PREACHING & TEACHING

Bible Study Lesson Plan

A seventy-five minute small group lesson plan with the timings marked and the questions written out, built on the principle that a study where the leader talks for forty minutes is a sermon with chairs in a circle. Includes what to do when nobody answers.

75 min session · 6 segments

Six parts with timings. The questions are written; the passage is yours. Designed for a group of six to twelve in someone's front room.

BEFORE YOU RECORD

- Count your own talking. If the leader speaks more than a third of the session it has become a lecture and the group will slowly stop preparing, because there is no point.
- The silence after a question is almost always shorter than it feels. Count to ten before rescuing it. Most groups have one person who will fill any gap and that person is not the one you need to hear from.
- End on time, every time. Groups that reliably finish at the stated hour keep people who have childcare, early shifts, or simply a limit.

01. Arrival and the opening question

15 min

[the food and the small talk are part of the study, not a delay before it]

Open with a question everybody can answer without preparation and nobody can get wrong. What was the best part of your week. What is something you are dreading. Two minutes each, round the room.

This is not a warm-up. It is the part that makes the difficult conversation in part four possible, and a group that skips it stays shallow for months.

02. Read it twice

10 min

[two voices, two translations if you can]

Two different people read the passage aloud, ideally from two translations. Then thirty seconds of silence before anybody speaks.

First question, and it is always the same one: what did you notice. Not what does it mean. What did you notice. It has no wrong answer and it gets the quiet people speaking in the first fifteen minutes, which is when it is still easy.

03. Observation

20 min

[stay on the text - resist jumping to application]

Who is speaking and to whom. What has just happened. What is repeated. What is strange or uncomfortable. Which word would change the meaning most if you removed it.

[prepare four observation questions specific to your passage - generic ones produce generic answers]

04. The hard question

20 min

[the reason the group exists - do not soften it]

One question with real stakes, that a thoughtful person could answer two ways. If everyone agrees within four minutes, the question was too easy and you should have a harder one ready.

If nobody answers: say "I will give you a minute to think" and then actually be quiet. If still nothing, answer it badly yourself on purpose. Someone will correct you, which is usually all a stuck group needs.

05. So what changes

5 min

[specific and out loud - vague intentions evaporate in the car park]

One sentence each, round the room, on what they will do differently. Saying it aloud in front of six people who will see you next week does more than any amount of private resolve.

06. Pray, and stop

5 min

[end on the hour - protect this]

Short, specific, out of what was actually said tonight. Then finish, and let people leave without the second conversation at the door that turns a ninety-minute evening into two hours.

USAGE

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