

Taking The Scary out of Group Bible Conversations - Kambui

Here at Journey we believe there is no better resource for sparking healthy, life-changing, and amazing group discussions than the Bible itself. But for many, group Bible study can be awkward, intimidating, and downright scary! In this breakout we will explore best practices for engaging with scripture in ways that you and your group will love and benefit from.

Why do we want our groups using the Bible as the text/resource?

- We believe the Bible contains the Living Word of God.
- The Bible has a track record of inspiring life-change and supporting the pursuit of a growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- The Bible never loses relevance; through it God speaks to everyone in every age.
- Through the Bible God speaks freshly to our current position regardless of how many times we have read its contents.
- The Bible is a treasure given by God for us to use to help us know his character, to know ourselves, and to know this world and our Adversary. But most importantly to know his love for us.
- Everyone can enjoy the Bible and gain value from it; not just theologically trained professionals.

What makes group Bible discussions scary?

- Pressure to already know
- Pressure to agree with the interpretations of others
- Overly dominant contributors; know-it-alls
- When it becomes like a classroom with a self-appointed teacher. When there is not much room for conversation
- Fear of my issues being exposed in front of others. Fear of judgement
- As a leader, I may not feel comfortable leading what I don't quite understand myself. I Don't want people to look to me for answers I cannot provide

Our groups are not "Bible Studies" but we want them to frequently include discussion-based Bible exploration.

- In a bible exploration there isn't a need for an expert in the group meeting. You can all be exploring to learn, not to showcase what you know.
- There are many resources to help you gain a better understanding of the context. This is a great way to promote participation. Invite different group members to prepare to share at the next meeting a "closer look" at a word or phrase that gave the group some difficulty during the discussion.

When leading a group Bible discussion posture is key to setting the right atmosphere in the environment. What is the posture of a leader?

- **Humble** leaders understand they are on a Journey, they are not experts handing out truth.
- **Teachable** leaders are actively pursuing ways to grow and learn.
- **Curious** leaders continuously prioritize getting to know the people around them better.
- **Intentional** leaders consistently ask the questions “what is God up to in the lives of my group members?”, and “What can I do to encourage their growth?”

What can I do to make the conversation better?

- Know the personalities in your group. Some group members are internal processors and need a few moments to consider a thing before speaking on it. Others will jump right in every time with a thought or story. The Leader’s job is to create space for everyone to engage not just the fastest to the draw.
- Help your group members prepare for the discussion by forecasting. Give them an opportunity to read and process some ahead of the discussion.
- Use a predictable discussion guide. (5 questions doc... an example of this can be found on insidejourneyrva.com)
- Encourage the pursuit of understanding. Introduces tools and pathways to increased understanding; make it ok to not already know. When group members know where to find answers many of them will be excited to pursue them and come back and share their findings.
- Pray. Pray humbly. And thank God for being our guide, our teacher, our present Source. No other person gets credit for that.

What parts of the Bible should we explore together in group?

- You want the environment to encourage discussion. Not every part of the Bible will be as engaging as others in a group environment.
- Know your group. What stage of their relationship with Jesus are they? What would be most helpful for them to engage with at this stage?
- Topical or Expository? (There is no pressure to discuss every chapter of a Bible book in the group setting.)
- Historical books (e.g. Genesis, Exodus, Kings, Judges, Acts); Poetic books (e.g. Psalms, Proverbs); the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John); The Apostle’s letters (e.g. Romans; James, Ephesians, Galatians; Philippians; Philemon)

Theopraxis - Practical Theological Training For Leaders: Coming soon. Available to all Group Leaders.