

# Run a Bible reading group using the Swedish study method

By Peter Blowes

## **Bible Study**

**Pray:** Ask God to speak to each of you through his Word.

**Read:** 10 or 12 verses out loud.

**Each person looks for three things:**



**A light bulb:** Something that 'shines', that impacts, or draws your attention.



**A question mark:** Anything not understood from the text, or a question you'd like to ask the writer or the Lord.



**An arrow:** A personal application.

**Then add a fourth point:**



**A speech bubble with a name:** Someone who would benefit from hearing about what you discovered in the passage, before the next Bible study.

After reading and some thinking time, each one shares their 'light bulb' with the group. Next, everyone shares their question, and then everyone their application.

**Note:** If there are less than five people in the group, it's helpful to choose two or three 'light bulbs', questions, and applications each. You can then share according to the time available.

**Pray:** Invite people to lead in prayer as they please, and pray for the people named in the speech bubbles. Someone who has been appointed beforehand closes the time of prayer.

## Philosophy and some suggestions

The goal of this style of Bible reading is to promote good observation of the text, individual participation, and discovery.

Each person has the opportunity to discover for him or herself what God says. In principle, no one answers someone else's question, unless it is about something simple, like the meaning of a word. The idea is that questions motivate investigation on the part of the person who raised them. We should avoid anyone 'grabbing the microphone' and jumping on the poor 'new person' present.

It is impressive to see the capacity that even non-Christians have to understand the Bible when God speaks to them.

### Responding to the questions:

- ✚ You can invite the person who raised the question to propose an approach to answering the question, with the aim of promoting further investigation.
- ✚ Any member of the group can respond to the question, provided the answer appears in the passage under consideration, or previously in the book being read.
- ✚ After the meeting you may wish to take the subject up again. In the meeting, it is important to seek to avoid argument, falling into the trap of 'sharing ignorances', or imposing an answer by appeal to human authority.

**The name (speech bubble)** means that telling other people the good news becomes a normal outworking of Bible reading.

### Some books of the Bible to begin with:

Colossians, James, John, Philippians, Romans 1-5, Proverbs (reading the chapter number that corresponds to the date: 1-31.)

### Some evangelistic passages:

John 3:1-21.

Romans 3:9-30; 5:1-11.

Ephesians 2:1-10. Philippians 2:1-18. 1 Peter 1:1-12.

### Some passages for new Christians:

- 1) Ephesians 2:1-10 – Reviewing the gospel
- 2) Romans 5:1-11 – Reviewing the gospel
- 3) 2 Timothy 3:14-17 – The Bible
- 4) Philippians 4:4-9 – Thoughts and prayer
- 5) Hebrews 10:11-25 – Christ and the church
- 6) Galatians 5:16-26 – The Holy Spirit and holiness
- 7) Romans 12:1-21 – Thoughts and holiness

## A further step

For the next step in learning Bible reading skills, the following ‘symbols’ can be added at a later date. (I have added them after one or more years Bible reading with good results.)

Do not rush this process, as it depends on having refined observation skills. It is not easy, and is much more open to debate.

It is helpful to practice these—without making any comments on which is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’—as skill, competence, and confidence will be gained through practice.



Relating the **ideas/concepts** in the passage.



Indicating the **central idea/heart** of the passage.



Indicating the **central application** of the passage.

## A final step

Finally—when inductive Bible study is taught as the next step in a methodical approach to Bible reading, at this stage it makes a lot more sense.

We do not want half-baked theoreticians of inductive Bible study; we want competent practitioners. I have experienced students who could teach me a course in how to do inductive Bible study, but were unable to do it themselves. We don’t want to train people to give seminars, we want them to be reading the Bible inductively.