

# HOW TO LEAD A SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

## A Workshop series for Coaches of Small Discussion Groups

Six short training sessions of approximately 4 hours each for Coaches. A most effective way to produce maximum results is to conduct the workshops on a bi-weekly basis for about 3-months. To qualify as participants all MUST have led at least 2-small group sessions prior to attending. To qualify their local Discussion Group must consist of minimum 4 and maximum 12 members. The ideal group size is 6 to 8 participants. Following each Workshop the training must be applied by each coach immediately at his local discussion group prior to the next Workshop.

The purpose of this Workshop training is to help you, the COACH/group leader in the leading of a small group. Not in teaching or lecturing, but in leading your group. The understanding and application of this content will make for a more meaningful involvement of each group member and contribute to his overall development as a spiritual leader.

Is there anybody that can do better than Jesus? Jesus could only handle eleven. He tried twelve, but he was only successful with eleven.

The small group can be one of the most dynamic means for stimulation in our spiritual life. The coming together in such a way enables us to share with one another the workings of God in our lives through personal study of the Word and in our everyday experiences.

It is important to remember that learning to lead a small group is something which takes time and practice. Some of you may already feel confident and enjoy leading, while others of you may be experiencing fear, frustration, or inadequacy about leading. Hopefully these workshops will help to meet whatever need you have and that each of you will experience much joy and fulfillment in leading a small group.

(Why we feel a small group is so much better. Five ladies drinking some tea and talking about babies is a small group too, but that is not what we had in mind.)

The Workshops offer five areas for student coaches to understand and use.

1. The need for training in small group leadership, and be motivated in your involvement.
2. Basic principles in leading a small group and handling problem areas.
3. How to prepare questions and evaluate their effectiveness.
4. How to evaluate the effectiveness of the leader and the group.
5. The value and workings of a small group.

### Workshop leader's NOTES:

The Workshop leader should print and pass out these complete Workshop lessons to each student coach.

The Workshop leader each time provides a SAMPLE lesson by leading a complete "Discovery Bible Study" - DBS- cover all 16 points accurately. This will be approximately a 2-hour discussion time. (For DBS see New Life for Churches Lecture series 12.EV3)

## WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Workshop TITLES	SESSION CONTENTS
1. Workshop #1 The Small Group	Description of a Small Group Advantages & Limitations Personal Needs Met
2. Workshop #2 Group Dynamics	Principles in Leading Principles in Handling Problem Areas

3. Workshop #3  
The Preparation of Questions

Three Types of Prepared Questions  
Evaluating Your Questions

4. Workshop #4  
Evaluation

Evaluation Questions for- Group  
Evaluation – the Coach  
Spiritual Benefits

5. Workshop #5  
Hands on Practice

Preparing Questions  
Group Dynamic Principles

6. Workshop #6  
A Resource of Questions:

Introductory Questions  
Observation Questions  
Interpretation Questions  
Application Questions  
Miscellaneous Questions

# WORKSHOP ONE

## THE SMALL GROUP

- Workshop Objectives:**
1. To describe what a small group discussion is.
  2. To show the value of the small group.
  3. To identify personal needs met through the small group.

**Workshop leader's NOTES:**

(1) Close this session by leading a discussion on “**Practical interaction with student coaches**” points ‘A’ and ‘B’.

*(2) Lead a complete “Discovery Bible Study” SAMPLE lesson with your group – cover all 16 points accurately. This will be approximately a 2-hour discussion time.*

(3) Follow-up by phone with the Practical Assignment for this Workshop.

## I. WHAT IS THE DESCRIPTION OF A SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION?

The basic small group format which will be studied is the group discussion.

### A. What it is:

By definition a small group discussion is a planned conversation, between three or more persons on a selected topic, with leadership. Now notice that there are four ingredients here:

**1. A planned conversation.**

Somebody had to plan it. Guess who had to plan the conversation? The coach.

**2. Between three or more people.**

So, it is not a private conversation between two people while the group looks on.

**3. On a selected topic.**

Example: You are talking about Goliath, and some brother says, “Yeah, but what about John Mark?” “Oh, very interesting. Maybe we can talk about it after the lesson, because right now we are talking about Goliath.”

**4. With leadership.**

In other words, somebody is guiding this discussion. This discussion is going somewhere. It has a goal. It has a purpose.



**6-8**

**5. With 6-8 participants**

The optimum number in a group, for quality learning, is about six or eight people. Quality is the crucial thing. If you have a larger number, it is very difficult to have the desired involvement from each person. When you have a bigger group, there are usually one or more people who are just sitting there, not listening or participating. People are just sitting in a corner and daydreaming, or doing their homework, or doing something other than participating.

**6. The group is seated in a circle**

It is important that the group is seated in a circular form. Even in our conferences we have the group seated in a semi-circle, which means the leader can see the students much better. The students are much closer to the coach. The students can understand much better. Psychologically it has been discovered that when people sit close like this, they learn a lot more than when somebody stands on a platform in a long hall. Sitting in a circular form enables each person to be better understood in **what** they say, and **how** they say it. You speak much more with your facial expressions and body language

than you do with your words. Therefore, it is important that the students can see each other so they can hear and participate better.

## B. What it is not:

### 1. **A lecture**

The leader talks the whole time and the members in the group just listen and maybe ask a few questions.

### 2. **A conversation between the leader and one student.**

In other words, all of the students should be involved in it if it is to be a group discussion. If only two people out of the group are talking, and the rest are listening or starting their own independent conversations, it is not a discussion. Example of a discussion: One student has a question. Another student gives an answer. A third student says, "Oh I do not agree. I think it is a little bit different." That is a discussion.

### 3. **Several one-to-one conversations between the leader and some students.**

A leader begins a separate conversation with or two of the students. A few others sit and listen but dare not take part. That is not a discussion because each is doing something different. The leader has excluded the rest of the group from the discussion.

## II. THE VALUE OF THE SMALL GROUP

### A. Advantages

#### 1. **It encourages participation from all members.**

That is the secret. If one student does not participate, he will likely quit the group after a while.

#### 2. **It allows for a good exchange of ideas and convictions.**

Students learn from each other.

#### 3. **It develops leadership skills.**

Not everybody can stand on the platform of a big church. However, if for one year you lead a small group, you will learn many leadership skills. Since there are many small groups, there are many leaders. Only one preacher for a thousand people in some churches; but for the same church of 1-thousand you would need a hundred small group leaders.

#### 4. **It provides opportunity to share leadership.**

Slowly your good students can begin to participate in being leaders.

#### 5. **It stimulates the sharing of new ideas and convictions.**

#### 6. **It encourages honesty in real life issues from those involved. This gives the group an opportunity for personal involvement in the concerns of others in the group and outside of the group.**



### B. Of course there are also some limitations:

#### 1. **It involves only a limited number of people (4-12).**

#### 2. **It requires good preparation by all members.**

For a Sunday morning church service, only 2 or 3 Brothers and the pastor have to prepare a good sermon. Everybody else prepares nothing. However, in the small group every student must be talking, so they all must prepare. If one student did not prepare anything, my question is, "Why not? Why did you not motivate him? Why did you neglect that task?" Jesus talked about a leader who had a hundred people. Ninety-nine did well. Did the leader say, "This is wonderful. I am successful"? No. Jesus said the leader went out in the night looking for this one person. All night he looked, "Where can I find that

person? How can I help that person? He is hurting. He is wounded.” He picked that person up, and carried him as a lamb on his shoulders.

**3. It covers a limited amount of material.**

You do not do a lot of work in one weekly session.

**4. It requires skilled leadership.**

That is why we have these lectures. This coming month you will need to read these lectures every week if you really want to benefit from this material. Then for the next six months you read each lecture once a month. After that you read each lecture once a quarter. In the future you need to read each lecture at least once a year. Ten years from now I can still measure you, and I can still discover if you are reading these lectures once a year or not. They are lifetime material which you need to review and review and review. That is how you will be blessed.

**5. Many people are not ready to share freely in a group.**

They are reluctant; therefore you need to be patient, and train them.

### III. PERSONAL NEEDS MET THROUGH THE SMALL GROUP

#### A. Expressed and Unexpressed Needs

The atmosphere of a small group helps to meet many of our expressed and unexpressed needs, some of which would not be met otherwise. Example: Not many people will come to you and say, “I just had an argument with my wife. Could you help me a little bit?” People have many unexpressed needs. They do not tell you about them, but you need to discover them. You as a leader need to know them. Only then can you really help your students.

**1. The need for discipline in personal study of Scripture.**

All of us need to have somebody checking up on us once in a while. Your whole life long, satan will try to stop you reading the Bible on a daily basis. So we need to help each other with this discipline. With just a little question, “How was your Bible reading yesterday?” or “This morning I had a wonderful time in the Bible,” and I am giving a short testimony. This will make the other students whisper, “I hope he does not ask me because I did not read my Bible.”

**2. The need to learn correctly.**

All of us when we read the Bible find many things that we do not understand correctly. The Bible says, “*For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.*” (Proverbs 11:14). The small group provides counselors for each other. Other students are a checkpoint for our understanding of the text.

**3. The need for accountability in personal application of Scripture.**

Students have exams. Coaches meet with deacons. Coaches meet with pastors. Pastors meet with the city leaders. People need accountability. It helps people to be more successful in life, especially in how you are using and applying the Bible in your life. Example: I have made two discoveries in Ukraine. Most older believers knew their Bible much, much better than I did. But very few knew how to apply it in their daily lives. I have given several exams, and the students always knew much more about the Bible than I did, but they knew very little about how to use it.

**4. The need to learn from others as applied Scripture is seen in their lives.**

The Bible says, “*All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility*” (1 Peter 5:5. NKJV). Nobody has all the gifts. Nobody knows everything. In a small group, somebody can ask a question, and one time this person has a good answer, and next week somebody else has a good answer.

**5. The need to learn to speak freely.**

This has been one of the secrets of the small group. People have gone to church for twenty years or maybe longer. Every Sunday they heated up a pew, and then they would go home again. By next Sunday the pew is cold, so they have to go back and reheat it. “What are you doing for Jesus, brother?” “Well, I am heating up my seat at church.” Then they go into a small group, and they learn to talk about Jesus.

They learn to talk about spiritual things. They always wanted to do that, but they never thought they could. So, they go home and say, "Honey, guess what? I can talk about Jesus! I can intelligently talk about the Holy Spirit." People have gone home after learning how to do this, and they have talked to their colleagues in the factory and many other places. That is your work. That is what you need to do: train your students to talk about Jesus. That is the whole secret of being a good leader.

**6. The need to have others care for them on a personal level.**

With prayer, with tokens of affection and care, and sometimes with real practical help.

## B. Desire for Fellowship

The desire for fellowship is basic to our humanness. God created us that way. That is why we get married. That is why we have children. That is why we have church services. God made us with the desire for fellowship. Acts 2:42 tells us how this need was met in the early church, through praying together, eating together, studying the Word together, and fellowshiping together. *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."* (Acts 2:42). The small group provides an excellent opportunity for all of this to take place. What happens on Sunday morning in a church? You sit here. They sit over there. You never see each other. You do not talk to each other. You just go in and sit down. If somebody else sits in your place, you raise your eyebrow. "I am supposed to heat up this place." There is no fellowship going on. People go home and say, "Oh, I did not know that their child was sick." They were sitting right behind them, but they did not find out anything about them.



However, in a small group you learn to care for each other and pray for each other. This deepening will be in proportion to his understanding and his experiencing the fact that he is a member of the body of Christ, and that every other student is a part also.

## C. Desire to be a Part of Something

When nothing happens, everyone is discouraged. Let us say you have a poor church where nothing is happening, but the youth group is very good. What happens? Everyone wants to be in the youth group. "Why can I not be in the youth group, I am only thirty-five." "I want to be in the youth group too, I am already ten years old." Everyone likes to be a part of something and to feel that he is contributing to the accomplishing of a certain task. This is what you need to create as a leader: a small group of which people want to be part. Being a part of a successful group encourages self-worth in a person. It also gives him a sense of laboring together with others.

# IV. PRACTICAL INTERACTION WITH STUDENT COACHES

What do you need for a good discussion? You need to arrange the group in a circle. Example: I went to a group (in a church) once, where they were all sitting in a row, behind each other. Somebody else was doing part of the lesson, and they did the lesson just like that. Then they asked me to do something. I said, "I am so glad to be here, would you all please stand up." They all stood up. "Now please pick up your pews, and set them in a circle. Thank you. Now I am even happier to be here." That is the first thing I do: that is, make people sit in a circle.

Here are some good questions, for leading a discussion with a new group:

- A. Have you had any experiences in the past with small groups?
- B. What personal needs do you think will be met through our workshop small group?
- C. See Workshop six 1 "Introductory Questions" for additional questions.

# WORKSHOP TWO

## GROUP DYNAMICS

- Workshop Objectives:**
1. To identify the principles in leading a small group.
  2. To identify principles in handling problem areas.

**Workshop Leader's NOTES:**

- (1) Open the session with the **"Leader's & student coaches NOTE"**
- (2) Close this session with leading a discussion on **"Practical interaction with student coaches"** points (A) & (B).
- (3) Lead a complete "Discovery Bible Study" SAMPLE lesson with your group – cover all 16 points accurately. This will be approximately a 2-hour discussion time.
- (4) Follow-up by phone with the Practical Assignment for this Workshop.

**Workshop leader's & student coaches NOTE**

There is always a problem somewhere. Do you know of any place where there is no problem? Any village where there is no problem? I want to live there. Any country with no problem? Any job where there is no problem? There is always some difficulty. So, what are you going to do about it? You know that there are going to be problems. If you know there are going to be problems, then you can also prepare for the problems. You know what happens when you do not prepare? Your problem comes and you say, "Oh, what will I do? I did not think it would be like that." But now you know there are going to be problems, and you can prepare for them, then when your problem comes you will be able to say, "Oh, that problem. I have got an answer!" That is the benefit of preparing.

## I. PRINCIPLES OF LEADING A SMALL GROUP

### A. Try not to answer your own question

Many leaders ask a question and then they answer it themselves. Or they express their opinion instead of asking the group for their opinions. Try not to make a contribution which you can get from the group through questions. The leader comes to his group and says, "Good evening! It was cold today, was it not!?" What can the student say? What you need to do is, you go into your group and say, "Good evening! What do you think of this weather?" Hey, now they have to give you an answer. You see? All of a sudden they are involved. That is what you have to do all the time, with all of your questions. Make the group do the work.



### B. Rephrase your questions if necessary

For instance, you may say, "What was so bad about Goliath? And the people wonder, "Oh, what was it, what was it?" So you say, "Let me rephrase that. Was the problem with Goliath his size, that he was big, or was it something else?" By doing this people can better understand what you mean. Some people have difficulty in answering your questions. Rephrasing them will make them more easily answered. This will also help to eliminate failure on the part of the individual.

### C. Respect the importance of each individual

You may ask a question, and somebody gives you a bit of a poor answer. And you say, "I thought you would say that." That student may not stay long in your group. Each student has his own thoughts and ideas. Give people the opportunity to think that their idea is worthwhile. Your goal is to **know** what he thinks, not what you think he should think. I get that all the time. When I ask a question and I am the big important foreigner,

do people give me an honest answer? No! They think, "What would he like to hear? I think he wants to hear this, so that is what I will tell him." Many times I find out the facts are very different. So be careful. Many students will want to please you because you are the coach.

## D. Allow time for thought questions

If you ask a deep spiritual question, and nobody answers you right away, do not panic and say, "Oh, what is wrong? You do not understand me? You do not know what I mean?" They just need some time to think about it. Here is what you do:

1. **Ask the question**
2. **Pause briefly. Allow thirty seconds or even a minute for people to think about it.**
3. **Call on someone for an answer.**
4. **If there seems to be doubt about the meaning of the question, rephrase it.**

## E. Encourage discussion

1. **Ask questions to stimulate discussion.**

When you ask one main question of somebody and he has given an answer, then you ask someone else, "What do you think? Do you agree with that?" Then you ask several other follow up questions to get other people involved.

2. **Show approval. "Thank you for that answer". "I appreciate your contribution".**
3. **Be ready to comment on answers.**

However, do not interrupt a good discussion that is proceeding without your help. For example, there is a good discussion going, people are really talking. They are raising their voices, they are active, and you say, (clapping your hands, clap, clap) "Brothers, let me say something." No. Everybody knows you have been to a workshop. Everybody knows that you are smart. That is not important. The important thing is that they learn, and learn to express their ideas.



## F. Take advantage of controversy

Do not panic when two people do not agree. The job of the leader is to guide thought rather than stifle it. "Oh, thank you for that wonderful idea. It is so interesting that this person here has a complete different idea from the brother over there. Now let us see, what do you think? Do you agree with either of them?" Getting two different ideas or opinions going is an excellent way to stimulate the interest and thoughts of all members of the group. That is what a good leader encourages. He aims to guide the students' thoughts rather than stifle them. When differences arise, help your students to find a solution based on the passage in the Bible which you are studying. In this way the truth will be purified and the truth will emerge. If the passage is not specific, several actions can be taken.

1. **Other passages of the Bible known to the group may provide the answer.**
2. **Further study at home may lead to decisive information.**

In other words, sometimes when we first consider an issue, certain points or opinions seem real good, but after further study and discussion, one point shows up as the best.

3. **Disagreement may be irresolvable and so members should be encouraged to "agree to disagree," having come to an understanding of one another's viewpoint.**

So it is not important that every single evening all group members go home agreeing on everything that was talked about. You simply have to remember that every group member has had very different experiences in life. Some of them are very advanced in their faith, and others are just starting--they are babies in their faith. So the secret is to "agree to disagree."

I had a discussion with a pastor about a doctrine, and he said, "In the final analysis, would you not agree that it is this way?" And I said, "Well, in the total, final analysis, no." But his church is sending us money.

We do not agree on a major doctrine, but he still believes in me as a good Christian doing a good job in Ukraine, and he encourages his church to help me.

## G. Review Periodically

At points where natural breaks occur, ask summary questions. Tell your students, "We have already talked about this, we have learned this, and we have talked about that. Now we need to begin to think about this next part." So, you review some of the points that have been talked about. If you do not do that, sometimes the people get lost and wonder, "First we were talking about that. Now we are talking about this. What are we doing?"

Reviewing clarifies the topic by encouraging the group to think through the previous progression and pinpoint the main ideas. When natural breaks in the discussion occur, ask questions like: "Could you tell us what we have just talked about please?" "Ok, that was a good answer. There was one more point I want to hear. Who can remember one more point that he did not mention?" "Oh, thank you, exactly, yes."

This break time / summary time is also a good place for the leader to ask the members if they have any questions. "Before we go on to the next section, has anyone got a question about this? ..... Ok, if there are no questions then we will go on to the next section. Ok, there is one question; yes sure, what is it?" So you finish up one section and 'clear the way' to go on to the next section.

## H. Emphasize the Positive

### 1. *No group member should ever be told bluntly his answer is wrong.*

I did not say to this man, "How come you did not list all the points?" I said, "Good, thank you, it was just right." Then I said, "There was one more point I would like to hear." No group member should ever be told bluntly his answer is wrong. If someone gives you an answer that is totally wrong, you say, "That is interesting. Where did you find that?" "Well I read it in some of the readings from Lenin." "Oh, I understand." Do not turn to somebody else for the answer. If you want to follow-up that same answer, you would say to that person, "Oh that was interesting. What about sharing an idea from the Bible?"

### 2. *Quite often a certain part of an answer can be commented upon.*

You should do this. You can ask the group for an opinion, if there is a real basis for it in the text of the Bible or in your book. Another way to comment is, "That is an interesting point," or "Does anybody else want to share their thoughts."

### 3. *Wrong theology does not need to be approved.*

However, it also does not need to be criticized. So you do not have to say, "Oh, I agree with you." You may simply say, "I know how you could think this about this verse," or "Thank you for that answer. Soon we will discuss some other ideas about this." You do not say, "Bother, no, no, no, that is not correct, no! The Adventists believe that but we do not believe that!" Do not do that. The way in which you handle wrong answers will make or break future group responses.

### 4. *Make sure the members' answers to the leader are clear.*

So you say, "If I understand you correctly, you mean this..... Am I correct?" Then the student will say yes or no, and maybe he will rephrase it. Good questions about his answers can help clarify the meaning.

### 5. *Remember to raise the truth to the same level as the untruth that is being told.*

Then allow the Holy Spirit to lead that person to the truth. It is much better for a student to not agree with the truth and go home, than for you to force him to believe the way you think he should. The Holy Spirit is the teacher. Usually during the week the Holy Spirit will talk to him more about it, and he will come back next week probably agreeing with the truth.

## I. Carefully Challenge Superficial Answers

Insist on a modern Bible phrasing. When people quote Bible verses, always insist that they say it in their own modern language, not exactly from the old language. You will find that it will be much more meaningful for the whole group. Ask the group to explain some of the Bible terms they are using, because there are many terms that are almost without meaning these days. Example: I was with a group and the word

'prostitute' came up. And they would not use that word; they only wanted to use the special Bible term for that. They just did not want to face the reality. If they used this Bible term, "Ok, it was bad, but, but ..."

Here is another way to get a better answer from a student: "How would you explain this to someone from another culture, or someone who is illiterate?" or "How would you explain this to a child?" We like to talk about God being omnipotent and omniscient. Do you know what it is? I do not know what it is. I just know that His brain is bigger than mine. In other words, "Could you give an illustration of what you mean?" If they can give you an illustration, or a little story, it helps to clarify what they are thinking.

## J. Occasional Use of Background Information

This can be very helpful in stimulating discussion, but it should be kept brief. You can explain that it was on a mountain, or that there were many trees. For instance, Jesus told a story of a man who went down to Jericho. The reason was that Jerusalem was on top of the mountain and Jericho was in the valley of the Jordan. Sometimes it can be helpful to give people this information, but keep it brief.

## K. Larger groups

If the group is larger (ten or more), use questions that students can discuss among themselves in smaller groups of two or three persons. Later have them share the results of their discussions in the smaller group.

# II. PRINCIPLES IN HANDLING PROBLEM AREAS



### A. Encourage the new and shy members of your group with simple questions.

These questions should invite the expression of opinion or choice. "What did you think of this chapter we are studying?" They cannot give you a wrong answer. They may say, "I liked it," or "I found it difficult," or "I did not understand everything." Anything they are going to say is a good answer. Be appreciative of every contribution. Always say, "Thank you," or "That is fine," or "I appreciate that," or "That is interesting," or something else.

### B. Gently restrain the too talkative members.

"Ok, George, would you give us a real short answer please. Very, very short, just a few words." "Ok, thank you, thank you, that is enough. I think you have given us the main idea already." Or, "Ok, George, let us ask a few of these other people first, then if you still have some ideas, you can share them." Restrain him by addressing questions to others by name. Like "Tanya please or Dan." There just are some people who have a real musical voice, and they like to hear their own voice. It may also be good to talk with him after the study.

### C. Ask the uninstructed questions of fact from the text.

Ask questions about facts given in the text which are not asked in the book. Do this until confidence is established enough for students to give opinions and impressions. For instance, students maybe know of other facts from another part of the Bible or from another part of the book which have not been considered in this lesson.

### D. Try to help the 'tangent chaser' to pursue the purpose of the study.

In other words, you are having a discussion about Paul, and someone says, "But what about Paul's assistant Luke, was he really a doctor or not?" Or, "What about John Mark, was he really a weak assistant?" Instead

of talking about the apostle Paul, he always leads you to talk about something else. Encourage him to bring up his private, genuine concerns after the study. “Was Gamaliel really a Christian or was he not?” “Oh, that is an interesting question, but right now I do not think we have time for that. Let us talk about it after the lesson, ok?” Then it is up to him to come and talk about it after the lesson, or not. Otherwise, he will talk about everything in every session.

### E. Question irrelevant contributions

Ask the student who makes irrelevant contributions, “Where did you find this in our lesson?” And he says, “Well I found it in another chapter” or somewhere else. So, you say, “Well that is interesting, but let us go back to our lesson. Ok?” You bring him back to your lesson topic. There are many ways you can urge him to get his ideas from the lesson or passage the group is studying.

### F. Help the member who approaches the passage, looking for problems.

Help that person to see that we learn more by concentrating on what we do know and what exists, than by concentrating on what is not. Difficulties that remain unresolved can be studied separately from the group, or by the group if desired. You cannot discuss all the issues people bring up today. Sometimes you have to tell people, “I am sorry we do not have time to study that today. It will have to be another day. It is good, it is interesting, but we cannot do that today.” Or “The problem that you have mentioned is a difficult one which cannot be answered in our lesson time today. Let us discuss afterwards some possible alternatives in handling this problem.”



### G. Show the ‘well informed’ member the value of keeping to this passage.

Show the ‘well informed’ member who frequently digresses by quoting other parts of scripture, the value of keeping to this passage. He is simply an advanced student. He knows the Bible better than some other students, so you may simply say to him, “Yes, that is good information” or “That could be helpful, and you and I could spend a long time talking about that. But for our group tonight, I think we will just stick to what we find in this lesson tonight.” Of course, there is always an exception, when his contribution fits very closely to the discussion and is helpful in clarifying a difficulty.

You need to know what lessons are coming in the future and their content so you can look further than your students. You may say to somebody, or the whole group, “In two weeks we will have a special lesson about that. So, for now, let us see if we can continue to discover additional insights in the passage before us.” That helps people to see that you understand it, you want to do it, and you already have a plan.

### H. For a thoughtful discussion to occur there must be enough time for students to think.

So, you give a little bit of quiet time for them to think about it. Periods of silence may mean that the students are thinking about the passage. A good leader must learn to discern between fruitful silences and simply blanks. You ask a question; you give people some time to think about it. It has been a very hot day for the people, and nobody answers. You look at your watch and wonder why nobody is answering. This is not such a difficult question. While you are looking down at your notes you hear snoring, “zzzzzzzz.” Oops, you missed it. It was the wrong pause. It was not a fruitful silence. Rephrasing the question may help to get peoples’ interest, or to help them understand what you are asking. Do not answer your own questions.

## III. PRACTICAL INTERACTION WITH STUDENT COACHES 2

### A. Do some role playing of the problem areas.

Then ask your group to provide some helpful questions or some helpful statements of how to deal with these problems. That would be very wise to do together. “What are you doing in your group? Did you ever have

this and this problem? Oh, what did you do about that?” You need to talk about these things together. After this workshop you have no chance, you will be at home alone. Now you can talk about these things. You do not have to talk about the weather. Together in your rooms you might have the opportunity to do role playing. One can play the role of the one who does all the talking and the other can play the role of the one who fell asleep. That should not be a difficult task to try after this session.

**B. Use “Miscellaneous questions” listed under Workshop six 1 to lead a discussion.**

Give emphasis to basic small group principles, whenever appropriate in your discussion. You may have to do that next week in your lesson. You explain to the students some of the things you have learned and then you try to have them do it in a new way.

# WORKSHOP THREE

## THE PREPARATION OF QUESTIONS

- Workshop Objectives:**
1. To describe three basic types of prepared questions.
  2. To give an outline for the evaluation of questions.

### Workshop Leader's NOTES:

- (1) Open the session with the "**Leader's & student coaches NOTE**"
- (2) Close the session by leading a discussion on: "**Practical interaction with student coaches**" – points 'A' 'B' 'C'.
- (3) Lead a complete "Discovery Bible Study" SAMPLE lesson with your group – cover all 16 points accurately. This will be approximately a 2-hour discussion time.
- (4) Follow-up by phone with the Practical Assignment for this Workshop.

### Leader's & student coaches NOTE:

Each time you meet with your group, you should have objectives. You should have a very specific goal you want to accomplish that evening. For example, "Tonight I want to accomplish this," or "I want to teach my students this," or "I want them to learn this." Your objectives need to be written down in a notebook. When a leader comes to your province and visits your group and says, "I would like to see what you were teaching last week and the week before," he wants to see a list of goals for each week that you have been teaching your group.

There are three types of *prepared* questions. Notice that these questions are *prepared*. The success of asking good questions is to write out the questions on paper before you come to class.

## INTRODUCTION

Questions are tools. A question is an instrument that you, the group leader, are using to guide the discussion. For instance: "What happened in the book of Exodus with Moses and the people?" That is a factual question. The next question may be, "What did Moses want to accomplish with those people?" Now you look at what Moses wanted to accomplish, and you have the facts. The third question is, "How can we use that information in our lives?" Do you see those three steps?

1. **Fact — What happened to Moses?**
2. **How or why did Moses do it?**
3. **How can we use it for us?**

So, by asking questions you can guide the discussion. Learning to prepare and ask good questions, is crucial to having a meaningful discussion and it gives confidence to you the coach.

There are also two general categories of questions:

### A. Unprepared Questions

These are those kinds of questions that do not have to be prepared beforehand. For instance: "What does somebody else think?" You do not have to write that down ahead of time. Such questions are very useful in stimulating further discussion and increasing the worth of your prepared questions.

### B. Prepared Questions

Secondly there are questions that the coach must prepare in advance. These are the majority of questions, and they are based on the content of your lesson. We are going to talk about this category of questions that we need to prepare. Remember these questions need to be prepared at home, in advance, before the lesson.

# I. THREE TYPES OF PREPARED QUESTIONS:

1. Observation questions
2. Interpretation questions
3. Application questions

## A. Observation Questions

“What does it say in this chapter in the Bible?” or “What does it say in our lesson, in our book?” Observation questions are based solely on content of the passage or material studied. They are developed for the students’ observation, to help the student to pay attention to what he has been reading. I have been in some groups where the leader has made the mistake of asking the same question that is in the student’s book. That is of no use. The student has already answered that question in his homework assignment. The leader should not use the same questions which are used in the students’ material.

**Observation questions are characterized by five words:** Who, what, when, where, why and how. All of these questions are about observing what is happening.

1. **“Who are the characters in this passage?” and “Describe them briefly.”**
2. **“What happened? Summarize in your own words.”**
3. **“When did this happen?” “Before Easter?” “On the day of Pentecost?” or “In the evening?”**
4. **“Where do these events take place?” “In Galilee, Judea, Egypt or Moldavia ?” “Locate them on the map.”**
5. **“How long would it take to travel between the two cities?”**



## B. Interpretation Questions

These questions are designed to help understand the meaning of the passage. Usually, they are prepared by looking for key words, key ideas, or situations that are hard to explain. Here is a list of ideas that could be considered in developing interpretation questions.

### 1. **A definition of a word.**

“What does it mean as we use it today?” “What verse or passage gives an indication of its meaning?”

### 2. **Purpose.**

“What was the reason that Paul went to Troas?” “What was the reason for this particular action or statement?”

### 3. **The relationship.**

“What is the relationship between the two events?” “There were Priscilla, Aquilla, and Apollos. What was their relationship?”

### 4. **Significance.**

“Why is this important?” As soon as I ask this question everybody looks. It works. “How does it affect the overall situation?”

### 5. **Consequence.**

“What would be the result of such an action?”

### 6. **Relevance.**

“What does Pilate’s washing of his hands have to do with the rest of the crucifixion scene?”

### 7. **Application.**

“What does this mean then to us in Ukraine ?” “What meaning does it have to us today?”

### 8. **Divine/human relationship.**

“What does this imply about God’s relationship to man? What does this imply about man’s relationship to God?”

These are the Interpretation questions. In each of your lessons, you should have some of each kind of question: Observation, Interpretation, and Application. Of course, you will not have every question given here every time in every lesson. But you will each time use some from each of the three categories.

## C. Application Questions

Application questions are to make the scriptures relevant to current concerns in the students’ everyday lives here in our country. They should be personal. Not, “What would be good for Ukraine ?” That is very general, but “Sasha, is this something you can use in your family?” That is personal. Application questions should be addressed to an individual member of your group. Of course, do not offend people in your group. An alternative would be to ask each person to write down their own application, and then ask each member to share what they have written.

**Three questions you need to ask yourself to ensure your questions are appropriate:**

**1. *How relevant is this question?***

Is this question useful in your group or in your family? Or in your city?

**2. *Does the question lead to action?***

It is one thing to have a grand idea, but if nobody can use it practically, then maybe it is not very useful.

**3. *How personally is the student (the one being asked the question) involved by the question?***

So, let us say you have a mixed group of people; you have some parents with young children, and you have some retired people. So, you point to one of the retired people and you say, “How would you solve this problem with a young child in the school?” So, you see the person you are asking is not at all involved; he does not have involvement with children in the school. You need to ask that question to someone who does have involvement.

**The following are sources to direct application questions to:**

1. Relationship questions — their oikos - about family, relatives, friends, neighbors, employers, etc.
2. Situation questions — about death, sickness or accidents, etc.
3. National and international problems — about economics, war, morals, etc.
4. Modern thinking and lifestyles.
5. Personal study of the Bible.
6. Church management and growth.

Now we are finished with describing the three basic types of prepared questions. That was the first objective of this workshop. Now we are going to give you a simple means of evaluating your questions.

## II. EVALUATING YOUR QUESTIONS

If you do not understand your questions, how can you ask intelligent questions? If you do not know what questions to ask first, and how to build on that question and get an application, then study this material every week. You need it. Many of you simply do not know what you are doing with your group of students. You meet every week, you have a lesson, you talk a little bit, a lot of students do **not** do their homework, and it is a little bit boring. You need to start reading our “**Coach’s Handbook**” every week, and start doing the things that it says.

A simple way to evaluate the worth of a question is to look at the answer that could be expected. Every time you are writing down a question on paper (before you go to the lesson), you should know, “What answer do I want from this question?” “Why am I asking this question?” “How is it going to help my students?”



Here we have a Question Evaluation chart before us. There are four categories of questions listed, each with an example question and answer. The last column evaluates the worth of that type of question. Is it a good question or is it a bad question?

QUESTION	EXAMPLE	ANSWER	VALUE
1. Leading question	“You all agree with that don’t you?”	Yes. (Maybe he does not agree, but you lead him to this answer.)	No value, because it stimulates no thought or discussion.
2. Limiting question	“What are the three most important truths in this chapter?” (Better phrasing: “Can you give me some important truths from this chapter?”)	The answer is what the group thinks you want to hear from them.	Of little value. Everyone knows that you have the right answer. Avoid grading and using numbers.
3. Open question	“Where did this happen?” “Who was present?” “When did it happen?” “Why did it happen?” “What was the result?”	Gives a place, time, people, reason, and results.	Great value. It stimulates discovery, understanding, or application.
4. Wide Open question	“What do you think?” “Do you have anything to add to this?” “What do you say about this?”	The answer can be any relevant thought.	Tremendous value. Maximum stimulant. It opens the mind of the student to think. You help him to discover for himself. Use after a response to an open question.

### III. SUMMARY NOTE: for workshop leader and student coaches.

A discussion will normally progress from observation, to interpretation, to application. Do not forget that the observation step must serve as the foundation for interpreting and applying.

The number of questions you can ask for any passage are endless. You as a good leader must select the very best of the questions and strive for a balance between *observation*, *interpretation*, and *application*. A general rule would be to have a **third** of the questions from each type.

For example, you meet for two hours each week with your group. It takes fifteen minutes to get started and get everyone focused on the lesson. Then you have a half hour of observation questions, a half hour of interpretation questions, and a half hour for application of the material. And you still have fifteen minutes left over for extra questions or for prayer or for other things. You began on time and finished on time.

## **IV. PRACTICAL INTERACTION WITH STUDENT COACHES**

### **A. Ask a few people to illustrate the 3 types of basic questions of observation, interpretation, and application on a familiar Bible passage.**

That would be an excellent thing to do at this workshop. Two or three of you may share and each of you give an illustration from one of the Bible courses/lessons about one of those three questions.

### **B. What is the relationship between the three types?**

You should be talking about that with new coaches. So, you have a little bit of homework until the next workshop.

### **C. Have different people define and illustrate the four categories in question evaluation.**

So, an illustration about a leading question, about a limiting question, about an open question, and about a wide-open question. Use the same passage as you did for the first exercise.

# WORKSHOP FOUR

## EVALUATION

**Workshop Objectives:** To provide suggested questions for the evaluation of...

- a) a group discussion.
- b) the coach.
- c) the spiritual benefit of the group.

### Workshop Leader's NOTES:

- (1) Open the session with the **"Leader's & student coaches NOTE"**
- 2 Close this session by leading a discussion on **"Practical interaction with student coaches"** points 'A' and 'B'.
- 3 Lead a complete "Discovery Bible Study" SAMPLE lesson with your group – cover all 16 points accurately. This will be approximately a 2-hour discussion time.
- 4 Follow-up by phone with the Practical Assignment for this Workshop.

### Leader's & student coaches NOTE:

Always begin with an objective. Everything you do should always begin with an objective, always! You are going to bake bread. Why? Because you want to have a nice loaf or because you want somebody to eat the bread? You need to have a goal.

Later on, we want all of you to visit another group, and use these same evaluation questions. Not this week. I know you are still making many mistakes, but towards the end of the academic year you better be making fewer mistakes. When a visiting coach comes to your group and listens for half an hour, he knows whether you are using these ideas or not. That is why you have to read this material every week.

## INTRODUCTION

Dear student coaches we are learning to lead a group. Therefore, we should periodically evaluate to see how we are doing. You need to evaluate yourself. How else are you going to know if you are doing better this week than last week? Every week you should give yourself a little exam. It is the same thing as an "after action" report. This is best accomplished along with several mature people from your group. So, take one or two of your best students that are friends, or whom you really trust, and ask, "How am I really doing? Were my questions better this week?" This will help to provide accountability for the leader. Ask your friend, "Can you tell me how I can maybe do a little better?" "What was there tonight that did not go so well? I saw that people were tired, people did not seem to be very happy." You ask somebody. It will also help them to be more attentive. It helps them to grow also.

Taking time for evaluation will be of benefit to you the leader and the group. It is a wise investment. The best time to do this is normally shortly after your lesson, while all is still fresh in your mind.

Remember that the evaluation should only be periodically, not every week. Once a month is a good idea. If you are just beginning, then every second week is a good thing for two or three times. Later when you have a little more experience once a month, and always at least twice during a lesson series : in the middle and the end . Always twice you should evaluate yourself.

The evaluation is to serve as an encourager, a corrector, and a strengthener, but not to place the coach under performance. As you go over the evaluation, you say, "Oh I did this, I did this, I did this. Oh, but that I did not do." Slowly you are going to see you are making less and less mistakes.

Learning to lead a group takes time. Benjamin has been doing it for several years. Yes, it goes much faster for him than it does for you. Slavic has been studying and teaching for several years. Of course it goes pretty fast, easy and smooth for him. The more experience you gain, the more these principles we talked about will become second nature.

## I. EVALUATING QUESTIONS. Group discussion in general

“So how did the whole evening go?”

### 1. **“Did the discussion seem to flow logically together?” “Why or why not?”**

In other words, “Did it stop all the time and you had to force it again, or did it just flow from one person to another?”

### 2. **“Was the material covered as desired?”**

Maybe it was like a rabbit trail. You were doing some other questions and you finished only half your lesson.

### 3. **“Was everybody involved in the discussion?”**

It is interesting to me that Jesus said, “Ninety-nine were, but one was not.” For instance, I could ask the question, “Were most people involved?” You have nine students, and you say, “Yes, most were involved; only four were sleeping.” That is not the right question. The question is, “Why was the one not involved?” Jesus asked, “Why is the one sheep not here? Where is this one sheep? What must I do to help this one sheep?”

### 4. **“Were there tangents?” “If so, how could you have avoided it?”**

By sending your worst student home. That leaves you 7 of them. Next week you send your worst student home again. That leaves you six. The next week you send your worst student home again. That leaves you five. Next week you do it again. Pretty soon you do not have a job. Sending people home is not the answer. Making people successful, that is the answer.

### 5. **“Was there a good atmosphere in the group?”**

### 6. **“Was everyone there? Were they on time?”**

Very interesting questions. If something is a very high priority, would they be there or not? If he had a date with his girlfriend, he would be there! But if your lesson is a little bit weak, he says, “Well, I do not know if I can come next week or not.”

## B. Evaluating the Coach

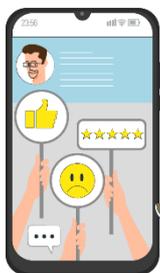
Guess what? That is you--questions about you.

### 1. **“Were you well prepared? Did you need more time for study? How much?”**

### 2. **“Which questions (prepared in advance), stimulated the best discussion? Why?”**

### 3. **“Which questions stimulated the least discussion?”**

If you want to develop spiritually you always need to ask yourself two questions: “What was good?” so you can do it again next time, and “What was bad?” so I can do it better next time. This lady was baking bread, and it was terrible, and she said, “I do not know what went wrong.” While her husband sleeps happily, she lays awake and thinks about this bread. The next morning her husband gets up and she says, “Guess what! Guess what! I know what went wrong with the bread!” That is what you always need to do. Honestly, you need to stay awake at night and think about your students. That is how good coaches are made--when they lay awake at night and think about their students.



### 4. **“Did you answer your own questions?”**

### 5. **“Did you lecture or hold a conversation with one or several members of the group?”**

I remember when I was in a group one time, the pastor asked a question. A student gave an answer for three minutes, then the pastor began. He talked for twenty minutes, then he asked another question, and nobody wanted to give any more answers. No way!

### 6. **“Were you encouraging, enthusiastic, and confident?”**

### 7. **“Did you reflect a learner’s attitude?” “Did you show vulnerability?”**

In other words, “Are you open to let people know that sometimes you make a mistake?” In other words, you are not an instructor. Tell all your students that you are doing only student teaching. You are doing practice teaching like all teachers do when they are in teachers’ college. So do not be afraid to say, “I

do not know”, or “I am sorry, I did not ask the right question.” The biggest mistake you can make is to say, “I am the instructor. I know. I am perfect, just ask me.” That is the worst mistake you can make.

**8. “Did you force your ideas on the group?”**

That is always a bad thing to do. A coach should never force things on his group.

**9. “Did you follow the outline closely?”**

Remember you were supposed to make a plan, set a goal, and write down questions. “Did you follow that?” or “Did you leave it in the car?”

**10. “Did you have time for application and summary?” “Why or why not?”**

If the students do not learn how to use their material in their own lives, it is of little value.

**11. “Did you begin, and end as scheduled?”**

**12. “Did you involve others in helping with the group?”**

Arrangements, leading, materials, etc?

## C. Spiritual Benefits

Evaluating the spiritual benefit of the group. “Are your students growing? Are they being blessed spiritually?” That is what is important! It is your hand that the Holy Spirit is using to help other people. God gave you that hand because He wants to use it to do something spiritually. Why are you living? The only reason that we are living is to make other **people successful**. That is the whole purpose for our lives. To glorify God by making other **people successful**! Jesus said the shepherd had ninety-nine sheep. He was not satisfied with that. He said, “But there is one that is not yet successful.” He bled for the one that was not successful.

**1. “Are the members gaining new knowledge?”**

“Are they learning new things about the Bible and about Jesus?”

**2. “Is there new understanding?”**

**3. “Are attitudes and actions being changed?”**

Unfortunately, in many churches there are a lot of wrong traditions--in churches in other countries too. But in many of the churches in Ukraine there are wrong traditions that have come from communism dictatorship or the Orthodox Church. They have not come from the Bible. Through Bible study, your students need to change. Do not criticize the old traditions; just build better ones according to the Bible.



**4. “Is specific spiritual growth seen in the lives of individuals?”**

This is, of course, what is critical for every student in your group. This is why I am here to help you. This is why you are teaching or coaching. If it does not happen, then we are all wasting our time.

**5. “Do you see an increasing commitment to one another among your students?”**

In other words, “Are they beginning to pray for each other, to care for each other, to help each other in some ways?” This is what body life is all about.

**6. “Is there a freedom to share from one’s personal life?”**

For instance, “Are people beginning to share about some of the family difficulties they are having?” Or “Are they willing to share some of the struggles they are having spiritually?” Or do they just give you a nice answer from the lesson? The idea is that they learn to share some of their own needs, their aches and pains.

**7. “Is there a desire to share with others what they have learned?”**

“Do they talk about the lessons with their parents or friends?” The idea is that your students begin to talk about Jesus, which is the whole purpose of your group. If you are excited about something, you want to talk about it. Someone is excited and what happens? They come running, “Hey listen, I have got to tell you something! You should hear this!” What do they do? They talk about it. That is the success of your program! They have been studying and they go someplace and say, “Guess what?” and they begin to talk about Jesus.

## **II. PRACTICAL INTERACTION WITH STUDENT COACHES**

### **A. “What are your general impressions or attitudes about evaluating this way?”**

(Maybe some of you do not agree with it or are scared to use it, or you say, “It is good, but I will do it later”).

### **B. “What suggestions do you have, about following through with a periodic evaluation?”**

# WORKSHOP FIVE

## HANDS ON PRACTICE

- Workshop Objectives:**
1. To provide an opportunity for practice in preparing questions.
  2. To provide opportunity for practice in applying group dynamics principles.
  3. To provide an opportunity for using questions through the leading of a group.

### Workshop Leader's NOTES:

- (1) Close this session by leading a discussion on "**Practical interaction with student coaches**".
- (2) Lead a complete "Discovery Bible Study" SAMPLE lesson with your group – cover all 16 points accurately. This will be approximately a 2-hour discussion time.
- (3) Follow-up by phone with the Practical Assignment for this Workshop.

## I. PREPARING QUESTIONS

Remember you need to have written questions before you go to class. So, at home you study your own lesson first, then you prepare the questions, then you go to class to be the coach.

**A. Choose a Bible passage or lesson from your lesson or book.**

**B. Write out five questions for each of the three types of questions.**

(Observation, interpretation, and application questions). So, the next time you come to the workshop you will need to bring along your list of the questions from the lessons you are leading.

**C. Use the evaluation chart (from chapter 3) and give each of your questions a value mark.**

**D. Have as many persons as possible share some of their questions with each other.**

Take time to do that during this workshop or at a mini retreat.

## II. APPLYING GROUP DYNAMIC PRINCIPLES AND THE USE OF QUESTIONS

**A. Choose a group member (with some previous experience) to lead the group for 25-30minutes.**

Do not do that right away. Do that later in the lessons after you have been leading about eight lessons. You need more experience first, and your students need to have more experience. You also need to find out who your best students are. Then you are going to ask some of your best students to **co-lead**. Then a few weeks later you are going to phone them and say, "Oh, I am very sorry I am busy next week. I cannot come. I want you to lead my discussion group for me. You are my best student, so you can do it for me. Thank you very much, good-bye."



**B. Ask a few people to observe your group and make evaluations.**

We want all of you to visit another group and make evaluations.

**C. Take some time to evaluate the dynamics of the group and the use of questions.**

This can be best done following the group discussion for about 10-15 minutes. Encourage evaluation from every student. Ask for negative comments, too. Many people will only tell you nice things, so you need to ask for some negative comments. So, you say, “Brothers and sisters, I am not leading this group for my own pleasure. I would like to help you but let us be honest with each other. Is there anybody who does not make mistakes? No, so I know that I have made some mistakes, too. Please tell me about them. It is the only way that I can know how I can do it better next time. I want to be a better facilitator for Jesus. Help me please. Tell me some things that I should change and do better.” If people sense that you are honest, they will help you.

**D. If time permits, give others opportunity to lead the group.**

Use the same passage, or another passage for which questions have been prepared. Next year you will need many more workers in your New Life Church or province. There will also be a few more new churches in your province. For all of these things, we need new workers. There are twelve lessons in the first *Basic Christian Life Series*. After you have been leading eight lessons, we want you to give opportunity to your better students so these brothers can also learn how to lead Small Discussion Groups. They need experience and practice by helping you a little bit; first fifteen minutes then half an hour and so on. Next year they can lead a discussion group and they can come to Workshops and get more training.

### III. PRACTICAL INTERACTION WITH STUDENT COACHES

Be positive -build atmosphere / friendships / relations

It is important that you take care to encourage all persons, with particular attention given to those who lead the group. You should say something positive, nice, and encouraging to each member of your group every week when they come. “What a beautiful sweater you have. Now I know you are the worst student in the group, but ...” You do not say that part. That is the part you keep inside. You only say the part about the nice sweater. If he stops coming you have lost one opportunity to help somebody. Remember that being a coach is a privilege of the Holy Spirit. Each person needs to know that you are accepting him, and that nobody is a failure. Your group is not an exam time. It is a learning time.



# WORKSHOP SIX

## A RESOURCE OF QUESTIONS

**Workshop Objective:** To provide a resource list of questions to aid in the preparation of a coach's own questions.

Introduction **Workshop leader's NOTES:**

- (1)** Close the session by leading a discussion on: **"PRACTICAL INTERACTION WITH STUDENT COACHES"**  
Lead a review discussion on each of the 5 workshops using the sub-points (in the outline).
- (2) Lead a complete "Discovery Bible Study" SAMPLE lesson with your group – cover all 16 points accurately. This will be approximately a 2-hour discussion time.
- (3) To bring your Workshop series to a successful culmination, phone each student coach monthly for 3 months to provide encouragement and personal refreshing.

There are five categories of questions:

- I. Introductory
- II. Observation
- III. Interpretation
- IV. Application
- V. Miscellaneous

The major part of any discussion centers on asking good questions. If you have good questions, you will only need about ten questions at the most for an hour. Some people have only five questions, but they are good questions, thinking questions, and people want to talk about them.

### I. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

#### A. "Do you remember what the divine truth or principle was in our last lesson?"

That is a good beginning question. People have been doing different things, in their garden, in the factories, and they are all coming together with different thoughts. You bring all these people together with a question that says, "Do you remember what we studied last week?" "Oh, last week, oh, so many things have happened, I have almost forgotten." Then somebody gives an answer, and everybody says, "Yeah, that is right!" Now they are in gear, concentrating, and now you can start the real lesson. Do you understand the purpose of these introductory questions?

#### B. "Would someone like to share what happened when you applied that truth at home or work?"

So, you are asking for a little testimony. This automatically proves to everybody that there is a practical purpose for studying these Bible lessons.

#### C. "Let us go around the room and share a joy, a praise, or a problem." "Now let us pray about these things." "Would each of you pray for the person on your left?"

#### D. "What activity gives you the most satisfaction in your service for Jesus? The least satisfaction?"

Again, you get a practical answer that shows you the spiritual direction that student is going.

#### E. "What do you want or expect to gain out of the lesson tonight?"

Now everybody is concentrating on what will happen now. Expectations are raised. "Huh, something is going to happen in this session? I thought we were just going to study the Bible. Apparently, the facilitator thinks that something is going to happen." The expectation goes up and people think, "Well is it going to be on this page or on the next page?"

## II. OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

- A. “Who is the human author?” “How much do we know about him?”
- B. “To whom is the passage addressed? Believers or unbelievers, Israel or Gentiles, an individual or a church?”
- C. “What is the author’s purpose in writing this? Is it to warn, admonish, discipline, instruct, encourage, inform, etc.?”
- D. “Is it addressed to a specific circumstance or situation?” “If so, what is it?”
- E. “What words/phrases in this passage do you think are the key ones? Which words/phrases do we need to define in their context in order to draw out the meanings in this Scripture?”
- F. “How would you define this key word/phrase in the context of this passage?”
- G. “How many synonyms can you think of for this word?”
- H. “How many antonyms can we list for this word?”
- I. “This word has a very interesting etymology, that is, a historical and cultural application. Do any of you have any idea of the historical and cultural background to this word?”

So you talk a little bit about the Bible history and the Bible culture.

- J. “Can you think of other places in the Scriptures where this word/phrase is used? If so, let us look at them and see if they might help our understanding here.”

A very large portion of the New Testament is simply quotations from the Old Testament.

- K. “Does this word/phrase make you think of any unique experience in your life which you would like to share?”

A very interesting question.

- L. “Do you think that your understanding of this word/phrase is contradicted or supported by the following Bible references?”

Now notice that these questions are all based on the lesson **text**. The introductory questions were about **people**. The observation questions were about the lesson.

## III. INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

Now we are going to talk about the meaning of the Bible passage. I have used these interpretation questions many times and this set of thirteen questions (which are in your booklet) are excellent with unbelievers. I have used them, and other people have used them, and they have brought many, many blessings.

- A. “Do you detect any kind of promise or assurance that God has clearly given or implied for us?”

- B. **“Do you note a command here for us to obey?”**
- C. **“Do you see any kind of example He has given us here to follow?”**
- D. **“Is there a sin here that He is telling us to avoid?”**

The Pharisees picked up stones to throw at Jesus. It is not a very good idea.

- E. **“Is there a warning here regarding false teachers or false doctrines?”**

Thus says the Lord God, ‘Do this, do not do that!’

- F. **“Is there a truth God is giving us here?”**

Maybe it is about Himself, or the church, or Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, or about men, or angels, about Israel, or about the material universe, etc.

- G. **“In your own words how might you state the main idea in this passage/chapter?”**

Remember when you study the *Basic Christian Life* lessons , we want you every morning, in your own words, to write the main idea from the chapter down in a notebook. Let us see, who is doing that? Most of you will make good facilitators because you lead by example. However, a few of you are not going to have good success because you are going to tell your students, “Please do it, (but I am not doing it.) It is a good idea, but I do not like the good idea.”

- H. **“How would you interpret the meaning of this passage?”**

It is one thing to know what the Bible says, but it is another thing to know what to do with it. Nowhere does it say, “Abraham, go to Ukraine.” It does not say that. So, I had to read my Bible, pray about it, and interpret it, “This is what God wants me to do.”

- I. **“Could you summarize what you think is the message, or the truth, or the principle, God is conveying to us in this passage?”**

- J. **“How would you state the antithesis to this truth or principle?”**

- K. **“Can you detect more than one meaning or application of the truth contained in this passage?”**

- L. **“How can you use an ocean, ant, tree or other things to illustrate the principle under discussion?”**

- M. **“How can you make this into a diagram, illustration, demonstration, or act out this principle so that it could be understood by a ten-year-old child?”**

That is why we want you to learn how to use a whiteboard. Guess what? What is going to happen a few months later? A visiting coach is going to ask, “Do you use whiteboard?”

## IV. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- A. **“What principles or truths did you learn from this lesson which you can apply in your relationships with non-Christians at work, home, church, or in the neighborhood?” “How can you apply them?”**

- B. **“Which of these things can you apply in your family?” “How?”**

See it becomes very practical. First you had questions about **people** when they came in the classroom; then you had questions about the lesson; then you had questions about 'what does this mean?'; and now at the end of the lesson you are back to questions about the **people**. "How are you going to use this? Does it make sense?" You began with questions about *people*, and you end with questions about *people*.

- C. **"What things did you learn in this session that will be effective in witnessing to unbelievers?"**
- D. **"What did you learn that will make you a more effective edifier of your brothers and sisters in Christ?"**

Every Christian must learn to be a discipler of other people. The Bible says that the older women in the church should be teaching the younger women. The young married women can teach the young girls that are unmarried. The teenage girls can teach the young children. Everybody ought to be an edifier, a discipler.

- E. **"In what area do you feel a need for greater knowledge and understanding in order to be a more effective witness or edifier?"**
- F. **"Can you think of events in your life which might demonstrate how this principle works?"**
- G. **"How many of you are willing to apply this truth/principle to a non-Christian in your sphere of influence at least once this week, and be willing to share what happened at our next meeting?"**

You see how individually practical it becomes? Each person has to make a choice before the lesson is over. That is where your success is. That is why in many churches in services there is not the same success, because people are not challenged/forced to make a choice. They sit, they sing, they listen, they sleep, they pray and go home. Do you see that you need to make an opportunity and be willing to share some of these things with other people?

- H. **"Write down on a sheet of paper the name of the person you are going to apply this divine principle with in this coming week. Put your name also on the paper and give it to me. ??Next week we will ask you to share what happened when you applied it."**

Now you will not use that question every week, of course. However, let us say you are going to be talking about starting a new church. You know that there are going to be five new churches in your province and you are going to start two of them. "Where? In what city? Who is going to help you?" Something like this, with a piece of paper, asking people to do something concretely helps to bring focus.

1. "What do you think might happen when you apply this principle with this person?"
2. "How will he react?"
3. "What will you do after his reaction?"
4. "Will it make a difference if you apply it according to your own wisdom, as compared to applying it under the power and direction, and discretion of the Holy Spirit?"

So, you are asking people to make a distinction between using their own wisdom and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit.

5. "How can you make sure that the Spirit is in control and not **just you** when you apply it?"

That is of course a question for advanced students, not for students who are just beginning to study the Bible.

- I. **"Write down one commitment to God, based on the understandings and insights you have gained, regarding a change you intend to make in your attitude/behavior for Christ's sake."**

## V. MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

To be used with a group to stimulate understanding of one another:

- A. "Describe briefly how you came to Christ."
- B. "What are some of the things you enjoy doing the most?"
- C. "What is your least favorite task?"
- D. "What do you consider as one of your present greatest needs?"

## CONCLUSION

The objective for you students is to strengthen your abilities in leading a small group. To do so, let me remind you that you will need to read these notes at least every week for the next month. There is so much in this, you cannot remember it all, and you need to review and review, at least once a year for many years to come. But, oh what blessings will flood your life when you master these principles. God is just waiting for you to become successful.

Hallelujah.

## PRACTICAL INTERACTION WITH STUDENT COACHES

### *Practical assignment*

Completed

- 
- Workshop 1 The Small Group Read this part of the lecture through one time each week till the next Workshop
  - Week 1
  - Week 2
  - Week 3
  - Week 4
- Workshop 2 Group Dynamics**
- Meet with another facilitator to discuss the problem areas. Your discussion should last at least 15 minutes and should cover the following questions:
  1. What unique things are you doing in your group?
  2. Have you ever experienced any problem?
  3. If so, which ones?
  4. How did you deal with them?
- Read this part of the lecture through one time each week till the next Workshop
  - Week 1
  - Week 2
  - Week 3
  - Week 4

### Workshop 3 The Preparation of Questions

- Meet with at least two other coaches to do the following:
  1. Ask them to illustrate the three types of prepared questions on a familiar Bible passage. Each must use a ??different?? Bible passage.
  2. Have them define and illustrate the four categories in question evaluation. Use the ?? Same?? passage as you did for the first exercise.
- Read this part of the lecture through one time each week till the next Workshop.
  - Week 1
  - Week 2
  - Week 3
  - Week 4

### Workshop 4 Evaluation

- Read this part of the lecture through one time each week till the next Workshop.
  - Week 1
  - Week 2
  - Week 3
  - Week 4

### Workshop 5 Hands on Practice

- Choose a group member who has been with the group a while and have him lead the discussion for 20-30minutes!
- Take sometime during your meeting to have your group evaluate:
  1. what they like
  2. what they don't like
  3. what changes they would like to have take place?
  4. what mistakes you are making
- Ask at least two other people to observe your group and make evaluations
- Read this part of the lecture through one time each week till the next Workshop
  - Week 1
  - Week 2
  - Week 3
  - Week 4

### Workshop 6 A Resource of Questions

- Read this part of the lecture through one time each week till the next Workshop
  - Week 1
  - Week 2
  - Week 3
  - Week 4