

¹ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group: 52 Ways to Help You and Your Small Group Grow* (Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications, 2007), 13.

² Studylight.org, "Ekklesia Definition," <http://classic.studylight.org/isp/view.cgi?number=1577> (accessed May 24, 2014).

Notes:

LEADING MULTIPLYING SMALL GROUPS [PART 1]

DEVELOPING NEW LEADERS

Those who would be the disciples of Jesus must practice the disciplines of Jesus. If we want to live as Jesus lived we must do as Jesus did. One of the main things Jesus did was invite a handful of men to be gathered together with Him in an intensive ministry—focused small group. Jesus was a small group leader.¹

Dave Early

BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, IS CHRIST ON THE THRONE?

If not, make sure He is!

MEMORY VERSE

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

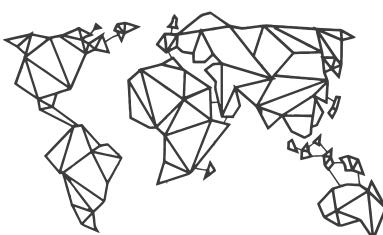
Hebrews 10:24-25 [NIV]

JESUS AS A SMALL GROUP LEADER

Jesus told His followers of the power of Christian fellowship, using the Greek word, *ekklesia*, to describe His church (Matt. 16:18). This word literally meant a group called and assembled for a purpose and can legitimately be used to describe any group of believers assembled in His name with the purpose of worshipping Him and making Him known.² Jesus taught the power of fellowship with other believers and then demonstrated the power of small group fellowship with His own disciples. Jesus' twelve disciples are the perfect example of a small group. Jesus called His disciples (Mt. 4:18-22, Mk. 1:14-20, Lk. 5:1-11, Jn. 1:35-51) and built them into a team that would turn the world upside down for Him (Acts 17:6). Jesus' small group illustrated all the fundamentals of a good small group. Jesus taught His small group to spiritually multiply (Matt. 10:1-15). Jesus

GREAT COMMISSION LEADERSHIP

HOMEWORK PACKET TWENTY-FIVE



Notes:

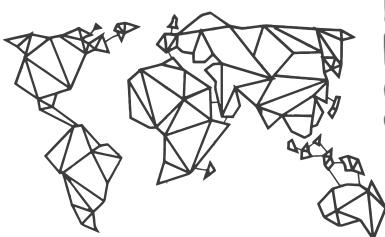
made sure to help His small group gain an understanding of God's Word (Matt. 13:10-23). Jesus called His small group to saturate their area for Him and to spread out into the whole earth from there (Acts 1:8). Jesus prioritized team unity in His small group (Jn. 13:35, 17:11). Jesus kept His small group accountable (Mk. 8:33). Jesus prioritized relationships and cultivated relationships with those in His small group (Mk. 6:31). Finally, Jesus discipled His disciples and called them to make disciples as well (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus' small group was one that spiritually multiplied, grew in understanding of God's Word, saturated the area for Him, was unified as a team, maintained accountability, invested in authentic relationships and was committed to being discipled and making disciples. All good small groups will follow Him and His small group's example.

Small groups are God's idea. As described in this chapter's leadership profile, Jesus originated the small group model. The early church followed this example as well. This was instrumental in all that happened in the early church, including personal growth and spiritual multiplication.

- **Read Acts 2:42-47. What characteristics of a small group Bible study seem apparent to you in this passage?**

GROWTH LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

It is easy to relegate small group Bible studies to "side issues" that piggy-back on the rest of the ministry. This is a wrong perspective and always leads to minimally effective small groups. Small group Bible studies play a vitally important role in the ministry. The **MUSTARD** acronym was created to help you remember the seven purposes of a Bible study. This acronym derives from Jesus' metaphor of the mustard seed and how that related to the kingdom of God growing (Luke 13:18-19). **MUSTARD** stands for **M**ultiplication, **U**nderstanding God's Word, **S**aturation, **T**eam unity, **A**ccountability, **R**elationships, and **D**iscipleship. Notice that each of these seven fundamentals are present in the type of small group Jesus led with His disciples. Small group Bible studies are instrumental in the growth of a ministry.



Notes:

MULTIPLICATION

A Bible study exists to facilitate spiritual multiplication. As a small group grows it should branch into two and each “daughter” group should go on to do the same, resulting in multiplication of leaders and believers. Bible studies that fail to grow and multiply tend to become ingrown and either die or stagnate. Always personally invite new people to Bible studies so multiplication can happen.

- **Have you ever been a part of a Bible study small group that didn't desire to grow or multiply? If so, how did a lack of a vision for multiplication effect the group?**

- **How does a multiplication purpose help prevent stagnation and foster real growth?**

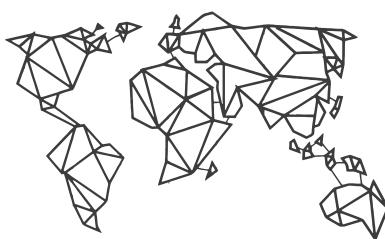
UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

A Bible study exists to help everyone involved grow in a deeper understanding of God's Word. This is why Bible studies should use transferable resources that focus on God's Word.

- **Why must a Bible study actually focus on Scripture?**

- **How do peoples' opinions take away from the diligent training in God's Word that God desires of us (2 Tim. 2:15)?**

- **How do good, Biblical, transferable resources ensure God's Word does not get diluted through the multiplication process?**



Notes:

SATURATION

A Bible study exists to saturate an area with Christians equipped to reach that area for Christ. This is why it is vital to strategically place Bible studies in areas that the ministry needs to reach for Christ.

- **What effect can a good Bible study small group have on its surrounding community?**

- **What happens when a small group is inward focused and not focused on being a tool for reaching an area for Christ?**

TEAM UNITY

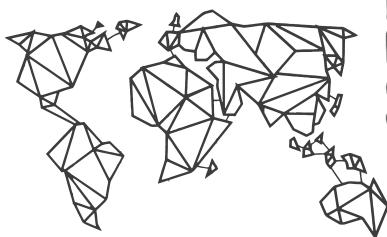
A Bible study exists to unify a team of believers towards loving God and accomplishing His Great Commission. The small group becomes a team together with each other and God, unified to do His will.

- **What are 3 Bible study components you have seen lead to team unity?**
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- **How is the Bible study affected if these aren't present?**

ACCOUNTABILITY

A Bible study exists to encourage accountability among believers. The small group setting encourages honesty and vulnerability (just



³ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group: 52 Ways to Help You and Your Small Group Grow* (Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications, 2007), 95.

Notes:

make sure to keep things expressed in confidentiality confidential). Small groups are a great place for members to confess their “sins to each other and pray for each other so that” they “may be healed” (James 5:16 NIV). Bible studies benefit from member covenants³ that lay the foundation for accountability. Finally, a Bible study leader must lead by example, setting the pace, being honest and vulnerable so that the rest of the group feels free to do the same. Keep things shared in the group in confidentiality confidential. Make sure everyone knows this is a safe place to be honest.

- **How does accountability affect unity, growth and multiplication?**

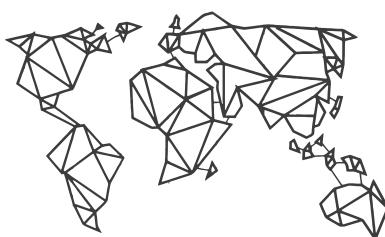
- **How do you plan to set an example of humble vulnerability in your Bible studies?**

RELATIONSHIPS

A Bible study exists to facilitate authentic, Agape love, friendships and relationships. Bible studies provide a small group setting where fellowship and encouragement can flourish and where deep friendships can grow. These small groups become an energizing component of the ministry.

- **What happens when Bible studies are all about “business” and fail to cultivate authentic relationships?**

- **How will you incorporate fun, “life together” components into your Bible study small groups?**



Notes:

DISCIPLESHIP

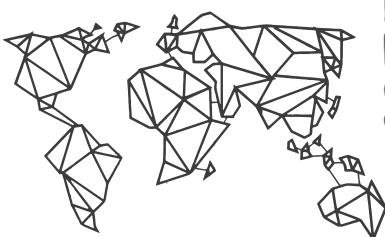
A Bible study exists to nurture discipleship. Bible studies are one of the *Four Contexts of Discipleship*. One-on-one discipleship is always enhanced when the discipleship relationship exists in a small group setting as well. Similarly, leading a Bible study is a critical leadership development step for every believer and part of the discipleship process. Once a young disciple has watched the person discipling them lead a Bible study, they can step into that role, with that person's encouragement. Leading a Bible study is so critical to leadership development because it is where someone first puts themselves "out there" as a leader, learning to do the ministry, trusting God with their insecurities.

- **Ideally, a Bible study leader should be discipling those in their Bible study. How do you plan to disciple those in your small group Bible study?**

QUALIFYING TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

Who should lead or teach a Bible study small group? James 3:1 says, "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." They must not be young in the faith (1 Tim. 3:6)—they should be mature enough to teach. This means they should be discipled and trained first. If someone is not trained or discipled first they can do more harm than good. Please review the character and integrity requirements for leadership from Homework Packet 10; a Bible study leader should be exhibiting these in increasing measures. That being said, character is more important than knowledge or experience. A Bible study leader will multiply both strengths and weaknesses, so be careful. A Bible study leader should be a FAITH Christian, serving with right motives (for God's glory alone—1 Cor. 10:31), full of honesty, integrity, vulnerability, wisdom, and maturity!

- **Has God built a foundation in your life that is strong enough for Bible study leadership? Why or why not?**

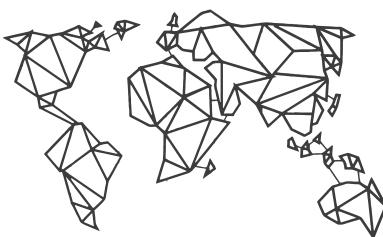


⁴ Jeffrey Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups*, Rev. Ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 52-57.

⁵ Ibid, 125-129.

⁶ Howard Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* - Rev. Ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2003), 17.

Notes:



- **How can you continue growing to make sure that you are who you need to be for those you're leading?**

NEVER STOP GROWING

Grow into the small group leader God made you to be. Jeffrey Arnold describes the following characteristics of a good Bible study leader.⁴ A skillful leader establishes a group covenant. A skillful leader understands group dynamics.⁴ A skillful leader transitions a team from unity at the expense of diversity through diversity at the expense of unity to unity alongside diversity. A skillful leader creates a holistic meeting schedule. A skillful leader plans logistics well. A skillful leader asks good questions. A skillful leader shares group care. A skillful leader prepares the group to grow through multiplication. Finally, a skillful leader has a vision and a purpose for the small group. Pray for your group and group members daily. Finally, be committed to personal growth. Remember Hendricks' statement, "If you stop growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow."⁶

- **Which 2 of these attributes do you need to grow most in?**

1.

2.

GETTING STARTED

Getting a Bible study going can be very difficult. Remember, this is where true leadership is developed. You really are putting yourself "out there," so to say. Your insecurities and weaknesses will become apparent to yourself and others, creating incredible opportunities for growth. There are a few keys that dramatically impact the effectiveness of a Bible Study.

1. Take the initiative. Nothing will get started until the Bible study leader, through the power of the Holy Spirit, gets it going. Prepare and then get the Bible study going right away! For example, in a campus setting, it is imperative to get the Bible study going the first couple weeks of school, before peoples' schedules get filled.

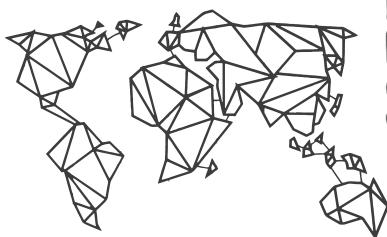
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2. Personally invite people. While you can use social media, fliers, and other invites, remember that a personal invites is the most effective. Don't just make a Facebook invite and then hope people show up. Make the invite, hand out fliers, do a sign up sheet, and then personally call or text your contacts to invite and remind them. When you contact people, also be respectful of their boundaries—don't badger them. Authentic Christ-like love is vital. Don't treat people like a ministry project—show them that you actually care.
3. Be consistent. This is key to the Bible studies success. Don't skip weeks or change locations. Keep the schedule, location, and structure consistent to encourage consistency. This will make or break a Bible study. Keep it flexible within that structure.
4. Persevere, by faith and in the power of His Holy Spirit. Fluctuations in attendance are inevitable. Remember that you are doing this for God, and not for people. Faithfulness is success. Be patient with yourself—you will grow and develop in both teaching and leading. Getting a quality Bible study off the ground can be a struggle, but persevere and trust the Lord with the results!
 - **Have you ever struggled getting a Bible study off the ground? If so, what did you learn from that experience?**

FOCUS ON SCRIPTURE

What should you teach? Use tools and resources that focus on and are filled with God's Word. God's Word is meant to be understood by all people, at all times. Help those you lead learn to study God's Word, not just regurgitate what they read in a book. The *Inductive Bible Study* method (observation (investigation), interpretation, and application) is a great resource. God's Word sustains us (Mt. 4:4), guides us (Ps. 119:105, Ps. 119:130), keeps us from sinning (Ps. 119:11), and transforms us by renewing our minds (Rom. 12:1-2). Opinions don't matter! Heb. 4:12 reminds us of this:

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. [ESV]



⁷ Terry Powell, *Now That's a Good Question: How to Lead Quality Bible Discussions* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2007), 63-76.

⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁹ Ibid., 25.

Notes:

Remember, knowledge without application produces deception (James 1:22) and pride (1 Cor. 8:1), while knowledge with application produces zeal and passion (Rom. 10:2, 12:11, Pr. 19:2). It is vitally important to use transferable resources so look for transferable resources, that are biblically based—resources that can be passed on from one spiritual generation to the next that focus on growth through God's Word.

- **How will God's Word affect a Bible study differently than good, Christian books?**

HANDLING GOD'S WORD ACCURATELY

Powell states that it is important to organize the discussion into three main categories: Approaching, Absorbing and Applying God's Word.⁷

APPROACHING GOD'S WORD

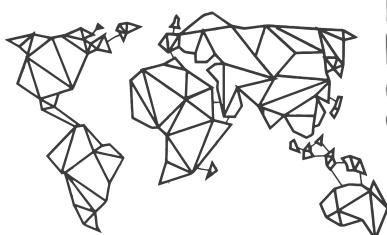
This is a time to prepare mentally and it is when you introduce the group to the topic.

ABSORBING GOD'S WORD

The *Inductive Bible Study* method is a great way of studying the Bible. It involves three steps: Observation, Interpretation, and Application. The "Absorbing God's Word" portion of a Bible study is geared toward the first two steps in the *Inductive Bible Study* method, while "Applying God's Word" focuses on Application.

1 | OBSERVATION

Observation involves "the close inspection of a Bible passage, usually resulting in a written record and classification of facts. It's more than just reading; it's close scrutiny demanding focused attention."⁸ This isn't a time to analyze the facts, just record them. Ask good observation questions. Many people start with analytical questions, but it is vital to start with observation questions. Include an overview of the passage. Reveal information like repetition of words and patterns; it will lead them to and prepare them for interpretation. Ask questions based on the facts that will help lay the ground work for interpretation. However, if pressed for time, state the observations and spend most of the time on interpretation questions and application. After Observation, continue with Interpretation, the "...identification of timeless truths stated in, or implied and illustrated by passage content."⁹



¹⁰ Terry Powell, *Now That's a Good Question: How to Lead Quality Bible Discussions* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2007), 25.

¹¹ Ibid, 25-29.

¹² Ibid, 28.

¹³ Ibid, 28-29.

¹⁴ Ibid, 29.

¹⁵ Ibid, 46-48.

Notes:

2 | INTERPRETATION

"Interpretation is the step where you pull all the facts together in a coherent explanation of their meaning."¹⁰ Powell describes four steps that aid interpretation¹¹:

- » *Pray*: Pray for the Holy Spirit to illuminate the passage.
- » *Probe*: From the observation record, begin to analyze the content by asking questions about the record. Carefully scrutinize all the facts.
- » *Principles*: Identify timeless truths from the probes.
- » *Proofs*: Proofs are, "evidence or support that bolsters the validity of the truths we find."¹² There are three places to find evidence to support truths we find¹³: ① Support from the context: What portions of the passage affirm our conclusions? ② Support from Scripture as a whole: Let Scripture interpret Scripture. ③ Support from other Biblical scholars: Check your interpretation against various commentaries. Do other "experts" agree with your conclusions? Using a resource like blueletterbible.org, or studylight.org, can be helpful resources in this area. This is where you can add your conclusions to the curriculum. Note: If any of these conclusions conflict with Scripture as a whole, let God through His Word have the final say.

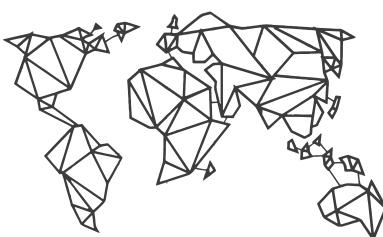
APPLYING GOD'S WORD

After discussing observations and moving toward interpretation of the passage, conclude with application—the third step in the *Inductive Bible Study* method.

3 | APPLICATION

At least 25% of the lesson should cover application. Application includes "identifying attitude and behavioral changes that spring logically from God's truth."¹⁴ Have group members come up with practical ways of applying what has been learned. Application questions are important and will help participants creatively think through ways of applying what has been learned. Powell shares three types of application questions¹⁵:

- » *Anecdotes*: questions that draw out personal examples.
- » *Probing questions*: probe for possibilities. These are the main types of application questions to put together. This is where to discuss ways to respond to what has been learned.
- » *Rhetorical Questions*: These seek a concrete response.



Notes:

After asking, allow time for an answer. Some questions may be very personal and not necessarily something to answer during the session; these intense questions are not for every meeting.

- **How can you incorporate the *Inductive Bible Study* method into your own study of God's Word?**

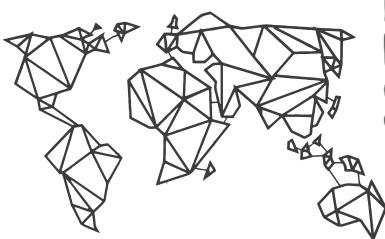
- **How can you incorporate the *Inductive Bible Study* method into your small group's study of God's Word?**

STRATEGIC SMALL GROUPS

Bible studies must be multiplication oriented. They must have purpose and direction. Random topic Bible studies will most likely derail momentum, stunt growth, and prevent multiplication. It is best for Christians to spend personal time studying random topics, and focus group time studying gospel-, growth-, and Great-Commission-oriented topics. The following three types of Bible studies lend themselves to growth and multiplication:

GOSPEL GROUPS

Remember 1 Cor. 3:11. These Bible studies focus completely on Jesus. They are great for evangelism and they will also encourage even the most mature Christians. Invite anyone and everyone (non-christians that are searching, young Christians, or mature Christians) to gospel groups. Gospel groups should begin in a very personal way, building friendships and community while sharing each others' stories and testimonies, and studying the Gospels. You could include some additional content after the groups get going but keep these groups mostly relational and conversational. *The Case for Christ Participant's Guide*¹⁶ is one of many great resources for additional content. Just don't let these introductory groups become lecture sessions. Help people learn about Jesus!



¹⁶ Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ Participant's Guide: A Six-Session Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

Notes:

GROWTH GROUPS

These small groups focus on growth as disciples of Jesus, teaching and equipping those involved that they might grow in maturity, preparing them to be the sort of multiplying Christians God designed them to be. Topics include studying God's Word, walking by faith, dealing with sin, prayer, evangelism, etc. Invite FAITH Christians to growth groups. Good growth groups could spend time studying through different books of the Bible together, or they could use a biblically-based study.

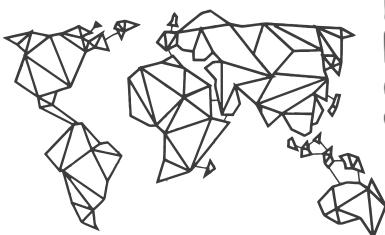
Using the *Inductive Bible Study* method can also equip the leader to focus on bedrock doctrines of the faith, and the passages that support them, helping those they lead grow in biblical maturity. This is great because it teaches your group a transferable method rather than just a resource. It is also nice because it allows your leaders to have some freedom in the direction of the Bible study they lead while still keeping it transferable and growth oriented.

GREAT COMMISSION GROUPS

Great Commission groups are Bible study small groups which consist of Bible study leaders and other ministry leaders. These should focus on Christian leadership and ministry training in a way that equips each person in the group to do the ministry God has entrusted them with. These groups are a fundamental component in the multiplication process as this is where new leaders are developed, trained, and equipped for ministry. Only invite believers who have a strong Biblical foundation, leadership potential, and who are taking leadership steps to Great Commission groups.

Random topics will prevent multiplication (they are typically not transferable), while these three types of Bible studies will facilitate it. Keep it focused and on track, not hyper-spiritual. Stay practical and relational!

- **Which of these three types of Bible studies have you been in or led and how did they effect you?**



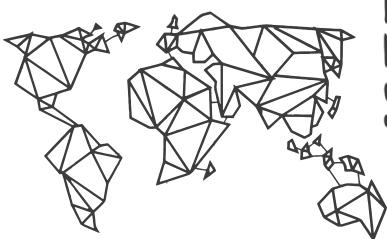
- How have you seen random topic Bible studies work in the past? Did they multiply? Why or why not?

Notes:

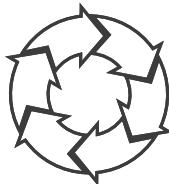
LEAD SMALL GROUPS STRATEGICALLY

Multiplication requires reproducible and transferable resources. The Great Commission requires leadership development and all the aspects of leadership development exist in Scripture. Keep groups small and grow through branching and multiplying, saturating your community for Christ and multiplying Christ-like multipliers in the process. Leading a Bible study will push you to your limits and you'll probably feel more dependent on God than ever. Your insecurities will be exposed, your limitations will be challenged, your weaknesses will be confronted, talents and skills will be learned, and maturity will be cultivated. This is a good thing and a vital part of your progress and development as a leader. Lead by faith. Rely on God. He will work through you. Trust Him.

Remember, your weaknesses, inabilities, failures and past present no challenge to God's will for your life. Your willingness does. Be willing to be and do what God made you for. You don't have what it takes but God's Spirit in you does so be the leader He made you to be and turn this world upside down for Him!



Notes:



ACT NOW

LEAD A BIBLE STUDY SMALL GROUP

- For review, fill out the Exponential Harvest Strategy diagram in the Notes column on this page. Draw a cross (✚) next to “Water” for Gospel Groups, a star (★) next to “Harvest” for Growth Groups, and a bow-and-arrow (🏹) next to “Multiply” for Great Commission Groups. Which type(s) of these small groups do you need to grow in utilizing?

- Are you leading a Bible study? If not, do part 1 below.
If so, skip to part 2 on the next page.

PART 1: PLAN TO START A BIBLE STUDY

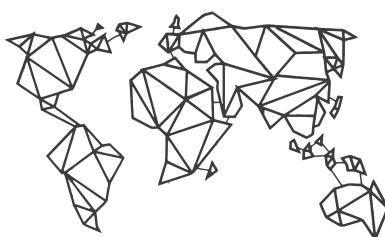
- Are you at a place of maturity where you are ready to start a Bible study? If so, or if not, why do you think so?

- What type of Bible study should you start? (If you have not led a Bible study, try starting with a Gospel Group.)

- When and where will you lead your Bible study?

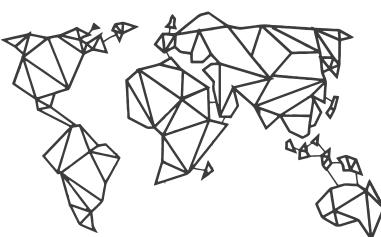
- Who will you invite to the Bible study (invite 3 times the number you hope to attend)? List 12 names (but feel free to invite more as well).

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 7. |
| 2. | 8. |
| 3. | 9. |
| 4. | 10. |
| 5. | 11. |
| 6. | 12. |



Notes:

- How will you get the ball rolling and who will keep you accountable to start?



PART 2: EVALUATE YOUR BIBLE STUDY

- Which of the **MUSTARD** Bible study purposes are lacking in your Bible study?

- What relational components are lacking in your Bible study?

- How can you make your Bible study more encouraging and loving?

- What resources are you using in your Bible study? Are they Bible-focused and transferable? Do you need to change resources to make sure your Bible study can multiply?

- What next step do you need to take as a Bible study leader?

¹⁷ G. T. Doran, *There's a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives* (Management Review, Volume 70, Issue 11, 1981), 35-36.

Notes:

PERSONAL GROWTH

- Write out this lesson's memory verse (also, write it out several more times this week):

- List a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & within a Time-frame) goal¹⁷ for this lesson and action plans for achieving it.
SMART Goal:

Action plan:

Action plan:

Action plan:

→ How are you staying close to Jesus, walking by faith and in integrity, trusting Him and the power of His Spirit in life and ministry rather than yourself, and how can you more?

- Jesus insisted that serving Him and serving others was the highest attribute of leadership (Mt. 20:25-28). How are you growing as a servant leader?

- How will this lesson help you better accomplish the Great Commission and multiply Christ-like multipliers?

- List any last thoughts and then put everything you learned in this lesson in God's hands, trusting Him to build these things into your life.

