

DISCOVERING SERIES

Overview:

The Discovery Bible Experience, or Discovery Bible Study as it is known in some circles, is a powerful tool for teaching people how to connect with and learn from God. The Discovering God series has been widely used to help pre-Christians discover God. These additional passages were developed to help those with a spiritual interest to build a solid foundation for spiritual growth. Believers will also develop a deeper relationship with God as they work through these passages. These series and corresponding discussions are designed for small groups.

Series	Series Title	Summary
1a.	Discovering Jesus	This series includes a brief overview of the early ministry of Jesus as He revealed Himself and His message to pre-Christians.
1b.	Discovering Peace	Jesus offered peace to those who followed Him. This series looks at how we can gain this peace even in the midst of the troubles we face.
2a.	Discovering God - Traditional	Beginning in Genesis, the God of the Bible is presented along with the main characters and stories of the Old Testament, leading to the discovery of Jesus the Messiah.
2b.	Discovering God - Postmodern	Similar to the previous series, these passages also move the reader from creation to Christ. This series is developed for secular people from Western cultures.
3.	Discovering the Life of a Disciple	What did Jesus consider most important to teach His new followers? This series explores the principles Jesus expressed to His disciples.
4.	Discovering Church	This study explains the purpose and reason believers are commanded to assemble, leading to a discussion on what they should do when they gather.
5.	Discovering Our Calling	All Christians are called to make disciples. This series shows how Jesus modeled the advancing of His kingdom and taught disciples to do the same.
6.	Discovering Healthy Relationships	How does God view His followers? How do we develop healthy relationships with God, family, and one another? The answers to these questions are explored in this series.

About These Series:

Do not simply hand these pages to people. People must be shown how to read the Bible using the Discovery Bible Experience method. First, have someone show you how to lead these studies or watch a video before you begin—then show someone else how to experience God through reading the Bible.

Overview:

These passages are designed to be used with the Discovery Group Experience (DGE) or Discovery Group. A detailed description is available in Section 3 of the book *The Jesus Strategy: How Jesus Taught Followers to Carry out His Vision*.

DGE is an obedience-based approach to the Bible, based on Jesus' command to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey all His commands. The objective of the Discovery Group Experience is for members to discover at least one principle from the passage that God desires them to understand and apply to their life. Pre-Christians can then decide if they wish to take this step of faith. Believers are encouraged to obey any command God reveals to them in the passage.

Getting Started:

Discuss with participants if they would like to write the answers before the group discussion or simply discuss the questions. If they choose to discuss the questions, you might encourage them to write down their answers at a later time when they become more motivated from their experience with God.

The first two series provide an example of how to lead an oral discussion without writing out the passage. The rest of the series includes instructions to write the passages in a notebook. This writing can be done in advance or during the meeting.

The following are tips for effective group discussions:

- Be patient and give people time to think about how to answer.
- Encourage everyone to express their answers, but don't force anyone to speak.
- Encourage the more talkative members to wait and let quieter members answer first.
- The group facilitator should share their thoughts last and keep their answers brief.
- Create a supportive environment where everyone is encouraged to share openly.
- Remind everyone that what's shared in the group must not be shared outside the group.

Before you Begin a Discovery Bible Experience with Pre-Christians (Seekers)

I recommend meeting twice with pre-Christians before you begin. At the first meeting, you should discuss in general terms the purpose of reading and how you plan to learn from the Bible. You can explain that you plan to show them how they can read the Bible for themselves and learn to listen to what God wants to show them. Ask the person to think about anyone else that they know who would like to explore God through the Bible with them. It is more enjoyable and productive for pre-Christians to discuss these passages and experience God together with their friends. Before you begin studying a passage, meet one more time with the person, along with anyone else who is interested in learning from the Bible with them. See **Introduction to the Bible** for suggestions about what to discuss at your second meeting.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

Introduce the Book to New Bible Readers

I typically discuss the following during my second meeting with pre-Christians. I will suggest we start reading the Bible together the week after we've had a conversation about the Bible and after I've shared this information.

I) Why Read the Bible? For the sake of simplicity, share just one of the following reasons during your first introduction to the Bible. The other two reasons can be shared at a later time.

A) For Life:

The Bible tells us about God, the author of life, the creator of heaven and earth. It also tells us about people and how we can experience life the way God designed it to be.

It points out the wrong things we do to find happiness, pleasure, or security, things that will not satisfy and may harm us or others. The Bible tells us that true life is found only in God.

It is not a magic book to place over people to heal them or to hold up for protection. God wants us to read the Bible and listen and do what he says in it.

B) For Relationship with God:

The Bible tells us that God values us and wants to have a relationship. It tells us how we can enjoy this relationship with God and put God in his rightful place in our lives. I'm not interested in teaching about religion or changing your religion. This is about a relationship.

I would like to show you how you can read the Bible for yourself to enter into a relationship with God. The best way to get to know God is by reading the Bible. Jesus said if we are willing to listen and learn from God, he will reveal himself to us. You can get to know him if you are willing to put in a little effort. I would like to show you a way to read and understand the Bible for yourself. You will also be able to show this to other people who want to learn how to connect with God.

C) To Better Love God and Others:

The Bible tells us that God loves people; He wants to have a love relationship with us. It tells us *how* we can love God and *how* God wants us to love others.

It is not just about you and your relationship with God. The Bible also talks about community. It is best to experience God with others so we can help each other. I would like to not only show you how you can get to know God yourself but also how you can get together and experience God with your interested friends. I would like to teach you a way to experience God with others. It is not difficult and you will then be able to help other people know how they can do this with their friends.

II) What to Bring to This Meeting

Select an easy-to-read translation of the Bible such as the New International Version (NIV). Do not use a paraphrased version of the Bible, such as the New Living Translation, for the Discovery Bible Experience or Discovery Group Experience because the student will be asked to write the passage in their own words. They will be paraphrasing the passage, so we don't want to start with a version where someone has already paraphrased the passage. Bring a new Bible for each person to hold while you talk about the Bible.

III) About the Bible

Explain that the Bible is unlike any other book you have read. God had people write the things he wanted us to know and do. It was written by many different people over a very long period.

- 16** The Bible is a collection of writings written over a period of 1,600 years/16 centuries. The part that was written in the first 1,500 years, before Jesus was born, is called the Old Testament. The second part, which was written over a period of 100 years after Jesus' birth, is called the New Testament
- 36 +** The Bible is a collection of writings that were written by more than 36 people over this very long period. Together, they express what God wanted us to know.
- 66** The list of writings is found in the Table of Contents. There are 66 writings we call "books." There are many types of writings included, such as historical writings, poetry, or messages to people from God.

IV) Navigating the Bible

Each **book** is divided into **chapters** and each chapter is divided into **verses** (shown as numbers in small font). Help people locate the Table of Contents where they can see the sixty-six books. Show how passages are listed and help them find several passages such as Geneses 1:1, Jeremiah 9:23–24, and Matthew 22:37–40.