

The Discovery Bible Study Method (DBS)

Discovery Bible Study is a simple but very powerful discipleship process centred on opening the Bible with someone who doesn't yet follow Jesus. It is sometimes so simple that people walk by it and miss its power – yet thousands of churches have been planted using this methodology.

Discovery Bible Study is as simple as ABC.

Ask: A session begins with prayer and thanksgiving.

Bible: The Bible is at the centre – the disciple is empowered to discover the truth in God's Word for themselves, rather than being taught by the leader.

Commit: The disciple commits to apply and share what they are learning.

In most situations, it is best to start a DBS with two or three (or more) people – reaching a community, not just an individual. Jesus disciplined people in groups, and it is the best way to learn. The group also has the power of accountability and multiplication.

The focus is on discipling pre-Christians by allowing them to discover God's Word for themselves, rather than trying to get people 'saved' up front (usually by saying the sinner's prayer) and then discipling them. It takes time; we are not in a hurry. In this process, we let people discover God's story, the big picture. It is about reshaping people's world view around a new, biblical world view – to discover or rediscover God's story.

A - Ask

Open by asking, "What has been good this week?"

It's important to be specific. Rather than asking "How are you?" or "What has been good for you?" asking the question "What has been good this week?" guides people to articulate the good things that have happened. This becomes the basis for teaching them to praise and thank God.

Next, ask what has been difficult, bad or challenging in the past week. This forms the basis of prayer for needs. As you pray for needs, whatever they are, this makes space

for God to break through and do a miracle.

Thirdly, pray aloud together, thanking God for what was good, and praying for what is needed. Keep your prayers simple, easy and to the point. Encourage others to pray as early as possible. Make your own prayers really simple, so you don't sound religious or 'professional.' This helps new disciples overcome the intimidation of learning how to pray. It's important to teach people how to pray, with others, out loud. It's an important part of making a disciple.

Ask how they went with the previous week's obedience steps and with their walk of discipleship with Jesus. Each week they will be sharing with someone (their family or friend) about what they have learnt. Ask how they went with this obedience step.

B - Bible

From the beginning the aim is to teach people to discover God's Word for themselves, rather than relying on a teacher, and to understand that the Holy Spirit is sufficient.

Self-discovered truth stays with the person. It is personal and owned. Jesus used this approach a lot in his discipleship. He asked the disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" and "Who do you say that I am?" affirming them, "Well done, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven." Jesus didn't just tell them the answer. He didn't just say from the beginning, "Hey guys, I am the Messiah, the Son of the living God!" Instead, he let the process of discovery happen over time, by revelation from his Father. This is the same process used in the DBS discipleship method.

Start by choosing a passage of Scripture that is simple, not too long and to the point. A story or narrative is good. Several possible lesson plans are included below; you may use them as a starting point or adapt them to suit your context. The suggestions listed below are long passages – the idea is to select a smaller passage out of these chapters. So for the first lesson, for example, you might focus on Genesis 1:26–28.

Read the Scripture. If the person is bilingual, read it aloud in their language then reread it in English. If they are not bilingual, it is good to read it and then re-read it. Then retell the story. This is important as it cements the story in our minds. Re-tell the story as you would tell it to a friend. The retelling of the story should be a group affair. One person can attempt to re-tell the story, and others can chip in and add to the picture. In this way the story is painted by the group.

Next, ask 'so what?' The key is for the leader (you) not to jump in too quickly and teach! Let them think and talk. What do they see in Scripture? If they ask you to explain, turn it around by asking, "What do you think?" Don't be afraid of awkward silences. Sometimes it is good to simply be quiet, and let them come up with the answers. This is very hard to do, as we are so used to providing all the answers, but it is vital to this process. The key is self-discovery. The leader's job is to give space for the person to learn and to put what they see in their own words. You have to trust the Holy Spirit! You can ask and prompt with questions like,

"What does this say about God?"

"What does this say about us?"

"Are there areas you are bothered by?"

"What do you like?"

"What needs to be understood or obeyed from this passage?"

If you are talking more than the disciple, then you are talking too much! Your method is successful if the other person is talking more than you. Stay centred on Scripture. If the person is veering off course, bring it back to the Bible by saying "Where do you see that in this passage?"

C - Commit to Obey

The third part of this process is to ground the discussion in obedience steps.

Jesus described making disciples as "teaching people to obey everything I have commanded you." We often miss the word 'obey.' Our discipleship processes are often knowledge-based and not obedience/action based. There is a key difference.

Ask the question, "So what will you do about this?" Their response forms the basis of their obedience step. Let the person come up with their own commitment. It might be something like, "I need to respect people" or, "I need to be thankful." Or it may be something very specific like, "I need to stop shouting at my kids!" Whatever it is, it needs to be listened to and respected. It is ok if it is a simple application. When someone commits to obey, truth that has come via Scripture and revelation becomes lived, personal and owned.

The last step is to ask the disciple to share with someone about what they have learnt this week. Talk with the person about who they are going to share with. Help them to overcome any barriers that might stop them sharing the good news with their family and friends. This weekly challenge ensures that sharing and multiplication are built into discipleship from day one. Even before they commit to follow Jesus, they start spreading what they are learning.

The ABC of meeting together

A - Ask	B - Bible	C - Commit
<p>Share and Pray Ask: "What's going well?" (Good) Ask: "What's not going well?" (Bad) Facilitate conversation about real life. Fellowship: Jumping into one another's worlds Praise: For the good things Prayer: For the challenges</p>	<p>Select a study appropriate to the group (see table below for suggestions) Read Re-read Re-tell OR Story-tell the Bible for oral cultures</p>	<p>Discuss and Commit I will ... How would I tell what I have learnt to someone I know?</p>
<p>Accountability and Support "So how did we go last week?" Look back and discuss how we went with the steps from last week. Done in a spirit of love, accountability and encouragement.</p>	<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I learn about God? • What do I learn about us? • What do I feel about the story? • What does this teach me? • What do I need to obey? 	<p>How can we reach people outside our world? Luke 10 + other stories of how Jesus reached people. Testimony and sharing good news. How do I do that? Pray and commit to pray every day</p>
<p>Vision Cast Answers the question "Why are we doing this?" Lead this well as it's an important part of the process. Scripture: E.g., the Great Commission, Luke 15. Stories and testimonies</p>	<p>Holy Spirit Speaking Spend a bit of time waiting for the Holy Spirit to speak to us. "God, what should I do as a result of reading this?"</p>	<p>Pray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the coming week • For the lesson learnt today • For those we are reaching

Where to Start in the Bible

Creating World View From Creation to Christ: An outline for Muslims	Stories for the Hungry Who Jesus is and how he ministered to people	What to do to be saved What must I do to become a child of God?	Discipleship & Multiplication All followers should...	Forming Church When we gather as church we should ...
Genesis 1:1-25 The Creation Story: God Created the World	Mark 1:1-15 Jesus bursts on the scene	Ephesians 1:13-14 Hear, Believe, Receive	Matthew 28:16-20 The Great Commission	Acts 2:42-47
Genesis 2:4-24 The Creation Story: The Creation of Man	John 3:1-21 "For God so loved..." Born of the Spirit	Mark 1:9-20 To be a disciple repent and believe; follow (leave all) and fish	Mark 1:14-20 Follow me and I will make you fishers of men	Mark 14:12-26 The Lord's Supper
Genesis 3:1-13 The Fall: The First Sin and Judgment	Mark 2:1-12 Authority to heal and forgive sins Or Luk 7:36-50	Acts 2:37-41 Repent, be baptised for forgiveness of sins and receive the Holy Spirit	Mark 2:13-22 Story of Levi and new wineskins	1 Corinthians 14:26-33 Each one ...
Genesis 3:14-24 The Fall: Judgment of a Sinful World	Mark 2:13-17 Calling of Levi: Jesus for the sick sinners	Romans 6:1-14 On Baptism	Mark 4:1-20 Parable of the Sower	Study the Gospel of Mark DBS style
Genesis 6:1-9:17 The Fall: The Flood	Mark 8:27-30 & 9:2-9 Jesus the Messiah and Son of God	Acts 8:34-40 Ethiopian Eunuch and Baptism	Luke 10:1-11 Find house of peace	Study a letter of Paul DBS style
Genesis 12:1-8, 15:1-6 Redemption: God's Promise to Abram	Luke 6:20-36 The great teaching of Jesus	John 14:15-20 Obedience and the Holy Spirit	Kingdom Parables e.g. Mark 4:26-29 Growing seed	
Genesis 22:1-19 Redemption: Abraham offers Isaac as a Sacrifice	Mark 14:1-11 The anointing of Jesus		Matthew 13:44-46 Hidden treasure	
Exodus 12:1-28 Redemption: The Promise of Passover	Mark 15 The Cross		Luke 6:46-49 Obedience: wise man and foolish man	
Exodus 20:1-21 Redemption: The Ten Commandments	Isaiah 53 He took our suffering		Mk 1:35-19 Prayer Jesus Prayed	
Leviticus 4:1-35 Redemption: The Sacrificial System	John 20 The Resurrection		Luke 11:1-13 Jesus Teaching on Prayer	
Isaiah 53 Redemption: Isaiah foreshadows the coming promise			Luke 14:15-23	
Luke 1:26-38 & 2:1-20 Redemption: the birth of Jesus				
Mark 4:35-41 Redemption: Jesus calms the storm				
Mark 5:1-20 Redemption: Jesus casts out evil spirits				
John 11:1-44 Redemption: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead				
Matthew 26:26-30 Redemption: the first Lord's Supper				
John 18:1-19:16 Redemption: Jesus is betrayed and condemned				
Luke 23:32-56 Redemption: Jesus is crucified				
Luke 24:1-35 Redemption: Jesus conquers death				
Luke 24:36-53 Redemption: Jesus appears and ascends				
John 3:1-21 Redemption: we have a choice				