



Explore

Resources



How to Lead an *Explore Study*

World Christian SERIES



Facilitator Guide

Who Should Be In Explore:

- People in your circle of influence—from your community, campus, or church. It is challenging yet simple requiring minimal preparation for the leader.
- It is for every believer, and perhaps even more so for those that are not currently living missionally.

How to “Namestorm” and Invite People to Join:

- Take out a piece of paper and write “community,” “campus,” and “church” in three columns.
- Take three to five minutes to pray for wisdom and list names of people in each of those categories.
- Now, which column has the most names? Start with that column and circle the three to five people you want to ask to do Explore with you.
- After you circle those names, choose what day and time you are going to contact those people to invite them to do this study with you.
- Remember, it is a personal invitation. It could be something like:

“Hey David, this summer I’m going through a study called Explore, it’s seven lessons on God’s heart for the world and how we can participate in God’s mission today. Would you join me in going through this?”

- You may even want to think through or write out what you are going to say when you invite them.

How to Lead the Study (Facilitator Role):

- You are a facilitator, so your role is to ask questions and facilitate discussion, not to teach.
- Personally invite people to be part of your group.
- Plan a time and place to meet (can be once a week or you could meet more often).
- Give yourself 90 minutes to have enough time for relational time and the study (more time can be allocated for your context).
- Keep the group discussion on track, don’t let the group get stuck on one part of the lesson, and keep the discussion moving if one person is doing all the talking.
- Help the group as they make applications and facilitate accountability the next lesson.
- Here’s a tip to get the most out of application: Brainstorm as you prep the lesson on what specific opportunities your group could engage in together.

Lesson Elements:

01 Intro and Prayer

- Briefly review last the last week's main points.
- Ask for examples of how participants complete their applications.
- Don't get bogged down in the "Prep It" section—it's meant to present pertinent information in a concise way. You could ask participants to do this section before coming to the group or it can be done together.

02 Read and Discuss

- Do this as a group and discuss the main ideas from the article. Ask which concept most impacted each person.
- Since Explore is primarily a Bible study, prepare to spend significant time in this section discovering and discussing how the verses apply to the topic at hand.

03 Live and Pray

- This is the critical part of the lesson where knowledge is transformed into action.
- As the discussion facilitator, be sure to leave enough time for this section. If your time gets cut short people may walk away without a concrete action step. Explore is about information and action.
- Help the group set SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Achievable, Relevant, Time-based.
- You can pray for a long time, but if you are running out of time you can ask one person to pray the written prayers.
- Encourage different people to pray each lesson.
- Explore follows the THUMB acronym, so each lesson has a different people group to pray for from the from the THUMB religious blocks.

Keys for Leading Each Lesson

Lesson 1 – God’s Word

- This section sets the tone for the rest of Explore. Keep it Christ-centered.
- Challenge people to see the nations as they read the Bible.

ENCOURAGING REFLECTION AND TESTING BY THE WORD

Take these two statements in Explore and put them to the test:

- “You will see that missions is not your pastor’s idea or your campus minister’s idea, or even your idea — it is God’s.”
- “The Bible is not a collection of separate books with no common theme or story. It is one book with one theme.”

After the group has read these statements you can say, “both of these statements are bold statements. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 tells us to test everything and hold on to what is true. We are not going to just accept these statements just because they are in a pretty printed book. Let’s put these statements to the test.”

BASING ANSWERS ON SCRIPTURE

When responding to the questions, ask the participants to first answer with a phrase directly from the verse(s) before adding their own thoughts or summary. The goal is that people see the clear message of Scripture that often gets overlooked by people’s commentary.

LOTS OF VERSES

This is one of the longer lessons because of how many verses you will cover in a short amount of time. As you prep, think through how much time you need to spend on each section to stay on track. One idea for making this go faster is when you get to the verses discussion section, assign the questions to different people and give them some time to simultaneously lookup their passages and answer their questions, then come back together and have them share the answers they found.

Lesson 2 – God's World

Keep in mind that there is a lot of challenging information and questions in the lesson, and most of it will be new to your group.

Make sure to highlight and define terms (Don't assume everybody knows what you're talking about):

- Unreached People Groups, 10/40 window, THUMB

CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

In DISCUSS question 3, someone will probably ask “Do people who have never heard of Jesus go to hell?” Don't get hung up on that question as a group. Affirm the validity of the question and the need to honestly wrestle with it. Perhaps let a couple comments be made, maybe have your own brief statement prepared, allow the weightiness of the issues to be felt and then if people want to talk more, offer another time to gather to address that specific topic, or address it individually.

Having said that, it is important to reinforce the fact that salvation comes through Christ ALONE and 2.9 billion of the world has little to no access to anyone that would tell them about Christ.

- Polls show that close to 38% of all Christians believe that those who never hear or accept the gospel will still be saved which completely undercuts what Scripture says and the Great Commission.

Lesson 3 – God's Work: Praying to the Lord of the Harvest

This is the first practical lesson! The first two were primarily about engaging our minds and hearts with God's mission, but the remaining lessons are about engaging our hands with God's mission. Jesus commands his disciples to pray at the end of Matthew 9 before he sends them out in Matthew 10—there's a reason it is the first of the practical lessons in Explore.

“⁸So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us” (1 Thess. 2:8). The best way to mobilize and disciple others is to do life together, and invite them as you live out the World Christian lifestyle.

PRAY, PRAY, PRAY

Make sure you spend a significant amount of time actually praying and not just talking about prayer. For many in your group it probably is the first time they have ever prayed specifically for unreached peoples!

Idea: Print out people group cards from joshuaproject.net beforehand so you can spend more time praying for the unreached.

Use DISCUSSION verses to show believers how they can pray for missionaries on the field.

Lesson 4 – God’s Work: Sending Laborers into the Harvest Field

Sending is a vital habit of the World Christian lifestyle. Make it clear from the start that we will be talking about money in this lesson amongst other aspects of sending! As Christians we should be comfortable talking about this topic seeing as Jesus talked about it all the time, but we shy away from it! These conversations need to be had.

We often think we can’t send because our finances are already stretched too thin. Not only are there multiple ways to help send well, but most haven’t actually sat down and thought through which areas they can reduce their spending so they can give.

If you want to see a real example of how this can happen, watch this video of how a group of Kenyan students responded to the Explore study and Sending lesson. <https://vimeo.com/158660397>

ADDITIONAL IDEAS:

- Encourage them to take people they know through a lesson of Explore.
- Encourage or help them find missionaries to help send and support if they aren’t doing so already.
- Practice sacrificially sending with them.

Lesson 5 – God’s Work: Welcoming the Nations Among Us

Highlight God’s awesomeness in how he is bringing peoples from hard to reach places to us. Go back to lesson 2 and look at the 10/40 window and show how the 10/40 window is an area of the world where it is hard to be a Christian. Ask what the reality is where they live?

Highlight the impact an international has in his/her own community. They know the language, culture, people, etc.

Remember to apply these lessons with your group. This is a challenging one because most people are too fearful to get to know internationals. Make specific plans to meet and welcome internationals in your area.

If you want to dive deeper with your group into welcoming check out our new tool *Welcoming the Nations Among Us!* vianations.org/welcoming

Lesson 6 – God’s Work: Going Where the Church Is Not

Set the tone early. Help them see that going requires the greatest cost. Most of the other habits of a World Christian don’t require you to leave the comforts of your home.

As you address the fears of going, combat those fears as a group with God’s word. Affirm those fears and invite people in the group to directly address them with Scripture.

In the LIVE session, for question 1, ask “what are you NOT WILLING to sacrifice?” Be honest and vulnerable and begin to pray with them over those things.

“CALLING” TO GO

In the DISCUSSION session, question number 4, talks about “the call” to GO with Scripture. The Apostle Paul’s motivation to go because He saw God’s glory to the nations in Scripture. Paul didn’t reference his experience on the road to Damascus or any other “feeling/call”. He was motivated to give his life to missions because of the supremacy of God through his word.

Lesson 7 – God’s Work: Mobilizing the Body of Christ

This lesson is all about multiplying ourselves and inviting others to join us in the World Christian lifestyle. Congratulations, you already started to mobilize others when you invited them to join an Explore group with you!

This statement from the lesson sums up the whole lesson “The best way to raise up other World Christians is to first model the lifestyle, and then invite others to join you.” You only need to be one step ahead.

MAKING A PLAN TO MULTIPLY

Leave extra time to fill out the World Christian lifestyle plan at the end of the lesson. This is the last time you will be meeting for Explore so it’s important you walk away with a plan on how your group will continue to live out the World Christian lifestyle together!

Tips for Leading A Small Group

- 01 ***Your part is to facilitate discussion.*** The Explore study is designed to facilitate discovery and discussion. Don't feel the pressure to make people "get it," just walk and talk with them through the process of discovery and discussion, allowing the Holy Spirit to help them understand the truths in the lessons. Be okay with silence, also be okay with calling people out to generate conversation.
- 02 ***Don't be afraid when people ask questions that you cannot answer.*** Either encourage them to do some research on their own outside of the group time or ask others in the group what they think. Your success doesn't depend on your ability to provide an answer to every question. The goal is to cause people to want to learn more. Most often it is better for them to wrestle through a hard question than you to give them a pat answer. Embrace this and lead them to discover new things about God and his mission!
- 03 ***Listen more than you talk.*** Your role is that of a facilitator, not teacher. To do this well you need to listen. Try to discover why each participant is asking the questions he/she is asking. Try to be like Jesus and ask good questions that really get to the heart of the issues.
- 04 ***Be affirming.*** Never be critical or sarcastic of a person's answer, if you do, the likelihood is that they won't share openly again. This will help create an environment of trust within your Explore group. If their answers are confusing or incorrect, ask some questions to help mature them in their understanding.
- 05 ***Keep the group on track.*** Do your best to keep the studies within the allotted time. If people have more questions let them know you would love to stick around after the study and talk with them. If there is someone who is very vocal and answering all the questions, pull them aside after the study, thank them for their contributions to the group, but mention that you have noticed how little others are answering questions. Ask if they would help you to get others involved in the discussions. This way you are not criticizing them for talking too much, but you are involving them in getting others to share.
- 06 ***Review the material and pray before the study.*** Go over the study and make any notes of questions or points you want to share in the group. Adding a couple quality points is fine, but remember, you are there to facilitate, not lecture. Also make it a point to be regularly praying for each person in the group.
- 07 ***Think through the size of your group.*** Take time to plan how to be most effective with the size of your group. Often a good group size is between 4 and 8. If there are too few people, you can lose the dynamic of having various personalities, stories, and experiences to draw from. If there are too many, people may find it easy to check out and not participate or cause unnecessary distractions. Regardless of the size, find creative ways to engage your group and trust God to speak to them.
- 08 ***Listen carefully to your group members so you can lead each one well.*** How does what they say reflect where they are in their walk in the World Christian lifestyle? Take mental notes about conversations you'll want to have one-on-one.