

Goals for the Group Discussion

1. To fellowship in the Spirit of God while focusing on His word
2. To help class members assimilate God's truths, for some who did not "complete" the lesson but come to stay connected with the study and the class
3. To provide an opportunity for the class to ask questions and gain clarification concerning the lesson
4. To provide a variety of modes for learning and strengthen this process for everyone (see the following examples)
5. To provide an oral discussion as a means of allowing *auditory learners* the opportunity to hear the review and participate in the discussion
6. To provide the Visual Aid on the board so that the *visual learners* can look at the review on the board and learn from what is pictured before them
7. To provide opportunity for the *tactile/kinesthetic* learner to copy the visual aid onto his or her own paper
8. To affirm the *analytic learner* who learns through details; seeing, listing, comparing, and contrasting the details in the Scripture being studied
9. To help the class arrive at "the big picture" of the lesson, such as the themes in each of the chapters of the book being studied
10. To encourage the *global learner* to appreciate the attention others have paid to the details of the lesson, as it is easier for the global learner to "see" the themes of the lesson
11. To gain insight from another's perspective because of differences in background, age, and spiritual gifts
12. To gain a broader, deeper understanding of the passage through the leader's insights
13. One of the goals of the ministry of Sunergos Bible Studies is to lead people to truth by helping them discover God's truth revealed through the Holy Spirit. (This was also the premise of Socrates' teaching!)
14. To brainstorm ideas for living out the truths of the lesson so students can apply this to their life
15. To connect class members to others in the class, to rejoice with those who rejoice, to mourn with those who mourn
16. To provide accountability among class members, encouraging them to challenge one another in their faith

Goals for the Discussion Leader

1. To facilitate a discussion that would review the main points of the week's lesson
2. To encourage learning with people from all educational backgrounds, asking a variety of questions to help the class members learn. To be sensitive and gracious to individual personalities and differences among class members
3. To encourage students to embrace the critical thinking skills that are incorporated in the lesson, to help them see the value of the review through the group discussion
4. To direct the class member's thinking, asking questions that incorporate themes from the lesson, which cover Scripture from a number of biblical references. If the message is revealed in a number of places, and demonstrates the progressive revelation of the word, God's plan will be made clearer through the discussion.
5. Some class members are used to the lecture as a means of teaching, so encourage the class with the role that they have in contributing to someone else's learning, and the importance of each member of the group sharing. To encourage participation from all who are in the class.
6. To affirm each in the class, to build confidence and acceptance among class members
7. To provide a safe environment that will encourage trust within the members of the class, as confidentiality is essential
8. To extend God's grace to those who are new to the faith, or that come from other denominations
9. To provide historical and contextual information regarding the passage
10. To share from your own life experiences on the topic helps class members feel more open and comfortable with sharing
11. To encourage the class members to keep coming and to keep working on the lessons even though they might have trouble completing the lesson. This includes encouraging the class members with their participation as some feel they must have an "answer key" but none is provided.
12. To keep the class focused on the goal for the discussion of the lesson, graciously keeping the discussion moving, while being sensitive to the needs of the class
13. To greet each class member by name before the class or during the discussion; to learn the name of each class member
14. To prayerfully match each class member with some one else to be prayer partners throughout the class. This ministry would encourage the class to share during the week when they have a prayer request, as well as sharing prayers of praise for answers! The prayer partners would also be encouraged to meet monthly to get better acquainted and to pray together.
15. To pray for the members of the class every week, perhaps meeting with someone who is willing to help you with class administration. Ask the class to share their prayer requests and their goal for taking the class on a 3 x 5 card that you can refer to during your prayer time.

The Class Discussion and the Use of the Visual Aids

1. I believe the class benefits from a time of corporate **Scripture reading, singing and praying** before the discussion begins. I open each class session asking the class to stand for the reading of a passage of Scripture that relates to the lesson, a song that reflects a theme of the lesson and an opening prayer asking for the Holy Spirit's help with understanding what God would have each of us see so that we could apply the truth to our life.
2. I have provided two resources that I believe will help you, if you choose to use them. First there is a **Visual Aid** for each lesson that provides suggestions for the group discussion based on the weekly lesson. The Visual Aids for the first two lessons are more detailed, showing the headings that could be covered as well as the answers from Scripture. The remaining Visual Aids contain only the theme headings and the Scripture used in the lesson. These will then provide the basis for you going through the lesson, gathering information that could provide answers to the questions relating to the various themes. Considering the time constraints, it would not be possible to discuss every phrase that is listed on the Visual Aid. Let the Lord lead you with what to include in the discussion and what you leave out.
3. Also included is a separate sheet for each lesson that gives suggestions for the Scripture reading, song, and examples of questions that could be asked for the discussion. Sometimes specific **questions** found in the lesson can be asked. Asking questions where there are many right answers encourages participation from more class members. For example, I prepare my Visual Aid sheet with a list of every possible response to the question, but I don't expect to have time for every thing I've listed on the sheet. An example would be in the Lesson 1 overview discussion, "What does the book reveal about God that spoke to your spirit and made a difference in your week?" The heading simply says, "Truths about God," however, there are many possibilities for answers. I take my ideas for questions from what God has done in my own heart as I worked through the lesson, as well as being sensitive to what individuals in the class are dealing with in their own lives. Some questions will be observation questions, some questions of interpretation, some challenging them to think about the eternal principles of the lesson, and finally, some questions for application of the lesson to their life.
4. To **prepare** for the class, I suggest that you complete the lesson yourself and then consider going through the lesson **reviewing** the lesson before the class meets, so that it will be fresh in your mind.
5. When you have asked a question, allow the class time to think. When there is silence and you have then reworded the question, you might ask them to share with the person they are sitting next to. Or, you might ask a question and then ask them **not to answer** for 30 seconds and have them share with the person they are sitting close to.
6. Each week choose a statement from a Scripture used in the lesson or from the text of the lesson itself and ask them to **respond to the statement**.
7. Allow the discussion to **reflect back** on the discussions from earlier lessons as a means of review and to see how God's truth builds as one studies the word.
8. While I encourage the class members to participate, I always make a commitment to the class that **I will not call on them** unless they share something personally with me ahead of time that they would like to share in class.

9. I allow time at the end of the discussion for **small groups to meet and pray together**. Sometimes I will ask a question or present a challenge to the group and they pray concerning that, but the reason I allow this time so that class members connect, as two prayer partners meet with two other partners during the entire semester. Week by week they support one another through prayer. This has been a great encouragement to the women in the class. This last semester I was in a group where the three other women were each married to nonbelievers, and while that's not the case with me, we had such a sweet time of fellowship together.

10. At the end of prayer time, we usually play a song to signal when the "time" is over, although some continue praying beyond the closing time. Sometimes we play a song by Bach or Handel, sometimes a hymn.