

## • **Group Bible Study Format**

- Each group should feel free to vary this format to fit local Traditions, talents, time and circumstances.
- This will be more of a Bible sharing group than a class.
- The leader need not be a teacher or expert, but rather an organizer and facilitator for the group.
- Total time is about 60 to 100 minutes per session.
- Refreshments are traditional and scriptural at Christian gatherings.
- Open with one or two songs as a sign of coming into the presence of God to hear His Word. Psalm 100 says, "Come into His presence singing for joy."
- Light a candle as a reminder that this is holy time.
- There is a spiritual dimension to coming together to hear God's Word.
- Pick someone to light candle with appropriate words, such as,

COME HOLY SPIRIT, ENLIGHTEN US, THAT THE MESSAGE YOU HAVE INSPIRED IN THE BIBLE MAY BE AS WORDS OF FIRE IN OUR HEARTS, WARMING AND LIGHTING OUR LIVES. GIVE US UNDERSTANDING TO KNOW WHAT THE WORD OF GOD IS TELLING US, AND THE COURAGE TO LIVE WHAT WE LEARN. MAY WE WHO SHARE THIS GOOD NEWS BE BLESSED WITH THE LOVE OF JESUS FLOWING THROUGH US TO OTHERS IN HIS HOLY NAME, BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER. AMEN. LET IT BE SO. AMEN. COME LORD JESUS.

- Some groups may like to enthrone a Bible, perhaps with flowers Around it.
- There is a page of cut-apart book marks included with this prayer
- A short time of praise is appropriate here. This may be spontaneous, a litany of praise, tongues, or the doxology or Gloria. Type of praise will depend on the gifts or traditions of the group. (Litany of Praise, handout enclosed)
- All the above may take about five minutes. Next you may want a few minutes of personal witness so they can share what The Lord has been teaching them since the last meeting. "In what way did last week's Bible study enter your life?"
- **BIBLE READING AND DISCUSSION:**
- The general format for the body of each session is, to read short segments of scripture in turn, followed by discussion based on prepared questions. Leaders with the time and talent may want to write some of their own discussion questions. (Enclosed is General Questions Sheet # B-171)
- Questions should reflect the interests and abilities of the group and focus on what the Bible means in their personal lives, rather than attempt to formulate doctrine. A leader should serve the needs of the group, and support what Church is teaching.
- If you have a good discussion going it is not necessary to move along just to finish the lesson. Feel free to pick and choose what fits the interests, needs and time frame of your group. Let the Holy Spirit be your guide. There is nothing magic about this format.
- Leaders should see that everyone gets a chance to share insights, and no one person dominates. Discussion should be prayerful and in the presence of God. Care should be taken that it not becomes a debate over issues and opinions. We are seeking God's enlightenment as the Holy Spirit may bring forth in the words of Scripture and through the insights of our peers.
- **HOMEWORK:** Decide with your group about this. Generally, in a group study like this, homework should be optional, but available and encouraged. Take home sheets on general Bible topics are provided. Some may want to finish any unfinished questions, and all should be encouraged to read next week's readings ahead of time. Some may want to make notes of the pastor's homily on these readings.
- **ATTENDANCE:** In our experience we have better long range attendance with open meetings where anyone can come anytime. With this program there is little need for a sign up sheet since you do not have to buy a given number of materials ahead of time just make copies as needed.
- The closing prayer should reflect on what God has said to us in the Bible session. Someone may be chosen in advance to lead, or it may be a time of shared spontaneous Prayer followed by the Lord's Prayer.
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- We revise these studies from time to time. Comments and suggestions are welcome. Sheeppgate, N11805-Lucke Lane, Daggett, Mi. 49821