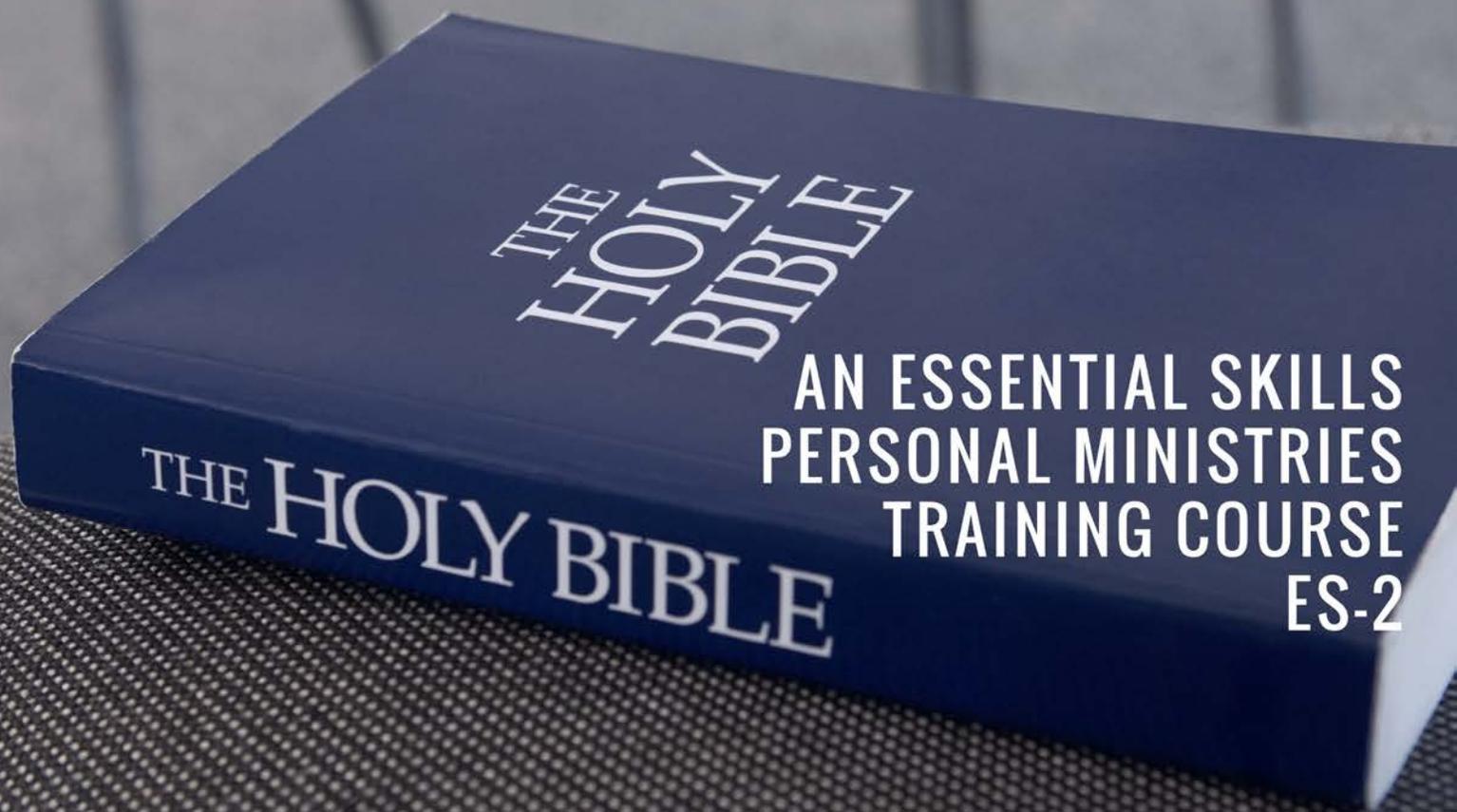


METHODS AND APPLICATIONS

# HOW TO GIVE BIBLE STUDIES



AN ESSENTIAL SKILLS  
PERSONAL MINISTRIES  
TRAINING COURSE  
ES-2

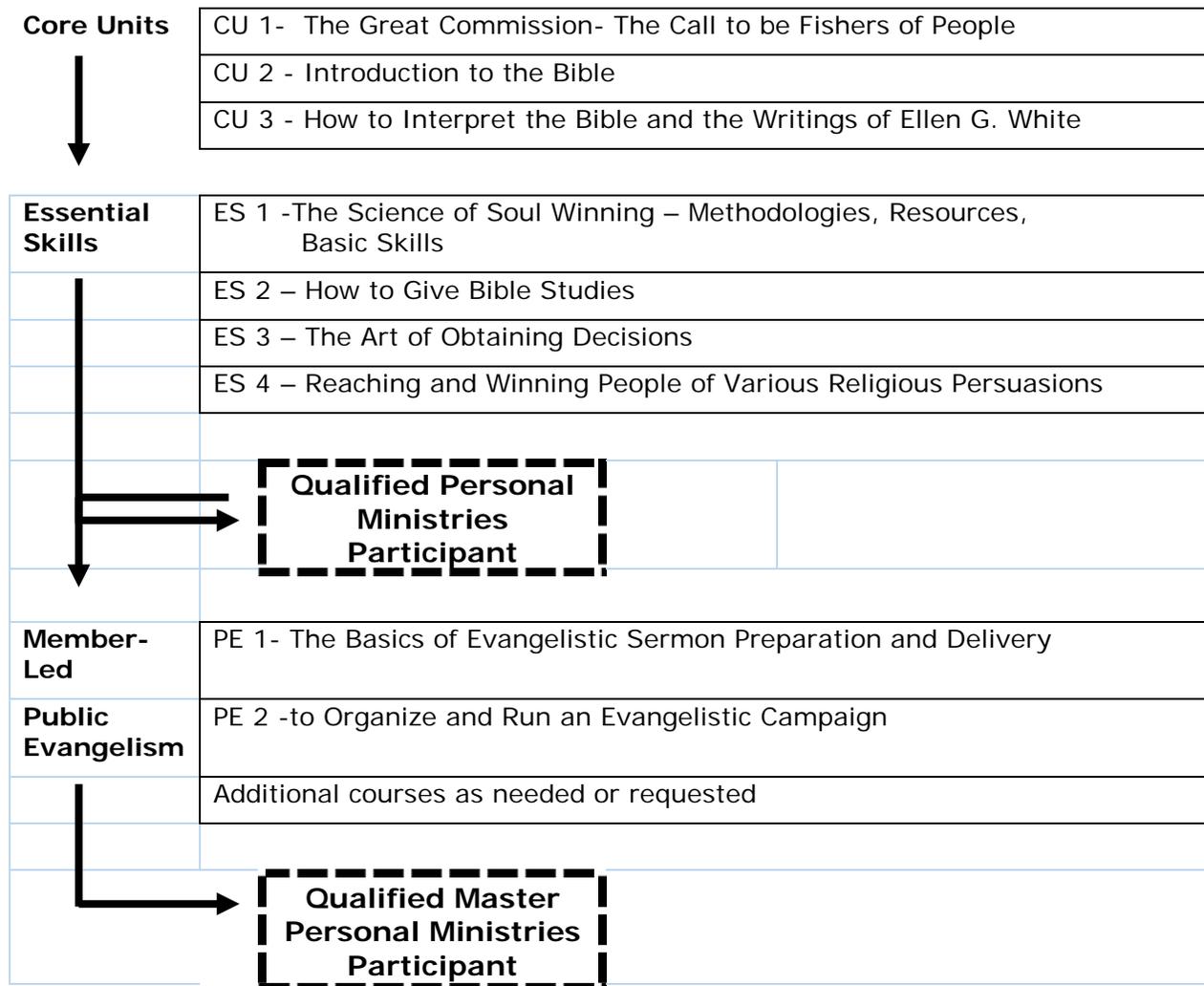
This Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment Course is sponsored by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

**A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored  
Essential Skills Level Personal Ministries Instructional  
and Enrichment Training Course**

The Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division sponsors a curriculum for the instruction and enrichment of those involved in personal ministries outreach and leadership. This curriculum has three levels of training and enrichment. All the courses are available online at [www.nadadultministries.org](http://www.nadadultministries.org).

These courses are all self-contained units. If you wish to obtain either the "Qualified Personal Ministries Participant" or "Qualified Master Personal Ministries Participant" *Certificates of Accomplishment* you must complete all of the previous courses in the curriculum outline.

**North American Division Personal Ministries Participants  
Qualification Process and Curriculum**



# **How to Give Bible Studies: Methods and Applications**

**A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored  
Essential Skills Level Personal Ministries Instructional and  
Enrichment Training Course**

## **Course Contents**

**Course Description**

**How to Study this Course**

**Course Introduction**

**Unit 1 – What Bible Studies Are All About**

**Unit 2 – Materials and Resources for Bible Studies**

**Unit 3 – How to Conduct a Bible Study**

**Course Summary**

## **Course Description**

Personal Ministries is both the name of a department sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist church, and a designation for any ministry carried out by individual members, or small groups of people, focused on direct evangelistic contact such as Bible studies, baptismal classes, church member-led evangelistic campaigns, or other methodologies involving direct soul winning outreach.

Ellen G White gave us the phrase “the *science* of soul saving” (See *Ministry of Healing*, p. 398). To learn and practice that science, the same statement admonishes, “a broad foundation must be laid.” This course is about one of the essential skills of that broad foundation: preparing and giving Bible studies.

Giving Bible studies is a key strategy of personal ministries participation. Those who master this skill will see many people receive Jesus as a personal Savior, accept the seventh-day Sabbath, and become members of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

## **How to Study this Course**

This is one of the online courses sponsored by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division. When you finish, you will receive a Certificate of Completion indicating that you have satisfactorily complete this course via [www.nadadultministries.org](http://www.nadadultministries.org).

This course is both theoretical and practical. It is composed of a course outline, assignment sheets, and attached readings from various sources that cover valuable insights about personal ministries outreach enrichment.

You can download the material if you prefer to study from a printed copy. You can also study it directly on the screen if that is your preference.

Often Bible texts are indicated as references. It is always a good idea to look up these texts to see how they fit the pattern in which they are quoted or referred to in this course.

## Vocabulary

**Bible studies/Bible readings.** Bible studies refer to teaching/facilitating a Bible-based series of lessons in a systematic format. Bible studies and Bible readings are two titles for the same process.

**Christian personality.** The term “Christian personality” refers to the manifestation of the Christian virtues and attitudes in the life of an individual Christian or corporate body of Christians.

**Church growth eyes.** The term “church growth eyes” is an analogy referring to the ability to recognize how elements of church life relate to the Great Commission. A person with church growth eyes “sees” evangelistic opportunities that others are blind to.

**Church/district.** Many churches in the North American Division belong to an extended family known as a district. This is usually because the local conference can only finance one pastor for various churches. Since this type of arrangement is common, and often the churches in a district cooperate in sponsoring training programs, etc. the identifier “church/district” is used in this course.

**Evangelism.** In this course evangelism refers to the entire process of winning converts and incorporating them into the life of the congregation. It is not limited to public meetings.

**Friendship evangelism.** A system of evangelization based on the *koinonia* and *oikos* principles that involve human relationships and listening skills, as well as the passing on of information about the gospel and the church.

**Giving Bible Studies.** This is a common phrase used in Seventh-day Adventist literature and training classes for the on-the-spot action of presenting a Bible study. It may refer to the process or to the on-the-spot action.

**Incarnational evangelism.** Incarnational evangelism refers to outreach attitudes and systems that build relationships with people rather than simply passing on information. It is based on the methods used by Jesus and Paul’s statement that Christians are “living letters.”

**Missionary.** This title is most often applied to someone who crosses salt water and works in a place other than his or her country of origin. The Bible, while it does not use this particular word, applies this role to anyone who is actively involved in “spreading the Gospel.”

**Missiology/Missiologist.** Missiology is an academic discipline that studies ways and means of reaching people groups around the world with the Christian message. A missiologist is someone who is trained in this academic discipline.

**Outreach.** This is another word for evangelism. It refers to the process of reaching people with the Gospel and winning them to the Seventh-day Adventist church.

**Personal ministries participant.** Anyone involved in soul winning/outreach/evangelistic activities in an intentional way.

**Small groups.** Small groups refer to any gathering of three to twelve people who do something in common by intention.

**Spiritual gifts.** A spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God’s grace, for use within the context of the Body.

**Teaching ministry.** Teaching ministry refers to any activity in the church whose objective is that the individual student or audience learn either information or application.

**Unchurched.** Any person or persons who does not regularly attend church services, or is not involved in the life of the church.

**Witness/witnessing.** This term refers to the responsibility of every Christian to relate to others what the Lord has done in his or her life, and appeal to people to accept the plan of salvation.

### **Textbook**

There is no specific textbook for this course. Three valuable resources, obtainable on the Internet or at Adventist Book Centers, will be helpful: (1) *Bible Readings for the Home*, (2) Mark Finley, *Studying Together*, and (3) *Training Light Bearers* (See [sdavalleycenter-net.adventistfaith.org](http://sdavalleycenter-net.adventistfaith.org) for an online PDF copy). Other resources will be referenced in various places in the course materials.

### **Student Fulfillment Card**

At the end of this Study Guide you will find a *Student Fulfillment Card*. This is the record of study you will forward to the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division ([jalfred.johnson@nad.adventist.org](mailto:jalfred.johnson@nad.adventist.org)) so you can receive your Certificate of Accomplishment.

### **Types of Study Locations**

- If you are studying this class on your own, this online Study Guide will indicate the exercises that you should complete. These contain question-and-answer sheets you can print out. They identify the important points of the readings and units of study. It is very important to fill in these sheets. They are your way of knowing how you are doing in the class.

- If you are studying in a classroom-type setting, an instructor will lead you through various participatory activities.

- If you are studying in a small group, ideas are included for those studying in this environment.

- There are no examinations scheduled for this class, unless an individual instructor decides to use them.

## **Course Introduction**

The Bible emphasizes the responsibility of the followers of the Lord to pass on the instructions and belief system recorded in Scripture. This implies acquiring and building skills in the science of soul winning.

Medical personnel are highly trained to do their jobs. You and I would not dream of going to a doctor who had no specialized training or medical degree. We know what the results would be! When your car needs repair, you take it to a certified auto mechanic because that person has been trained to repair whatever the problem is. If you try to fix it yourself with no knowledge of how automobiles function, the problem will probably just get worse.

The science of soul winning is no different. Participants need to acquire certain essential skills to do an effective job. Some of these skills involve understanding and applying resources and social skills. Others encompass the content of the message communicated to others.

The Bible outlines many methodologies for doing outreach. Sometimes it is done through social networks (The woman at the well); sometimes through governmental agencies (Daniel, Nehemiah); sometime through public proclamations to large groups (Ezra, Paul); sometimes through one-to-one Bible study, conversations, and discussions (Nicodemus).

This present course focusses on one-to-one or small group Bible studies.

The world Adventist church sponsors many mass media evangelistic outlets and initiatives. It has many resource materials available to accomplish these tasks. These methodologies are based on the principle that every believer is called to share his or her

convictions and belief system with someone who is not a believer, or who inadvertently or deliberately believes things that the Bible does not teach.

This is the purpose and assignment of what the Seventh-day Adventist church has chosen to call "Personal Ministries."

The local church/district is the best place to accomplish soul winning and establish discipleship. To accomplish this mission, Ellen G White writes, "Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted." -- *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 148, 149.

## **Course Objectives**

The objective of this course is to gain an understanding of the skills of a personal ministries participant, and the use of these skills as basic outreach tools and methodologies.

After completing this course, you should:

- Understand the reasons for using a system of giving Bible studies as a strategy of personal ministries participation.
- Understand and articulate the reasons for a designated order of subjects in presenting Bible studies.
- Be able to compose a Bible study or a personalized Bible study series.
- Understand and demonstrate the best ways to present a Bible study.
- Become knowledgeable in the identification and use of some key Bible study resources.

# Unit 1

## What Bible Studies Are All About

A Bible study is an outreach strategy. It is a way to study the Bible with someone systematically, usually by themes or topics. This is usually called “doctrinal study,” because the focus is on studying a particular biblical teaching as it is developed throughout the Bible.

Notice the word “systematically.” A Bible study is more than a casual conversation. It is not a free-for-all argument about something in the Bible. If someone around the water cooler at work says, “Hey, doesn’t the Bible say . . .” and you respond in some way, that is not a Bible study. Nor is a Bible study a sermon: “Listen carefully to what *I* have to say . . .” is not a Bible study, it is a monologue.

*A Bible study is a teaching/learning environment that presents what the Bible says about a topic in an organized, systematic sequence, usually in a one-to-one or small group setting.*

The usual format of a Bible study is called “question and answer.” The instructor asks a question and the Bible study participants look up the answer in the Bible. Almost all Bible study resources, whether books, Bible lesson series, or online resources use this format. Bible study resources also may include explanations, charts, historical information, etc. that both instructor and student will find helpful.

### Some Historical Background

This style of outreach strategy goes back to the origins of the Christian church.

Acts 18 records the story of a Jewish person, well-educated and knowledgeable, who from some source learned about Christianity; at least about the teachings of John the Baptist. His name was Apollos. He was from Alexandria in Egypt, an historical local for training in philosophy and public-speaking eloquence.

At one point Apollos appeared in the city of Ephesus. The Bible says, “He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.” It also records that, “He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.”

Here’s where a Bible study began: “When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.” This was a case of studying what we Adventists call “present truth” — something that was in the Bible, but Apollos didn’t know about it, or understand it, until he took those Bible studies.

This was a Bible study involving three people. We don’t know how long it continued, or exactly what the contents of the study were. The record says that as a result “he (Apollos) vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.” This Bible study strategy was successful: “When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia (Western Greece), the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.”

Ellen G White reinforces the viewpoint that using this outreach strategy helps both the person receiving the studies and the person giving the studies:

“Open the Scriptures to someone that is in darkness, and you will not complain of weariness and lack of interest in the cause of truth. Your heart will be awakened to an anxiety for souls, and joy in the evidences of the faith will fill your heart, and you will know that ‘he that watereth shall be watered also himself.’” — *Christian Service*, p. 144.

Ellen G White also highlights the value of this system of outreach:

“The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul. To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. Through that one soul the message was often extended to thousands. We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are.”— *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 229.

### **Bible Studies in Adventist History**

Bible studies as we know them, once known as “Bible Readings,” became a commonplace Seventh-day Adventist church strategy by accident.

Early Adventist leaders were often preachers from a variety of denominations who had become followers of William Miller and what was called by many “The Great Advent Movement.” When they started the development of what became the Seventh-day Adventist church, they mostly continued to preach. That is what we call today “public evangelism.”

Another widely used strategy was the circulation of printed material — historically known as “literature distribution.”

In May, 1883 S. N. Haskell, then the president of the California Conference, was speaking at a campmeeting. According to the record in the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (article “Bible Studies”) he was preaching when a storm—he called it a “downpour”—hit the campground. This was before the age of electronic public address systems, and the audience could no longer hear him speak. Pr. Haskell, the record tells us, “gathered a group around him in the center of the tent and began to announce texts of Scripture to be read by various persons in response to questions related to the subject under discussion.” The record says, “This method of communicating Bible teachings and Christian faith was received with enthusiasm and was endorsed by church members and leaders.”

The California conference was enthralled with the plan. They registered this vote: “Resolved, That we recommend that as far as practicable, the various churches and little companies of Sabbath-keepers hold Bible readings similar to those conducted on the campground, for the purpose of better informing themselves in the Scriptures, and also of interesting their neighbors in the special truths of these last days.” (*Signs of the Times*, Sept. 27, 1883).

Ellen G White was at the campmeeting, but not present in that meeting. However, her son, Elder W. C. White, knew about the experience, and gave a glowing description of the meeting to his mother. The very next day Elder Haskell and other ministers were called to meet with Mrs. White. She told them that the meeting about which she had heard was in harmony with the light she had received from the Lord. She stated that in vision she had seen hundreds and thousands of Seventh-day Adventists going from house to house with the Bible under their arms, teaching the truth in this way.

Two months later, the *Review and Herald* (July 31, 1883), reported that two California pastors, A. Briggs and M. C. Israel, joined with several colporteurs each morning for a Bible class, training themselves to use this new method. Pr. Haskell quotes one of these men as saying: “We have been having a drill on different subjects, and each person has a short form of Bible reading questions in his Bible, so when the Sabbath question or any other subject comes up, each one makes it a point to have the person or family visited get a Bible, and have the subject cleared up right from the Scriptures. In this way a controversy never arises; but the people are in almost every case convinced that the Bible teaches that

doctrine. . . . I do not see why very many of our brethren and sisters may not be educated in this way to make efficient workers. By practice they could soon get so they would not have to look at the questions. They could get companies of neighbors together, and have prayer with them, and Bible-readings."

In September of that same year, Pr. Haskell attended the Michigan Conference campmeeting and reported that based on the success of Bible readings in California, Nebraska and elsewhere, the Michigan conference voted approval of the plan for use by colporteurs. Following that, a 10-day Bible Reading Institute was announced for Battle Creek, to begin Oct. 30, preceding the General Conference session.

Haskell reported: "The subject of Bible readings has been one of interest on the Pacific Coast, and has been considered of that importance that there is a special department in that College [Healdsburg College] devoted to it. Those who have adopted this method in their colporteur work speak of it in the highest terms, as it avoids all discussion, and simply calls the attention of the people to the Word of God" (*Review and Herald*, Oct. 16, 1883).

The General Conference session voted to recommend the Bible study method and proposed the publication, by a "Bible reading Bureau," of a monthly sheet containing one or more lessons for each week. This *Bible-Reading Gazette* was issued monthly through the year 1884. Afterward it was bound and sold as a book, and was later replaced by the much larger book still published, after many editions, as *Bible Readings for the Home*. This book is still a key resource for personal ministries participants who conduct Bible studies.

### **Initial Organization**

Some of these original Bible readings were pretty extensive. They averaged one hundred and fifty questions, with even a larger number of texts of Scripture. While that shows how thorough the instruction was in those days, it wasn't long until it became apparent that these Bible readings were too long.

Today, most Bible study guides present ten to twelve questions with accompanying Bible texts in each lesson. One resources notes: "It is a well-established fact that a few carefully selected, pointed, and definite texts used at one time are much more effective than a multiplicity of texts covering the entire subject."<sup>1</sup>

Pr. Haskell's description of a typical Bible reading is interesting:

The plan which as yet has seemed to be most successful [for conducting city missions] is that of holding Bible readings in families and obtaining subscriptions for the *Signs* .... These Bible readings embrace more than a single family. Sometimes they are held with the family during the first visit, then an appointment is left for another, when the family themselves invite in their neighbors. In this way the families become interested for their neighbors, and not infrequently there will be from five to fifteen in attendance at each Bible reading. They sit around a large table, each one with a Bible, and all turn to the various texts. Questions are asked and the Bible explained, or rather texts are quoted so that the Bible explains itself. On Sabbath and Sunday there are public social meetings or readings at the mission rooms. Bible readings are also held on board the ships. Some of our sisters are quite as successful in holding Bible readings as our brethren .... It is as important that our brethren be instructed how to do this successfully as it is to do missionary work of any kind. Some will naturally adapt themselves to it, while others need a special drill to prepare them to give the readings acceptably .... One thing is certain, God is with His truth, and He will help those who

---

<sup>1</sup>*Training Light Bearers*, p. 14.

not only feel their need of Him but feel the importance of qualifying themselves to labor in the best manner."<sup>2</sup>

### **Bible-Reading Gazette**

This was a 24-page monthly magazine that collected and published Bible readings developed by church members. Anyone who composed and submitted four Bible readings got a free one-year subscription. The magazine proved very popular, and soon there were 12,000 copies in circulation. By the end of the first year, the demand was so great that the first twelve numbers were reissued as a bound volume. The book contained more than 162 studies, 2,800 questions answered, diagrams, notes, and texts written out. Some twenty people sent in studies. This is the original book that eventually became *Bible Readings for the Home*.

Here is a sample list of some of the studies in that volume:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of Questions</b>
The Sanctuary	149
The Law of God	111
Spiritual Gifts (Gift of prophecy)	126
Tithing	98
Conversion	58
New Earth	48
Sabbath	61
The Scriptures	27
United States in Prophecy No. 1	104
United States in Prophecy No. 2	53
2300 Days	72

### **Why Bible Studies Are a Successful Personal Ministries Strategy**

Bible studies are successful primarily because they are one-to-one or small group activities. Here are a few reasons why this is a successful strategy:

1. It is a strategy that can be learned and mastered very quickly.
2. It allows participants to be actively involved in the learning process.
3. It is an informal activity that allows for unhurried study and sharing.
4. It allows participants to learn/participate at their own pace. For example, people who are biblical illiterate (don't know where to find the various books of the Bible, etc.) are not overpowered by biblically knowledgeable environments like

---

<sup>2</sup>ibid, p. 16

rapid-fire "let's go to \_\_\_\_in the Bible" pronouncements that basically leave them perplexed and confused.

5. People read at different levels. In a Bible study, someone who reads slowly can still feel at ease, because no one is pushing them to speed up.
6. The strategy leads to a level of confidence in the Bible as the religious authority in people's lives. The only religious "authority" many people recognize is a family tradition where "We always believed that way," or "I have always heard that \_\_\_\_." By being gently led to the Bible itself, and reading it for themselves, they soon learn the "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).



## Unit 2

### Materials and Resources for Bible Studies

The Seventh-day Adventist church and its cooperating independent ministries provide personal ministries participants with a variety of resources for giving Bible studies.

#### Types of Bible Study Series

There are many types of Bible study lessons. Some are general series. Some specialize in a particular area of Bible study. Some are geared to target groups. Other series are designed to be used in small group settings.

1. *Full-Message Bible study guides.* A full-message series contains all of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church. They usually consist of around 25-30 individual lessons. An example is the *Discover Bible Study Guides* series from the Voice of Prophecy radio ministry. This is a series of twenty-six Bible study guides that cover all the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines and lifestyle. The series has three specific decision points built in: (1) A decision to accept Jesus as a personal Savior, (2) a decision to accept the seventh-day Sabbath, and (3) a decision to be baptized and become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

*The Search for Certainty* series from It Is Written Television Ministries follows the same general outline and covers the same general topics. The *New Beginnings* series, available from It Is Written, is also full-message, but is designed primarily for visual presentations (DVD, etc.) rather than written.

2. *Targeted series.* Targeted series are focused on a particular audience or theme. The Bible study guides produced by the Amazing Facts ministry focus more on prophecy. They are still full-message, but the arrangement of topics is different. The Discover Bible School has a series of lessons that are chapter by chapter studies of Daniel and Revelation. The Discover Bible School also has available, for example, series of Bible studies such as "Shema Israel," targeted specifically to a Jewish audience, and "Native New Day," targeted specifically for Native-Americans.

AdventSource (the North American Division resource center) has available a series titled "41 Bible Studies" designed specifically for teenagers. The same resource center has a series titled "Lifting Up Jesus" that focuses on the plan of salvation. A set of 12 study guides titled "Footprints for Parents & Mentors" is geared to small group study for this targeted group.

A series provided by the Women's Ministry department of the General Conference titled "Surprised by Love," is targeted specifically to women's study groups. The Pacific Press publishes a series titled *Bible Studies for Busy Women* that targets the group mentioned in the title. These are just a few examples of targeted Bible study series.

#### Venues and Timeframe

Venues for Bible studies vary. They may be person-to-person or family group studies in a private home. They may happen around a meal, or break time in a workplace. A Bible study group may meet at the church, or at some selected convenient site.

The traditional average length of a Bible study is one hour. This can vary according to the circumstances involved.

Many Bible study series are available on the Internet in various formats via social media. Just about all the Bible study series available can be studied online.

#### Bible Study Designs

There are various organizational systems or designs that a personal ministries participant may choose to use in developing ways and means of giving Bible studies.

##### 1. Spontaneous Bible Studies

This is a type of Bible study that more or less comes out of nowhere! As noted previously, a spontaneous answer to a question that arises in a casual conversation is not technically a Bible study. Sometimes, however, someone does raise a question in some situation that leads to employing Bible texts you think appropriate and most meaningful to the specific student at the moment. For instance, with a seat partner on the bus or on an airplane.

These studies often arise when someone hears the name "Seventh-day Adventist." "Oh, you are the people who don't eat pork. Why is that?" All too often arguments ensue and the series ends abruptly. Using this spontaneous approach it is very difficult to stay on one subject and make it clear to a person's thinking.

On the other hand, this spontaneous "open-the-Bible" approach does require a thorough knowledge of the Bible.

**Resource.** You can get a resource that helps prepare for this kind of study when the occasion appears: Kraid I. Ashbaugh, *How to Give Impromptu Bible Studies* (1980). This resource shows how to memorize, or at least have in mind, Bible studies in a way that keeps them always present in your thinking.

## 2. Bible Marking Systems

This is a practical system that allows you to have Bible studies available at any time. You mark the studies in your Bible using a code that leads you through the texts in order, one at a time. You can use any size Bible and always have a series of Bible studies available.

On the blank flyleaves at the beginning or end of your Bible, make a list of all the subjects as you mark them, with the key letter which stands for that subject and the first Bible reference with which that lesson begins.

You can also use a color-coded system by using colors for each study. Adventist Book Centers and other religious supply sources stock colored pencil sets designed to use with the types of paper used in Bibles.

### **How the system works.**

1. Each subject has its own distinct key letters (plus color if you use that system); for example: SC = Second Coming of Christ. M = Millennium. List the subjects, code letters and the first text for each on the flyleaf in the front or back of your Bible. Copy just the key letters and the first text of each subject on these flyleaves.
2. Turn to the first reference of each subject and write in the margin near it the second reference. Then turn to the second reference and write in the margin near it the third reference, and so on to the end of the study.
3. Call for a decision during each lesson.

## Question and Answer Systems

This is a frequently used system for giving Bible studies. The study consists of a series of questions with Bible texts attached that answer the question.

There are study series available with accompanying Bibles. The question and answer sheets may have page numbers beside each Bible text that correspond to the Bible used. This helps people unfamiliar with the Bible to find the texts attached to the questions.

This type of Bible study design follows a simple approach:

1. The teacher first gives the page number (if needed) and text to the student, and the student finds the text.
2. The teacher asks the question.
3. The student reads the text.
4. The teacher asks the question again and the student answers.
5. The teacher then provides any further comments or illustrations.
6. After the 10-12 questions are studied, the teacher will ask: "Any questions? Is it clear?" and then focus on a decision question, usually included in the Bible study series.

## Assignment 2

### Mark Your Bible

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this assignment.*

Mark one of the following Bible study in your Bible as an example of a Bible marking system.

The two studies below are taken from J.L. Schuler, *Helps for Bible Study* and John Earnhardt, *Bible Marking Guide* (both are available at any Adventist Book Center).

<b>Shuler, The Lord's Day: Key letters: LD</b>	<b>Earnhardt, Sabbath/Seventh Day – Key Letters: SAB</b>
1LD Revelation 1:10	1SAB James 4:17
2LD Matthew 12:8	2SAB 1 Peter 2:21
3LD Exodus 20:10	3SAB Luke 4:16
4LD Exodus 20:1	4SAB Matthew 12:8
5LD Ephesians 3:9	5SAB Mark 2:27,28
6LD Luke 4:16	6SAB Exodus 20:11
7LD Hebrews 13:8	7SAB 1 Chronicles 17:27
8LD Genesis 2:1-3	8SAB Leviticus 26:2
9LD Mark 2:28	9SAB Mark 6:2
10LD Mark 16:1,2	10SAB Acts 17:2
11LD Mark 15:42-44	11SAB Ezekiel 20:12
12LD Luke 23:54-56; 24:1	12SAB Isaiah 66:22,23
13LD Ezekiel 20:12	13SAB Matthew 24:20
14LD Isaiah 66:22,23	14SAB Acts 18:4
	15SAB Acts 13:42,43
	16SAB Isaiah 56:1-6
	17SAB Hebrews 4:1-11

## **Bible Correspondence School Study Guides**

As noted above, Adventist media programs offer Bible study series that can be used in a variety of ways. These lessons are usually produced as colorful pamphlets with 6 to 10 questions in each guide. Usually the Bible texts are written out in the lessons, along with explanations and further information. The lessons typically finish with an appeal and decision question.

1. They can be used as correspondence lessons either by regular mail or online. In this case the student studies the lessons on their own and sends in answers to be corrected by a central office or a Bible school run by a local church/district. At some point, the student is contacted by a personal ministries participant who either makes a personal visit, or arranges to give the student one-to-one Bible studies.
2. The same lessons can be used as the curriculum for one-to-one or family group Bible studies.
3. The same lessons can be used as the curriculum for small group Bible studies. Special study sheets accompany the lessons for use in small groups that work as question and answer sheets. Participants look up the texts, sometimes using a special Bible with page numbers included.

## **Baptismal Classes**

Baptismal classes are Bible study groups made up of people who have decided, or are at the point of deciding, to join the Seventh-day Adventist church. A baptismal class is a tool designed to put into practice Jesus' command to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28: 19, 20).

### ***What Is a Baptismal Class?***

A baptismal class aims to teach in a group environment the basic doctrines of the Bible as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist church. Its basic characteristics are: (1) A group of people interested in learning about these teachings, (2) led by a qualified person, either clergy or member, (3) uses the Bible as its textbook. Bibles are usually provided for the class members, and (4) the group usually uses a study guide or baptismal manual as a class syllabus.

The North American Division media programs offer the Discover Bible Lessons both in print and on DVD that are ideal for baptismal classes. *A Reason to Believe* (Review and Herald Publishing Association) is a manual that covers the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church in an attractive and contemporary way. *Seventh-day Adventist Believe* is a larger book that covers all the doctrines of the church. It's a little too big for a baptismal class, but it's a good resource for new members to have. *Bible Readings for the Home* (Pacific Press Publishing Association) goes through hundreds of Bible questions and answers and can be used primarily as a study reference or as a resource for developing individual Bible studies.

### ***Why Do Baptismal Classes Produce Good Results?***

1. They represent an easy way for any church member to reach people.
2. Small group classes appeal to a sense of community. People like to study together in a group.
3. Studying from the Bible always gives good results.
4. It is an ideal setting for gaining decisions.
5. From an economic viewpoint, it is inexpensive — only the cost of a few lessons, maybe some Bibles, plus some time and concentrated effort.

### ***When and Where to Convene Baptismal Classes***

Baptismal classes can be held at different times, depending on the program of the church and composition of the congregation.

**During Sabbath School.** Urban churches tend to be “commuter” churches. Members do not live close to the church, and just about everything happens on Sabbath, because that is when people are at the church. As a result, many churches find that the best time to hold baptismal classes is during Sabbath School time. These are often called “The Pastor’s Class.”

Baptismal classes held during Sabbath School time have two unique features: (1) They usually run longer than regular classes: the members often go directly to the class and do not attend the preliminaries some churches have, and (2) they study doctrines instead of the lessons in the *Adult Bible Study Guide*. Once a person is baptized, they either join a regular Sabbath School class or participate in the new four-quarter *In Step With Jesus* discipleship series of lessons.

**After the worship service.** Some churches have discovered that the best time to hold baptismal classes is right after the worship service. Depending on the facilities available, you could offer a fellowship meal to the baptismal class members followed by the class study. In some cases the class members participate in the general fellowship meal after church and then go to whatever venue is used for the baptismal class study.

**Sabbath afternoon.** Some churches schedule a baptismal class later on Sabbath afternoon. Others find it hard to get people back to the church once they leave.

**Midweek meetings.** Other churches schedule baptismal classes after midweek prayer meeting, or as part of the same meeting. This has the advantage of helping new members develop the habit of going to prayer meeting. Ellen White once recommended this plan: “After a short discourse, change the order of the exercises, and give opportunity for all who desire it, to remain for an afterinterview, or Bible class, where they can ask questions upon subjects that trouble them. You will find great success in coming close to the people in these Bible lessons.” — *Evangelism*, p. 152.

### **How to Organize a Baptismal Class**

If there is currently no baptismal class in the church or connected with the Sabbath School, one way to start the class is to present an evangelistic sermon on a given Sabbath morning and make a call for those who would like to join a baptismal class. You could make up a special invitation card or letter inviting them to the class.

*Keep records.* It is a good idea to ask someone to be the secretary of the class. This person will keep attendance records. These records should also record the student’s advancement in understanding and spiritual progress. Students make a lot of decisions as they progress in the class, and these decisions need to be noted. This secretary can be a church member or a member of the class who wishes to be involved.

*Progress certificates.* Some baptismal classes have discovered that people like to get progress recognition. Some classes have designed progress certificates to hand out convenient times.

Here’s how one class did it. After 6 classes the member got a certificate of attendance. After attending classes 7 -15 they got an “Interested Member” certificate. After attending classes 16-20 they got a “Candidate” certificate. You can print/photocopy these certificates in various colors.

You might be surprised how many people like to get some recognition like this; even people you thought would have no interest at all. Any one of these certificates can also serve as a kind of ID card for recording attendance, etc.

*Class social activities.* Two or three times during the duration of the class, it is a good idea to have some kind of social activity. Once someone is baptized, it is a good idea to have a fellowship meal, maybe including a short devotional-type message, and a time for greeting the new members. This is also a time when the new members can give testimonies or even relate their conversion stories.

## Reading 1

### The Value of Baptismal Classes

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading.*

It may not seem that articles on how to organize and operate baptismal classes have much to do with world mission. Actually, they do. All over the world people join and study in baptismal classes. Connected with Sabbath School they are sometimes called small groups, or Pastor's Class, or New Member class, or occasionally "Visitor's class."

Seventh-day Adventist world outreach is based on a number of biblical injunctions: Matthew 28: 18-20, the Great Commission; Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come;" and the First Angel's Message in Revelation 14:6 where the angel speaks of "the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people."

The current world emphasis on Revival and Reformation also involves reminding church members of the importance of spiritual growth and correct doctrinal beliefs, as well as preparing new converts to understand the biblical basis for Adventist doctrine and the basis for an Adventist lifestyle that matches biblical principles.

A Sabbath School dedicated to including soul winning and the emphasis on the world-wide mission program of the church, in conjunction with the local church/district Personal Ministries department, will find ways and means of sponsoring baptismal classes.

Why do baptismal classes produce good results? First of all, they represent an easy way for any church member to reach people. Secondly, these kinds of small group classes appeal to a sense of community. People like to sturdy together in a group. Third, studying from the Bible always gives good results. Fourth, it is an ideal setting for gaining decisions, and fifth, from an economic viewpoint, it is inexpensive — only the cost of a few lessons, maybe some Bibles, plus some time and concentrated effort.

Sometimes baptismal classes are combined with other outreach activities like an evangelistic campaign, or a Discover Bible School run by the church; but they can as well function as a free-standing outreach methodology. In fact, most baptismal classes function that way. It stands to reason that a method this effective and economical surely ought to be used extensively and on a regular basis.

#### **An Old Method with a New Face!**

Ellen G. White long ago recommended that we need to keep up with the times with our methods: "Men are needed who pray to God for wisdom, and who, under the guidance of God, can put new life into the old methods of labor and can invent new plans and new methods of awakening the interest of church members and reaching the men and women of the world." — *Evangelism*, p. 105. Jesus Himself spent much of His contact time with the public teaching. The apostles used a teaching methodology on a regular basis. Peter, for instance backed up with a teaching ministry the evangelistic work done by Phillip in Samaria (Acts 8:5-7, 14, 25). Peter also stayed with the Roman Centurion Cornelius and his family "for a few days" (Acts 10:48) after their baptism. We can assume that he did some teaching during that time.

Paul leaves us another example of the value the apostles placed on careful teaching and instruction. He and Barnabas met with the church in Antioch in Syria for an entire year "and taught great numbers of people" (Acts 11:26). He stayed in Corinth, a difficult city to evangelize, "for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God" (Acts 18:11). Someone had taught a Jewish convert by the name of Apollos about Jesus, but later two church members named Priscilla and Aquila took him under their wing and "invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18:24-28).

Ellen G White remarks "It had been Paul's work to instruct the Corinthian converts in the rudiments, the very alphabet, of the Christian faith. He had been obliged to instruct them as those who were ignorant of the operations of divine power upon the heart." —*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 271.

All of these teaching sessions in early church times are of a style we could term a baptismal class today. Again Ellen G White notes: "There are many who want to know what they must do to be saved. They want a plain and clear explanation of the steps requisite in conversion — *Evangelism*, p. 188. She continues with the advice: "Often it would be more profitable if the Sabbath meetings were of the nature of a Bible class study. Bible truth should be presented in such a simple, interesting manner that all can easily understand and grasp the principles of salvation."—*Evangelism*, p. 348.

So what is a baptismal class? A baptismal class aims to teach in a group environment the basic doctrines of the Bible as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist church. Its basic characteristics are: (1) A group of people interested in learning about these teachings, (2) led by a qualified person, either clergy or laity, (3) uses the Bible as its textbook. Bibles are usually provided for the class members, and (4) usually uses a study guide or baptismal manual as a class syllabus.

A baptismal class is a vehicle designed to put into practice Jesus' command to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28: 19, 20).

## Resources for Bible Studies

There are many Bible study guides available. People who give Bible studies frequently often develop their own set of lessons based on their own personality and the environment in which they work.

1. As mentioned above, by far the most popular and most used personal ministries Bible study guide book produced by the General Conference is *Bible Readings: Four Thousand Answers About Bible Topics*. It was originally titled *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. It is arranged by topic and each topic is answered by Bible texts. The book is available on the Internet or at any Adventist Book Center. It can be used in giving Bible studies, or as a study reference tool by personal ministries participants.

2. The North American Division provides a website that lists some of the most used Bible study guides (<http://www.nadadventist.org/article/6/bible-study>).

3. A popular resource is Mark Finley, *Studying Together* (Fallbrook, CA Hart Research Center, Revised Edition, 1995). This is a valuable handbook of answers to all kinds of questions that come up in giving Bible studies. It also outlines the belief systems of many denominations in the North American Division.

4. Another popular resource used over the years is *Training Light Bearers: Brief Bible Reading for Busy People*. The latest revised edition was produced in 1977. The book is no longer in print. You can find copies in PDF format on the Internet and obtain printed copies from various Internet websites.

This book covers the science of giving Bible studies and contains 29 Bible studies. Each study consists of about 10 questions with accompanying Bible texts and a page of explanatory notes for the person giving the Bible study. The studies are heavily weighted toward prophecy and distinctive Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.

5. Seventh-day Adventist media programs produce the contemporary most used Bible study series. The It Is Written television program provides a series titled *Search for Certainty Bible Study Guides*. It Is Written also provides a visual media based Bible study series called *New Beginnings*. The Voice of Prophecy Radio Ministry produces the *Discover Bible Study Guides* sets. Amazing Facts, a cooperative independent ministry, produces a series of Bible study guides available through AdventSource ([adventsource.org](http://adventsource.org)).

6. The Voice of Prophecy also sponsors [Bibleinfo.com](http://Bibleinfo.com). This is a website that has Bible questions and answers. It is an excellent resource for personal ministries participants to use in preparing Bible studies and finding answers to questions raised. It is also an excellent reference for Bible study students to use in finding answers to questions raised in whatever Bible study guides they are using.

## Bible Study Series Contents

What do you teach/learn in a Bible study? Bible Studies usually focus on biblical doctrines. As noted above, many Bible study series are "full-message." They cover basic biblical doctrines and the belief system of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Others have a narrower focus, often emphasizing Bible prophecies.

**Know your lessons.** No matter what series of lessons you choose, you must know and master the contents. Contradictory as it may seem, there are those who attempt to lead out in Bible studies who do not themselves study the lessons. The results can be disastrous. If you as the instructor do not know what you are talking about, the students will not learn!

The following chart shows three contemporary Bible study series. Notice the similarities and differences between each series. These are examples, but are typical of most Bible study series.

### **Discover Bible Study Guides**

1. We Can Believe in God.
2. We Can Believe in the Bible.
3. Does My Life Really Matter to God? (Origin of sin).
4. A Plan for Your Life (Jesus as Savior).
5. Bridge to a Satisfying Life (Plan of salvation).
6. A Second Chance at Life (Plan of salvation)
7. About Your Future (Daniel 2).
8. When Jesus Comes for You.
9. Your Home in Heaven
10. How Soon Will Jesus Return?
11. Mysterious Power in My Life (Holy Spirit).
12. An Ever-Present Savior (High Priest).
13. From Guilty Sinner to Forgiven Saint.
14. The Secret of Answered Prayer.
15. The Secret of Happiness (10 commandments).
16. The Secret of Heavenly Rest (Sabbath).
17. The Secret of Growth Through Sharing (Lifestyle).
18. The Secret of a Healthy Lifestyle.
19. Entering the Christian Life (Baptism)
20. The Secret of Growth Through Fellowship (Church membership).
21. Can the majority be Wrong? (Sunday).
22. Is God Fair? (Millennium)
23. What and Where is Hell?
24. When a Person Dies, What Then?
25. Can I Find God's Church Today?
26. Does God have a Special Message for Our Day?

### **Search for Certainty**

1. How to Understand the Bible.
2. Our Day in the Light of Bible Prophecy.
3. A World in Turmoil.
4. The Manner of Christ's Coming.
5. How to find Personal Peace.
6. The Secret of a New Life.
7. Good God! Bad World! Why?
8. Revelation's Most Thrilling Message.
9. The Bible's Longest and Most Amazing Message.
10. A Date with Destiny: The Judgment.
11. What's Behind Rising Crime, Violence, and Immorality?
12. Christ's Special Sign.
13. Tampering with Heaven's Constitution.
14. Modern Cults Identified Five Ways.
15. Our Greatest Need – New Lifestyle.
16. The Real Truth About Death.
17. God's Love in the Fires of Hell.
18. How to Successfully Bury the Past.
19. A Financial Secret
20. Growing as a Christian
21. God's Church Identified.
22. Prophets and Prophecy/Visions and Dreams.
23. The Mystery of Spiritual Babylon Revealed.
24. Holy Spirit and Unpardonable Sin.
25. From Disappointment to Triumph.
26. The Mark of the Beast and the Mysterious Number 666.
27. The United States in Prophecy.
28. Armageddon and the Seven Last Plagues.
29. Revelation Predicts 1,000-year Blackout.
30. Revelation's Glorious Climax

### **Amazing Facts Study Guides**

1. Is there Anything Left You Can Trust?
2. Did God Create the Devil?
3. Rescue from Above.
4. A Colossal City in Space.
5. Keys to a Happy Marriage.
6. Written in Stone.
7. The Lost Day of History.
8. The Ultimate Deliverance.
9. Purity and Power.
10. Are the Dead Really Dead?
11. Is the Devil in Charge of Hell?
12. 1000 Years of Peace.
13. God's Free Health Plan.
14. Is Obedience Legalism?

## Reading 2

### An Example of a Special Target Group Bible Study

#### Title: St. Peter Says

Sometimes you may study with a person or group from a particular religious background who focus on some specific biblical passage, or a biblical person, as their authority. This example is based on a Roman Catholic person's focus on the authority of St. Peter. Significant numbers of Roman Catholics have only heard from church authorities that Peter is important. They have never read in the Bible what it says about Peter and his beliefs.

You can build a Bible study using all or some combination of these texts to illustrate how the beliefs of St. Peter match the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists.

Your introduction to a study can be something like this: "We all respect the teachings of St. Peter. Let's see what the Holy Scriptures tell us about his beliefs about (mention the topic)."

You can even use these texts as the basis for a series of sermons for a public evangelistic campaign, or a series of studies about Bible doctrines using Peter's beliefs as the starting point for each study.

This example is not in any particular order of presentation. You can organize the order of subjects as needed or desired.

<b>Biblical Teaching</b>	<b>What Peter Said</b>	<b>Biblical Teaching</b>	<b>What Peter Said</b>
The Prophecies	2 Peter 1:19-21	Apostasy of the Early Church	2 Peter 2:1.
The Nearness of the End	1 Peter 4:7	Religious Liberty.	Acts 4:19
Second Coming of Christ	2 Peter 3:10	Holy Living.	1 Peter 1:16; 2:1, 11
Preparation for Christ's Coming	2 Peter 3:14	Christ the Creator.	Acts 4:10
The Judgment	Acts 10:42	Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.	Acts 2:33, 38
Christ the Sole Mediator	Acts 4:12	The New Birth.	1 Peter 1:3, 23
Obedience	1 Peter 1:22	God Hears Individual Prayer.	1 Peter 3:12
The New Earth	Acts 3:21; 2 Peter 3:10-12	Christian Witnessing.	1 Peter 3:15.
Forgiveness of Sins	Acts 2:38	Life of Prayer.	1 Peter 4:7
Baptism.	Acts 2:38	Rock Christ, Not Peter.	1 Peter 2:4, 6, 7
Jesus Our Redeemer	Acts 2:36	Priesthood of Believers Not Hierarchy.	1 Peter 2:5, 9.
Endurance of Trial	1 Peter 4:12	Existence of Satan	1 Peter 5:8
Fallen Angels	2 Peter 2:4	The State of the Dead	Acts 2:29, 34; 13:36
The Resurrection	Acts 2:27,28	Destruction of the Wicked	2 Peter 3:7

## Essential Resources and Study References

All kinds of questions arise during Bible studies. The instructor must know how to deal with these questions. Every personal ministries participant should have access to at least the following resources as study references:

1. **A study Bible.** A study Bible is one with notes and explanations included. There are many available. Two valuable resources for Seventh-day Adventists are (1) *H.M.S. Richards Study Bible-KJV* (available through Amazon) that includes a series of Bible studies, (2) *Andrews Study Bible-NKJV* (Andrews University Press or any Adventist Book Center).

2. **A Bible handbook.** A Bible handbook is a general guide to Bible studies and information about the beliefs of various churches. An excellent one is Mark Finley, *Studying Together* (available at any Adventist Book Center).

3. **A theology study resource.** An excellent resource is the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (available online or at any Adventist Book Center).

4. **Reference books.** The following books are excellent study resources to have on hand:

- a) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary.* This a volume in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary series. It is a treasure chest of biblical information.
- b) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Student's Source Book.* Another volume in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary series. It has statements, historical notes, quotations, etc. about biblical and church history topics. All sources are carefully documented, and can be used as authentic, verified statements.
- c) *Questions on Doctrine, Annotated Edition* (Andrews University Press). This book contains a series of answers to questions asked by other religious groups about Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. This annotated edition is an update of the original. This book is a valuable resource for understanding and answering questions that might arise in Bible studies. It contains notes about a few issues that some Adventists debate among themselves, but overall it is a very valuable resource for explaining Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.
- d) *Interpreting Scripture: Bible Questions and Answers* (Biblical Research Institute). This book gives answers to a multitude of questions that may arise on biblical topics.

5. **Resources about key biblical doctrines** that are often difficult for people to accept.

- a) *The Sabbath. The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Review and Herald Publishing Association). This is an excellent source of all kinds of issues about the Sabbath.
- b) *The state of the dead.* (1) Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection* (available from Amazon and Adventist Book Centers). This is an outstanding resource by a recognized Seventh-day Adventist scholar. (2) Uriah Smith, *Here and Hereafter* (available from Amazing Facts and Adventist Book Centers). This book answers just about any question that may come up about the state of the dead, what hell really is, and the fate of the wicked.
- c) *The second coming of Jesus.* Adventist belief about prophecy and the second coming is called "historicism." Many people you may study with believe in a view called futurism, or the "secret rapture." A valuable resource to understand the background of the Seventh-day Adventist system is *The Advent Hope in Scripture and History* (available online and at any Adventist Book Center).

6. **General information and helpful resources.**

- a) A major online resource for in-depth information on many topics is <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org>.
- b) An excellent online resource for answers to a multitude of biblical questions is <http://www.bibleinfo.com>. This is a website sponsored by the Voice of Prophecy radio ministry that specializes in answering questions people send in.



## Unit 3

### How to Conduct a Bible Study

There are some basic things to consider in giving Bible studies, especially in private homes. If the studies are held in a church or small group setting, it is easier to control the environment. In a private home, it is more difficult. Here are some of things to take into consideration. (Don't be discouraged. The Lord will help you through any and all of these situations).

#### Theological Concerns and Sequence of Studies

**Get a firm decision for Christ before you introduce testing truths.** This is a basic principle of success. Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. . . . Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5, KJV). Your participants have no desire or power to obey Jesus until they know Him and surrender their lives to Him as Saviour and Lord.

The Wrong Way	The Right Way
Second Coming	<i>Salvation and Jesus as Savior</i>
Sabbath	Second Coming
Tithe	Sabbath
Diet and Health	Tithe
Baptism	Diet and Health
Salvation and Jesus as Savior	Baptism
Etc.	Etc.

When Jesus is Lord and Master of the life first, the person can take every step of obedience led by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Nothing is impossible. It is the right way. To introduce any truth that requires obedience before surrender occurs only antagonizes a powerless person. Piling up truths without leading to Jesus first only builds an impossible wall.

#### Social Surroundings

1. *Finding ways and means* to get people in the home to turn off the TV or game equipment during the Bible study. It is surprising that this is even an issue, but it can be a major problem. Some homes have the TV on at relatively high volume most of the time (at least it seems so). If only one or two people are studying, other family members may continue watching TV, and it is difficult to acquire a decent study environment. You can very tactfully suggest that the TV be turned off during the study.

2. *Children and pets.* This is often a real problem. Children and pets tend to demand attention that interrupts a Bible study. A small group setting can usually make provision for entertaining children, but in a private home it is more difficult. There is no magic key to solve this problem. Usually you just have to play it by ear.

3. *A person or persons* in the family opposed to the study. In these cases, tact, and diplomacy (and a lot of prayer) are the best solutions. A key consideration here is *never argue with anyone.* Let the Bible do the talking.

4. *Social amenities.* A Bible study should be an informal study event. Let the people in the home know in a tactful way that they do not have to prepare food, or make any special arrangements other than turning off the TV, etc. for a Bible study. If the participants perceive that the study entails a lot of preparation, extra time, and special social amenities, they will often withdraw quickly.

## The Study Environment

A typical Bible study is about one hour long. There are reasons for this time span. Many people are so busy they are watching the clock all the time. It is hard to get them to sit still for too long a time. Today's society is visually oriented. It is difficult for many people to focus on reading and thinking. They are used to sitting and watching. Many people have a very short attention span.

1. Ask yourself, "What is the purpose of this visit or study? What decision do we want? How can I make it Christ-centered? How can it make Jesus more attractive and aid in a decision to accept and follow Him?"
2. Be punctual. This is important because the people you study with are scheduling this time with their family.
3. Dress appropriately.
4. Seating arrangements. With a group, it is best to sit in a circle if possible. With one person, sit across from the person at a table if possible.
5. Prepare well with underlining, highlighting, and comments and illustrations jotted in the margins of your personal study guides.
6. There may be other people at the study, so have plenty of materials, study guides, Bibles (if provided), support booklets, and tracts available.

## What to Do When You Arrive at the Study Venue

1. Be enthusiastic, cheerful, relaxed and friendly when you greet the people and throughout the study.
2. Show interest in the participants. Remark about their interests — not yours. Comment on interesting items in the room, etc. Initiate forming a friendship. It is good idea to do this brief chatting before, not after, the study.
3. After you make certain everyone is introduced (if there are new people present) and comfortable, you can begin by saying, "Well, I was wondering, how did you enjoy the study guides?" When they respond, you may add, "Was there a particular point that you enjoyed the most?" It is always a good idea to encourage and allow the person to express satisfaction with the lesson.
4. Don't be disturbed if the participants have not studied or done an assignment. Just pass it off with a few encouraging words like, "You will probably have time this week to study for a little while."

## How to Present the Bible Study

Besides passing on the biblical information about a topic, you are trying to gain confidence and build relationships. Most of the principles outlined here can be used at points within any particular study or at any time throughout the series.

**Begin with prayer.** Utilize the lesson to introduce prayer. Say, "You noticed that in 2 Peter 1:21 [*point to the place in the lesson*] the prophecy came to us by the Holy Spirit. In John 16:13 [*show the place*] Jesus promised the same Holy Spirit to guide us into all the truth.

Say something like, "What a privilege when we study His Word to always ask Him to guide us. As we begin, shall we bow our heads and do that?"

**Read the introduction or review its high points.** As the instructor, you should read the questions. Say something like: "Perhaps it will be easiest if I read the questions and you share your answers."

**How to Deal with Answers.** As people share, compliment them on their answers. Good answers are usually brief. They are probably not understanding the answer if they simply read or write out the entire Bible text. If there is a wrong answer, never say, "That's wrong." You are not only looking for right answers, you are trying to win hearts. Say something like: "We seem to have different thoughts on that question. Would you mind sharing that text with us again?"

The participant will usually recognize the right answer immediately. If he/she doesn't change the answer, you could say, "Perhaps you would like to jot that in your guide." The participant will be happy with the perfect score that you can give at the end.

**Avoid an "I'm the teacher, you're the student" attitude.** Portray a, "Let us see what we can learn together" attitude. Let the students know that you are a learner also, not simply an authority. This will help them to feel at ease.

**Always listen and ask questions** to be certain the person understands clearly. Use phrases such as: "Is it clear that...?", "That word is a bit difficult. Is it clear?"

Make brief, relevant comments as you move along. Construct a case built on their understanding and comments.

Don't preach. You are not giving a sermon. Giving Bible studies is done by interactive discussion. Don't attempt to tell your students everything you know all at once.

**Use appropriate illustrations to make it interesting.** An illustration creates a deeper and more lasting impression in the heart and mind. It is like a window that lets the light in and brings in fresh air. It drives the point home. Phrases like: "Let me tell you a story. . . ." will immediately get attention and awaken interest.

Be careful not to use too many illustrations — keep them short. Your own personal illustrations are best. Constantly listen in church, Sabbath School, etc., for brief stories to share.

**Move at the participant's pace.** Constantly listen and watch people's eyes and body language. If you perceive you are boring them, move to the next question. Make the study quick and interesting. Remember to always be kind and tactful. Build bridges, not walls. In gentle tones, make your presentations beautiful, clear and simple.

**Keep in mind the following:**

1. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart.
2. Be kind and gentle, never harsh. Jesus promises us all His power but, "Our Saviour's power was not in a strong array of sharp words that would pierce through the very soul; it was His gentleness and His plain, unassuming manners that made Him a conqueror of hearts" — Ellen G White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 477.
3. "The tones of the voice have much to do in affecting the hearts of those that hear" — *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 615.
4. Stress the blessings over the requirements. When appropriate, emphasize that God is not there to squeeze the fun out of life, but He longs to give His children the more abundant life (John 10:10), withholding nothing good (Psalms 84:11). At appropriate times, tell of blessings you have personally received.

**Handling objections.** The key phrase here is "What does the Bible say?" Nevertheless, you don't have to clarify in detail every wrong doctrine that people may believe. Stick with biblical information and truth.

It does help, however, to answer some questions even before they arise. For instance, you might say something like, "Many people have heard that Jesus' second coming is secret, but the Bible says . . ." That way you have defused a problem before it even comes up. At the same time, the phrase "have heard" is more tactful than, for instance, "you probably believe . . ." No one feels put down because they "heard" something. But "you probably believe" is an accusation that may well erect a barrier.

**Go from the known to the unknown.** Don't introduce ideas for which the student does not have sufficient background and is not prepared to receive. Lead participants one step at a time. Follow the sequence of the study guides.

If questions arise about an issue that will appear in a future Study Guide, don't attempt to answer immediately. Simply indicate that that is an important subject that can't be studied in just a few minutes. Say something like "Good question. It is so important that an entire future lesson will deal with that question." The question was worthwhile, and the

person feels important for having asked it. Your answer, however, leaves you in charge of the answer.

Initiating an off-wall-discussion about a controversial topic is one of the greatest causes for Bible study dropouts. If asked, for example, "Why do you keep Saturday for Sunday?" say something like, "That's a good question, and it deserves a good answer. I could give you a personal answer, but my answer is not really important. A couple of lessons from now we will see what the Bible itself says about that. Is it OK if we wait till then?"

**What to do if the participant insists.** It is vital to anchor the participant's faith in the Bible as the ultimate authority. If the person insists on asking what you believe about a sensitive issue, redirect the question back gently. Say, for instance, "Would you like to share what you believe? Then listen and show appreciation for his/her understanding. *Don't argue.*

*For example:* In the very first study, an instructor was met at the door with the comment, "Do you believe in speaking in tongues?" The instructor had no idea what her prospective participant understood or believed about anything. She needed to discover what the person believed before expressing her opinion or she could easily erect a barrier. The instructor prayed silently, and decided that she must first listen to discover the lady's opinion so she could build on her understanding. So the instructor redirected the question and asked, "What do you believe?" The lady shot back, "I believe it's of the devil." "That is interesting," the instructor replied. She could now leave the subject until the appropriate time later when she could give a complete study on the topic.

If she had said she believed in speaking in tongues, assuming that the lady at the door was a Pentecostal, it would have built a barrier between them. It pays to listen before talking!

### **More Tips for Success**

**Be understanding.** When you know that a person's position is contrary to the Bible, you may say something like, "I understand how you feel about that." He/she may only have wanted to state an opinion, so you can forget the subject, build on his/her understanding, or ignore the erroneous idea until the person is willing to change.

**Listen.** This is a major element of success. Don't always do the talking. Listen to hear needs, concerns, and understanding. Adapt your answer to the needs of your participants.

**Know how to meet opposition.** If a participant objects strongly to some study or doctrine, you can say tactfully, "This is not my idea. This is Jesus, your Friend and Master, talking to you. You belong to Him. Ask Him what to do. I'm here to encourage you to do His will."

This approach usually eliminates or diminishes arguments and debate. The truth is clear to the learner. (Remember John 7:17: "Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" NIV).

For example, Ellen G White counsels about presenting the Sabbath: "You should not feel it your duty to introduce arguments upon the Sabbath question as you meet the people. If persons mention the subject, tell them that this is not your burden now. But when they surrender heart and mind and will to God, they are then prepared candidly to weigh evidence in regard to these solemn, testing truths." — *Evangelism*, p. 228.

**Be tactful.** Don't be rude and make anyone angry. Don't condemn participants. "Satan is constantly seeking to produce effects by rude and violent thrusts; but Jesus found access to minds by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He disturbed as little as possible their accustomed train of thought." — Ellen G White, *Evangelism*, p. 140.

**Don't argue.** You may win the argument and lose the soul. When people become argumentative, don't oppose them. Don't get pushy. "Christ saves none against their choice." — Ellen G White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 457.

Accept people where they are. Work with the Holy Spirit in moving them from where they are to where He wants them to be.

**Be intensely interested in the person.** Constantly pray for the love and tact of Jesus. Study His methods in *The Desire of Ages*. It is instructive to read the book through looking for Jesus' methods. When you find them, write "JM" in the margin so you can review them. Keep in mind the paragraph in *Steps to Christ* on page 12 that begins, "Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but he uttered it always in love."

**Agree on every point possible.** Don't be embarrassed about questions you cannot answer. No one knows everything; and, besides, you aren't posing as an authority. You might say, "I never thought of it that way before. I'll try to find the Bible answer and bring it to you next week." If you are certain there is no Bible answer, don't speculate. Only teach the Word. Remember Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."

### Ending the Study

Finish the study guide questions, and as you do build interest in future lessons by indicating how various points will be expanded later.

**Review and decision.** At the end of the lesson, briefly review the key points. Always ask for a decision at every study session. Ask in a pleasant and positive way, expecting an affirmative answer. Then compliment the participants for making this decision. This will give them support.

**Ellen G White counsel on the value of small decisions.** "The secret of our success and power as a people advocating advanced truth will be found in making direct, personal appeals to those who are interested, having unwavering reliance upon the Most High." — *Review and Herald*, Aug. 30, 1892. "Many times minds are impressed with tenfold more force by personal appeals than by any other kind of labor." — *Evangelism*, p. 463.

**Pray.** As soon as the participants make a decision, say, "Let us close with prayer." Thank God for His presence, the good work of the participants and the decisions made. Ask for God's special blessings on them as they continue to study.

**Final Remarks.** Mark "Excellent" or "100%" on each of their lessons after correcting them together. Say something like, "You did such a good job on these; I know you are going to thoroughly enjoy the next study guides. Show the study guides and briefly explain them.

1. Remind them of next week's appointment and state that you will be looking forward to it. It is vital to have a study session every week.
2. If appropriate, lend a book/booklet to substantiate the subject/s just completed. Lending the document automatically encourages the person to read it because they have to give it back in a week! At the next study you can tell them to keep the document.
3. Test the degree of interest by saying, "I hope we haven't kept you too long and worn out our welcome." Remember, the study should not take more than 40-60 minutes.
4. Leave immediately after the study to help keep the truth fresh in the mind of the participants.

## Reading 3

### How to Develop and Hold Attention

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading.*

A Bible study instructor should have in mind how to develop and hold a person's attention. The learning that takes place during a study is in proportion to the attention paid during the study.

There are various ways to get and retain attention during a study.

#### What Is Attention?

Attention is the direction of the mind to a given subject. Who has not read a whole page, and at the bottom found themselves unable to recall a single idea that it contained? The sentences were complete, and they logically followed one another, but the mind had been busy with other thoughts. The person or persons you are studying with may be looking at you and at the same time have their minds on some other subject.

A Bible study is a teaching situation. Teaching is arousing the class member's mind to grasp the desired thought. The teacher's beginning point in a class period is to get the attention of the class. Do not teach without attention.

A Bible study is of little use if a person is sitting quietly and watching, but her or his mind is thinking of something a thousand miles away. According to the Law of the Learner, the teacher should not proceed in teaching while some in the participants are not listening. Their inattention is likely to encourage the same in the others.

#### Inattention Causes a Lack of Learning

If the teacher does not have the attention of the participants, they will not learn. The vigor of mental action, like that of muscular action, is proportioned to the stimulus that inspires it. The pupil's mind may not at once respond to the command of the teacher, nor to the call of a cold sense of duty. It is only when we begin our work "with a will"—that is, with interest in our work—that we are working with maximal effectiveness. Unexpected reserve powers come forth when the demand is strong enough. With growing interest, attention grows, and we are enabled to accomplish more.

Stanley Will tells a story that illustrates the point. A certain boy had trouble with his grammar, especially the use of verbs. He had a habit of saying, "I have *went*" when he should have said, "I have *gone*." The teacher assigned him to write on the blackboard, many times over, "I have *gone*." He apparently was not interested in learning why he had to do that. When he finished writing "I have *gone*" the required number of times, he left the teacher a note that read, "I have *went* home." So much for learning anything!

#### Types of Attention

Attention is the direction of the mind, but there are varying degrees of absorption. The psychologist speaks of the direction of the mind as the act of bringing the object into the focus of consciousness. This absorption or focus of consciousness may be involuntary or voluntary.

***Involuntary Attention.*** Involuntary attention is spontaneous. It is given without conscious effort. For instance, a participant is so interested in the subject that he or she naturally pays attention. Even if someone walks into the room, or a child or pet disrupts the proceedings, the person is so absorbed in the subject that they are unaware of the other's presence. Involuntary attention stems from interest in a subject and the eagerness of the mind for more information about it. A teacher may use an illustration, tell a story, show a picture, and become conscious that the class members are quiet and listening without effort. This is involuntary, spontaneous attention.

The aim of the Bible study instructor is to develop involuntary attention that can be sustained because of interest. It's not always easy to develop the desirable conditions of involuntary attention, but it is always more effective. It takes diligent effort by the teacher to make the subject interesting.

### **Kinds of Involuntary Attention**

There are two categories of involuntary attention: *primitive* and *apperceptive*.

**Primitive attention.** This type involuntarily attracts one or more of the five senses—sight, smell, taste, hearing, or touch. For instance, when a baby suddenly cries in Sabbath School or church, some people automatically turn toward the disturbance. The attention they give to the sound they heard is primitive; their response is unplanned.

A teacher might use what is sometimes called a "hook" (some action to get attention). She might take something out of her purse and look at it intently without saying anything. The participants will suddenly become quiet and attentive. They are giving primitive, spontaneous attention to what they see. A teacher may lift a box to the table, cautiously look inside, then hurriedly close the box again. No matter how inattentive or noisy the group is, they are now quiet and attentive. They are giving primitive spontaneous attention to what they saw.

**Apperceptive attention.** When one is interested in conveying new knowledge and facts to people and things about which he has already learned, this process, born of interest and given without effort, in psychology is called building up the apperceptive masses of the mind.

For instance, the person or group is studying about the Sabbath. The teacher has the keen attention of the participants, not because they have seen or heard anything unusual, but because they are deeply interested in the subject of the Sabbath and in knowing what the Bible says about it. They already know some things about the Sabbath, and now they are adding to this knowledge. They therefore listen involuntarily. This addition of knowledge to knowledge is the process of *apperception*; spontaneous attention born of interest and given without effort.

**Voluntary attention.** Voluntary attention is forced attention. It is a momentary kind of attention that may be called "active" only because it requires an action of the will to respond to whatever is going on. The teacher may secure voluntary attention with commands like: "Stop reading," "Look at me," "Now listen to me;" but it is only temporary. A few seconds later the same mind may flit to some other subject or object.

Very often people may force themselves to give attention, not because of any interest, but because they feel they must. It is temporary; there is no real interest in the subject. Voluntary attention is not very effective in any learning situation.

### **Interest Gives Birth to Attention**

Interest is the thirst or the desire of the mind for knowledge. It is the power or the force that makes participants and teachers alike assume an attentive attitude so that the mind can be satisfied with knowledge. A Bible study participant will give attention to things they are interested in. Interest must be aroused, and the more interest the instructor can create in the subject, the better the attention.

If there is only a partial interest, the perceptions gained will be faint and fragmentary. "What a blessing it would be," Ellen G White wrote, "if all would teach as Jesus taught! . . . In your teaching be as near like Him as possible. Make your exercises interesting."<sup>3</sup>

There are two kinds of interest: *mediate* and *immediate*.

**Mediate interest.** This kind is given as a means to an end. For instance, a Bible study participant might show mediate interest because they are interested in getting a diploma at the end of the course or studies that they can put up on the wall.

---

<sup>3</sup>*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 182.

**Immediate interest.** When there is interest in the subject itself for the sake of what one gets out of it, it is called *immediate* interest. The participants are interested in studying the Bible because of the satisfaction that comes to them when they understand more of its teaching.

Someone once told the story of his daughter, who was not interested in playing piano. It was a very distasteful task for her to take piano lessons and to practice. Then she became acquainted with a boy who was studying to be a minister, and they began to date. One day he remarked "I hope you will take piano lessons. This would be such a help to me in my ministry." Suddenly, she took real interest and began to practice enthusiastically, not having to be coaxed or forced from then on. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to analyze why her mediate interest turned into immediate interest.

Forced attention is useful for a moment, as is primitive attention, but to arouse an interest, the teacher must produce something interesting that will change the attention of the participants to apperceptive attention. It is one of the chief purposes of the teacher to stimulate and create involuntary attention. This is done by helping the students establish an interest in the subject under consideration. It is difficult for the teacher to do much good until he or she has acquired this interest.

### **Four Ways to Create Interest**

Here are four things that help create interest:

1. *Interest is developed by understanding the participants viewpoint.* How the teacher and the other participants treat the comments of whoever makes a contribution to the discussion makes a difference in the level of interest of that person. By understanding the learners' viewpoint, the teacher can adapt his or her teaching material to the interest and need of the participants.

2. *Enthusiasm inspires interest.* To establish immediate interest, the teacher must themselves be interested in the subject. Enthusiasm begets enthusiasm. Someone said, "You cannot start a fire with an icicle!" A teacher who is lifeless cannot create interest in others. Enthusiastic teaching helps.

3. *Curiosity arouses interest.* A strong trait in humanity is curiosity, and a way to develop immediate interest is by arousing the curiosity. He who is curious about something is ready to give attention. Attention traps have been a means of capturing the interest through curiosity. While this is most effective with children, the teacher may also successfully employ this tactic in instructing youth and adults.

Stanley Will tells about a Sabbath School workshop where the instructor suddenly held out a string in his hand. The string had a box on it that slid up and down as the instructor moved his hands from one position to another. He would begin at the top and the box would go to the bottom. After demonstrating this a number of times, he changed the position of his hands and the box slid about half way down the string and stopped. How could that happen? Always before it had moved down to the end of the string, but now it was hanging more or less in midair in the middle of the string.

Obviously, the instructor had everyone's attention. Curiosity took possession of the minds of the adults who were watching, and everyone was keenly interested.

4. *Visual aids stimulate interest.* Any kind of visual aid will encourage interest. Illustrations, pictures, DVDs, maps, a whiteboard, PowerPoint® presentations, videos—all generate and hold interest. Things that appeal to the senses catch the imagination, hold the interest, and are easily remembered.

### **Holding interest**

Involuntary attention may be maintained just as long as the participants are interested in knowing more about the subject being considered. The mind, however, may still wander to some other subject, because it must be trained to concentrate on a given subject for a prolonged time. If the teacher sees that the mind is wandering, she must do something to regain the attention. What can the instructor do to regain attention?

*Pause.* A pause whenever the attention is interrupted or lost is helpful in bringing the mind back to the subject.

*Silence.* A brief period of quiet is generally all that is needed to regain attention.

*An earnest gaze.* When the participants awaken, you will have their collective thinking.

*An uplifted hand.* This will often bring back the thought of the wandering mind.

*Changing your position.* A different posture sometimes helps to get attention and adds variety to the presentation.

*Speech variation.* Changing rate or tone of speaking also helps to make your presentation stand out.

*A movement.* Going toward the source of inattention may make that person heedful of what you are saying.

*Writing.* Fill-in answers on the Bible study sheet will reactivate interest.

## Assignment 4

### Types of Bible Studies and Lesson Series

➤ ***Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this assignment***

1. What is the difference between the right and wrong way to organize a sequence of Bible studies?
2. List some of the necessary things to keep in mind about the surroundings for a Bible study?
3. Assume that two of the issues mentioned in No. 2 above arise in a Bible study you are conducting (choose any two). How would you handle them?
4. Describe some of the things you should consider when you arrive at the venue of a Bible study.
5. What does it mean to go from the *known* to the *unknown* in a Bible study?
6. Describe how you would handle a situation where a participant brings up unexpectedly a controversial subject.
7. Why is it important to obtain small decisions during each study?

### **Course Summary**

Ellen G White gave us the phrase "the *science* of soul saving" (See *Ministry of Healing*, p. 398). To learn and practice that science, the same statement admonishes, "a broad foundation must be laid." This course is about one of the essential skills of that broad foundation: preparing and giving Bible studies.

In this course you have learned the art of giving Bible studies as one of the skills included in the science of soul winning. The course has outlined the philosophy on which the skill of giving Bible studies is based, listed some key resources available, and outlined the ways and means of giving a Bible study.

## Student Fulfillment Card

### How to Conduct Bible Studies

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Church/District \_\_\_\_\_

This Student Fulfillment Card is the record that you have successfully completed the Essential Skills course *How to Conduct Bible Studies* of the North American Division Adult Ministries Department Personal Ministries Instruction and Enrichment training curriculum. When all the items are completed, have the Fulfillment Card signed by the appropriate person (your class instructor, your Internet instructor, a person in charge of Personal Ministries in your church/district, your pastor or someone from the conference in charge of personal ministries or evangelism training).

#### Check the items completed.

- I have read the three Units of the Study Guide.
- I have looked up and read the Bible passages included in this Study Guide.
- I have completed Assignment 1: What Have You Learned?
- I have completed Assignment 2: Mark Your Bible.
- I have completed Assignment 3: Types of Bible Studies and Lesson Series.
- I have completed Assignment 4: Issues in Conducting a Bible Study.
- I have completed Reading 1: The Value of Baptismal Classes.
- I have completed Reading 2: An Example of a Special Target Group Bible Study.
- I have completed Reading 3: How to Develop and Hold Attention.

\_\_\_\_\_ has satisfactorily completed the course *How to Give Bible Studies*.

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Position \_\_\_\_\_