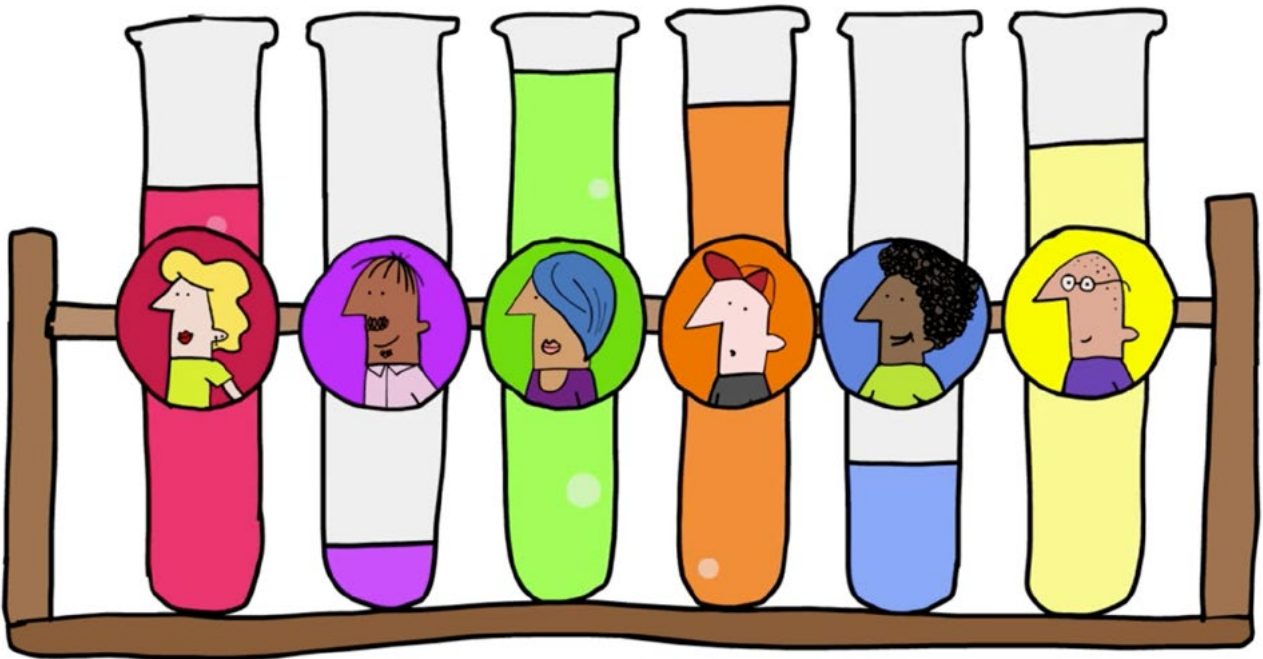


DISCOVERING

**BIBLE TALK: WITNESSING MADE EASY
BECAUSE THE BIBLE DOES THE WORK!**



The animation describes what we call Bible talk. The group talks about the Bible and the Bible talks to the group. (In FX Godsend we called it Discovery Bible Study. But this has been confused with a different approach using the same name.)

Bible Talk involves four questions that anyone can answer:

- If this story happened today, what would it look like?
- What is it saying to me?
- Could it make a difference to my life? If so, how?
- Did it make a difference? If so, how?

AMAZING!

In the video, Tim did this with young adults. He found that 'it was amazing to see what happened. Everyone was a learner in the room. People were

able to explore... Christians and non-Christians alike began to grow in their relationship with Jesus, and it was brilliant to see!

Denise convenes a walking group. Before they start, she reads them a Bible story about Jesus from her phone. Then she asks one of the four questions, chosen somewhat randomly, and they discuss it before they walk.

In the United States, Michael Beck has a ministry of supporting and training leaders of new Christian communities among people not previously attending church. 'I teach these four questions all round the country' he says.

Bible Talk differs from conventional Discovery Bible Study, which asks, 'What does the story tell me about God?' and 'What does the story tell me about people?'

These could be good questions for exploring Scripture in more depth (see *Deepening*). But some people may find them off-putting to start with. They might think that the questions imply a right and wrong answer. Bible Talk can be a less threatening way in.

If you are leading a Bible Talk group, you may find it helpful to read [Top Ten Things About The Gospels](#).

INVITING PEOPLE

If you sense a spiritual appetite in your outreach initiative, you could invite people to a 'Spirituality group.'

'Would you like to explore spirituality? Jesus is known as one of the world's greatest spiritual teachers. Why don't we look at some of the stories about him and some of the stories he told, and see what we feel about them?'

You could do this on Zoom, face-to-face, or hybrid - people meet in different homes and use Zoom breakout groups. For example, families in an all-age community might discuss the questions at home, and share their thoughts by Zoom.

If the group gathers over a meal, you could spread the discussion over four weeks - one week for each question. This would leave plenty of time to eat and hang out together.

When you meet to plan your outreach activity, why not turn it into an enquirers' group? Invite people who may be interested in God to your planning meeting. Eat and drink together, have fun, do some planning, read the story (or watch a video version), and then discuss one of the questions.



See *Enriching* for how you might add in prayer and worship if and when the time is right.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

Deep talk:

- What do you like best about the story?
- Where are you in the story?
- What would you like to change in the story?

Bite, chew, savour and digest – based on *lectio divina* (a traditional Christian practice of scripture reading):

- What word, phrase or image in the story are you most drawn to? (Bite)
- As you stay with your particular word, image or phrase, what else does it bring to mind? (Chew)
- Prayerfully wonder: why are you drawn to it? (Savour)
- How could it make a difference to your life? (Digest)

Kingdom questions:

- What's the story saying that would make life more God-like?
- Where can we see signs of this God-like living round us?
- What could we do individually or as a group to increase this?
- In the next session: What have we done and what were the results?

If you are working with people outside the church (for example, to feed homeless people or in an environmental project) you could change the first two questions to 'How might the story give us encouragement or wisdom for our task?' 'Where can we see signs of this encouragement/wisdom round us?'

With children?

- You could adapt some of these approaches for an all-age context.
- Or you could go to www.godlyplay.uk, which has a wealth of Bible-based resources to foster childhood spirituality.

Unlock!

- For lots of resources, go to [Unlock](#)

TOO MUCH STRESS ON EXPERIENCE?

Worried that the approaches here put too much emphasis on experience? People will ignore the story's meaning to its initial audience and read whatever they want into it. If so, consider the following:



1. In Bible Talk, the first question invites some reflection on the original setting. At its best, you can't translate the story from the first to the 21st century without imagining what the story originally meant.
2. By starting where they are at, these approaches help people to feel relaxed in looking at Jesus, discussing him, and applying the story to their lives. When they are comfortable splashing in the shallow end of the pool, you can take them deeper if they want.
3. *Deepening* will help the group to access insights into the story's original context, so that they can become more proficient Bible students.
4. All the approaches are based on the Reformation principle that through the Holy Spirit Jesus speaks directly to those who read Scripture, however little they know about the background. Though people may approach Scripture with their subjective experiences in mind, the one they encounter is the objective Christ who transforms experience. This is true whether you are a New Testament scholar or whether you are coming to the story for the first time.

SOME ADVANTAGES

- Anyone can lead these discussions.
- Enquirers easily join in.
- The Bible tells people about Christ. You don't need to have done an evangelism course!
- Christians share their faith almost without knowing.
- People exploring faith see how the Bible makes a difference.
- New Christians learn how to study the Bible on their own, apply it to their lives, and share it with their friends.
- It saves time. No need to prepare a talk! Just choose a Jesus story and let people discuss it.
- The leader is not on a pedestal. Insights arise from the group.
- If the leader moves on, the group has the means to keep going. Sustainability is built in.

