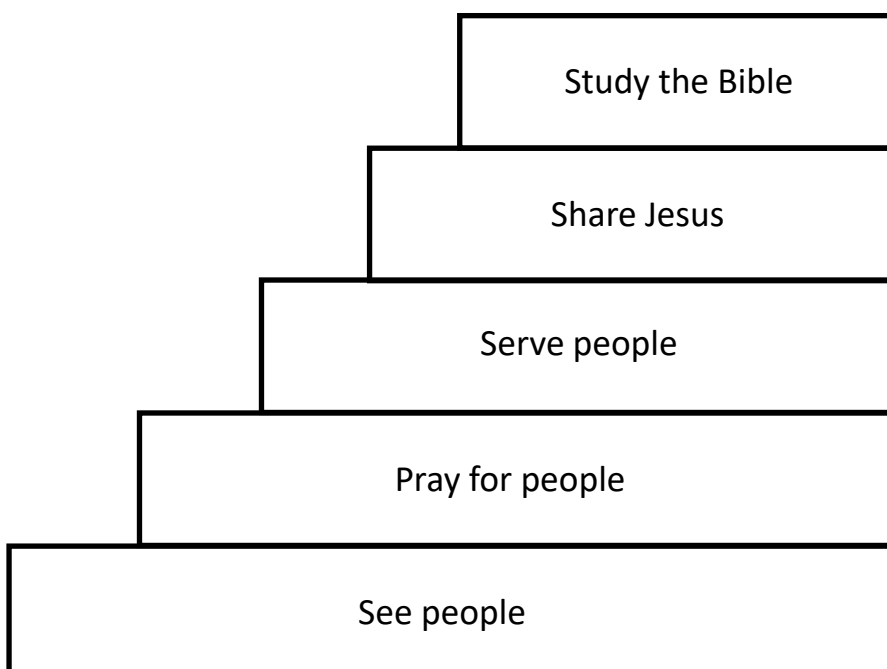
Matthew 9:35-38

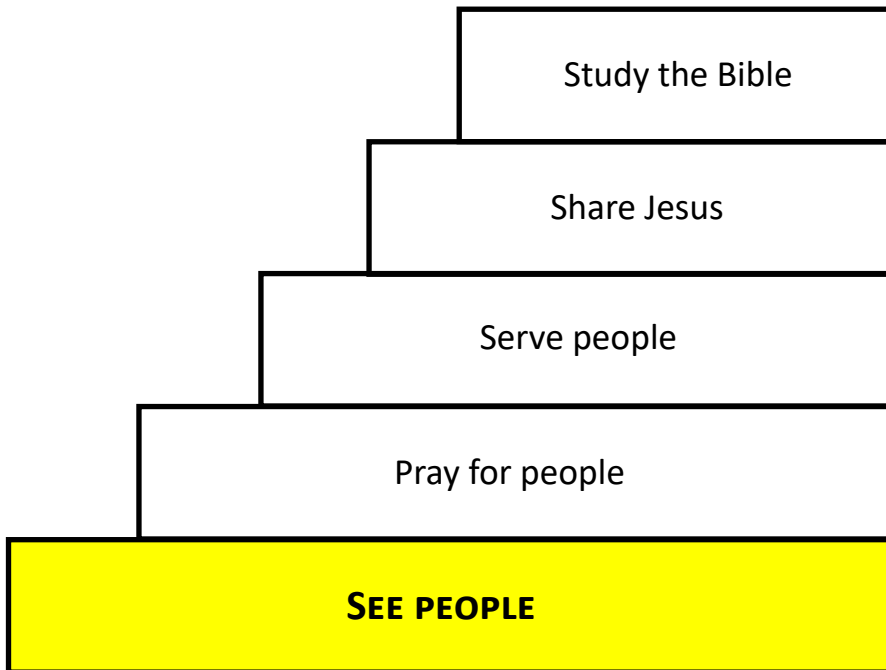
Luke 6:12

Notes/Questions

What did Jesus do to reach people with the Gospel?

Jesus saw people in their lostness and was moved with compassion. At the same time, he saw in them a rich harvest of precious souls who could be reached for God's kingdom. He spent much time praying for these precious individuals (cf. Mark 1:35). Jesus ministered to their needs by healing their diseases. Whenever people were open to listen to him, he preached the Gospel to them. And he taught the word of God in their synagogues (cf. John 8:31-32). His example can be summarized in five simple steps:





The first step in personal evangelism is to see the people God has placed in our lives. Each of us knows many people who are far from Jesus. God has placed these people in our lives so that they can learn about him through us. But "seeing people" means even more, namely seeing these people with God's eyes: uniquely created, dearly purchased, infinitely loved and yet in need of redemption. Just as Jesus did, we should not only see what people are, but also what God's grace can make of them.

How we see people has the greatest influence on how we treat them. If we see them the way God sees them, we will treat them the way God wants us to.

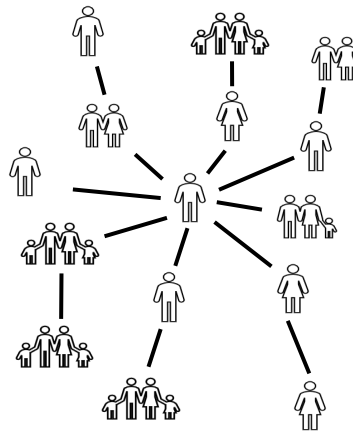
„Jesus saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom.“ (The Desire of Ages, p. 151)

„One soul is of infinite value; for Calvary speaks its worth. One soul, won to the truth, will be instrumental in winning others, and there will be an ever-increasing result of blessing and salvation.“ (Christian Service, p. 121)

“The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. Hear that despairing cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Mark 15:34. Look upon the wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul.” (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 196)

Your Assignment

We all live in a network of relationships. This network is our first and most important mission field. Take a sheet of paper and write down every one you know personally that does not follow Jesus. Remember your family members, relatives, friends, neighbours, classmates, colleagues, young people in the church, inactive or former church members, visitors of church events, ... Write down as many as you can think of!



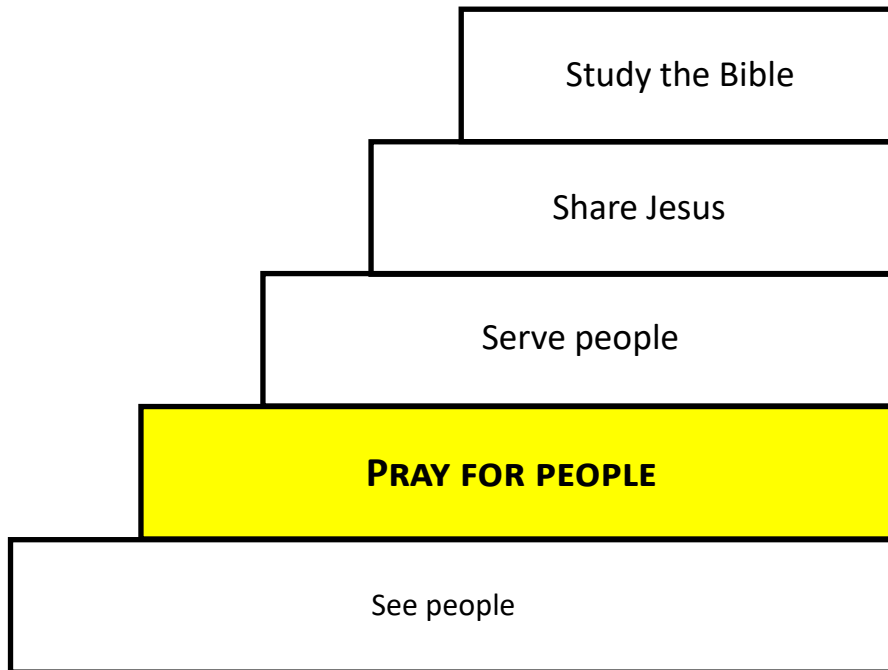
Then ask God to show you which of these people he wants to especially put on your heart. Pray that God will help you see them in his eyes as uniquely created, dearly bought and immeasurably loved people. Write down the names of individuals and families that God has impressed you with!

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Notes/Questions

Second Step: Pray for People

Notes/Questions



Intercessory prayer gives God more room to work in the lives of our friends in the controversy between good and evil. When you pray for someone, then God does something for this person, which He otherwise wouldn't have done. When we try to win someone for Jesus, we must spend a lot of time praying for him/her. It will make a huge difference! Remember that Jesus also prays for your friends. (John 17,20)

Therefore, pray for the people on your prayer list every day. Think about their live situation and be specific in your intercession. Remember to pray a threefold prayer!

- Ask God to help you see them through his eyes, as uniquely created, dearly bought and immeasurably loved people. (see first step)
- Pray that God will intervene in their lives to open their eyes to the truth.
- And pray that God will use you to be a blessing to them!

As you pray for them, think about their live situation and be specific in your prayers. It is also a blessing if we don't just pray for these people alone. Join together with others who are also praying for the people around them. Pray together for the people God has placed on your heart.

„Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another?“ (Testimonies for the Church, p. 21)

„Through much prayer you must labor for souls, for this is the only method by which you can reach hearts. It is not your work, but the work of Christ who is by your side, that impresses hearts.“ (Evangelism, p. 341)

Why is intercessory prayer so important?

How does praying for others impact *us*?

Praying with Bible Promises

The Bible is full of Bible promises that can give our prayers for others more confidence and power, because we know for sure that we pray according to God's will. You may pray with assurance and boldness that, God will ...

- draw them to himself. (Jeremiah 31:3; John 6:44,45; 12:32)
- teach them His way. (Psalm 32:8; Isaiah 48:17)
- give them authority to become children of God. (John 1:12)
- give them His peace (John 14:27; 16:33)
- help them see how much He wants to save them. (John 3:16-17; 1 Timothy 2:4)
- help them see that they can come with their burden to Jesus and find rest in Him. (Matthew 11:28-30)
- give them true repentance (Acts 5:31; Romans 2:4)
- help them see that He has good thoughts toward them. (Jeremiah 29:11)
- help them to seek Him with all their heart so that they will find Him. (Jeremiah 29:12-14)
- give them conviction of sin. (John 16:8-9)
- lead them into all the truth. (John 16:13)
- give them a hunger for God's word and motivate them to study the Bible diligently. (Jeremiah 15:16; Matthew 4:4; Acts 17:11)
- help them to understand the Bible (John 8:31-32)
- heal their broken hearts. (Psalm 34:19; 147:3; Luke 4:18)
- open their eyes and free them from whatever binds them. (Isaiah 42:6-7)
- open their heart for the Gospel. (Acts 16:14)
- help them to see how much He loves them. (Ephesians 3:14-21)
- help them understand His will and grow in their faith (Philippians 1:9-11); Colossians 1:9-11)
- help them to be rooted and established in their faith (Colossians 2:6-7)
- help them to receive the message not as the word of men but , as it is in truth, as the word of God. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)
- strengthen their hearts and help them be ready for the second coming of Christ. (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)
- drive back the evil one and shine in their hearts. (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)
- help them to look to Jesus and overcome sin. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

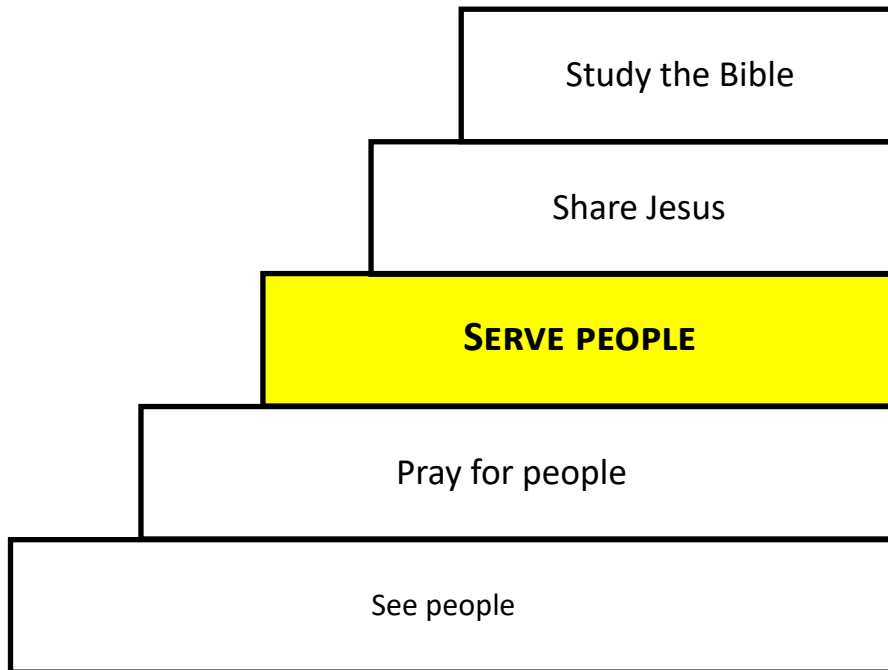
Not all of these promises apply in all circumstances, but as you prayerfully read them, God will impress you which one that best fits the situation of the person you are praying for.

Notes/Questions

How can praying with Bible promises give our prayers for others more power?

Third Step: Serve People

Notes/Questions



The third step in reaching people for Jesus is to meet them as Jesus would do in our place. Wherever Jesus met people, he met them with love, compassion and appreciation. He helped them with their needs. He did not come to be served, but to serve. (Matthew 20:28) In the same way, he wants us not only to tell people about God's love, but to show them this love in a practical way. We are to serve people, just as Jesus did.

Matthew 5:13-16

Colossians 4:2-6

How can we be a blessing to the people around us?

"The truth expressed in living, unselfish deeds is the strongest argument for Christianity." (Counsels on Health, p. 537)

"The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian." (The Ministry of Healing, p. 470)

Serving People Like Jesus

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit." (The Ministry of Healing, p. 143)

"Jesus saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom. He reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good. He sought them in the public streets, in private houses, on the boats, in the synagogue, by the shores of the lake, and at the marriage feast. He met them at their daily vocations, and manifested an interest in their secular affairs. He carried His instruction into the household, bringing families in their own homes under the influence of His divine presence. His strong personal sympathy helped to win hearts. (The Desire of Ages, p. 151)

"The example of Christ in linking Himself with the interests of humanity should be followed by all who preach His word, and by all who have received the gospel of His grace. We are not to renounce social communion. We should not seclude ourselves from others. In order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord. Not alone from the pulpit are the hearts of men touched by divine truth. There is another field of labor, humbler, it may be, but fully as promising. It is found in the home of the lowly, and in the mansion of the great; at the hospitable board, and in gatherings for innocent social enjoyment." (The Desire of Ages, p. 152)

"In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate with them at their tables,--partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands,--taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy." (The Desire of Ages, p. 193)

"Jesus sat as an honored guest at the table of the publicans, by His sympathy and social kindliness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity; and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. Upon their thirsty hearts His words fell with blessed, life-giving power. New impulses were awakened, and the possibility of a new life opened to these outcasts of society." (The Desire of Ages, p. 274)

"At the table of the publicans He sat as an honored guest, by His sympathy and social kindliness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity;

Notes/Questions

How did Jesus mingle with the people and win their hearts?
Mark the relevant statements!
Read these quotes over and over again until you have really internalized them!

and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. Upon their thirsty hearts His words fell with blessed, life-giving power. New impulses were awakened, and to these outcasts of society there opened the possibility of a new life. Though He was a Jew, Jesus mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at naught the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept with them under their roofs, ate with them at their tables,—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands,—taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy. And while He drew their hearts to Him by the tie of human sympathy, His divine grace brought to them the salvation which the Jews rejected.” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 26)

Notes/Questions

Remember!

“Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart.” (Gospel Workers, p. 193)

Practical ideas to serve people and bring joy into their lives

- Treat everyone with love, kindness and respect. Smile at them and greet them by name!
- Be trustworthy, even in the smallest things. And honor people with your trust.
- Habitually express your appreciation and thankfulness to people, even for little things.
- Remember the names and concerns of their family members and show genuine interest in them.
- Look for opportunities to help and bring joy to people's lives.
- Encourage people who go through difficult times.
- Be quick to forgive and show mercy.
- Visit people who are lonely and/or need help.
- Invite people into your home and/or accept their hospitality.
- Be open and share things about yourself. Allow them to take part in your life, your history, your thoughts.
- Take time to call family members and friends and ask how they are doing.
- Ask people for a favor or their help. Of course, these requests should be appropriate.
- Show a genuine interest in others and ask good questions. Listen carefully and seek to really understand.
- Create opportunities to spend time together, e.g. picnicks, birthday parties, nature walks, ...
- Visit your neighbors, especially those who have just moved to your neighborhood.
- Remember special occasions like birthdays, weddings, births, funerals and express your care.
- Respect the religious beliefs of your friends, even though they are different from your own. Be sensitive to cultural differences.
- Give your friends and neighbors homemade bread, rolls, or cookies.
- Write cards, emails, or text messages.
- Give a single parent a free day or evening by taking care of his/her kids.
- Offer to help to people in your community, e.g. mowing their lawn, buying groceries, clearing the snow etc.
- Join neighborhood, community or school projects.

Notes/Questions

Mark ideas that you want to implement. Especially remember the people on your prayer list.

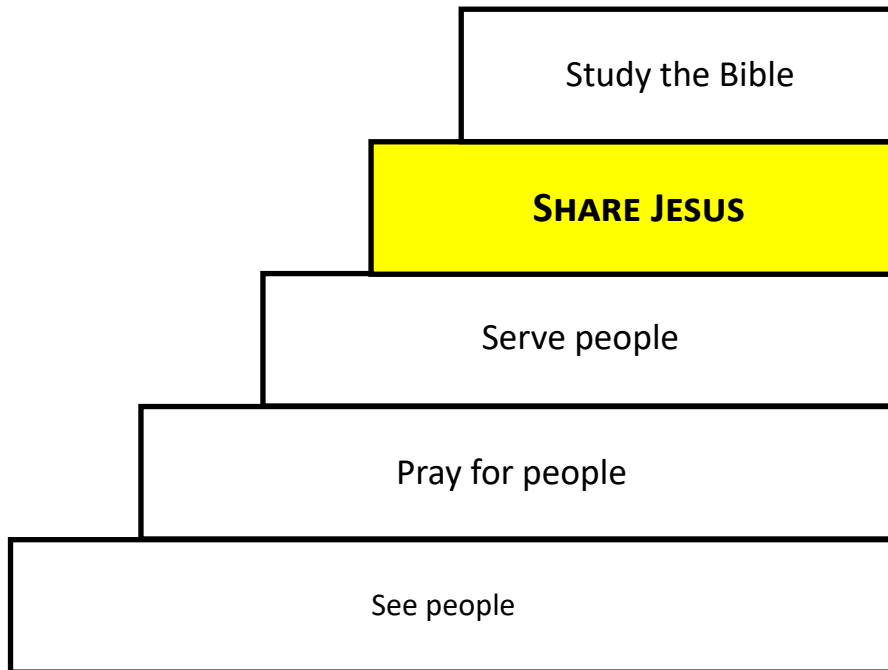
- Lend or give away helpful books.
- Share helpful links on the internet.
- When you are tempted to say something negative about someone, say something positive instead.

Further Ideas:

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Notes/Questions

Now it's your turn! Write down further ideas to help people or bring joy into their lives! Remember especially the people on your prayer list.



As followers of Jesus, we don't just want to serve the people around us so that their lives on this earth become better and easier. Because we are convinced of the truth of the gospel, we naturally also want them to come to know Jesus and be saved for eternal life. Therefore, the third step is to witness Jesus in a winsome way. We do this by ...

- openly living out faith in Jesus
- looking out for children of peace, i.e. spiritually open people
- telling your own story with Jesus
- explaining the gospel (God's story)
- telling Bible stories

„No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart.“ (The Desire o Ages, p. 141)

“At every opportunity when an interest was awakened by either friend or foe, He presented the word. With clearness and power He proclaimed the gospel message.” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 21)

“Mark how all through the word of God there is manifest the spirit of urgency, of imploring men and women to come to Christ. We must seize upon every opportunity, in private and in public, presenting every argument, urging every motive of infinite weight, to draw men to the Saviour.” {(The Ministry of Healing, p. 164)

Live out our faith in a natural and winsome way!

- You need a clear identity as a follower of Jesus. Live out this identity in an authentic, natural, visible and winsome way.
- Be visible as a spiritual person. People who are looking for spiritual answers are looking for people who are spiritual.
- Go on prayer walks! Prayer walking is simply praying as you walk through a community or neighborhood. You pray for the people you meet and especially ask God to reveal the persons of peace in that community or neighborhood.
- Pray for people and let them know that you are praying for them. Also pray with people and bring their need before God.
- Let people see that your faith in Jesus makes gives you peace and joy.
- Connect your friends of other believers.
- Habitually express that you wish people God's blessing.
- Pray before you eat, no matter where you are.
- Naturally include your faith in your everyday conversations. Share what you are thankful for to God and how you have experienced his help.
- After a good conversation, ask if you may pray for the other person.
- Share good Christian content on social media.
- Give people good spiritual and helpful books. Also send them spiritual and helpful videos and podcasts.
- Ask good questions to find out, if people are spiritually open, e.g.
 - Are you attending church?
 - Do you believe, there is life after death?
 - Have you ever read in the Bible?
 - Have you ever asked yourself why there is so much suffering in our world?
 - If you could ask God one question, what would it be?
 - If you could ask God for one thing, what would it be?
- Search for open people by going door to door or talking to people on the street or in the parks.
 - Offer to pray for the people you meet: "We are out here to pray for this community. Is there anything we can pray for you?"
 - Offer a free book: "We are here to share good Christian literature. You may choose one of three books as a free gift."
 - Do a community survey: "We want to find out how we as a church can better minister to the needs of the people in our community. Could you please help us with a few questions?"

Notes/Questions

What can you practically do to be visible as a follower of Jesus?

- ◇ Do you believe in a personal God?
 - ◇ How often you do attend church?
 - ◇ How often do you read in your Bible?
 - ◇ What would a church look like that people in our community would like to attend?
 - ◇ What are the needs of our community where our church may help?
- Whenever you meet a spiritually open person, share your personal testimony and the gospel and ask people if they would be willing to read some stories from the Bible with you.

“Let your thoughts dwell upon things of earth less, and upon heaven more. When you are with your associates, talk about Jesus instead of dress and appearance, Do you love Jesus? If you do you will love to talk about him. Do you love his appearing? If you do, you will love to dwell upon it, Does heaven charm you? Does it attract you? If so, you cannot hold your peace. You will talk about it; for you will always have it uppermost in your mind, and be ready to converse, when you meet with your friends, upon that which most charms, and engrosses the mind, Talk about your hopes of heaven, your joys, your eternal prospects, and then when you part with your friends, you will be benefited by each others society, and there will be a sweet satisfaction when you meet and when you part, instead of barrenness of soul, and an empty feeling.” (The Youth Instructor, January 1, 1856, par. 4)

Looking for Persons of Peace

Matthew 10:11-13

Luke 10:5-7

Acts 16:14-15

Acts 17:10-12

Notes/Questions

How should the disciples recognize persons of peace?

What kind of people was Paul looking for?

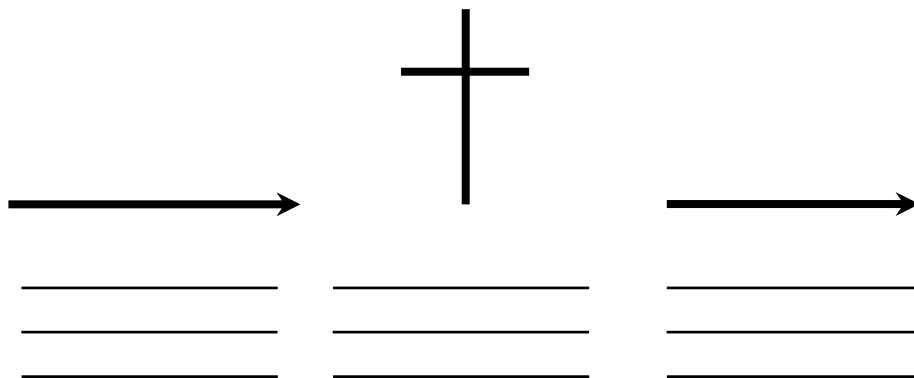
Jesus taught his disciples to look for people who were spiritually open and to focus on them. He called these people "children of peace" or "person of peace" (NIV) and commanded his disciples to look not just for individuals, but for whole families (homes) who were ready to receive God's peace.

Ellen White described them like this: "All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in. (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 109)

While our first task is to look for these open people in our personal network, we also need to understand that there are spiritually open people around us that we don't know. It is important to look for these people and ask God to lead us to them.

YOUR STORY (Your personal Testimony)

Notes/Questions



At first, write on these lines words or short phrases that characterise the particular time in your life.

Your life, before you decided to follow Jesus

Now write down your personal testimony word for word! T

How and why you decided to follow him

How and why you decided to follow him (continued)

Notes/Questions

Your life with Jesus today

Practice your personal testimony until you can tell it by heart. Tell it to other believers and ask for feedback.

Look for people you can share your personal testimony with. Start with the people on your prayer list.

Ask at the end: Have you also experienced Jesus? Or: Would you like to experience Jesus too?

If someone is open, ask: May I show you how you can also experience Jesus? If the answer is YES, explain the gospel.

In this way you will find people who are open to God.

“Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world.” (The Desire of Ages, 347)

The best way to share your story with Jesus

- A personal testimony is like a commercial, which should spark people's interest in Jesus in a very short time. So it doesn't have to do with putting ourselves in the spotlight, but rather Jesus.
- Keep your testimony fairly short (approx. 3-4 minutes). Remember: better to use too few words than too many.
- Share your testimony naturally. Even if you wrote it down first, it may not sound as if you were doing it by memory.
- Be prepared to tell others humbly but bravely that you are a Christian.
- Be specific. Describe in plain words what Jesus has done for you and what he means to you.
- Identify with the person you are talking to! If possible, make a connection to things you have in common or questions that they might have while you are sharing.
- Don't glamorize your past sins by telling about them in detail. Share only what is needed to understand how Jesus changed your life. The focal point of your testimony should be what Jesus has done for you and is doing today.
- Avoid expressions and figures of speech in your testimony which non-Adventists or non-Christians would have a hard time understanding.
- Never criticize other churches or religious groups! If it is necessary to mention a specific church then it should be done respectfully.
- Avoid giving a long list of all the victims, who demanded you to make a decision for Christ. This could frighten off your friend.
- Be open and honest. It's not a problem to admit that we are still having difficulties.
- Be friendly and share your testimony with a bright smile. Let them feel that your faith is the most precious thing in the world to you.
- Pray that the Holy Ghost will work on their hearts while you share your testimony.
- Always be positive even when negative reactions to your testimony come. Try to go back to a point that your listener can agree with. End your conversation in a friendly and polite manner.
- Even someone who has grown up well protected in a believing family and has never had the thought of living a life without God and the church has an impressive story to share and can say for example: "I grew up in a Christian family and have been familiar with God and the Bible from an early age. My parents exemplified their faith to me. And yet there came a time when I also had to make the decision as to whether I would make their faith completely my own." It is important to emphasize what faith means to us today.
- Our story can encourage people to get involved with Jesus. But it cannot save them. For that, they need the Gospel. So see your story as a bridge on which the Gospel can reach others.

Notes/Questions

Sharing God's Story (the Gospel)

Mark 1:14

John 3:14-17

Acts 16:30-32

Romans 1:16

Notes/Questions

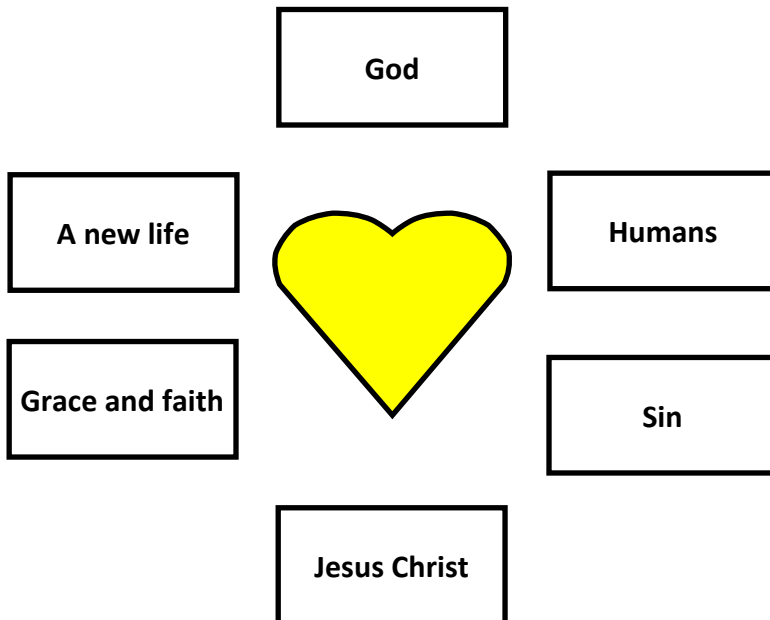
What is the Gospel?

Why is it so important to share the Gospel?

"There are many who want to know what they must do to be saved. They want a plain and clear explanation of the steps requisite in conversion." (Evangelism, p. 188)

What is the Gospel?

What is the gospel? In short, the gospel is the answer to the question: What must I do to be saved? It is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. The gospel is the only way to eternal life. That is why it must never be preached in a one-sided, abbreviated or distorted way. (cf. Galatians 1:6-9) In order to explain the gospel correctly, it is necessary to talk about seven core biblical truths.



God is the Creator of all life. He is love and has existed from eternity in the community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is holy and righteous. His law is an expression of his selfless love. It is the law of life and love.

Humans were created in the image of God. However, this image was distorted by sin. Nevertheless, God loves people and wants to save them for eternal life.

Sin is the breaking of God's law of love. While God's love is selfless, sin is deeply selfish. The problem of sin is not just sinful deeds, but a sinful nature. Every person carries this sinful nature within them. That is why man is in need of redemption and cannot save himself alone.

In **Jesus Christ**, God became man. Jesus lived among mankind and showed what God is really like. He led an absolutely pure and selfless life. He took the guilt of all mankind upon himself on the cross. On the third day, he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, from where he will return in power and glory to create a new heaven and a new earth. Through Jesus, God and humanity are united forever.

Through what Jesus did, he offers everyone his **grace**. Through **faith**, we accept this gift. While God's grace is an undeserved gift to us, faith means living in a trusting relationship with God.

Notes/Questions

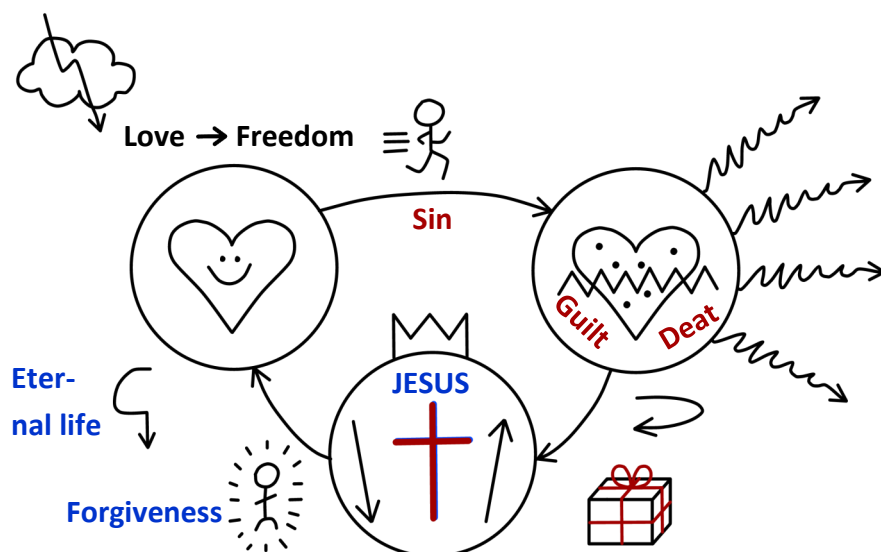
Jesus not only wants to forgive our sins, but also to change our lives. That is why he calls us to follow him and live a new life. He fills us with the Holy Spirit and gives us a new heart, filled with his love. In doing so, he gives us the strength to walk in his ways.

God's love is at the center of all this. It is the core of His character and moved him to create human beings. Sin is the opposite of this love. In Jesus Christ, God's love became clearer than ever before. In his love, he forgives us our sins and gives us a new beginning. And ultimately, it is his love that changes us and helps us to follow Jesus and live a new life.

On the next two pages you will find an example of how to explain the gospel while addressing all seven of these core truths.

Notes/Questions

How to Share God's Story (The Gospel)



When you have a good conversation and have a chance to share your personal testimony, you can simply say: May I share with you, how you can experience God in your life, too? If they say yes, you share this gospel presentation.

When we look at our world, we see a lot of brokenness. We see broken relationships, sickness, suffering, and death. But we also see many beautiful things like the innocent smile of a child, true love among people and endless beauties in nature. These things exist because God created our world as the most beautiful place for people, He wanted to see happy. (Genesis 1:31)

But why is our world so different today? The Bible tells of a war in heaven when the highest angel started to rebel against God and told lies about Him. (Revelation 12:7-9) Many ask: Why didn't God destroy him right away? After all, He is more powerful. The answer is simple: God is love. (1 John 4:8) And love can only exist when there is freedom. You cannot force, manipulate or bribe someone to love you. Love can only be given freely and accepted as a gift. That's why God gave the angels and human beings freedom to choose. Tragically, they decided to distrust God and run away from him. (Genesis 3) The Bible calls this departure from God sin. Through sin, all this brokenness came into our world. But this brokenness is not just in the world around us. It is deep inside us. We all have dark spots in our hearts: envy, anger, jealousy, hatred, shame, and fear. We are all born this way. That's why we make so many mistakes and become guilty before one another and before God. The final consequence of all of this brokenness is death. (Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 John 1:8,10)

But no one likes to live in this condition of brokenness. Some people try to escape by climbing the ladder of success. Some seek to find joy and happiness through fun and adventure. Others attempt to drown it out with drugs, alcohol or relationships. And many try to find peace by being reli-

Notes/Questions

You can watch this gospel presentation on <http://bit.ly/Gospel4All>



It is important that you practice it so often, that you feel comfortable to share it anytime. Then pray and look for people to share the Gospel with! Start with the people on your prayer list.

gious and trying to be a good person. But none of these attempts to escape this brokenness in our own strength can get us out. They actually snap us back into brokenness like a bungee cord and make our it even worse. We need to face it: It is impossible for us to get back into God's perfect world in our own strength. (Romans 1:19) Our reality is that are sinners and cannot save ourselves.

But God loves us so much that He doesn't want us to live in this brokenness. That's why he did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He sent his Son Jesus, the Messiah, into our broken world. (John 3:16-18) He became a human being and lived a perfect life. By showing love and care for people, he demonstrated that God is truly love. (John 14:9) But even though he lived a sinless life, He was hated by the religious leaders who finally brought Him to death on the cross. Jesus did not die on account of his own sin. He was sinless! He died because he took on our guilt and our sins. He died for us! (Isaiah 53:4-6)

But, praise God, on the third day He rose from the grave and defeated death. (Matthew 28:1-15) And now He offers to everyone the free gift of eternal life that we don't deserve and could never pay for. This gift is free but it was brought with a high price; it was brought with the precious blood of Jesus. (Ephesians 2:8,9)

God declares that anyone who will repent, return to Him, accept this gift and make Jesus the king of their life, will be forgiven of all their sins. (Romans 10:9,10) Christ will help us to live a new life and give us eternal life. Christ will soon come back to our earth and create a new world in which everything that was lost will be restored. (John 14:1.3, Revelation 21:1-5) God's purpose in giving us life is to bring us there. Think about it! God's loves you so much that He doesn't want you to only live, struggle and die in this broken world and then be gone forever. No, you are made for a better world. But the only way to get there is through Jesus. (John 14:6)

Where do you see yourself? Where would you like to be? Do you want God to forgive your sins and give you a new life? You can experience this right now. You can pray a simple, honest prayer:

"Dear God! Thank you for loving me so much! I am so sorry that I lived without you. Thank you for sending Jesus to die for my sins and for raising him from the dead for me. I want to stop running away from you and return to you. I accept the free gift of salvation and want you to be the Lord of my life. Thank you that you have forgiven me and given me eternal life. Amen"

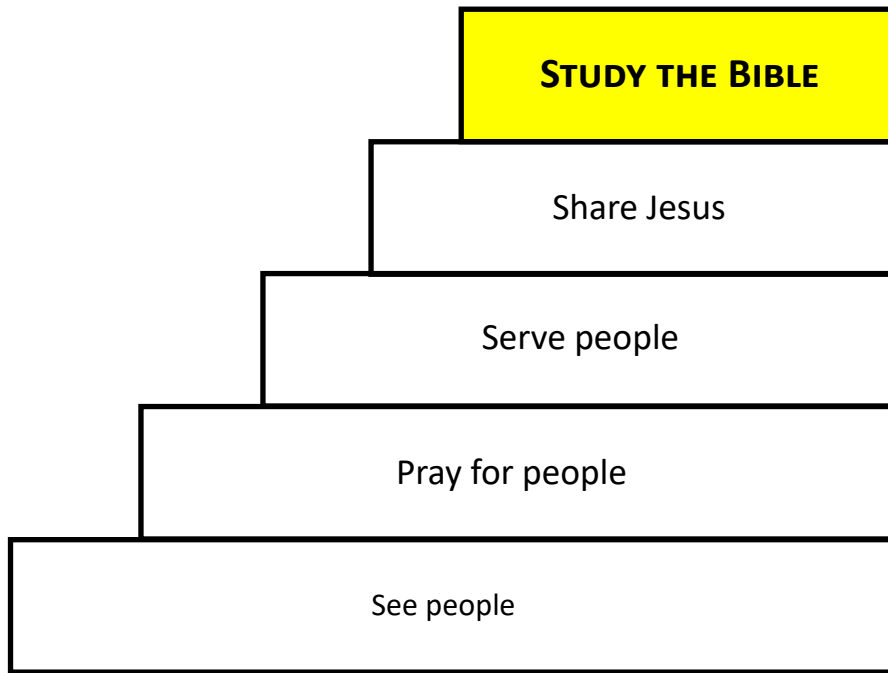
When you pray this simple prayer with an honest heart, you can be sure that God has forgiven you and given you eternal life. You are now a child of God. (1 John 5:11-13)

Tell Bible Stories

Another way to talk about spiritual things in an easily understandable way is to tell Bible stories. They show how people have experienced God and what faith looks like in practice. If you consciously pay attention, you will find opportunities to tell stories from the Bible. Different stories fit different life situations. Always choose the story that best fits the situation. Here are some examples:

- Crises and difficulties: "Jesus Calms the Storm " (Mark 4:35-41)
- Guilt: "Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic" (Mark 2:1-12)
- Grief and fear of death: "Jesus Raises the Son of the Widow of Nain" (Luke 7:11-17)
- Moral failure: "Jesus Forgives a Woman Caught in Adultery" (John 8:1-11)
- Failure: "Peter's Denial of Jesus" (Luke 22:54-62) and "The Appearance of Jesus to the Seven Disciples" (John 21:1-25)
- Doubt: "Jesus Appears to Doubting Thomas" (John 20:24-31)
- Disappointment: "The Road to Emmaus" (Luke 24:13-35)
- Worry: "Feeding the Five Thousand" (Mark 6:30-44)
- Fear of demons: "A Demon-Possessed Man Healed" (Mark 5:1-20)
- Feeling of not being good enough for God: "The Centurion" (Luke 7:1-10)
- Future: "Nebuchadnezzar's dream" (Daniel 2)

Notes/Questions



The fifth step is to read the Bible together with friends. Because it takes God's Word for faith to grow in us. So if someone has accepted Jesus as Savior or is open to learning more about Jesus, it is important to offer to read the Bible together. You can simply say:

"There are stories in the Bible that show how people met Jesus and were completely changed as a result. I would love to meet up with you to read these stories together. Because we can experience the same thing today! Shall we meet to discover these stories?"

Sometimes it is helpful to offer one meeting first so that people can experience what it is like to read the Bible with you. After the first story, you can then ask them if they would enjoy discovering more stories with you in this way.

Maybe you can't even imagine how you could read the Bible with people. There is a fascinatingly simple way you can learn how to do this. It's called Discovery Bible Study (DBS). It can be applied wherever people come together to study the Bible: in family worship, in Sabbath school, in discipleship groups, in caregroups, etc.

Discovery Bible Study (DBS)

Matthew 23:8

Hebrews 8:11

John 6:44,45

John 14:26

John 16:12

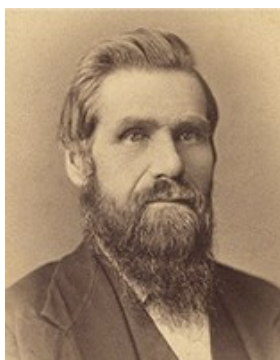
Colossians 3:16

Notes/Questions

How do people learn about God and the Bible?

The Rise of Discovery Bible Study in Adventism

Discovery Bible Study found its way into the Adventist Church at a camp meeting in 1883 in California. One night, when Ellen White had already retired to her tent, Stephen N. Haskell was preaching, when a severe storm hit the campground. The storm made so much noise that it seemed as if the service would have to be discontinued, because the people could not hear what the preacher said. It was then, that the Holy Spirit impressed Stephen Haskell to try another plan. Stepping down from the pulpit, he took his place in the centre of the tent and gathered the people close around him. Then, instead of continuing to preach to them, he gave out texts of Scripture, to be read by different persons in the congregation in response to questions he asked. We don't know anymore which Bible texts he used, but it could have gone something like this: Question: "How were the Holy Scriptures given?" Someone arose and read 2 Timothy 3:16 in a clear voice: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." In another section of the audience, another person stood up and read from 2 Peter 1:21: "...holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Then Elder Haskell asked the next question: "For what purpose were the Scriptures written?" Back came the reply in the words of Paul, "They are 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'" (2. Timothy 3:16, 17) All the people listened intently for the next question: "What is necessary on our part?" Someone arose and read: "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119:11) The truth presented in this manner made a deep impression on the minds of the people. It was evident that here was a new and very effective way of teaching the truth.



Notes/Questions

The very next day Elder Haskell and other ministers were called to meet Ellen White, and then the messenger of the Lord told them that this plan for Bible reading came from God. Stephen Haskell at once prepared question-and-answer Bible studies, which were called Bible readings, because the student did the reading, and the teacher asked the questions which the Bible texts answered. These Bible readings were printed right away in our church's periodicals. They simply consisted of Bible texts with appropriate questions and an occasional comment. The church members quickly embraced them and began to hold Bible readings with their friends and neighbours. They understood that they could give Bible studies in a fascinatingly simple and effective manner. As a result, a true mission movement was triggered in the Adventist church, which led to enormous growth. Ellen White encouraged the church members to fully embrace this new method of reading the Bible with friends. Today, the Bible reading method is most often called Discovery Bible Study. (Training Light Bearers for Laymen, p. 11-19)

Ellen White about Discovery Bible Study

“The minister should not feel that it is his duty to do all the talking and all the laboring and all the praying; he should educate helpers in every church. Let different ones take turns in leading the meetings, and in **giving Bible readings**; in so doing they will be calling into use the talents which God has given them, and at the same time be receiving a training as workers.” (Christian Service p. 69)

“House-to-house laborers are needed. The Lord calls for decided efforts to be put forth in places where the people know nothing of Bible truth. Singing and prayer and **Bible readings are needed in the homes of the people**. Now, just now, is the time to obey the commission, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Those who do this work must have a ready knowledge of the Scriptures. “It is written” is to be their weapon of defense.” (Christian Service, p. 114)

“**The plan of holding Bible readings was a heaven-born idea**. There are many, both men and women, who can engage in this branch of missionary labor. Workers may thus be developed who will become mighty men of God. By this means the Word of God has been given to thousands; and the workers are brought into personal contact with people of all nations and tongues. The Bible is brought into families, and its sacred truths come home to the conscience. Men are entreated to read, examine, and judge for themselves, and they must abide the responsibility of receiving or rejecting the divine enlightenment. God will not permit this precious work for Him to go unrewarded. He will crown with success every humble effort made in His name.” (Christian Service, p. 141)

“Among the members of our churches there should be more house-to-house labor, **in giving Bible readings** and distributing literature.” (Christian Service, p. 113)

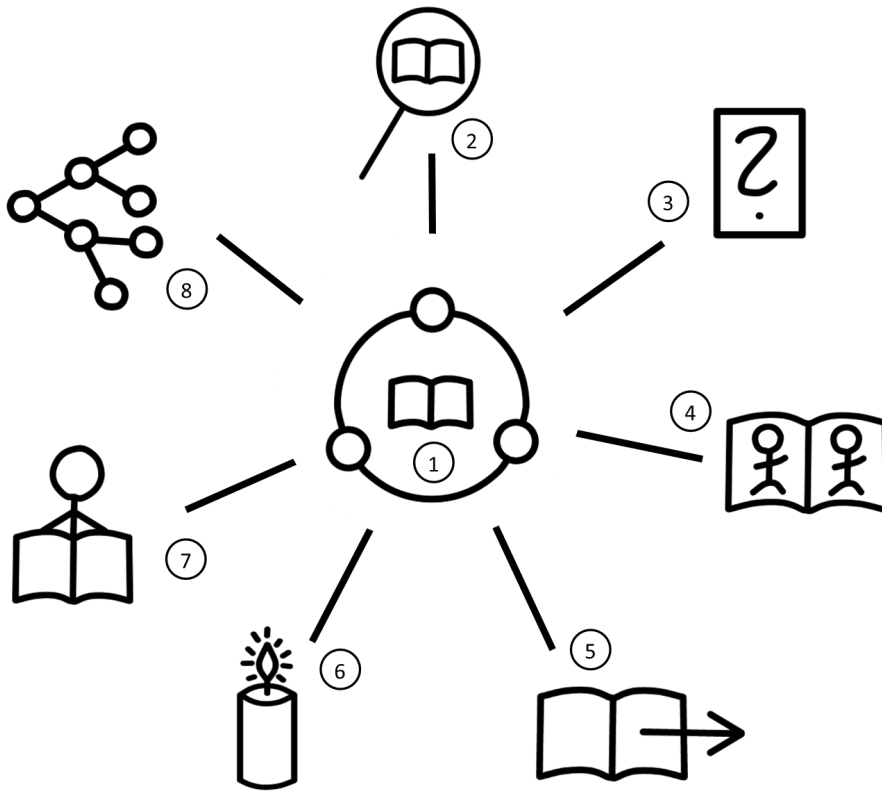
“Many will be called into the field to labor from house to house, **giving Bible readings**, and praying with those who are interested.” (Christian Service, p. 141)

“Many workers are to act their part, doing house-to-house work, and **giving Bible readings in families**.” (Christian Service, p. 141)

“Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. **Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings**, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. There should be schools of health, cooking schools, and classes in various lines of Christian help work. There should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people and others, uniting with them, will learn from their example. One example is worth more than many precepts.” (The Ministry of Healing, 148, 149)

Notes/Questions

How does Ellen White describe the importance and advantages of Bible readings?



1. Discovery Bible Study works best in **small groups**. The participants learn from each other, encourage each other, and remember better what they have learned. So whenever possible, study the Bible in small groups. That can take place in family worship, in caregroups, in sabbath school groups, in Bible studies, in short: wherever you can sit together with people to read a Bible passage.
2. The **focus** remains on Bible text. We try to observe every detail and want to get our answers from the text.
3. Instead of lecturing, the leader simply asks good **questions** to help his friends to discover for themselves what the Bible passage says. There are questions you can ask of every Bible passage.
4. The **stories of the Bible** are the best way to discover the message of the Bible and apply it personally, when people begin to learn about the Bible. In the stories we see how people experienced God, how God dealt with them and what God is like. We read about people's victories and failures and can identify with them. These stories encourage us to trust God. That's why it's best to use stories when we study the Bible with friends. Even in topical Bible studies that use other Bible passages Bible stories that highlight the topic should be included to make the Bible study easier to understand, remember and apply.
5. The Bible is not just about information to be learned but about truths to be obey. That's why it is important to emphasize the **practical**

Principles of Discovery Bible Study (cont.)

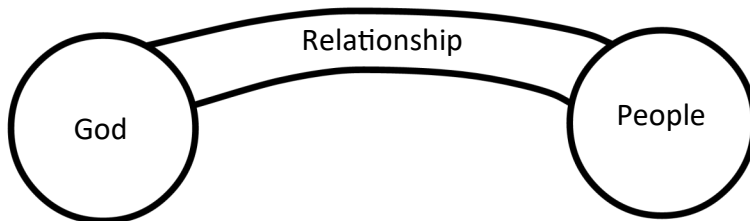
Notes/Questions

application and obedience of what we learn from the Bible.

6. Tell your friends that every blessing is meant to be shared. Therefore, encourage them to **share** with others what they have learned from the Bible and experienced with God.
7. Encourage your friends to **read the Bible in their own quiet time**. Give them the bible text for your next meeting in advance so they can already read the story before you meet again. Also, share how you are doing your personal quiet time with Jesus. Giving your friends a Bible reading plan is also a great help.
8. Always keep in mind that the goal is **multiplication**. As you lead such a small group, your responsibility is also to train your friends how to learn to read the Bible for themselves and to study the Bible with others in the same way as you study the Bible with them. So, as soon as possible let others lead the bible study in your group. This is training on the job and will help your friends to grow into leaders. That works only when your method is biblical, practical, and simple. Only then it can multiply.

Asking the Right Questions

There are some simple questions that can be asked of any Bible text. These questions reflect the main concern of the Bible. When we ask about these questions, we are not talking about some side issues, but about the heart of the Bible. The Bible is a story about God who reaches out to people in order to restore the broken relationship between them and Himself.



With these most important topics in mind, we can simply ask:

- What can we learn in this passage about **God (Jesus)**?
- What can we learn in this passage about **people**? (Oftentimes we find different persons or groups of people in the story. We can ask these question about every one of them.)
- What can we learn in this passage about **living with God**?
- When we see another topic mentioned in the Bible passage, we can ask: What can we learn about ...?

Other helpful questions:

- What stands out for you in that story/passage?
- Can you summarize what the passage says?
- Why? Why not?
- What does it mean?
- What is the main message of this passage?
- When you read this passage, which questions come to your mind?
- Asking the 5 W's and H Questions (Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?)

Notes/Questions

Exercise: Bible Study

And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. (Mark 3:1-6)

<u>Jesus</u>	<u>People</u> Man: Pharisees:
<u>Living with God</u>	<u>Personal Application</u>

Notes/Questions

Study this story about the healing on the Sabbath and make notes about your observations and questions!

Write down your answers about what this story say about ...

Advantages of Using Questions in Discovery Bible Study

- You don't give a monolog, but rather give your friends the chance to discover the answers for themselves. In this manner it is much more valuable for your friends.
- By asking good questions you encourage people to think for themselves.
- This kind of Bible study creates a real conversation, which helps you to understand your friends and see where they are spiritually.
- Your friends will learn and be encouraged to read the Bible for themselves.
- You confront your friends with God's Word and not with your opinion. They can see for themselves if it is biblical or not.
- The application questions challenge your friends and yourself to make a practical application of what was read.
- This method of giving Bible studies is very simple. Many church members could be trained in this method to read the Bible with friends.
- Since the answers to your questions can be quite different depending on the situation, each Bible study is unique and a special experience. Everyone, including yourself, will learn something new.

Notes/Questions

Why is asking questions such an effective way to read the Bible with friends?

Bible Study Series: Stories of Hope

No.	Story	Passage
1	Creation*	Genesis 1:1-2:4
2	Adam and Eve	Genesis 2:4-25
3	The Fall*	Genesis 3:1-24
4	Cain and Abel	Genesis 4:1-16
5	God Announces the Flood	Genesis 6:5-22
6	God's Promise to Noah	Genesis 8:20-22; 9:1-17
7	The Tower of Babel	Genesis 11:1-9
8	Abram's Calling*	Genesis 12:1-9
9	God's Covenant with Abram	Genesis 15:1-6; 17:1-8
10	Sarah and Abraham Promised a Son	Genesis 18:1-15
11	Abraham's Faith Tested*	Genesis 22:1-19
12	Joseph's Dreams	Genesis 37:1-36
13	Job's Faith Tested	Job 1:1-22
14	Job's Repentance and Restoration	Job 42:1-17
15	Israel's Suffering in Egypt*	Exodus 1:1-22
16	Birth and Early Life of Moses	Exodus 2:1-25
17	Moses at the Burning Bush*	Exodus 3:1-22; 4:1-17
18	The Passover Instituted*	Exodus 12:1-28
19	Crossing the Red Sea*	Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-31
20	Bread from Heaven*	Exodus 16:1-36
21	The Ten Commandments*	Exodus 19:1-25; 20:1-21
22	The Building of the Sanctuary*	Exodus 25:1-9; 31:1-11.18

23	The Day of Atonement	Leviticus 16:1-34
24	David and Goliath	1 Samuel 17:1-58
25	God's Covenant with David	2 Samuel 5:1-5; 7:1-29
26	Naaman's Leprosy Healed	2 Kings 5:1-27
27	The Coming Messiah*	Isaiah 7:13,14;9:1-6; 42:1-9
28	The Suffering Messiah*	Isaiah 52:13-53:12
29	Announcement of the Birth of Jesus*	Luke 1:26-38
30	Jesus is Born*	Luke 2:1-21
31	John the Baptist	Luke 4:1-18
32	Jesus is Baptized*	Matthew 3:13-17
33	The Temptation of Jesus*	Matthew 4:1-11
34	Jesus Calls his First Disciples*	Luke 5:1-11
35	Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic*	Mark 2:1-12
36	The Prodigal Son*	Luke 15:11-32
37	Nicodemus*	John 3:1-21
38	Jesus and the Samaritan Woman*	John 4:1-42
39	The Centurion	Luke 7:1-10
40	Jesus Raises the Son of the Widow of Nain	Luke 7:11-17
41	Salt and Light	Matthew 5:13-16
42	Jesus and the Law*	Matthew 5:17-20; 7:12-29
43	Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath*	Mark 2:23-28
44	Jesus Heals on a Sabbath*	Luke 13:10-17
45	Jesus on Prayer*	Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11
46	The Parable of the Sower	Matthew 13:1-9.18-23

47	A Demon-Possessed Man Healed	Mark 5:1-20
48	The Woman Caught in Adultery*	John 8:1-11
49	Jesus and the Woman Caught in Adultery*	John 8:1-11
50	A Man Born Blind Receives Sight	John 9:1-41
51	The Good Samaritan*	Luke 10:25-37
52	The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus*	John 11:1-57
53	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector	Luke 18:9-14
54	The Rich Young Ruler	Mark 10:17-31
55	Jesus Talks about the End Times*	Matthew 24:1-31
56	The Parable of the Ten Virgins*	Matthew 25:1-13
57	The Parable of the Talents*	Matthew 25:14-30
58	The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations	Matthew 25:31-46
59	Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet*	John 13:1-17
60	The Lord's Supper*	Matthew 26:17-30
61	Jesus in Gethsemane*	Matthew 26:36-46
62	Jesus is Betrayed and Faces Trial*	John 18:1-40
63	Jesus is Crucified*	Matthew 27:31-66
64	Jesus is Resurrected*	Matthew 28:1-15
65	The Road to Emmaus*	Luke 24:13-35
66	Jesus Ascends to Heaven*	Acts 1:1-14
67	Pentecost*	Acts 2:1-36
68	The Early Church*	Acts 2:37-47
69	The Resurrection of the Faithful*	1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:35-58
70	The New Earth*	Revelation 21:1-5; 22,1-5

* These stories are most important and should not be skipped.

Discovery Bible Study in Small Groups

Notes/Questions

Fellowship

- What are you thankful for? What are you struggling with?

Bible Study

- Read the passage together!
- Ask someone to retell the story in his/her own words! (When the passage is longer, it's better to read and retell it paragraph by paragraph.)
- If necessary, ask someone to read the passage again!
- What does this story tell us about **God (or Jesus)**?
- What does this story tell us about **people**?
- What does this story tell us **living with God**?
- Possibly: What does this story tell us about ...? (**another topic** it talks about)
- Other helpful questions are: What surprises you? What does ... mean? Why? Why not? When you read this passage, which questions come to your mind?
- How can we obey/apply what we have learned?

Mission

- With whom can we share what we have learned?
- How can we be a blessing for other people? Do you know anyone who needs help?
- With whom can we start new Bible study groups?

Pray

- Pray for people you want to help and for those you want to invite to join a discovery group.
- Pray that God will make you a blessing for others and use to share the Gospel in a winsome way.
- Pray for each other.

"The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches." (Christian Service, p. 122)