

A Study Isn't Everything . . . But It Is Important

One of the most common questions that group leaders ask their Groups Directors is: “What should my small group study next?” That question can be a major stressor for group leaders . . . but it doesn't have to be. That's why we created a [group resource list](#). Anytime you find yourself wondering what to study next, just take a look at what we have. We'll continually update the resource list as we discover new ones and we also welcome submissions.

The truth is, a study won't make or break your small group experience. The study is like a roadmap for your small group meetings. It's not everything, but without it your meetings will lack a clear direction.

Great small group studies push you to answer the question: “How does this information change the way I relate to God and to others?” A study is the springboard into discussion about practical ways to live every day as a follower of Christ and through those discussions to build positive relationships with others.

North United Methodist Church
Small Group Resource List - Materials Available through the Church Library

All of these small group resources have a video component usually with an accompanying discussion guide. Some of the resources have a required companion book while others offer the option for deeper study.

Animate: Bible

- each session features a leading thinker and practitioner of the Christian faith: Eric Elnes, Jay Bakker, José Morales, Nadia Bolz-Weber, Phyllis Tickle, Rachel Held Evans, and Will Willimon
- 7 sessions: the canon, history, testaments, gospels, genre, interpretation, and grace
- built on centrist Protestant theology, it's not too liberal or too conservative with thoughtful, edgy, and interesting ideas engaging
- participant keepsake journals are optional but encouraged, journals allow participants to delve deeper and reflect on session content by jotting down notes, sharing creations, finding inspiration, and make connections wherever they are—at church and at home
- a facilitator's guide features notes, ideas, and a structural framework for each session with minimum prep required

Animate: Faith

- each session features a leading thinker and practitioner of the Christian faith: Brian McLaren, Bruce Reyes-Chow, Lauren Winner, Lillian Daniel, Mark Scandrette, Nadia Bolz-Weber, and Shane Hipps
- 7 sessions: God, religion, Jesus, salvation, the cross, the Bible, and church
- participant keepsake journals are optional but encouraged, journals allow participants to delve deeper and reflect on session content by jotting down notes, sharing creations, finding inspiration, and make connections wherever they are—at church and at home
- a facilitator's guide features notes, ideas, and a structural framework for each session with minimum prep required

Animate: Practices

- each session features a leading thinker and practitioner of the Christian faith: Brian McLaren, Shane Claiborne, Phyllis Tickle, Sara Miles, Enuma Okoro, Doug Pagitt, and Mike Slaughter
- 7 sessions: prayer, food, worship, sacraments, money, service, and community
- participant keepsake journals are optional but encouraged, journals allow participants to delve deeper and reflect on session content by jotting down notes, sharing creations, finding inspiration, and make connections wherever they are—at church and at home
- a facilitator's guide features notes, ideas, and a structural framework for each session with minimum prep required

Basic

- Francis Chan
- 7 sessions
- reflection guide offers discussion questions, thoughtful prompts, and scripture references (free download by session: www.flannel.org/store/films/basic)

- Trends come and go in our culture and the church seems to follow. BASIC is a seven-part series of short films that challenges us to reclaim the church as Scripture describes it to be. This series speaks to those who have questions about the church and to those who may have lost interest in the church.

Chase

- Jennie Allen
- 8 sessions (including one introductory session)
- participant study guide uses projects, stories, and Bible study to engage the mind and heart
- a leader's guide prepares facilitators and conversation cards offer questions for spontaneous and authentic discussion time
- We're all chasing after something, something that we think will make us happy—comfort, success, a bigger house, or someone's approval. But if we are all honest, it feels like trying to catch the wind. As David's life weaves throughout the pages of Scripture, we see he was a man who spent his life chasing after God. Chase explores the events that defined David's life and the Psalms that flowed out of those experiences. Through David's example we'll discover what God really wants from us. The lessons in this study are simple yet deep and very interactive, offering Bible study, stories, and projects to dig into Scripture and deeply engage the mind and heart.

Crazy Love

- Francis Chan
- 10 sessions
- small group study guide offers session discussion questions (free download: www.flannel.org/products/crazy-love-study-resource)
- intended to use with the book *Crazy Love* (1434705943)
- God is love. Crazy, relentless, all-powerful love. Have you ever wondered if we're missing it? It's crazy, if you think about it: the God of the universe loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs, and try not to cuss. Whether you've verbalized it yet or not ... we all know something's wrong. Does something deep inside your heart long to break free from the status quo? Are you hungry for an authentic faith that addresses the problems of our world with tangible, even radical, solutions? In this study resource, each short video session corresponds to one of ten chapters of the *Crazy Love* book and includes questions to initiate group discussion, interactions, and practical application.

Embracing an Adult Faith: Marcus Borg on What It Means to Be Christian

- Marcus Borg
- 5 sessions: God, Jesus, Salvation, Community, and Practice
- participant guide contains all the material needed for use by class participants as well as notes for the class leader to facilitate each session
- Revisit Christianity's most fundamental questions: Who is God? What does salvation mean? What place does Jesus hold in contemporary Christian faith? In this five-session, faith-formation resource, participants enjoy the rare privilege of witnessing Marcus in dialogue with a small, diverse group of adults as they honestly — and sometimes painfully — confront the big questions and work together toward authentic answers.

Everything Must Change

- Brian McLaren
- 8 sessions
- intended to use with the book *Everything Must Change* (978-0-8499-0183-6)
- The impact of our society and the demands upon the religious community call for a thoughtful response from followers of Christ. If believers don't change, all is lost. This 8-session book-DVD study shows how the message of Jesus provides a framing story that brings healing and sanity to the dominant societal and global realities of our time: systemic injustice, poverty, and dysfunction. This study will help participants discover a “form of Christian faith that is holistic, integral, balanced, that offers good news for both the living and the dying, that speaks of God’s grace at work.”

Invitation to John: Short-Term Disciple Bible Study Series

- Robert D. Kysar
- 11 sessions
- beginners’ study
- leader’s guide with discussion activities for use in the 60–90-minute weekly meeting
- participant book with daily Bible reading and reflection prompts
- Experience the magnificent passages in John including the “I am” statements and stories only told in John's gospel including Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene and the raising of Lazarus.

Invitation to Romans: Short-Term Disciple Bible Study Series

- 8 sessions
- extremely enjoyable for those with some familiarity of Romans and with a strong biblical foundation
- leader guide provides process guidance for weekly group sessions including directions for using related video segments and questions for discussion
- participant guide offers daily study and preparation for discussion in the weekly group meeting with no more than thirty minutes of daily study
- This study explores how people have interpreted Romans through the ages as a good lens to view the history of Christianity itself. Compare what Paul writes in Romans to what theologians like Augustine, Luther and Calvin say in trying to understand Paul in their time. At the end of this study your group will have a more informed commitment to Paul’s radical vision of God’s relationship to both Christians and Jews and to their relationship to each other, thanks to the “love of God in Christ Jesus.”

Living the Questions

- 21 sessions (offered in sequence or as three independent units of seven sessions each)
- presentations by over 30 highly acclaimed scholars, theologians and other experts in a video exploration of an open, inclusive, broad-minded, progressive Christianity
- downloadable participant and leader resources with weekly readings and discussion questions
- optional book *Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity* with discussion and reflection questions at the end
- This study strives to create an environment where participants can interact with one another in exploring what's next for Christianity. The 20-minute video segments include

conversations with leading voices of faith, digital stories illustrating aspects of an evolving faith, and concrete spiritual practices and disciplines.

Making Sense of the Bible

- Adam Hamilton
- 6 sessions
- leader guide contains everything needed for the study, including session plans, discussion questions, and multiple format options (free download: www.abingdonpress.com/leaderguides)
- optional book for deeper study
- Underlying religious, social, cultural, and political debate, the authority of the Bible is often a hot-button issue among conservatives and progressives. How *should* we interpret and apply Scripture? Forging a common-sense path, Hamilton addresses the relationship of the Bible to science, history, social values, and other topics to help you better understand and apply its principles.

NOOMA Series

- Rob Bell
- 24 self-contained video teachings on various topics of faith and theology, details at www.nooma.com
- complete leaders guide with discussion questions is available to download or borrow from the church library

Stuck

- Jennie Allen
- 8 sessions (including one introductory session)
- participant study guide uses projects, stories, and Bible study to engage the mind and heart
- a leader's guide prepares facilitators and conversation cards offer questions for spontaneous and authentic discussion time
- So many of us live stuck. Stuck in trying to seem perfect. Stuck in sadness. Stuck feeling numb. Stuck pursuing more stuff to make us happy. Stuck in something we can't even name. These stuck places often go unattended inside of us and they are shaping our lives more than we would like to think. We've been trying to fix this feeling with everything but...God. God has a plan for these spaces inside of us, the places we feel broken, but we have to go to God. Stuck is a journey to take an honest look at the fight going on inside, leading us to the God who has a plan to restore it, to restore us. Because as we realize that our stuck places are the very places that make us ache for God, we find God waiting there for us with hope and freedom.

The Awakening of Hope: Why We Practice A Common Faith

- Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (forward by Shane Claiborne)
- 6 sessions
- optional book with 8 chapters corresponding to a video segment
- practical ideas for putting the practices into daily life
- Belief without action is hollow, but a lived-out faith invites an important question: why? Digging into the historic practices of the Christian faith, this study invites participants to

truly live out the common convictions and truths that have marked Christians through generations. *The Awakening of Hope* provides extensive Biblical reasoning for seven core practices of Christianity: eat together, fast, where we live, living together, rather die than kill, and sharing the good news.

24 Hours That Changed the World

- Adam Hamilton
- 7 sessions
- filmed in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, where the events took place
- leader guide contains everything needed for the study, including session plans, discussion questions, and multiple format options (free download: www.abingdonpress.com/leaderguides)
- optional book for deeper study
- The aim of this study is to help you better understand the events that occurred during the last 24 hours of Jesus' life, see more clearly the theological significance of Christ's suffering and death, and reflect upon the meaning of these events.

Three Simple Questions: Knowing the God of Love, Hope, and Purpose

- Bishop Rueben P. Job
- 6 sessions with DVD teaching
- leader guide by Pamela C. Hawkins
- original 78-page mini book is helpful background, optional
- This six-session DVD study leads naturally into small group discussion and sharing through the use of stories, Scripture, personal comments, and music. The comprehensive leader guide contains useful information for organizing, leading, and preparing for each of the six sessions. In addition, you will find extended reflection and discussion questions, suggestions for spiritual practices, guides for prayer, and flexible group sessions.

When Christians Get It Wrong

- Adam Hamilton
- 6 sessions: politics, judgment, salvation, sexuality, tragedy, and science
- leader guide offers session goals, leader helps, activities, Scriptures, and more
- optional book for deeper study
- When young adults talk about the problems they have with Christianity and the church, they often name certain attitudes and behaviors they believe are practiced too often by Christians: judging others, condemning people of other faiths, rejecting science, injecting politics into faith, and being anti-homosexual. With his familiar style, Adam Hamilton tackles these issues and addresses the how's and why's of Christians getting it right when it comes to being Christ in the world.