

OPEN BOOK GROUP GUIDE

Each Open Book Group Guide is intended for a weekly in-person gathering, approximately 60 minutes in length. Pick 7-8 questions per week, in advance of your meeting time—enough to fuel conversation without rushing. A mix of catch-up, daily lesson recap, and big-picture module questions is included in every week's content, but you should **adapt or adjust for your context**.

LEADER NOTES

COME PREPARED: Read all of the questions ahead of time and anticipate possible answers. Think through possible follow-up questions to keep the discussion going within the group on each topic.

FACILITATE, DON'T DOMINATE: Open Book Group Guides are meant to spark discussions, not lectures by the leader or any one person in the group. Encourage everyone to participate, realizing some might naturally be hesitant the first time being there.

AFFIRM PEOPLE'S ANSWERS: People are often reluctant to talk unless they know their insights will be accepted. Simple encouragements like "That was a great insight," "Thank you for that encouraging response," or "I hadn't thought of that before" clearly show people that you value their thoughts and comments.

DO NOT BE AFRAID OF SILENCE: You know what questions are coming up; they don't. Many people take time to process their thoughts before responding. It can take even longer if they are looking for a personal story or connection to the question to share. Silence allows time to process and people to gain confidence to respond.

ENCOURAGE MORE THAN ONE ANSWER: A good question should allow more than one response. Plus, each person could have a unique perspective or experience that shapes their view on the question. Ask questions like, "What do the rest of you think?" or "How would you respond?" or "Who has had a different experience?" or "Anyone else?"

BE A SAFE PLACE FOR DOUBT OR HARD QUESTIONS: A common insecurity people have in Bible studies is that they think they don't know the Bible well enough compared to everyone else. Encourage openness for people's doubts or questions by affirming them when they ask a tough question. A safe way to respond is, "I'm certain you're not alone in that thought." You might not have the full answer to a question. That's okay. Admit that you don't but then reach out to someone who can get the Bible's answer and find a way to share it with your group.

LET GOD LEAD: A big mistake that can be made is being afraid to stray from the agenda. Often, the side questions prompted by the Open Book Group Guide go deep and are very personally encouraging. If the secondary question continues to focus hearts on the love of Christ, do not hesitate to spend time exploring those topics.

PRAY FOR YOUR GATHERING: Pray for wisdom to know when to speak, patience to know when to listen, and insight to know when to redirect the conversation. Talk with God about your group discussion before your group discussion talks about God!

INTRODUCTION

1. What was one highlight of your week and one thing that challenged you?
2. Which of this week's six readings was hardest to sit down and do? What got in the way?

LESSON RECAP

3. Genesis 1 makes one thing very clear: God designed every detail of his perfect world with wisdom and love. How does that affect the way you look at creation today? How does it change the way you see others who were made in God's image?
4. In Genesis 3, the serpent's opening move was asking "Did God really say...?" Where in your life right now do you hear a version of that question?
5. Deuteronomy 6 says God's commands were meant to be talked about "at home, on the road"—woven into ordinary life, not saved for church. What would it look like for your household or friend group to actually do that?
6. Isaiah 53 describes a Savior nobody was expecting. Why do you think God chose to reveal himself that way instead of with obvious power?
7. You've probably heard the Luke 2 account of the Christmas story before, maybe many times. What details stuck out to you this time studying an important event in God's plan for salvation?

BIG PICTURE

8. Across this week's readings we go from a perfect garden (Genesis 1) to a broken world (Genesis 3) to a promised rescue (Isaiah, Luke). Where else do you see arc of the redemption story echo throughout Scripture? What other stories would be good additions to this module on "The Story of the Bible"?
9. Psalm 22 begins in despair ("why have you forsaken me?") and ends in praise. What is the value of honesty in vulnerability when talking to God?
10. If someone asked you, "why does the world feel so broken if God is good?" - how would this week's readings shape your answer?
11. What was your biggest takeaway from this week's study? What's your biggest unanswered question?

INTRODUCTION

1. What was one highlight of your week and one thing that challenged you?
2. What's one moment from this past week where an Open Book lesson came to mind outside of your study time?

LESSON RECAP

3. In Matthew 27, the temple curtain tears the moment Jesus dies. What is the significance of Jesus destroying the barrier between God and his people? What does that mean for your life?
4. In John 20, Thomas doubts until he sees and touches. Jesus' response might come as a surprise. What does this reveal to you about who your Savior is and how he cares for you?
5. What did Peter's sermon and the Holy Spirit's power in Acts 2 teach you about the way God uses normal people for extraordinary purposes? What's your takeaway for your life?
6. Romans 3 says we're made right with God as a gift, received through faith, not something earned by our effort or even chosen by our will. Why do you think it's so hard for us to stop trying to contribute something to it?
7. Revelation 21 promises a world with "no more death or mourning or crying or pain." What present comfort does this text offer? How can you remind yourself of God's eternal promises more often?

BIG PICTURE

8. Looking back over all twelve lessons, what new things stuck out to you about the whole story of the Bible—creation, fall, promise, rescue, resurrection, new creation? What's the value in capturing this big-picture view of the Biblical narrative?
9. Psalm 98 ends the module with pure praise. What's something true about God lately that makes you want to respond that way?
10. If you had to explain "the story of the Bible" in two or three sentences to a friend who's never heard it, what would you say?
11. What was your biggest takeaway from this week's study? What's your biggest unanswered question?