

## Writing and Leading a Bible Discussion

### *The Kite Method*



The Kite Method for developing group Bible studies invites people from all backgrounds to read scripture together; understand the basics of a passage; learn something about God, others, and themselves; and be transformed that they might spread the light and love of Jesus to others. Like the design of a kite whose top is narrow, the Kite Method begins with studying details about a passage so that everyone, regardless of their background, can understand what they're reading. The conversation then widens to explore how the passage reveals the heart, nature, and character of God through Jesus and the heart, nature, and character of the world. The design narrows again by examining more closely how the passage relates to our own world—our home, families, work, school, or social circles. The questions then move us inward to examine ourselves so that we can make specific choices about how we will reflect more of Jesus and his Word in the coming week and share what we are learning with others.

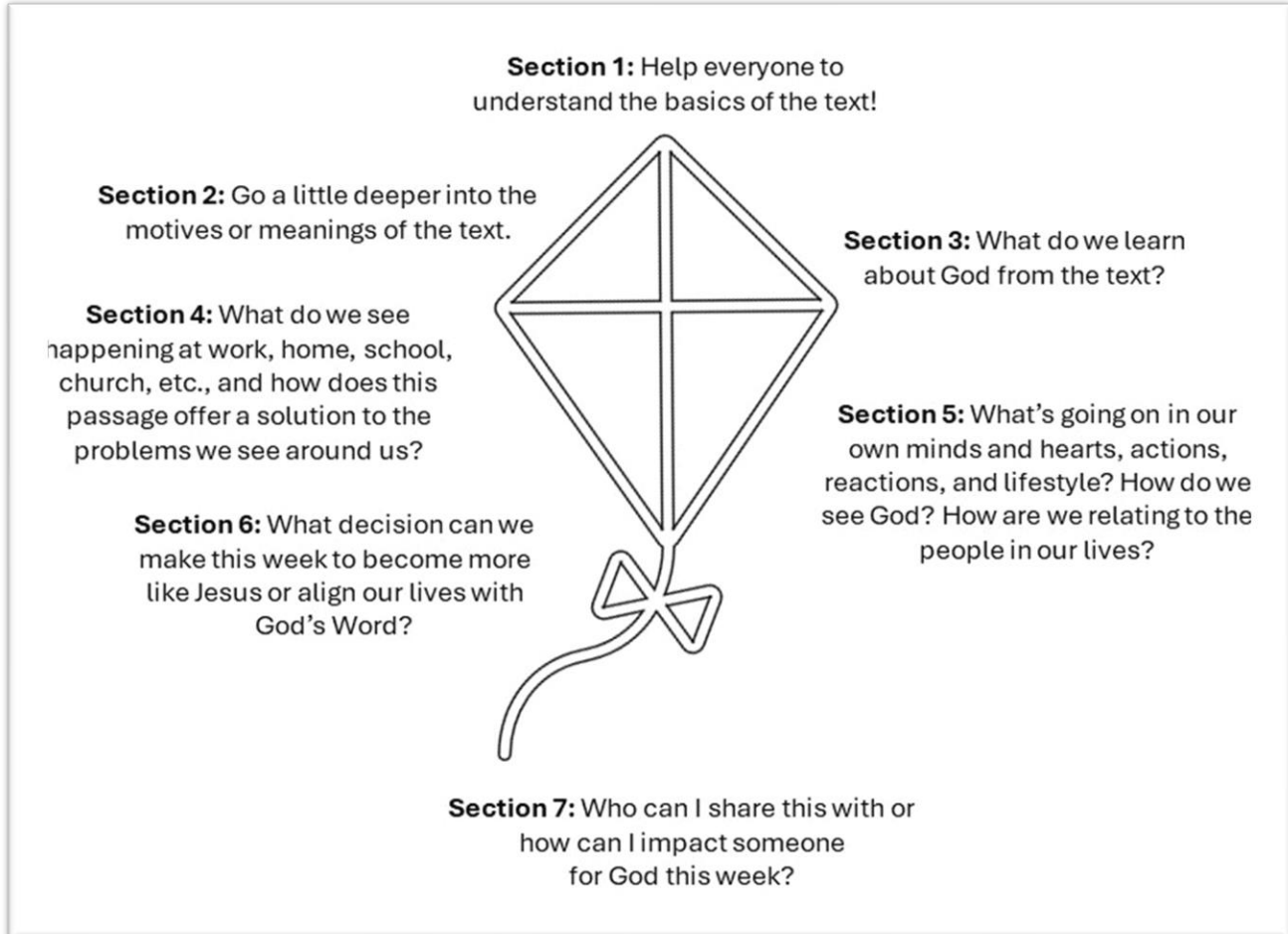
With the Kite Method, we're not just gaining information about the Bible, but we're learning what it really means to follow Jesus and to soar above our world through God's power and love, instead of staying engulfed in a world view that weighs us down and keeps us bound. The kite pulls us upward toward God as we begin to see the world as God sees our world and to see ourselves as God sees us. Through this process, each of us has a chance to soar higher and with greater faith in God's vision for our lives and to experience the Word of God's transformational power. What's more is that we encourage one another along the journey as we see the power of God also working in the lives of the people in our group. Are you ready to fly the kite?

### Leading your study

Before diving into designing a Bible discussion for the group, let's look at a bird's eye-view of the flow of your gathering. The journey is simple, yet with thoughtful questions and prayer, the experience can be meaningful and life-changing for everyone!

1. **Praise Report:** Begin your study by asking if anyone has a praise report from something they put into practice from the last study, someone they shared with, something they're thankful for, or some way they saw God working in their lives this week. (10 min.)
2. **Prayer of Praise:** Ask someone to pray a brief prayer of praise for what happened this past week, for other praises shared, and for the Holy Spirit to move hearts again during this study. (3 min.)
3. **Reading:** Going in a circle, ask each person to read a verse. Then ask one person to read the entire passage again so that everyone has heard the passage twice. (5 min.)
4. **Define terms and phrases:** Ask if anyone has any questions about terms or phrases used in the passage, especially if their first language is not English. (2 min.)
5. **Dive into your questions!** (40 min.)
6. **End in prayer** (15 min.)

**Total time:** 1 hour, 15 minutes



## Preparing your study

The passage you select should flow within a series of topics or books of the Bible. In this way, each week flows into the next, and everyone begins to see the rich aspects of a topic or book. The message becomes clearer, and conversations can go deeper as each lesson works together to unveil the story of God.

1. Think of your study like a diamond-shaped kite. The group will start off exploring specific details from the text, then go a little deeper into its meaning, and then broader as we think about how the text relates to God and the world around us. We'll start to narrow our focus to our community and then to our own lives and hearts, making decisions about how we want to apply the passage during the coming week. We'll pray one for another and then share what we learned with someone else!
2. Select a relatively short passage, i.e. one story or section (not a full chapter). If you choose a section, rather than a story, then make sure that you include enough of the chapter to understand the context and any other verses necessary to interpret the passage, but keep it short. For ideas, you can use passages from the Discovery Bible series or App; follow a theme, like forgiveness; or work through a book of the Bible.

3. If you need to include other passages, use up to two brief verses so that the focus stays on the main passage.
4. Bring a copy of the verses you're going to share so that everyone reads the same version. If you cannot print a copy, then ask everyone to open their phones to [www.biblegateway.com/versions](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions) and select the version they'll be reading. Make sure everyone has the passage before you begin.
5. Write your questions in advance, and if possible, provide a printed copy for everyone to follow.
6. If there are people whose first language is not English, then the first question should always be, "Are there any words or phrases you don't understand?"
7. Make sure that the questions are clear and open-ended, not "yes" or "no" questions or ones that are too obvious, like "Who's speaking?" "Uh, Jesus."
8. Understand that the Kite Method is just a guide. If the natural flow of questions needs to change, feel free to make any adjustments you need to make to fly your kite!

### Let's Practice!

**Reading:** Using the passage below, follow Steps 3 and 4 in **Leading Your Study**. Going in a circle, ask each person to read a verse. Then ask one person to read the entire passage.

#### Matthew 5

<sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' <sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca' [a term of hatred or dislike], is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. <sup>23</sup> "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. (NIV)

**Section 1 Questions:** (5 min.) Now it's time to prepare some questions. The first section of questions should help everyone to understand the **basics** of the text. Don't get bogged down in details about words or phrases, unless they are crucial to understanding the passage. You can handle this part of the discussion in one of two ways:

**Retelling:** Ask a volunteer to retell the passage in their own words. When they're finished, ask if anyone wants to add anything. Finally, fill in anything that was missed.

**Ask basic questions:** Break down each section of the passage and gather information about the context with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and basic *why* and *how* questions.

Example:

*Where is Jesus? What is he doing, and why is he there? (Based on Luke 5:17-26)*

**Let's Practice!**

**Retelling:** Using Matthew 5:21-24, ask a volunteer to retell the passage in their own words.

**Asking basic questions:** Make a list of some *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and basic *why* and *how* questions you could ask to help the group break down the passage and its meaning.

**Section 2 Questions:** (5 min.) The second section should go a little deeper into the **motives or deeper meanings** of the text. Here, you will likely ask *what*, *why*, and *how* questions that require more thought.

Example:

*We see that the friends of the paralyzed man went up to the roof and lowered their friend so he would land right in front of Jesus to be healed. Why do you think they did this? What do you think this says about their relationship with the paralyzed man? What do you think these men believed about Jesus?*

**Let's Practice!**

**Finding deeper meaning:** Using Matthew 5:21-24, make a list of any *what*, *why*, or *how* questions or motive questions that might help the group to go deeper with the passage.

**Section 3 Questions:** (5 min.) The third section should venture outward into how the passage relates to **God** and what we learn about his heart, nature, or character.

Example:

*How does Jesus respond when the paralyzed man comes through the roof to be healed? What do we learn about God in the way Jesus responds?*

**Let's Practice!**

**Understanding God:** Using Matthew 5:21-24, what is a question we could ask that would help us to understand God's heart, nature, or character in this passage?

**Section 4 Questions:** (5 min.) The fourth section allows us to relate the passage **to the world around us**. While we can relate to the world at large (society, media, government, countries, etc. ), the worlds we can most directly impact are typically our roommates, family, coworkers, classmates, friends in our social circles, church, or this group. We can explore how this passage exposes problems in the world around us and offers solutions to these problems. The passage might also reveal how we can better relate to the people in our lives.

Example:

*The man's friends made incredible sacrifices to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus to heal. Think of a friend in your life who doesn't know Jesus or needs healing. Describe their physical or spiritual needs.*

### Let's Practice!

**Understanding our world:** Using Matthew 5:21-24, what is a question we could ask that would help us to understand the world around us, including our home (roommates, immediate family, or extended family), work, school, social circles, church / this group, etc.

**Section 5 Questions:** (10 min.) The fifth section helps us to apply the passage to **ourselves**. What's going on in our minds and hearts, our actions and reactions? We can explore how we personally see God and how we are personally relating to the people around us. Perhaps the passage speaks to us about our ideas, attitudes, speech, behavior, lifestyle, i.e. the movies we watch, the news we're seeing, our physical or mental health, where we focus our minds, where we find our peace, etc. In what ways do we need to grow and change to follow more closely the lessons we are learning from this passage?

Example:

*Is there an area in your life that you need Jesus to heal (physical, spiritual, relational, emotional)? Who are your closest friends with whom you could share your need and pray together for your healing? Have you allowed others to pray with you over your need? Explain.*

### Let's Practice!

**Understanding ourselves:** Using Matthew 5:21-24, what is a question we could ask that would help us to better understand our own minds and hearts, actions and reactions, speech, lifestyle, relationships with people, and relationship with God or our view of him? Try to be specific.

**Section 6 Questions:** (5 min.) The purpose of the study is to motivate us to think and live in ways that align more closely with God's Word. In section six, we want to inspire each other to make a **personal decision** for the week about how to do this. Perhaps there is a belief to embrace; a sin, pattern, or habit in our life to overcome; a promise to remember; a command to obey; or an example to follow. Perhaps

we want to change something in our relationship with the Lord or with others; how we see ourselves, God or someone in our life; or how we are treating another person or people. Be sure to share your own decisions and even challenges you face in putting into practice what you learned. Difficulties in obeying can be opportunities to pray one for another when ending the time together.

If there is time, you can also share a brief testimony of yourself, someone you know, or even a video to encourage the group so they can see how others are putting this passage into practice. Make sure the testimony is not more than 5 minutes (or whatever the time allows).

Example:

*What can you do this week to help someone seek Jesus for their need? What can you do this week to allow someone to help you?*

*Did you get something else from the passage that you want to take with you during the week? Or is there a challenge you're facing in following this passage?*

### Let's Practice!

**Making decisions:** Using Matthew 5:21-24, what is a question we could ask that would help everyone to make a plan of how to align their lives with the passage they just learned: a belief to embrace; a sin, pattern, or habit in our lives to overcome; a promise to remember; a command to obey; an example to follow; a way to grow in our relationship with the Lord or with others; a way to see ourselves or others the way God sees us; or a change to make in how we're treating a person or people. Create a question that fits well with the passage.

**Section 7 Questions:** (5 min.) Finally, in section seven, we want to take a minute to consider how we can share what we learned with someone else in our lives so that we can **impact others for Jesus**. This can be done simply by showing Jesus to people, sharing what you learned with them, sharing how Jesus is impacting your life or answering your prayers, or inviting them to the next study. Have everyone in the group close their eyes and ask the Lord, "Who can I share this passage or testimony with this week?"

### Let's Practice!

**Making an impact:** Using Matthew 5:21-24, what would it look like to share this passage with a person or to share how the passage impacted me this week? Who can I invite to the next study? Take a minute of silence, write a name that comes to your mind, and share your plan with the group.

### A few tips on facilitating

1. As a facilitator, you should only be talking about 20% of the time. This is a time for everyone to discover what the Bible is saying to them, not a time to preach or teach your own views. Let the word speak for itself, while you and others discover its meaning. In this way, the entire group learns from each other, and you will avoid being the “answer-person.” If each person discovers meaning, then they will learn how to study and apply God’s Word on their own. Group learning is very powerful and more engaging when everyone gets a chance to explore meaning in scripture, rather than one person doing most of the interpreting and teaching.
2. Avoid bringing and allowing preconceived doctrines (belief systems) into the discussion. Try to focus solely on the passage within the context of the chapter where it is found. This allows everyone to have a fresh, authentic encounter with God’s Word that is unbound by interpretations that may or may not be entirely correct.
3. Avoid *abductive* reasoning strategies that lead to a perceived conclusion. Abductive reasoning examines a few passages to draw an inferred conclusion, which is often debatable. For example, one person may use three scriptures to prove a point, while another person uses three other scriptures about the same topic to draw a different conclusion. To avoid this, simply focus on the scripture you’ve chosen within its context and allow everyone to explore its meaning.
4. Likewise, avoid “reading into” scripture too much. Try to choose topics, principles, and conclusions that can easily be derived from the passage(s) you read. It’s ok to tackle tougher topics, but stick to the verses and what they say, and ask people in the group to do the same.
5. Don’t try to conquer the moon! The process of leading a Bible study is quite simple. We’re just reading, trying to understand the Word of God, and learning ways to think and live our lives differently so that we’re following Jesus more closely.
6. Get to know the spiritual needs of your group. For example, if you know that there are people struggling with forgiveness or resolving conflict, choose a passage to help them. Such topics can also be covered in a series if more passages are needed for deeper understanding and growth.
7. If you’re reading an entire book of the Bible together, just pick one passage each week from each chapter to discuss. Encourage everyone to read the chapter(s) on their own that week as well.

*Do you have any questions about these tips?  
Are there any that you think are particularly important?*

### Ending in prayer

1. If there is time at the end, ask for prayer requests. After someone shares, ask someone in the group to pray for them. Then have another person share. In this way, many people will have a chance to pray one for another (and since the person just shared their need, the person praying won’t forget what to pray for!). You can also break up into small groups to share needs or decisions from the discussion to pray over. From time to time, break out men with men and women with women to meet more intimate needs.

2. Prayers should be short and specific. Begin with a brief prayer of praise and worship and lead into the specific request. Pray as specifically as possible so that the person can see the Lord working.
3. If you have time, find out if anyone outside the group needs help from the group. Make a plan to serve them together and include them in your prayers.
4. As the facilitator, write the prayer requests so you can follow up with everyone to see how the Lord answers. Make sure you get numbers for anyone who received prayers. It's ok if you assign a woman to follow up with the women and a man to follow up with the men.

*Do you have any questions about conducting a time of prayer?  
Are there any tips that you think are particularly important?*

## Managing the time

1. Ask someone in the group to signal you when you have about 20 minutes left. This means that you need to wrap up the discussion to have time for prayer requests.
2. Expect at least two answers for each question, but try to limit answers to no more than three people. Don't feel like everyone has to answer every question.
3. Allow 1-3 minutes for replies, depending on the number and types of questions you're asking. Include time for your responses as well, but don't feel like you must respond to every question or repeat what's already been said.
4. Don't wait too long for people to respond. Call on people, if there's a lull. This will help to keep the studying moving.
5. If someone wants to "tell a story" or "add more," but you're running out of time, just politely say, "I would love to hear more about that after we're done, but we're running out of time, so let's keep going." Say this with a smile! 😊
6. If someone has a question outside of the passage, let them know you can talk more about the question after you've finished the discussion about the passage you're reading.
7. If someone takes the discussion off-topic, you can ask, "Where do you see that in *this* passage?" OR "So, for now, we're just going to focus on *this* passage."
8. If you feel rushed trying to answer all the questions you prepared, then consider either managing responses more efficiently OR shortening the number of questions you created.
9. Don't go over the time allotted. Respect the people who are hosting. This means that you may need to wrap up the discussion without answering all the questions. In the future, select fewer questions or follow the tips on managing time.

*Do you have any questions about these tips?  
Are there any that you think are particularly important?*



## Managing responses

1. Be sure that everyone has a chance to answer at least one question over the course of the entire discussion. You can do this by going around in a circle to respond (but allow others to add to the response). You can also call on people who have not responded to a question.
2. If someone speaks too long, you can interrupt gently with, "Ok Maryam, thank you so much for sharing. What you said is really important." Briefly summarize their main point(s), and then say, "Does anyone else want to share or something?"
3. If someone is continually answering questions, call on others to contribute.

*Do you have any questions about these tips?  
Are there any that you think are particularly important?*

## Handling wrong answers

1. If someone's answer does not align with the passage, first listen and respect what the person is saying. The answer may differ from the text but not be wrong. Try to find truth or good in what they're saying and affirm them. You can then say, "What do you see in *this* passage?" If needed, point them to the verse where the answer is found and have them reread it.
2. You can also try rephrasing the question, if you think they didn't understand what was being asked.
3. You can also say something like, "Tell me more about why you think that way?... I see. That's interesting. Does anyone want to add anything?" Whatever you say, be respectful and don't worry too much about a wrong answer. Others in the group will help correct the situation, but we want everyone to feel that the group is a safe place to share, even if ideas vary.

*Do you have any questions about these tips?  
Are there any that you think are particularly important?*

## Handling bland or shallow answers

1. If a question produces bland or shallow answers, then try to be more specific with your question: For example: "Paul says that love is patient. Can anyone give an example where you were impatient with a family member or roommate this week? What would patience have looked like?" vs. "How can we be impatient?" Overly general questions will produce overly general answers.
2. You can also model an answer that fits your expectations. You can share a specific and authentic example from your own life. Others will model how you share. For example, "I was so impatient with my husband this week that I grabbed the TV remote from his hands and took over what we were going to watch. I felt very bad later and apologized. Can anyone relate to being impatient recently or some other time in your life?"

*Do you have any questions about these tips?  
Are there any that you think are particularly important?*

## Handling opposing ideas

1. Respect that people have different perspectives. You can say things like, “Yeah, I get that,” “I respect your thoughts,” or “That’s interesting. Tell me more.” Ask them how they developed their idea (i.e. parents, religious teaching, books, experiences). Seek to understand them better and where they’re coming from, rather than challenging their view.
2. While we want to encourage people to focus on what the passage says, people will have varying ideas, interpretations, beliefs, and responses. Honor the person’s idea and encourage them that this is an opportunity for them to learn what the Bible teaches, specifically this passage, even if it’s different from what they believe. We want to create a safe educational opportunity for everyone. You can say something like, “All ideas are welcome here, but this is a great opportunity to learn what the Bible says, and it may be different. But that’s ok. We’re just here to learn. So, even if you disagree, what do you see in the text?”

*Do you have any questions about these tips?  
Are there any that you think are particularly important?*

## Closing the time / Housekeeping

1. Each week, announce where and when the next meeting will be, if the location or time changes.
2. After you’ve ended the discussion and prayed, please ask everyone to clean up one or two things, wash a dish, and put a chair away so that the host doesn’t have much to do after everyone leaves. This teaches us all to be good guests and to serve one another.
3. Once a month, invite people to serve in the ministry (i.e. prepare or bring food, give rides, facilitate, lead worship, etc.). Select the topic(s) to be discussed and assign facilitators.
4. Once a month, remind people how to give to the ministry, i.e. portals for giving, cash to hosts for food and gas for pick-ups, or one-another support for small needs. Larger needs, if applicable, should be organized through the leader.
5. For any new friends who are attending regularly, make sure we have an emergency contact card for them. This is not required but is encouraged.

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Don't have much time to prepare?

Try these *Discovery Bible Questions!*

### Discover

1. What did you like or find significant about this passage?
2. What bothers you or what don't you understand about this passage? Why? [You don't have to answer everyone's questions. Just let people share and respect their thoughts. See if the question is answered by the end of the discussion!]
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. What does this passage tell us about the relationship between God and people?
6. What other questions do you have about this passage?

### Obey

*Help people to share specifically about themselves in this section, and set the example in vulnerability and authenticity.*

7. If you believe this passage is true, then how does it change how you view God?
8. How should it change how you treat others?
9. How should it change how you live life?
10. What specifically will you do differently this coming week based on what you learned through this passage?

### Share

11. How can you share with others what you learned? What do you want to share? (i.e. the passage, how God is working in your life, or ways God is answering your prayers)
12. Who will you share with this week?

### Care

13. Do you know anyone outside this group who needs help? How can you/we help them? (Make a plan.)

### Prayer

*See Ending in Prayer.*

### Closing the time / Housekeeping

*See Closing the time / Housekeeping.*