

Goal

To train new and current Bible study group leaders to prepare to teach a Bible study group using the resources provided in the *Explore the Bible Group Box*.

Preparation

- Purchase the *Explore the Bible Group Box*, one per leader.
- Familiarize yourself with each resource provided in the group box.
- Create a display of various boxes wrapped in gift paper.
- Make copies of “Ways to Using the Explore the Bible Leader Pack Items” article.
- Marker board and markers (or large sheet of paper and markers)

Conference Plan

Arrival

As the participants arrive, call attention to the gift-wrapped boxes on display. Invite each participant to share about the most helpful gift they ever received. Encourage them to share if the gift came with everything needed to make the gift useful (batteries, manuals, assembled, etc). After most have arrived, ask: *Did you know how to use that gift before you received it? How did you learn to use it well?*

Explain that the purpose of this meeting is help the participants know how to use the tools provided so they can more effectively lead a Bible study group using Explore the Bible.

Distribute *Explore the Bible Group Boxes* to each attendee. Direct them to open the box and remove the *QuickStart Guide* laying on top.

Defining the Items

Using the photos on the *QuickStart Guide*, quickly identify the items included in the box.

- 10 *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guides* – tool that helps the group members do personal Bible study prior to the group time
- 1 *Explore the Bible Leader Guide* – Contains commentary and group plans for you to prepare to lead the group
- 1 *Biblical Illustrator* – provides biblical backgrounds to the passages being studied with insightful articles and photos
- 1 *Explore the Bible QuickSource* – provides the leader with extra questions, an extra object lesson, and a dig deeper feature
- 1 *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* – posters we can use to enhance our teaching, plus a CD ROM with all kinds of helps to make teaching easier for you.

Distribute

Point out step one on the *QuickSource Guide* (1. Distribute). Display a *Personal Study Guide* and explain the importance of everyone in the group having a copy. Remind them that the *Personal Study Guide* helps them be a better shepherd to the people in their group. This tool makes it possible for the group members to do personal study prior to the group time so they can participate more easily.

State: *The Personal Study Guide also gives you a reason to personally contact everyone on your group ministry list. You can deliver the resource to them the week prior to the first lesson, removing some of the potential awkwardness of making a personal contact.*

Invite participants to share ways of encouraging group members to study each week prior to the group time.

Study

Direct the participants to locate the *Leader Guide* and remove it from the box. Point them to page 13 of the *Leader Guide*. Highlight the session 1 title, session summary statement, and the core passage on page 13.

Call attention to Step 2 on the *QuickStart Guide* (2. Study) and read the first statement (Use your Bible and the *Leader Guide* commentary to study the Bible passage selected for each session.)

Remind the participants to start their preparation each week by studying the Bible. Highlight the Read and Study statements on page 13 of the *Leader Guide*. Explain that on the first page of each session in the *Leader Guide* they will find a Read and Study suggestion that is specific for that lesson. Note that for session 1, an introductory video can be watched online for free, pointing to the web address provided in the Read section.

Share the following steps:

1. Read the core passage and the verses surrounding the passage in your Bible.
2. Make notes as you read, listing on a piece of paper people, places, things, and questions you have while reading.
3. Read the commentary provided in the *Leader Guide* to identify the people, places, and things and to discover answers to the questions you listed. Record insights gained.

Call attention to the second statement under study on the *QuickStart Guide* (Review article(s) in *Biblical Illustrator* that relate to each session. Note information you want to share with your group.) Lead participants to remove their copy of *Biblical Illustrator* from the Group Box and locate the Table of Contents in the magazine. Highlight the articles that directly relate to Explore the Bible. Lead them to review the article "It Happened on Mt. Sinai" since that article gives background to session 1.

Ask: *How might you use information from Biblical Illustrator to better lead your group?*

Note: Call attention to the WordSearch flyer included in the Group Box. Encourage participants to take advantage of the free offer to Explore the Bible teachers for access to selected online Bible study tools.

Say: *You are now ready to move to the next step.*

Prepare

Call for a volunteer to identify step 3 and the first statement under that step on their copy of the *QuickStart Guide*. (3. Prepare / Pray for God's direction.)

Discuss the importance of praying for God's direction when preparing. Share the following statement: you are not the only teacher in the room. Allow participants to respond to the statement. Emphasize that the Holy Spirit will help us as we lead the group time but we need to be in tune with Him for that to happen.

Lead participants to locate pages 20-22 in the *Leader Guide*. Identify these pages as the Group Plans. Highlight the headings Focus Attention, Explore the Text, and Summarize and Challenge. Explain that the group plans are organized around these heading segments.

Suggest that they follow these steps to create their own group plan:

1. Review the group plans provided.
2. Consider the More Ideas on page 22. (Note that these are organized in the same segments as the core group plans)
3. Consider the free Extra ideas online (state: One current event is identified and ideas are given for using that event to begin and close the group time. The web address can be found on the bottom right corner to the front page of the *QuickStart Guide* or in the Plan section on page 13 of the *Leader Guide*).

Call attention to the third statement under Prepare on the *QuickStart Guide* (Look in *QuickSource* for additional questions and ideas for leading the group time.) Guide the participants to remove their copy of *QuickSource* from the Group Box and to open it to page 11. Highlight the features: core passage text (CSB); Key words (identify and clarify key words); Talking Points (outline used by the writers when creating these lessons); Discussion Plan (additional questions following the same group time segments); Object Lesson (a way of using a common item during the group time); and Dig Deeper (adds depth to a finer point in the lesson).

Lead the group to discuss different ways they might use the features found in *QuickSource*. Encourage them to identify where they might use that feature in the group plans found in the *Leader Guide*.

Call attention to the Music Suggestion on page 22 of the *Leader Guide*. Explain that you may want to use that in the group time or with several groups who meet together prior to moving to their smaller group time.

4. Adjust your group plan so it fits the needs of your group....always asking God for direction.
5. Gather the posters and other items suggested for this session from the *Leader Pack* and display them wherever your group meets. (the third statement under Prepare on the *QuickStart Guide*).

Call attention to the Gather list on page 13 of the *Leader Guide*. Explain that a list of the items needed to lead the group time is provided for every session.

Lead participants to remove the *Leader Pack* from the Group Box. Call for a volunteer to call out the items listed under Gather while the other participants remove those items from their *Leader Pack*.

Distribute copies of the "Ways to Using the Explore the Bible Leader Pack Items" article (at the end of these plans). Guide participants to work with a partner to review the article and identify three ways they believe they will most likely use the Pack Items. Invite volunteers to share. Allow participants to share additional ideas.

Invite a volunteer to locate the CD-ROM included in the *Leader Pack*. Explain that the Pack items are included on the CD-ROM in PDF format for those wishing to project them on a wall or screen. Point out that also on the CD-ROM are editable DOC files of the Leader Guide Commentary and Group Plans.

Lead

Read step 4 on the QuickStart Guide (Lead your group's Bible study). On a marker board, list the actions printed under the heading (arrive early, greet people, and start on time). Lead the group to add other actions to the list (arrange the room, review your notes one last time, make a bathroom stop). If not suggested, emphasize the importance of prayer for the group in the moments leading up to the group time.

State: Every group time will require adjustments as you lead it. Emphasize the importance of using the group plan they created, but feeling free to deviate from the plan when needed.

Tip: Nametags are a great way of helping everyone in the group know each other and it helps guests as well. Handwritten nametags work better than printed ones.

Tip: Taking prayer requests at the beginning of the group time can consume much of the group time. Passing around a prayer sheet for recording requests or asking for requests at the end of the group time protects the Bible study time without minimizing personal prayer.

Afterward

Invite a volunteer to read the step 5 actions listed on the QuickStart Guide (5. Afterward - Evaluate the group time, noting what went well and what needs improvement. Act on the "Practice" suggestions on the last page of the session in the *Leader Guide*. Do these things again for each session.) Point them to the Practice ideas on page 22 of the Leader Guide for clarification. Explain that these ideas will help them be a better manager of their group.

Scheduling

On the marker board, write Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Identify the day of the week when the Bible study groups meet (most likely on Sunday) by writing "Lead" on that day on the marker board. Emphasize the value of studying and preparing early in the week. Explain that preparing early makes it possible for God to use the lesson in your life through the week, for you to refine the group plans, and removes the pressure of preparing in a short time. Challenge them to complete the Study actions by Monday and the Prepare actions by Wednesday. Write Study and Prepare on Monday and Wednesday respectively. Add Afterwards on Sunday. Characterize Distribute as an action that is ongoing.

Dismissal

Invite volunteers to share questions about the resources and the process for studying and preparing. If you are unable to answer a question, promise to find the answer and supply it to everyone present.

Direct participants to pair up and pray for each other, that God will use them to disciple others through teaching a Bible study group.

Ways of Using the Explore the Bible Leader Pack Items

The *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* includes maps, timelines, outlines, charts, key verses, and other items designed to be used in the course of a quarter. There are multiple ways of using a pack item, with some uses being more obvious than others. Here's a list of THIRTEEN different ways of using pack items.

Decorate the room. Place selected items throughout the room as a way of changing up the walls every three months.

Read all the content. When directed in the Group Plans, read aloud the content included on the item. In some cases, the only place this content is found is on the pack item.

Highlight one section, word, or phrase. Sometimes the only thing you really need to read aloud or call attention to is one piece of information on an item. Highlight just that one piece of information and move on.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud. To involve the group, invite a volunteer to read the content on the item or one section of the content included.

Pass around the group. Some items can be passed from group member to group member during an activity to help them complete the activity.

Display in a non-conventional way. Sometimes displaying an item on the floor in the center of the group circle, on the floor where most will enter, or on the ceiling can serve as a way to add some spice to the meeting space and some intrigue. You may choose to do this just to get the group's attention or to do something different. Be sure you call attention to the content that relates to the session before handing the item off.

Display at the exit. Some items have more information than others and can be displayed near the exit so group members can read the remaining information as they exit. You would highlight the piece of information needed during the session and then direct them to review the rest of the information on their way out.

Display over the coffee and donuts table. This approach works similar to displaying the item near the exit, but you are doing so at a natural place for congregating. The poster serves as a means of whetting their spiritual appetite as they address their physical appetites.

Display at the entrance. Some items announce a study or give the group clues as to what will be studied. These kinds of items can be placed outside the entrance or near the door.

Write on it. Some items are designed to be written on. In fact, any item can be written on to highlight or remind the group of a key insight or where they are in the study. Flip chart markers tend to work best; just make sure you let the ink dry.

Write on the back. The Group Plans may include an idea that calls for you to write on a large sheet of paper. The back of a pack item will work well. Use flip chart markers since they tend to bleed less than other markers.

To more easily identify something in the Personal Study Guide. Some items include information also found in the Personal Study Guide (for example, the map on the inside back cover and the Bible book outline printed in the first few pages of the PSG). Using these types of items along with the Personal Study Guide allows you to identify locations and outline points so group members can easily find the same information in the resource they hold in their hands.

Make copies for distribution. Some items are designed to be distributed in mass to the group. These items include a permission to photocopy statement on the bottom corner.

The *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* is available in a print or digital format. The digital format tends to be more limited in use but can be used to accomplish many of the same things listed above (for example, if projecting a digital item using a PDF reader on your computer, you can use the comments feature to "write" on the item).