

DC202 (Last updated: September 2019)

Suggested Format of Meetings (1.5 hours)

- I. Opening Prayer, Announcements, and Memory Verse (5-10 minutes)
- II. Discussion of Bible Reading (20-35 minutes)
- III. Topic-of-the-week Bible study (40-55 minutes)
- IV. Closing Prayer and Fellowship (2-10 minutes)

1. Intro to DC202: Romans

-Have them read and sign the covenant again.

-Memory Verse: Note the importance of the mind (and 12:1's body) in following God.

-*Intro to Romans*: The first half is Paul's classical apologetic on justification through the blood and cross of Christ and sanctification through the Holy Spirit. The second half contains a number of other practical teachings on Christian living. The book was probably written because Paul was unable to visit the church there and wanted to lay out these teachings on doctrine and practice in a systematic manner. Watchman Nee's *The Normal Christian Life* is awesome but optional.

-Note Paul's knowledge of OT (without Bible study tools!) in 3:10-18.

-On 5:20b-6:2a, Chuck Swindoll (in *Grace Awakening*) makes the point that Paul feels like he must deal with this question, given the extent to which he has preached God's grace. Swindoll challenges pastors that they should occasionally face the same dilemma—or they're probably not preaching grace strongly enough.

-Compared to the Sermon on the Mount, Romans 12:9-21 is a similar but less familiar (and probably "fresher") discussion of the high ethical calling within Christianity.

-Make sure to spend ample time within Romans on chapter 14—a great and important discussion topic. We will come back to this passage again with the first lesson in DC401 on liberty vs. legalism.

-If you have time, this may be a good week to have members share a testimony of some sort. If so, make sure not to have overlap between these testimonies and what they share in DC202 when you'll talk about evangelism.

-As you approach weeks 7 & 8 of DC202, consider an experiment where members are given an amount of money to steward—as individuals or as a group.

2. Children

-*Intro to Mark*: The so-called “action” gospel—labeled as such for its terse style and its focus on the activity within Christ’s ministry. It was meant to appeal to practical citizens of Rome; it avoids OT references and long discussions to encourage the reader to draw his own conclusions based on the historical record. In particular, Mark emphasizes the cross, Christ’s ministry as a teacher, and his emphasis on discipleship.

-Be careful about the length of the discussion of the Bible reading in Mark &/or consider doing the Study before the Reading.

-The Moore article is meant to help parents with children—and to equip DC’ers for ministry opportunities. Another good article:

<http://www.firstthings.com/article/2002/11/fatherhood>. And a long but provocative article on Christians raising children, particularly with respect to sheltering them: “Solving the Crisis in Homeschooling” at <http://familyministries.com/>. (The article is easily applicable beyond homeschooling.)

-On teen dating, it has been said that the fathers of teen daughters are those who best understand and respect sin nature! When I read that the testes of an octopus are in its head, it occurred to me that some teenage boys are like octopi—in that their testes seem to be in their heads and they seem to have eight arms on a date!

-2: I Corinthians 7:32-35 implies a system of priorities. The passage does not preclude or diminish marriage/families. (Of course, other passages make that even clearer.) The larger point is that having a spouse and kids is both an opportunity and a distraction in terms of doing kingdom work. Marriage and family are great callings, but remaining single may be the optimal calling for those currently in that state (the broader message of I Corinthians 7-11).

-3a: Answers to this question include being honorable and honoring one’s own parents.

-3b: Fathers are ultimately held responsible for them; have more impact on them (see: research literature); and needed more exhortation (especially in that culture).

-3c: inconsistency in discipline, failure to discipline, unnecessarily severe/inflexible discipline, over-protect/smother, not listening to them, fail to apologize when appropriate, very high expectations, verbal “sticks”, conditional love, favoritism, too much criticism, “because I said so”, hypocrisy, and so on

-4b: For most of the members in your group, this may be the most important question they face in this week’s study. The optional reading in II Chronicles 24 tells the story of Joash and (father-figure/mentor) Jehoiada and allows wrestling with whether the latter did an effective job in “raising” the former.

2. Children (cont'd)

-4d: As a signal of ability to lead within the church; he has more important things to do (esp. if they're young); not a good witness to outsiders nor as credible within the church

3. *Work I*

-Memory Verse: Ask them which phrase they enjoyed the most.

-*Intro to Hebrews*: A letter of unknown authorship written to those with a Jewish background which builds on OT themes. The primary topic is the overwhelming supremacy and all-sufficiency of Christ—as the mediator of the New Covenant and his simultaneous activity as both the perfect High Priest and the perfect Sacrifice.

-Do the study first this week, given the amount of time one can easily spend on Hebrews. Note that Romans and Hebrews (and Revelation in another way) are the heaviest reading in the NT.

-Watch for potential overlap with next week's lesson.

-2c: Degrees of reward in Heaven is a topic in DC402.

-3a-b: Huge points!

-3c: Note also that God could have built the ark for Noah.

-3e: Answers can include the disadvantages of being (and being perceived as) a “professional Christian” and more empathy with those in the world.

-Throughout this week's study (and next), get group members to tell stories about success, failure, and struggle at work.

4. Work II

-*Intro to Ecclesiastes*: Solomon's reflections on what this world offers. He focuses on the difference between whether those things are pursued as earthly goals (e.g., things "under the sun") rather than as means to godly ends. Often considered depressing, it takes a realistic look at the vanity of life pursued outside of relationship with God. Remind them about the distinction between vanity and meaningless from DC101 and make sure to emphasize the concluding two verses.

-1b: By nature, most people in your study will probably struggle with over-working. (If they struggled with under-working, they're less likely to be in a study like this!)

-1c: To some extent, one has to wrestle with a definition of "work". If one is active at church, how does one balance church activity with work and family?

-1: As useful, discuss challenges that are particular to certain jobs—e.g., sales, purchasing, working within a union, etc.

-4d: It is interesting that some decisions become easier while others become more difficult. Some challenges: Does "letting your light shine" equate, in practice, to providing glory to God or self? You want your reputation to be solid, but you don't want to be a braggart. In marketing and sales, in particular, what's the difference between "selling" something and being fraudulent.

-4e: Note Daniel 6:4's "neither corrupt nor negligent" as avoiding sins of commission and omission.

5. *Evangelism I*

-Now, or in the next few weeks, order DC301 and acquire the Crabb and Hendricks books for DC301. (The books will run \$30-40.) There are two versions of the Crabb book; unless you enjoy a *very* small font, we would recommend ISBN #157683029. (If you're interested, there is also a study guide of Crabb's book available.) If you have an allergy to Crabb, read the relevant portion of the 301 Leaders Guide to understand all of the reasons we use his book. If you decide to go a different direction, you might consider books like *Nothing to Prove* by Jennie Allen or *The Broken Way* by Ann Voskamp. In any, case, it's time to order Crabb or figure out what you'll use instead.

-Memory Verse: Note the importance of doing so “among the pagans”. John Stott describes “rabbit-hole Christianity” and its “mad, brave dashes from one Christian event to another”.

-*Intro to Acts*: Luke's careful history of the early church and his defense of the Christian faith. He documents the triumph of Christianity despite bitter opposition, chronicles key moments in church history (e.g., Acts 15), and in the second half of the book, describes the ministry activity of Paul—as the Gospel spreads from the Jews in Jerusalem to the Gentiles and “the ends of the earth”. The reading of Acts is meant to coincide with the two weeks on evangelism.

-If you haven't done so already, over the next two weeks, have each group member share a brief testimony.

-1a: The study questions should accomplish this, but make sure your group members move beyond understanding eternal salvation merely as the exclusive component of “the good news”.

-1c, 4a: A little bit of a trick question since these categories are not this clear.

-3: A huge question, including find their stumbling blocks and identify them as real or imaginary; pick your battles (essential vs. non-essential); find common ground/interests; and so on.

-4a: Pre-evangelism refers to, at least, building relationships and dealing with pre-Gospel apologetics concerns. A nice book for introducing these issues is James Sire's *A Little Primer on Humble Apologetics*.

-6: Answers include “know your audience”, keep learning, pray for wisdom and courage, practice and prepare, work on style—gentleness and respect, lifestyle evangelism and develop relationships.

6. Evangelism II

-For Revelation the next two weeks, remind them to focus on “what touched their hearts” from their reading vs. covering the sort of detail you’d get in a Bible study.

-Discuss the memory verse this week—at least the distinction between salt and grace.

-The reading in Acts provides great examples of both verbal (e.g., Acts 22, 26) and lifestyle evangelism (16:3,25,28, 21:24). A reference to Galatians 2:3 may be useful in fielding questions about Acts 16:3.

-1b: Failure to do so is analogous to one of the three primary characters in “The Wizard of Oz”—the lion lacked courage, the tin man lacked heart, and the scarecrow lacked knowledge.

-3a: Our mission is to be faithful to God’s calling; we are not responsible for others’ response to the Gospel.

-5a-b: Go through their stories/testimonies as time permits. Make more time for this if you haven’t done it along the way.

-Consider role-playing to practice evangelism.

-Nice articles: <http://www.equip.org/articles/why-apologetics-has-a-bad-name/> and <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/september/5-tips-for-training-little-evangelists.html>. Mention “The Way of the Master” (<http://www.wayofthemaster.com/>) as an effective evangelism tool, especially for one-time encounters.

7. *Personal Finance*

-If you're at another church, have you ordered Crabb and Hendricks yet? ;-)

-*Intro to Revelation*: John's revelation from and about Christ while in exile on the island of Patmos. Ironically, while often viewed as confusing, Revelation is meant to reveal—if not historical detail, then an overview of history and something about the character of God and the mission of Christ in His 2nd coming. The book is written in apocalyptic style which is known for its hyperbole, symbolism, numerology, and a division of history into a present time of trial and suffering, an imminent intervention by God to remedy the problem, and a subsequently glorious future. Chapters 2 and 3 are particularly easy to read and apply. Chapters 4 and 5 are particularly impressive in the worship they relate and inspire.

-Revelation is a providential choice for our reading the next two weeks in that it encourages an eternal perspective—important in considerations about stewardship of our time, talent and treasure. Chapters 1-5 should lead to much conversation, but chapters 6-11 less so.

-If you have the appendix from Boyd and Eddy's *Across the Spectrum* (from the web), you may find appendix 10 useful.

-1a: The second question is a trick question.

-1b: Note that leadership can mean delegation, including to one's spouse.

-2c-d: Note that this is explicitly targeted to those who “want to get rich” and those who are “eager for money”—whether they have it or not! Among other things, note what “roots” typically do—spread and support, growing and providing nourishment and life.

-Throughout the study this week, many issues pertaining more directly to next week's lesson will arise. Try to anticipate this, postponing discussion as appropriate.

-If you haven't already, it's time to watch the video (and get the hand-out) for the last training—one hour on the challenges and changes within DC301 and the 400-level:
<https://thoroughlyequipped.org/leading/training-page/>

8. Stewardship

-Hand out DC301-401 now (and collect money) or at the beginning of DC301. If you're at Southeast, remind them to purchase their books.

-This is a relatively important topic, so you may want to plan on less time for discussing Revelation. On Revelation, it also may be useful to remind them about the literary style of "apocalyptic" writing, including the use of hyperbole and symbolism.

-For those at Southeast, it's interesting to know that the second article was written by Joe's brother.

-In 17 of his 37 parables, Christ deals with property and our responsibility for stewarding it wisely.

-Suggest offering possessions as a "living sacrifice" (given that our possessions are an extension of our selves), routinely give away any extra, make your possessions available for others to use, and buy some/many things with the intent to share them. At some point, make the broader point that stewardship is more about attitude than a list of things to do—a lifestyle more than an event.

-1a: We're all stewards. The question is whether we're good or bad stewards. It's also interesting that a healthy view of stewardship leads to both greater responsibility (more at stake) but greater freedom (it's not my stuff). A recent memory verse, Col 3:23-24, connects to stewardship of time. It also may be useful to note that co-leaders and to a lesser extent group members are stewards of your 1.5 hours together each week.

-2b: This question provides surprisingly fertile ground for discussion. Lay it out there and allow for plenty of time.

-2c: Christ is using this to commend shrewdness not to endorse dishonesty (Mt 10:16; I Cor 9:22). Luke 16:13 is a bit of a surprise ending to the passage. It says we shouldn't serve Money, but Luke 16:9,11 indicates we should be passionate about using it well. We should take care with our money—but how much? We should be shrewd and focused/purposeful, but not idolatrous.

-2d: Distinguish between resources as our tools vs. our master. Mention the inexactness of trying to define "hoarding".

-3a: Point out the irony that people focus on I Tim 6:10 without reading it in context.

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9. An Intro to Leadership—from the Life of Moses

-Hand out DC301-401 now (and collect money) or at the beginning of DC301. If you're at Southeast, remind them to purchase their books.

-Memory Verse: Among other things, note that this would be a terrific thing to have said about you!

-On Psalms, you may or many not find it useful/appropriate to cover the article prior to discussing the Bible reading. In any case, wrestle especially with imprecatory psalms and their role in reminding us to be angry with injustice, to refocus our concerns away from self and on to others, to refocus our desire for revenge within a trust of God's justice and timing, and to wrestle with the tension between our desire for justice and the call to pray for our enemies. (For more on imprecatory psalms, see: It also may be helpful to remind them that we read chunks of Ps 119 when we talked about God's word in DC101.

-If you haven't already done this, teach them how to "pray through the Scriptures" (a la Don Whitney):

- explain method: prayers based on phrases/verses moving through a Psalm [or after some experience, an epistle])

- provide an example: Ps 23:1a's "The Lord is my Shepherd" might result in thankfulness that the Lord has been my Shepherd in a certain area, prayer that I would be a good shepherd to others, and so on. Ps 23:1b's "I shall not want" might thank God for his provision, encourage me to be more generous to others, etc.

- do this briefly as a group: leader reads verse/phrase and pauses while they pray about things that come to mind from the passage

-This is a big week for you to lead in terms of injecting vision about lay-leadership—that they are becoming "thoroughly-equipped" and can do great things in God's Kingdom.

-This is a good week to ask if people have comments about the quotes in the margin.

-1a-b: There will be fears and sins of omission and commission here—depending on personality type, etc. Note that "can do" people—those who don't have as many fears or make as many excuses—may not have as much to say on these questions. Note also that there are different types and levels of leadership as well as different contexts in which leadership can be exercised (e.g., in the church, within the family, at work). It may also be helpful to think of leadership as an event and a lifestyle. And if you have an interesting testimony in this regard, it would be good to share any struggles you had in embracing this leadership op!

-2-3: Bring in points from Thomas early in the study as context allows.

9. An Intro to Leadership—from the Life of Moses (cont'd)

-2a: Good news about Moses: passionately bothered by injustice (vs. apathy); takes risky/courageous action (trying to turn chaos into order vs. cowardice and “the silence of Adam”); wanted unity for his people; as royalty, cared for “the little people” and went to investigate their situation; and so on. In wrestling with how else he could have fallen short, consider the example of Jacob (sins of commission; passionately wanted the things of God, but often pursued them improperly) vs. Esau (sins of omission; no interest in the things of God).

-2a: Applications: somebody is always watching—integrity (or not) and ripple effects; intentions vs. effects (and do people want to be helped?); difficulty of exerting leadership without having relationship; and so on.

-3a: Wrestle with whether/how Moses is humble here. Note also that we would worry if Moses volunteered immediately, especially after having been “burned” previously. See also: G. Campbell Morgan on Moses' five excuses: inadequacy, ignorance, incredibility, inarticulate, insubordination; and Wilmington's "I have no ability (3:11; Phil 4:13), no message (3:13; I Cor 15:3); no authority (4:1; Mt 28:18-20), no eloquence (4:10; Lk 21:15), no inclination (4:13; I Cor 15:10)". In response, God encourages, provides info, empowers with resources, asks rhetorical questions (and gets edgy/sarcastic with him), shows anger and moves to plan B.

-3b: We would have liked to hear Moses say “Who is Pharaoh (vs. God)?” or “Here I am” (revisited from 3:4b).

-In closing or by way of intro to the study, it’s probably worth some time looking back on what we’ve done—and looking forward to where we’re going. DC301 takes us into Leadership and is quite different from what we’ve done before. In the 400-level, we return to our usual format, but will cover difficult doctrinal issues and other advanced topics.

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