

Small Group Guide | Leader's Manual

Introduction: Somewhere in your personal journey, you were honest with yourself and realized that you were in desperate need of a savior. And maybe for some of ya'll you tried to find a savior in materialism, maybe in creation (money, sex, abilities), maybe even in religion. And when all those crashed and burned you gave up and placed your hope, trust, and faith in Jesus Christ to save you. And from that point on you were not able to recover. And at that moment where you invited Christ into your life he has taken you to places you never wanted to go personally...but you trusted him and he has never misled you.

This is another step that Jesus takes us all on. We realize that this earth does not circle around us and spending time, money, and energy all on us is, in the end, quite worthless. Jesus' love changes our hearts and we give back. And in this way...we give back by pointing others to Christ and "equipping the saints". This is your job...this is your role. You are biblically commanded to equip the saints for ministry. It doesn't matter if you are not a pastor or have a seminary degree...your biblical role (which God will hold you accountable) is to train and disciple those who come after you. But here's the best part...this command isn't given to destroy you...rather it's to give you life.

I have been graciously given many disciples in my lifetime and it has truly been one of the most humbling, frustrating, and rewarding experiences in my life. They teach me more about my selfishness, pride, and constantly challenge me to press all the more into God. I have prepared for you what I think is crucial for discipleship. This isn't anything special...but only what I've gathered from Scripture and experience.

Content

- I. Curriculum: 3 categories for you to teach from. I think if you had a limited time on earth with a person, these are what they must learn...crucial. I have given you what they are, why it is important, what you should do with it and how to go about it, and lastly, what resources are out there for you to prepare yourself
- II. Pillars: Outside of curriculum, discipleship is teaching another "live like I live". And so I gave you some pointers to be able to do so.

Biblical Hermeneutics & Exegesis

What it is: Biblical hermeneutics is basically learning how to study the bible. It's kind of like learning a language but instead you're learning how to read and study the Scriptures. What you would do is teach how things fit together and why it is important. Teach that context is crucial in reading scripture...and not just immediate context, but the whole of scripture is important. Understand that Scripture interprets scripture and you don't proof-text (taking one verse and building a theology on it).

Biblical exegesis means to "draw out" meaning from the Scripture. What we usually like to do is to have an idea and use the bible to justify it. Instead Biblical exegesis teaches us how to read and examine the scriptures for what they are and let the bible speak for itself. This takes a lot of work and patience because of the depth that scripture has.

What purpose: Spiritual development and growth always accompanies has faith and truth as its foundations. This step is crucial in a person's journey. How do you learn about the Gospel, the nature of God, the beauties and joys of life, if you don't know scripture? Everything almost has to start here because this jump starts and continues till the end. This is the thing that everyone talks about but nobody does or knows how to do. Let us start here and become accustomed to it.

What to do: 1. Look BIG: Learn how to read the whole of the passage. 2. Always ask questions when you're reading. "Why did this happen? What did they feel? Who was in the crowd? What would I do if I were there?" 3. Research & investigate. You're going to need to understand the context of the passage: historical, cultural, and biblical. 4. Look SMALL: Learn how to find the details in the wording. What tense is the verb? Why did the author repeat this phrase? 5. Find the main idea. The author has a main idea in mind.

What to get: How the Read the Bible for All its Worth: Gordon Fee (**Beginner: Hermeneutics**)
Grasping God's Word: J. Scott Duvall (**Beginner: Hermeneutics**)
Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Graeme Goldsworthy (**Advanced: Hermeneutics**)
Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary (**Beginner: Commentary**)
New International Commentary: Old & New Testament (**Advanced: Commentary**)
On the Old Testament (A Book You'll Actually Read): Mark Driscoll (**Beginner: Reference**)
On the New Testament (A Book You'll Actually Read): Mark Driscoll (**Beginner: Reference**)
Backgrounds of Early Christianity: Everett Ferguson (**Intermediate: Reference**)
www.monergism.com
www.zhubert.com: Online Greek Bible study tool
www.ntgateway.com
www.blueletterbible.org

English Standard Version Study Bible: Crossway

Systematic Theology

What it is: Taking the doctrines of the bible and putting them into a category. According to Grudem, “collecting and understanding all the relevant passages in the Bible on various topics and then summarizing their teachings clearly so that we know what to believe about each topic”

What purpose: Understanding systematic theology helps students of scripture put doctrines into practice. Also, this forces and pushes us to read more than we ever would if this was just some kind of curriculum. It works as a good gateway into larger and more in-depth topics.

What to do: Most systematic theology books are quite intimidating. However, they are designed to accommodate your individual study style. At the start of each chapter the author has purposefully categorized each subject into its place. Typically, you would want to start at the beginning and finish at the end. A personal recommendation would be to hit the essentials: 1. The Bible – how did we get it; the sufficiency & inerrancy of it; 2. God – attributes, existence, character; 3. Man – creation, sin, nature; 4. Jesus & the Holy Spirit – person of Christ, atonement, resurrection and ascension, works of the Holy Spirit; 5. Redemption; 6. Church – baptism, government, Lord’s supper; 7. Future – judgment and end times.

What to get: Christian Beliefs: Wayne Grudem (Beginner)
 Systematic Theology: Wayne Grudem (Intermediate)
 A Theology for the Church: Daniel Akin (Advanced)
 Christian Theology: Millard Erickson (Intermediate)
 Institutes of the Christian Religion: John Calvin (Advanced)
 Basic Christianity: John Stott (Beginner)
 Concise Theology: J.I. Packer (Intermediate)
 Knowing God: J.I. Packer (Advanced)
 Orthodoxy: GK Chesterton (Advanced)
 www.desiringgod.com: John Piper
 www.gty.org: John MacArthur
 www.monergism.com

Culture, Philosophy, and Worldviews

What it is: Culture, philosophy, and worldviews cover a pretty broad topic when it comes to teaching. Culture deals more so with what is going on today and in the world – the political climate, music, movie, and cyber industry. Philosophy is trying to understand how we get our answers – asking the “why” questions. Worldviews deal with understanding how people think and act the way they do. What do the major world religions teach? What about the cults? What about the occults?

What purpose: We aren’t born into a bubble. There is a world that surrounds us and not just the world, but their thoughts and ideologies. The reason why understanding culture, philosophy, and worldviews is crucial is because more often than not we bump up against these things and we’re left wondering “how am I supposed to respond?” Equip your students with enough training so they’re able to see the vanity of empty religion and vain conceit.

What to do: Start with typical, everyday observations and see what kind of questions come up. What is going on in the world and those will tend to bring you paths to discover. The important thing is to research and be a questioner of life. I would do an evaluation of all major religions and go find experts in their field and see what they have to say. I would take their thoughts and line them up with Jesus and his word and see what’s going on with it.

What to get: Vintage Jesus: Mark Driscoll
Confessions of a Reformation Rev.: Mark Driscoll
Worldliness: C.J. Mahaney
What Jesus Demands from the World: John Piper
When Skeptics Ask: Norman Geisler
The Reason for God: Timothy Keller
The Case for Faith: Lee Strobel
The Language of God: Francis Collins
Jesus Freaks: D.C. Talk
The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict: Josh McDowell
Kingdom of the Cults & Kingdom of the Occult: Walter Martin
Mere Christianity: C.S. Lewis

The Pillars: Teaching, training, and mentoring goes far beyond just basic curriculum. Paul exhorts the church in Ephesus to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” (Eph. 4:12). You do that by investing yourself into those whom you are teaching, training, and mentoring. And let me say that this is NOT an easy thing to do...why? Because deep down inside, we’re all selfish and we don’t want to invest time and patience into other people. But understand that Christ has saved you from death and that his blood covers and redeems you. We rejoice and are humbled by this fact and what comes out of it is us chasing our joy through Christ. When we understand this...we start saying “I gotta do anything and everything that might give me more of Jesus...anything and everything that might get me closer to Jesus”. This is why we disciple others...because we’ve had our palates invigorated by the taste of Jesus and we want others to get a taste of Him. It’s not like you teach on this once in awhile (although for more clarification you might want to)...but these pillars are things you constantly model with your life and constantly teach your disciple.

In your relationships with others you’re going to need to focus on these things always:

1. **Spiritual Formation:** (Prayer, Fasting, Worship, Devotional, Sabbath, and Enjoyment) These aren’t a list of rules that you have to follow. God is NOT impressed or frustrated if you do or don’t do these things. Rather, you eventually find your joy when you do these things. You take time off to rest and Sabbath because it’s the way God has designed the universe...and when we do that our soul feels right and we enjoy Jesus.
2. **Community:** Understand that this Christian journey is NOT meant to be lived out alone. Yes your faith is your faith and you gotta own up to it...but the journey is meant to be lived in community. In community you’re help accountable to others. In community people who love you call you out on things that ultimately rob you of joy.
3. **Service:** Again...because our hearts are drastically transformed by the cross of Christ this is just another thing that flows out of us. We understand that by serving, we are indeed serving Jesus. Who needs service? Jesus pretty much tells us...anyone who is in need we serve.
4. **Discipleship:** I believe that there are three relationships that are key in growth – up, side, and down. Up – always have someone mentoring you...someone who has done life longer and has wisdom into life that might help you grow. Side – always have someone who can keep you accountable for your life. Someone you can be completely honest and open with. Down – always have someone you’re teaching and showing how to do life...showing them to watch out for this or to learn that.

5. Missions: understand that God has placed you where you are for a reason. That your mission field is right where God has you now. Start to see the world and the places you go as a mission field. There are always opportunities to minister.