

# Precept Leader Manual

how to launch & lead your group



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# Mission And Vision

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Precept Ministries International reaches hundreds of thousands of people worldwide each year.

## **OUR MISSION**

Engaging people in relationship with God through knowing His Word

## **OUR VISION**

Every believer in Christ living out God's Word every day.

We offer a broad variety of events and materials all aimed at motivating each believer to study the Bible for himself inductively, using the Bible as his primary source and other works as secondary. All these are driven by the mission that we believe God has given us, to assist the local church. The Lord has graciously opened doors in nearly 180 countries and provided resources to translate materials into nearly 80 languages.

# History

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Where did it all begin?

## **BIBLE STUDY CHANGES LIVES OF TEENAGERS**

In 1969 Jack and Kay Arthur were forced to leave the mission field in Mexico due to Kay's illness. Confident that the Lord had further plans for them, they returned to their home base in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where Jack became the station manager of a Christian radio station and Kay became involved in teaching the Bible to teenagers. As these young people became grounded in God's Word, their lives began to change dramatically. The number of teens steadily multiplied so that in 1970 God provided a 32-acre farm, which became known as Reach Out Ranch, to accommodate Jack and Kay's expanding ministry. In 1972 the radio station was sold, and Jack was free to devote his time to administrating Reach Out on a full-time basis.

## **MINISTRY BROADENED TO INCLUDE ADULTS**

Soon adults began asking for the same practical Bible teaching and helpful guidance that the teens were receiving, so the ministry of Reach Out was broadened to include adults. Then, by special invitation, Kay began commuting to Atlanta to teach a weekly ladies' Bible study. Beginning with 250 women meeting in the home of Grace Kinser, the ladies in Atlanta flocked to hear Kay's solidly doctrinal, yet intensely personal approach to the Scriptures. Hungering to know God's Word and to apply it practically to their everyday lives, some of the ladies asked Kay to teach them how to study the Bible as she did. Inspired by Irving Jensen's inductive methods of observation, interpretation, and application, Kay was led of the Lord to teach these same methods. In 1974 she wrote the first draft of How to Study Your Bible, the four pages of which were printed out on a mimeograph machine.

## **PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT® BIBLE STUDIES BORN**

The concept for Precept™ Bible Studies was born out of Kay's prayer, "Lord, when You call me to leave Atlanta and these 250 people, will they be able to feed themselves?" God's answer was Precept Upon Precept® Inductive Bible Studies.



The first course Kay wrote was Romans. After writing each lesson, Kay would meet with a number of her mature leaders in Chattanooga and Atlanta to discuss the contents of the lesson. Each of the leaders would then meet with a small group of students and discuss the week's homework in a one-hour discussion time which became known as "Precept I." After attending a small discussion group, each student and leader would attend a follow-up lecture. The lecture session taught by Kay became known as "Precept II." In 1975 the Romans study, consisting of 31 lessons, was published in book form; and Precept Upon Precept study was on its feet and growing.

### **LINE UPON LINE (NOW DISCOVER 4 YOURSELF®) DEVELOPED**

Shortly after the inception of Precept Upon Precept studies, Line Upon Line, an inductive Bible study course for children, was developed. Tailored to meet the heartfelt need for an in-depth study for impressionable young minds, Line Upon Line was a valuable tool to introduce preteens to challenging and exciting Bible study. This is now the Discover 4 Yourself® Inductive Bible Studies for Kids series, begun in 1999, that complements many of our Precept courses.

### **THE MINISTRY MULTIPLIED**

When the day came in 1980 for Kay to leave Atlanta, the concept of Precept was put to the test and validated; the 900 studying Precept Upon Precept courses in Atlanta mushroomed to 3,000. Gradually, the Lord moved key Precept leaders and students out of Atlanta and Chattanooga, and other groups quickly sprang up in new locations. Precept's inductive method of study emerged, not by any one person's design, but as part of God's plan for "such a time as this."

### **LEADER TRAINING INTRODUCED**

In an effort to provide consistent, high quality leadership for every study group, leader training was introduced in 1981 and has now expanded across the United States and in a number of countries worldwide.

### **A NEW NAME**

In 1982 the name of the ministry was changed from Reach Out to Precept Ministries, a name which more clearly identifies the ministry's focus: Engaging people in relationship with God through knowing His Word.

## **INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY LAUNCH**

Precept diversified and became truly international during the spring of 1983 when the translation of Romans into Korean was completed. Since then, other courses have been translated into many languages.

## **IN & OUT® AND “LORD” SERIES ADDED**

In 1984 In & Out® studies were added to the Precept Bible Studies Series in order to meet the needs of teens and adults who might be new to Bible study or who might not be able to commit themselves to the requirements of Precept Upon Precept studies. Created for people who want to do more than just fill in blanks or record the obvious, In & Out has proven to be an open doorway to more in-depth study for many. Also added in the late 1980s was the “Lord” series of Bible studies. These are meaty devotional studies designed to answer some of life’s tough questions and to meet daily needs. God has used these different studies to set people free from misconceptions about Him and to ground them in the truth of the Word.

## **NISB & NISS PUBLISHED**

In the 1990s we added *The New Inductive Study Bible (NISB)*, which provides directions for studying each book inductively in a self-paced format. *The New Inductive Study Series (NISS)* has also been added as a survey-style inductive series that covers all the books of the Bible. These studies give daily 15- to 30-minute directions and pace the student through books of the Bible.

## **40-MINUTE SERIES**

In 2001 Precept added a new Bible study series to meet the needs of those who wanted or needed an inductive Bible study with no work outside of class time. Each of these studies is six weeks/lessons in length, and each lesson should take approximately 40 minutes to complete. They cover biblical topics rather than books of the Bible, and are designed so that no formal training is required for leaders or students.

## **MORE STUDIES**

We created the Inductive Bible Study Curriculum (IBSC) for use in Middle and High School classrooms in 2006, adapting existing Precept Upon Precept courses for Bible education in schools. In 2008, Transform Student Ministries began developing a new series aimed specifically at teens for use as a weekend retreat or a month of youth curriculum with the first study, *The Problem with Evil*. In 2009, the *Sweeter Than Chocolate!*<sup>®</sup> Series was added, written by our first non-staff author, and we began making the Precepts for Life™ (PFL) TV and Radio Study Companions available to the public to use as group Bible studies.

## **ENGAGING PEOPLE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH KNOWING HIS WORD**

Today Precept Ministries International is thriving—a testimony to the faithfulness of an all-wise and loving Father. The list of courses continues to grow with thousands of students in the United States and in a number of foreign countries participating in the studies. Although students have been attracted to Precept Bible Studies primarily through the testimonies of other students, Precept Ministries' conference ministry and the radio and television programs have also awakened the desire in Christians to study the Word of God precept upon precept.

Born out of a desire to provide ongoing discipleship in the Word for the people of God, Precept Bible Study affords its leaders the privilege of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. Through thousands of volunteer leaders worldwide, Precept Bible Studies continue to meet the needs of people who are hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

If you're burdened for other believers to know God in an intimate way, if you've seen the deep need for people to be able to apply His Word to everyday life, if you sense the need for Christians to be discipled through a study of the Word of God, God may be calling you to leadership that you might equip His saints through Precept Bible Studies.

# The Precept Model

Ultimately, the Precept Model isn't about just knowing Scripture—we want you to know God in a way that transforms your life.

Through insightful tools, individual study, and group discussions, our mission is to encourage believers around the world to engage in relationship with God through knowing His Word.

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- **INSIGHTFUL TOOLS**
  - **INDIVIDUAL STUDY**
  - **GROUP DISCUSSION**

## INSIGHTFUL TOOLS

The Precept Bible Study Method is a Holy Spirit-led approach to studying the Bible. In this study, you will observe what the text says, interpret what it means, and apply the truth of the passage to your life.

**Observation**—Before we can understand what Scripture means, we need to clearly see what it says. By carefully examining God's Word, you'll be able to identify a text's author and recipient (if it's a letter), thematic purpose, and historical, cultural, and biblical context. This step includes exercises like marking key words and making lists.

**Interpretation**—Using the details you gathered in Observation, you can begin to draw conclusions about a text's meaning. Through exercises like cross-references and word studies, you'll gain deeper insight into Scripture.

**Application**—Spiritual growth may begin with knowledge, but it can't end there. As your understanding of God's Word increases, you must examine your life and apply the truth you've learned to your relationships, values, and work.

*Keep in mind that this is a fluid model, and you'll often move between observation, interpretation, and application as you study.*

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## INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Work on your lesson daily throughout the week. It can be tempting to finish an entire week's lesson at once, but doing the homework one day at a time will help you go to the Word consistently and give you time to meditate on the truths you are learning.

Only the Holy Spirit can give true understanding and insight into God's Word, so begin each day with prayer. Ask God to reveal His truth to you so that you will grow in your relationship with Him.

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## GROUP DISCUSSION

Meeting regularly with a small group to reason through Scripture allows you to learn and receive encouragement from other brothers and sisters in Christ. Precept Bible Study Leaders are trained to lead effective discussions and to confirm, clarify, and correct individuals' interpretation of God's Word.

# Bible Study Formats

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## **PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT**

The most in-depth study offered in the Precept Bible Study Series is Precept Upon Precept, which is the only series that requires training for the leader. Over seventy-five courses are available in this unique format.

### **Study Time**

The Precept format incorporates approximately five hours of individual study time per week. The student purchases a workbook for the course of study which lays out approximately one hour of study time per day for five days of each week of the course.

### **Group Discussion**

A small group meets once a week for approximately an hour to discuss each week's lesson and application of the truth.

### **Lecture**

An optional lecture immediately follows the group discussion and, through expository teaching, builds upon the discussion of the lesson. Lectures are audio (CD) or video (DVD) featuring your choice of a male or female teacher from Precept Ministries International and are 40 minutes to an hour in length. These are available through the Customer Service Department or through the Estore. In some situations, lectures are taught by a local pastor or Bible teacher.

The study can be done without a lecture.

## **IN & OUT**

In & Out studies are designed to meet the needs of those who might be new to Bible study or who might not be able to commit themselves to the lengthier homework requirements of Precept Upon Precept courses. Each In & Out lesson consists of two parts: Taking It In (the study of the Word) and Living It Out (the practical application of the Word). While In & Out exposes the student to some basic observation skills, it does not take the student into a thorough inductive approach to the Word of God. However, to those who have never studied to this depth before, it is an “eye-opener” to the treasures of God’s Word.

### **Study Time**

In & Out lessons are intended to take one to three hours per week.

### **Group Discussion**

If the whole group is studying In & Out, that is what the discussion should center on. But if In & Out students are in a group with some studying Precept Upon Precept, the discussion will focus on the PUP study. For more detailed information on using In & Out, see the end of this Leader Manual.

### **Lecture**

In & Out courses can use the same lectures as Precept Upon Precept.

The study can be done without using a lecture.

## **NEW INDUCTIVE STUDY SERIES**

This series provides a study plan that will help you survey each book of the Bible in such a way that you will see and understand truth for yourself. These books are ideal for Sunday school, prison ministry, inner-city ministry, etc.

### **Study Time**

These studies take 15–30 minutes a day.

### **Group Discussion**

For those using this series for a group study, there are discussion questions on Day 7 of each lesson.

## **Lecture**

There are no lectures available for this series, except for *Free from Bondage God's Way* by Kay Arthur.

## **40-MINUTE BIBLE STUDIES**

Our 40-Minute Bible studies are designed to be led by anyone to help people learn how to study inductively without doing homework! Work through these six-week assignments with anyone...right at your kitchen table, with a group of business associates over breakfast or lunch, in your cell group or Sunday school class. It's a simple way for busy people to study the Bible and share it with others! Scriptures are included in the book as well as instructions for the leader.

There are no lectures available for this series.

## **SWEETER THAN CHOCOLATE!<sup>®</sup> SERIES**

These are six- to ten-week studies with homework designed with options that will allow you to go as deep each week as you desire. There are optional sidebar "One Step Further" assignments and "Digging Deeper" boxes. The amount of time you spend studying can be as much as Precept Upon Precept study or much less—you choose. Each book in the series covers a specific Scripture or uses a passage to address a topic that can be as narrow as one Psalm, or as broad as a book of the Bible. Leader's guides are available at: [preceptministries.ca](http://preceptministries.ca)

## **PRECEPTS FOR LIFE™ STUDY COMPANIONS**

These study booklets were designed to accompany the PFL TV and Radio program, but can be used independently for Bible study. Each "program" or day of study is one page, with a synopsis, questions to answer from the Bible, cross-references, and extras like word studies, historical information, maps, etc. And there's a concluding prayer. While there is no discussion guide, the lecture CD/DVD's are available for purchase from Precept Ministries or lecture podcasts for individual viewing or listening are available at [PreceptsforLife.com](http://PreceptsforLife.com).



## **“LORD” SERIES**

The “Lord” series is designed to answer some of life’s tough questions and meet the daily needs of people. These devotional studies expose the student to some basic observational skills but do not take the student into a thorough inductive approach to the Word of God. They are intended to be used in a variety of ways, including personal devotions, home Bible study, Sunday school class, or church-wide Bible study.

### **Study Time**

The “Lord” series lessons are intended to be less than thirty minutes per day.

### **Group Discussion**

For those who wish to study in group settings, there are discussion questions available after each lesson, and a group discussion can be held like the Precept Upon Precept and In & Out studies.

### **Lecture**

There are audio and video lectures of sixty minutes or less (depending on the series) by Kay Arthur that are available for most “Lord” studies through the Customer Service Department or through the Estore. (CD and DVD lectures by Wayne Barber are also available for *Lord, Where Are You When Bad Things Happen?*)

The study can be done without a lecture.

## **COOKIES ON THE LOWER SHELF™**

Take Bible reading to a new level—read through the Bible in just 30 weeks—10 weeks at a time. With a flexible format designed to meet the needs of each student, this series provides a step-by-step guide to the story line of the Bible. Part 1 covers Genesis to Ruth; Part 2 covers 1 Samuel to Malachi; and Part 3 covers the New Testament. A leader’s guide is available at: [preceptministries.ca](http://preceptministries.ca)

## **INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY CURRICULUM**

The Inductive Bible Study Curriculum is designed specifically for Christian education, grades 6 through 12. Students will learn to observe the text carefully to build their knowledge of God while being challenged to interpret the text accurately and apply the truth to their lives.

Each Bible study in the series includes a student workbook and teacher's guide. They are designed to take four hours of individual study time per week.

Each teacher's guide gives the teacher everything they need to review the lessons with their students: answers to the student assignments, suggestions for teaching the assignments and for holding discussions with the students, and tests and quizzes for each unit.

## **DISCOVER 4 YOURSELF®**

Discover 4 Yourself Inductive Bible Study series, created for the preteen student, is designed to challenge young minds with the truth of God's Word. This series teaches the child good principles of study which will enhance both his spiritual life and his studies at school. Discover 4 Yourself takes the boredom out of Bible study and leaves 8- to 12-year-olds asking for more. It is ideal for homeschoolers. (Please remember that these age recommendations are not "law." Because children's reading skills and maturity vary, your child might be ready for these books at a younger age, or you might find them useful for 13-year-olds.)

There are no lectures available for this series; however, we have an audio seminar and a training workshop on how to teach/use this series in Sunday school/group settings.

Teachers' guides are available for Christian school and homeschool use.

## **BEGINNER INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY**

This is an all-new study series for beginning readers ages 4-7 by Janna Arndt and Kay Arthur. Each book is designed to help children build a familiarity with and love for God's Word at an early age.

Kids will have a blast following the many adventures of Cooper and Callie and their faithful canine companion Kate as they go on a quest for Bible knowledge. This unique series makes use of all learning styles—visual, auditory, read-write, and kinesthetic—to create a fun and memorable experience for every child.

The first book in this series is *Who Created It?*

There are no lectures for this series.

# Bible Study Formats

Formats	Personal Study Time Per Week	Discussion	Lecture	Training for Leaders
<b>Precept Upon Precept</b>	5 hours	1 hour	(optional) 1 hour	Required
<b>In &amp; Out</b>	1-3 hours	1 hour	(optional) 1 hour	Not required but helpful
<b>New Inductive Study</b>	1-3 hours	1/2-1 hour	No lectures except <i>Free from Bondage God's Way</i>	Not required but helpful
<b>40-Minute Studies</b>	None	40 minutes	None	Not required but helpful
<b>Sweeter Than Chocolate</b>	1-5 hours	1 hour	Check <a href="http://www.pamgillaspie.com">www.pamgillaspie.com</a> for online studies/videos	None
<b>Precept for Life</b>	1 hours	1 hour	30 minute per program	None
<b>"Lord" Series</b>	1-3 hour depending on book	1 hour	(optional) 1 hour for most books	None
<b>Cookies On the Lower Shelf</b>	1-5 hours	1 hour	Check <a href="http://www.pamgillaspie.com">www.pamgillaspie.com</a> for online studies/videos	None
<b>Inductive Bible Study Curriculum</b>	4 hours	1 hour	None	None available at this time
<b>Discover 4 Yourself</b>	2-3 hours	optional	None	Not required but helpful
<b>Beginner Inductive Bible Study</b>	??	optional	None	None available at this time

# Getting a Group Started

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Beginning a Precept Bible study group has the potential of being one of your most spiritually profitable undertakings. Preliminary preparation is a key factor to beginning a productive time of study and growth, and it is never too soon to start considering the specific steps to take in order to be ready.

These guidelines can be used for any Precept Bible study series.

## **CHARTING YOUR COURSE**

Choose an appropriate course for your group. You should consider the doctrinal content and the appropriateness of the message of the course to the particular needs of your area, group, and time. Ask the Lord for direction as you seek to know what topic or book of the Bible should be studied next in order to make your group effective servants. As you plan for your group, pray that God will bring together those who are to study this course with you.

For course descriptions, possible course sequence, and what to study go to:

*[preceptministries.ca](http://preceptministries.ca)*

## **NEW GROUPS WITH NEW LEADERS**

We recommend that new groups begin with one of our easier Bible studies. If your group is new to Precept Bible study, we suggest beginning with one of the following:

- *Teach Me to Study the Bible in 28 Days*
- *40-Minute Bible studies*
- *The New Inductive Study Series*

We suggest that new Precept Upon Precept groups with new leaders might begin with:

Genesis Parts 1–5

*Part 1: The Creation* (four lessons)

*Part 2: The Fall, the Flood, and the Nations* (seven lessons)

*Part 3: Becoming a Friend of the Faithful God: A Study on Abraham* (six lessons)

*Part 4: Wrestling with God: A Study on Isaac, Jacob, and Esau* (four lessons)

*Part 5: Keeping Your Focus When Your Dreams Are Shattered: A Study on Joseph* (four lessons)

*Titus, Developing Character and Integrity in the Midst of a Society Which Has Lost Respect for God* (three lessons)

## **ENLISTING THE STUDENTS**

About **two months before your course begins**, start to generate interest for your study. Several Precept students could give testimonies of the effect that Bible study has had in their lives. Determine the schedule (starting and finishing dates, allowing for holidays, and time of day), and begin to talk with those who you think would be interested.

### **Pray**

The most effective way to draw students is by prayer, asking the Lord to bring the ones He desires to study with you.

Enlist others to pray with you—for you and for the group.

### **Start Small**

Perhaps you know of two or three people who want to study the Bible. Begin with them. You can have a wonderful learning time together and trust the Lord to increase the number of students as He wills.

## **CHOOSING YOUR MEETING LOCATION**

Choose a place for your group to meet. If you will be meeting in a church or other public facility, make the necessary prearrangements for use of the building and nursery if you need one.

### **Churches**

Church buildings are usually the most ideal locations for Precept groups; they are often centrally located to the students' homes and have classroom and nursery facilities. Having a nursery facility can increase the possibility of those with children being able to attend your study.

If the study is to be held at a local church, you will need to obtain permission from the pastor or ruling body of leaders. You may also wish to invite the pastor or other church representative to welcome the group on the first week if possible.

### **Homes**

Meeting in a home is another option which works well with smaller groups.

### **Other Venues**

Another possibility is the workplace, reaching out to coworkers. Think creatively! Coffee house, gym...we once had a group in the Pentagon!!

## **COMPLETING THE PREPARATIONS**

### **Substitute Leader**

Recruit a substitute leader. A substitute leader is a group member who leads the discussion in the event of the leader's absence. This is also a good way to encourage and raise up new leaders for other Precept Bible study groups. Training is not required for a substitute leader, but is strongly recommended.

### **Registration**

Set up or recruit someone else to set up an organized system for registering people who want to be a part of your group. This will help you decide on how many books to order.

## **Administrator**

We recommend you delegate the administrative duties of your group advertising, registration, ordering materials, making name tags, and setting up the room each week.

## **LISTING YOUR BIBLE STUDY CLASS ON THE WEBSITE**

Go to [www.preceptministries.ca](http://www.preceptministries.ca) to list your Bible study class information.

## **PLACING YOUR ORDER FOR MATERIALS**

**Three to four weeks before your study begins**, order your materials. If you have preregistered your students, placing your order will be a simple task.

### **Ordering Workbooks**

To place an order for Canada, please go to [www.preceptministries.ca](http://www.preceptministries.ca) or call 877.234.2030 for Precept Ministries Canada.

Students who join the group late may order online or call the Customer Service Department and use MasterCard, VISA, or American Express, to order a book.

The first lesson of each Precept Upon Precept and In & Out course is available as a free download on the Precept website ([www.preceptministries.ca](http://www.preceptministries.ca)) and can be printed for late registrants who have not yet received their books.

To place a USA order, visit [shop.precept.org](http://shop.precept.org), or call 1.800.763.8280.

To inquire about books in other languages, call 1.877.234.2030.

### **Ordering video and audio lectures**

**Audio and/or video lectures** can be purchased for your group.

You or those in your group can purchase a set of audio or video lectures by Kay Arthur or a male teacher. Individual audio lectures and sets may be purchased online. Videos present the lecture material best and contribute the most to the group's learning. Video lectures are available only on DVD.



## Downloading Leader Materials

*preceptministries.ca/leader-connect*

### Precept Upon Precept Leader Guides

We recommend new Precept Upon Precept leaders use the leader guides as their lesson plan and that all leaders use them in their lesson preparation. Leader guides may be downloaded free from *preceptministries.ca* or a printed copy can be purchased from the E-store.

### Certificates

Certificates of completion for a course can be downloaded at:  
*preceptministries.ca*.

### Receiving Your Order

For best results **include a phone number and/or email address** where you may be reached during the day so that any questions concerning your order might be answered and your order quickly expedited.

All materials are shipped Canada Post within Canada. You will receive an email with the Canada Post tracking information.

**Double-check** your order when you receive it and call us **immediately** if there is a problem. This will enable us to quickly respond to any questions you have and send replacements if necessary.

### Returning Materials

If for some reason you must return the materials you ordered, please follow the guidelines listed below. If you have questions, please call Customer Service at **877.234.2030** Monday through Friday 9 am–5 pm Eastern Time or email us at *info@preceptministries.ca*

1. Materials returned for credit in new and excellent condition and received within 90 days of the original invoice date will receive a full refund. Materials which are damaged or marked will not receive a refund. (See item # 5 below concerning damaged or defective materials you received.) **If materials are received after this 90-day grace period or become obsolete in the interim, no credit will be issued. No credit will be issued for returned items from which you have removed the shrink wrap or have broken the seal (DVD and CD sets).**

2. Call or email the Customer Service Department of Precept Ministries Canada to obtain a Returned Authorization Number (RA #). Write this RA # on a copy of your original invoice. **No credit will be issued on materials received without an enclosed RA #.** Please enclose a copy of the original invoice and/or packing slip including the RA # and a note stating the reason for the return.

3. **CANADIAN CUSTOMERS** must package materials carefully and return them using a shipping method, that allows for package tracking, to:

**Precept Ministries Canada  
61 Sherwood Dr  
Brantford, ON N3T 1N3**

**Items purchased from the U.S or other international offices should be returned to the respective office.**

4. We will not give credit if merchandise is damaged due to inadequate packing by the customer, so it is very important that you prevent damage to the merchandise during shipment. When packing your merchandise, carefully stack all materials flat and include enough packing material so the merchandise is secure in the box and does not shift during shipment.

5. If you receive *defective* materials (missing or cut pages, etc.), please advise us, and we will replace them. A Customer Service representative will advise you whether the defective item should be returned to us.

6. If we have shipped *incorrect* items, please let us know. We will issue a return shipping label and promptly ship the correct items to you. Please repack items in their original box, when you receive the return shipping label, affix to the box and drop it off at your nearest Canada Post outlet.

If you have additional questions, please call our Customer Service team at 877.234.2030, Monday through Friday 9 am–5 pm ET.

# Qualifying To Lead

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**Note: This section is specific to Precept Upon Precept Studies**

## **EXAMINE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS**

Not everyone should be a Bible study leader; there, you should examine your qualification. Before one can successfully lead a Bible study, there are certain qualities that must be evident. Please read the following qualifications carefully, and then prayerfully examine yourself in light of each one.

### **Demonstrate that Jesus Christ is Your Lord and Savior**

By “Lord” we mean acknowledging that Jesus Christ is God and, because He is God, seeking to walk in submission to His will. By “Savior” we mean that there is salvation in no other. All have sinned; and there is no salvation from sin’s penalty, sin’s power, or (someday) sin’s presence apart from trusting in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins and in His resurrection from the dead for our justification.

### **Not Be a New Convert**

This qualification is not intended to discourage Christians who are young in the faith from taking responsibility, but rather it is an exhortation to temper zeal with knowledge and wisdom before assuming leadership. Allowing oneself time to mature in the faith is a valuable and necessary step toward becoming an effective leader (1 Timothy 3:6).

### **Have a Speaking Gift**

First Corinthians 12 says that God gives all believers spiritual gifts to equip them for the ministry He gives them. First Peter 4:10-11 categorizes spiritual gifts into two groups: speaking and serving. Leading a Bible study discussion involves speaking, so effective Bible study leaders have a speaking gift.

One of the ways God leads us in ministry is by His equipping. It's necessary that discussion group leaders have one of the following speaking gifts.

1. **Teaching:** The God-given ability to clearly communicate God's Word so that others understand it (Romans 12:7).
2. **Pastor-teacher:** The God-given ability to shepherd and to teach (Ephesians 4:11).
3. **Exhortation:** The God-given ability to encourage and motivate (lit., to call to the side) believers so that they follow the Lord, obey His Word (Romans 12:8).
4. **Prophecy:** The God-given ability to speak forth a message from God's Word which edifies, exhorts, and/or comforts the body (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 14; Ephesians 4:11).
5. **Leadership:** The God-given ability to lead (lit., stand before) others so that they follow (Romans 12:8).

### **Know That God Has Called You To Precept Bible Study Leadership**

Spiritual service should result from a believer's response to the call of God on his life, not from a believer's sense of duty, nor to resolve a "need" in your own life.

### **Agree With The Doctrinal Statement**

We ask that leaders agree with the following Doctrinal Statement, which is the common ground on which we ask our leaders to stand. Disagreement over doctrines not mentioned here are accepted without breaking fellowship.

## **PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

Our doctrinal statement summarizes biblical truth that historically and doctrinally has been regarded as essential to the Christian faith. We ask that all of our leaders be in full agreement with this statement.

### **The Scriptures**

We believe (a) in the plenary verbal inspiration of the Word of God, and (b) that both the Old and New Testaments are inerrant in the original writings and are the supreme and final authority for faith and life.

### **The Godhead**

We believe the Godhead exists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three Persons are one God having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections.

### **The Lord Jesus Christ**

We believe in (a) His eternal existence as God, (b) His Incarnation and Virgin Birth, (c) His death on the cross as the substitutionary atonement for sin, (d) His literal, bodily resurrection from the dead, (e) His present ministry of intercession in heaven, and (f) His personal, future return to earth.

### **The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, convicts men of sin, regenerates, baptizes, indwells, seals, and sets apart believers unto a holy life; that He keeps and empowers believers day by day; that He is the Teacher of the Word of God and the Guide for daily living.

### **Man**

We believe that (a) man was created innocent and pure, and (b) Adam fell through the sin of disobedience. Therefore, (c) all men are corrupted in body, soul, and spirit; and (d) all men need redemption.

## **Salvation**

We believe that (a) salvation is by grace, a free gift of God apart from works, (b) salvation involves repentance, a change of mind in respect to God and thus turning from one's own way to God's way, (c) salvation is through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, (d) all who receive Jesus Christ are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become the children of God, and (e) true salvation will be manifested by a changed life.

## **The Future**

We believe (a) in the personal, visible, bodily return of Jesus Christ to earth, (b) in the bodily resurrection of the just to the eternal abode in the glory of God's presence, and (c) in the bodily resurrection of the unjust to judgment and everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.

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## **Give The Home God's Priority**

God's primary priority for husbands, wives, and parents is the home. Precept Bible study leadership should never be a threat or source of contention in the home.

A married woman must have her husband's permission and wholehearted support in order to assume leadership (Ephesians 5:22, 24).

A married man should have his wife's wholehearted agreement that this leadership position is what God wants for him (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Timothy 3:4, 5).

## **Regularly Attend and Support a Local Church**

One purpose of our study is to equip the saints to more effectively serve in the church. Active participation in the life of a local church is not only an essential act of obedience on the part of the leader (Hebrews 10:25), but it is also necessary for the welfare of the group.

God has ordained Precept Bible studies to work through local congregations. Therefore, it is the purpose of Precept Ministries International to support the local church. Never is it our intention to usurp the authority of the pastors, elders, or leaders of the church; nor to cause people to sit in judgment or withdraw from serving/ministering to and with their church.

### **Be Committed to Weekly Preparation**

The leader must diligently study the Word of God for himself if he is to be equipped to lead those in his discussion group. Each leader is responsible not only to be a diligent student of the Word but also to have a teachable spirit. The leader's thorough preparation will give him the confidence to lead so that both understanding and application are discussed.

### **Follow the Format**

The leader should be fully committed to following Precept Ministries International's inductive Bible study format: study time before discussion and discussion before lecture.

## **APPLICATION FOR PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT LEADER TRAINING**

Training is required for all Precept Upon Precept discussion group leaders. (This is not required for leading other studies, such as the "Lord" Series, In & Out Series, NISS, Discover 4 Yourself, or 40-Minute Bible Studies, but would be helpful.)

### **Training to Lead a Precept Upon Precept Discussion Group**

Training for Precept Upon Precept discussion group leaders is free of charge. In order to attend training to be a Precept Upon Precept discussion group leader, go to *preceptministries.ca* where you will be directed through the application process. After completing the process, you will be sent a Precept Upon Precept course to complete prior to the training, which will be used during the training process.

In some locations, Precept Ministries Canada has qualified Coaches who train new leaders within the context of their weekly Precept class. If this is available in your area, we'll make you aware of this option.

## **PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT ENTRUST COACH**

A coach is an experienced Precept Upon Precept leader who has been trained and commissioned by Precept to raise up other PUP leaders. The coach uses a weekly PUP course discussion for training potential PUP leaders.

### **Process for Becoming a Coach**

The process for becoming a Precept Entrust coach:

1. Recommendation by Precept Entrust coach or staff
2. Trained at the Precept Training Centre in Brantford, ON or another location set by Precept staff. Training includes an evaluation of leading a PUP discussion.
3. Commissioned by Precept staff



# Leading Precept Upon Precept Discussions

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## **BEGINNING THE COURSE—TEACH YOUR GROUP HOW TO STUDY LESSON 1**

Meet with your group one week prior to the first discussion.

This can initiate a successful start.

### **GETTING STARTED**

Begin with prayer.

Register any latecomers and hand out workbooks.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Announce the course schedule, including information regarding holidays, the finishing date, and what to do in the event of prohibitive weather. Also, be sure everyone is aware of the location of rest rooms, telephone, nursery provisions, coffee and refreshments, and any specifics pertaining to parking, equipment use, or the building.

### **SHOW YOUR GROUP HOW TO DO THE FIRST LESSON**

The focus of this time is to help them start Lesson 1 so they can complete the lesson. It's also a refresher for those who are familiar with the skills. Everyone leaves with part of the homework completed and new students have confidence they can complete the lesson on their own. Your group should leave excited about what the Lord will teach them as they study His Word!

Each one will need a workbook and colored pens or pencils. You might have a few sets of inexpensive colored pencils to lend to anyone who did not bring some.

**CAUTION:** Do not try to teach the entire *How to Study Your Bible* method. Focus on making sure they know how to do the assignments in Lesson 1 only. Teach them how to do each type of skill in that lesson, such as marking, listing, cross-references, chapter themes, etc.

After prayer, welcome the group. Then briefly explain the **Precept Upon Precept**

**Format:**

**Homework**—Complete the lesson prior to the discussion

**Group discussion**—The leader asks questions for the group to discuss what they learned from studying the lesson.

**Optional lecture** (video or audio)—The lectures expand on what was studied in the lesson.

Very briefly tell about the **Precept Bible Study Method:**

The Bible is our primary source for study. We'll look at what the Bible says first before going to commentaries or other resources.

**Workbook**—Acquaint the group with their workbooks.

- **Table of Contents**—As each lesson refers to certain charts, maps, or the Observation Worksheet, you can find the page number in the Table of Contents.
- **Lesson 1, page 1**—“This Lesson Incorporates”—Items needed to complete the lesson which are not found in the lesson.
- **Day One, etc.**—Each lesson is divided into five days of homework, approximately one hour per day.

## **HOMEWORK**

Get the group started on Lesson 1. As you do some of the homework together, be careful that you don't start discussing what they learn. Remind them they'll discuss the lesson next week.

Read the bold Introduction on the first page of the lesson.

Continue reading the assignments. For each type of assignment, stop and complete all or part of the assignment, depending on time.

For example,

- If the assignment is to read
  - one chapter and mark certain words, give them suggestions how they might mark the words. Then read the text or part of it aloud, and encourage the group to say aloud the words they need to mark. When they say a word aloud, give them a few seconds to mark it.
  - an entire book, read one or two chapters for them to mark. Tell them to finish at home.
- If the assignment is to make a list on a word marked, begin the list together. After you've listed several facts together, give them an opportunity to continue adding to the list. Then let them share what they've added to their list and encourage them to finish the list during the week.
- Be sure to help them begin each type of assignment so they know how to complete the homework.
  - If there are cross-references, do one or two with them.
  - If there is a map, help them find the first place or two they are to look for.
  - If they will be using a timeline, briefly go through what's on it to make sure they understand it.
- If they are to summarize a paragraph, do one or two with them or maybe all the paragraphs in the first chapter.
- If they are to summarize a chapter, help them summarize the chapter you've been working on if you've spent enough time in the chapter to do this.
- Cover as much of the homework as you have time to do with them, and be sure to ask if they have any questions.

**Further help**—If possible, give the group your contact information and that of one or two in the group who can help with questions.

**Let your group know that for each lesson they will complete their study on their own. The class time will be a discussion of what they learned from the lesson.**

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR LEADING DISCUSSIONS

### PERSONAL STUDY

Be sure you thoroughly study the lesson you'll be leading. Study to the point that you understand the whole lesson, what's covered in it, how the parts fit together, the main truths, how the study relates to life, and how to bring out life-changing application in the discussion.

This doesn't necessarily mean you'll understand every detail of every lesson, but you'll know enough to effectively lead a discussion about it.

The time you spend studying your Bible lessons is serving or ministering to other believers. Studying until you "get it" is time spent in ministry. So study well to serve those who are in your Bible study group.

### PRAYER

None of us truly understands God's words of life apart from God Himself. Spiritual truth is spiritually discerned—God the Holy Spirit gives us understanding.

So you need to pray when you study each part of the Bible lesson—before, during, and after. Ask God for understanding as you begin your study, during your study, and in how to live it out after you've studied.

You also need to pray for those in your Bible study. Pray that they won't get weary and lose heart. Pray that they'll be excited about what they learn from God's Word.

Colossians 1:9-12 is good to pray for those studying the Bible. You might pray this for yourself and your group.

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

#### **Colossians 1:9-12**

So pray for your group to understand what they study, and pray that you lead the discussions effectively.

## **SETTING THE GROUP ATMOSPHERE**

The people in the discussion group need to sense an excitement about what they're learning from God's Word, and they need to feel comfortable to participate in the discussion.

There are several ways you can set this atmosphere.

- Focus on your group's learning, not your leading. Let them know through encouragement that you're excited when they learn together and discuss the Bible.
- They should know you care about what they say and what they learn. They should feel free to answer questions or even ask them—to think out loud together.
- If you're sufficiently prepared, then you're free in the discussion to focus on those in the group.
- Maintain eye contact with individuals as much as possible. This helps them personalize what you say, and it helps you see where they are in their understanding. If you see that something isn't clear, then it probably needs to be repeated or restated.
- Be aware of your facial expression. It can communicate satisfaction or displeasure.
- Don't call on people unless it's obvious they want to say something. A few in your group might not want to speak, and that's OK. Don't try to force them to; just let them learn from what others in the group say. But help your group to feel relaxed so that they want to participate. If you don't call on people, then they won't be wondering when you'll call on them, and they can concentrate on the flow of thought in the discussion.

You set the atmosphere in the first several discussions, and then your group knows what to expect when they get together. They'll focus on talking about what they've learned.

## **ASKING QUESTIONS**

Discussion questions are based on the 5 Ws and H kinds of questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Ask these questions about the lesson your group studied so the discussion is focused on what they studied.

To lead your discussion in a logical order, you will need to ask questions in a logical sequence. The Leader Guide gives you an order and questions for each discussion.

### **Beginning Questions**

To begin your discussion, ask simple questions that have obvious or easy answers. Simple questions to begin the discussion set a comfortable tone, and sometimes most of the group will answer together.

It might take about five minutes or so for your group to get acclimated to the discussion.

### **Questions That Generate Discussion**

The Leader Guide gives questions that are easily understood by your group. Long and complicated questions usually produce stares. Simple is better.

These questions allow for more than one-word answers. Let your group expand on the information, not just give short, fill-in-the-blank answers. Asking general questions about what your group learned will usually generate discussion better than asking a lot of specific questions with short answers. Too many questions become a “drill.” Ask just enough questions to encourage your group to discuss what they have learned and to think through how those truths relate to their lives.

Also, be sure to give your group time to think about how they’ll answer. Don’t rush their answers. And give time for more than one person to answer a question. This brings about good discussion. Be sure to pay close attention to what is said, because sometimes your next question will be based on a comment that was just made.

Encourage your group to “think aloud” together about the text. They need time to reflect on the meaning of the text and not rush too quickly to application.

## **Application Questions**

The Leader Guide gives application questions to help your group relate the truths to life.

Often application will come up during the discussion as your group talks about what they learned from the Bible and how it has meaning for their lives.

Sometimes application questions come as the Holy Spirit puts something on your heart during the discussion.

Occasionally short illustrations from your life are appropriate, but don't overdo it.

## **CROSS-REFERENCES**

The purpose of cross-references is to give further insight into the text being studied.

Let your group bring up what they learned from the cross-references that helps understanding of the main text. If they don't mention an important point from a cross-reference, you can ask a more direct question to get the necessary information. However, be careful not to try to make them observe everything you did. Also, don't bring in points that don't relate to the main text of the lesson.

## **WORD STUDIES**

As in English, Hebrew and Greek words many times have more than one meaning. Ask your group which definitions they found that fit the context of the verse being studied. How do they help with understanding the meaning of the verse or passage?

## **VISUAL AIDS**

The Leader Guide suggests simple visual aids that will help your group see the main points of a discussion, not just hear them. They usually are maps, diagrams, or charts from the lesson your group studied, simple drawings, or timelines.

Visual aids are to enhance your discussion, not become the focus. So simple visual aids are the best. Complicated visual aids can cause the leader to focus on the visual aid rather than the discussion.

Visual aids that you've "pre-prepared" should not be used. By "pre-prepared" we mean a list you've written on the board prior to the discussion or a PowerPoint "production" that you've created ahead of time. These can stifle the discussion flow rather than promote freely sharing what the group learned as they studied.

## HANDLING DIFFICULTIES

Sometimes discussions don't go the way you planned. Here are some difficulties that might arise and tips on how to handle them.

**What do you do if you ask a question and no one says anything?** First, be sure that you've given ample time for your group to think about the question. You can ask the question again. If there's no response the second time, then try restating the question in different words. Point your group to the verses or the part of the lesson where they can find the answer. But don't answer your own question; that doesn't produce discussion.

Sometimes there's the opposite problem in your discussion **when some people talk too much**. You can try to control this by beginning questions with, "Now, someone else..." Or if you usually stand when leading the discussion, just walk to the other side of the room. You can change the direction of your focus to another person. This problem can be tricky, and it's one of the times when you ask the Lord's wisdom while you're leading.

At the beginning of your Bible study course, you can tell the whole group that you hope they'll all participate in the discussion, but it's important that no one dominates so all have opportunity to discuss what they've learned. Then repeat this for the next couple of discussions.

Another common problem you might encounter is **a person in your group who wants to wander away from what the lesson is about**. You need to keep the discussion focused on the lesson the whole group studied. Sometimes just saying something like, "Now, let's get back to..." takes care of this problem. If you clearly state at the beginning of your course that the discussions will only be on what was studied by the group, and repeat this a few times during the course, then this may help.

Our last common problem is **wrong answers**. What do you do when this happens and it's very obvious? You can ask what someone else in the group thinks. If the correct answer is given, the problem is solved. If it's a minor error, don't comment and move to the next point in your discussion. There's probably a point later in the discussion when the answer to a question will correct the error without embarrassing the one who said it.



Sometimes you have to take the group to the exact Scripture reference and ask questions to reason through the text so the error is recognized. Other times, you have to let someone disagree, but in kindness.

When there is disagreement with the emphasis or the interpretation of the material, maintain the unity of the Spirit by focusing on God's Word in the spirit of humility. This is characterized by the ability to disagree and still walk in love and peace. This is maturity.

*Our prayer for you is that you become the Bible study discussion leader God intends for you to be. We all learn by doing, so don't get discouraged if you don't think you're where you should be yet. Keep practicing, and you'll get better at this.*

## GENERAL ELEMENTS IN PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT LEADER GUIDES

### LESSON EMPHASIS

The lesson emphasis is given for the leader's information—to help the leader focus the discussion on what is emphasized in the lesson.

### LOGICAL DISCUSSION ORDER

The most logical order is usually

- chapter by chapter (for an overview lesson or history books)
- verse order of the main text (for other types of lessons)

**Cross-references** and **word studies** are discussed at relevant points.

**Application** is discussed throughout the lesson, wherever relevant.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**5 Ws and an H** questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how

**Review questions** are first in Leader Guides, except for Lesson 1.

Answers or reasoning are indented under the suggested questions.

The indented information is what a group will usually answer from a specific question. But there is more in the Leader Guide than some groups will answer. The Leader should not ask questions until all of the information is given or teach that material.

### A VISUAL AID

*Simple* visual aids are suggested for use during the discussion. Visual aids from the lesson are best.

Examples:

maps, drawings or diagrams, time lines, charts or lists, body language

## USING THE LEADER GUIDE FOR IN & OUT BIBLE STUDIES

Because In & Out Bible Studies are a shortened form of the Precept Upon Precept studies, students with both types of books can be in the same discussion group.

### **For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out**

Since the In & Out assignments have been taken from the PUP lessons, you can discuss what both PUP and In & Out students studied. Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion.

Be aware of what is and is not in the In & Out workbook.

- You may want to purchase an In & Out workbook, or prior to the beginning of the course, you might borrow one from a student and compare each of the PUP and In & Out lessons.
- Make notes in the margin of your PUP workbook or the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out workbook.

During the discussion:

- Tell your group when an assignment you're asking about is not in In & Out.
- If there will be lengthy discussion of a cross-reference not in In & Out, give the reference and encourage those studying In & Out to turn there and follow along.
- As needed, direct your group to the page numbers in both PUP and In & Out, such as charts, cross-references, word studies, etc.

### **When your entire group uses In & Out**

The purpose of the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned from their study.

The Leader Guides can be used for both PUP and In & Out studies.

- Go through the Leader Guide to identify the parts that relate to assignments in In & Out.
- Then use that as a guide for leading a discussion on the In & Out lesson.

**CAUTION:** Refrain from teaching what your group didn't study and from spending discussion time looking up cross-references not in the In & Out workbook. Instead, ask your group about what they studied in their In & Out lesson.

## DISCIPLING YOUR GROUP THROUGH THE DISCUSSION

A disciple is one who learns from another, who follows another's teaching. Being Jesus' disciple is a biblical role for all believers and is the goal of Bible study. Your goal in leading an effective Bible study discussion is that each one in your group learns God's Word and follows Him.

### YOUR EXAMPLE

Your example of following Christ should be evident for them to follow. In Philippians 3:17, Paul said, "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us." Paul was following Christ and called others to follow him.

As a leader, you should demonstrate Christlikeness so that others can follow you—lifestyle as well as teaching. Lead them to follow Him. You don't want your group to follow you in immaturity, but rather to follow your example to become mature believers.

<sup>1</sup>And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to *receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup>for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not *mere* men? <sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. <sup>7</sup>So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

#### **1 Corinthians 3:1-7**

The problem with the believers in Corinth was jealousy, strife, "I am of . . ."

Paul and Apollos were servants (verse 5). Precept leaders are servants and, through the Word, encourage others on to maturity.

## YOUR DISCUSSION PURPOSE

It's important to understand that because your role is to make disciples, you're not merely facilitating a discussion. A facilitator just keeps a discussion going, but a Precept Bible Study leader leads the discussion by having a goal and a plan to direct and disciple the group.

The Word is the basis of your discussion.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

Help your group “reason the Scriptures” with each other. This term “reason the Scriptures” is from Acts where Paul reasoned the Scriptures with several groups of people. “Reason the Scriptures” means you ask questions to make your group think about what they're learning. Just keeping a discussion moving is not helping your group “reason the Scriptures.”

If you're going to help your group reason together what they studied, then you shouldn't lecture or teach during the discussion time. Beware of teaching what you, the leader, learned from your study instead of asking questions and giving time for your group to discuss what they learned. If you do most of the talking during your discussion time or if you're introducing information not in the lesson, then you're teaching.

Remember, Precept studies are inductive—the Bible is our primary source for study. The group studied inductively as they did their homework. Now it's time for them to reason the Scriptures together. If you teach, the discussion is no longer inductive for them.

Also, refrain from trying to make them observe or understand everything you did. We grow in our understanding of God's Word one step at a time. Don't feel they have to know all that you know right now.

If you have the spiritual gift of teaching, you enjoy teaching and need to guard against lecturing, against dominating the time by sharing what you learned. This is what many students expect from a Bible study leader, because it's what they're used to. They'll ask you questions and expect you to answer them. But the goal is for *them* to discuss what *they* learned from their study.