

Church Guide Playbook: Small Group Leaders

Bible Journey is an online, interactive series of Bible courses appropriate for a variety of small groups and classes. If you are a small-group leader new to Bible Journey, you may wonder where to begin and what makes this program more than just another Bible study. Six comprehensive studies comprise seven to eight courses each, with five lessons per course. Your group can choose from a variety of approaches toward a deep, rich understanding of the Bible through these studies. The curriculum and online platform offer flexibility in learning that includes videos, maps, workbooks, lectures and other writings.

1. Organize your group by topical interest.

To prepare to lead your small group, browse through the 6 studies—**3 Old Testament and 3 New Testament**. Notice that each study is not simply reading through Bible books. You will learn in detail about the context of the time in which the people lived and wrote, and how the text affects us today—in other words, *In the Text, Behind the Text, and In Front of the Text*.

Two **Old Testament** studies have overall themes: History & Poetry and Prophecy & Restoration. The Pentateuch study covers the first five Bible books, of course. But within its 5 courses you'll find topics such as *covenant, calling, priesthood, holy days, heading home*, and even a field guide to begin the journey.

New Testament studies provide intensive probing of the four Gospels, Acts & Paul's Epistles, and General Epistles & Revelation, all with a strong emphasis on the history and culture of the time periods. The Gospels study dives into politics and culture along with the significance of Jesus and His ministry. In Acts & Paul's Epistles, a key topic is the Gospel for Jews first and then Gentiles. Courses 5, 6, and 7 of General Epistles & Revelation cover cultural themes, Bible interpretation, and history of the Bible.

When you've chosen a study or studies for your group, get ready to begin.

2. Decide what your subscription plan will be and sign up your group.

Bible Journey gives you flexible subscription options for your group. Do you plan to do one study over a month? Two or three studies within two to four months? Choose the monthly pass. If you intend to run a program for a year or so, and complete most or all of the curriculum, an annual pass is your best choice. Remember that all studies can be customized for any group or predetermined period of time. For more information about getting started, see [How to Get Started with Bible Journey for Small Groups](#), and [Online Bible Study Courses to Deepen Your Biblical Engagement](#).

Once you have purchased a group subscription for Bible Journey, we will provide coupon codes for each member of your group. Each member should have their own account; each email address equals one account. Family members may sign up for separate accounts, but these accounts will be charged separately. Participants will apply their unique coupon codes when they register through the invitation emails they will receive. It's a good idea to allow a week or two to give members time to sign up and begin to look at the curriculum.

3. How to proceed with your group

Begin at the beginning. It is recommended that all new Bible Journey users begin with the **Journey Prep mini-courses** to become accustomed to the online platform and the flow of the content. Find these courses in [Before You Begin: Journey Prep](#) on the dashboard.

Take advantage of Bible Journey's flexibility. It's important to know the approximate length of your study ahead of time.

Short term: If you have only 4 or 5 weeks, and you love the Psalms, consider doing Old Testament History & Poetry, Course 7: Psalms and Song of Songs. The platform's customization gives you numerous such options. After Easter is a great time to embark on a study of Acts, which is Course 1 of Study 5, Acts & Paul's Epistles. A short summertime or pre-Advent group might dive into the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, which are Courses 5 and 6 of The Gospels. Or break these 5-lesson courses into two studies. Note that The Gospel of Mark is to be completed before The Gospel of Matthew.

Long term: This could be six months, a year, two years. If you set up a long-term small group, the possibilities are many, depending on the pace of the group. You might work through the Old Testament and then the New Testament in the same study or in a new study. Based on groups that have reported to Bible Journey staff, completing the full Bible Journey curriculum typically takes 1 to 2 years.

Factors that affect the pace of the group: Consider the type of group you will lead. Biblical or seminary students might move faster through a study plan than a general study group with less knowledge of Scripture. Allow plenty of

opportunity for newer Christians who yearn to deepen their knowledge.

Resources for a group leader: Bible Journey serves as a stand-alone program or as a tool within churches to amplify a sermon series or another church project.

Maybe your church will integrate a study with a new service ministry to encourage participation in both. Whatever the group's purpose, leaders have the workbook assignments, along with webinars, interactive maps and videos, so there is no need to prepare lessons. This leaves more time for mentoring and supporting your group members.

Engagement ideas: How do you keep your group members engaged through bad weather, good weather, pandemic shutdowns or simply a long-term Bible study?

- The digital platform enables students to study and complete workbook questions remotely from anywhere they want to be. Each group has the options of meeting together digitally, or in person, or scheduling a combination of remote and in-person gatherings that suit the group's style.
- Periodically, you might tie a study to a community service project or an outing to celebrate completion of one of the courses.

4. Support

As a group leader, you can assist your small group with any support needs they have regarding the curriculum or technical issues. Group leaders, or church administrators, can then reach out to Bible Journey for any help they require at hello@biblejourney.com.