



# DISCOVERING CHRISTIANITY

Hello,

I'm really excited that you're considering running the seven-session *Discovering Christianity* course of presentations and discussions. You will, like me, find it an exciting journey. I know that you and the people who join you in these studies will find yourself blessed and strengthened by the experience.

Today, many people don't have any Bible-reading or church-going experience. They know very little of the details of the Christian story and how it might relate to them personally.

Over the last four years of developing and running these courses, I've tried to aim the material and approach towards those who wouldn't call themselves a follower of Jesus. The *Discovering Christianity* material covers some of the central ideas of Christianity including concepts that some similar courses don't cover (e.g. fulfilled biblical prophecy, the Sabbath, the second coming of Jesus). The intention is that each session follows a well-structured progression that leads attendees into seeing Christianity in a relevant way.

You could use this course as either a follow-up to any 'Introduction-to-Christianity' course that you currently run or even as a replacement.

The material on this CD includes **attendee handouts** for each of the seven sessions as well as **facilitator's notes and script**. It's best if you use a software program called *Adobe Reader* to open these files (it's a free download at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)). The advertising brochure can be used to promote the course, and I've also included a 30-minute MP3 sound file based on Session 1. You can use this to familiarize yourself with the style of the material.

I invite you to use this material and see how the Lord might bless both yourself and those who join you. Feel free to contact me using the email address at the bottom of this page with any questions or feedback on how this course could be improved.

## SESSION TITLES

Session 1	CHRISTIANITY: What Is The Evidence?
Session 2	JESUS: Who Did He Claim To Be?
Session 3	JESUS: Why Did He Come?
Session 4	JESUS: Why Did He Die?
Session 5	THE RESURRECTION: So What?
Session 6	OUR PLANET: Where Is It All Heading?
Session 7	FAITH: What is a Christian?

## **SUGGESTIONS**

Here are a few tips for running these sessions:

★ By focusing primarily on the Gospel of Mark, as this course does, it teaches good Bible-reading techniques that attendees can use as they continue in any study after course.

★ I've found that the material works just as well in private 'one-to-one' studies as it does with groups.

★ If you expect a group larger than ten or so people, it's often better to split the group and have other facilitators lead through the discussion part in the smaller groups. This will help encourage discussion (you only need one presenter for the *Main Presentation*).

★ Have your leadership team meet 15 minutes before each session for prayer together (if it's only you leading, then use this time to pray and settle yourself before the attendees arrive).

★ The discussion and presentations run for approximately 75 minutes (I advertise for 90 minutes just in case. The bigger the group, the more time you'll probably need for discussions).

★ You will see that each script has the 'section' times to help plan the evening. Try to start on time and make sure you end on time. This demonstrates your respect and courtesy for the attendees.

★ The day before each session familiarize yourself with the script and understand the main points. Don't read it word-for-word. Just be natural and give your attention to the attendees, not the script.

★ You may like to think about having some food available before each of the sessions. This dynamic can really help with developing the relationships (allocate about 30 minutes for this meal together).

★ Don't ask anybody to read from the Bible without first asking them discreetly if it's OK. Many people are uncomfortable about reading in public and you don't want to embarrass anyone. It's probably safer for the leaders to do the readings during the opening session.

★ Prayer during the sessions is at our discretion and sense of discernment. Some people have never prayed before either individually or with a group of people. I often introduce the idea of prayer at about Session 3.

★ During the discussion times (like the *Home-Reading Q & A*) if a question or opinion is raised ask the other attendees for their thoughts before you share your answer. It's OK if you don't know the answer to a question. That will make you more real and honest in the eyes of attendees. Tell them that you'll write the issue down and do some reading before the next session. Remember, the best facilitator style to use during the discussions is one that encourages discussion and thought rather than one that just gives answers.

★ Use the suggested questions as a base and give yourself the freedom to ask related-questions as God's Spirit leads you. Try to draw out ideas and discussion from the

attendees rather than any “Yes/No” answers.

★ I’ve found that having the same copy of the Bible available for everyone is really useful. It helps the facilitator to also give the page number for Bible references. This is helpful for attendees who have never used the Bible before.

★ Depending on how you’ve advertised the course, the attendees who come will be there for different reasons. People attend because someone’s personally invited them, some because they have any interest in finding out more about Christianity, and some might be new Christians. Often, someone who is a “long-term Christian” will want to attend purely because it’s another Bible study. I try to provide them with an alternative Bible studies *Discovering Christianity* unless they’re bringing a friend who is not a Christian. The reason for this is that I want to provide as much time and ‘space’ as possible for genuine inquirers of Christianity to feel comfortable in raising any issues, questions or doubts.

★ At the end of the first session, you may like to get people’s names and email addresses. This way you can remind them of upcoming sessions and their topics.

Yours in Christian service,

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September, 2008 (Version 1.2)