



Discovery Groups

what are discovery groups?

These are any gathering of people who are seeking to know more about God/Jesus and what it is to follow God. This is an environment that we want to provide to allow people to honestly, openly, and faithfully search out the Truth. These groups can be as diverse as seeker LTGs to book clubs to discussion groups to evangelistic Bible studies. Size is not an issue for us—it can be one-on-one or a group of 25+ people.

For us, discovery groups are not “churches.” The “church” is present as followers of Jesus who are part of the “Church” are there. Of course God is there—I am with you always (Matt 28:20). But it seems there are some essential elements missing to be a local expression of the church. We would prefer not to call these churches, but discovery groups.

But every follower of Jesus needs to make it a priority to make disciples. We see discovery groups as a flexible way that everyone can be a part of sowing the seed of the Good News. We understand that not everyone is going to be a “church planter.” So there is no pressure to start a church.

Discovery Groups need to be *focused* toward the seeker and *doable* by the disciple. That means different kinds of discovery groups for different kinds of folks! So feel free to experiment!

For you “church planters,” we want you to start churches, but that means you need to make disciples. The discovery group is a way to make disciples that form into churches. The discovery group may be started with the intention of becoming a church, but it takes disciples to make a church, not just good intentions.

With that being said, a local expression of the church may emerge from this group. In fact that’s why we do them—to serve alongside Jesus as He builds His Church! So, if someone comes into relationship with Jesus, then we want to help him or her grow and reach their circle of influence, so that more disciples can be made. These disciples then can form into spiritual families that are local expressions of the church. That is why we do discovery groups!

tools we recommend:

❶ Genesis to Jesus

This is a *seven-session study about the major themes in the Bible, from Genesis to Jesus*. For those who want an overview of the Bible and God’s story, this is a great place to start. For those who know nothing or little about the Bible—this is for them. In fact, it even spends time learning how to look up verses in the Bible. It is very basic. It would probably be best to go through this once before you try to lead someone else through this. This is a tool written by **thequest** (Larry Tetzke, Sam Schwartz and Mike Jentes). We are actually revising/re-writing it to be used as a one-on-one or do-it-yourself kind of format rather than a “small group only” tool.

❷ The Gospel of John

This book is the best place to start for someone who wants to find out more about Jesus. *We recommend that you start here with any seeker*. You can do it for your first LTG time!

We have Gospel of John’s in a little booklet from the New Living Translation that you can have to give to someone. Even if they have a Bible, you know they can read this! Maybe you both read from the booklet—so your 25-pound black study Bible doesn’t intimidate them. 😊

❸ Discovery questions* for the Gospel of John

In a group format you can read a chapter together or a section or however much you want to and ask these questions for each reading:

- 1) What did you like?
- 2) What didn't you like?
- 3) What didn't you understand?
- 4) What new thing did you learn about God/Jesus?
- 5) What word or phrase do you want to take with you?
- 6) What are you going to do about it?

(The beautiful thing about these questions is that they are designed for any group-learning environment around the Bible. So you could use these 6 questions for your time in the Word in your house church gathering too!)

* These 6 six questions were taken from the *Organic Church Planters’ Greenhouse: Session 5, The Seed is the Word of the Kingdom*. By Neil Cole and Paul Kaak © 2001, page 6. The questions were adapted from John DeVries of Mission 21 India.

④ The Seven Signs In the Gospel of John

“But these [signs] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John 20:31 (NIV)

*Here is the list: (the italicized titles are just catchy ways to say them for invitations, etc. *)*

- 1) John 2:1-11 Changing Water to Wine --*Jesus is the Life of the Party*
- 2) John 4:46-54 Healing the Official's Son --*Jesus is the Long Distance Operator*
- 3) John 5:1-18 The Invalid of Bethesda --*Jesus is Hope for the Helpless*
- 4) John 6:5-14 The Feeding of the 5,000 --*Jesus is Real Satisfaction*
- 5) John 6:16-21 (25-35) Walking on the Water --*Jesus in the Boat is Better*
- 6) John 9:1-41 Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind --*Jesus is the Empowerer of the Ordinary*
- 7) John 11:17-46 The Resurrection of Lazarus --*Jesus is Stronger than Death*

We have two different tools that you can use for using the Seven Signs in John. . .

① Seven signs discussion questions*

The goal is to allow the miracles of John to introduce seekers to Jesus. Individuals (persons of peace, perhaps) are invited to invite their friends to a group that will meet 7 times. Here is an example invitation: “*Join us for a hour long group in which you get to meet Jesus from the perspective of those who knew him, not from the viewpoint of a preacher or theologian or philosopher...*”

For the first week, Read the first of the seven signs aloud and then ask the following three questions--and they can even be asked *by* the seekers in the group. Encourage interaction around the answers. Then do it the next week with the second sign, the third, etc.

- 1) What does this say about human nature (people in general)?
- 2) What does this say about human needs?
- 3) What does this say about Jesus?

* These titles from the *Organic Church Planters' Greenhouse: Session 5, The Seed is the Word of the Kingdom*. By Neil Cole and Paul Kaak © 2001, page 5.

* Ibid.

② Face To Face with Jesus--Seven Signs Brochure*

This is probably easier to be done in groups of 2 or 3 than the first tool, but is certainly usable for large groups too. You can go the speed of your group with this tool, but it is probably best to have seven times together (one for each sign). You can do this in a week or in a couple of months, the timing doesn't really matter, because God is doing the work!

You can walk through this by giving the people the brochure with the "blanks" and walking through it step by step. You can have the "answer guide" with the blanks filled in. Or you can look over the answer guide ahead of time to be ready for your time together. *Warning:* Don't be strapped in to only the answers on the guide. The people you are with might have a profound insight—watch God do His work!

other books that could be helpful

The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus by John R. Cross.

If you would rather listen to it than read it—check out www.goodseed.com/audio.html.
This book is also in a variety of foreign languages—including Chinese and Spanish.

Who is This Jesus? by Michael Green

Christianity: The Faith That Makes Sense by Dennis McCallum

This book is also translated into Chinese.

* By Dave Guiles and Gary McCaman, © 1997.