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Ken and Julie Moser

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Writing a Youth Bible Study

written by
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These guidelines are taken from the introductions to “*Studies 2 Go*” and “*More Studies 2 Go*” by Julie Moser with some extra tips added.

WRITING A YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

Here are a few guidelines and suggestions for you as you plan to write your own youth Bible studies. If you are looking for a way to get started, below is a six-step outline as well as three basic guidelines to three different types of studies. You will need to add your own creative touches to each outline. Beware of using only one style of Bible study (e.g., don't just write topical Bible studies) as you need to do a whole range of studies to develop a good understanding of the Christian life and faith.

Before you start:

- Consider your group: age, Christian maturity, relevant circumstances etc.
- Plan: Do you want to do a series or a single study?

Basic Outline:

Using these guidelines, prepare a study sheet to photocopy and give to each group member. Leave plenty of space and unanswered questions (don't give all the answers away!)

Here is a basic outline you can use when writing your own youth bible study:

1. Icebreaker sharing question.

Sample: When was a time you felt afraid?

2. An exercise to introduce the subject.

Sample:

Circle the statement below that best describes your attitude to the Bible:

It's confusing I read it all the time I feel guilty when I don't read it

I like to study it with others I wish I knew it better

No desire to read the Bible I don't have a Bible Other _____

3. Read the Bible passage/s.
4. Write some questions that will help the group think through what the passage is teaching.
5. Apply what they have learned to their own context.
6. Pray.

NOTE: Make sure that your study invites discussion and involvement - don't let it become a lecture where they only hear your voice.

Different Types of Bible studies:

Below are guidelines for preparation of three different types of Bible studies:

1. Inductive

Definition: *An inductive study is where you look at a Bible passage (e.g., Ephesians 1) and work at understanding what the passage is teaching.*

Step 1: Choose a book of the Bible or a Bible passage.

Step 2: You could begin the study with a sharing question that is easily answered by all and is loosely connected to the passage to be covered.

Step 3: Spend some time finding out some basic information about the passage or book of the Bible you will be studying. Find out some details about the author, recipients, historical background, and key themes. A Bible Dictionary or commentary will give you more information if you want.

Step 4: Study the passage. Break longer passages into sections (paragraphs, verses, themes etc) and look at specific key verses, themes and characters. Ask some questions that will help people understand the passage. Try not to ask questions that are answered by quoting the passage back to you.

Step 5: Application – without this your whole bible study will only be a collection of facts. Ask: 'how will your life be different because of this passage?' and, 'how can we put into practice what we have learned today?'

2. Thematic

Definition: *A thematic Bible study is where you look at the overall teaching from the Bible on a particular biblical subject (i.e., the Holy Spirit, salvation, Love etc.).*

Step 1: Choose a Bible theme, e.g. salvation, faith, grace etc.

Step 2: Write a sharing question that will help the group to share their views on the subject.

Step 3: Unless the study will cover this clearly, give a definition of the subject to be studied.

Step 4: Choose several key passages from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Try to extract different information about the theme from these passages. *HINT: A searchable online Bible like www.biblegateway.com is helpful for this kind of study.*

Step 5: Application for this kind of study can sometimes be a little more. Your outcome must not be simply to understand a concept but to be challenged by your new understanding. 'Ask: how will your life be different because of this bible theme?'

3. Topical

Definition: A topical Bible study is where you develop your understanding on a particular issue based on what the Bible teaches (e.g., alcohol, sex, dating, etc.).

Step 1: Choose a topic (e.g. Being a Christian at school, Who is the Holy Spirit? etc.).

Step 2: Introduce the topic. You can ask a sharing question on the topic or, ask for popular opinions on the topic (from the group members themselves or, what they think their friends, families or society believes on the subject).

Step 3: Using one or more bible passages draw conclusions about what the Bible teaches about the topic and what the view of the Christian should be.

Step 4: Application – discuss how they can change wrong opinions or actions. Think of standards set by the Bible in these areas.

Extra tips

Give your study a brief title (no more than 5 words) or summarise the study in one word. This will help you keep focused on the subject.

You do not need to cover every single verse of every chapter in your study. You need to decide what you are able to cover and focus your study accordingly.

Make sure that your study is not merely a comprehension test. Try to ask questions that evoke discussion.

Try to be creative in your teaching style and not limited to simply asking questions. At the completion of each study ask: "How is this a *youth study* as opposed to an *adult study*?" I would encourage you to attempt to have at least 1-2 creative exercises in each study that is simple and fun.

When you complete the study go through it and write down how you would answer each question – if the question is too difficult or too vague for you, it will definitely be too hard or too vague for a young person.

Note the tenses of the questions, statements etc. When referring to stories in the Bible they need to be in the past tense.

E.g., "What did the disciples believe about Jesus?" Rather than "What do the disciples believe about Jesus?"

Commentary (sections of text inserted in the study to be read aloud) is an awkward medium for the bible study leader. On some occasions you cannot avoid text/commentary but where possible keep to a minimum and preference is none at all. It is good to have brief FYI sections (1-2 sentences – see samples of other YS booklets) but these are set within the study almost as optional side references.