

GROWTH
•
GROUPS

A MANUAL

What are growth groups?

Disciples not only follow in the way of Jesus, they encourage others to do the same.

Growth groups are designed to facilitate your walk with Jesus. They are centred on six guiding principles:

GRACE

RELATIONSHIP

OBEDIENCE

WITNESS

THANKFULNESS

HOLY SPIRIT

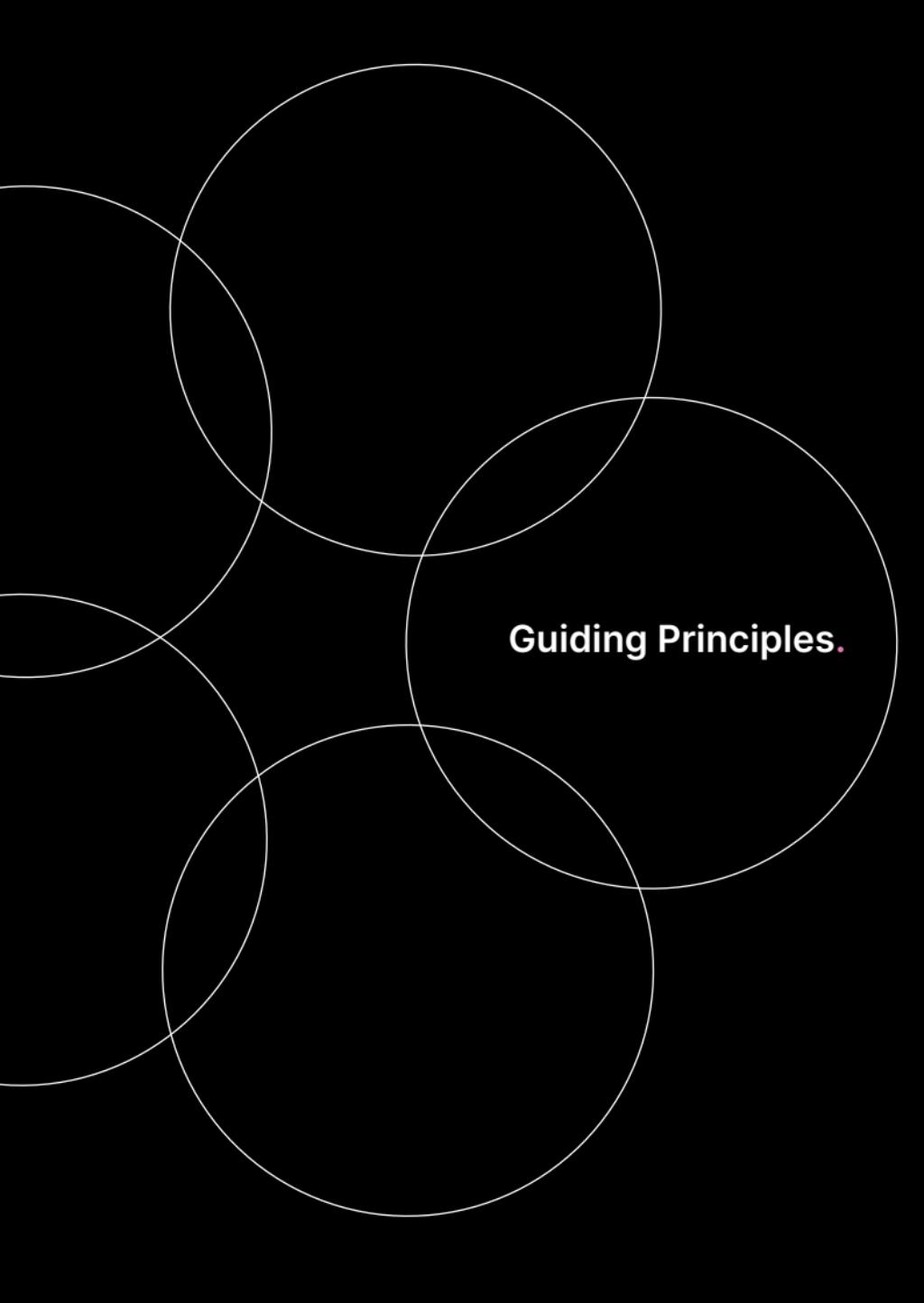
Taking part

This guide is designed to facilitate running and participating in a GROWTH group. In order to start you'll need a group of 3-5 people of the same sex who are committed to growing as disciples of Jesus.

The success of these groups rests on a willingness to challenge and be challenged by one another in a safe space, as you pursue a greater obedience to the way of Christ. Agreeing to participate is an agreement to fully take part and be accountable to those in your group.

When & How

Groups can take place in person or online. The ideal length for a meeting is 45-60mins and so the group could run in a lunch hour, before work or in an evening.



Guiding Principles.

As you participate in a growth group it is our prayer that the following aspects of faith are formed in you.

Grace

'Grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ' Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

All discipleship must be based on the foundation of grace. We live under the grace of God. We are saved not because of our good works or best efforts but through Jesus' work for us (Eph. 2:8-9). His substitutionary death and bodily resurrection means that we can know God. This is an act of extravagant kindness, or grace towards us.

Yet, once 'saved' we are called to grow in obedience, and 'faith formation' as we aim to become more like Jesus. Sanctification (that is growing in godliness) is a slow process in a single direction. GROWTH groups are spaces where we show grace to one another and live out of the grace we have received.

Relationship

Humans are designed for relationship (Gen 1&2). Both with our Creator and with one another. Following Jesus isn't meant to happen in isolation. Faith in Jesus is in one sense personal yet it must be worked out in community with other Christians. It is our intention that, alongside our other church meetings, GROWTH groups facilitate Christian community.

Maintaining and deepening relationships with fellow Christians should lead us to greater accountability, love for the church, love for one another and a heart for Jesus' mission.

Obedience

'By obedience we live into an identity we have from God.' Klyne Snodgrass

A confident understanding of the grace of God will result in obedience (John 13-16).

Obedience to God's way isn't a means of obtaining his favour or approval, instead it is a response to the gift of adoption and the new life we have received. Obedience is both hearing and doing what God says to us through his word and by his Spirit.

Witness

Jesus commissions us to go and make disciples of others (Matt. 28:16-20). As we follow Jesus in obedience we will find ourselves on mission to the world around us. Wherever Jesus' disciples go the Kingdom of God is being made known. Growth groups are spaces to encourage one another towards mission and to facilitate mission as we train one another in discipleship.

Thankfulness

One of the marks of a disciple is walking in thankfulness (1 Thess. 5:18.) The response of the generosity of God towards us will be joy, thanksgiving and generosity. This thankfulness is both a result of the Spirit's work within us (Eph. 5:18-20) and choice we must step into (Col. 3:15). As you take part in a growth group aim to be thankful for all that God is doing in your life and in the lives of those in your group.

Holy Spirit

The most significant element of our growth towards Christlikeness is the Holy Spirit's power in us (Gal. 5:16-26). His presence, reveals Jesus to us, draws us towards him and empowers us to bear witness for him. Making space to hear the Holy Spirit's voice and be filled with his presence is a crucial element of growth groups.



Running a growth group.

Step 1. Worship (suggested time 10 mins)

As you begin, start with worship and thanksgiving. This could take various forms, from prayer, singing together, reading liturgy or reading a psalm of praise. The key thing is this – that as a group you realign with who God is and what he has done.

Andrew Murray once said, *'the power of prayer depends almost entirely upon our comprehension of who it is with whom we speak.'*

Refocusing ourselves on who he is, is a vital first step as you meet together.

Step 2. Welcome (suggested time 5 mins)

Invite the Holy Spirit be with you as you meet. Spend time welcoming his presence. Ask him to guide you in truth as you meet (John 16:13).

Step 3. Review (suggested time 10 mins)

Take time discuss your previous meeting.

- What did God say to you?
- What did you do as a result?
- Did you get any opportunities to share with those you identified?
- Did you get any opportunities to meet needs in others' lives this week?
- Do you need to confess anything to the others in your group?

Step 4. Study (suggested time 25 mins)

Use the set scripture list at the back of the manual (if at the start of a new topic/book) to:

1. Read

Read the passage together twice. If able, aim to do this from two different translations.

2. Retell

Close your bibles/apps and aim to retell and remember the passage together.

- What are the key elements to be communicated?
- Have you missed anything significant?
- Is there anything you have read that raises lines of inquiry for personal study outside of this group?

3. Reflect

- What does this passage teach us about God and his character?
- What does this passage teach us about ourselves and our world?

4. Respond

One of the most important steps to meaningful change is committing to action and then being held accountable for that action. Reflecting on the passage studied, aim to consider:

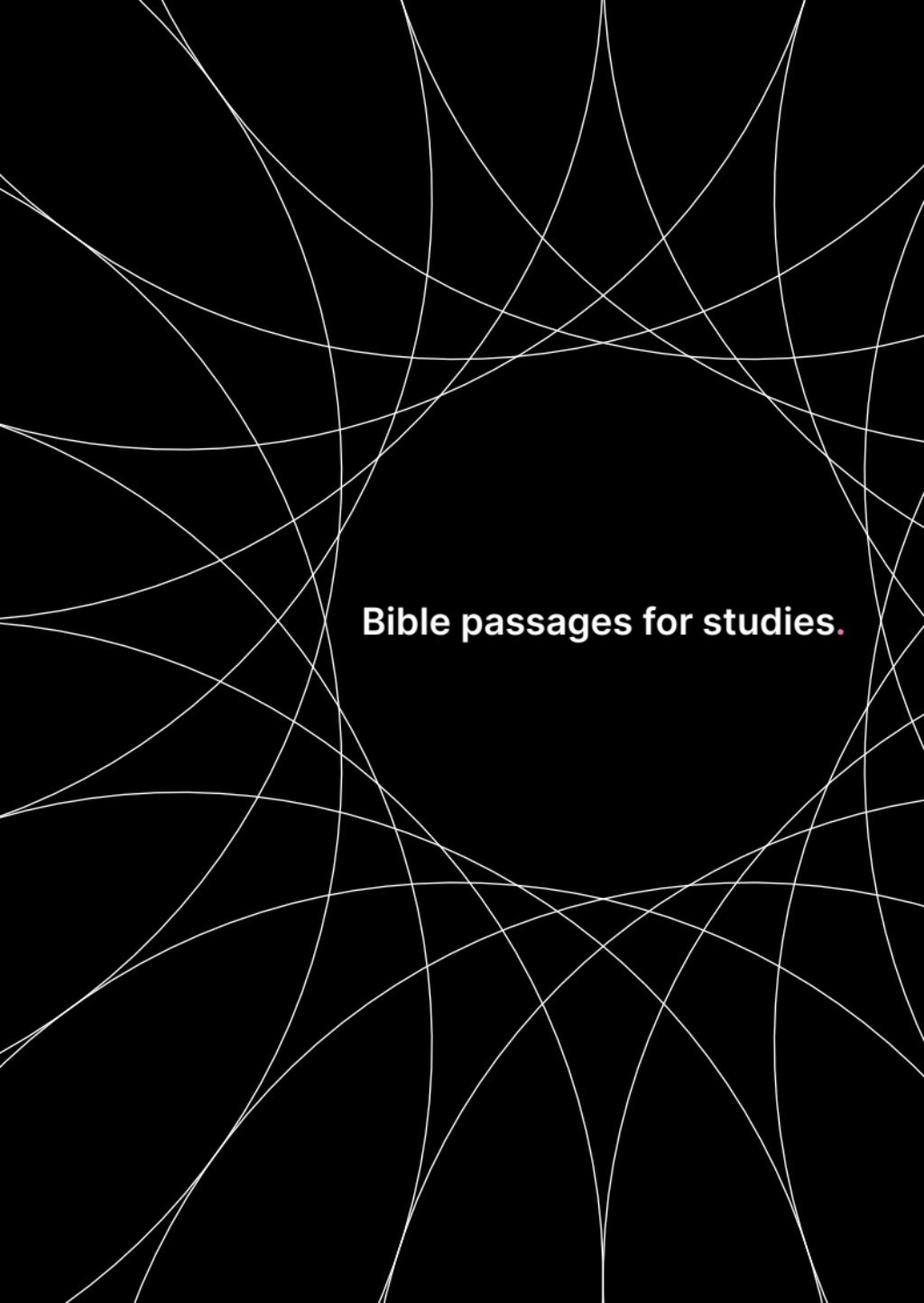
- What are you going to do with what you learnt today?
- What do you need to do or change in your life this week as a result of this study?
- How and who could you share this passage with before we meet again?

Examples of actions could include: *committing to praying for someone everyday, making a commitment to changing a sinful habit, engaging in an act of kindness for someone; giving someone an anonymous gift.*

Use the space at the back of this manual to record your action.

Step 5. Pray (suggested time 10 mins)

As you finish pray for one another. Pray for God's grace and for his Spirit to fill you as you step into a new week.



Bible passages for studies.

The following five studies provide 52 weeks of material for your group and lay foundations for Christian faith and practice.

Salvation History (14 weeks)

Creation	<i>Gen. 1:1-25</i>
Creation of humans	<i>Gen. 2:7-9, 15-25</i>
Humans disobey God	<i>Gen. 3:1-24</i>
God destroys an evil humanity	<i>Gen. 6:5-6, 9-22, 7:17-24</i>
Tower of Babel	<i>Gen. 11:1-9</i>
Abraham trusted God	<i>Gen. 12:1-7, 15:1-6</i>
Abraham obeyed God	<i>Gen. 22:1-19</i>
God's call to Moses	<i>Ex. 2:23-3:14, Ex. 7:1-5</i>
The passover	<i>Ex. 12:1-3, 21-31, 40-42</i>
The ten commandments	<i>Ex. 20:1-17</i>
Cycle of disobedience	<i>Judges 2:10-23</i>
The suffering servant	<i>Isaiah 52:13-53:12</i>
The promised Saviour	<i>Isaiah 9:1-7</i>
The birth of Jesus	<i>Luke 2:1-20</i>

The Life and Message of Jesus (14 weeks)

John testifies of the Saviour	<i>Mark 1:1-8</i>
Temptation and ministry of Jesus	<i>Luke 4:1-22</i>
Jesus heals and forgives	<i>Luke 5:17-32</i>
Jesus' power	<i>Mark 4:35-5:20</i>
Forgiveness and sacrifice	<i>Luke 18:9-30</i>
Love God & love your neighbour	<i>Luke 10:25-37</i>
God seeks the lost	<i>Luke 15:1-24</i>
Different responses to God	<i>Matt 13:1-9, 18-23,44-46</i>
Jesus' power over death	<i>John 11:1-44</i>
Passover with the disciples	<i>Matt. 26:36-56</i>
Jesus arrested	<i>Matt 26:36-56</i>
The crucifixion	<i>Luke 23:32-56</i>
The resurrection & ascension	<i>John 20:11-31 Luke 24:50-52</i>
Jesus in Heaven	<i>Rev. 7:9-17</i>

Jesus is Lord (9 weeks)

Who is Jesus?	<i>John 1:1-18</i>
What does Jesus offer us?	<i>John 14:1-7, 23-27</i>
What is the result of faith?	<i>John 3:3-21</i>
What is the price of following Jesus?	<i>Matt. 10:37-39, Mark 8:34-38</i>
What is your response?	<i>Acts 2:36-41, Psalms 32:1-5 Rom. 10:9-10</i>
What does Baptism mean?	<i>Rom. 6:1-4, Gal. 3:26-28 Acts 10:44-48</i>
Saved by grace	<i>Eph. 2:1-10 Rom. 5:1-5</i>
How will God help us?	<i>John 14:15-27</i>
What does he tell us to do?	<i>Matt. 28:16-20 Acts 1:3-8</i>

Being the Church (10 weeks)

The Church is the body of Christ	<i>1 Cor. 12:12-31</i>
The Church is the bride of Christ	<i>Eph. 5:25-32</i> <i>Rev. 19:6-9</i>
The Church is God's family	<i>Eph. 1:3-10</i>
The Church is a spiritual temple	<i>1 Pet. 2:4-10</i>
The Church is guided by the Spirit	<i>John 16:5-15</i>
The Church is a community	<i>Acts 2:36-47</i>
The Church serves one another	<i>1 Cor. 12:4-11</i>
The Church gives generously	<i>2 Cor. 9:6-15</i>
The Church sees signs and wonders	<i>Acts 5:12-29</i>
The Church remembers Jesus	<i>1 Cor. 11:23-32</i>

Life in the Spirit (5 weeks)

Jesus promises the Spirit	<i>John 14:15-27</i>
The Holy Spirit comes	<i>Acts 1:8, 2:1-18</i>
Directed by the Spirit	<i>Acts 16:6-10</i>
The gifts of the Spirit	<i>1 Cor. 12:1-12</i>
Living in the Spirit	<i>Gal. 5:16-26</i>

Actions record - (this week I will...)







If you are running a group please let us know! Scan the QR code to send us your details.



For how to's and resources visit:
www.makedisciples.uk

