

Bible Clusters

MINISTRY OVERVIEW



Meeting God with a Bible & Friends



"**Bible Clusters** are by nature evangelistic incubators built on relationships."

What is a Bible Cluster?

A Bible Cluster is a group of three or more people who meet together to:

- (1) READ the Bible;
- (2) TALK about the Bible; and
- (3) PRAY.

In doing so, people encounter God through His written Word. Participants need no previous knowledge of the Bible, or even of Christianity in general. In reading the Bible together, participants encounter God through His written Word. And when you encounter God, you change.

Anatomy of a Bible Cluster



READ

Read part of the Bible aloud.



TALK

Talk about what you've just read.



PRAY

When you're finished, pray together.

The beauty of Bible Clusters lies in their simple, organic structure. They can meet anywhere: coffee shops, restaurants, parks, conference rooms, community rooms—anywhere there is space. The public nature of the groups makes it easier for your congregation to invite friends, coworkers, and neighbors to the groups. It also makes them highly attractive to nonbelievers who are looking to learn more about God and the Bible, but who are intimidated by (or unwilling to enter) traditional church settings. And it makes it an attractive option for those new to

Christianity who feel "outside" the church structure because of their lack of knowledge. A Bible Cluster is a safe place to learn, to ask questions, and to express doubts. It is not about indoctrination or in-depth study, but simply an encounter with God through the Scriptures.

Looking to Help Your Congregation Make Disciples?

Simply put, the process of discipleship requires following the Lord along with others who are also following the Lord. We live out the truth of Scripture in redemptive relationships with others. Bible Clusters are, by nature, evangelistic incubators built on relationships. It is a way for people to encounter God together through the written Word.

There are no shortcuts to growing a healthy Body of Christ. A single evangelist or event can call thousands to salvation, but it takes the whole church to grow a single disciple. You may have a number of programs and groups already doing this disciple-making, but Bible Clusters are designed to seamlessly fit into this existing grid, helping



Simple. Engaging. Life Changing.

you reach into the community in ways you never have been able to before.

Bible Clusters are designed as a simple way for your congregation members to invite their friends and neighbors into a simple, non-threatening exploration of Scripture. This approach may help you reach out to people your congregation can not reach any other way.

Bible Clusters are not designed to distract from your existing small groups and Bible studies, but to strengthen your existing efforts. Bible Clusters turn these existing structures into active evangelistic bases, allowing your entire congregation to engage in ministry. Small groups and Bible studies are the perfect springboard for numerous Bible Clusters for which they then provide active prayer support.

Members of a typical small group or Bible study can launch three or more Bible Clusters that meet during the week. Why? Because they are already out in the community day after day. They work for different companies, have different occupations, live in different neighborhoods, and have different circles of

friends outside of church. And while members of a Bible study or small group are already in your congregation, Bible Cluster members generally are not. But we are called not just to make converts, but disciples, and that happens in the church. Bible Clusters gives new believers a glimpse of, and a chance to be integrated into, your larger church fellowship. Bible Clusters are not an end, but a beginning.

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How Bible Clusters Are Different and Why They Work

Bible Clusters look familiar on the surface, but are unlike existing Bible study and small group structures currently in use.

The Bible is the only material in use. There is no complicated curriculum that assumes vast Biblical knowledge or an in-depth understanding of biblical languages (or a working knowledge of *Logos* software!). No need for participants to have a



To Millennials and Beyond

Those in the Millennial generation are particularly attracted to Bible Clusters for a number of reasons, including their familiarity with small teams at school and work, their desire to discover truth with others, and the flexibility of time schedules. Also, to be honest, many Millennials are uneasy about coming to a church building, even though they are curious about God. Bible Clusters go to where Millennials live and work.

Bible Clusters also appeal to those of different faiths. Many are curious about the Bible even though they are reluctant to attend an established church. For others, it is a matter of scheduling. Busy professionals might still find time for a Bible Cluster meeting that fits into their lunch hour or early morning. Bible Clusters create safe environments in known spaces where people can explore and meet Jesus through the Scriptures.

background in Christianity, or to have heard a particular sermon to engage in the group's conversation. Bible Clusters read the Bible and reading along or hearing what is read is all that is needed to participate in the conversations.

They meet in public places. Unlike traditional church gatherings which tend to meet in church buildings or homes, Bible Clusters meet in public spaces making them highly attractive to nonbelievers, who perceive these locations safe places to seek God by exploring the Bible.

"Leadership is key in keeping the group in **biblical truth**"

They do not have a teacher, but a facilitator who acts as a guide for the group. This is more than someone who can keep a conversation going. Leadership is key in keeping the group in biblical truth. Bible Cluster facilitators are trained leaders who established the groups, facilitate the discussion environment, keep conversations on topic and away from unhelpful tangents, provide healthy doctrinal boundaries set by your congregation, and direct new and unchurched believers toward the larger church fellowship.

Bible Clusters work, because they provide a safe environment where people can encounter God through His Word together. The Bible is central and leadership plays a key role. While these groups are simple, they are not easy.

Six Qualities of a Great Facilitator

WELCOMING

A Bible Cluster is a ministry of invitation. Great facilitators foster a sense of welcome within the group.

GENTLE

They gently nudge people along, always with the goal of helping people encounter God through His Word.

PERSISTENT

Conversations naturally drift, but great facilitators know how to steer the conversation in the right direction.

FAITHFUL

They understand the important of prayer, and pray for their group regularly.

ATTENTIVE

A great facilitator is an active listener. "Repeat. Reflect. Rephrase."

PROTECTIVE

From where the group meets to how they interact, great facilitators provide the group with a sense of safety.





Because of their safe environments, Bible Clusters attract people who are unchurched, unsaved, and also from other congregations. Therefore the church that starts Bible Clusters should present a clear vision, expectations, and boundaries. Facilitators are accountable to their sending congregations and pastor.

Bible Clusters can operate independently, with no specific church connection. BibleClusters.org gives basic training and communicates the vision to anyone who feels called to be a facilitator. But we believe wholeheartedly in the ministry of the church. So we are eager to see pastors and church leaders embrace this method as a significant outreach, a first step in disciple-making.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (*Matthew 28:18-20 ESV*)

Giving It Away With Joy

Behind Bible Clusters stands Charlotte Awake, a small ministry in Charlotte, North Carolina, focused on revival, discipleship, and equipping the church. We have four overseers with a combined 80 years of church experience as pastors and elders. We are surrounded by an even larger group of advisors and volunteers. The website was developed in partnership with American Bible Society, a 200-year-old ministry pursuing cutting-edge ways to promote Scripture engagement in the U.S. and around the world.

There is nothing to buy here, nothing to own. We are happy to share our training and insights into how to run Bible Clusters.

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