



**Editors Note:**

This is excellent material that has been used in starting and multiplying churches all over the world. This tool is a great way to start a group with unbelievers, and the principles that are used for studying the Bible are ones that many simple churches use regularly in the life of the church. The principles can be used with any scripture passage and the focus on discovering biblical truth as a group instead of depending on a weekly sermon is very practical and helpful for simple churches. The principles also emphasize the importance of application and obedience.

We hope to provide some additional examples of how to use this ministry tool in the near future.

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**Guiding Principles**

Discovering Jesus groups can be a great instrument for starting simple churches. Their purpose is to bring the gospel into an existing group/network/community, through a person(s) of peace (Luke 10:1-9)\*. The goal of the group is to help people discover a relationship with God in Christ through a Scripture-centered, Spirit driven, obedience-based discovery process. The groups establish the DNA of a disciple making and church planting movement. As people come to Christ the group moves from a Discovering Jesus group to a simple church. Those involved reproduce the process with others and a disciple-making movement begins.

Discovering Jesus is facilitated through questions rather than through a teacher. The questions are designed to help people discover the simple meaning of the passage and then personally apply it. We want to help people move from reading the text for information to heart transformation. The process is more about letting the text read us than us reading (analyzing) the text. A supernatural work of the Spirit occurs when people read the Bible with listening ears and responsive hearts.

### **Scriptural Basis for this Process**

Luke 8:8, 11, 15, 18

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."... "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.... As for the seed on good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.... Therefore consider carefully how you listen..."

Luke 8:21

"He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."

Matthew 7:24

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock..."

Romans 10:17

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

Hebrews 4:12-13

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

1 Peter 1:23-25

"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you."

John 16:12-15

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

## **Person of Peace**

A person of peace is a man or woman who is receptive or open to the message of Christ. They may be interested in spiritual things. They may express interest in your faith and/or lifestyle. They may have a high respect for Jesus; though not see him as the only way. Or they may be someone who recently turned his or her life over to Christ. They are also people with relational connections. Meaning they are a doorway into a network of people. They know lots of people and are known by lots of people, for better or for worse. The person of peace becomes the avenue for passing Christ to an entire community. The person of peace invites their friends or family to the group. Ideally the group will meet on their territory (i.e. their house).

According to Luke 10, a person of peace is someone who will invite you into his or her relational network. Luke 10 says "don't move around from house to house." We are to stay with the person and share our life with them. Relationship is essential – the gospel is a

relational message, the expansion of the gospel comes through our relationship with them and then through their relationship with others.

The person of peace becomes the beginning point of a new church. Instead of extracting them from their environment, we empower them to follow Jesus and lead others to Jesus in their existing sphere of life.

Scriptural examples of God redeeming relational networks (oikos) through person's of peace: John 4:30-41 - the Samaritan woman; Mark 5:19-20 - the demon-possessed man; Acts 10 – Cornelius; Acts 16:1-15 – Lydia; Acts 16:19-24 - the jailer; Acts 18:8 – Crispus the synagogue ruler; 1 Corinthians 16:15 – Stephanas' household.

It is important to recognize that not all people are persons of peace, only those who are open to the gospel message. According to Luke 10 some people will not receive the message; some will be confrontational and /or distracting from the mission. In such cases the Scripture directs us to “shake the dust off your feet”. In other words, we are to move on from such people. We can still love them and be Christ-like to them; however their rejection of the gospel indicates we should move on and look for those people who are more receptive.

### Question Driven Discovery

The Discovering Jesus group is a question driven discussion. Questions facilitate the discovery process. Questions allow the listener to wrestle with the text and discover answers for themselves. Jesus is our example in this, he often taught through asking questions (Mark 8:17-21; Luke 2:49, 5:21-23, 7:39-44, 8:25, 9:18-20, 10:25-28, 18:18-20, 20:1-8, 24:17-19; John 4:7, 9:35-38).

- The purpose of a question driven discovery is:
- To give room for the Spirit to speak and teach.
- To learn how to discover the meaning of Scripture through questions.
- To ask questions that lead to application. Jesus said we will be blessed if we do what he says (John 13:15-17; Luke 8:21; James 1:22-25). Application based questions help us begin to apply the Scripture to our lives, even if we don't “get” everything in it. This process helps us become obedient-based disciples, even before one may know who Jesus fully is. Followers become believers, rather than believers becoming followers. We see

this process in the life of the 12 disciples. The disciples did not always “get it”, yet they followed. Their faith grew as they continued to follow and obey. (Mark 4:13; 4:41; 6:51; 8:17-21; 9:10; 9:32; 9:34; 10:13; 10:26; 10:38; Luke 5:1-11)

- To learn as a group. Jesus taught in groups. Group learning allows for diversity of gifts to emerge, as well as a diversity of insights into the Scripture. Additionally, groups have a group memory,. One may forget, but the group usually does not. Also, once properly trained, the group will hold itself accountable for staying scripturally based.

- The facilitator's role:
- The facilitator is not a teacher. He or she facilitates group learning through asking questions.
- The facilitator should strive to create a safe environment where people can honestly raise questions, voice confusions, and share personal needs.
- Romans 14-15:13; Galatians 6:1-2
  
- The facilitator should have an idea of the principles in the passage and its application based on their personal study of the passage.
- If the facilitator is young in the faith, they can be coached to know the passage's principles and general application.
- It is important for the facilitator to know that if the group doesn't end up where they want it to, it's ok. The facilitator can let the discovery process end where it ends and try again next time. They shouldn't switch into a teacher role. This will cause the group to look to the person instead of the Scripture for instruction. It may take time for people to track with the process, but once they get it, it will stick.
- The facilitator can (but does not need to) record participant's gleanings as people make them.
- Notes can be used to go back and highlight/ask questions about the most pertinent statements/questions
- Recording learning's may be uncomfortable for some people. If the facilitator records, it may help if they explain why they are doing so.
- The facilitator can encourage the group to take notes/journal if it will be helpful in processing and applying the passage.

- Discovering Jesus Questions (The questions have three main groupings: What? So What? Now What?).

- **For seekers:** The questions assume that non-believers either do not believe the passage is true or they view it as one truth of many. You don't try to convince them that

the passage is true or the only truth; instead you say “if this passage is true”. Your goal is to direct them to state what the passage would mean “if” it were true. They don’t have to acknowledge the passage as truth, only a possible truth. It may be one of many truths to them, and that is ok. Even if people think it is one of many truths, you can still help the group discover the truth of that particular passage. The rest is up to God.

- What?
- Did anything in this passage capture your attention? If so, what?
- If this passage is true what does it tell us about Jesus?
- If this passage is true what does it tell us about humanity?
  
- So What?
- If this passage is true how does it change the way you see Jesus?
- If this passage is true how would it change the way you view others?
- If this passage is true how would it change the way you live?
  
- Now What?
- Regardless of where your faith is at right now, if you were to apply what we learned about Jesus to something in your life this week, what would that look like? Be specific.
- Do you know anyone with whom you can share this story with this week?
- Do you know anyone in need who this group can help?
  
  
- *For believers:*

[Note: once you have a group of people who have become believers and you become a spiritual family(a church), you can use this same discovery process for studying the Bible together. There are times for teaching, but most often you will want to allow the believers to discover God’s truth themselves.]



- That's an interesting thought, let's talk more about that after we have finished; right now let's focus on what this passage is saying.

## The Group Process

1. Share one thing you are thankful for and one thing that is stressing you.
2. Pray together (this may come later if the group are not yet believers or it can be a moment of silence for seekers)
3. Ask the group to share what God told them through His Word since the last meeting. Ask them to share how they applied the previous week's Scripture.
4. Read Scripture out loud while people follow along in their Bibles.
5. Have someone else read the same passage out loud while the group listens.
6. Have someone in the group retell the passage in their own words. Allow the group to add to the retelling, if necessary.
7. Use discovery questions to encourage the group to engage the passage.
8. Close in prayer or silence.

## Discovering Jesus Reference List

16 week study

Theme	Passage	Related Passages (can be used for Personal Reflection)
Jesus – God Amongst Us	John 1:1-18	Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20
Jesus and the Testimony of John the Baptist	John 1:19-34, 3:22-36	
Jesus and Nicodemus	John 3:1-21	
Jesus and the Woman at the Well	John 4:1-29	
Jesus the Bread of Life	John 6:22-51 (leader give context)	feeding 5000 context)

Jesus Sets us Free John 8:21-36  
Jesus and the Blind Man John 9

Luke 4:14-21; Romans 6:16-23; 1 John 1:1-2:2

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead John 11:1-44  
Jesus and Loving One Another John 13:1-17, 34-35  
Jesus the Way to the Father John 14:1-14  
Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit John 14:15-31  
Jesus the Vine John 15:1-17

Luke 5:17-26  
Luke 6:27-36; 1 John 4:7-21  
John 5:1-29; John 12:44-50  
John 16:4-15; Romans 8:1-17

Jesus' Crucifixion John 18-19 (read sections Isaiah 53, 1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 9:11-12, 25)

Jesus' Resurrection John 20:1-31 Luke 24:1-53; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Peter 1:3-9

We Have a Choice John 20:30-31; John 3:1-2 Romans 3:9-26 and 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-10  
Life in the Spirit John 7:37-39; Romans 8:1-17 Acts 1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Galatians 2:2