

Suggestions for leading a small group study using “The Story of Jesus”

“The Story of Jesus Christ” can be read individually or studied in a group. One approach would be to read one or two chapters of the book beforehand and then gather together to read the related verses from the Bible and discuss them. This study guide includes some possible lesson plans and discussion questions. If your group is really motivated you could give them the verses of the Bible and questions ahead of time for preparation. Also try to look at the lesson plan and chapters a few days before your group, so that God has a chance to prepare your own heart and thoughts ahead of time.

Here are a few more suggestions to help with your group:

There are six elements that are very important to include in a small group. You can use the consonants in the acrostic “Carp Blog” to remember them. (I don’t know if a carp has every written a blog! But oh well!)

Christ

A

Relationships

Prayer

Bible

Love

O

Group Image

- **Christ:** He is the Person behind this whole study. He is “the Way, the Truth and the Life”. “No one comes to the Father except through Him”. Try not to get off on to may spiritual “bunny trails”. If people have questions, they bring up not related to Jesus, answer them briefly or tell them you can talk about them after the lesson individually. Jesus needs to be at the center of these lessons.

- **Relationships:** Work to not only teach a lesson but help your group members develop a relationship with you and with each other. Remember that Jesus lives in you in the person of the Holy Spirit. They are getting to know Jesus not only through the lessons, but through you. Take time to share about your own life: your interests, your struggles, your family and your relationship with the Lord. Also take time to get to know the life and faith of your group members.

Have a time for fellowship before you start your lesson. Ask how their week is going. One question you can ask is what was a high moment and a low moment in the last week? This allows people to understand that we don't have to just pretend that everything is going alright, but can share our difficulties with each other.

- **Prayer:** The saying "When we work, we work, when we pray, God works" is very true. You may be leading the lesson, but it is the Holy Spirit who will open their spiritual eyes to see that this is true and encourage them to respond. Pray for your lesson and for your small group members. We are in a battle, so also pray that distractions will be kept to a minimum, that the hearts of people will be open to the truth about Jesus and that people will not be kept from attending your meeting.
- **Bible:** Help your group feel more and more comfortable reading and studying God's Word. Read some of the passages related to each chapter, but don't feel you have to read them all if your group is young or your time limited. For unbelievers or new believers, you may want to limit the Bible study part to about 30 minutes to avoid spiritual "indigestion" where their eyes gloss over and they can't take any more. Use a translation of the Bible that they understand. In the back of the book are helpful hints for helping them start to read the Bible on their own.
- **Love:** Jesus said that people will know that we are His disciples by our love, and the apostle Paul said if a person doesn't love, they are just a "clanging cymbal". Love is at the center of all we do. There are different ways to show love including sincere compliments, handshakes and hugs, showing an interest in others' lives, using people names, welcoming first timers, helping people with their problems, etc, etc. Our groups need to be known as places where people are loved.

- **Group image:** Try to keep the meetings interesting and something that people look forward to each time. The meetings will be more interesting with questions for the group to answer: the leader doesn't just do all the talking. Visual aids also help keep people's attention during the lesson. You might want to include a game or quiz for fun. Refreshments are also good for helping people relax. The image we set in our group, lesson and relationships will have an influence on what people think about the Bible and a relationship with Christ. If the lessons are really dry and boring, they may think that a relationship with Jesus will be the same. The group atmosphere will also have an influence on whether they would invite a friend to the group.

We see all six of these elements in the ministry of Jesus and if we will include them, our group will be a place where people want to come and will meet God.

May God bless you as you introduce people to the Master!

These six elements are based on "Foundations for ministry" from the organization "Sonlife" and on the ministry of Jesus.

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