

I. Bible Study**II. Training****A. Bible Study****Why have a Bible study?**

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ Colossians 1:28

Bible Study is one of the foundations of TLC, however it should never be the end in and of itself. The purpose of the Bible study within TLC is to help you see God's perspective on how to live the abundant and obedient life. Without the Word, people focus on their perspective rather than God's. Without the Word, people focus on human solutions instead of God's.

What type of Bible study should we choose?

TLC Groups are free to choose whatever topics they wish to study. The first option, of course, is to study the Bible directly. Believe it or not, this can be difficult. Mark Twain once said "It's not the things in Scripture we don't understand that bother us, it's the things we understand." I would recommend against opening a Bible, starting to read, and struggling to understand it. It helps to have some questions, and some guidance. One method is the *Serendipity Bible for Groups*.

The *Serendipity Bible for Groups* (1988, Zondervan Press) is a special form of the New International Version designed for small group bible studies. Each section begins with an opening, and then has more detailed questions relating to the section, and finishes with questions to reflect upon the message. There are about 100 well known Bible stories which can easily be done as a one-time Bible study. They have also broken the books of the Bible into studies for regular study.

Another resource I find helpful is a study Bible. I use the *Concordia Self-Study Bible* (Concordia Publishing House). It provides historical and linguistic details about the translation. It does not have the question and answer type feel of the *Serendipity Bible* but when used in conjunction, it does provide some insight.

Should we all have the same translation?

It is actually a good thing to have multiple translations of the Bible. Each translation is translated differently, and at times the choice of words lends

clarity to the meaning. At times it is difficult to follow along if your translation is very different from the reader.

One thing to note would be the difference between a paraphrased version (such as The Way or The Living Bible) and a literal translation. A paraphrased Bible is an attempt to make it more understandable by simplifying the language. Many scholars dismiss them as “Reader’s Digest” condensations, however if they are the only way that an individual is able to understand the Bible, it suits my purpose.

How about Study Guides?

There are many Study Guides available from countless sources. There are “officially” sanctioned Bible study guides from Concordia Publishing House or Augsburg Fortress. They look on varying topics with a Lutheran persuasion. There are also studies by more popular authors, such as Max Lucado and Timothy Jenkins. These tend to be less denominational, and at times may not necessarily reflect the Lutheran beliefs.

I personally believe that it is good to get many different viewpoints on the scripture. I don’t always agree with the Lutheran Church’s position on issues. I think it is good to see what differentiates us, where some of the scriptural questions arise, and how they can be addressed.

If your group gets into a deep theological discussion, and you believe you are leading them astray, always check with the pastor to confirm or correct your interpretation.

Where can I find Study Guides?

Of course, there are Web sites for all the above resources. Some of them include:

Concordia Publishing House
Augsburg Fortress
Zondervan Family Bookstores
Lemstone

Also, locally, there are Christian Bookstores located at...

There’s a ton of material. How do we choose which one?

Again, it is up to your group as to what to do next. As a leader, you should suggest some alternatives, and most of the local bookstores will let you return unused study guides. In the past, I have been in groups where the leader

brings a couple of guides to the meeting, then takes back the ones that were not chosen.

Is it OK to quit halfway through?

Definitely. If the interests of the group no longer match the Bible study chosen, then as a leader, you should suggest that you put it aside and start something new.

B. Encouraging, Uplifting, Challenging

A group is stronger than the sum of its members. The nice thing about TLC Groups is that you become connected in ways that are not possible in a corporate church setting. The leader's role is one of a facilitator, rather than the center.

Encouraging

A TLC Group is a good vehicle for encouraging its members to take action. Many times when people are looking at doing something new, they procrastinate due to various factors. Fear of failure or rejection, stress involved with change, the nudge to get started, and lack of confidence are all excuses that we use to justify our inaction.

TLC groups are perfect vehicles to gather the strength to go beyond ourselves. The group can encourage an individual, or provide the necessary support and assistance to start something. They can affirm the goodness of the goal, or be used as a sounding board to test whether or not an objective is achievable.

As a leader, you should facilitate the group relationship such that it can be used to encourage each other. Making sure that individuals are welcome, that no idea is a dumb idea, and no question too simple. Reward desired behavior. If someone grows enough to begin sharing at a meeting, encourage them to continue. Ensure that others in the group are sensitive to one another's needs.

Uplifting

A TLC Group is also a wonderful setting to uplift the good things that God has done for us. Celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, christenings, and marriages is a good way to give thanks to God for another way to serve Him. Providing the gracious love to each other that Jesus gave us is a natural for a group such as this.

Look for ways to look for the good that God does for us. When sharing, don't just dwell on the problems, but celebrate the positive things in life. The

coming of spring, a good report card, an opportunity to share Christ with another are all noble things to pray for. Love is all around us. Take the time to point it out.

Challenging

The leader's job is also to challenge the group to excel. There are more needs in this world than we can possibly fulfill, so as a leader, you want to challenge the group to show God's love. What would Jesus do?

This challenge may be in the form of a group challenge, like a more involved Bible Study, helping the group focus on their personal prayer lives, collectively adopting a cause, or birthing a new TLC group. It may also be used as peer pressure to challenge an individual in making a commitment, or letting the individual know that the group stands behind them in a choice they are contemplating.

These three aspects of the TLC group underlay all of the aspects of a meeting, from the Bible study, through the sharing and prayer, into the fellowship. What is the deciding factor, however, may be the interaction that occurs between meetings.

C. Nurturing the Soul

We are all given various gifts, one of which is the gift of Ministering to each other. The most important part of this ministry happens between meetings.

If someone shares a crisis they are going through, it is a good thing to follow up with the person between meetings. It gives them the knowledge that their problems are being shared among the group, and that they continue to be in our prayers.

This can be done in any number of ways. Telephone conversations, a lunch meeting, a card in the mail, or just a quick message via e-mail all convey the caring message that comes from Christ. At times, you may be called upon to fulfill someone's special needs. Anything from giving someone a ride to looking after children in an emergency can help relieve the stress that occur in times of trial. If you are unsure of what to do, I always resort to a hug. I have yet to see that fail.

III. Birthing New TLC Groups

A. Prayer

B. Goals

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

C. Identify Candidates

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

D. Process

1. Identify Number of Groups
2. Identify Leadership Team
3. Propose Initial Teams
4. Propose Initial Topics
5. Propose Initial Meeting Times

E. Results

TLC #1

Leader: _____

LIT (Asst.) _____

Admin. _____

Topic _____

Time: _____

Members: _____

TLC #2

Leader: _____

LIT (Asst.) _____

Admin. _____

Topic: _____

Time: _____

Members: _____

TLC #3

Leader: _____

LIT (Asst.) _____

Admin. _____

Topic _____

Time: _____

Members: _____

TLC #4

Leader: _____

LIT (Asst.) _____

Admin. _____

Topic: _____

Time: _____

Members: _____

IV. Sharing

V. Prayer

VI. Fellowship