

KERYGMA
the BIBLE in DEPTH

Revised Edition

LEADER'S GUIDE
edited by John E. Mehl

the **KERYGMA** 

program

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the **KERYGMA**
— *program* —

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Foreword

This revision of the *Leader's Guide* has been prepared as a companion for the new edition of the *Resource Book*. Dr. Walther has thoroughly revised the material in the "Notes from the Author." We have also reviewed all of the activities in the "Session Plans" and revised previous suggestions or added new ones to correspond to changes in the *Resource Book*. In addition, we have enlarged the type size and opened up the format so the material can be read more easily.

The work of revision was begun in 1990 by Barbara Minges, who wrote a substantial portion of the original *Leader's Guide*. Following her untimely death in the fall of 1991, Dr. Byron Jackson, Associate Professor of Christian Education at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and Dr. Bardarah McCandless, Professor of Religion at Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA., picked up the task. Dr. D. Campbell Wyckoff, General Editor of The Kerygma Program, and Dr. Donald L. Griggs, Education Editor, reviewed the manuscript and made numerous suggestions. We are also grateful to Raymond F. Luber, Director of Seminary Relations at Pittsburgh Seminary and Patricia Heidebrecht, Assistant Manager of the United Church of Canada Bookroom, for proofreading the text and checking the biblical references. Elizabeth Modispacher, "wonder" typist at the Kerygma office, entered the copy into her Macintosh and patiently made last minute changes requested by the editorial staff.

We trust you will find this *Leader's Guide* useful as you prepare to lead *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*. We also hope it will encourage you to create your own session plans and activities for your unique group. Over the years, several leaders have sent us suggestions for the *Guide*. Some of them are contained in this edition. Others, because of length or other considerations, have not been included. They all, however, provide evidence of the creativity of the Kerygma community.

John E. Mehl

Preparing to Lead *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*

by Donald L. Griggs

Introduction

In this section we will be working with some of the information and skills that you as a leader will find helpful as you prepare to lead a group in a study of the Bible using the *Kerygma* resources and approach.

Before proceeding further you should read the Introduction (3 parts) and Theme 1, GOD SAVES A PEOPLE (4 parts). Read the appropriate portions of the *Resource Book* as well as this *Leader's Guide*. The materials in the Introduction and Theme 1 are representative of what is included for the other nine themes. By reading this material, you will understand the information, skills, resources, and guidelines outlined in this section more clearly. After planning and leading one or two themes, you will probably find it helpful to return to this article.

What Is *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*?

“*Kerygma*,” a Greek word, means “proclamation by a *herald*.” In New Testament translations this is rendered as “message” or “teaching” or “gospel.” We use the word here in its original sense. But we also use the word in a more inclusive sense as referring to the “message” of the whole Bible. It is that message persons will be introduced to in order to become more knowledgeable about the Bible as a whole and about the interrelatedness of the Old and New Testaments.

There are several distinguishing characteristics of this approach to the study of the Bible:

1. *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is *thematic*. It is not a book-by-book study, nor is it a literary, critical, or doctrinal study. It is unique in the way it explores the great experiential themes of the biblical story throughout the whole Scripture. Each of the ten themes involves participants with both the Old and New Testaments. The themes are not imposed on the Bible nor on its study; rather, they arise from Scripture and confront us as we read and explore the text. *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is not just a study about the Bible; it is a participation in and with the message of the Bible. Many portions of the Scripture are studied from different perspectives in more than one theme.

2. *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is *comprehensive* in scope, seeking to uncover as much of the biblical story as possible. Those who participate in this study should gain a sense of the Bible, including the Apocrypha, as one book and not just a collection of unrelated works of literature. The Apocrypha is included because it provides an important continuity, linking the Testaments together. Although each element of the Bible has its own integrity, there is a oneness and wholeness to which both Testaments and all of the books together bear witness. To see the Bible in this way helps to overcome any tendency to view it in a disjointed, incomplete way.
3. *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is both *historical* and *contemporary*, providing a means for enabling us to hear and participate in the biblical story. In this approach, the biblical story is first read from the vantage point of the people of God who lived it. The study is completed with the exploration of the meaning and significance of the biblical story for the lives of individual Christians and the community of the People of God today. *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is grounded in the conviction that Christians have a profoundly important religious heritage that finds its origin, its continuation, and its fulfillment in The Story of the faith and life of God's people as presented in the Bible. To mature in one's faith and life as a Christian requires knowledge of The Story, as well as the ability to translate that Story in the living of one's life.
4. *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is *incomplete*. The process is completed only when, and to the degree that, it becomes manifest in the faith and life of the people who participate in the study. This approach involves the people with a story, but that story comes alive only when people of faith begin to see their own story as a part of The Story. Thus the objective of *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is not simply to increase biblical literacy but to infuse biblical faith into the life experience of individuals and the collective life of the local church.
5. Finally, *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is primarily a *resource* and only one component to be integrated into the larger worshiping and working community of the church. It provides a guide to the reading and study of the Bible in the experience of the life of a local congregation. It is a process and it is a program that can be used within the life and ministry of Christian churches to assist their people in learning about, growing with, and walking in the light of the marvelous story of God's people as they live with God, with each other, and with others in the world.

Those Who Lead *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*

You are most likely reading this *Leader's Guide* because you are considering the possibility of, or have already committed yourself to, leading a group of participants in a creative approach to studying the Bible. Whether you are a clergy person, a church educator, or a lay person, it is less important how much you remember about your previous study of the Bible than that you are now willing to engage in an intensive process of reading, studying, planning, and leading. There are no short cuts to a successful study of the Bible using the Kerygma approach. It will require a significant commitment of time and energy in order to accomplish the ambitious goals of *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*.

In some churches there will be one study group with one leader. In other churches there may be several groups meeting separately at different times, each with its own leader. In still other churches it is possible that two or more persons may form a leadership team to share the responsibility for one or more groups. Whichever arrangement you find yourself in, you will discover your own study and preparation are enhanced when you are able to share your plans, questions, dreams, and satisfactions with others who have the same interests.

As a leader of a study group, you will function in a variety of roles at different times. You are first of all a *learner*. Being a Kerygma leader may be the best opportunity for learning more of the Bible you will ever be privileged to experience. You are not expected to be an expert teacher of the biblical material on which the course is based. However, you are expected to be prepared for each session so that you are able to guide the members of the group in a productive study.

As a result of all the reading in preparation for leading each session, you will also become a *resource person*. You will become familiar with tools for studying the Bible, audiovisual materials, resource books, and resource persons. Knowing which resource to use or recommend for a particular purpose or time is a helpful role. You are not expected to know all the answers to every question that is raised, but you should be able to direct group members to resources that will assist them to find answers for themselves.

Furthermore, you will be a *planner* who works intentionally to consider session plan suggestions, the time available, the needs, interests, and abilities of the participants, and the resources available in order to develop an appropriate plan for each session. The session plans provided in this *Leader's Guide* are very complete and offer more than you will be able to accomplish in the time you have. However, the best session plan is the one you con-

struct, using the suggestions here as well as your own personal resources and experiences in order to meet the needs and interests of your unique group.

Being a *facilitator* of group process is also a very important role for you to perform. The thirty-four session plans include many activities that involve participants in processes of investigation, discussion, reflection, creativity, and application. The more comfortable you become in guiding group process, the more effective the study will be for others. At first, some participants may prefer having you tell them what they should know about a theme or passage. And, there are times you may be tempted to tell them all that you know. However, you will be most effective as a leader and the group will gain most from the course when they are guided by you in many different participatory activities as you explore the Bible together.

It is important for you to be a *listener*. You will not only listen to what is communicated in God's Word, but you will also listen to what the people in the group are saying. To be a listener is to care about persons, to be accepting of what they are sharing, and to be responsive to their needs and interests.

Throughout the course of study, you will be called upon to exercise several important qualities. With the constraint of time and the great body of material to study, you must be *flexible*. Unplanned questions will arise, activities will take longer than expected, and participants may want to go slower than you feel is necessary. This will require considerable flexibility on your part.

You will need to be *patient* with the authors when the written materials are confusing or unclear. Unprepared participants will test your patience. And unpredictable occurrences in the life of the group and the church will require patience.

Thirty-four or more weeks of reading, planning, and leading will require *endurance*. You may begin to feel more like a long distance runner than a sprinter. It requires pacing one's self, getting a second wind, and having a kick at the finish in order to endure such an intensive, extensive study.

Those Who Participate in Kerygma: The Bible in Depth

The people who choose to associate with a group that is studying the Bible using *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*, do so for a wide variety of motives and bring with them many levels of readiness and ability.

When individuals are invited to attend a Kerygma group, they should be made aware from the beginning that this is not a study of the Bible where the leader does all the work of preparation and presentation. Every participant is expected to have read the appropriate material in the *Resource Book* prior to each session. Familiarity with this material is assumed by the session plans that are developed in the *Leader's Guide*. In addition to reading from the *Resource Book*, participants are expected to read at least the basic Bible texts that appear in boldface type and as many other recommended texts as possible.

Given the busy schedules most people have, there will be some times when persons come to a session with *minimum preparation*. You should not compromise the expectation of adequate preparation, because the experience for the whole group will suffer if the reading is not taken seriously. There are several ways you can handle the lack of preparation by the participants.

1. Encourage persons who have not read the assignments not to participate in the discussion until others have had a chance.
2. Provide some time, as a part of the session plan, to review the key texts that serve as the foundation for the session.
3. When working in pairs or small groups, be sure that those who are not prepared are distributed among the groups rather than grouped together.

Some participants will have had a lot of experience with studying the Bible, but for others this will be their first experience as adults to be involved in an in-depth study. It is important for each person to feel that he or she belongs to the group. You need to encourage both the experienced and inexperienced participants to be mindful and appreciative of each other.

Reviewing the Printed Resources

There are a number of printed resources that are included as part of *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*. Each resource makes a significant contribution to the whole program.

The Bible

The major curricular resource for *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is the Bible. The *New Revised Standard Version* is the translation on which this course is based. However, participants will be able to engage in the study effectively with another translation. In fact, the study is enhanced by the presence of several translations. The approach is to study representative texts; thus one is not required to read the entire

Bible. Instead, participants are offered relevant passages for each theme that provide sufficient background and focus for the study of that theme. A study Bible with notes for each section of the text and other study aids is recommended for the leader as well as the participants. A number of good study Bibles are available. Among those containing good study notes are the *New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha (NRSV)*, *The Oxford Study Bible with Apocrypha*, and the *New Jerusalem Bible (with complete notes)*.

The Resource Book

The *Resource Book* is a guide to reading the Bible thematically. This is the text that both leaders and participants will use to guide their study. There are four to six pages of text for each part of each theme, with all the related Bible passages identified clearly. The purpose of the text in the *Resource Book* is to identify relevant Scripture readings with sufficient information to explain the relationship of the various readings with one another and with the theme. This volume contains all the necessary information for the entire study to enable persons to participate responsibly in the group sessions. It is essential that the leader read the *Resource Book* in order to be adequately prepared to lead each session.

As you review the *Resource Book*, you will note that each part begins with a Summary and includes a listing of Basic Bible References and a Word List. In the main body of the text, the Basic Bible References are in boldface type. At the end of each part is a section entitled "For Further Study and Reflection." You will want to review this section with the option of directing the group members' attention to it generally or on a week-by-week basis. This section will from time to time encourage participants to use additional study resources. For this purpose the group should have available from the church library basic Bible reference books. These will include as a minimum a Bible dictionary, atlas, commentary, and concordance.

As a leader, you should read the *Resource Book* from beginning to end before undertaking leadership of a study group and before you start planning any particular sessions. This effort will provide you with an overview of the total study. As you then plan for each session, you will need to reread the appropriate material for this session.

The Leader's Guide

This is the book you have in your hands at this moment. It will be the indispensable resource you will use for planning each session. You will notice that the *Leader's Guide* contains:

1. The Table of Contents and this article, a session planning form and a description of other study resources.
2. The Introduction (three parts), Ten Themes (thirty parts), and a concluding session. The word *part* is used to designate a study session. Ordinarily there should be a minimum of one and a half hours of meeting time for each session. For best results, two or more hours are preferable. (See the section below on number of sessions and amount of time.)

Each of the thirty-four parts includes:

1. "Notes from the Author." Dr. James A. Walther provides background information on the content of the biblical texts referred to in the *Resource Book*. Included are helpful comments on ways of dealing with various issues that may arise in group discussion.
2. "Session Plans." Extensive suggestions for session planning are provided for each part. *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* is a highly flexible resource, and its flexibility is evidenced in session methodology as well as in other areas. Kerygma groups have been successfully led with the lecture and discussion format as well as with an emphasis on participatory activities. Most clergy have derived much of their education from a lecture format and may be most familiar and most comfortable with this approach. There is, however, overwhelming evidence that adult learning is increased and enhanced when group members participate directly in the learning process. It is strongly recommended that all leaders review the session plans and incorporate as many suggestions as appropriate into each session. Further suggestions on the specifics of session planning will be found in the following sections entitled "Planning a Study Session" and "Additional Guidelines for Leading a Study Group".

Number of Sessions and Amount of Time

In the early stages of thinking about *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*, a number of questions usually arise, such as:

How will this study fit into our adult education schedule?

How many weeks or sessions does it take?

How much time should be planned for each session?

Perhaps those questions have already been answered in your church and arrangements have been made for scheduling. If the questions have been answered, you and your group will have to adjust to what is already planned. However, if the questions have not been answered, you may want to consider a variety of options. A comprehensive and detailed review of the various issues noted above is contained in *The Adult Education Idea Book*, available from The Kerygma Program office.

Kerygma: The Bible in Depth is flexible enough to fit into a variety of church settings. Each of the thirty-four parts is presented as one session, with enough suggested in the session plans for a meeting lasting two to two and a half hours. This presumes a midweek or Sunday evening format where enough time is available. However, it is quite possible to divide the session plans for each part into two or three segments, so that each segment fits into the usual one-hour Sunday morning study format.

It is possible for a group to complete *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* in thirty-four weeks. Many churches have done this, and it is quite an accomplishment. Another strategy is to schedule two or three themes for an autumn term, another two or three themes for a spring term, and continue over the period of two or more years to complete the program.

It is important for all who become involved in the study to begin with the Introduction and the first theme. Thereafter, it is possible to enter any combination of the other themes whenever they are presented. Once a study group has begun, it is advised that persons not begin the study in "midstream." If this is not practical, individuals should be given a review of the Introduction before joining the group. Another option is to add new persons at specified times, e.g., at the conclusions of Theme 3 and Theme 6.

Planning a Study Session

By reading the Bible texts, the *Resource Book*, the *Leader's Guide*, and any other supplementary resources, you have already accomplished a major task of planning for leading a study session. However, there is one more important task: preparing a workable session plan to use with the group. Even though there is a detailed outline of a plan for each session (part), it is important to prepare your own session plan appropriate for your group. Only you know the unique situation of your group; the number of participants, the amount of time for each session, the interests, abilities, and needs of each participant, and circum-

stances of the ministry of your church. Thus, you are the only one who can prepare a session plan that is truly appropriate for your particular group.

In preparing your session plan you will want to give special attention to the following elements that appear at the beginning of each part in the *Resource Book*.

1. *Summary*. This is the focus of the session. All that you and the participants will do during the session will be done to uncover the meaning of the summary statement in terms of its biblical and its contemporary significance.
2. *Basic Bible References*. These are the essential references that you and the participants must read. These Bible texts provide the basis for the study in the session. They will ordinarily be used in one or another of the suggested activities.
3. *Word List*. These words are used in the content of the study. They are usually unfamiliar words for many people. Yet they are words for which you, as the leader, should have a working definition. Check a Bible dictionary for assistance with meanings of these words. The comments by Dr. Walther will also be helpful.

The Session Plans in the *Leader's Guide* include:

1. *Learning Objectives*. The three to six statements presenting the learning objectives indicate what the leader will help the participants to accomplish as a result of their study. When leading adults, it is appropriate to share these objectives with the members of the group at the beginning of each session. The selection of activities is then guided by the objectives considered most important. The statements of learning objectives can also be used as a basis for evaluating whether or not the participants have accomplished what was intended. A word of caution: accomplishing the learning objectives is not all there is to leading a study group. Some of the most important things that happen among the participants in a group cannot be evaluated by learning objectives; forming of Christian community, growing in faith, developing the ability to speak comfortably about one's faith, nurturing the spiritual life, as well as other important matters regarding the Christian faith and life.
2. *Resources*. In addition to the Bible, *Resource Book*, and supplementary readings, a list of those resources that are needed for the various activities is provided.
3. *Leadership Strategy*. This is the heart of the session plan. The leadership strategy is organized in three sections:

- a. "Setting the Stage" is a time for inviting persons to become involved with the subject of the session. Ordinarily it will take ten to twenty minutes for this segment of the session plan.
 - b. "Exploring the Scripture" is what the study is all about. Most of the time of the session will be spent with activities that enable exploration of several biblical texts which are integral to the theme. Usually three or more activities will be planned for this portion of the session.
 - c. "Closing" is a time to bring closure to the session, to summarize what has been explored, and to make applications of what has been learned to one's own faith and life experiences.
4. *Looking Ahead.* In order to work effectively at the next session, some special tasks may need preparation by some or all of the participants. For example, occasionally a brief report requiring advance preparation is called for. Participants are invited to volunteer for these assignments. Of course, the basic assignment for each week is reading the *Resource Book* and the recommended Bible texts.

As you prepare for each session, it may be helpful to use the Session Planning Form that is included at the conclusion of this section. You may make copies of these pages or develop your own form.

Using Leadership Strategies

As you read the suggestions in each Leadership Strategy, you will notice that several activities are usually offered for each part of the session. These activities are clearly separated by **or**, **and**, or **and/or** in the center of the page. Ordinarily no group would be expected to complete all the activities that are recommended for each session. And there will be times when you, as the leader, will decide to do something different from what is suggested. You should feel free to utilize your own creativity, but be sure that what you do relates directly to the subject of the theme and enables fulfillment of the learning objectives.

When choosing from among the options that are suggested, there are several things to keep in mind.

1. The *amount of time* available is a critical factor which influences your decision. When faced with the choice of trying to do two activities quickly (perhaps superficially) or doing one activity thoroughly, it is usually best to do the one activity.

2. *Activities that involve participants* interacting with one another, preparing a presentation to share with others, or working cooperatively on a task, will always take more time than it does for the leader to present the same information. However, when persons are significantly involved in the process of their own learning, they will be much more motivated and will accomplish more in the end.
3. Some activities are designed to probe in *depth*, and others are intended to provide an *overview*. On the other hand, there are activities for individuals or pairs or small groups or the whole group. The important thing is to develop a session plan that has *balance*, so that there are some *in-depth* and some *overview* activities. There also needs to be a balance between individual, small group, and whole group activities.
4. The *interests, abilities, and previous experience* of the members of the group will influence your choices regarding which of the suggested activities to implement. It is important for you to become acquainted with the members of the group in order to make such judgements. It may be self-defeating to plan an activity that you feel will be resisted by many in the group.
5. Your own *interests, skills, and concerns* must also be considered when deciding which activity to choose. You should be reasonably comfortable with the activity and confident that it can be used effectively to guide the group's study. However, as the course develops and you become comfortable with the group and the subject matter you should be willing to try some of the activities that are new to you. All of the activities have been tested and proven by other leaders so that you should have confidence that whatever activity you select from the session strategy will work for you as well.
6. Some activities rely more on *presentation* of information by the leader and/or some of the participants, and other activities require more *involvement* by the participants. Again, it is important to make selections of activities that will provide an appropriate balance of leader input and group participation.

Planning for leading a group's study is an art. There is no right session plan for every topic or every situation or every leader. Neither is there just one right way to go about planning. You need to be willing to practice the art of planning until you find a process that works effectively. It is important to be willing to try new strategies, new resources, and new approaches to working with the group. Through practicing the art of planning and leading a group in the study of the Bible, you, as well as the group members, will discover the ways that work best.

Guidelines for Adult Education

The following guidelines provide a summary of the most recent findings about adult education.

- **Adults are responsible for their own learning.**

Therefore, it is important not to develop dependent relationships whereby the learners look to the leader as the authority and primary source of information.

- **Adults learn best when they can participate directly in the process of their own learning.**

Therefore, opportunities should be provided in each session for participants to make decisions about what and how they will learn and to interact with the subject matter and other learners.

- **Adults represent a variety of learning styles as well as different stages of physical, emotional, and spiritual development.**

Therefore, learners will be related to individually without assuming that all adults are the same. Learners will be encouraged to work at their own pace and to make applications that are appropriate to themselves.

- **Learning is reinforced best when adults have the opportunity to practice skills and to express ideas in their own words.**

Therefore, in each session there will be opportunities to practice particular skills and to express personal insights and interpretation.

- **Learning occurs within an environment of trusting relationships.**

Therefore, it is important to develop a process whereby persons will be encouraged to share feelings, needs, and concerns as well as information and ideas. In such a setting persons will be helped to become caring about and supportive of one another.

- **With adults it is not necessary to use competitive activities to motivate them to want to participate and learn.**

Therefore, the activities and resources will represent a cooperative, collaborative style of learning.

- **Adults who have positive self-concepts are less threatened by new information and experiences.**

Therefore, leaders will be encouraged to use strategies that enhance a person's sense of self-worth.

- **Adults will increase their knowledge and skill to a greater extent when they gain a sense of satisfaction and experience success in those activities that are planned for them.**

Therefore, the session plans of the Kerygma Program study resources will present a variety of activities that are designed to enable participants to achieve satisfaction and success.

Additional Guidelines for Leading a Study Group

There are many factors that contribute to the effective, productive working of a group. What follows is an attempt to summarize some of the most important considerations about effective group leadership.

What kind of leader do you want to be?

An *autocratic* leader is one who takes charge, who assumes all the responsibility for the group, and who is primarily concerned about getting the task accomplished. There are times when it is necessary for a leader to present information to the group or to make a decision on behalf of the group. However, the Kerygma approach to the study of the Bible will be most successful when the leader does not do all the work for the group.

The *laissez-faire* leader is one who sits back, enjoys what is happening, and lets the group go its own way. It is important from time to time to relax and not be too agenda-conscious. But the approach suggested by the Kerygma Program assumes that the leader is actively engaged in guiding the group's process.

The *democratic* leader functions in a partnership style. The leader of this type shares responsibility with the group's members for the content and the process of the study. *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth* will be studied more effectively when led by persons who seek to involve others in sharing their questions, insights, and affirmations.

How will you keep the group focused on the theme or the task?

Because participants will have questions, opinions, and insights about many aspects of the study of the Bible, it will be very easy for the group to stray from the focus of the session. The leader needs to tread the narrow line between letting the discussion proceed with its own momentum and directing the discussion back to the planned task. Sometimes the leader can note the group's interest in a topic and schedule further discussion as part of another session. There are also times when it will be possible to use what the group is talking about by relating it directly to the next topic, question, or activity. On occasion the group may just need to be reminded that it has gotten sidetracked.

What will you do when someone offers a contradictory point of view?

If you encourage members of the group to think and speak for themselves so that there is a lot of interaction, then it should not be surprising that persons will feel free to offer contradictory ideas and will, on occasion, disagree with you, with Dr. Walther, or even with the Apostle Paul. When disagreements occur be thankful that the individuals feel free to express themselves. You can accept what persons say even if you disagree with them. You can encourage them to clarify what they mean or to give the evidence that leads them to their position. It is not necessary for you to defend Dr. Walther or the Apostle Paul; they can defend themselves by what they have written. However, it is important to be sure that you and the others have read carefully and worked hard to understand what was written.

How will you respond when you don't know the answer to a question?

There is nothing more frustrating to a group than a leader who tries to bluff his or her way through a topic or a question. A basic premise of this study is that the leader is a learner among learners. It is not necessary for the leader to be authoritative in all subjects of the study. It is much more important to know where to turn for the needed information, to encourage the group to work toward its understanding, and/or to be willing to admit that you do not know something when you don't.

How will you establish a climate that is relaxed as well as stimulating?

In order for effective group process to develop, there are several very simple, yet significant, things you as the leader can do:

1. Speak to persons by name and encourage everyone to share enough of himself or herself so that all members of the group feel that they know one another.
2. Arrange the room so that persons are in a circle or square, so that everyone can see all other members of the group. This arrangement suggests a cooperative style of participation.
3. It is preferable for participants to be seated at tables so that they do not have to juggle their Bibles, books, and coffee cups on their laps.
4. Have a pot of hot water handy and the makings for coffee, tea and hot chocolate.
5. If the group meets for more than ninety minutes in a session, take a short break about half way through the session.
6. Be sure the meeting space is comfortable with regard to heat, lighting, chairs, etc.

The Art of Asking Questions*

If we desire to involve persons in serious interaction with one another and with the subject of the session, we will enable that process by asking effective questions. Questions may be one of the most valuable resources available to the leader as well as to the participants. The leader with even minimal experience can learn to ask good questions. And the church with the smallest budget can still afford to invest in valuable questions.

Questions may be used in at least a dozen different ways to:

1. introduce a new subject
2. discuss a familiar subject

*Based on a chapter from *Teaching Teachers to Teach* by Donald L. Griggs, published by Abingdon Press, 1980.

3. review a subject studied earlier
4. invite interpretation of a biblical passage
5. connect a biblical concept to personal experience
6. evaluate a recording, film, or other resource
7. motivate further research on a subject
8. brainstorm solutions to a problem
9. interview a guest resource person
10. consider alternative actions
11. clarify personal values
12. guide expression of beliefs

There are many ways to categorize questions. In all the categories there seem to be generally three different types or levels of questions.

Type One: Information Questions

Questions of this type assume that there are right answers. As a result of remembering the information or the facts related to a subject, persons are able to give correct answers when called upon. Information questions tend to be limited in their ability to provoke exploration or discussion by the group. When leaders ask too many information questions, the participants may feel as if they are taking a test. People often sense that leaders have all the answers to the questions they ask, so it is important to have the right answer to please the leader. Information is very important for setting the context for studying a subject; however, there are many ways to present information other than asking questions. Some examples of information questions:

In what city were followers of Jesus first called Christian?

Where in a town did apostles often go first to present the gospel message?

Type Two: Interpretation Questions

Interpretation questions require participants to think about, analyze, explore, and evaluate a subject. Based upon previous experience, available information, or a given situation, group members are guided to reflect upon the experience or information in an interpretive or analytical way. Interpretation questions are open-ended. Several people can be asked the same interpretation question, each can offer a different answer and each answer can be acceptable. Interpretation questions assume that there is a variety of points of view, that the leader has no correct answer in mind, and that together the leaders and participants will find the question worthy of their time and thoughtfulness. Questions of this type motivate people to think and express themselves, to become more involved in the session. Interpretation questions can be introduced with phrases such as:

What are some reasons. . . ?

Why do you suppose. . . ?

Let's think a minute about why. . . ?

What are some examples of . . . ?

What is the possibility of. . . ?

Who do you think will. . . ?

What are the alternatives for . . . ?

What are your thoughts about. . . ?

Some examples of interpretation questions:

What are some reactions Jesus' followers in Antioch might have had to being called Christians?

Why do you suppose Peter, Paul, and others often went first to the synagogue to preach when they entered a new town?

Type Three: Personalized Questions

With personalized or identification questions, leaders encourage participants to apply the subject to themselves in a personal way that helps them express their own

identity. Information and interpretation questions can be impersonal—unrelated to the participants’ interests or values. Personalized questions are designed to help people express their own values, commitments, choices, or affirmations regarding a particular subject or issue. Personalized questions guide the members of the group to invest something of themselves as they identify with persons, events, or situations of a past, present, or future time frame. A discussion of value questions moves out of the hypothetical and abstract arena into a very real and personal space. Questions at this level are essential if persons are going to grow in their faith and life commitments. In using questions of this type we must be careful to avoid embarrassing the group members by getting too personal or putting them “on the spot.”

Some examples of personalized questions:

When someone identifies you as a Christian, what are some feelings or reactions you have?

If you had been members of the synagogue in Ephesus when Paul came to preach, how do you think you would have responded to his message?

When preparing to lead a discussion that utilizes a variety of questions, there are ten guidelines that will be helpful to keep in mind.

1. *Ask questions that are more open than closed.*

Questions with only one right answer or implying a “yes” or “no” response are more closed. These questions are more a test of memory than they are inquiry into subject matter. When tempted to ask a closed question, make a statement instead. Then ask open, analytical, probing questions.

2. *Ask only one question at a time.*

More than one question is confusing to the participants. Leaders who ask several questions at once usually have not thought carefully or prepared adequately and are “fishing” for the right question.

3. *Present questions to the whole group.*

Instead of putting one person “on the spot” by directing a question to one, offer the question to the whole group. By being aware of a person’s readiness it is possible to

recognize who wants to answer. A participant can be called upon to respond without the leader speaking a word—through eye contact, gesture with the hand, or a nod of the head.

4. *Provide feedback after a person responds.*

The leader can reinforce participants and facilitate further discussion by providing verbal and nonverbal feedback so that they will know the leader has heard and received the response.

5. *After an initial question and response, follow up with probing questions.*

Probing questions follow first questions. Probing questions lead to further inquiry and exploration in depth of the subject. Probing questions can also provide a degree of reinforcement and feedback.

6. *After asking a question, be silent.*

The best “next step” after asking a question is to be silent. If the question is clearly stated, and if the members of the group have sufficient data to answer, they need some time to think. Ten seconds is not too much time. However, ten seconds of silence can feel like an eternity to a leader who is a little anxious. Leave the burden of the silence on the group. Bite your tongue and relax; usually someone will respond.

7. *Use an inquiry style rather than an interrogation style.*

Inquiry is a style or approach that says to the group members, “I’m interested in what you think and say.” Interrogation puts persons on the defensive and inhibits their ability to think and express themselves creatively.

8. *Encourage people to ask their own questions.*

Questions are not just the property of the leader but can also be used effectively by the participants.

9. *Avoid echoing participants' responses.*

There are two valid reasons for repeating participants' responses: to reinforce the answer or to state it loudly enough so that others can hear who might have missed it the first time.

10. *Accept responses as if they were gifts.*

When people venture an answer to a question, they are risking something of themselves. Every person hopes his or her answer will be accepted. They will feel more confident to respond to open questions than to closed questions. Also, leaders will be more able to accept responses to open questions. We are not always perfectly pleased with every gift we receive, but we are usually gracious in receiving even the ones that don't please us.

Closing Words

All that we have been talking about in this chapter should help you to feel ready to begin preparing to lead your first sessions of *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*. You are engaged in an outstanding program that will not only enrich the lives of many persons in your church but will also enrich your life and faith. As a result of your own study, you will discover many new and exciting truths in the Scriptures and you will be pleased to have an eager group of learners with whom to share what has been discovered. As a result of leading others in their study of the Bible, you will be rewarded again and again by the satisfaction of seeing persons become newly empowered by the authority and relevance of God's Word for their life and faith experience. You, and those with whom you share this adventure of studying the Bible, will find that the time spent together, the discussions of different interpretations, the challenge of difficult passages, and the commitment to one another will all contribute to a bonding of Christian fellowship where God's Spirit is present and working in your midst. Your study of the Bible should lead from study to service—service through leading others, through responding to the needs of hurting people, and through representing the Christ who calls us all to be disciples. May you and your people be abundantly blessed by God as you seek to grow in faithfulness to God's Word!

Kerygma Leader's Session Planning Form

Course Name _____ Leader _____

Session _____ Date _____ Time _____

Learning Objectives:

Real Time (i.e. 7:30 - 7:40)	Strategies/Activities	Resources Needed

Real Time (i.e. 7:30 - 7:40)	Strategies/Activities	Resources Needed

Supplementary Books

for the Kerygma Leader

In earlier editions of Kerygma Program study resources the *Leader's Guide* recommended the purchase of several reference books and listed specific readings by page in preparation for each session. The concept was that leaders should be prepared to respond to questions related to issues raised in the session. While reference books were recommended, leaders were also alerted to the danger of relying too heavily on secondary references lest the group study become a study *about* the Bible rather than a study *of* the biblical texts themselves.

In subsequent years two issues have arisen that make identifying references by page problematical. The first is that many of the references originally selected have either gone out of print or have been published in new editions, making the identification of pages inaccurate. Secondly, the pricing of books has made some texts unreasonably expensive.

With this edition of *Kerygma: The Bible in Depth*, we continue to recommend that leaders have access to standard reference texts. By using the Table of Contents and the Index in the various volumes, relevant material is easily accessible. In the *Leader's Guide* there will also be suggestions from time to time about research on ideas and concepts found in such familiar resources as a Bible dictionary, commentary, etc. In addition, leaders should feel free to use whatever reliable texts they have available, most of which should be in a good church library. The Kerygma Program has in stock a short list of standard reference books which are identified in the following section titled "How to Study the Bible."

for the Participants

A primary goal of The Kerygma Program is to promote a responsible study of the Bible by adults. To facilitate and enrich such study we recommend that participants in Kerygma study groups use a good study Bible and have access to selected reference books. Several of these volumes are listed in "How to Study the Bible," which is also included in all *Resource Books*. Leaders should review this section for recommendations on standard reference texts and be prepared to discuss the material with members of the study group as they begin their work.

KERYGMA
the BIBLE in DEPTH

Revised Edition

LEADER'S GUIDE

GOD SAVES A PEOPLE

THEME

1

God's Saving Act in Jesus Christ

PART

3

NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

The Gospels and Our Kerygma Study

As we focus on the Gospels for the first time, let us remember that we aim to use the Bible as the sourcebook for Christian faith. Its contents, therefore, must become well-known, and so we constantly emphasize both details and interrelationships of the biblical books.

By studying the biblical material through themes drawn from the Bible itself, we gain maximum opportunity to learn the Bible on its own terms. A great value of this structure is that it enables us to learn responsibly what the Bible as a whole is about.

To relate biblical details to the themes requires another move. We have to give careful attention to the setting of the particular passages as we move along. Thus, when we are studying about Jesus, it will not do to pick indiscriminately among the materials in the four Gospels. Our group members need a growing awareness of the relationships among the Synoptic Gospels—the so-called “Synoptic problem”—and we cannot avoid the question of the relationship of the synoptics to the Gospel of John. We shall not explore problems in unnecessary detail, but when open study and inquiry are invited, serious questions will arise. They should be dealt with constructively, but we must avoid overkill.

About Technical Matters

Some of the material in this part requires basic familiarity with research in Gospel studies. If you the leader do not feel adequate in this area, a few ideas here should see you through. If you do have confidence in these matters, be careful not to parade your learning. Our goal is to understand the texts, not to see how technical we can become.

Perhaps the most important observation on the Gospels in relation to this theme is that a Gospel is not intended to be a biography of Jesus. John 20:31 expresses well the purpose

of a Gospel: *These [signs] are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.* What we learn about the life of Jesus is to be viewed in light of the primary goal of the Gospels. Although we have information from only a few of the years of his life, we do have data upon which to form a fair view of his career. An important example is the sequence of events centering in Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. In all four Gospels this seems to constitute a turning point. (The confession in Matthew 16:13-20, Mark 8:27-30, Luke 9:18-21; John 6:67-71 is somewhat parallel.) From then on, Jesus turns inexorably toward Jerusalem and the dramatic conclusion of his ministry.

Another conclusion of Gospel research is that each of the Gospel writers was a theologian in his own right. This is one of the factors that accounts for the existence of four different Gospels. The star news reporters of each TV network file stories on the same events, but each report bears the distinctive character of the individual. So it is with the Gospel writers.

A challenging example is Matthew's story of the flight to Egypt (2:13-15). No other Gospel writer even hints at such an episode, and it is not, of course, an essential detail for studying Jesus' ministry. Matthew, however, makes a theological reflection that brings the story into direct bearing on this theme. *This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the LORD through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."* This quotation from Hosea 11:1 refers to Exodus 4:22. Thus, a very brief detail in one Gospel becomes a part of the pervasive exodus theme. It also associates Jesus again with the figure of Moses. Among many other Moses examples, see John 3:14, 15.

About Fulfillment

Now just a few words about the idea of "fulfillment." When the occasion offers itself, help your group to understand that we deal with several kinds of fulfillment in Bible study. The most common is the sort we have just mentioned. The New Testament writer observes that something that has occurred reflects appropriately something recorded in the Old Testament. (Matthew particularly points out such connections.) The New Testament writers were probably convinced that there was a providential relationship between the Old Testament citation and what they were recording, but this is primarily the inspired insight of the writer. If we treat fulfillment as a mechanical ordering of history, it undermines the meaning of human existence.

Another meaning of fulfillment is related to this. Sometimes the relation between Old and New Testament events or texts shows a bringing to completion of what started in the past. Matthew's citation of Isaiah 7:14 is sometimes misused because of the inclusion of the

Greek word for “virgin,”¹ but here think about *Emmanuel . . . God is with us*. The presence of God in Isaiah’s thought now finds its ultimate meaning in Jesus. This is also one meaning in Jesus’ words about the presence of the Kingship of God. In Theme 6 we trace how the perception of God as ruler comes to a new and complete understanding in Jesus’ mission and message.

A third kind of fulfillment concerns things Jesus said and did that are related to his Old Testament heritage. The relationship is intentional even when not explicit. Two items are very important: (1) The influence of the servant-figure from Isaiah 40-55 upon Jesus’ evolving mission. Another way of putting this is to say that Jesus accepted the role of suffering servant-savior of God’s people rather than that of political messiah. (2) Jesus’ deliberate choice of Passover time for the climax of his ministry. Thus he died as the sacrificial paschal lamb for the new people of God (as Paul observes in 1 Corinthians 5:7).

One more kind of fulfillment is that which the modern reader professes to see between texts. It is valid when it relates God’s law or saving power to a sequence of experiences. It is highly questionable when it associates events with passages perceived as predictions of the far future. This latter practice is subject to the interpretative whim of each person who comes to the texts. It applies particularly to claims of fulfillment in modern world events. In this course we make regular and intensive use of thematic relationships among texts from the two Testaments, but we scrupulously avoid identifying this as fulfillment unless the Bible itself introduces the association. Perilous mischief can be done through the indiscriminate connection of texts by the subjective ingenuity of someone who will not seriously study the Bible whole.

About Beginning at the End of the Gospels

It is important to the development of this theme to understand why we begin at the end of the Gospels. When the evangelists compiled their Gospels, they were living after the climax of God’s saving act in Jesus Christ. The Gospels were written in the light of the church’s knowledge that Jesus had risen and that he was relating to his followers in a new way. This is a presupposition of the New Testament understanding of God, and it explains why a new view of the people of God developed. There is a parallel to the exodus story, which gave new meaning to the events that had happened to God’s people before that time.

The Emmaus road passage, Luke 24:13-35, provides a narrative view of the transformation that was taking place among Jesus’ followers. Cleopas and his friend were in a dilemma: They were not ready to accept the reports about Jesus’ resurrection, yet they could not give up their hope that he might bring a new day to God’s oppressed people. Their discussion

¹ We consider this in another context. Do not allow it to intrude here.

with the unrecognized traveler turns on continuity between the old revelation and the new time. They recognize Jesus during a meal, which directly connects them with experiences from his earlier ministry. This breakthrough disclosure of the resurrection immediately leads the two to join the community that is sharing support and witness. This kind of response and action becomes distinctive of the life and work of God's people in the New Testament.

Peter's quotation of Joel 2:28-32, recorded in Acts 2:17-21, begins with the addition of the words *In the last days*. The events following Jesus' resurrection were viewed as a decisive fulfillment of Old Testament expectations. The fact that the *portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below* had not literally taken place is ignored in Peter's affirmation. Luke anticipated a fulfillment by his use of the word *exodus* when Moses the law-giver and Elijah the prophet were talking with Jesus at the transfiguration (Luke 9:31). Now, Peter says, what Joel wrote is taking place: *God declares. . . I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*. Because of what has happened in Jesus a new time in the life of God's people has begun.

The New Deliverance

This theme concentrates upon the importance of the resurrection as the initiation of a new deliverance for God's people. Part 4 looks at how this immediately affected the church, and other themes will consider other facets of what Jesus did. No one line of description exhausts the significance of Jesus' accomplishment. Through the centuries theologians have held what are called "theories of the atonement"—that is, explanations of what Jesus did for the relationship between God and people. Each focuses on one or more aspects of the truth, but the whole truth is greater than the sum of these expressions. The New Testament includes many ways of describing the new condition and how it took place: "entering the Kingdom of God," "receiving life," "being justified by faith," "being reconciled," "being redeemed," and so on. This theme emphasizes one descriptive view, which has the immediate value of using terms that we have just studied in Old Testament traditions.

This is how the earliest Christian community understood what Jesus did. We should also ask, "How did *Jesus* understand his mission and accomplishment?" The *Resource Book* touches this question. What did Jesus think he was doing? How do we discover this? Do the Gospels tell us enough that we can recover Jesus' own intention? Of course we cannot explore the ranges of Christology, nor can we pursue technical details of how the Gospels were formed. The objective is to set the records we have within a framework that will facilitate understanding this theme.

Mark's three predictions of the passion are significant. This must surely reflect an emphasis in Jesus' teaching. Note the setting of the first warning (Mark 8:31). The collection of

incidents (whatever their sequence in each Gospel) marks a turning toward the climax of Jesus' ministry, so we may take it that Jesus foresaw how it would end.

Jesus' perception of the socio-political situation differed radically from that of most of his contemporaries. We have stressed the background of the Maccabean successes followed by the Roman occupation. Jewish nationalists in Jesus' time seem not to have understood two things. (1) The unsettled conditions under Antiochus' rule were different from the hard reality of Roman imperial power. (2) The Maccabean revolt was as much a spiritual achievement as it was a military victory. Thus Jesus' contemporaries who had high political ambitions did not recognize that the relationship between God and a people is primarily moral and spiritual, not physical and political.

Old Testament prophets tried to say this, and it was an essential emphasis in Jesus' teaching. It finally reached theological formulation in the letters of Paul. He declared that in the cross and resurrection God had delivered a people from the ultimate slavery, which Paul identifies as *sin and death* (Romans 8:2). The rest of the New Testament, especially the Gospel of John, supports this interpretation.

The Scope of Deliverance

If there is one New Testament theme that embraces the others it is this one about God's saving acts. The material in the *Resource Book* provides a framework for this theme. You have the responsibility of seeing that any diversion is turned back to the focal point.

The theme indicates that there is a new people of God, but we must not lose sight of the continuity with God's people before the New Testament. "New" implies an old. Once slavery to sin is seen as the universal problem of people, God's deliverance must be announced beyond national boundaries. Do not miss the importance of Jesus' Nazareth sermon in this respect. Note particularly his use of Isaiah 61:1, 2 as a program for his ministry. His choice of illustrations shows the broad scope of his vision. Think how this would speak to the second-generation church. This is expanded in Theme 4.

Supplementary Reading

A review of articles in a Bible dictionary on the items in the Word List will be helpful. You might also do some background reading on "Messiah," "Resurrection," and "Kingdom of God."

SESSION PLANS

Learning Objectives

This session is intended to enable participants to:

1. Describe the impact the crucifixion had upon the disciples.
2. Retell the story of Jesus' resurrection in their own words.
3. Explain three ways Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of the Old Testament.
4. Compare the similarities and differences between the deliverance in the exodus and the new deliverance accomplished by Jesus.
5. Describe the nature and purpose of the new community.

Resources You May Need

Chalkboard and chalk

Newsprint, markers, masking tape

A recording of "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?"

A recording of *Jesus Christ, Superstar*

Record player or cassette player

Large sheets of construction paper

Hymnbooks or copies of a hymn about the resurrection

Leadership Strategy

SETTING THE STAGE

1. Add dates for Jesus' and Paul's ministries to your time line.
2. Ask the group for any questions from previous sessions or the present reading to add to the Loose Ends list.
3. The story of Jesus' crucifixion is so familiar to us that it is easy to overlook the impact it had on his followers. In order to experience the joy of the resurrection, we need to reflect upon the death of Jesus.

Tell the participants to close their eyes and pretend they are the followers of Jesus. Set the scene by saying, “It is Saturday morning. Yesterday you saw Jesus placed on the cross and crucified. His dead body was removed and placed in a tomb. All night you have met in small groups, talking over the events that have just taken place. There is no way to know what today will bring. Your grief and pain overshadow everything else.”

Dim the lights and play a recording or have someone sing the spiritual, “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?” After the final verse is sung, have the whole group hum the melody.

Divide into groups of four. Remind the participants that they have just experienced the loss of the person in whom they have invested their hopes and dreams. They have gathered to share their confusion, fear, grief, disappointment, and pain and to give support to one another. Ask them to share their feelings about the death of Jesus with one another.

or

The musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* has become a classic. The selection titled “Crucifixion” (running time 4:04) is very moving. Ask the members of the group to imagine that they are followers of Jesus and are witnesses to the event of the crucifixion. Play the music and then ask what impact the experience of the music had on them.

and

Many events, including the story of the crucifixion, are told with varying details in all four Gospels. Dr. Walther states, “Our group members need a growing awareness of the relationships among the Synoptic Gospels...and we cannot avoid the question of the relationship of the Synoptics to the Gospel of John.” Give a mini-lecture about the purpose and composition of the Gospels using information found in resources such as *Understanding the New Testament*, *Introducing the New Testament*, and the material under “About Technical Matters” in “Notes from the Author.”

EXPLORING THE SCRIPTURE

1. After the despair of Saturday came the amazement and hope of Sunday. Luke 24 presents three different encounters with the resurrected Messiah. Divide into three groups. Assign these passages of Scripture:

Group 1 - Luke 24:1-12

Group 2 - Luke 24:13-35

Group 3 - Luke 24:36-53

Give these directions to each group:

- a. Select someone to read your passage aloud to the group. The remainder of your group will form a “listening team.”
- b. Listen for and record the “evidence” that caused the followers to believe that Jesus had indeed been raised from the dead.
- c. Together, make a composite list of the information your group has gathered.
- d. Choose someone to present your list to the other groups.

After ten minutes gather the groups so they can compare the evidence that is mentioned in each case.

Then divide into clusters of three and invite the participants to respond to this question: “What has convinced you that Jesus has been raised from the dead?”

or

Divide into three groups. Assign each group one of these portions of Scripture: Luke 24:1-12; Luke 24:13-35; Luke 24:36-53. After they read the assigned verses, the groups are to decide how to present the central message of their accounts of the resurrection to those who do not understand its importance. Some suggestions are a dramatic reading, a TV interview using eyewitness accounts, a pantomime, a mural, or a poster. After the presentations reflect on these questions:

- a. What is similar or different in the attitudes and responses of the women, the two disciples, and the others?
 - b. What is it that makes the most difference in these responses?
 - c. Who or what has influenced your response to the resurrection?
2. The idea that Jesus is the “fulfillment” of the Old Testament hope is presented in many New Testament passages. In his notes Dr. Walther says that there are several senses in which fulfillment is used in Bible study. Engage the group in a discussion of these different meanings of fulfillment by asking questions such as:

- a. What do you think Luke means in chapter 24:44, 45 when he says that Jesus “opened their minds to understand the scriptures”?
- b. To what extent do you think Jesus’ followers saw him as the fulfillment of Scripture before the resurrection?
- c. What do we mean when we say that the Gospels were written backwards, beginning with the resurrection?

or

Introduce the person who prepared a report based on Dr. Walther’s comments in his notes under the heading “About Fulfillment” on pages 62-63 of the *Leader’s Guide*.

and/or

The early church understood Jesus consciously to have related his mission and message to the Old Testament. Assign the following passages to small groups and ask them to summarize the texts and share with the whole group how they see Jesus linking himself with the history of Israel in each passage.

Matthew 26:1, 2, 17-29

Luke 9:28-36

Luke 4:16-30

Mark 15:33-39

Conclude by asking the group to name titles for Jesus (the Good Shepherd, Vine, Lamb) and discuss how these also link him to the Old Testament.

3. Up to this point we have been concentrating on the continuity between Jesus and the Old Testament. In Romans 6:1-11 Paul indicates that our bondage and the deliverance secured by Jesus Christ are different from those involved in the exodus.

On the chalkboard or two sheets of newsprint create a chart that will help the group compare the first exodus with Jesus’ death and resurrection. Head one column “Exodus 1” and the other “Exodus 2.” Ask the members of the group to respond to these questions:

- a. Who is in bondage?
- b. What is the nature of the bondage? to what? to whom?
- c. What is the means of deliverance?

d. What is the nature of that deliverance? by what? by whom?

e. What is the result of the deliverance?

or

Dr. Walther says, "The Gospels were written in the light of the church's knowledge that Jesus had risen and that he was relating to his followers in a new way. This is a presupposition of the New Testament understanding of God, and it explains why a new view of the people of God developed." While the church understood its relationship to what had come before, it also recognized that God's saving act in Jesus Christ ushered in a new type of deliverance from bondage.

Ask the group to skim the material in the *Resource Book* under "Discontinuity with the Old Testament," "Jesus' New Message," and "Paul and God's New Salvation" to locate ways in which the deliverance brought about by Jesus' death and resurrection differed from the exodus experience of the Hebrews. Write their suggestions on a chalkboard or newsprint. Conclude by discussing these questions:

a. In what ways can Jesus' death and resurrection be seen as the second exodus?

b. How are the first exodus and the second exodus similar? dissimilar?

c. The Israelites were God's special people of the first exodus. What people were/are a part of the second exodus?

4. The deliverance brought about by Jesus resulted in the formation of a new community. The resurrection was the trigger that set this new community in motion and mission. Review with the group the following texts, asking what each one discloses about the nature and purpose of this community.

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 1:8

Luke 10:30-37

Acts 2:14-42

Discuss these question in the group:

a. According to these passages, what was the nature and purpose of this community?

b. In what ways do the life and work of your church reflect the meanings of these texts?

OR

The church's ministry and mission reflect the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The unity and diversity of each community of faith depends upon its understanding of what Scripture discloses about the nature and purpose of the church. Divide into small groups. Provide large sheets of construction paper and markers. Assign each group one of the following passages:

Luke 10:30-37

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 1:8; 2:14-42

Tell the groups to imagine they are founding members of a new church community. They want to spread the news about their church's ministry through the local newspaper. Using the assigned passages for inspiration, each group has ten minutes to create an advertisement that discloses the nature and purpose of this new community and encourages others to become a part of the church.

Gather and share the advertisements.

and/or

Ask the participants to describe the path by which they came to be members of their present congregations. Were they members of the same denomination previously? What branches of the church and what nationalities do they represent? Discuss as a group how their diversity reflects the nature of the community described in the passages listed above.

CLOSING

1. Go over the Loose Ends list and respond to those questions that can be answered at this point.
2. The following verses to "Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain" tie in the exodus theme with both the Old and the New Testaments. Sing or recite the words in unison. The hymn tunes St. Kevin or Ave Virgo Virginum can be used.

Come, you faithful, raise the strain of triumphant gladness;
God has brought forth Israel into joy from sadness;
Loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke Jacob's sons and daughters;
Led them with unmoistened foot through the Red Sea waters.

'Tis the spring of soul's today; Christ has burst his prison,
And from three days' sleep in death as a sun has risen;
All the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying,
From his light, to whom we give laud and praise undying.

or

Select another resurrection hymn to sing.

3. Stand, join hands, and invite the members of the group to share their joys and concerns. Include these in your closing prayer.

Looking Ahead

Item #2 under Exploring the Scripture in the next session suggests that two individuals or two small teams prepare brief presentations reflecting opposing views of the church's relationship to civil authority. Scripture references and discussion questions are listed with that activity.

Item #3 suggests that a member of the group present a summary of the characteristics of apocalyptic literature. Sources of information for the presentation are included with the activity.