

HOUSEGROUP LEADERS NOTES

“HOW TO” BIBLE STUDY COURSE

The following studies are based on some follow up material from the Alpha course. I would recommend that all Bible study leaders read the book “Challenging Lifestyles” by Nicky Gumbel, which has a chapter on each study. You may also find that members of your group might like to buy the book.

PROGRAMME:

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| Week 1 | How to deal with anger |
| Week 2 | How to stop worrying and start living |
| Week 3 | How to avoid judging others |
| Week 4 | How to avoid sexual sin |
| Week 5 | How to handle money |

“How to” Series

1: How to deal with anger



Live (10 minutes)

This is an icebreaker.

Key points about icebreakers:-

- An icebreaker is not a game
- Do not expect too much from icebreakers
- As the name suggests, it only breaks the initial top layer of everyone present
- It is only a TOOL to help you take the first step into each other's lives
- The FOCUS that icebreakers are able to achieve is vital

Q. What was your favourite childhood toy?



Love (10 minutes)

Place a cross on a table in the middle of the room (you could use a palm cross, or a cross and chain). Hand out the words for a song about the cross, eg “When I survey the wondrous cross” or “How deep the Fathers Love for Us.” Encourage the members of the group to sit comfortably, to focus on the cross, and to think about the words of the song. Sit in silence for about 5 minutes of meditation. At the end of this time read or sing the hymn together.



Grow (45 minutes)

Q1. What things make you angry?
Can you remember the time you were the most angry?

Q2. **Read Matthew 21 v12-13**
Was Jesus angry?
Was he right to do what he did?
When is it right to be angry, and when is it wrong?

Q3. **Read Matthew 5 v21-22**
The term ‘fool’ is contempt for a person's heart and character. The term ‘racha’ is contempt for a person's mind. We all know the phrase ‘sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me’. Is it true? Why is Jesus so hard on angry words?

Q4. What advice does Jesus give about how to deal with anger?
Can you think how you could apply this advice in your own life?

Leaders Notes:

Q2. The difference is between selfish anger and righteous anger. When arrested, unfairly tried, tortured and crucified, “he did not retaliate; when he suffered he made no threats” – 1 Peter 2 v23. “Father, forgive” – Luke 23 v34.

Pray

Give each member a piece of paper and a pen. Ask them to write down something they have been angry about. Take these pieces of paper to the cross. Place before the cross, rip them up or burn them (if burning have a practice beforehand!!) Explain all this to the group before you ask them to write down. Make sure the papers are destroyed. Repeat or sing the words of the song you used at the start of the evening.

“How to” Series

2: How to stop worrying and start living

Live (10 minutes)

This is an icebreaker.

Q. If you were in a circus, who would you be?

Love (10 minutes)

Encourage the group to close their eyes and sit comfortably. Help them to imagine that they are one of the disciples, setting off with Jesus to cross the Sea of Galilee. Read Matthew 8 v23-27, better still tell the story in your own words, emphasising how worried you are, and how Jesus brings peace.

Grow (45 minutes)

- Q1. What things do you worry about?
What effect does worrying have on you?
- Q2. **Read Matthew 6 v25-34**
What sort of things does Jesus say we should not worry about?
Why does he select these things?
Is it ever right to worry?
- Q3. In v25-27 what does Jesus say are the results of worrying?
- Q4. V25 “is not life more important than food than clothes”
Do you believe this? And if so does it show in your life?
- Q5. V33 “seek first his kingdom”
What does this mean in practice?

Pray

Ask the group if there is anything they are worrying about at the moment then encourage someone to pray for them. There are lots of ways you could do this:-

- One at a time, share then pray. You may need to take a lead.
- Use a large piece of paper. Write down each worry that is shared then pray all together.
- Ask people to share a worry and then you pray one prayer handing all these worries over to God.

“How to” Series

3: How to avoid judging others



Live (10 minutes)

“What’s the best thing that has happened in your life in the past 12 months?”



Love (10 minutes)

Read Psalm 150.

Play a piece of music to meditate to. Encourage the group to thank God for all that he has given them. You may want to play a piece of Christian music, or a piece of classical music. The aim of this time is to help the members to encounter God before the Bible study starts.



Grow (45 minutes)

- Q1. When do you think it is right to judge, and when is it wrong to judge?
- Q2. **Read Matthew 7 v1-6**
What kind of judging is Jesus getting at in this passage?
- Q3. Why do we judge people?
- Q4. Which would you prefer to receive from God; Justice or mercy?
Which do you tend to use in your relationship with others?
Why are we often so hard on other people?
- Q5. What ‘pearls’ do you possess?
What do you understand Jesus to mean by the ‘pigs’ you should avoid throwing them to?

Pray

We all have a tendency to judge rather than to forgive. God is in the business of changing us from judging to forgiving. Ask the members of your group to think about who they need to stop judging and start forgiving.

Hand out the sheet “Prayer of forgiveness”. Give the group time to read through the sheet. This will be a very difficult exercise for some people.

When you are ready, lead the group to pray in silence. Finish the prayer time with the Lord’s Prayer. Encourage the members to take the sheet home with them.

Week 3 – “How to avoid judging others”

Taken from “SET MY PEOPLE FREE” by Mary Pytches

PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

Heavenly Father, I choose as an act of will to forgive_____

I forgive _____ for _____

I release _____.

Heavenly Father, I ask you to forgive _____ for all these things as well and that you do not hold these things against him/her on my account.

I ask you to release him/her.

Heavenly Father, I ask you to forgive me for holding unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, etc., in my heart towards _____. I receive your forgiveness now and your cleansing of my heart from all unrighteousness.

Heavenly Father, forgive me for holding resentment towards you for allowing these hurts to happen to me. Heavenly Father, if I have any more negative feelings stored up within me towards _____ I ask you to cleanse them from me now. I open myself to replace these negative emotions with the fruit of your Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, etc.)

Heavenly Father, I ask that you now heal the wounded places in my soul. Heal every memory of those offences so that I can look back on them, realistically accepting that they were hurtful, but also trusting that you, Lord, have healed the hurt. Enable me to use this experience to help others with whom I come into contact.

Now, Heavenly Father, I ask that you bless _____ with your abundant mercy.

Prosper _____ in every way, body, soul and spirit.

In the name of Jesus.

It is profitable to continue to ask God to bless and prosper this person until all negative feelings towards him/her are healed. And each time you begin to feel anything towards him/her use this as an opportunity to bless and intercede for him/her.

“How to” Series

4: How to avoid sexual sin



Live (10 minutes)

If you could spend a day with a celebrity who would it be?



Love (10 minutes)

Write the following words on pieces of card and place around the room before people arrive: Purpose Groups, Sunday Worship, Alpha Course, Church Leaders, Children’s Groups, My Role, Music in Church, Chris and Liz and Jarod and Bexi, Newcomers. Get the members to move around the room as they spend a short time praying for each item.



Grow (45 minutes)

- Q1. Why do you think adultery appears to be on the increase in society?
- Q2. **Read Matthew 5 v27-30**
Why does Jesus view adultery as a matter of thoughts and desires as well as actions and deeds.
- Q3. What is the difference between looking at someone lustfully and appreciating a person’s beauty?
- Q4. How should we put v29-30 into practice?
- Q5. Is sexual sin any more than any other sin?
Is there a way back to God for those who have sinned in this area?
What does John 8 v11 teach us about Jesus’ view of sexual sin?

Pray

This is a very difficult area to address. Be aware that some members may want to talk to you after the meeting or during the week. Point out that few of us have no regrets in this area, and that Jesus is an expert when it comes to forgiveness. Ask people to close their eyes and slowly read out John 8 v1-11. You might like to play an appropriate song of forgiveness.

“How to” Series

5: How to handle money



Live (10 minutes)

TELLING YOUR STORY

In groups of 3 or 4 share with each other the story of your adult working life (that might include being a housewife or being unemployed)

- How old were you when you started work?
- What different jobs have you had?
- Which have you enjoyed the most?
- Have you had periods of being unemployed?
- Are you happy in what you are doing now?
- How has being a Christian made a difference at work?
- How has being a Christian changed your attitude to money?



Love (10 minutes)

Get the group to read aloud Psalm 148. Each person to read one verse each.



Grow (45 minutes)

We tend to think that money is a personal matter, not something to be talked about. Jesus talked a great deal about money.

- Q1. Why does money have so much power over us?
In what ways is money like a pagan God?
- Q2. **Read Matthew 6 v19-24**
What is wrong with seeking security by making lots of money?
Is it wrong to save or take out insurance?
- Q3. In practical terms how can we “store up treasures in heaven”?
- Q4. v21. “For your heart will always be where your riches are”.
In what ways have you found this to be true?
- Q5. Is money your servant or your master?
How do you know?

Pray

This section is all about our lives being changed so that we are a better witness.

In the middle of the room on a low table, place a large uncut loaf that has been ripped in half and a twenty pound note.

Explain that Jesus said:

“I am the bread of life”

And

“Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these other things will be added to you”

Then give the groups 5 minutes to meditate.

You could share in 2's what your thoughts were.