

CATALYST
VINEYARD CHURCH

HOW TO LAUNCH A
DISCOVERY
BIBLE STUDY

A GUIDE



NOVO

INVITE PEOPLE TO DISCOVER WHO GOD IS THROUGH READING THE BIBLE TOGETHER

Exploring what the Bible says in a small group is a simple next step for people who are curious about God but aren't likely to look to the church down the street for answers. A Discovery Bible Study (DBS, or sometimes just a "Discovery Group" for short) is a great way to do that. Discovery Groups begin with a Person of Peace (a spiritual seeker) and include that person's family, friends, or network of social relationships—whoever they invite to explore with them.

A Discovery Bible Study is an opportunity for people to discover firsthand what the Bible says about God, about people, and what it means to follow Jesus.

A Discovery Group (DG) is a non-threatening way to start discipling someone even before they become a believer.

You don't need to be a Bible or theology expert to launch an effective DBS. A DBS is based on the belief that God's word is powerful (Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16) and that God's Spirit is faithful to lead us into all truth (John 16:13). When you facilitate a DBS, you are essentially co-leading with God's Spirit, who is the major player in guiding seekers toward Jesus.



CONTENTS

STEP ONE	Invite and Gather
STEP TWO	Connect
STEP THREE	Discover
STEP FOUR	Empower
STEP FIVE	Multiply
STEP SIX	Keep Accountable
SUMMARY	Putting It All Together



STEP ONE

Invite and Gather

One of the biggest roles that you, as a believer, have in this process is inviting people to join in a Discovery Group (DG Invitation). If a Discovery Bible Study were a baseball game, you would be the coach sending players onto the field. How do you do that?

First, you need to find out who has an interest in “playing the game”; we call them “Persons of Peace.” A Person of Peace will be open to relationship and to talking with you about spiritual things. They will have a hunger for the things of God, be quick to share what they’re learning with others, and bring you into their network of relationships. People who are willing to have meaningful conversations about spiritual things and who display these characteristics are the ones you should invite to start and lead a Discovery Group.

Once you’ve identified a potential Person of Peace, you need to actually “make the ask.” Ask if they’d like to discover more about God and what’s in the Bible.

If they say yes, encourage them to bring others along with them. This will make the process much more dynamic.

Here are some helpful questions you can use to invite someone into leading a Discovery Group:

- Would you be interested in learning...
 - how to discover what God has to say about life and his purpose for yours?
 - a simple way to discover more about God and yourself?
 - a simple way to help your friends and family discover hope?
 - how to become the spiritual leader of your household?
- Would you be willing to meet with me one time for one hour to learn more?
- Would you be willing to invite 3-5 people to start and lead a Discovery Group?

Once you have a group of people willing to discover more about Jesus, it’s time to launch your Discovery Group.

DISCOVER WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT...

Recognizing a Person of Peace

- Read Luke 10:1-11
- Ask, “What does this passage tell me about what a person of peace is like?”

Inviting and Gathering

- Read John 1:40-42
- Ask, “What does this passage tell me about inviting others to meet Jesus?”

STEP TWO

Connect

You're really doing this! God has led you to a Person of Peace; they've gathered a small group around them, figured out the best way to meet, and brought them together at the chosen place. What do you do now?

You might be tempted to jump straight into Bible study, but we're going to stop you right there. While the Bible is our central tool to discover Jesus in a DBS, there are some other crucial elements to making disciples,

which is our ultimate goal. Before you get into scripture, take time to connect. To continue using our coaching analogy, you could consider this a pregame warm-up. It's much more than an icebreaker for the group, and we'll explain why.

There are three key questions that make the connect time an intentional part of the discipling process. These questions not only help participants to connect on a personal level, but begin to instill the DNA of Christian fellowship into the group from the very beginning.

The first two questions lay the groundwork of worship (recognizing God's presence and giving thanks). The third one steers participants toward intercession (expressing need) and creates opportunities to meet those needs (fellowship). Those of us in the Church are familiar with

small group dynamics that include open sharing, discussion of deep life topics, and requests for support. But for many outside the Church, this is a foreign space. The fellowship and connection within a Discovery Group are things many people

long for and rarely experience. The connect time is a powerful space to open hearts wider to the word of God.

THREE CONNECT QUESTIONS:

- What are you thankful for?
- How did God show up in your life this past week?
- What challenges or stresses are you facing in your life right now?

DISCOVER WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT...

Fellowship

- Read Acts 2:42-47 & Hebrews 10:24-25
- Ask, "What do these passages tell me about the Church and fellowship?"

STEP THREE

Discover

DISCOVER WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT...

The Power of Scripture

Read Hebrews 4:12 &
2 Timothy 3:16

Ask, "What do these passages tell me about the power of scripture in someone's life?"

Acting on Scripture

Read Matthew 7:24-27

Ask, "What does this passage tell me about responding to what I read in scripture?"

We've made it to the heart of a DBS—discovering God through his word! It's time for you, the coach, to send your players (Persons of Peace) onto the field, where they can explore what the Bible reveals about God and about them. Your main tools in this process are a carefully selected Bible passage and some key questions.

Here are the steps in the discovery process:

- Read the passage.
- Ask, "What in the passage stands out to you?" (Select someone from the group to retell it in their own words.)
- Ask, "What does this passage mean?" (Or specifically "What does this tell me about God/Jesus?" and "What does this tell me about people?")
- Ask, "If this is God speaking... what will you do to obey Him?" (Another way to ask this with a non-believer is, "If I believed this was true, how would my life be different?") At the end of this step, everyone should have a practical "I will" statement.

Alongside the Word and the Holy Spirit, these questions start to reshape a person's worldview—their beliefs about God, about humanity, and about how we should live. But a Discovery Bible Study is about more than head-knowledge or curiosity. It shifts immediately from knowledge to action, from awareness to real life. If you've been involved in many Bible studies before, this may feel very different or even a bit uncomfortable to you. Many of us have not been expected or challenged to instantly put what we read into practice. This is one of the most powerful elements of a DBS. People's lives actually start to look different as a result of their obedience.

It's helpful to remember that in the discovery process you are the coach, not the player. Your goal should always be to empower the players on the field to successfully engage in the game. Once you get them onto the field and provide the tools they need to participate, it's time to let God connect with them personally and for you to coach them from the sidelines.

STEP FOUR

Empower

While the process of leading a discovery group is fairly simple, the process of being a good “coach” or facilitator can be challenging. It sometimes takes a colossal effort, as someone who is really good at the “game” of understanding God’s word, not to take the bat away from the little league players and hit the ball for them.

Remember that DBS’s are all about self-discovery. Resist the temptation to become the expert in the room: teaching, preaching, providing extra-Biblical references, or even referring to other scripture passages beyond what’s in front of you. Nothing shuts down a discussion faster than the feeling that one person has the answers. And besides, what we discover for ourselves usually carries a lot more weight and is far more meaningful and memorable than what another person tells or teaches us.

When you commit to facilitate in this open way, you empower people in the group to personally grapple with the passage and give God’s Spirit more room to speak truth to the heart. Not giving all the answers doesn’t mean you have to be silent in the group. Just be careful not to contribute in ways that go beyond the text. Focus on the Bible, and let the Bible speak.

In a discovery process, questions are one of your strongest allies.

If what people are coming up with feels wildly “off-base,” you can ask, “Where do you see that in this passage?” And if participants mention ideas from other parts of scripture, bring them back by asking, “Do you mind if we keep to this particular scripture?”

The discovery approach requires a willingness to give up control and trust God to be at work. Discovery Bible Study has a high view of the power and authority of the Bible to speak. God can work in power through the Bible to accomplish his redemptive purposes. A DBS is built on a conviction that the Spirit of God is at work in such a process, wooing people toward Jesus. That combination—Word and Spirit—is irresistible.

If possible, don’t lead the study yourself. Ideally the Person of Peace (who gathered others together) facilitates and leads the study within their group. Because this is such a simple process, it is easy to learn. Teaching the Person of Peace to lead not only empowers them in the process, but is also one of the simplest ways to avoid being the expert in the room. This is their discovery process with God, not yours. Give it to God, and give it to your Person of Peace, by faith in God.

DISCOVER

The Holy Spirit’s Role

Read John 16:7-15. Ask, “What does this tell me about the work of the Holy Spirit?”



STEP FIVE

Multiply

A Discovery Bible Study is the cornerstone of a strategy to bring entire networks, cities, and nations to Jesus. This strategy is gaining incredible momentum in many parts of the world, with thousands of new disciples now beginning to follow Jesus. The strategy is called Disciple Making Movements (DMM).

If this sounds a little big in scope for you, consider the plan of God for the world laid out in the Bible. 1 Timothy 2:4 says that God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Not some, but all! As a follower of Jesus and a member of his Body, you are part of this plan. And once you've started a Discovery Bible Study, you have opened a door to be a part of that big movement of the gospel, where the good news of Jesus can multiply far beyond your own power to share it.

How can you equip your group to multiply? First, you ask questions that challenge them to be others-focused and self-giving.

THE MULTIPLY QUESTIONS:

- How can we help one another in our group?
- Who else (outside of our group) can we demonstrate kindness to?
- Who can we tell and how can we share with them what we're learning?

These questions weave the DNA of love (for each other and for all people) into the group, and incorporate Jesus's command to his disciples to tell others the good news. We call them multiplication questions because showing the love of Jesus and sharing the truth God reveals to us are two of the most compelling actions we can take to draw people closer to God.

There's one extra tip for helping your group to multiply that is important on many levels. It's simple, but a little counterintuitive. We recommend that you don't keep an open door policy in Discovery Groups. Don't add new members after the group has started to gain momentum. As the group starts having a transformational impact on its members, it's natural for other people to hear about what's going on and "want in." Instead of adding new members, start new Discovery Groups.

This is where the magic of multiplication (and movement) really starts to kick in. Do you remember the difference between addition and multiplication from your school days? If you only add people to an existing group, you are living in the realm of addition— $3+1=4$. But if you ask the new seeker to pull together a new group, you begin to multiply— $3 \times 2=6$. And over time that makes a huge difference in the number of people given an opportunity to discover Jesus.

When someone asks to join the group, you can say something like this: "Our group has already started and we aren't adding people. Sorry. But if you want to do something like this, I/we will help you start and lead a Discovery Group for yourself and the people you know. Let's start a new group."

DISCOVER WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT...

Multiplication and Expansion

- Read Mark 5:1-20, Acts 11:19-21 & 2 Timothy 2:1-2
- Ask, "What do these passages teach me about multiplication and sharing the gospel?"



STEP SIX

Keep Accountable

DISCOVER WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT...

Obedience

Read Matthew 28:18-20
Ask, "What does this
passage tell me
about obedience?"

It's the final inning of the game. The bases are loaded, the score is tied, and everyone is holding their breath as the batter steps up. The whole team is counting on the next hitter to bring them home. This player is accountable to the rest of the group; they're depending on him. Accountability is a powerful dynamic.

We mentioned earlier how a DBS is not just for learning about God, but for taking action. It's in the response of obedience to Jesus that life transformation starts to take place. Accountability is one of the best tools you have to support one another in making that transformation a reality.

So we'd like you to add this accountability question to your connect time, from the second meeting onward. That means that before you dive into the week's discovery time in the word, everyone will be asked to give an account of what they said they would do.

The accountability question

- Were there any lessons you applied or shared? Did you follow through on your "I will" and "I will tell" statements?

This question will give you a space to celebrate victories and encourage each other to obey Jesus. It's not about making someone feel guilty, but giving them more opportunities to grow. If someone didn't take the action they said they would, you can gently ask, "How can we help you to obey what God is telling you?"

Discovery Groups are a place where community forms around the process of discipleship (following and becoming like Jesus). They have the potential to eventually become churches that meet in homes or community spaces, poised to reach the world with the good news of Jesus. These new churches can multiply by starting Discover Groups that also become churches and form a collective of churches in a geographic area.

PUTTING IT

- ALL TOGETHER -

In this guide we've outlined six major steps to effectively launch a Discovery Bible Study (DBS):

- 1. INVITE AND GATHER**
- 2. CONNECT**
- 3. DISCOVER**
- 4. EMPOWER**
- 5. MULTIPLY**
- 6. KEEP ACCOUNTABLE**

These six steps will guide you all the way through finding and inviting people into your study to catalyze a Disciple Making Movement (DMM), where the good news of Jesus expands far beyond the reach of your original group.

We've covered a lot of ground, so we want to summarize the main components of a DBS one more time. There are 11 key questions that shape a powerful time of discovery. We've looked at these questions in groupings to better understand their purpose, but it's helpful to see how they all flow together. Here's what the full discovery process looks like:

Connect

1. What are you thankful for?
2. How did God show up in your life this past week?
3. What challenges or stresses are present in your life right now?
4. Were there any lessons you applied or shared? Did you follow through on your "I will" and "I will tell" statements?

Discover

5. What does the passage say? (Retell it in your own words.)
6. What does the passage mean? (What does it tell us about God/Jesus? About people?)
7. Where did you see that in this passage? (Used if discussion strays from the passage.)
8. (If this is God speaking...) What will you do about it ("I will" statement)?

Multiply

9. How can we help one another in our group?
10. Who else (outside of our group) can we demonstrate kindness to?
11. Who can we tell and how can we share with them what we're learning ("I will tell" statement)?



NOW IT'S UP TO YOU

As you've learned how a DBS works, have people come to mind who could benefit from being in this kind of a group? Do you know people who might be ready to discover God? Take a minute or two right now to pray over those people and make a plan. Tell someone you trust that you want to do this. Maybe they'll be inspired to join you and start a group of their own!



NOVO