

No-Prep Bible Study Method Based on Mutual Invitation Process created by Eric H.F. Law

Note: You have about 10 minutes for each step, or about 30 minutes total for this exercise. The first and third questions are always the same. The second question changes with each new Bible passage read. Using three different translations adds another dimension to the Bible study.

Step One: The leader invites a member of the group to read the text slowly. Identify which translation of the Bible is being read.

Leader: As _____ reads this passage, I invite you to listen for a word, a phrase, or an image that speaks to you or comes alive for you.

After the reading, the Leader continues: Using Mutual Invitation, I invite you to share a word, phrase, or image in this passage that stands out for you – without discussion by the group.

Step Two: The leader invites a member of the group (it could be the same person) to read the text slowly. Identify which translation of the Bible is being read (if different than the one used in Step One).

Leader: As _____ reads this passage again, I invite you to reflect on a question:

The reading is followed by a short period of silence.

Then using Mutual Invitation, each person will have two minutes to share their reflections on the question.

Step Three: The leader invites a member of the group to read the text slowly. Identify which translation of the Bible is being read (if different than the one used in Steps One and Two).

Leader: As _____ reads the passage for the third time, I invite you to reflect on the question: Based on this passage, what does God invite you to do, to be or to change?

The reading is followed by a short period of silence.

Then using Mutual Invitation, each person will have two-three minutes to share their reflections on the question.

Optional: The passage could be read a fourth time, with participants invited to discuss it using the Mutual Invitation Method.)

Step 4: Close with a prayer circle. Invite participants to join hands in a circle. Invite each person to mentally complete a sentence: *I thank God today..... (or) I ask God today....*

The leader will begin by sharing prayers. After the leader has shared, he or she will squeeze the hand of the person to the right, which is the signal for the next person to share his or her prayers. If the person does not wish to share aloud, he or she can pass the pulse to the next person on the right. When the pulse comes back to the leader, he or she begins the Lord's Prayer, inviting everyone to join in.

Respectful Communication Guidelines

- R – Take responsibility for what you say and feel without blaming others
- E – Use empathic listening
- S – Be sensitive to differences in communication styles
- P – Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak
- E – Examine your own assumptions and perceptions
- C – Keep confidentiality
- T – Trust ambiguity: we are not here to debate who is right or wrong

Mutual Invitation Process

The leader invites someone to read. After the reading, the leader invites someone to share. That person then invites another participant to share, until all have had an opportunity to contribute. Participants are encouraged to listen to other participants without commenting, unless the group adds the optional fourth reading of the passage and chooses to discuss it.

It is okay to say “pass” or “pass for now.” Those who “pass for now” will be invited to share after all other participants have shared.

This method is taken from *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* by Eric H. F. Law (1993). St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press.

Diane Shallue of LACE (Lutheran Association of Christian Educators) adapted the ground rules from Eric Law’s Kaleidoscope Bible Study for the method she calls “No Prep Bible Study.”

1. The Bible passage, not the leader nor the group, is the focus of this Bible study.
2. We are not here to debate who has the right interpretation; we are here to read Scripture together and share our insights.
3. Our leaders are not experts. They are facilitators who will lead us through a process by which the inspiration from Scripture can be shared and celebrated. However, a leader might bring in historical, literary, and contextual information to help the group understand the text better.
4. We are all equals before the Scripture; therefore, no one needs to feel disadvantaged. We invite you all to adopt a “beginner’s mind,” so that every time we approach a text, we would hear it as if for the first time.
5. Because we seek insights and not just information and we seek to build up the body of Christ, it is of great importance to the community of God’s people for everyone to participate in the discussion.
6. We invite you to hold any personal information shared here in confidence, because it is only in this way that we can feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts.

The website for the Kaleidoscope Institute is located at:

<http://216.104.171.229/ki/>

A YouTube prayer video entitled *Still* can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=246wzYIOJfc#>

To learn more about Eric H.F. Law go to:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP_Ia0Zitdg