



**SPRING  
2009**

# COMMUNITY GROUPS

**GPS**  
navigation for life

**GPS: 40 Days of Spiritual Growth**

# WELCOME TO SMALL GROUPS AT BETHLEHEM CHURCH!

You are in for an exciting journey in “GPS: Navigation for Life”.

Your group will meet for 6 sessions and will experience 3 elements of group life in varying degrees each week.

**PRAYER**—time to hear requests from each other and also some time to pray for each other.

**BIBLE STUDY**—God has given us a handbook for life and we can understand it more and apply it better when we discuss it with friends.

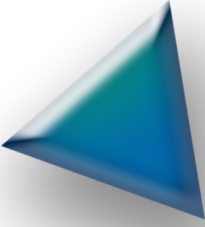
**Fellowship**—God wants us to have meaningful relationships and we believe this can best happen when you move from the large group setting on campus to a small group setting with friends.

Those 3 elements drive our small group ministry, and your group leader has the flexibility to sense the needs of your group each time you meet. A good balance of those 3 will strengthen the relationships in your group and create an environment that promotes spiritual growth in each person.

[www.Bethlehembc.com](http://www.Bethlehembc.com)  
[www.Bethlehemtoolbox.com](http://www.Bethlehemtoolbox.com)

WELCOME!





The goal of GPS is that you would learn how to better study the Bible and apply it into your life.

- #1 Why study the Bible
- #2 How to study the Bible
- #3 When to study the Bible
- #4 How Jesus used the Bible in His ministry
- #5 How to apply the Bible
- #6 Feeding yourself

**MISSION PROJECT for each GPS Community Group:** “Hope for Gaston” on Saturday, May 2. Bethlehem will partner with area churches and other organizations to share God’s unending love with many vulnerable citizens in our community. You can help by volunteering your time and treasure for this great event.

**Areas of Need**

- painting, landscaping, minor carpentry, etc. (bring your ladders, rakes, shovels, etc. with you)
- separate materials into pallets for each home early that morning and help load the trucks for the individual homes.
- box up and distribute food for the families.
- register the families coming to the Angel Food Distribution site
- work at the block party or serve a hotdog lunch that day
- man the blow up games, do face painting, and generally love on the community participants
- prepare and serve the food, clean up, pour drinks, etc.

Sign-up in the lobby or in your bulletin insert on Sunday!

Icebreaker & Social Time

10-30 minutes

- Spend time talking informally, either as one group or with people breaking off into natural smaller groups
- Then come back together as a group and give everyone a chance to respond to the icebreaker question.

Icebreaker: What is the scariest thing that ever happened to you on a trip?

**Week 1: WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO STUDY THE BIBLE?  
DVD TEACHING (10 MINUTES)**

God wants us to **study** the road map He made for us!!  
—2 Timothy 2:15

God wants to give us **directions** and **hope** for our “life trip”.  
—1 John 3:1-3

God wants us to study the Bible so we **know Him** better and **become more like Him**.  
—Psalm 119:9-16

GOD WANTS US TO STUDY

## Week 1: WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO STUDY THE BIBLE? GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Have everyone pull out their HammerTime card and be prepared to discuss what they are learning this week.*

When it comes to going on a trip, do you use any of these tools?

- Study a map
- Plug info into a GPS
- Call a friend for help
- Just head in the right direction and figure it out on the way

**Read through 2 Timothy 2:15 and consider the following questions:**

- **Since God considers you a workman, how are you doing on your job?**
- **What is your job, as God would see it?**
- **What would it be like to “correctly handle the word of truth”?**

In times that you have studied your bible (recently or in the past), what are some things that God has revealed to you?

Read through Psalm 119:9-16 and discuss that passage, especially verse 11.

### HammerTime & Application

10 minutes

- Give people a chance to talk about how the experience of completing the HammerTime card has gone, especially if they worked on it as a family.
- Talk about what some real-life application might be from this week’s topic—give people in the group a chance to give their thoughts on applications for themselves.

### Prayer Requests

10 minutes

- Have everyone turn in their study guides to the pages with room to write prayer requests. Go around the room and let people share their prayer needs and group members are encouraged to write down those needs.
- Have one person in the group (who is comfortable praying out loud) to close the group in prayer.

### Icebreaker & Social Time

10-30 minutes

- Spend time talking informally, either as one group or with people breaking off into natural smaller groups
- Then come back together as a group and give everyone a chance to respond to the icebreaker question.

Icebreaker: Have you ever had a trip where you really got lost? Describe all the entertaining details. OR Describe something you learned (or tried to learn) through lessons, classes, etc.: e.g., guitar, karate, foreign language, painting, etc.

## Week 2: HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE DVD TEACHING (10 MINUTES)

### Create the environment.

- Time of day
- Location
- Tools: Bible, notebook/pen, concordance, study guide; Bethlehem tools: HammerTime card, reading plan
- Start with prayer—that God would teach you what He wants you to learn.

### Have a system or game plan.

- Study a book of the Bible (ex. one of the gospels - Philippians, Ephesians, Timothy, James, Nehemiah, Genesis, etc.)
  - Verse by verse
  - Chapter at a time (Proverbs, Psalms)
  - Process for studying:
    - ◆ Read the section.
    - ◆ Re-read and underline or write down main points in notebook.
    - ◆ Think carefully about “key for me”.
    - ◆ Pray about applying that key.
- Study a character trait: ex. anxiety, courage, love, patience, etc.
  - Process for studying:
    - ◆ Use concordance, web search or study guide.
    - ◆ Look up verses.
    - ◆ Underline (with notes?) and/or write in journal.
    - ◆ Write out daily the “key for me”.
- Focus on one person to study: ex. Joseph, Esther, David, Mary, Peter, etc (same process as “character trait”).
- Choose a particular topic: ex. finding a purpose in life, parenting, finances, etc. (same process as “other studies”).

### Apply it daily.

## Week 2: HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

### GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Have everyone pull out their HammerTime card and be prepared to discuss what they are learning this week.*

When you think about spending time with God, do you have a good place to meet? Do you have the right tools to be best prepared to study your bible and hear from God? Discuss those details.

***Turn to Ephesians 4 and have someone read verses 25-32 out loud. Take 5 minutes and have everyone on their own note main points (either underline in your bible or jot notes in this study guide). Have each person write down a "key for me" and then go around the room and discuss those keys.***

Discuss if anyone in the group has any other study methods they have benefitted from.

Use a concordance, web search or the verses listed below this question to do a word study on "courage" or similar terms (e.g., bravery, nerve, fearlessness). Also, you can use opposites of courage (e.g., cowardice, fear, timidity, etc.). Assign one verse to each person and have each person read their verse out loud. When finished, go around the room and have each person pick a verse that stands out to them or if they have a clear "key for me".

Courage verses:

- Deuteronomy 31:6
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- Isaiah 35:4
- Psalm 91:5, 11-12, 14
- John 16:33

HammerTime & Application

10 minutes

- Give people a chance to talk about how the experience of completing the HammerTime card has gone, especially if they worked on it as a family.
- Talk about what some real-life application might be from this week's topic—give people in the group a chance to give their thoughts on applications for themselves.

Prayer Requests

10 minutes

- Have everyone turn in their study guides to the pages with room to write prayer requests. Go around the room and let people share their prayer needs and group members are encouraged to write down those needs.
- Have one person in the group (who is comfortable praying out loud) to close the group in prayer.

Icebreaker & Social Time

10-30 minutes

- Spend time talking informally, either as one group or with people breaking off into natural smaller groups
- Then come back together as a group and give everyone a chance to respond to the icebreaker question.

Icebreaker: Do you have a preferred time to travel during the day? Why?  
What is the longest drive you have ever been on?

**Week 3: WHEN DOES GOD WANT US TO STUDY THE BIBLE?  
DVD TEACHING (10 MINUTES)**

Read the Bible **before you start the day's journey.**  
— **Joshua 1:8-9**

Read the Bible **to find answers for life.**  
— **1 John 5:13-15**

Read the Bible to **find strength for the journey of life.**  
— **Philippians 4:11-13**

WHEN DO I STUDY?

**Week 3: WHEN DOES GOD WANT US TO STUDY THE BIBLE?**  
**GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*Have everyone pull out their HammerTime card and be prepared to discuss what they are learning this week.*

For you personally, when is the best time for bible study? Morning, Lunch, Evening? Why?

**Read through Joshua 1:8-9 and discuss the following questions:**

**What do you think it means when it says “not depart from your mouth”?**

**How does God measure prosperity and success differently than the world measures those things?**

**How can we truly move from reading words about being courageous to actually living life with strength and courage?**

Do you write down your thoughts after reading your bible? How do you know what to write? Have someone in the group talk about the value they have found in using a journal in the time they spend with God.

Is there a particular time in your life where you felt God gave you strength to make it through a situation?

Do you read the Bible as often as you think you need too? What are some steps you can take to improve in that area?

**HammerTime & Application**

10 minutes

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Icebreaker & Social Time

10-30 minutes

- Spend time talking informally, either as one group or with people breaking off into natural smaller groups
- Then come back together as a group and give everyone a chance to respond to the icebreaker question.

Icebreaker: What do you think is the prettiest state in the United States?  
Which one do you think is the most interesting state? Why...

**Week 4: HOW DID JESUS USE THE SCRIPTURE IN HIS MINISTRY?  
DVD TEACHING (10 MINUTES)**

Jesus used scripture to resist temptation.

Jesus was confident of His position.

Jesus used God's authority to fight the devil.

— **Matthew 4:1-11**

No temptation can overtake our knowledge and obedience of God's word.

— **1 Corinthians 10:13**

— **James 4:7**

**Week 4: HOW JESUS USED THE BIBLE IN HIS MINISTRY**  
**GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*Have everyone pull out their HammerTime card and be prepared to discuss what they are learning this week.*

**Read Matthew 4:1-11 and discuss the following questions.**

**When experiencing temptation in your life; do you use scripture to help you think about something else? Explain some ways that you personally have done this.**

**When are you most susceptible to temptation in your life? Tired, hungry, alone, etc?**

**Do you think Jesus went through the same type of temptations we experience? How did He respond?**

How can you lessen the opportunities for temptation in your life?

Read these verses and discuss the lessons we can learn from them.

1 Corinthians 10:13

James 4:7

**HammerTime & Application**

10 minutes

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### Icebreaker & Social Time

10-30 minutes

- Spend time talking informally, either as one group or with people breaking off into natural smaller groups
- Then come back together as a group and give everyone a chance to respond to the icebreaker question.

Icebreaker: Talk about a time when you took on a great challenge and succeeded—when you had ideas/vision/goals and you actually applied yourself and did it (e.g., losing weight, starting a business, running a marathon, etc.).

## **Week 5: HOW TO APPLY THE BIBLE DVD TEACHING (10 MINUTES)**

### Desire

- John 3:30
- James 1:22-25—doing what we read about in the bible

Develop some habits that will help you live out God's Word every day

Remember or write down your "key for me"

Memorize scripture

by verse

by location of topic by chapter

Carry a bible with you

Tell others what you have learned

Meet with a small group and talk about what you are reading

Put yourself in the text

Ex. David and Goliath, Esther and Xerxes, Peter walking on water, etc.

This race is a marathon, not a sprint

Always taking the next step (Philippians 1:6)

Constantly becoming more like Jesus (John 3:30)

**Week 5: HOW TO APPLY THE BIBLE**  
**GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*Have everyone pull out their HammerTime card and be prepared to discuss what they are learning this week.*

**Discuss the habits of answer #2 from the DVD. What are some of the habits that you think would be helpful for you as you try to grow in the skill of applying God's Word?**

One of these key habits is memorizing, especially by chapter location. Have each person look up one of these listed below and explain what is a key topic from that passage or chapter. Encourage everyone to listen to each one read and pick 1 to focus on for the next week. At the next group meeting encourage people to say from memory the topic and its location.

Philippians 4:6-7  
Romans 8:38-39  
Joshua 1:9  
Ephesians 5:25

Isaiah 40:30-32  
Proverbs 3:5-6  
1 Peter 5:7  
Matthew 11:28

**HammerTime & Application**

10 minutes

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### Icebreaker & Social Time

10-30 minutes

- Spend time talking informally, either as one group or with people breaking off into natural smaller groups
- Then come back together as a group and give everyone a chance to respond to the icebreaker question.

Icebreaker: Have each person talk about what has stood out for them so far in the first 5 weeks of GPS: 1) Why study the Bible, 2) How to study the Bible, 3) When to study the Bible, 4) How Jesus applied the Bible, 5) How we apply the Bible.

## Week 6: FEEDING YOURSELF DVD TEACHING (10 MINUTES)

Know the directive from Jesus.

Transformation, not information

— Romans 12:1-2

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up . . . — 1 Corinthians 8:1

Know your enemy.

— 1 Peter 5:8—prowls like a lion

— Ephesians 6:12—not a physical fight, but a spiritual one

Stay focused on your target.

— Matthew 25:21

— Philippians 1:6

Watch out for valleys.

Tips to get out of valleys:

- Location change
- New study, new translation
- Read out loud
- Bible on CD or DVD

Give a man a fish . . . or teach him how to fish

— 2 Timothy 3:16-17

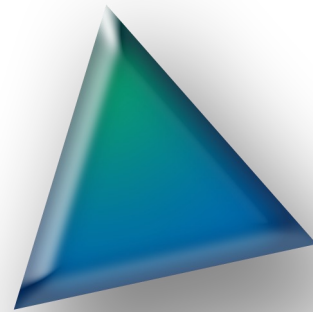
**Week 6: FEEDING YOURSELF**  
**GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*Have everyone pull out their HammerTime card and be prepared to discuss what they are learning this week.*

**Read Romans 12:1-2. What is the difference between gaining information and truly undergoing transformation? If you want to get direction in life (discern God's will) what does God want you to do with your mind and your body?**

Look at DVD answer #4 and talk about how you can get out of "valleys" or "ruts" in your spiritual walk. Do you think any of these will help? Do you have any others that have worked for you?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Talk about different "uses" for God's Word and what they can look like in your life today.



**HammerTime & Application**

**10 minutes**

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Check out the tools we have provided to help you out during GPS.

- **Sermon messages** from Pastor Dickie—these relevant messages will start our week off thinking about the topic.
- **DVD teachings** from a Bethlehem staff member—there will be some fellowship time to start your group, then you will watch the DVD (approx. 10 minutes) to learn more about the week's topic.
- **Group discussion questions**—group members will have a chance to talk through some thought provoking questions.
- **"HammerTime" card**—each member of the group has the opportunity to dig into the topic on their own and then with their family.
- **The Bethlehem Toolbox**—available in the bulletin each week or online at [www.bethlehemtoolbox.com](http://www.bethlehemtoolbox.com), this resource includes a blog and other "tools" that will help your whole family focus on the topic of the week.

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For more information about small groups or other ministries at Bethlehem, check out [www.Bethlehembc.com](http://www.Bethlehembc.com) or call us at 704.823.1600.

For more tools during the GPS series go to the Bethlehem small groups page or directly to [www.Bethlehemtoolbox.com](http://www.Bethlehemtoolbox.com).

Keep an eye out...

...upon the completion of GPS join us in "A Journey with Luke", as we spend the summer reading through the life of Jesus as told in the book of Luke. Over 400 reading plans already distributed—pick up your copy in the worship center lobby.

