

FOCUS Bible Study

Tough Questions



leader's guide

This is a leader's guide for the series of studies at Focus dealing with Tough Questions which people ask about Christianity. Please read this guide carefully as you prepare to lead your group discussions. Feel free to ask me questions about the studies if these instructions do not make sense. Ken.

Aim:

To help non Christians get some of their common questions answered.

To help Christians learn how to answer questions. I.e. Develop the right kinds of attitudes and basic tools for answering questions.

Here is an easy way to remember what to do when someone is confronted with a question.

ANSWER.

Ask God for wisdom (ie. pray).

Never be argumentative.

Show grace and respect

Work out why the question is being asked.

Explore the Bible with them.

Refer it back to Jesus

The Structure of this series.

This series tries to answer 5 common questions asked by Non Christians. These questions are usually stumbling blocks to faith and are related to each other. There is a certain logic to the questions.

1. Does God really exist?
2. Is the bible reliable?
3. Who is God?
4. Why does god allow suffering?
5. Did the resurrection of Jesus really happen?

We start with the question about God's existence. Most non believers (though not all) have trouble accepting God's existence. For them, God belongs in the realm of abstract ideas and opinions. There are no concrete evidences to show that God exists. So, the way we answer it is to go back to the Bible for our information about God. Although this doesn't give us concrete evidence about God's existence, the Bible sets our expectation about how God chooses to reveal himself to us. And so study #1 explores how God reveals himself to us. From study #1 we will learn that God's ultimate revelation of himself is through his Son Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-3). It is important to help people understand the significance of Jesus because Jesus makes the question of God's existence concrete. Jesus is a historical figure who makes certain claims about God.

This leads us to the next question, is the bible reliable ? If all the information we have about God and Jesus comes from the Bible, how reliable is this document? If the Bible is trustworthy then all the claims that Jesus makes about is true.

If the Bible is reliable and what Jesus says about God is true (that God exists) then the next question that flows out of this argument is "Who is God and what is God like"? So the 3rd study explores the question "Who is God?" Here we look at what the bible says and we pay particular attention to the idea of the Trinity. Why bring up the Trinity at this early stage of answering a non Christian's question about God? Shouldn't we leave it for later? I think it is not wise to push it later. The Trinity is basic to our understanding of God and yet for most Christians it is the weakest part of our apologetics. We always stumble and fall whenever we try to explain the Trinity, instead it should really be our strongest case for the person of God because it answers so many other questions for us. So it is important for your group to get a clear understanding of the Trinity and a good grasp of how to explain the Trinity to others. This 3rd study will probably be your hardest study but it will pay large dividends if you do it properly. So my advise is make sure you know the material well.

The fourth study asks a practical question about suffering. It is a flow on from the 3rd study about God being Trinity. In the third study we will also learn about God's love but this will raise another question about suffering. Why does God allow it? This study will explore reasons for suffering and show us how God sometimes uses the unpleasant and difficult things in life to grow us. It also shows us that God himself is not above suffering and that he subjected himself to cruel mistreatment under the hands of his own creatures and died for our sakes

The fifth question is on the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus' resurrection helps us answer all the previous questions (See study 5). It is also a good way to end the series because Jesus' resurrection make us accountable to God in that He will return to judge again. The main Passage for this study is 1 Corinthians 15.

How to prepare and lead the discussion.

I have already explained my reasons for the studies so that you can understand the logic of each study. My recommendation is that you will need to spend about 1 or 2 hours to prepare each study. There are lots of verses to look at (I have highlighted the essential ones and included other as well) but you will need to work out the logical connections between the verses and the questions. The ice breaker discussion at the beginning of each study is meant to introduce the topic, don't take too long on these questions, just make sure you have enough time for the passages. Where possible help the group summarize the answer to the question. Make it as straight forward an answer as possible.