

Source

THE BIBLE IN COMMUNITY

LEADER'S GUIDE

Welcome

Welcome to Source: The Bible in Community. This curriculum has been designed to help small groups discuss the Bible in a way that leads to application. Each session is designed to incorporate the dynamics of community life as you explore the Bible together. The goal is to challenge group members toward personal life transformation—moving from where they currently are to where God intends them to be.

Reading the Bible

The first step is to make sure everyone in your group owns or has access to a Bible. The questions and text notes from the Source studies are designed to be used in conjunction with reading a section of the Bible. It is important to communicate that reading the notes is not a substitute for reading the actual text. We have designed Source based on the New International Version (NIV), but the study will work with any of the other modern translations of the Bible.

Preparation

Ideally, you and your group members will want to look over each week's session before meeting as a group. Each session includes notes to give you some cultural and literary background information for the particular passage. Reading the notes will give you the context of a passage and can help you understand what the author was communicating. After you read and think through the corresponding passages and notes, look over the discussion questions for that week and write down any responses or questions to share when participating in discussion with the rest of the group.

Participation

Hopefully, everyone in your group will have read through the Bible passages and answered the discussion questions. Some groups may wish to start by reviewing the past week's session and discussing questions which may have developed during the week. Other groups may begin by reading through the **Introduction** to start that week's discussion.

Discussion is one of the distinguishing factors of the Community Group environment. It is the element that allows people to engage with the topic by actively sharing their thoughts and feelings, while at the same time responding to the thoughts and feelings of others. These Source guides have been designed to stimulate meaningful dialogue among group members. In a typical Community Group environment, we would expect the questions to stimulate 45-55 minutes of discussion.

The first **Discussion Question** is usually designed as an icebreaker—a question that prompts responses from personal experiences that tie in with the themes of that week’s session. We’ve designed the discussion questions to build on each other, starting with the first question. Ideally, these questions progress from what culture says, to what God says, and then to what individuals believe and what action will be taken. There is a gradual progression that builds toward action.

The **Think About It** question is intended to challenge you and your group members to evaluate your beliefs on the topic. It seeks to address the way you think about something and to uncover the thought patterns that prompt our actions. The **What Will You Do** section serves to help group members come up with a specific action step for the upcoming week and beyond. Finally, **Changing Your Mind** includes a key verse from the session that you can encourage your group members to reflect upon or memorize during the following week.

Over the Next Several Weeks

Source studies provide opportunities for groups to focus on the biblical text within the context of community. In the next three to six sessions, you and your group will grow in your understanding of the Bible as you uncover the truths found throughout Scripture. As you study the biblical characters of Abraham and Jonah in the Old Testament, or listen to the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, or follow along with Paul on his missionary journeys, you may begin to identify a connection between those stories and your own story. Moreover, the application of these biblical principles may look different for each person in the group. In the end, we hope that the time spent in study and discussion will lead to personal life transformation—a life drawn into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

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