

## STEP 1: WATCH & LEARN

Watch the video on the Growth Group Leaders website, and follow along using these notes.

# Trainee: Preparing a Study

This training module aims to show you the different ways you can use the online study.

Different leaders require different levels of support and the online studies can be used accordingly.

For the leader who has either little preparation time, or who is new to the role, the online studies can be used as is, providing a high level of support to the leader.

For the leader who is wanting to stretch themselves and eventually write their own questions, the study can be used to develop that skill.

This training module shows you how a leader might use the studies, from using the study in its entirety, to using the study simply as a reference tool to writing their own study.

There are many advantages of writing your own study and developing that skill for yourself including:

- A leader often leads better from a study they are more familiar with.
- When a leader writes their own study, they will be using words and concepts more natural to the way they talk.
- A leader who writes their own study can focus the study in ways specifically suited to your group as you know them.
- Every leader who starts writing their own study tends to find they get taken to a level of Bible understanding that is deeper than if using a pre-written study. They are personally grown through the experience.

With these advantages in mind, why not have a go developing your own skills in writing a Bible study using the approaches below?

However we recognise, there are times for all leaders, when life is such that it is helpful to have a study already written, ready to go, to lead a good group time, even in the midst of life crisis and/or busyness.

**Before you begin let us remind ourselves of the goal of any study.**

We want...

1. A study that asks questions that will enable the group members to work through the passage in such a way they can see what God has said and wants us to understand.
2. A study that generates discussion and investigation, reflection and challenge.
3. A study that enables the group to apply the passage into their lives with ideas of how to pray from the passage into their lives.

## STEP 2: Put into Action

- Work through the training exercises below.
- Work with your **Trainer** (Growth Group Leader) to find an opportunity to put this into practice.

### How to Use This Training Module

1. Look at each of the approaches and decide on the approach that best describes where you are at NOW.
  2. Work out which approach you would ultimately like to reach. Stretch yourself.
  3. Start at the next approach from where you are now. Increase to higher levels as you are able.
- In this way you are teaching yourself to read the Bible carefully to see what it is saying.

#### Approach One: The simplest option.

- Print off the study, read the study questions, watch the video, and then lead your group through the given study.
- Make sure the Bible passage is read at the beginning of your group study time.
- It helps to have time to read the passage yourself and the questions yourself beforehand so that you are familiar with the flow of the study.

#### Approach Two:

For the next level do as above but also complete the pre-written study yourself before the group time and make small changes as appropriate.

- Write your own answers to the questions and think about whether you want to make changes.
- Some changes you might make:
  - You might change the wording to suit you and your group.
  - You might change questions that you think create a better flow or movement of ideas through the study.
  - Change or add questions that you think “don’t work”.

#### *After*

Reflect on the following questions yourself, or with your leader;

- The flow – was there a build-up of ideas reaching some main points and conclusions?
- Did the group want to answer the questions?
- Did the questions generate discussion?
- What might you want to do differently if you were to do it again?
- Asking these reflective questions is valuable to improving your skills in Bible study writing.
- Ask another group member the same questions to get another point of view.

### Approach Three

At this next level up you will do your own preparation on the passage first, before looking at the study questions and watching the video.

- You will be asking two main questions
  1. What does the passage say?
  2. What main points does the passage make?

To do this you would do what we might call 'bombarding' the passage with questions, which you then try to answer, writing down your thoughts.

You will be asking the passage:

- What is being said here?
- What does this mean?
- What did the author do to help me see that? (Which literary devices?)
- What is the author wanting to make clear?
- Write all this out for yourself.
- Write out how the passage is structured (what sections would you divide it into).
- Note what bits you don't get, have a think about them, does the passage help you answer your own questions then
- Write down ways you might apply the passage to the group.

Once you have done this preparation work, have a look at your notes and see what conclusions you would draw about the main points that you think would be applied from the passage.

(You might be interested in checking your thoughts alongside a commentary at this point.)

#### *Note on using a Commentary:*

The approaches below don't specify when to use a commentary. Where possible do as much of the work yourself first. You might then use the commentary afterwards as a reference tool to check your own reading and preparation.

NOW have a look at the pre-written online study.

At this point answer the questions given in the online study and note any differences in what you were discovering.

- Compare and contrast your work with the online study.
- What differences?
- What do you learn about the differences?
- Make adjustments to the study questions that you think are needed.
- Then deliver the study.

What you will have is a study where you have done a fair bit of thinking on the Bible passage, and have a sense of what you want the questions to do.

Note the impact of this on;

- a) Your leading.
- b) The group discussion.

What conclusions would you draw on your leading and on your Bible study preparation?

### **Approach Four**

For the next approach read and interrogate the passage as above and have a go writing your own study questions.

- What questions will help your group get the basic understanding of WHAT is being said. Write them down.
- WHAT questions will help your group get the basic understanding of points being made, the meaning, the WHY it is being said.
- Write them down.
- And finally what questions will help your group think into how to apply the passage and what to pray for.
- Write them down

Now look at the online study and compare your questions with the ones given.

- What do you learn?
- Answer your own study questions.
- Answer the online study questions.
- What do you learn?
- What would you change?
- Whose study will you use?

Through this method you will be training yourself to write your own studies.

(You might want to use the online training module on How to write your own studies)

### **In Summary...**

If you are a new leader, using the online studies for a certain amount of time is a good thing.

The online studies are a helpful guide to you on what works and why.

They are a helpful guide on how to understand the text and what questions to ask, on how to help your group read the Bible and move to application

AT some point hopefully you will find yourself in a place where can stretch yourself and develop your own preparation from passage and write your own study.

Hopefully the approach as outlined above will be a useful tool to develop this skill.

### **STEP 3: Receive Feedback**

- Your Trainer (Growth Group Leader) has been provided with tools to help them give you feedback, training and encouragement.
- Don't forget to ask your Growth Group Leader to meet up and provide you with feedback on each of these exercises.

Which weeks this term would you like to try using the next 'approach' to preparation? (Maybe start by picking 2 weeks).

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9