

**A Spiritual
Journey**
Leader's Guide

Before Starting

1. We Are on A Mission

Paul said "Knowing the fear of God, we persuade men... Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, we are AMBASSADORS for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:11,18,20)

There is no greater privilege than to be an Ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ on assignment in the world. God is the agent that changes a heart, but we are able to participate with Him as we invite and urge men and women to trust in Christ alone for salvation.

Philip told Nathaniel, "We have found the Messiah. Come and see." (John 1:45-46) Our lives and our words should invite others to investigate Christ's claims and to urge a response to the gospel.

2. The Importance of Investigation

C.S. Lewis, the great English author, scholar, and professor was an agnostic for many years. As an agnostic, he investigated the person of Christ from an intellectual perspective - after which he professed Christ to be God Himself. He felt that everyone, like himself, should have the opportunity to investigate the claims of Jesus Christ. Lewis said that, as one considers Christ, he must come to one of three conclusions. Either He was a liar because He claimed to be God and knew He wasn't. Or secondly, He was a lunatic - that is, He was merely a man who claimed to be God and really thought He was. Or thirdly, He was exactly who He claimed to be, the Lord of the universe. (Lewis states: "I'm trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him. 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. You

must make a choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God or else a madman or something worse.")

3. Investigative Bible Study

The Spiritual Journey Bible Study gives a "Cliff Notes" overview to the critical issues of following Christ. The theme of these studies is what Jesus claimed about God, Himself, and people, and the implications to all men if these claims are true. It is reasonable to conclude that because of the magnitude of Christ's claims, and the place history gives to Jesus, that any reasonable person should investigate His claims first hand.

This study is a tool to help you in the overall evangelism process. Several things need to be kept in mind as you engage others with the gospel.

1. *God changes lives. This brings optimism and freedom in our approach. This also puts an emphasis on praying for the lost. (Acts 2:47b)*
2. *The Word of God (Isaiah 55:10) and the Body of Christ (Matthew 5:16) are God's tools for change. We must utilize His means for maximum impact.*
3. *We are called to initiate relationships and conversations with non-believers. (Lk. 19:10, Col. 4:2-6)*
4. *Evangelism is a process that leads to an event. (Acts 17:2-3) Though we cannot change the heart, we must engage those showing spiritual interest with Christ's claims and the implications of the gospel.*
5. *Spiritual fruit is given by God in His time; therefore, faith is required to minister. We may never see the visible fruit of our labors. We are called to be faithful every day and abide in Him. (John 15:5)*

Introduction

Week one

1. Begin by getting acquainted with one another. This will loosen the tensions and bring each person into the group as a participant (you might want to have each person share about their background, where they're from, etc.)
2. Explain the structure of the group.
 - A. A topic will be discussed and verses from the Bible will be read that relate to the topic. Those that want to can give their opinions – optional.
 - B. The leader will sum up the discussion and illustrate the points.
 - C. Questions that individuals in the group have will be dealt with weekly.
3. Explain the reason for the Bible study.
 - A. Everyone is on a Spiritual Journey. 1 2 3
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 1. Don't know enough to be interested (some would say they are not interested but the Bible says this is not true).
 2. Want to find out more.
 3. Ready to make a decision.
 4. Brand new Christian etc.
 - B. The issue is not as much *where* you are but *if you are moving forward*.
 - C. Help each person evaluate where they are on the journey.
4. Share your personal testimony (be brief).

- 5.** Pass out blank sheets of paper or index cards and have them write down questions they would like to discuss about spiritual things (no question is unacceptable).
- 6.** Take up questions (you will deal with one each of the following weeks).
- 7.** Explain that you will provide Bibles but they can bring their own if they would like (Ask how many need Bibles for next week).
- 8.** Encourage those with Bibles to begin reading in the book of John (totally optional).
- 9.** End with a brief prayer.

How to View God

Week two

1. Begin by reminding everyone of the reason for the study. (Draw out the spiritual journey chart again). This will help those who are new to get up to speed on the study.
2. This study will deal with "The Proper Way to View God".
3. Discussion: How do most people view God?

A. Terminator God - Waiting for you to screw up or walk off line and then He's going to blow you away in many little pieces.

Questions:

- 1) How would this affect your approach to God?
- 2) Why would this keep people from developing a relationship with?

B. Santa Claus God - He doesn't expect anything of us, He's just there God to grant our every wish, but we can live like we want to.

Questions:

- 1) How would this affect your approach to God?
- 2) Why would this keep people from developing a relationship with God?

4. Look up verses in the Bible to understand how we should view God:

Luke 11:11-13, Matt. 6:9-13, Matt. 6:31-33, John

1:12

Questions:

- 1) What do these verses tell us about how we should view God?
 - 2) *Luke 11:11-13* - What if we ask for stones, is God obligated to give us a stone? What would a stone / serpent represent? Would God withhold good things?
 - 3) *Matt. 6:9-13* - What does it mean to say to our Heavenly Father, "*Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven?*"
 - 4) *Matt. 6:31-33* - What does our Heavenly Father expect us to do and what does He promise to do for us?
 - 5) *John 1:12* - How does a person become a child of God?
- 5.** Conclusion - God is a Father who has the best interests of His children in mind as He guides, protects, and provides for them.
- 6.** Deal with one question from last week and close in prayer.

The Difference Between Christianity and Religion Week three

1. Begin by asking someone to explain how we should view God. (Review)
2. This study will deal with the difference between Christianity and religion.
3. Discussion: What are the different religions of the world?
4. What is the definition of a 'religion'? Man's attempt to reach God
5. Why is Christianity not a religion? Because of Jesus Christ. He claimed that Christianity was God's way of reaching man.
6. Read this quote: *"Not one recognized religious leader, not Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc. has ever claimed to be God: that is, with the exception of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only leader who claimed He was the exclusive way to God and the only individual ever who has convinced a great portion of the world that He is God."*
7. Read the following verses that express Jesus' claims: *John 14:6, John 10:27-33, Mark 2:2-12.*

8. Read the following verses that explain how Jesus backed up His claim of being God.
 - A. His many miracles: *John 9:13-33, John 20:30-31* (Rotate the reading)
 - B. Approximately 300 prophecies from the Old Testament fulfilled in Christ (*Ps. 16:10, Acts 13:34-38, I Cor. 15:1-8*).
 - C. Christ rose from the dead - all other religious leaders are in the tomb (I Cor. 15:3-6).

9. Common objections:
 - A. Is this fair, what about people who have never heard? *Romans 1:19-20*, revealed through (1) man's conscious (vs. 19), (2) God's creation (vs. 20)
 - B. Why did Jesus come in the first place? *John 10:10, Luke 19:10*

10. These verses deal with next week's topic of "Why Man Needs God".

11. Conclusion - Christianity is different than other religions because it is God's way of reaching man through Jesus Christ.

12. Deal with one question from the first week and close in prayer.

Why Man Needs God

Week four

1. Begin by having one person explain how we should view God and another person explain the difference between Christianity and religion (review).
2. This study will deal with "why man needs God."
3. What is a need? A requirement, a necessity , a condition of deficiency (discuss)
4. Think of examples of people who have a need for something but do not realize that they do. (ex: a person that has cancer but unaware of it, overweight but still eats, etc.)
5. What about people who do not sense a need for God, do they really have a need? (allow different opinions at this point)
6. Look up the following verses that explain why man needs God.
 - A. *Romans 9:20* - God created man for God's purpose, if man refuses, he is resisting God.
 - B. *Romans 3:23* - Man cannot accomplish his purpose on his own, he falls short of what God expects. (Explain sin as man trying to fulfill his purpose on his own, without recognizing his need for God).
 - C. *Romans 6:23* - Penalty of sin is death, (illustrate with judge/courtroom rob bank = \$5,000 or 5 years in jail if you break the law you pay).

D. *Romans 5:8* - God is loving and just. In order for both characteristics to be satisfied someone must die for everyone's sin (illustrate w/ death row scene - die for your own sin or accept Christ's death for your sin. We are all in jail, guilty of sin therefore we all need God to get us out of this mess. God has provided a way out, but only one way, through Jesus Christ.

7. Conclusion - whether a person senses their need for God because of failures and frustrations, or if a person ignores or is unaware of their need, all men need God or they fail to fulfill their purpose, and remain separated from God. Jesus said the only way to God was through Him.
8. Deal with another question and close in prayer.

The Why, When, and How Of Becoming a Christian Week five

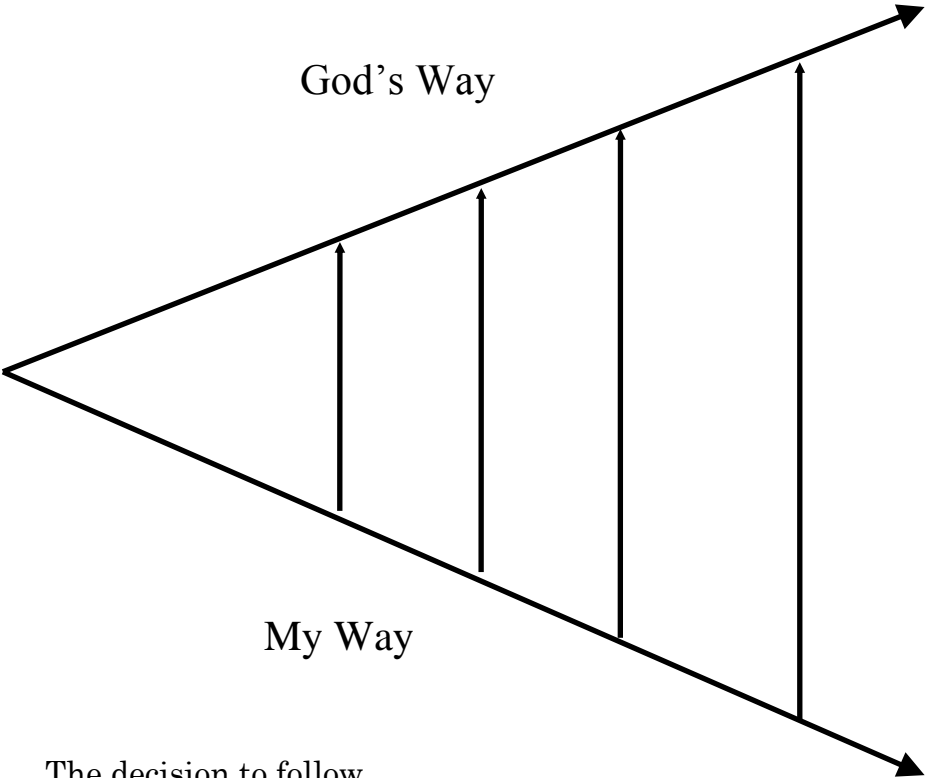
1. Test your group's memory by asking questions from the first four weeks of discussion and study.
2. Explain that this will be the last week unless some want to continue (individually get a feel for the group to possibly begin a follow-up group if the interest is there and a group is ready for an increased commitment).
3. Last week we discussed why a person should become a Christian. This week we will be more detailed with why as well as explain when and how.
4. Why? When? How?
5. Draw out the diagram on a piece of paper that everyone can see. Begin to look up verses that explain why and then list out the reasons as the group discovers them (2 diagrams on next page).
6. Draw the second diagram to explain when (the decision for Christ is never easier but harder as time goes on).
Common hesitations:
 - A. "I'm afraid I couldn't stick with it" *1 Cor. 5:17* - You can't stick with it, but God gives you the power to change when you step out on faith.
 - B. "I'm not ready yet" *Eph. 2:8-9* - You can never be good enough or clean enough to ask Christ to forgive you. It is a gift.

C. "I'm growing into it" *John 3:1-not 8* The act of becoming a Christian is an event, a process.

7. Explain what each person must do to receive the gifts God wants to give them. *Mark 1:15* /explain repentance by using the driver's seat illustration and trust by using the tight rope walker (when do you really believe? Climb on his back).
8. Close by reviewing the full study yourself. Make sure the Gospel has been clearly presented. Give the group a chance to pray to receive Christ and then follow up each person individually. Decide on the direction of the study based on who was there and their response.

WHY?	
God's Gifts	
1. <i>John 3: 16</i>	His love
2.2 <i>Cor. 5:14,15</i>	His life
3. <i>Jer. 29:11</i>	Purpose, plan
4. <i>Isaiah 53:6</i>	Forgiveness
5. <i>Phil. 4:7</i>	Peace
6. <i>Romans 6:23</i>	Eternal life
7. <i>Isaiah 41:9b-10</i>	Strength
8. <i>Romans 8:32</i>	Provision
9. <i>James 1:5-6</i>	Wisdom
10. <i>Gal. 5:22-23</i>	Joy
11. <i>Joshua 1:8</i>	True success
12. <i>Matthew 6:19-20</i>	Eternal impact

HOW?	
Our Response	
1. <i>Mark 1:15</i>	Surrender
2. <i>Acts 20:21</i>	Trust



The decision to follow Christ is never easier but always harder the longer you wait.