

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This series is designed to help individuals and small groups explore Scripture thoughtfully and honestly. Each session includes three components that work together.

1. Personal Study (Before the Group Meeting)

Participants begin by working through the **Study Guide** during the week.

This guide contains:

- Scripture readings
- background context
- reflection questions
- personal response prompts

The goal is to **engage the Bible personally before gathering with others**.

Participants should take their time reading the material and writing down thoughts, questions, or insights.

2. Group Discussion

When the group meets, the **Discussion Guide** helps facilitate conversation.

The facilitator's role is **not to lecture or provide all the answers**, but to help the group:

- reflect on the Scripture
- share observations
- listen to different perspectives
- deepen understanding together

The discussion guide includes suggested questions and teaching notes to support the conversation.

3. Reflection and Prayer

Each session ends with a brief time of reflection and prayer.

This helps participants move from **information to transformation**, allowing Scripture to shape both understanding and practice.

Suggested Group Format (60–75 Minutes)



Opening & Prayer – 10 minutes

Discussion of the Text – 35–45 minutes

Personal Reflection – 10 minutes

Closing Prayer – 5–10 minutes

A Note for Facilitators

You do not need to be a Bible expert to lead this study.

Your role is to:

- create a safe and respectful environment
- guide discussion through the provided questions
- encourage thoughtful engagement with Scripture

Faithful discussion is often more valuable than perfect answers.



TEACHER / FACILITATOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

LGBTQ & THE BIBLE – Session 1: First Things First

SESSION OVERVIEW (FOR THE FACILITATOR)

Big Idea

Before addressing specific questions about sexuality, identity, or Scripture, it is essential to begin with foundational truths about **God, the Bible, humanity, and how we interpret Scripture**. This session establishes a shared framework that helps participants approach the topic thoughtfully, faithfully, and with humility.

This lesson is not about winning arguments, but about **learning how to read the Bible well**, understanding God’s character, and grounding difficult conversations in grace and truth.

Teaching Goals

By the end of this session, participants should:

- Understand why starting with biblical foundations matters
 - Recognize the difference between **what the Bible says, how we interpret it, and how we apply it**
 - Acknowledge personal assumptions and experiences that shape interpretation
 - Commit to engaging this topic with humility, honesty, and love
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Time Guide (Suggested – 60–75 minutes)

- Opening & prayer: 10 minutes
 - Teaching & discussion (three movements): 40–50 minutes
 - Personal reflection & closing prayer: 10–15 minutes
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OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Opening Question (Icebreaker)

“Have you ever realized that two people can read the same Bible passage and walk away with very different conclusions? What do you think causes that?”

(Allow multiple responses. Keep the tone exploratory, not corrective.)



Facilitator Notes

- This question helps surface the reality of interpretation without assigning blame
 - Avoid immediately correcting theological statements
 - Emphasize listening and curiosity
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Opening Prayer

Invite God to guide the conversation with wisdom, humility, and grace. Ask for open hearts, patient listening, and a commitment to truth shaped by love.

FOUNDATIONAL CONTEXT (FOR THE FACILITATOR)

Before teaching, briefly frame the session:

- Conversations about sexuality often become emotionally charged
- People bring personal stories, pain, convictions, and fears into the room
- This session intentionally **slows the conversation down**
- The goal is to build a shared foundation before addressing specific passages or positions

Reassure participants:

“This is a learning space, not a debate stage. No one is expected to have everything figured out.”

TEACHING MOVEMENT 1: WHAT THE BIBLE IS — AND WHY IT MATTERS

Key Teaching Point

The Bible is God’s inspired revelation, written through human authors, and meant to shape faith, character, and community.

Facilitator Explanation

- The Bible is not a single book, but a **library** of writings
- It includes different genres: narrative, poetry, law, prophecy, letters, wisdom
- Scripture reveals who God is and how God relates to humanity
- The Bible was written **for us**, but not **directly to us** — context matters

Emphasize:



- Respecting Scripture means taking it seriously, not superficially
 - Faithful reading requires attention to language, culture, audience, and purpose
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Discussion Questions

- Why do you think people sometimes treat the Bible as a rulebook instead of a story?
 - How does understanding genre change how we read a passage?
 - What dangers arise when verses are removed from their context?
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Facilitator Notes

- Gently redirect proof-texting tendencies
 - Affirm sincere faith while encouraging deeper study
 - Keep the focus on *how* we read, not *what conclusions* people hold
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TEACHING MOVEMENT 2: INTERPRETATION, ASSUMPTIONS, AND LENSES

Key Teaching Point

Everyone reads the Bible through lenses shaped by culture, experience, teaching, and tradition.

Facilitator Explanation

Help participants understand:

- No one approaches Scripture completely neutral
- Factors that shape interpretation include:
 - Family upbringing
 - Church background
 - Cultural norms
 - Personal experiences and wounds
- Acknowledging our lenses is not a weakness — it is honesty

Clarify the difference between:

- **Observation** – What does the text actually say?



- **Interpretation** – What does it mean?
 - **Application** – How does it shape our lives today?
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Discussion Questions

- What influences shaped how you learned to read the Bible?
 - Why is it difficult to recognize our own assumptions?
 - How can humility improve theological conversations?
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Facilitator Notes

- Normalize discomfort — this is self-reflective work
 - Avoid implying that having assumptions equals bad faith
 - Emphasize that growth often begins with awareness
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TEACHING MOVEMENT 3: TRUTH, GRACE, AND THE WAY OF JESUS

Key Teaching Point

Jesus models a way of holding truth and grace together without compromising either.

Facilitator Explanation

Highlight key themes from Jesus' ministry:

- Jesus consistently engaged people with compassion and honesty
- He refused both:
 - Harsh condemnation
 - Moral indifference
- Truth in Scripture is relational, not merely informational
- The goal of biblical teaching is **transformation**, not control

Emphasize:

- The Bible calls believers to speak truth **in love**
- Love without truth lacks direction



- Truth without love causes harm
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Discussion Questions

- Why is it tempting to choose either truth or love instead of both?
 - How does Jesus challenge the way religious debates are often handled?
 - What might it look like to follow Jesus' posture in difficult conversations?
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Facilitator Notes

- Keep the focus on character, not conclusions
 - Avoid "us vs. them" language
 - Reinforce that faithfulness includes how we speak, not just what we believe
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PERSONAL REFLECTION (10 MINUTES)

Invite silence. You may read aloud:

"Before we explore complex questions, God invites us to examine our hearts — not just our opinions."

Reflection Prompts

- What assumptions do I bring into conversations about Scripture and sexuality?
- Where might God be inviting me to listen more carefully?
- How can I grow in humility without abandoning conviction?

(Allow quiet space. Do not rush this moment.)

CLOSING (PRAYER & CHALLENGE)

Closing Prayer

Pray for:

- Wisdom to seek truth faithfully
 - Humility to admit what we do not know
 - Love that reflects Christ in all conversations
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Optional Take-Home Challenge

Encourage participants to:

- Reflect on how they learned to interpret Scripture
 - Pray daily: “God, teach me how to read Your Word faithfully and lovingly”
 - Commit to curiosity rather than defensiveness in future discussions
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FINAL FACILITATOR REMINDER

This session is about **laying groundwork**, not settling debates.

Transformation happens best in spaces marked by trust, patience, and grace.

The goal is not to simplify hard questions, but to approach them **with integrity, faithfulness, and love — following the way of Jesus.**

