

Did you ever think you could lead a Bible study group?

Yet here you are, about to discover in a personal way that you can trust God to make you into the leader he wants you to be.

GearedforGrowth have 3 aims:

- 1 to encourage men and women to read and study God's word for themselves, and to apply its teaching to their daily living. *(This is effective because the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and makes them known to us. John 16:13-15)*
- 2 to meet weekly in a small informal group, in order to fellowship with one another; to encourage each other; and share together the truth of God's Word. *(This regular study time is a discipline which helps us to know God and his Word.)*
- 3 to reach out to neighbours, relatives, friends and workmates, by introducing them to Jesus through friendship, as well as studying God's word together with them.

Bible Studies are classified under four categories



Some character studies effectively cover a book, eg. Nehemiah. The method is most profitable when study titles are selected in a sequence of: New Testament, then Theme/Character; then Old Testament.

In this way you will find that at least three or four 10-week courses can be covered in a year.



Leading a GearedforGrowth group

Leaders should apply themselves diligently to the study of God's Word, and prayerfully guide the discussion in an unobtrusive way. Each member is there to share what he or she is learning, and can only do so in a relaxed and encouraging atmosphere.

A 'teacher' attitude makes real sharing more difficult and creates an unnecessary barrier. People in your group may be tentative Christians, young in their faith, and some might not be sure they want to become Christians, but God can use them to teach and challenge you as you study together. This is a humbling, but very wonderful, experience.

Accept that the real leader is God, who is unfolding his Word, by the power of his Holy Spirit, and making the things of Christ plain. The power to open eyes to spiritual truth is his, and therefore we can afford to be less tense and fearful about our own leadership.

God knows and cares about the individual needs, longings and weaknesses of every member. This is why he sent his Holy Spirit, and he will teach, challenge, guide and direct at exactly the right pace.

- There should be one person designated to lead the group, also an assistant leader to 'stand in' in emergencies.
- This assistant will be able to lead the group, when you feel it is right to divide into two groups.
- A group should consist of 5-10 people. Once a group grows to 12 or so, it is good to divide.
- Allow at least an hour for study, refreshments can be served before or after study time.
- Choose the study title and order adequate supplies, one for each member.



Get the most out of each GearedforGrowth study

- Encourage members to work through the readings and questions daily in preparation for the group time. This will encourage the daily discipline and habit of spending time in the Word of God.
- Writing down answers in advance (at home) helps better memory retention, and gives more confidence in sharing.
- Avoid answering questions without first reading the relevant Bible passages.
- Avoid thinking that the questions are too easy. Other members may struggle with them, and finding answers together may be a vital step in their understanding of God's Word.
- It is also surprising how much a mature believer will benefit from meditation on an answer to even a simple question!
- Encourage all members to participate and ensure that the group moves on through the study questions.
- Encourage members to pray, not only for the Holy Spirit to guide them in their understanding of God's Word, but also for each other, as needs are shared.
- Avoid gossip in the group; teach members to respect confidences, to pray about problems, and not to discuss them outside of their group.

Helpful hints for each study time

- 🕒 Cover all 7 days each week, apportioning reasonable time to each day's work.
- 🕒 Read the references again, as this can bring new light on the verse.
- 🕒 Don't 'squash' new participants, if they miss the point in answering; just keep the discussion going till the truth emerges.
- 🕒 Keep discussion lively, and work towards total group participation; this may involve having a private word to 'tone down' a more talkative person or to encourage a shy one.
- 🕒 Beware of 'red herrings'; there is no time for off-the-point discussion; gently steer the conversation in the right direction.
- 🕒 Refuse to discuss divisive doctrinal matters in group time, deal with them in private.
- 🕒 Empathise with those to whom the Word of God is obviously speaking; needs will surface; it is often wise to draw that person aside at the end of the session, to share privately rather than with the whole group.
- 🕒 Leave time to read through the weekly notes together before the study time ends.
- 🕒 During the course, take note of any recurring topic which captures the group's interest; this could suggest your next study.
- 🕒 'Each one bring one' is an excellent slogan; let your group will grow numerically as well spiritually; be prepared to form two groups, which will in turn become four, etc ...



Our Vision Statement:

Exposing as many people as possible to the truths of God's Word, using **Geared for Growth** Bible Studies as tools for evangelism, spiritual growth and the imparting of missionary vision.

www.gearedforgrowth.co.uk



Guidelines for group leaders



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