

## **Low-Tech, No-Prep Bible Study Circles Description**

The idea is to create an opportunity even simpler than a standard conference call (in recognition that some of our older folks might not succeed in entering a meeting ID, or navigating a large group of people on the line at one time) by using the Lambeth/African Bible study method (basically a form of lectio divina) and relying on people with newer model cell phones to host micro groups dialoging about Scripture. Most new androids and I-phones allow for the merging of five lines, so make sure the hosts you recruit have adequate technology. Groups are limited to five lines and seven participants (in case a couple or parent/child from one household wants to call in), and they'll meet weekly. Have an administrator be the intake person, working with interested parties on finding a workable time frame for participation.

**See following pages for samples**

## **Low-Tech, No-Prep Bible Study Circles - Participant Guide**

Thanks for signing up to participate in a Low-Tech, No-Prep Bible Study Circle through Oxford Presbyterian Church. This guide is designed to give you all the info you need.

Your group host is:

Your host's phone number is:\_\_\_\_\_. Your host's email is \_\_\_\_\_.

Your group meets on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Ahead of your first study, your group host will be in touch with you to let you know whether you should call them, or if they will contact you at the time of your meeting.

**Participant Guidelines** - Please be mindful of these guidelines as you participate in a Bible Study Circle.

- You may use a land line or cell phone to participate. Cell phones are preferable so long as your reception is adequate, as some have functions where the caller can mute themselves when not speaking, but they are not required.
- Please turn off or move away from all noise-making agents while on the call (this would include tv's, radios, passing traffic, pets, other people speaking in the background, etc.) If you can mute your line, please do so when you are not speaking.
- The design of this study is to allow each person to have a voice in reflecting on the how the Scripture speaks to them at the time of their study. Please respect the process of the study which your host will introduce to you. Specifically, we kindly ask the following:
  - Please keep your responses limited to the questions that the host asks
  - Please do not offer commentary on another's answer (aside from perhaps, a brief word of thanks, or an affirming "hmmm")
  - Please do not interrupt others who are speaking, and please be careful to listen to them with attention.
- The success of your group is dependent upon all parties honoring a weekly commitment of time they make to one another. If you are unable to make a particular call, please notify your host ahead of time about your intended absence. Similarly, if you choose to withdrawal from the group, please let the host know so your spot can be opened for someone else.
- If you have any concerns or questions about your group time, please be in touch with your host or the pastor at a time outside of your call.

## **Conference Call Bible Study Circles - Intake Process**

### **For Hosts**

1. When a person expresses interest in hosting a Bible Study Circle they will be put in touch with the pastor.
2. The host should confirm their cell phone's ability to link at least five people together in a conference call (later model iPhones and many Androids have this capability)
3. The pastor will review the process with them, sharing all necessary documentation.
4. The pastor will add their pertinent information to the "Bible Study Circles Master Schedule" sheet on Google Sheets.
5. As a group begins to form, the administrator will update hosts with the contact information of participants. The host should make contact, letting the group members know that the study will launch as soon three participants (the host and two others) are secured.
6. The host should communicate to group participants ahead of their first call if they are to call the host, or if the host will reach out to them.
7. It is a kindness, but not an expectation, for the host to send reminder texts/emails about upcoming calls to participants.

Here are some links for learning how to create a conference call using a few common models of cell phones:

#### [Iphone](#)

[Android](#) - This is a video from a Belgian mobile company, but it shows a common interface for Android users that should be applicable to most phones.

Alternatively, the host can receive phone calls from guests to go into conference. Hosts should make sure Call Waiting is activated on their phones. With each incoming call, the host will select the option to answer the call and place the current call on hold. This will switch them to the new call. At this point, an option on their interface to "merge calls" should be available. Tapping this will join all parties on the line together.

### **For the Administrator**

1. Participants must be 18 years or older, or on the phone with a parent or guardian.
2. Parties interested in participating in a bible study circle call or email the office.
3. The office administrator checks on available dates and times using the "Bible Study Circles Master Schedule" sheet on Google Drive.
4. When a date and time is conducive for the participant, the office administrator records their information on the google sheet. This information is then sent to the host in an email, with the participant and pastor copied.
5. The administrator then sends participants the document "Participant Guide - Low-Tech, No-Prep Bible Study" after it is filled out with their groups' specifics.
6. If it has not already been added, a calendar event detailing the call should be created on the OPC google calendar. The host and participants should be "invited" to this event.
7. **A group will not launch until three participants (the host and two others) are secured.**
8. Groups will be limited to a total of five separate phone lines, and no more than seven participants.
9. The assumption is that the participant will make this a weekly commitment. If they will miss a call they should contact the host ahead of time. If they fail to make a call, the host should try to contact them. If they miss repeated calls without cause the host may ask the administrator to free their space for another participant.

## Lambeth Bible Study Method

- Group size: 5 phone lines, 7 people max
- Time Requirements: 35-60 minutes (approximately, time signatures listed below are estimates)
- Materials Required: Each participant ideally will have access to a bible, and a phone (to call in on).
- Other requirements: A host, using a cell phone capable of merging five calls (newer Androids and I-phones)
- Best practices: Have participants turn off TV's and radios, or go into a room away from these and other noisemaking agents (e.g. pets, traffic, etc.). If possible, participants should mute their lines when they are not speaking.

This Bible study method was introduced at the Lambeth Conference, a gathering of bishops of the Anglican Communion. It is known by both names: "Lambeth" and "African."

**Opening Prayer:** *O Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning. Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

1. The host reads the selected passage slowly. (2 minutes)
2. On their own each person identifies the word or phrase that catches their attention (a moment of silent reflection).
3. Each shares with the group the word or phrase that stood out to them. (No discussion or commentary is offered on this word/phrase, nor do others respond. It is simply stated. 2 minutes).
4. Another person reads the passage slowly. (2 minutes)
5. On their own each person identifies where this passage touches their life today (a moment of silent reflection).
6. Each shares how this passage touches them today. (Other participants do not respond or offer commentary. 5 minutes).
7. Passage is read a third time (2 minutes).
8. On their own, each person answers "From what I've heard and shared, what do I believe God wants me to do or be? Is God inviting me to change in any way?" (3 minutes silent reflection)
9. Each person shares their answer (Other participants do not respond or offer commentary. 5 minutes)
10. The host invites the participants to share their prayer requests and asks each person if their requests may be added to the prayer chain for congregational distribution, or whether these are private to the group. (5 minutes)
11. Each person prays for another in the group, naming what that person shared in the study, and those specific prayer requests they may have named. Ideally, each person will be prayed for in this time. (5 minutes).
12. The session is closed with the Lord's Prayer. (2 minutes)
13. After the session the host sends an email to the pastor and office administrator with the names of those who called in, any prayer requests that are to be shared publicly, and a brief report of how the call went (maintain confidentiality - address issues such as: Did technology work? Were people engaged in the study?)

## Specific Notes

1. An email from you to group participants ahead of your meeting time is ideal. This could include the passage for the day, the assignment of readers, and instructions as to whether you will call people or they should call you.
2. Please teach your group this process, and don't be afraid to moderate the gathering. If someone is going off on tangents, interrupting, or frequently or negatively commenting on others' views, remind everyone of the rules. If this person's interruptions persist, please note it in an email to the pastor, and seek them out individually. If this does not work, please let the pastor know so we can set up a conference call with the person to discuss expectations of participants.
3. Please report any inappropriate behavior on the part of participants to the pastor immediately.
4. If you have reason to believe anyone is at risk of hurting themselves or others, please notify the pastor immediately in order that appropriate actions can be taken.
5. Please keep us up to date with how this is working, both technically and from a participant and host standpoint. Is it connecting with people's needs?
6. Please let us know if anyone in your group shows aptitude for leading their own group.

## Suggested Passages (for convenience sake, it is recommended you move through these in order so as to easily keep track of what you have done)

### GENESIS 32:22-31, JACOB WRESTLES THE ANGEL

The same night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

### EXODUS 3:11-14, I AM WHO I AM

Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.'"

### MATTHEW 5:14 - 16, YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

#### MATTHEW 5:19 - 21, TREASURES IN HEAVEN

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

#### LUKE 13:18 - 19 THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Jesus said, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."

#### EZEKIEL 36:26, A HEART OF FLESH

I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

#### JOHN 8:2 - 11, THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

At dawn Jesus appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered round him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

#### MATTHEW 8:13, BECOME LIKE CHILDREN

Today I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

#### JEREMIAH 1:4-10, BEFORE I FORMED YOU IN THE WOMB

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD." Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

#### MATTHEW 6:25-34, THE LILIES OF THE FIELD

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of

the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you--you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

#### MATTHEW 10:8, CURE THE SICK

Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.

#### JOHN 20:11-18, DO NOT HOLD ON TO ME

Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

#### ACTS 2:1-13, PENTECOST

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. . . And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? . . . All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

#### MATTHEW 14:13-21 LOAVES AND FISHES

Jesus withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

#### LUKE 2:41-52, TWELVE YEAR OLD JESUS

Now the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem every year for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was

ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

#### MATTHEW 3:13-17, THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

#### EXODUS 3: 1-6, MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

#### JOHN 1:1-15, THE WORD BECAME FLESH

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

#### MARK 6:7-13, JESUS CALLS THE TWELVE

Jesus called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

#### LUKE 10:38-42, MARY AND MARTHA

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself?"



Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

#### MARK 10:46 - 52, THE HEALING OF BLIND BARTIMAEUS

As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

#### MATTHEW 8:28 - 34, THE GADARENE SWINE

When Jesus came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. Suddenly they shouted, “What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. The demons begged him, “If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.” And he said to them, “Go!” So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water. The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood.