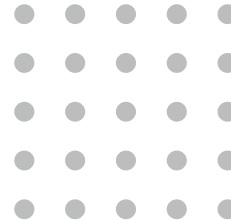


# DISCUSSION LEADER

Manual



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# PURPOSE AND MISSION

We make disciples who learn, love and live out the truth

- **LEARN** the Truth through daily Bible study
- **LEARN** that the Truth is a Person worth following
- **LOVE** Jesus and love His Word
- **LIVE** the Truth by applying the Word to daily life
- **LIVE** a changed life shaped by the Word

*EBS exists to bring people close to God through in-depth Bible study.*



*It's simple...  
we make  
disciples  
anywhere.*

*(see Matthew 28:19-20)*



Our classes provide in-depth Bible study through a four part method:



### **Study the Bible**

Daily **personal interaction** with God's Word through study questions.



### **Equip to Contribute**

**Small group collaboration** discussing what you learned.



### **Apply to Daily Life**

A teaching time delivering **inspirational application**.



### **Impact for Christ**

**Impactful education** through study notes.

# FACILITATE

## THE GROUP

*The GOAL of the discussion group is for members to encounter God in a transformative way by engaging together in a discussion of God's Word.*

### THE **WAY**

- Sit around a table or in a circle so members can see and hear one another.
- Provide a name tag for each member.
- Read the question and encourage members to share their answers.
  - Cover open/shut, fact questions quickly.
  - Spend more time on thought, opinion or application questions.
  - Review all the questions on the lesson.
- Allot a few minutes at the end to share prayer requests.
- Briefly close in prayer.
- Total time is 40-45 minutes.
- Take attendance each week.

### THE **SPIRIT**

The Spirit works in believers to increase love for God and others.

- Serving God requires relying on the Spirit more than relying on the rules!
- Ask God for wisdom to discern when...
  - A rich, meaningful discussion on a particular question is more important than discussing all the questions.
  - Challenging situations can be graciously redirected during the group or require a private conversation afterwards.
- Ask God for boldness to stop criticism of a person/church/ etc. so that the group maintains safety and respect for members with differing viewpoints.

# SHEPHERD

## THE MEMBERS

*The GOAL for shepherding is to relationally come alongside each member to enhance their spiritual growth.*

### THE WAY

- Make regular contact with each member outside of class to develop a trusting relationship.
  - Relationships require conversations.
  - Use the method(s) they prefer (e.g. text, email, phone call, Zoom, etc.).
- Continue conversations with each member at class.
- Pray for and with each member regularly.
- Offer to help with the study if needed or desired.

### THE SPIRIT

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. His Spirit knows the best way to shepherd each member.

- Walking with another person as they follow Christ is a great privilege and service.
- Since following Christ looks different for each person shepherding also differs for each member.
- Supporting members in distress and hardship requires prayer and wisdom.
  - Ask the Spirit how you can best come alongside to care for the member.
  - Encourage members to speak with their church leaders for counseling and/or financial needs.

# PRAY

## FOR ALL THINGS

*The GOAL of prayer is to be a part of what God is doing in the class and the members' lives.*

### THE **WAY**

- **During Leaders' Meeting**
  - Join the other leaders in praying aloud for EBS, class needs and individual needs.
  - Submit prayer requests for yourself and needs for your group.
- **During Discussion Group**
  - The teacher gives instructions for the preferred method in your class.
  - Encourage members to submit requests and pray for one another.
  - Choose a method to distribute requests that works for your group (*email, GroupMe, group text, etc.*).
  - Allot a few minutes at the end of the discussion group to mention requests and answers.
  - Include your own requests so the group also prays for you.
- **For each member**
  - Pray regularly for each individual member.
  - Follow up with members regarding their requests.
  - Pray for their spiritual growth in addition to daily life needs.

### THE **SPIRIT**

The Spirit knows and prays for the needs of every person.

- Ask the Spirit to increase your love for and desire to pray for each member.
- Ask the Spirit to guide you to pray for what He desires to do in their life.
- Pray God's Word for members as the Spirit brings it to mind.

# GROW

## IN LEADERSHIP

*The GOAL is for discussion leaders to draw near to God and grow spiritually by participating in a Leaders' Meeting.*

### THE **WAY**

- The teacher or assistant teacher leads the weekly Leaders' Meeting.
- Discussion Leaders attend the Leaders' Meeting for the purpose of:
  - Belonging to and participating in their own discussion group.
  - Preparing to lead the discussion group during class.
- Answer the lesson questions prior to Leaders' Meeting.
- Submit prayer requests as appropriate.
- Participate in the discussion of the lesson.
- Participate in prayer time.
- Participate in leaders' training and fellowships as scheduled.

### THE **SPIRIT**

The Spirit places believers in community to grow them up in Christ.

- Ask the Spirit to help you learn, love and live out the truth through the Leaders' Meeting.
- See your service in EBS as one way God grows you in community with others.

# IDENTIFY

## POTENTIAL LEADERS

*DLs get to know members well and are therefore uniquely positioned to identify potential leaders.*

### HOW TO **IDENTIFY LEADERS**

- Ask God to help you identify the potential leaders in your group.
- Remember God uses people before they seem or think they are ready!
- Recommend a potential leader to the teacher who will instruct you on next steps.

### LOOK FOR THESE **CHARACTERISTICS**

The Spirit places believers in community to grow them up in Christ.

- A believer in Jesus Christ who is teachable and willing to serve.
- Growing in their faith in Christ as evidenced by applying His Word to daily life.
- Demonstrates a love and concern for other members in the group.
- Listens well to others who share in the group.
- Enthusiastic about and faithful to studying the Bible in community.
- Involved in a local church.



# BEST

## PRACTICES

*Remind the group the GOAL is to learn and grow together.*

### **DISCUSSION LEADER (DL) ROLE DESCRIPTION**

Our goal is for every member to learn, love and live out the truth. Discussion Leaders assist members toward that goal as they...

- Facilitate
- Shepherd
- Pray
- Grow

### **CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

- Remember how it feels to be new to a group and new to the Bible.
- Encourage members to respect the viewpoints of everyone even when there is disagreement.
- Set the expectation that participation in discussion leads to discovery of truth rather than participating only when assured of right answers.

### **BALANCE PARTICIPATION**

- Encourage all to participate while avoiding embarrassing those who hold back (e.g. "let's hear from someone who has not shared yet").
- Redirect those who talk too often or for too long.
- Use pair or triplet sharing on a few questions to get everyone involved in discussion.

# BEST

## PRACTICES

*Facilitate learning rather than teaching the group.*

### FACILITATE DISCUSSION

- Read only what is necessary to ask the question (i.e. avoid reading headings, Scripture references, etc.).
- Smile and make eye contact with your members instead of looking at your lesson.
- Facilitate learning rather than teaching the group.
  - Do the question together when a group is unprepared rather than supplying the answer.
  - Call on a well-prepared member to repeat their answer if there is confusion on a question.
  - Remind the group the goal is to learn and grow together instead of merely “reviewing and checking homework”.
  - Remind the group that the notes and teaching can clarify unresolved questions.

### LESSON ANALYSIS

- Analyzing the questions before discussion group helps set an appropriate pace for the discussion.
- Determine which type of question each question is:
  - **Fact question** – the answer comes directly from the passage.
  - **Thought/opinion question** – a variety of answers are possible as members draw their own conclusions based on their knowledge and beliefs.
  - **Application question** – a variety of answers are possible as members seek to put God’s Word into practice in their daily lives.
- Move quickly through fact questions. Usually one person’s answer is sufficient.
- Spend extra time on thought and application questions. These questions prompt rich conversation, learning in community and spiritual growth.

# BEST

## PRACTICES

*Extend grace and view failures as opportunities to learn and grow.*

### **BALANCE YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE**

- Use firmness to protect the unity and safety of the group.
- Use grace to uphold the dignity of individuals.
- Use appropriate humor to keep the discussion moving while avoiding humor that devalues or embarrasses people.

### **AFFIRM AND APPRECIATE OFTEN**

- Express appreciation for the effort made to complete their lessons even if incomplete.
- Affirm their participation regularly.
- Affirm and appreciate the care members extend toward one another.
- A verbal response after each answer is not necessary.

### **ADDRESS THE MESS WITH GRACE**

- Recognize that no leader perfectly facilitates every week.
- Apologize quickly when you offend or wound someone.
- Acknowledge awkwardness when there is discomfort or discord in the group.
- Rely on God's Spirit for courage and wisdom when needed for a private, difficult conversation with a member.
- Extend grace to yourself and view failures as opportunities to learn and grow.

# ZOOM

## BEST PRACTICES

Review the "*Zoom Instructions for Discussion Leaders*" resource for more information.

### **FACILITATING AN ON-LINE GROUP**

- Use gallery view on your device if possible.
- Focus your eyes on your camera when you speak.
- Focus your eyes on the speaker when you listen.
- Call on the first person for each question to avoid the prolonged awkward silence.
- Use the chat function for communicating questions, requests to clarify or repeat, prayer requests or updates, etc.
- Use breakout rooms if possible, for sharing in small groups.
- Ask members to mute when audio feedback is present.
- Review the "*Zoom Instructions for Discussion Leaders*" resource for more information.



# EBS DISTINCTIVES



## **Interdenominational**

- We welcome anyone to study the Bible. All members are encouraged to attend and be involved in the church of their choice. Keep conversations focused on the Bible rather than churches. Remind members to speak respectfully of all churches if the topic arises.

## **Leadership Characteristics**

- The teacher invites people into leadership. Leaders receive training at the weekly Leaders' Meeting. EBS leaders are expected to model humble, servant leadership that seeks to honor Jesus Christ and avoids causing another to stumble.

## **Counseling Members**

- Occasionally a member's personal situation requires a greater level of care than shepherding provides. Ask the teacher for guidance if you think a member needs professional help.

## **Children and Infants**

- Some EBS classes provide a children's program or childcare. Infants may accompany mothers to discussion group and lecture at the teacher's discretion.

## **Host Church Relationship**

- EBS classes are guests of the host church. Make it a practice to restore the set-up of rooms and other items. Follow the church policies regarding clean up, food and drinks, audio-visual equipment, etc.

## **Audio and/or Video Recording**

- Each class provides a link to the lecture recording to all on-line members. Individuals may record the live lecture for their personal use only at the teacher's discretion.

## **Personal Contact Information**

- We protect the personal information of our members. Use the blind copy feature for group emails. Ask for permission from a member before sharing contact info with other group members. Allow members to "opt out" of a group text if they prefer not to share their contact info.

## **Other Events and Materials**

- Keep the focus on the common ground of Bible study by avoiding distribution of other materials or invitations to other events during class.

## **Copyright**

- EBS materials are protected by copyright. We ask each member to obtain their own copy of the workbook.

# LEADERS' MEETING SCHEDULE

## OPTION 1:

- Announcements (5 minutes)
- Prayer (15 minutes)
- Lesson discussion (40 minutes)

## OPTION 2:

- Announcements (5 minutes)
- Prayer (15 minutes)
- Lesson discussion (40 minutes)
- Training (15 minutes)

*NOTE: The preferred option is a **one hour Leaders' Meeting** held on the same day and prior to the start of the class meeting. Leaders' Meetings may be held for 1 ¼ hours earlier in the week than the class day.*

## LEADERS' TRAINING AND FELLOWSHIPS: [2-3 times per year]

- Training (30 minutes) - [resources provided by EBS HQ]
- Fellowship (30 minutes) - may include food as preferred

## ANNUAL LEADERS' TRAINING BEFORE NEW CLASS YEAR:

- Prayer (15 minutes)
- Class information/Announcements/introductions (10 minutes)
- Training (35 minutes) [resources provided by EBS HQ]
- [OPTION: Additional time for fellowship if desired]

## 1ST LEADERS' MEETING OF NEW CLASS YEAR:

- Announcements (5 minutes)
- Prayer (15 minutes)
- Devotional (10 minutes)
- Practice 1st Discussion [no lesson] (30 minutes)

# CLASS MEETING SCHEDULE

## SUGGESTED CLASS SCHEDULE

- **Opening** (10 minutes)
  - Song/Hymn (5 minutes)
  - Inspiring Devotional (3-5 minutes)
  - Prayer
  - Move to Discussion Groups (3-5 minutes)
- **Discussion Groups** (40 minutes)
- **Song/Announcements** (optional 5 minutes)
- **Teaching and Closing Prayer** (30 minutes)

## CLASS FELLOWSHIPS:

A fellowship time for groups and/or the entire class can be held 2-4 times per class year. A meal or snack and informal time to build relationships builds and strengthens community in the class.

*Options include: pot luck, bring your own food, food truck, etc.*

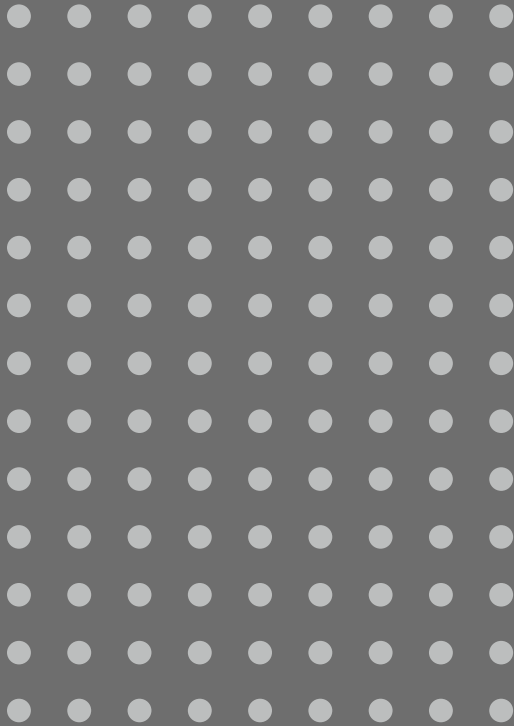
## OFFERING:

Classes that meet in a host church are encouraged to collect a "free will" offering each year for the church. This offering provides a tangible way to show gratitude for the use of their facility each week.

## EBS STATEMENT OF FAITH

- We believe the Bible is God's Word, a divine revelation, in the original language verbally inspired in its entirety, and that it is the supreme infallible authority in all matters of faith and conduct (*II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16*).
- We believe in the Trinity – Holy God, Three in One; God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit, united in one Supreme and Divine Being (*Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:31-33; 2 Cor. 13:14*).
- We believe in God the Father, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, measureless in power. He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, and He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (*I Timothy 1:17*).
- We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, of virgin birth, sinless in life, making atonement for the sins of the world by His vicarious substitutionary death on the cross, efficacious for all who repent and believe (*Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:14-18; John 3:16-18; I John 4:9*).
- We believe in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ which insures the resurrection of all believers who have received God's gift of eternal life. (*I Corinthians 15:1-4; I Thessalonians 4:13-18*).
- We believe in the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of God the Father and in His visible return to the world according to His promise (*Acts 1:10-11; John 14:1-6*).
- We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from God to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and comfort those who believe in Jesus Christ (*John 14:16-18; John 16:7-15*).
- We believe the church is the Body of Christ, a spiritual organism of born-again believers functioning in the world as a witness for Christ, thus fulfilling the great commission (*Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20*).
- We believe it is vital that Christians should personally study the Bible through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (*Colossians 1:9*).





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