



CCO FAITH STUDY SERIES

LEADER GUIDE

DISCOVERY

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Faith Study Objectives

CCO's Mission

Proclaim / Equip / Commission. To bring people to Christ, build them up as Catholic Christians, and send them out to reach others.

Objectives

The ultimate goal of CCO's Faith Study series is to form Missionary Disciples who embrace their baptismal call to pursue holiness and embrace the Church's primary mission of evangelization. The 5th General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean (the Aparecida Document) outlined five fundamental aspects of the process of forming Missionary Disciples:

1. The Encounter with Jesus Christ
2. Conversion
3. Discipleship
4. Communion
5. Mission

These five aspects of the formation of a Missionary Disciple can be found in this series. Discipleship begins with embracing the call to become a disciple of Christ. A disciple is one who has made a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ. This person has encountered Him and experienced a conversion of heart and mind (*metanoia*). The first goal of this series is to offer every participant the opportunity to make the personal decision, whether as a recommitment or for the first time, to embrace a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

People who make this important decision have started down the path of discipleship. Each lesson presents a step on the path towards greater maturity in their calls to holiness in Christ and in their readiness to fulfill their baptismal calls to serve in the mission of evangelization. Each participant should, therefore, grow in communion with others, in pursuit of holiness and in response to the mission of the Church.

CCO's collective ministry experience has demonstrated that effective evangelization also requires an individual dimension. We firmly believe that the renewal of the world will be accomplished one person at a time. To accomplish this, each book in the series has a prescribed topic for a one-on-one meeting between the leader and each participant. These one-on-one meetings are vital to the individual support of each participant and should be treated as an integral part of the program. This Faith Study Series is more than just an opportunity to add to our knowledge of the Catholic faith. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, it is designed to bring participants to a real and effective encounter with Jesus Christ and to progressively build them into the Missionary Disciples the Church needs them to be to "make his proclamation of joy resound in the new millennium" (St. John Paul II, Papal Welcoming Ceremony at the 17th World Youth Day [Toronto, July 25, 2002]).

Goals of Each Thematic Study

CCO has formulated five small group thematic Faith Studies: *Discovery*, *Source*, *Growth*, *Trust* and *Commission*. These are Faith Studies, not Bible studies in a pure sense (i.e. the study of long passages of Scripture in their context). CCO Faith Studies look at particular Scripture passages and other Church documents as they relate to certain topics or themes (e.g. prayer, the love of God, the Holy Spirit).

The series does not attempt to teach comprehensive theology. It is simply meant to (re)introduce participants to the basics of the Catholic faith, challenging them to greater holiness by means of group discussion.

Leaders should understand the purpose of each study in the series: what it teaches, how studies complement each other and the objectives of each lesson. Small group sessions should be purposeful (for example, we want to avoid spending hours looking up verses that may quickly be forgotten). Adhering to the objectives of each lesson will help leaders to communicate their content effectively.

DISCOVERY—Evangelization. The first four lessons of this Faith Study introduce the basic concepts of the Christian faith. In the fifth lesson, participants are invited to make a commitment to Christ and choose to become his disciple. The sixth lesson helps them understand how to begin to live this new commitment within the context of their relationship with Jesus and the community of the Church.

SOURCE—Holy Spirit. This Faith Study looks at the Holy Spirit's vital role in our lives, which is to direct us to be holy, and empower us to overcome our sinfulness.

GROWTH—Daily Christian Growth. This Faith Study explores living out of a commitment to Christ. It explains the essential components of the Christian life (prayer, Scripture, sacraments, fellowship, service and witness).

TRUST—Deepening trust in God. This study helps participants grow in trusting the Lord in all aspects of life so as to live in greater freedom.

COMMISSION—Missionary Identity. This Faith Study explores the Church's deepest identity, which is Her missionary character. The lessons examine truths and principles about evangelization and discipleship that CCO has learned over years of active missionary engagement.

Discovery Goals

“ Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation. ”

CCC 161

If you glance through the six lessons and their goals in the table of contents, you will notice that they present the *kerygma* (or the basic Gospel message), summarized in four points:

1. God is love and created us for relationship with him.
2. That relationship has been broken though sin.
3. Jesus, exclusively, restores that relationship through his death and resurrection.
4. We are all personally invited to accept this gift of salvation.

The reality today is that many Catholics need to be reevangelized; to hear the Good News explained in a clear and simple way to which they can respond. Many of our participants first received the gift of salvation at their Baptism through the faith of their parents. They are invited to make that faith their own.

“ While we have received baptism in the church, the church gave it in the hope that at some point in our adult life we would confirm our “I believe” in a personal, free act of faith. ”

Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa,
(Preacher to the papal household)
The Word Among Us, May 1996

“ [S]ome Catholics have neglected the importance of this conscious, personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Catholics sometimes assume that persons who are baptized, attend Mass, and receive the sacraments regularly have obviously accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of their lives.... This is often not the case, many Catholics have not yet made a deliberate, adult decision to believe in Jesus Christ and give their lives fully to him. ”

Dr. Alan Schreck, *Catholic and Christian*, p. 25

The fifth lesson and the one-on-one follow-up meeting of *Discovery* are key. During this lesson, participants will be introduced to the opportunity to invite Jesus into their lives. Be sure to practice explaining the relationships diagram well before you lead this lesson and follow-up.

At the end of the lesson, you will invite each participant to meet with you individually. An appendix at the back of the leader guide includes the follow-up materials to help you explain the relationships diagram and clarify typical misunderstandings in order to help participants respond to God's invitation to deeper intimacy.

Intercessory prayer is important as you embark on this lesson. Pray that each participant will be disposed to respond to the invitation to a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus.

Beginning at *Discovery*

Why is *everyone* asked to go through “the basics” of *Discovery*, even if they have a mature faith? First of all, we cannot assume that a person has had the opportunity to make a “decision for Christ.” Sometimes people we assume are already in a personal relationship with Christ are actually unsure about how to enter this kind of relationship. Once they learn how, they find greater joy in their new and fulfilling walk with the Lord.

Secondly, even mature Christians who know the material presented may not be able to clearly explain the Gospel message to someone else, or teach someone which Scripture verses show the divinity of Christ. By following *Discovery*, participants have an opportunity to learn how to share their faith clearly and simply.

Lastly, those who will eventually serve as small group leaders should go through the material before they teach it.



Leading a Faith Study

Qualities of a Faith Study Leader

Faith Study leaders should be: **F A C T** (Faithful, Available, Contagious and Teachable). They agree to chaste conduct, daily prayer, committed attendance at their parish and dedication to their primary vocation. They must be:

FAITHFUL

- To the Lord
- To personal holiness (prayer, Mass, discipleship, etc.)
- To Church teachings
- To a parish—faithfully attending Mass every Sunday
- To the call of evangelization

AVAILABLE

- Diligently prepare each lesson
- Spend time with group members

CONTAGIOUS

- Welcoming, affirming
- Authentic witness of a vibrant relationship with God
- Strive to relate to those to whom they minister
- Enjoy and delight in each group member

TEACHABLE

- In the areas of personal holiness, ministry, character, involvement
- Willing to grow in faith (prayer, reading, conferences, retreats)
- Able to accept constructive criticism

How to Lead a Faith Study

PHONE CONTACT

- As you are dialling, say a brief prayer for each person.
- Identify yourself and how you know the person, or received their contact information.

- Confirm the time and place of the small group meeting.
- Make sure each person knows where to find the meeting room, or...
- Plan somewhere obvious to meet so that you can lead your group to the meeting room.
- Let them know that every week they should bring a Bible to the group, preferably with an Old Testament. Wherever possible, have extra Bibles available for those who do not have one.

PREPARATION

PERSONAL PRAYER

- Leaders should have a consistent personal prayer life (with daily prayer time).
- Leaders should be reading Scripture on a regular or daily basis.
- Leaders should faithfully attend Mass every Sunday.

INTERCESSION

- Intercede specifically for each participant.
- Pray for one participant each day.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to open the hearts and minds of the participants.
- Pray the rosary, offering a decade or a Hail Mary for each member.

PREPARE

- Review the leader's guide as a whole and the lesson to be led.
- Have *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* handy for reference, as per preparation notes. The index in the back of the CCC is the best way to search for information.
- For leaders on a CCO campus, call a CCO staff member or student leader for guidance if necessary.
- Note which parts of the Faith Study are most important and which could be covered more quickly. The leader guide's stopwatch icons provide guidance to keep each lesson under one hour.

- The answers provided are intended as a guide and sometimes contain more information than is required. Use as needed.
- These studies are tools that you *use*, not just studies that you *lead*. Make the content your own. Share your relationship with God and your personal faith journey.

LOGISTICS FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING

- Meet your group members but do not wait too long—10 minutes after the starting time, start the meeting.
- Have everyone introduce themselves, then hand out the books and go over logistics.
- If necessary, collect money from each small group member to cover cost for the books.
- Give participants your phone number.
- Explain that you are committed to this meeting time and ask the group to make the same commitment for the duration of the Faith Study. This commitment is important because the lessons build on one another. Ask them to let you know if they cannot make it to a meeting.

COMPONENTS OF A SMALL GROUP MEETING

CASUAL SHARING

- Start the small group meeting in an atmosphere of fun and sharing.
- Discuss how the group implemented the lesson challenges that week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Make announcements at the beginning of each lesson. If you only make announcements at the end of the lesson, participants may need to leave quickly and will not take proper note of the upcoming events.

PRAYER

- Open the small group with prayer.

RECAP THE LAST LESSON

- Share a summary of last lesson.
- Invite participants to share what stood out to them in the last lesson.

OVERVIEW OF THIS WEEK'S LESSON

- This helps participants focus on the topic.

GO THROUGH THE LESSON MATERIAL

- Summarize each section as you go, so participants understand the direction of the lesson. This avoids a verse-by-verse checklist approach.

CLOSING COMMENTS

- Summarize clearly and concisely the points the group has discovered.
- Go over the challenge/homework.

CLOSING PRAYER

- Add any special intentions that have come up during the small group.
- Time permitting, you could close with 10 minutes of small group prayer. Have all participants share a need and pray for the person next to them.

HELPFUL TIPS

SET THE TONE

- Be on time for the meeting (arrive early when possible). This sets a good example and shows your commitment to the group.
- Greet each member by name. Vary comments to let each know they are welcome. The sooner you remember their names, the sooner they will feel comfortable with the group.

FACILITATE DISCUSSION

- A circle without barriers is best for group discussion. If people come in late, make sure they are brought into the circle.

- Your group may be quiet because they may be concerned that the answers are really “deep” ones. They might not want to give the “obvious” answer for fear that it is too simple to be true. For the most part, the answers are very straightforward. Remind the group of this.
- Give people time to think after you have asked a question or invited sharing (wait up to five seconds before speaking again). Relax. Don’t fear silence.
- Avoid answering your own questions. Reword a question if it is unclear.
- Sometimes you may want to expand on someone’s answer by asking, “What else do you see?” or “What other ways are there?” or “Does anyone else have anything to add?”
- Do not struggle to get participants to say exactly what you think is the right answer. Better to let a few questionable responses go by than to discourage people from talking. However, if it is a matter of basic truth or the answer is wide of your aim, say something like, “That’s an interesting point of view. Does anyone else have a thought about this?” To avoid confusion sum up briefly, “I appreciate your sharing. I guess my thoughts are... because...”
- Acknowledge each answer. Let the participant know (verbally and non-verbally) that you are listening and that you appreciate the contribution. If necessary, ask questions like “could you explain more?” Be natural in your response. If someone brings up something new to you, say so. (“I hadn’t seen that before. Thanks for pointing that out.”)
- If someone talks too much, try saying, “Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t had a chance to comment yet.”
- If some participants are barely talking in the small group, ask them to read aloud certain sections of the lesson or Scriptures so they can participate verbally in the group.
- Direct a question at an individual to draw out timid participants. It is a good idea to direct easy questions their way to build their confidence in speaking out.
- You can also use this technique (of asking specific people to answer questions) to allow other voices to join in when there are individuals monopolizing the discussion.

- Keep the sharing current and personal. Encourage people to share things God has done in their lives that week or during the meeting.
- Please be sensitive and welcoming if you have non-Catholics in the group. It would be considerate to prepare them before the Faith Study begins, in case they do not want to be in a Catholic program. Assure them that they are most welcome in the group, and that it is in fact an honour to have them join. Be sure they understand that the content will be very Catholic, with quotes from Scripture, popes, saints, and *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Although the material has been written to communicate the Catholic Church’s teaching, non-Catholics will probably be pleasantly surprised at how understandable it is. Assure them that you will be sensitive to their situation in the small group discussions. Let them know they can approach you if they have questions.

PACE THE LESSON WITHIN THE TIME LIMIT

- Know the objective of each lesson and communicate it clearly to ensure that people stay on track and do not go off topic. Do not get bogged down in unimportant details; keep the discussion moving.
- Be mindful of how much time is left and of how quickly you are progressing through the material.

LEADER’S ROLE

- The onus is not on the leader to convert the hearts of the participants—that job is for the Holy Spirit. The leader’s role is to present the material in an enthusiastic way and to facilitate discussion. Most of the speaking should come from the participants.
- The leader intercedes quietly in and beyond the meeting, staying closely connected to the Holy Spirit. The leader recognizes that:

“ No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit. ”
 1 Corinthians 12:3b

“ Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ”

1 Corinthians 2:14

“ We are not to be concerned with being effective. We are to be faithful, faithful simply to what the Lord has called us to be. What he may want to accomplish through us is his business and known only to him. ”

Father Bob Bedard, CC

DURING EACH BOOK IN THE FAITH STUDY SERIES

- Plan a social or meal as a celebration/reunion of your small group.
- Remember: you are encouraged to book a one-on-one appointment with each member of your small group; more information is in the lesson’s leader notes.
- Intercede for your group. The spiritual battle in their lives intensifies as they approach an opportunity for deeper commitment to Christ.