

Tips for Leading Precept Bible Studies

We hope that you find these tips helpful. Please take your time reading them through and also please remember to read the ‘Getting Started’ section at the beginning of each book!

Starting Out

Precept Ministries seeks to faithfully serve the church, so please remember to talk with your church leader about leading a group. You can direct your church leader to the ‘About Us’ section on our website.

If you would like help choosing a study, please call us or look at ‘Start a Group’ on our website. A good way to determine which study to use is to ask yourself ‘**How much time do I/we have to study?**’ or ‘**How deep into the Word do I want to go?**’.

Groups start because one or two people experience the tremendous rewards of inductive study and then wish to tell others about it.

Precept Bible studies should never be imposed on others. People must be free to opt in/decide of their own free will to join a Precept study.

We can offer advice about introducing Precept studies into your church. **From our experience, directing ‘all’ home/housegroups to do Precept studies may not be the best way to do it.**

Don’t worry if there are only 2 or 3 of you who want to study together. **It’s better to start with a small number of people who are keen to study than not to start at all.** Then pray and invite others to join - let God bring others along in His good time.

To gain an understanding of the inductive method, a great place to start is with a book from the ‘Lord series’ entitled ‘Lord Teach Me to Study the Bible in 28 Days.’ This has 28 days worth of work to do. Divide up the study to suit your group – but don’t rush it.

It may sound simple, but as a ‘ministry’ it is our true desire to minister to you. As such we offer introductory workshops which explain the fundamentals of Inductive Bible study. We do not charge for our training, however, as a ministry we do rely on donations to fund what we do. We leave this up to those hosting and attending the workshops.

Decide on a Place to Meet

Options include:

- Home
- Church rooms
- Café or Pub!

Think about refreshments, sufficient chairs, lighting and make it welcoming!

Prayer Cover

Ensure you have adequate prayer cover while you study.

Pray for yourself and, if in a group, pray for the group. (We have 2 tremendous studies on prayer - ‘Lord Teach Me to Pray in 28 Days’ and a ‘40 Minute study entitled ‘The Essentials of Effective Prayer’.)

Precept Ministries UK has a strong prayer support network.

We send out a Prayer email every Thursday and love to pray for Precept groups and group leaders on matters pertaining to the group or study. If you would like us to pray for you, please phone/email the details and you will have many people across the country praying for you. Don’t forget to feedback answers to prayer as this encourages us tremendously.

Persevere

Don’t be surprised or discouraged if you encounter opposition - persevere! Our enemy hates it when we get serious about God’s Word. Pray and contact us to do likewise. Romans 15:5

You will find that some people join your group and are all keen at the start, but then their attendance drops off. Pray for them, love them, continue to encourage them, maybe by offering to meet one-on-one with them. Ask them why they have stopped attending and if you can, address the problem.

Looking after your group members

Introduce new people to each other to make people feel at home. Collect email addresses or another simple way of communication (eg mobile numbers) so you can connect in the week if you need to. Explain the study book you are studying to your group.

Make sure they know what will be expected of them. You may wish to show them the Inductive Bible study introductory clip (5 minutes long) spelling out the basics of Inductive Bible Study. You will find this under the ‘Start a Group’ tab on our website. Go through some of the study with the group so they are set up for success!

Marking

Marking is a vital learning tool. Explain why marking is so important:

- It helps us to observe the text more closely
- It slows us down
- It helps us read intentionally
- It shows us where to go back and dig deeper
- It helps us remember Scripture better.

Persist with marking the text and you will discover its tremendous benefits. It will be new to many people but encourage them to do it. It really helps examine what the text says.

When marking, it helps to use different colours. This is not absolutely necessary in the 40 Minute study series. However, feel free to use colours in this series if you wish.

To remember how you mark different words, put your markings into an address book. For instance ‘grace’ would go under ‘g’ and you would write out the word ‘grace’ and how you mark it. You will always have a ready reference for marking ‘grace’ now.

We sell ‘micron’ pens in our online shop which are excellent for marking your **Bibles** because they do not bleed through the pages. We would not recommend that you use micron pens on anything other than your Bible because they will last much longer that way.

Ensure each person has either a Bible they are happy to mark or have the text printed off. Precept sells the Inductive Study Bible which many people use to study the Word. You can purchase this at our online shop. Alternatively you can copy the text from an online Bible programme such as www.biblegateway.com and print it off.

Leadership

Always remember to pray for God's guidance and leading before you start.

Remember the Lord is leading you as you lead the group.

Be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit as you go through the studies.

It's good to remember that the **Holy Spirit is our Teacher** (John 14:26).

You are not setting yourself up as 'The teacher' or the 'font of all knowledge'. **There is great freedom in having the attitude that 'we are all learning together'**. This attitude also helps raise up new leaders.

Pray for your study group as you meet and outside your group meetings. Colossians 1:9-12 is a great prayer to pray.

Encourage your group members to do their own study.

We all have busy weeks so sometimes people won't have been able to complete the home study (if it is required) but encourage people to do something, preferably daily.

If you are leading a group, you need to allow adequate time to go through the material personally in order to understand it in preparation for the weekly study group session.

You do not need to know all the answers. If you don't know, say so. This is usually well received by group members as they are better able to relate to you. However, **ensure you are well prepared as the leader.**

Be prepared for some emotional times. The Word is challenging and raises different issues in people's lives. Let God do His work in individual hearts and lives while you offer support.

Leaders are there to lead the discussion by asking questions and generally monitor the dynamics of the group.

All inductive study sessions are very interactive, with sharing and discussion as a group, so they work best with full participation.

Don't pounce on people to answer questions. Allow them to participate as the Lord leads them.

Leading should be very informal throughout and very much scripture based, following the workbooks.

Offer bags of encouragement for members of the group. Help them to see that the inductive study method really does enable them to engage with the Word of God in a powerful, simple and effective way.

Handling Red Herring questions. Gently point people back to the text and discuss that instead of the red herring.

Handling difficult questions. If you can't answer the question from the text: 1. Tell them you don't know – doing so is helpful and sets a good example! 2. Ask the group what they think the answer is. 3. Tell them you'll find the answer out for them for next week or 4. Ask them to find out the answer and report back.

Leading a small group is a privilege, but remember the leader doesn't have to be responsible for everything! Think about having a co-leader. Have someone else host the meeting if this is appropriate.

Be available to help your group. Let them call you if they have a problem understanding the study, but do set boundaries regarding when they are able to call.

Finish On Time

It is important that you finish on time. If you consistently finish late you may find fewer people attending! You can always pick up things you were not able to discuss the next time you meet or ask group members to complete the study in their own time.

Tips for Leading 40 Minute Studies

The 40 Minute studies are a great series to start with. They are topical and are excellent for non-Christians and Christians alike, youth and adults. We have seen God's Word in the 40 Minute series bring people to Christ.

Don't be surprised if you don't get through each week of the 40 Minute series in 40 minutes! The discussion can be in-depth and very rewarding and do factor in more time to meet if you want to spend time in fellowship together and praying for each other.

Although the 40 Minute series are set out as 6 week long studies, be prepared for them to last up to twice this length. Some of the initial 40 Minute studies to be published are shorter than later ones. You may be able to complete these in 6 weeks.

We advise you not to rush your study. As you slow down you are allowing God time to talk to you.

Sometimes you may be asked to mark 2 or 3 words at the same time as you go through the Scripture. This can result in stilted reading of the text. You have two options to overcome this: 1. Mark each word separately then go through again to mark other words in the text or 2. Read slowly enough for people to mark all words in one reading of the text. However, it is always advisable, once you have completed your marking of the passage, to read through the whole passage to gain the full understanding/flow of the text.

Tips for Leading New Inductive Study Series

The rich rewards of Inductive Bible study are only fully seen when you follow the instructions throughout the study books.

Members of your study group will need the Scripture text available to mark. There are different options available:

- Mark in your own Bible (an accurate translation is necessary)
- Use an Inductive Study Bible (especially designed for inductive Bible study and available through the Precept Ministries UK office – they have wide margins and plenty of charts and maps to help you)

- Print off the Bible text. You can do this by going to various websites (biblegateway.com for instance), copying the text into a normal document and then printing it off. It is helpful to double-space the text and set wide margins so there is room for marking.

Completing the study takes daily discipline and

perseverance. Offer much encouragement to group members to get into a regular, daily habit of studying God's Word. Be prepared to start slowly, for instance, help the group start the study and assign a couple of days 'homework' to be completed before you meet the following week. Increase the amount of homework gradually. Set the group up for success and lead people in gently.

Things to watch out for

The inductive study method of marking may initially come across as childlike to some. However, persevere, you will soon discover the value in marking words.

Some people do not like to mark in their Bible (the 40 Minute series does not need one). The way to get around this is to print off the Biblical text on worksheets from the internet (eg www.biblegateway.com)

Everyone will need their own book. Why? Because it becomes a personal record of each person's spiritual journey. Also, you need to be able to mark up your own text to get the benefit of inductive Bible study. Purchasing your resources from Precept helps fund the establishing of others in God's Word. Amazon does not provide this service!! We call it 'Purchase with a Purpose'.

Training Opportunities

Precept will come to your church and equip you and others in inductive Bible study to help you get started or develop your leadership skills. There are a wide range of training workshops - see under 'Training' on our website. Contact the office if you want any help or advice (01722 770028 or Email: admin@precept.org.uk).

Thank you!

We wanted to thank you for taking God's call on your life seriously and for being obedient to Him. We are here to establish people in God's word and will do all we can to help you and your group get to know God better.

We learn how to live as exemplary followers of Jesus, through studying the bible inductively. This leads to us obtaining a biblical world view, which enables us to disciple others and faithfully serve the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As lives are transformed, people notice and are drawn to join in studying.

Thank you for your support and please do pray for us as you can. God bless you as you study.