

When Heaven Meets Earth: Leaders Guide

What to Expect from Each Section

There's a lot to unpack in the biblical understanding of Heaven and Earth, so we recommend tackling one session at a time. It will give you and your group time to really grasp each lesson and have enough time to process through what you're learning. To help you guide a group or class through this book, we've broken down the sections you'll find in each session, so you can know what to expect.

Introduction

The first thing you'll find is an introduction to the lesson. It usually starts with a quick overview and a question to get you and your group into the right headspace. This section will also have definitions and background on the biblical language for the session. Basically, this part is all about establishing context. Context is super important for interpreting the Bible. If we don't grasp where the author and the original audience were at, we can't understand some of the nuances of the text or the full meaning.

But what can a modern audience learn from reading Scripture through the lens of this ancient culture? Turns out—a lot. This first section will help you and your group understand what Heaven and earth actually meant to the biblical authors and original audience, and it will give you the context you need to go deeper into the text where you can learn some pretty amazing stuff.

Geek Out

The next section you'll see is, "Geek Out." This is the fun part. You'll get to go deeper into ancient biblical culture, zooming out so you can better understand how the original audience thought and lived. We'll then bring you back around to connect to the text as we explain different examples of ancient thinking and influence woven into the Scripture. This is the stuff that we might normally read right past if we didn't stop to look at the whole picture.

Dig Deeper

In the "Dig Deeper" section, you get to put on your biblical scholar hat. We go beyond the primary text of the lesson and look to other passages of Scripture to provide more meaning and a better understanding of how language and themes are used throughout the entire story. Because as many biblical scholars will tell you, the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible.

Discussion Guide

The last part of each session is the discussion guide. At this point, you've probably learned some new stuff, and your mind might be reeling. Awesome! The discussion questions are meant to help you focus back in on all of this new information. What does all of this stuff about heaven and earth have to do with Jesus followers today? The guide will sum up the main points from the session and the big picture. It's important to summarize everything your group has learned, but as a leader, you should also allow for individual reactions and applications during this section.

Think Dialogue, Not Monologue

Sometimes a group will be hesitant to engage, and that's where a great leader can really help lead the discussion. But be careful that you're not the only one doing the talking. Ask direct questions to specific people in your group and wait patiently, and sometimes a little awkwardly, for the people in your group to draw their own conclusions and respond to what they're learning.

Find the Connection

As a leader, you can help make those connections between what your group is learning and their lives as Jesus followers today. These real-life examples will draw your group members into the conversation.

Keep your Group Focused

You want your group to draw parallels between what they're learning and their own lives. But often times this can lead the group pretty far off the text or the main point of the lesson. It's your job as the leader to point your group back to the biblical texts and keep the discussion focused.

Tips for Leading Group Discussions

