

The background is a light grey textured surface. It features several horizontal bars of varying lengths and colors, including shades of red, purple, teal, and blue, arranged in a staggered, descending pattern from top to bottom. The text is centered on the longest bar.

The Foundation Series

Bible Study for Youth

The Foundation Series | Bible Study for Youth

Introduction:

The Foundation Series is an introductory guide for youth groups looking for resources around how to run a regular bible study. It is based off of a resource created by the late Rev. Andre Le Roux for cell group bible study.

This resource provides a simple guide for youth leaders and youth groups, while also lending itself to being adapted to any group age, size and context.

Each lesson contains a basic outline for the weeks lesson, along with a few ideas/suggestions/activities for youth groups to engage with. Each lesson also has an accompanying PowerPoint which can be used to assist in presenting each weeks lesson.

Purposes:

To help new groups settle in terms of personal relationships and group dynamics

To grow our understanding of what it means to belong to your church or the Methodist church of NZ

To gain commitment to functioning as a cell/youth bible study group

To do Bible study as the basis for all the above

Some thoughts to consider:

The Foundation Series is, at its core, foundational. It doesn't seek to be too in depth, but rather an introductory level resource for getting young people more engaged in bible study and faith conversations.

This resource may be fully adapted and moulded to your context. If some things need to be tweaked/refined/removed to fit your context, feel free to do so.

It is very important that leaders/session facilitators are as well prepared as possible in leading sessions. The leaders notes are a guide for this, but it may also be helpful for leaders to do a lesson personally before leading the wider group.

This resource is more about *asking questions* than it is about *finding answers*.

Information can be non-transformational — this means that the more we know doesn't always mean we will be transformed in our thinking and being. On the flip side, Transformation can be non-informational — In other words, God can bring forth transformation in ones life, without us even requiring the knowledge of understanding how it happens in the first place!

Journey together with your group, in learning more about the scriptures and mission of the Church, but while all the while being open to non-informational transformation.

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Basic outline of the course:

Week 1: Our picture of God (Introductions)

Week 2: Our life together (Introducing the life of the early church as our model)

Week 3: Back to a Biblical basis for the Church (The Church: Biblical Purposes)

Week 4: Love God and love Your neighbour (The Greatest Commandment)

Week 5: Go into all the world (The Great Commission)

Week 6: The purpose centred church (Reflecting on John Wesley)

Week 7: The Christ-centred life (Worship and devotion)

Week 8: Sharing the Christ-centred life (Fellowship and discipleship)

Week 9: Offering Christ to the world (Evangelism and service)

Week 10: From bottle-necks to Flower-pots (Thinking around the church)

Week 11: From bible study to Wesley/Cell group (Thinking about groups)

Week 12: From member to minister (Changing the way we think of ourselves)

Week 13: Where to from here? (Building off the foundation)

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Group Session | WEEK 4

BACK TO A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE CHURCH

Purpose of this study: To explore the importance of the “Great Commandment” for the church

Leaders Notes

Introductions:

If there are people in the group that are meeting with you for the first time, open your group with introductions.

(Be creative, don't just stick to names. For example, you may also ask each person to share the last song they listened to, or their favourite movie etc. You may also want to ask each person to share what they hope to get from the group.)

Getting Started | Opening Activity

Choose a picture/s to answer this question — What does the love of God look like to You?

Give each group member time to select pictures and then reflect upon the question. Once time has been given, give each member chance to share their thoughts while holding up the picture for everyone to see. We allow each person to share without commentating on what they say — we just receive their words and story as a gift. It is also good to allow a pause before the next person shares so that we can allow the words of the previous speaker to sink in.

(This activity will require a bit of preparation time, but will definitely be worthwhile! You'll need to find pictures — either printed from online, or in newspapers and magazines. You can either provide photos with a common theme, for e.g. nature pictures, OR choose a wide variety of pictures of different things.)

Opening Question:

When did you first feel that God loved you? Where were you in your life at the time?

(This is a loaded question, so don't expect everyone to answer — perhaps take 2 or 3 responses.)

Worship:

Listen to a selected worship song and meditate over it in silence — listening with your heart not your mind. Once this is done, you may want to express your thoughts out loud to God in prayer for everyone to share with you.

(For song ideas, have a look at something relating to the love of God. Encourage person to pray a short prayer in response to the words or the music. Everyone can pray out loud at the same time, if comfortable for the group.)

Focus Reading | Study:

Matthew 22:34-40

Before jumping into the focus reading, try this small exercise about two strong opposing groups to Jesus' ministry — Sadducees and Pharisees.

Read the following characteristic statements and ask the group to try and decide whether they belong to a Sadducee or Pharisee

PHARISEE | | SADDUCEE

I come from a middle-class Jewish upbringing	I come from an aristocratic Jewish upbringing
I believe in the Torah alone as law for Jewish people	I believe in the Torah and also oral tradition as law for Jewish people
I see potential political and economic gain from conforming to Roman rule	I despise all non-Jewish rulership, especially Roman rule
I believe there is a heaven and hell	I believe there is no resurrection afterlife
I believe in the need for a Messiah to save Jews from the oppressive Roman regime	I believe in personal salvation only; that Jewish people must save themselves
Jesus is an ally (Neither)	Jesus is an enemy (Both)

(This exercise will help to give a little more detail around who these opposers of Jesus were. This can help us when looking to delve deeper into context and understanding the world in which the text was written.)

Before reading the text, answer the below question;

1. If someone was to ask you to sum up the most important elements of Christianity, what would you say? Why?

(You might want to get groups to create a check-list to answer this question. You may also find that you'll get two different groups of answers — some will list *Characteristics/Traits* as elements, for e.g. Acceptance, love etc. Others will list *ideas/Theological understandings* as

elements, for e.g. Jesus is the Son of God, The Bible as Word of God etc. Both of these groups of answers are fine.)

READ: Matthew 22:34-40

Share any general thoughts and questions that might arise from reading this text.

2. Reflect on your discussion about the previous question. Does this passage cover most of what was listed/spoken about?

(In the end love for God and love for our neighbour should cover all the basics. Try to help the group understand the importance of this command as a summary of God's law. You may find Jesus words in verse 40 helpful, together with Luke 10:25-28, esp. v28)

3. The "first and greatest commandment", according to Jesus, is to love God with everything that we've got. How do we express love to God? What place does worship play in loving Him?

(This is not an easy question, so you may want to ask people, "when do you feel love for God, during which times?" And use this question as a springboard to answering the above question.)

4. Matthew 4:10 — notice that *worship* comes before *service*. How can I grow my experience of worship so that I can grow in love towards God?

(This is personal question but sharing ideas can help people who are struggling. It may also be a good idea to emphasize the importance of *worship* coming before *service*. This is one of the distinctive characteristics of being Christian — that everything we do comes out of a spirit of worship. Worship leads us into service.)

5. The "second commandment" is to love our neighbour. Read Ephesians 2:10 — Notice that God has prepared good works for us. This we call "ministry" or "service" and its primary focus is those around us, not necessarily in the church. What does Jesus mean by the commandment to love our neighbour? How do we put this into practice? What will God be doing?

(Notice that it is about loving your *neighbour*. Later Jesus would say to His disciples that they should love one another as He loved them (John 13:34) and so love for those in the Body of Christ is not overlooked. Jesus spends most of His time caring for people who are not His disciples, but He also spends a lot of time teaching His disciples to care. The church cannot avoid the command to care for the people of the community in which the local church exists. Note that it is love for the neighbour (as opposed to the distant stranger), so when we look at

what it means to serve, we should initially look local and think about those within our immediate reach.)

6. What can our church/group do better strive toward the “Greatest Commandments”? Which commandment is done well? Which needs more attention?

(Make sure to record some of these ideas, with the idea of wanting to put them into practice in the future)

Act of caring:

Is there a way in which we as a group can put worship and service into practice this week? Can we worship together as a group this week? Can we, as a group, be involved in an act of caring?

(Again, don't ignore this! Come up with some practical ideas you could do in response to these questions)

Close with prayer

NOTES:

