

WEEK 4

**LEADING A SEEKER CENTERED
SMALL GROUP**

"GUIDING THROUGH SCRIPTURE" VIDEO
NOTES

10 Points/Principles

1. Use open-ended questions.
2. Don't give "test" questions (discover answers together).
3. Put people in a situation where they must think (sign of a good question).
4. Control group members (example - over talkative).
5. Watch out for wandering discussions.
6. Don't be afraid of silence (people need time to think).
7. Clarify questions or answers.
8. Save face of other person (don't be argumentative).
9. Appreciate their questions and answers (no stupid questions).
10. Be a learner (phrase: ask for examples, personal answers).

"SPARKING INTEREST WITH QUESTIONS" VIDEO
NOTES

OBSERVATION SHEET

Start reading through the Gospel of John. As you read, jot down what you notice about Jesus.

1. Jesus' character and personality

2. Jesus' Message

3. Jesus' Mission

4. Jesus' Identity

What is the Gospel?

When Jesus interacted with people, whether His enemies, the multitudes or His disciples, one issue dominated the conversation: *Who is Jesus?* If this was the issue for the people of Jesus' generation, it is still the issue in our generation. What is the gospel? The gospel is a person: Jesus Christ. But it's easy to obscure this message of Jesus' identity. We can do it in four ways:

The Gospel of Popular Issues

Sometimes a theme in the Scriptures so captivates us that we are tempted to make it part of the essential message. It might be God's love for the poor and oppressed, or His promise of prosperity to Israel, or His command to be stewards of the earth. Pretty soon we're proclaiming the gospel of social justice, or the gospel of prosperity, or the gospel of environmentalism, instead of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Our Personal Emphases

Certain forms of expressing our faith become so natural to us that we can't envision a Christian functioning without them. We may think certain behaviors or doctrines are essential, but we must take care not to let anything: our religious traditions, our forms of worship, our personal doctrinal emphases or our persuasions concerning Christian conduct, pull the Scriptures out of balance and so restrict the gospel. We don't want people to reject Jesus because of our cultural wrappings.

The Gospel of Christian Contract

Finally, we need to avoid focusing on the contract, how to transact a relationship with God, rather than on the person of Jesus Christ. We shouldn't become so intent on helping someone understand how to put his faith in Christ that we overlook the fact that he knows virtually nothing about Christ.

Instead of telling people what they need to do, we want to help them understand who Jesus is. As this understanding grows, it becomes obvious what one needs to do. Our friend often responds rightly without our help. If we focus on the response rather than on the understanding, we tend to force the contract. We lead a person to verbalize certain phrases, but he doesn't know what he is saying. The "decision" ends up having no effect on his life. But, if we introduce him to the God-Man, Jesus, a relationship with Jesus becomes almost irresistible.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Once we accept that the essential Gospel is Jesus, our approach becomes so simple. The question is, *Who is Jesus?* Take a look for yourselves, we tell our unbelieving friends: if you don't believe, we understand that. But, let's go to the Bible with this single question and research the answer. You don't have to accept the Bible? We understand that too, we'll just look at the Bible and count on Christ's superiority to accomplish the rest.

Simple Steps for Leading a Bible Discussion

Why is it usually more effective to ask what your friend sees in the Bible than to than to tell him or her what it says?

The Unbeliever's Questions

Let's say you are leading a discussion John chapter 1. Don't ask people to read aloud, since many people find this embarrassing. Instead, ask your group to read the first paragraph to themselves and voice any questions it raises for them. Usually, unbeliever's questions are the ones most relevant to them. Sometimes no one understand the paragraph well enough to ask a question, but if they do, great.

Your Questions

If an important truth remains uncovered in the paragraph after you've discussed the unbelievers' questions, you can ask your own.

Bible Discussion Questions Can Have Three Functions

To Launch a discussion on a subject (What is John referring to when he speaks of the Word?)

To Guide a discussion (Why do you think He is described as the Word?)

To Invite others to summarize (What can we conclude about Jesus form this paragraph?)

Start with a launch question for the first paragraph, then ask one or more guide questions, and finally ask a summary question about the first paragraph. Then move to the second paragraph. For each paragraph, your pattern will be as follows:

1. Unbelievers' Questions
2. Launch
3. Guide
4. Summary

Some Standard Guide Questions

Why do you think he said that?

What do you think he was getting at?

What else do you see in this verse?

Why do you say that?

What do you mean?

Why do you think he uses the word "_____" here?

Some Standard Summary Questions

How would you summarize the main idea of this paragraph?

How would you say this in your own words?

How would you summarize the idea we have been discussing?

Six Goals for Questions

Understanding: What does it say? What else?

Interpretation or Clarification: What does this mean?

Justification: How did you arrive at this conclusion?

Direction: Mike, what do you think?

Comparison: Where did we see this same idea before?

Application: How does this affect us?

Answering Questions

Acceptance

When a non-Christian begins to study the Bible with you, one of his or her biggest unspoken questions will be. "To what degree can I express what I really think with this person? How will he or she react if I express my true doubts and questions? The person will first send out some rather "safe" trial questions. How you react to these questions will affect the quality of communication from then on. If you respond with dogmatism or defensiveness (both signs of insecurity), the unbeliever will quickly understand the rules of the game and proceed accordingly. He or she will either play by your rules or disappear. But, if you show an attitude that encourages doubts and questions to surface, you will be much more effective. The unbeliever will get a chance to voice questions he or she has never had a chance to raise before. It almost doesn't even matter whether you have a clue how to answer the question, as long as you respond with acceptance.

Discernment

There are two kinds of questions: honest and dishonest. Dishonest questions intend to trap or embarrass, or to protect or justify the asker. Honest ones are for real learning.

Jesus answered questions according to their intent. When the lawyer asked Him, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied with a story. But, Jesus had all the time in the world for people with honest questions like his disciples.

It's often hard to tell the motive behind a question. But a good test is to ask yourself (not the questioner) "What difference will it make if I answer this question? Will this person accept my answer and build on it? Or is this question really a statement of rejection?"

If the person asked the question simply to push you away or trap you, then you are wasting your time answering it. But often an unbeliever will start with a trap and defense questions to see what you will do. So, even when you discern that the question is not meant to be answered, you should still respond acceptingly.

If a question is honest, the person is usually willing to wait for an answer. He or she won't mind if you say, "That's a good question, but I don't know how to answer it at the moment. Let me study this week and I'll show you what I find out next time we get together." A person who wants to trap you will usually want an answer right away, but since the answer won't make a difference anyway, it doesn't matter if you don't know the answer.

Sticking to the Bible

When studying with people who don't believe the Bible, it's crucial to consistently use nothing but the Bible. Your position is, "You don't accept the Bible's authority? That's understandable. But, we're not here to discuss my opinions. We're here to let you judge the Bible for yourself. So, when you ask a question, I'll try to restrict myself to showing you what the Bible says about it." Any other position undermines the Bible's authority, but this position lets the Bible function as the supernatural resource that it is.