Using the Daily Discipleship Guide to Lead a Bible Study Group

The *Daily Discipleship Guide* was created for the purpose of building disciples. As the leader of the group, you play a major role. You can build disciples through the group Bible study time, encouraging daily Bible engagement, facilitating smaller groups, and apprenticing future leaders.

Building Disciples through the Group Time

Leading the group Bible study time is the most direct way you will build disciples. Each week, you will introduce the group to the Bible passage, examine the key message in that passage, challenge the group to act on that passage, and encourage them to reflect more deeply in the week that follows. Doing so requires preparation. Here is a way to prepare that gives you adequate time to study the lesson and will make the session fresh in your own life.

Early in the Week (Sunday or Monday)

- Ask God to open your mind and heart to His Word as you study.
- Read the Bible passage for the coming session, and review Understand the Context and Key Words.
- If a QR code is available in the Leader Helps, scan it to gain additional information on what's found in the passage.

Through the Week

- Ask God to use the Daily Explorations to help you understand and apply the lesson to your life.
- Complete the Daily Exploration activities in the days leading up to the group time.
- Meet with a group of three to four other teachers to share and pray for each other. Use Talk It Out to start your conversation.
- Pay careful attention to the Apply the Text sections for that session, looking for ways you need to apply the Bible in your own life.
- Start gathering items you may use in the group time.

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The Day before Group Study Time

- Review the group plan in the back of the *Daily Discipleship Guide*.
- Review the first four pages of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* for that session and the commentary provided in the Leader Helps for that session.
- Review your responses and notes from the completed Daily Explorations.
- Listen to the weekly podcast at goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training.
- Adjust the plan to fit the needs of your group.
  Note: You can create custom plans using the DOC file provided in the Digital Download for the Leader Pack—it's the same content printed in the Leader Helps.
- Consult *QuickSource* for additional insights and ideas.
- Review the weekly Adult Extra idea on the Explore the Bible blog (goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras).
- Consult the *Explore the Bible Adult Commentary* for additional insight.
- Pull needed posters from the *Explore the Bible: Leader Pack* (or create your own using Visual Ideas on pages 160–161).
- Make sure you have all your resources gathered including extra copies of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* for guests.

The Day of the Group Study Time

- Arrive early. The group time begins when the first person arrives so make sure that is you.
- Pray for the study and the group.
- Adjust the room as needed.
- Lead the study, adjusting as you go.

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After the Group Study Time

- Consider the After the Session idea at the end of the group plans.
- Contact the group, encouraging them to complete the Daily Exploration section and sharing gathered prayer requests and other appropriate information.
- Record insights gained about teaching, individuals in the group, and Scripture.
- Pray for specific needs of people in the group.
- Do it all again, asking God to open you mind and heart to His Word this week.

Building Disciples by Encouraging Daily Bible Engagement

Here are some ways to encourage your group to engage with the Bible daily.

- **VISIT THEM.** Deliver a copy of the Daily Discipleship Guide to every person in your group.
- **ASK THEM.** That seems simple, but the simple is not always easy. Learn to comfortably ask if group members are studying the Bible. You may want to use a statement instead of a question, such as, "I hope you took a look at the Day 3 activity for this week." It's a question disguised as a statement, so it's not as threatening.
- **TELL THEM.** Let them know that you are using the Daily Exploration section as well. Set the standard.
- **SHOW THEM.** Point to the Daily Exploration section at the conclusion of the group study. From time to time, demonstrate how to use the section, guiding them through Day 1 as a group.
- **INVITE THEM.** Call on pre-enlisted volunteers to share with the group what they are learning and how they are using the Daily Exploration section.

As teachers, we have taken on the responsibility of encouraging everyone on our ministry list (class roll, membership list, etc.) to engage daily in Bible study. We can't make them do it, but we can provide them with a tool and encourage them to use it.

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Building Disciples through Smaller Groups

Talk It Out is designed for smaller groups of three to four people to meet weekly. The goal of the smaller groups is simple: holding ourselves and others accountable for living a Christ-honoring life.

Create smaller groups:

- Explain the importance of the smaller groups, emphasizing the goal.
- Allow the group to form their own initial groups of three by gender (men's smaller groups and women's smaller groups). This tends to work better than assigning groups.
- Allow the smaller groups to add one person from the names on the ministry list of people who are not present.
- You may want to encourage the groups to form based on neighborhoods or proximity to work.
- Make sure some of the groups have extra space for new people and guests.
- As the Bible study group grows, you may need to reorganize the smaller groups, but try not to regroup too often so that trust can be built within each smaller group.

Support the smaller groups:

- Provide opportunities for the members of the smaller groups to pray with each other during the group time.
- Make study assignments in the weekly group time based on the smaller groups.
- Pre-enlist a volunteer to share with the larger group how participation in the smaller group is impacting his or her life.
- Periodically organize fellowship events built around the smaller groups. The smaller groups could be the basis for teams during the event.

Be in a smaller group:

- Meet with two or three other Bible study leaders as part of your weekly preparation.
- Be part of a smaller group within your class.
- Host a smaller group for guests and new group members.

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Building Disciples by Apprenticing Other Leaders

Starting new groups is critical to the life of your church and the lives of the individuals in your group. People in your group need to be challenged to take on a greater role in your church. Providing the opportunity to do so helps them grow and removes the largest barrier to starting new Bible study groups—finding a leader. You can make a difference in the growth of individuals and in the future growth of your church by apprenticing potential group leaders. Here's how you can use the *Daily Discipleship Guide* to make this happen.

- **STEP 1:** Prior to group time, ask a potential leader to follow along in the Leader Helps for that session as you lead the group. Tell him or her to note what you did and what you adjusted. You're just coaching your apprentice to use the book he or she has in a different way.
- **STEP 2:** After that group experience, spend time with the group member going over what you did and how you adjusted the leader material for the group.
- **STEP 3:** Invite him or her to do this again in a few weeks.
- **STEP 4:** Ask him or her to lead a group time or part of one using the suggestions in the Leader Helps for that session. You may be away that week, or you can simply observe as a group member. Offer to help him or her prepare if needed.
- **STEP 5:** As your apprentice gains confidence, allow him or her to teach more in the near future.
- **STEP 6:** As a need for a new group surfaces, prepare to move on to lead the new group, with the apprentice becoming the leader of the current group (which tends to work best), or commission the apprentice and a few others from the group to start a new group.
- **STEP 7:** Do it all again.

Not everyone in the group will become a Bible study leader. For those who do, you can become a mentor to potential leaders, extending your teaching ministry and demonstrating discipleship.

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Prayer

Session 1 • 1 Samuel 1:9-18,24-28

ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of 1 Samuel*) and **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: Samuel's Life*). Make copies of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Praying Scripture in 1 Samuel*).

ASK: **Did you ever have something that you really wanted—and you got it? What was that like?** (p. 13)

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 13. Encourage adults to share responses. Allow a few individuals to share an opposite experience—when they wanted a specific gift and didn't receive it.

INTRODUCE: Point out **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of 1 Samuel*) and share that the group is starting a study of 1 Samuel. Explain that this first session is focused on a barren woman named Hannah and her prayers to God for a child.

CONTEXT: Use information from **Understand the Context** (p. 13) to provide the historical context of 1 Samuel, as well as introduce the primary characters from the first chapter.

- *Elkanah lived in the tribal territory of Benjamin; yet he was from the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. 6:1,27-28). Elkanah had two wives: Hannah and Peninnah. . . . Hannah and her story are the focus of 1 Samuel 1–2. In Hebrew, her name means "grace" or "graceful woman." Living up to her name, Hannah was the recipient of God's grace, and she showed great grace despite personal heartache. Eli served as the priest at Shiloh in the opening chapters. He became the custodial guardian of young Samuel.*

TRANSITION: *Hannah was a woman of grace, but her story begins with a difficult challenge. Hannah turned to God for comfort and to seek His blessing on her life.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: **Invite a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 1:9-11** as adults listen for Hannah's requests as she prayed.

RECAP: Summarize 1 Samuel 1:1-8 to provide context for Hannah's prayer. Explain that Hannah had been praying for a child for years, all while dealing with Peninnah's taunts.

IDENTIFY: Ask adults to call out the specific requests Hannah made in her prayer as you jot them on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Summarize the following information to explain Hannah's distress.

- Hannah's anguish came from her barrenness, which in ancient Israel was

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seen as a sign of God's disfavor. Because children were vital for a family's future, her condition may have led Elkanah to take Peninnah as a second wife. Peninnah's constant provocation only deepened Hannah's pain.

EXPLAIN: Point out that Hannah's prayer included elements of a Nazirite vow as described in Numbers 6. Note that God normally initiated Nazirite vows, but Hannah's actions underscore the serious nature of her prayer.

ASK: **What does Hannah's prayer teach us about the proper way to approach God in prayer?** (p. 15)

SAY: *Fervent prayer was for Hannah, and is for us, an acceptable way to approach God. Some people, however, may not understand the sincerity of such prayers.*

READ: **Read aloud 1 Samuel 1:12-18** while half of the group listens for Eli's initial observation about Hannah's prayers and the others listen for Hannah's response to Eli's accusation.

COMPARE: Call on the first group to characterize Eli's initial observation and impression of Hannah's behavior. Point out that most prayers in Eli's day were audible, which likely caused confusion for him. Note this also might be an indication that drunkenness had become a common part of Israel's festivals during the period of the judges. Call on the second half of the group to describe how Hannah replied to Eli's accusation. Affirm that we are often guilty of a similar rush to judgment today.

ASK: **Why are some people quick to make assumptions about others' spiritual condition without knowing the facts?** (p. 15)

RECAP: Point out that Eli's attitude shifted and how his words affected Hannah moving forward.

- **(1:17)** After Hannah explained herself, Eli's tone changed. Instead of rebuke, he responded with kindness and faith, blessing her and asking God to grant her request. While priests in the Old Testament blessed the people (Lev. 9:22-23; 2 Chron. 30:27), this is the only recorded instance of a personal blessing. Encouraged by his words, Hannah finished praying and prepared to leave. Her appetite returned and her mood lifted, and she left Shiloh with renewed hope (1 Sam. 1:7-8).

ASK: **How can we show greater sensitivity to people who are carrying burdens?** (p. 15)

PRAY: Call attention to the QR code on page 15. Encourage adults to use the **Explore the Bible Prayer Guide** to help them pray this Scripture passage back to God.

SUMMARIZE: Briefly recount the events of 1 Samuel 1:19-23, emphasizing God's faithfulness in answering Hannah's prayer. Call attention to **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: Samuel's Life*) and mention that the birth of Samuel begins his long and significant life.

READ: **Call on a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 1:24-28** as the group listens for actions Hannah took in fulfilling her vow to God.

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ASK: **How did Hannah's acts of worship reflect her attitude as she fulfilled her vow?** (p. 15)

RECAP: Point out the size of Hannah's offerings and how they likely represented her gratitude to the Lord for answered prayers. Highlight the importance of fulfilling vows to God:

- **(1:27-28)** *The Old Testament stresses the need to keep one's vow to God (Num. 5:4-5). Hannah was faithfully doing just that. She recognized that the Lord had given her this son, and now she was returning him to Him. By dedicating Samuel to the Lord, she was not abandoning him or neglecting her duty; rather, she was entrusting him to live in the Lord's presence.*

ASK: **When has prayer strengthened your faith in God? What is the relationship between our prayer life and our walk with the Lord?** (p. 15).

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week's Bible study passage:

- We can cry out to God with our requests.
- We need to be sensitive to those carrying burdens.
- Believers should follow through on what they vow to do.

DISCUSS: Direct the group to find and read the **Apply the Text** question on page 15. Call on volunteers to share a time in life when God has answered their prayers, especially in the small things of life.

REFLECT: Challenge adults to evaluate the consistency of their prayer lives and to begin making a plan to spend quality time in prayer with the Lord. Remind them about the importance of fulfilling promises they've made to God.

PRAY: Lead a time of prayer for those who are carrying heavy burdens. Guide adults to pray for friends and family members they know who are struggling with long-term challenges. Draw attention again to **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Praying Scripture in 1 Samuel*). Encourage the group to continue using the handout to allow Scripture to guide their prayers during the week.

AFTER THE SESSION

Follow up this session by contacting individuals who expressed concern over specific spiritual burdens they are carrying. Call them and pray with them, or text them and let them know you are praying regularly for their needs. Invite them to share how God is answering their prayers, or how you may continue praying for needs as they develop.

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