

LEADER HELPS

Using the Daily Discipleship Guide to Lead a Bible Study Group

The *Daily Discipleship Guide* was created for the purpose of building disciples. As the leader of the group, you play a major role. You can build disciples through the group Bible study time, encouraging daily Bible engagement, facilitating smaller groups, and apprenticing future leaders.

Building Disciples through the Group Time

Leading the group Bible study time is the most direct way you will build disciples. Each week, you will introduce the group to the Bible passage, examine the key message in that passage, challenge the group to act on that passage, and encourage them to reflect more deeply in the week that follows. Doing so requires preparation. Here is a way to prepare that gives you adequate time to study the lesson and will make the session fresh in your own life.

Early in the Week (Sunday or Monday)

- Ask God to open your mind and heart to His Word as you study.
- Read the Bible passage for the coming session, and review Understand the Context and Key Words.
- If a QR code is available in the Leader Helps, scan it to gain additional information on what's found in the passage.

Through the Week

- Ask God to use the Daily Explorations to help you understand and apply the lesson to your life.
- Complete the Daily Exploration activities in the days leading up to the group time.
- Meet with a group of three to four other teachers to share and pray for each other. Use Talk It Out to start your conversation.
- Pay careful attention to the Apply the Text sections for that session, looking for ways you need to apply the Bible in your own life.
- Start gathering items you may use in the group time.

The Day before Group Study Time

- Ask God to direct the creation of a group plan.
- Review the group plan in the back of the *Daily Discipleship Guide*.
- Review the first four pages of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* for that session and the commentary provided in the Leader Helps for that session.
- Review your responses and notes from the completed Daily Explorations.
- Listen to the weekly podcast at goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training.
- Adjust the plan to fit the needs of your group.
Note: You can create custom plans using the DOC file provided in the Digital Download for the Leader Pack—it's the same content printed in the Leader Helps.
- Consult *QuickSource* for additional insights and ideas.
- Review the weekly Adult Extra idea on the Explore the Bible blog (goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras).
- Consult the *Explore the Bible Adult Commentary* for additional insight.
- Pull needed posters from the *Explore the Bible: Leader Pack* (or create your own using Visual Ideas on pages 160–161).
- Make sure you have all your resources gathered including extra copies of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* for guests.

The Day of the Group Study Time

- Arrive early. The group time begins when the first person arrives so make sure that is you.
- Pray for the study and the group.
- Adjust the room as needed.
- Lead the study, adjusting as you go.

After the Group Study Time

- Consider the After the Session idea at the end of the group plans.
- Contact the group, encouraging them to complete the Daily Exploration section and sharing gathered prayer requests and other appropriate information.
- Record insights gained about teaching, individuals in the group, and Scripture.
- Pray for specific needs of people in the group.
- Do it all again, asking God to open you mind and heart to His Word this week.

Building Disciples by Encouraging Daily Bible Engagement

Here are some ways to encourage your group to engage with the Bible daily.

- **Visit them.** Deliver a copy of the Daily Discipleship Guide to every person in your group.
- **Ask them.** That seems simple, but the simple is not always easy. Learn to comfortably ask if group members are studying the Bible. You may want to use a statement instead of a question, such as, “I hope you took a look at the Day 3 activity for this week.” It’s a question disguised as a statement, so it’s not as threatening.
- **Tell them.** Let them know that you are using the Daily Exploration section as well. Set the standard.
- **Show them.** Point to the Daily Exploration section at the conclusion of the group study. From time to time, demonstrate how to use the section, guiding them through Day 1 as a group.
- **Invite them.** Call on pre-enlisted volunteers to share with the group what they are learning and how they are using the Daily Exploration section.

As teachers, we have taken on the responsibility of encouraging everyone on our ministry list (class roll, membership list, etc.) to engage daily in Bible study. We can’t make them do it, but we can provide them with a tool and encourage them to use it.

Building Disciples through Smaller Groups

Talk It Out is designed for smaller groups of three to four people to meet weekly. The goal of the smaller groups is simple: holding ourselves and others accountable for living a Christ-honoring life.

Create smaller groups:

- Explain the importance of the smaller groups, emphasizing the goal.
 - Allow the group to form their own initial groups of three by gender (men's smaller groups and women's smaller groups). This tends to work better than assigning groups.
 - Allow the smaller groups to add one person from the names on the ministry list of people who are not present.
 - You may want to encourage the groups to form based on neighborhoods or proximity to work.
 - Make sure some of the groups have extra space for new people and guests.
 - As the Bible study group grows, you may need to reorganize the smaller groups, but try not to regroup too often so that trust can be built within each smaller group.
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Support the smaller groups:

- Provide opportunities for the members of the smaller groups to pray with each other during the group time.
 - Make study assignments in the weekly group time based on the smaller groups.
 - Pre-enlist a volunteer to share with the larger group how participation in the smaller group is impacting his or her life.
 - Periodically organize fellowship events built around the smaller groups. The smaller groups could be the basis for teams during the event.
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Be in a smaller group:

- Meet with two or three other Bible study leaders as part of your weekly preparation.
- Be part of a smaller group within your class.
- Host a smaller group for guests and new group members.

Building Disciples by Apprenticing Other Leaders

Starting new groups is critical to the life of your church and the lives of the individuals in your group. People in your group need to be challenged to take on a greater role in your church. Providing the opportunity to do so helps them grow and removes the largest barrier to starting new Bible study groups—finding a leader. You can make a difference in the growth of individuals and in the future growth of your church by apprenticing potential group leaders. Here’s how you can use the *Daily Discipleship Guide* to make this happen.

- **STEP 1:** Prior to group time, ask a potential leader to follow along in the Leader Helps for that session as you lead the group. Tell him or her to note what you did and what you adjusted. You’re just coaching your apprentice to use the book he or she has in a different way.
- **STEP 2:** After that group experience, spend time with the group member going over what you did and how you adjusted the leader material for the group.
- **STEP 3:** Invite him or her to do this again in a few weeks.
- **STEP 4:** Ask him or her to lead a group time or part of one using the suggestions in the Leader Helps for that session. You may be away that week, or you can simply observe as a group member. Offer to help him or her prepare if needed.
- **STEP 5:** As your apprentice gains confidence, allow him or her to teach more in the near future.
- **STEP 6:** As a need for a new group surfaces, prepare to move on to lead the new group, with the apprentice becoming the leader of the current group (which tends to work best), or commission the apprentice and a few others from the group to start a new group.
- **STEP 7:** Do it all again.

Not everyone in the group will become a Bible study leader. For those who do, you can become a mentor to potential leaders, extending your teaching ministry and demonstrating discipleship.

Introduced!

Session 1 • Mark 1:1-13



ENGAGE

PRIOR TO THE SESSION: Conduct an online search to discover customs for meeting new people in various countries. (*Examples: shaking hands, kissing on the cheek, touching noses, and so forth*)

ASK: What is the most unusual way you have been introduced to someone? Invite adults to discuss customs for making introductions. Share information from your research concerning ways in which various cultures introduce one another.

STATE: *Every culture has a way of making introductions because those initial connections mark the beginning point of a relationship.*

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud the first paragraph on page 13 and discuss how introductions impact the nature of a relationship.

CONTEXTUALIZE: Use **Pack Item 8** (*Handout: Background of Mark's Gospel*), **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Mark Time Line*), and **Pack Item 2** (*Outline of Mark*) to provide an overview of Mark's Gospel. Discuss Mark's identity, the date of his Gospel, its original audience, its purpose, and its major themes. Using *Understand the Context* (p. 13),

emphasize that many scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was the first one written and that his audience primarily consisted of Gentile Christians.

TRANSITION: *Let's look closer at how Mark introduced Jesus to the initial readers of his Gospel.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Mark 1:1-3.

Direct adults to work in pairs to identify key words or phrases. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to report on their conversations. Lead a brief discussion on what they chose and why those words and phrases seemed significant.

OUTLINE: Point out the significance of these words: "beginning" (the starting point of Jesus's work); "gospel" (good news, used by the Romans to describe a great announcement); and "Son of God" (emphasizes Christ's deity).



Son of God

Mark 1:1 declares Jesus to be the Son of God. Learn more about Mark's use of the term "Son of God" in this Gospel.

- **(1:1)** There are three distinct “beginnings” in the Bible. Genesis 1:1 points us to the initiation of all creation. John’s Gospel (1:1) emphasizes the pre-existence and deity of the Word (Jesus). And in Mark 1:1, readers find the beginning of the gospel, the opening act in the life and ministry of God’s Son.
- **(1:1)** The word *gospel* comes from the Greek “good news.” Mark laid the foundation for what his Gospel was about—the good news that Jesus Christ would bring redemption and salvation for all humanity. The term originally meant any good news, but ultimately it came to represent the story of Christ’s ministry and sacrifice as He provided salvation to the world.

EXPLAIN: *Mark did not mince words in establishing the gospel. A great event took place when the Messiah, the Son of God, came to earth.*

ASK: If Mark’s audience was primarily Gentile, why did he refer to an Old Testament prophecy to introduce John the Baptist?

DISCUSS: Point out that while Mark’s original readers weren’t Jewish, seeing Jesus as the promised Messiah could bolster their faith and help them embrace Him as the Savior of the world.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Mark 1:4-8.

SUMMARIZE: Direct the group to briefly restate Mark’s description of John.

ASK: What was the focus of John’s message?

EXPLAIN: *John’s message emphasized the coming Messiah. He never described himself or what he had to offer anyone. John was humble about his ministry. He only mentioned the One who was coming after him. The focus of his ministry was on Jesus, the Messiah.*

- **(1:7)** John consistently placed his emphasis on Jesus, not on himself. While many religious leaders of the day built themselves up in the eyes of the people, John did just the opposite. Tying or untying the laces on sandals would have been a servant’s job. Rabbis taught that a master or teacher could ask their servant or pupil to do just about anything except tying or untying shoes. John indicated that he was not even worthy to perform this humblest act of service for the Messiah.

ASK: How did John’s message set the stage for the earthly ministry of Jesus? (p. 15)

TRANSITION: *Mark did not provide a lot of extra details in his Gospel, so each verse is full of important information. After a brief description of John’s ministry, Mark introduced Jesus’s earthly ministry.*

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Mark 1:9-13, as the rest of the group listens for details Mark shared about Jesus. *(Possible answers: Came from Nazareth in Galilee, baptized in the Jordan by John, and so forth)*

ASK: What was different about Jesus's baptism than John's other baptisms? Why is that important for us to understand?

EXPLAIN: Draw attention to the fact that Mark said Jesus came up out of the water, which describes a baptism by immersion. Emphasize that baptism is not required for salvation, but it serves as an act of obedience, an outward symbol of inward devotion to Christ. Encourage a few volunteers to share what they remember about their baptisms. Share that you are available to talk with any adult who has questions about being baptized.

DISCUSS: Read verses 10-11 again aloud. Point out that this is a time when all three members of the Trinity were revealed in Scripture. Ask: **What was God the Father's response to Jesus's baptism?** Affirm that the Father took pleasure in the Son's baptism. Note that this was another way Mark validated Jesus's claim as Messiah and Savior.

DESCRIBE: Use information below to explain the nature of Jesus's temptation. Point out that we are often most vulnerable to temptation after a close experience with God. Emphasize that Jesus withstood Satan's temptations perfectly.

- **(1:12-13)** Jesus's period of temptation lasted forty days, a period of time often associated with key events in the Scriptures (see Ex. 24:18; 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8; Acts 1:3). Some see this as representative of Israel's forty years in the wilderness (Deut. 8:2). If this is correct, then we can rejoice in the fact that where

they failed, Jesus succeeded. While the fact of Jesus's triumph is an example for us upon which we can draw, this is but a derived application of it. By not yielding to temptation, Jesus demonstrated His sufficiency as our Savior and as the Son of God.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week's Bible passage:

- *Believers can know with confidence that Jesus is the Messiah.*
- *Believers can point others to Jesus as the Son of God.*
- *Believers find joy in acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God.*

ASK: In what ways does believing in Jesus as the Son of God bring joy to your life?

CHALLENGE: Encourage the group to use the **Daily Exploration** on pages 17-19 to go deeper into God's Word.

PRAY: Close in prayer, asking God to help you keep your focus on Jesus this week.

AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the session by reflecting on how knowing Jesus as Messiah brings joy to your life. Contact the group by email or text, encouraging them to express their joy in Jesus this week.