

Small Group Leader Guide: Bible Project 2020

Thank you for saying “yes” to facilitating a small group during the Bible Project 2020! Whether this is your first time facilitating, you are a seasoned veteran, or somewhere in between, we are thankful for your service and leadership. **The key to success in facilitating is to remember you are not there to be an expert** – you are there to facilitate. Your role is to keep the conversation moving, care for your members and help the group learn together.

Below is a list of modules we have created to help structure your group time. Mix and match these modules to create a great small group experience for your members! Consider these modules and the times allocated as guidelines. If your group engages with a module a little longer than estimated, that is okay! If you have a unique idea for engaging with that week’s readings you would like to throw into the mix (such as a song or video), go right ahead!

It is highly recommended you begin and end each session with prayer – it is a great way to open and set the tone for each session, and to close each session and send your group members into the week ahead.

Suggested Session Outlines

If you are new to facilitating or would like some help structuring your group time, below are some suggested group session outlines for you to consider. We know this long list of modules can seem overwhelming – so we’re here to help! You can then adapt and/or try different modules, if desired, as the group gets to know each other better.

Option 1 – Sermon and Scripture Discussion (1-1.5 hours):

- Module A: Introduction and Opening Prayer (5 minutes or less)
- Module B: Icebreaker Question (5-10 minutes)
- Module E: Sermon Discussion (20-30 minutes)
- Module G: Reading Scripture Together (20-30 minutes)
- Module I: Closing and Prayer (5-10 minutes)

Option 2 – Podcast and Scripture Discussion (1-1.5 hours):

- Module A: Introduction and Opening Prayer (5 minutes or less)

- Module B: Opening Question (5-10 minutes)
- Module D: Podcast Discussion (20-30 minutes)
- Module G: Reading Scripture Together (20-30 minutes)
- Module I: Closing and Prayer (5-10 minutes)

Option 3 – Covenant and Scripture Discussion (1 hour):

- Module A: Introduction and Opening Prayer (5 minutes or less)
- Module C: Highs and Lows (10-15 minutes)
- Module G: Reading Scripture Together (20-30 minutes)
- Module I: Closing and Prayer (5-10 minutes)

Option 4 – Devotional and Scripture Discussion (1 hour):

- Module A: Introduction and Opening Prayer (5 minutes or less)
- Module B: Opening Question (5-10 minutes)
- Module G: Reading Scripture Together (20-30 minutes)
- Module H: Devotional Discussion (10-15 minutes)
- Module I: Closing and Prayer (5-10 minutes)

Module 0: Introductions and Icebreaker (10-15 minutes or more, depending on the size of your group)

This module is highly recommended for your first meeting only. It allows time for the class to get to know each other and opens the door for relationships to form.

- Pass out the provided name tents and markers to group participants. Let them know the name tents will be used throughout the study to help everyone learn each other's names.
- Going around in a circle, have everyone introduce themselves, tell how long they've been attending HPUMC and answer an icebreaker question.
 - The facilitator should be the first to introduce themselves – this helps break the ice and set the tone for everyone else.
 - Sample icebreaker questions:

- What is your dream vacation spot?
 - What is your favorite food?
 - If you were an animal, what animal would you be?
 - For additional questions, visit <https://www.the-balancecareers.com/fun-ice-breaker-questions-1918413>
- As a group, decide which of the Bible Project elements you will be utilizing:
 - Will the group be listening to the weekly podcast? If so, will you listen to it on your own time or together as a group?
 - Will the group be reading the daily devotional? Would they like time each session to discuss it?
 - Would the group like to use the weekly sermon discussion questions?
 - Will the group spend time discussing the week's Scripture readings?
 - Review the accountability and confidentiality document to set the tone for the group and establish expectations. Answer any questions on it. Have everyone sign a copy of it and keep their copy as a reference.

Module A: Introduction and Opening Prayer (5 minutes or less)

Below is an example outline of your opening time each week:

- Gather the group and thank them for coming.
- Remind them to have their name tents or name tags out and visible.
- Share any necessary housekeeping information, if applicable.
- Invite the group to join you in prayer or ask for a volunteer to pray to open the session.
- Give the group a broad overview of what you will be discussing this week.
- If you have any new members join your group that week, have everyone go around and introduce themselves. Be sure the new members fill out and display a name tent.

Module B: Opening Question (5-10 minutes)

Ask an engaging question that ties into the theme of the session to get people thinking and talking. It could be a “hook” question asked from that Sunday's sermon, a question

that popped into your head while reading the week's materials, or a question that ties into what you are going to discuss that week.

- Examples questions include:
 - One of the sermon discussion questions for the week, available at www.hydeparkumc.org/Bible2020
 - What was your favorite toy as a child? Why?
 - Who taught you how to drive? How did that go?
 - What is your favorite spot in nature? Why?
 - What was your first job? What was it like?
 - Have you ever had a mentor? Who were they? How did they impact you?
 - Have you ever supervised someone in a job? Have you made a mistake as their boss before?
- Thank the group for their responses and state how the question will relate to the session.
 - Example: the question “What is your favorite spot out in nature?” is asked. After thanking them for their responses, the facilitator notes that the group will now dive in to discussing the creation stories in Genesis.

Module C: Highs and Lows (10-15 minutes)

“Highs and lows” can be a great weekly activity that helps develop relationships within your group. If you have a large group, it is recommended you break up into smaller groups for this, in the interest of time.

- Go around the room and invite participants to share the best thing that has happened to them this week (high) and the worst (low).
- The facilitator should be the first to share – this helps break the ice and set the tone for everyone else!

Module D: Podcast Discussion (20-30 minutes or longer if you listen to the entire podcast)

Use this module if your group has committed to listening and discussing the podcast.

- Depending on your group's preference, play the summary of that week's readings at the beginning of the podcast (2-3 minutes) or the entire podcast (20 minutes).

- Discuss the podcast as a group using the questions below and/or your own questions:
 - What was your key takeaway from the podcast?
 - Did the podcast clear up any of the readings for you this week?
 - Is there anything in the readings with which you are wrestling after listening to the podcast?
 - How can you apply what you've heard this week to your life?
 - If there were any specific questions asked or discussed in the podcast, feel free to ask your group the same questions for discussion.

Module E: Sermon Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Use this module if your group would like to discuss the previous Sunday's sermon. It may be helpful to remind group members they can catch up on sermons when they miss a Sunday service at hydeparkumc.org/sermons.

- Discuss the sermon using the weekly discussion questions provided on the website at www.hydeparkumc.org/Bible2020. Other example questions to ask include:
 - Did anything surprise you from the sermon?
 - Were there any 'ah-hah' moments for you?
 - What was your key takeaway from the sermon?
 - How do you think you can apply the sermon to your life?

Module F: Discuss the Scripture Readings (20-30 minutes)

Use this as a time to discuss the Scripture readings. It is important to remember that no one – including pastors, staff or facilitators – is the authority in the room. Everyone is learning together.

- Encourage group members to share any insights or applications they had while reading through the Scriptures.
- Encourage group members to share with what they wrestled and explore resolutions together.
- Discuss the question for the week provided with the Scripture readings (www.hydeparkumc.org/Scriptures) and/or discuss some of the questions below:

- What does this passage say about God?
- What does this passage say about humanity?
- What does this passage say about the relationship between God and humanity?
- What do you think is the key message of this week's readings? Why?
- What for you was the key verse or passage from this past week?
- What did you learn from this week's readings?
- What from this week's reading stood out or spoke to you the most? How did it affect you?
- Does anyone know the context? What was going on at the time it was written? [Feel free to share this yourself if you know]
- Does anything from this passage apply today? If so, how?
- Can you think of a way to illustrate the main point of this week's readings in your own life?
- Is there something from this week's reading that surprised you? If so, how were you surprised?
- Are there any verses in this passage that confuse you or that seem to contradict other parts of the Bible?
- In view of what we have read, what changes do you think you should make in your attitude, words or actions?

General questions adapted from <https://www.dougbrittonbooks.com/onlinebiblestudies-godchristianityandchurch/questionsforbiblestudiesyoucanask/>.

Module G: Reading Scripture Together (15-30 minutes)

This module allows the group to focus on one or a few passages of Scripture versus the entire week's readings.

- Prior to the session, select one or more readings from the abbreviated Scripture reading plan www.hydeparkumc.org/Scripture and/or utilize the Scripture reading from the previous Sunday's sermon for your group to discuss.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the passage aloud for the entire group.
- Discuss the passage using some of the questions provided in Module F.

Module H: Devotional Discussion (10-15 minutes)

This module allows the group to reflect on and discuss the devotional readings. The daily devotionals are available online here www.hydeparkumc.org/Bible2020:

- Discuss the devotional readings as a group. Use questions such as:
 - What was your key takeaway from the devotional readings this week?
 - Did the devotionals clear up any of the scripture readings for you this week?
 - Is there anything with which you are still wrestling?
 - How do you think you can apply what you've read in the devotional this week to your daily living?

Module I: Closing and Prayer (5-10 minutes)

It is recommended you close each session with a brief closing summary or wrap-up statement and prayer.

- Summarize for the group, in your own words, the key takeaways from your discussion.
 - Optional: ask if any group members would like to share their key takeaways.
- Ask the group for any prayer requests. Give everyone the opportunity to share any prayer requests they have for the coming week.
- Ask for a volunteer to close the group in prayer. If no one volunteers, proceed with a closing prayer.
- Gather up the name tents to be used the next week and return any church Bibles to the "Shared Resources" cabinet in your room.

Additional Resources

We are here for you as you facilitate a small group! Below are a few places to find resources to help you prepare for your small group meeting:

- **The Big Ideas to Focus on Each Week of the Bible Project 2020**, courtesy of the preaching and podcast teams: www.hydeparkumc.org/Bible2020
- **Resources and ideas from other facilitators:** www.hydeparkumc.org/Bible2020

- **Scholarly resources**, like commentaries, Bible dictionaries and more: Knox Hall Room 153.
- **Specific Bible passage discussion question resources**, contact Nicki Taylor to utilize (ntaylor@hydeparkumc.org, 813.253.5388, ext. 231).
- **For general facilitation help and troubleshooting**, contact Nicki Taylor (ntaylor@hydeparkumc.org, 813.253.5388, ext.231).