

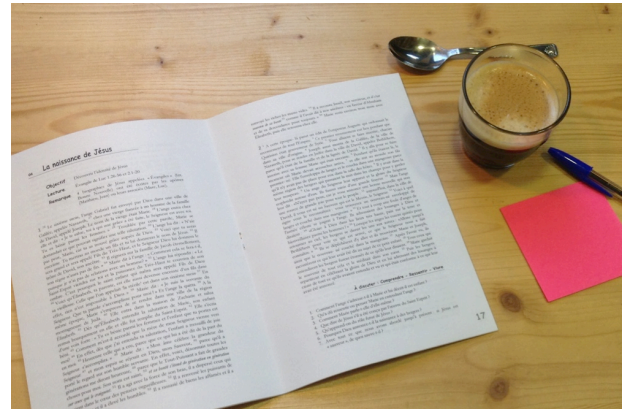
Instruction for using the booklet "Discover the Essentials of the Bible"

Printing and Format

Two possibilities :

Booklet format: (4 pages per sheet): Recent printers have the option of "booklet format." Presentation on pages is automatic. Another possibility is to take the document to a printing company and have it copied in A4 format and ask to have it printed in booklet format. Presentation on the page will be automatic. This is the format that is the most pleasing to the eye. If you have a stapler with a long arm, you may staple the booklet in the center thus creating a booklet form.

Notebook format: print both sides in order to obtain an A4 format; letters will be sufficiently large to enable those with deficient acuity to read without too much difficulty.



Principles

(These are the ideas explaining how these ideas were conceived.)

- If the Jews were converted in mass at Pentecost, they had 2000 years of preparatory teaching. Their history including their creation, their falling away from God, divine blessings, the law and vulnerability and the notion of sacrifice, had prepared them for their redemption in Jesus. This booklet takes these premises and presents the context to the advent of Jesus.
- The personal discovery of the Gospel is especially a question of the Holy Spirit. It is He who illumines, convinces, and orients the person. I do not speak too much about what may be possible, (even if this is difficult for me!), so that the person is permitted to "struggle" with the text in order to derive personal meaning to the principles and the lesson. It is the word of God which will accomplish the work, better than my explanations!
- People ask quite a few questions. Concerning the first theme, they may ask about the origin of man as for an example of this type, "You don't believe in evolution?" or "The Bible doesn't say anything about evolution even though it is a scientific fact!" I respond generally something like, "Yes, it's true that the Bible offers a different story about our origin. What I propose to you is we try to understand the message that the Bible is presenting to us. If you have questions at the end of the discussion, I will recommend books which will address these specific questions, but for these six sessions, we will focus on what the Bible says; I would prefer that one sees its coherence and pertinence.
- Each one must read the text in totality and reflect a little on the questions that are proposed. I emphasize this point; that you will only take out of the text what you have invested; it's not me who is giving the class. We discuss only what you have found in the

excerpts from the Bible. I propose to them to only write down a few words in response to questions which are only there to facilitate our discussions. (end of page 1)

- Questions are important for understanding. One has the tendency to want to say a lot of things and to teach what one knows about the Bible, but that does not guarantee the understanding of the person with whom one is speaking. What one person discovers for one's self on the contrary, will have a better chance of being integrated.
- As a general rule, I do not respond to questions that friends may ask if the answers will be given when subsequent themes are addressed. I suggest to them to just be patient and note their question so that we can address this when this theme is addressed.
- I believe that it is God who gives faith; I don't do any forcing. I have seen people being converted after a lecture on Isaiah 53; tears in the eye, they ask me, "but so, God forgives my sin?" Others have simply said at the end of the twelfth theme, "I would like to live according to what God proposes." Sometimes, I ask the question, "Do you want to turn to Jesus?" The discussions on the themes linked with the N.T. are conducive to speaking about personal faith and conversion.
- If the person has understood the Gospel and wishes to be converted, I encourage him to express his faith to God. This person says to God that he believes that Jesus has taken on his faults; he asks forgiveness with confidence in asking that His Spirit gives him a new life.

Organization of the sessions

- Generally, I have two themes per session. (six meetings in all) plus a moment of explanation why I give out the booklet. Each session only lasts an hour. Therefore, we stay with generalities. But I have noticed that groups with women last longer 😊. Often, they prefer to discuss only one theme in an hour. (twelve sessions in all.) Each group will adapt to the rules which are convenient for that particular group of individuals. But be alerted; it is my experience that it is better to be concise in order to maintain desire than have a long meeting to which people don't wish to dedicate their time.
- I have used this booklet in meetings in homes or in a cafe between noon and two or before leaving for work. Each meeting only lasts an hour, sandwich and drink included! This is already long for someone who is not used to this type of discussion.
- My objective is to understand the essential, not a deep Biblical study of the text. The essential being that God created a perfect world; human relations were perfect, the couple was perfect, but man chose his own independence with numerous consequences.

Here is the manner in which I use this booklet:

When I give the booklet, I open to the introductory page and explain to them how this works, what they are able to do, and what they must read before each meeting. This first meeting doesn't last more than ten minutes.

1st session, themes 1 & 2- here is how the meeting proceeds:

- Some general questions: "What did you think of it? Are there things that surprised you? Things you did not understand?"

- I briefly address some questions: " In a word, how did you respond to ..."
- I try to discern if the question the person asks necessitates a response or if it will distract from the theme...
- at the end of the session, I always summarize with the essential point of the lesson. In order to facilitate the use of this tool, you will find the essential points at the end of the document. (end of page 2)

2nd session, themes 3 & 4

- I pick up with a summary of the preceding themes, " At the last meeting, we saw..."
- I continue in the previous manner
- Etc.!

Last session, themes 11 & 12- Same as the previous manner, but I end with something like, "Now you know the main message of the Bible: God created man in His image, who one day chose to live independently of God, generating death; God, in His love, revealed himself so that those convinced of their need of Him, are able to come back to Him; in order for this to occur, it is necessary to realize that we are dead with our faults, sins, and that Christ died for us; this means He was judged in our place; by faith alone, manifested by repentance, God forgives us and gives us eternal life.. If one day you are convinced of the merits of this message,you can express this to God..."

I wish you many fruits in Christ!

The Central Point of Each Theme:

It would be helpful to read:

- Smith, Colin, " The Plan," in Carson & Keller (ed.) *The Gospel As Center*, Crossway 2012.
- Gilbert, Greg, *What Is the Gospel*, Crossway, 2010.

1 - A Perfect World - Genesis 1& 2

God created a perfect, harmonious world in which man was free to be trusted in his obedience with one imposed limit (the fruit which revealed the choice of good or evil)

2 - A Broken Relationship - Genesis 3 & 4

Man makes the choice of independence. Numerous consequences result: the relationship with God is broken and harmonious human relationships are broken. Man knows fear,shame,and violence. He tries to hide his nudity that God hides by an animal skin....

3 - A Chosen Man - Genesis 12, 17, 22

God, however, doesn't abandon man. He has already promised that evil will be conquered, (cf 3.15) and He makes other promise to God, promises that touch all of humanity.

4 - A Way of Life - Exodus 19 & Ecclesiastes 2

God reveals His moral standard or requirement. To be pleasing to Him, one must live according to His laws. The problem is that no one can fully arrive or live up to this expectation! And when we

live independently from His law, it is quite hard, as Solomon realized, when he tried everything, and found it to be quite futile.

5 - A Promised Messiah - Isaiah 53 & Jeremiah 31

The promise of God is accurate. A new alliance comes which will change the heart and will solve the question of culpability. This will be in the form of a substitute. Someone will take our bad...

6 - The birth of Jesus - Luke 1 & 2

Jesus is different from everyone. He was born of a virgin. He is presented as a Savior. He is one who will fulfill the announced promises in the first part of the Bible. The announcement is done to the "small" ones of this world.

7 - The Requirements of Jesus - John 3

If there were a man who would have had "the goodness of God without confession," it would be Nicodemus. He is religious, spent his life in service. However, He also needed to be born again. This is the central message of the Jesus. God proposes a new life, by the presence of His Spirit in us. A complete change, an invasion of God that changes all of the life, as a new life.

8 - The generosity of Jesus - John 4

Jesus meets with sinners and people who are despised. He takes the initiative, to offer, freely, a meaningful life to those who do not deserve it but who receive it by trusting him.

9 - The mission of Jesus - Luke 15

The mission of Jesus is simple; to seek the one who is lost. But it is necessary to respond to His invitation. The two brothers represent the two extremes of humanity separated from God. On one side, the obvious sins, in the story of the prostitutes, and on the other the sins of the "white collars", the religious. Both are invited to enter into His house, both of them are welcomed if they respond to the invitation to come back to the Father... In the parable only one accepts the invitation.

10 - The death of Jesus - Luke 23

The death of Jesus is unjust, but it allows for the fulfillment of what Isaiah has prophesied; a man will die to take the condemnation of others. and this is not because we deserve it; it is a gift, a favor. The proof was the thief (rather the terrorist), who was the beneficiary of the promise to be in paradise the same day because he understood and accepted that Jesus could save him.

11 - The Resurrection of Jesus - Luke 24

Jesus has conquered death. He came back to life, personally and corporally! He is living and He invites all to accept this good news that life is possible.

12 - The Grace of Jesus - Acts 3 & Ephesians 2

Grace begins with the realization that one has sinned and that Christ died for our sins. When we realize our faults, and verbalize our confidence in the fact that Jesus died for our sins, that He offers us forgiveness and a new life with new birth, this is the beginning of the Christian life!