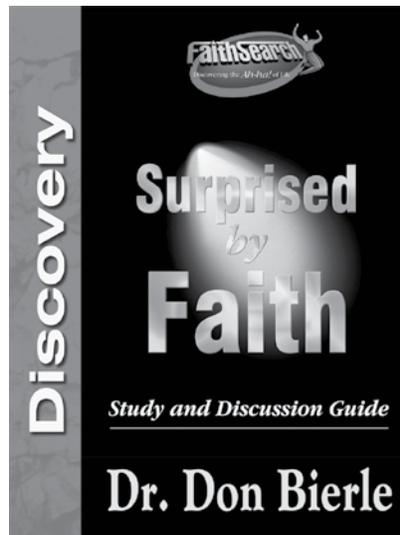


Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide

LEADER'S MANUAL

Introduction



- **Answer Key for the *Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide***
- **Teaching Helps for the Teacher/Facilitator of the *FaithSearch Discovery Presentation***



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PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL WITH EVIDENCE TO ALL PEOPLES EVERYWHERE

Leader's Manual

Teaching Helps for the Teacher/Facilitator of *FaithSearch* Discovery and Answer Key for the *Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide*

Welcome!

Welcome to an insightful, logical and biblical faith adventure! Hundreds of thousands of people in the United States and other countries of the world have encountered *FaithSearch* Discovery—and found it life changing. It is also a valuable resource for pastors, teachers, and small group leaders to use in their outreach and teaching ministries. I hope you are considering leading a group or sharing this Gospel with evidence in some way. It will be a satisfying experience. Even more, it will bear spiritual fruit by guiding unbelievers toward a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, by strengthening the faith of believers, and by equipping them to be more effective witnesses.

Several resources have been prepared for both the participant and the leader of *FaithSearch* Discovery. These will optimize the spiritual impact and guide the process from the beginning to the end of this study. The use of these resources will be explained throughout this Leader's Manual. May God bless your study.

1. *Surprised by Faith* – the text for *FaithSearch* Discovery. It is essential that participants have a personal copy. It contains a thorough presentation of the subject matter that is needed for personal or group study and discussion of *FaithSearch* Discovery.
2. *Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide*, (Study Guide) – 112 pages for personal and group study of the *Surprised by Faith* text. An ideal tool which will facilitate a deeper understanding and personal application of the ten “Ah-ha!” discoveries which are made by reading the *Surprised by Faith* text. This Study Guide, together with the *Surprised by Faith* text and a Bible, are the tools which can lead to a never-to-be-forgotten learning experience.
3. Leader's Manual of the above Study Guide. This publication is available free online at www.faithsearch.org/LeadersManual. A printed copy may be obtained for a fee plus shipping and handling by calling the *FaithSearch* office (952-401-4501) or by ordering online at shop.faithsearch.org. It is an answer key for all the subjective questions throughout the Study Guide, plus it has key points and teaching helps for the teacher/facilitator of a *FaithSearch* Discovery presentation, class, etc.
4. *FaithSearch* Discovery Participant Guide – 32 pages to accompany the Discovery event/presentation. A Discovery group would not use this publication if already using the *Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide*. This resource is primarily for use when *FaithSearch* Discovery is presented in a short time period (2-6 hours). It provides meaningful summary notes of each session, the ten “Ah-ha!” discoveries and a discussion of related Bible passages.



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Getting Ready to Lead

INTRODUCTION

What is *FaithSearch* Discovery?

FaithSearch Discovery is an eye-opening presentation of the case for Christian faith, including the use of logic, along with scientific and biblical evidence. It is for everyone who wonders why they should believe, and for everyone who wonders why they do—providing satisfying answers to life’s most important questions. Ten stimulating and inspiring “*Ah-ha!*” discoveries guide the participant to a confident and life-changing faith in the historical person of Jesus Christ. With intellectual validity, *FaithSearch* Discovery builds its case by analyzing five key questions which culminate in discovery of the “*Ah-ha!*” of life:

1. Why Am I Here?
2. Is the Bible True?
3. Is Jesus Really God?
4. When Is Faith Valid?
5. How Can I Know God?

Why Is *FaithSearch* Discovery Needed?

In our world, beneath the apparent of diversity, lies a common core of concerns about life. Can the Christian faith give genuine answers to these concerns and bring meaning to our lives? Yes, if it is communicated in a way that can be understood and applied. *FaithSearch* Discovery was designed to do this.

Until recently, Christians in some parts of the world enjoyed a consensus in society, namely that their message—and the source of that message, the Bible—is true. As a result, there has been little attention given to facts and reasons which support the Christian truth claims. Christianity became based on the *tradition* of its truth, not a *demonstration* of its truth. In other parts of the world, understanding of the basis for the Christian faith has never been addressed. Until recently such demonstration of this basis has been unnecessary.

Today, however, pluralism and a truly global marketplace of ideas have challenged the basic tenets of the Christian faith. Today its truth claims must be defended. Many Christians however, no longer know how or have never learned, and thus find their attempts at communicating their faith both ineffective and frustrating. When false prophets like Dan Brown (*The DaVinci Code* book and movie) arise who allege that the teachings of the Bible and of Jesus Christ are legends, Christians don’t know how to give an answer.

***FaithSearch* Discovery restores the “why” of the Christian faith both for those who wonder why they believe and for those who wonder why they should.**

How Do I Use *FaithSearch* Discovery?

The applications and situations in which one or more of its formats could be used are limited only by your imagination and ingenuity. Here are some ideas:

- Office and business interaction groups
- Church adult education classes and forums
- Home Bible study and discussion groups
- Junior and senior-highschool classes
- College campus groups
- Home schools
- Camp curriculum for youth and adults
- Men’s/women’s organizations and groups
- Youth groups
- One-to-one sharing and lending of materials
- Christian school curriculum and classes
- Youth school clubs, Bible studies, and prayer groups
- Curriculum resources for pastors and missionaries
- Equipping leaders/staff of Christian organizations

Hundreds of thousands of people have testified that *FaithSearch* Discovery has satisfied their questioning minds and subsequently changed their lives. Yet *FaithSearch* Discovery is easy to use. You don't need to spend days preparing or organizing. You do need to be a credible person in your networks of influence. As a discussion leader or facilitator, you are providing an opportunity for your family, friends or work associates to use the *Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide*, the *Surprised by Faith* text, and their Bible to discover Christ for the first time or deepen their walk with Him.

PRINCIPLES: How Does This Work?

A Biblically Illiterate World

The content and presentation of *FaithSearch* Discovery is sensitive to people in your network of influence who do not have much knowledge or understanding of the Bible. Polls conducted by the Princeton Religion Research Center revealed that only 42% of adults in America could identify even five of the Ten Commandments, and 75% did not know the content of John 3:16. Surprisingly, this is true even within the church. Another study by the Gallup organization revealed that 20% of regular church-attending teenagers could not identify the historical event that is commemorated by Easter.

When moderating the discussion about the evidence for the existence of God; the foundational truths of the reliability and historicity of the Bible; the life and times of Jesus Christ; and a biblical definition and understanding of genuine faith; be sensitive not to make assumptions as to what participants may know or believe about the Bible or the Christian faith.

Historicity of the New Testament

Whether the Bible is the inspired Word of God is *not* the foremost question in *FaithSearch* Discovery. (Read that again, carefully.) While we *are* committed to the truth of Holy Spirit inspiration, yet for the Discovery presentation, our priority is to help the inquiring person to discover whether the **New Testament is a reliable eyewitness and historical record**. If we can establish this through external evidence, then we can reliably use the New Testament to explore the question of who Jesus is without assuming His Divinity in advance. We can also then be assured that faith is not blind but is based on a certain object: Jesus Christ. This is the critical issue to keep in focus as you go through *FaithSearch* Discovery.

Introducing Real People to the Real God

The central concept of *FaithSearch* Discovery is the visit of God to earth 2,000 years ago in the historical person of Jesus Christ. **The fact that details of His life were recorded in the first century by eyewitnesses or their associates, and that they were accurately transmitted over the centuries to us, preserved in the New Testament, sets Christianity apart from every other religion**. It is therefore possible to pursue a reasonable investigation of Jesus Christ using the legal method (the use of testimony and evidence) to determine whether He claimed to be God, and if so, whether His claim to be God is true. That is the focus of chapters 1-6 of *FaithSearch* Discovery. These sessions are critical to the effectiveness of this series. Many have testified that the evidence in these sessions “disarmed” their previous arguments against the Christian faith.

Chapters 7-10 of *FaithSearch* Discovery explain the nature of biblical faith, reveal the primary stumbling block to faith, and provide an invitation for participants to follow Jesus Christ. Three important concepts are emphasized:

- The first is the **supernatural dimension of faith** associated with the work of the Holy Spirit to create in us new life from above (new birth). As a result, *becoming* a Christian is a miracle of God in each life.

- Second, coming into relationship with God through the forgiveness of our sins and confession of faith (salvation) is **the result of grace, not works**. This may be the most universal misunderstanding in the minds of people. It must be emphasized that *becoming* a Christian is not about morality, merit, or obeying a list of commands.
- The third concept is **our prideful nature of self-sufficiency and independence** which makes submitting our lives to God so difficult. Pride is the factor that keeps more people from faith in Jesus Christ than any other.

PREPARATION: How Do I Get Ready For This?

How should you approach this opportunity of facilitating or leading the discussion of *FaithSearch* Discovery? What are the fundamentals for making this opportunity a dynamic and fulfilling experience?

Develop the Right Attitudes

First, **avoid becoming paralyzed with the fear that you do not know enough**. By thinking you may be embarrassed by questions which you cannot answer, you may never feel adequately prepared. If this is your tendency, moderate this attitude with the following reminders:

1. A teacher or discussion leader is not necessarily the “expert,” but the moderator and facilitator of the study and discussion. It is enough that in advance you have read the book, *Surprised by Faith*, and completed each chapter in the *Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide*. For greater confidence you will want to consult the appropriate chapter helps and answer key in this Leader’s Guide.
2. A teacher or discussion leader will readily acknowledge when he/she does not know the answer to a question. Such honesty will gain the respect of your group. Trying to fool your group when you do not know the answer reflects insecurity on your part and eventually will distance you from the group.
3. Accept that you will not do a perfect job the first time through. No one does! If you learn from each experience, you will improve. Resolve to grow in competence over time, but don’t let a perfectionist attitude rob you of the privilege and responsibility of making a difference in the lives of others through *FaithSearch* Discovery.

Second, **avoid thinking you know it all**. An aura of super-confidence—even arrogance—prevents your acknowledging the need for study and preparation. If you err in this direction, be reminded of the following:

1. It is important for the discussion leader to be candid and transparent—in other words, “real.” The best teachers usually have a teachable spirit. When you don’t “know it all,” your group can relate better and relax with you.
2. Humility was a key characteristic of Jesus’ life. As is presented in *FaithSearch* Discovery, pride keeps more people from faith in Christ than any other factor. The teacher or discussion leader, as a Christian, is to model to the group the attitude of a humble servant (see John 13). In this way you make it easier for them to acknowledge their own shortcomings.
3. You may have more background preparation in the Bible and teaching than some or many others in the group. Thank God for the opportunities you have had. There is, however, important information in *FaithSearch* Discovery which you may not have mastered. Much thought and testing have gone into this series. Therefore, learn and use *FaithSearch* Discovery with little modification at first.

Third, **accept others as they are** with their strengths and weaknesses. Give others the benefit of the doubt, demonstrate a positive attitude, and be optimistic. Perhaps above all, culture the quality of patience.

Develop Skills for Sharing the Gospel

The discussion leader should develop two sharing skills to become spiritually effective.

First, **you should be prepared to relate your own spiritual journey.** This is important experiential evidence that supports the legitimacy of the Christian faith. While the early emphasis in *FaithSearch* Discovery is on pragmatic (purpose and meaning) and historical evidence, the final sessions focus on the experiential evidence of God's transformation of our lives. In your own testimony you are claiming to know the infinite and personal God and that He has made a positive difference in your life. Everyone desires this experience. A testimony of experiencing God, when spoken with conviction and genuineness, is particularly helpful when presented after other apologetic evidences earlier in the study.

Second, you should **be prepared to present a simple outline of the Christian Gospel** and provide an opportunity for individuals to affirm faith in Jesus Christ through prayer. As the teacher or discussion leader you need to be prepared for those occasions when a group member asks what they need to do to become a Christian. Many think this will never happen, but be assured that—as a teacher or discussion leader of *FaithSearch* Discovery—it will. Get ready!

Be prepared to summarize the Bible's teaching concerning God's love, the human problem, God's solution through Jesus Christ, and our need to respond in faith to Him. *FaithSearch* Discovery gives a presentation of the Gospel very similar to that of the apostles as recorded in the New Testament, particularly in the Acts of the Apostles. In Acts we can glean insights into what the apostles Peter and Paul said when they were presenting the Gospel (e.g. Acts 2:22ff; 10:34ff; 13:23ff; 17:22ff). Although some of the incidents are quite brief, a consistent pattern is apparent. The following three aspects seem to be central to all the outreach messages of the apostles:

- Historical facts concerning Jesus—His miracles, ministry, sacrificial death and resurrection
- Theological significance of these facts—evaluation of Jesus' claim to be Lord and Christ
- An invitation to respond in faith to Jesus with repentance for the forgiveness of sin

Chapters 1-6 of *FaithSearch* Discovery present the first two aspects of the apostles' Gospel message. Chapters 7-8 are explanatory of faith and preparatory for the invitation in chapters 9-10.

Engage in Additional Reading

There are many books and magazine articles referenced in the *Surprised by Faith* book (see the endnotes) and in the reading sections of each chapter of the Study Guide. As needed, become acquainted with some of these resources because they will strengthen your understanding of the issues raised in this study. In addition, the books listed below are a compendium of answers to issues and questions likely to arise from your group participants:

- Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody, *I'm Glad You Asked* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook Publishing, 2003)
- Norman Geisler and Ron Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask* (Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2008)
- Cliffe Knechtle, *Give Me An Answer* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986)
- Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Answers to Tough Questions Skeptics Ask about the Christian Faith* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1980)
- R.C. Sproul, *Reason to Believe: A Response to Common Objections to Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982)

Pray for Yourself and the Participants You Will Teach

Pray that God will give you sensitivity and wisdom, and that He will prepare the hearts of those who will be listening.

PRACTICE: How Do I Do This?

Atmosphere

The setting in which you conduct your group should be designed to prevent embarrassment and/or threat to anyone attending. Activities like spontaneously asking someone to lead in prayer, while natural and appropriate in a mature Christian group, may need to be eliminated for the comfort of the unchurched and of people from formal church traditions who may not be used to this practice. The location should be warm and friendly, perhaps your home. Don't be afraid to "pack" the room as this creates informality and a safety factor for those who have some hesitation about being there. If possible, people could be seated at tables. This makes writing in the Study Guide and using a Bible a lot easier.

Here are some practical and positive measures you may take to make guests feel welcome and comfortable:

1. Serve beverages as people arrive (coffee, cider, soft drinks, etc.) and perhaps after light refreshments at the end of the session.
2. As guests arrive, involve them in conversation to which they can contribute—about local events, jobs, children, etc.
3. Rather than total strangers, try to invite some people you know and with whom you have already developed some relationship. However, do not overlook new people in your community.
4. Invite a large enough group to fill the space you have. A large room with a small number of people creates an intimidating atmosphere in which newcomers feel self-conscious.

Facilities and Equipment

It is important to give due attention to the location and facility of a presentation. Distractions for the participants should be minimized by providing a venue which will allow them to focus on what is being taught. The atmosphere should ensure that everyone is welcome.

1. As discussed above, secure a room, tables and chairs to accommodate the anticipated group. The room should not be too large for the group. It is preferable to have people sit at tables to enable them to take notes although this is not essential. You should be able to darken the room to allow for clear projection of the slides. Everyone should have a good view of the screen.
2. You will need a computer and projector with a screen (a television screen or computer monitor will work for small groups). Test all the equipment ahead of time to make sure the presentation works properly.
3. You will need a sound system for larger groups.
4. The teacher will need a table for the computer and projector, along with books and notes. The teacher should be located to one side of the screen to avoid blocking the view of the participants.

Materials

Completion of the *Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide* requires the use of the Discovery text, *Surprised by Faith*. It is important that each person in your group do their own study of the Bible and text as they complete the Study Guide so the Holy Spirit can be at work in their lives as they make each discovery.

Discussion

Both objective and subjective questions make up much of each chapter of the Study Guide. Some are thought-provoking and stimulate discussion. Some are open-ended questions which will encourage personal thought and expression. Answers are provided for the objective questions on the bottom of the last page of each chapter. Suggested responses to the subjective questions can be found in the teaching helps and answer key of this Leader's Manual. The answers do not exhaust the information relevant to the questions. You may have additional thoughts to share as well. At times, you may want to rephrase a question, or even write some of your own.

Look for opportunities to get participation from most group members. However, be sensitive to people who are shy about sharing in a group setting. To encourage their participation, ask members to write down questions or issues they may be reluctant to ask aloud. You could respond to them at the next meeting. Also, as you prepare for each session consider how the material applies to your own life. Freely offer personal testimony during the discussion when relevant. This can serve as an example and model for the others to participate if you are careful not to dominate the conversation.

Spend time reviewing the session beforehand to determine the questions which will keep the group focused on the main theme. Don't be too rigid or participants are likely to feel their concerns and thoughts are not valid. When you feel that a question would lead the group too far from the main theme, offer to meet separately to discuss the issue.

If you are new at leading group discussion, you are likely to feel a bit uncomfortable with pauses. For instance, when you introduce a discussion question and no one immediately jumps in with a response, you might feel an irresistible urge to fill in the response yourself. If this is the case, try counting to ten silently before doing so to give participants a little time to consider their own response.

Below are some observations which may give you a quality discussion time:

- Be well prepared—possessing a thorough knowledge of the material.
- Avoid asking questions which contain their own answers.
- Moderate the discussion towards the main goal of the session.
- People learn best when they see relevance. Apply for personal meaning.
- People learn best when they sense mastery. Reinforce material so participants truly grasp the information and concepts.

Session and Series Length and Meeting Frequency

Your *FaithSearch* Discovery sessions should not last longer than 90 minutes. Lack of discipline as to the length of the sessions may deter some guests from returning. Some people may wish to stay longer, but guests need to know when they are free to go.

Most uses of *FaithSearch* Discovery will require ten sessions, one for each chapter. This would be true of home groups, a Christian education class and an office lunch-break series.

As for frequency, once-per-week for the duration of the series is preferable. Because each successive session builds on the previous ones, the interval between sessions should usually be no greater than two weeks. Find a time of the week that best fits the schedule of your group.

Importance of Attendance

As mentioned earlier, *FaithSearch* Discovery is a logical, building-block study. Therefore it is good to promote consistent attendance. Because there will likely be some absenteeism, it is good to review and keep reminding attendees of the logic of the sequence of chapters.

Priority of Prayer

In Romans 12:11-12 (NIV), Paul advises: "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual

fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Throughout the Bible, prayer is emphasized as the key to the outpouring of God’s spirit in a given situation. As you lead your group through *FaithSearch* Discovery, plan to allow time in your own schedule for intercessory prayer by name for those in your group.

Application and Reflection

The goal of *FaithSearch* Discovery includes getting truth into the participant’s life. That’s why each chapter has application and reflection activities for each participant to complete. Make it part of your procedure at each session to invite participants to share what they have learned and what difference the study is making in their lives.

Leading the Session

1. Start on time if possible. Begin by welcoming everyone.
2. Introduce yourself briefly, giving some of your background.
3. If you are not using the PowerPoint presentation, go to number 4. Present the material for the session as clearly as possible. (See Organization of the Slides, below.) The more often you present it the better you will become. It is better to present the material for each Discovery without interruption for questions. (If you are interrupted by a question, politely suggest that you be allowed to conclude the presentation or up to the next Discovery, which may address the question, and offer at that point to make yourself available for questions.) It is recommended that you present the PowerPoint slides up to the Discovery slide. There are ten discoveries; there should be ten sessions.
4. If you are using the PowerPoint presentation, go to number 5. Discuss each point from the Study Guide and develop the main themes. Remind participants to read the pages in the text before coming to the discussion.
5. Review the material after each Discovery by helping the participants fill in the blanks in the Study Guide.
6. Allow some time after each Discovery for questions. If you don’t have an answer it is fine to admit it and plan to have it for the next session.
7. Close on time with prayer.

Organization of the Slides in *FaithSearch* Discovery

NOTE: After each Discovery, there are slides with Review Notes. These are based on the publication *FaithSearch* Discovery Participant Guide. If you are not using this resource with your presentation, you may choose to hide these slides. The questions, however, are relevant to participants, and may be used as a review to facilitate learning. The questions asked are similar to those in both the *FaithSearch* Discovery Notes (included on the CD and the Web site with this Manual, which you may print out for each participant) and in the *Surprised by Faith Study and Discussion Guide*, for which this *Leader's Manual* was developed.

Slide # (Slide numbers refer to the *FaithSearch* Discovery v1.0 presentation.)

- 1..... **FaithSearch** Discovery title slide
- 2..... Introduction to the “Ah-ha!” discovery concept
- 3..... Doubting Thomas painting

- 4-10 **Chapter 1 presentation slides**
- 11-13 Transition to the “God” proposal of chapter 2
- 14..... Review Notes for Chapter 1

- 15-19 **Chapter 2 presentation slides**
- 20-21 Review Notes for Chapter 2

- 22-24 Transition slides to chapter 3
- 25-58 **Chapter 3 presentation slides**
- 59-60 Review Notes for Chapter 3
- 61-62 Why do we need to know this?

- 63-87 **Chapter 4 presentation slides**
- 88-89 Review Notes for Chapter 4
- 90..... Which is correct?

- 91-94 **Chapter 5 presentation slides**
- 95..... Review Notes for Chapter 5

- 96-115 **Chapter 6 presentation slides**
- 116-117 Review Notes for Chapter 6

- 118-132 **Chapter 7 presentation slides**
- 133-134 Review Notes for Chapter 7

- 135-145 **Chapter 8 presentation slides**
- 146-147 Review Notes for Chapter 8

- 148-152 **Chapter 9 presentation slides**
- 153-155 Review Notes for Chapter 9

- 156-166 **Chapter 10 presentation slides**
- 167..... Review Notes for Chapter 10

- 168..... **FaithSearch** logo and closing slide

- 169-172 *Growing Faith* presentation slides

- 173..... **FaithSearch** Discovery product slide

Invitation

Discovery #10 is an invitation to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Prepare in advance of this session to provide a response card to each participant, which will enable them to indicate their reaction to the presentation. These cards should be collected and acted upon for follow up by a local church.

Spiritual Follow Up

It is essential that you anticipate following up your *FaithSearch* Discovery series with a nurture or discipling group. Anyone can participate but all who responded in faith to follow Jesus Christ should certainly attend. You are encouraged to use *Growing Faith*, a discipleship manual which is designed to help the participant experience victory in the Christian life. It will deepen spiritual understanding and strengthen participants' Christian walk. It is available by contacting *FaithSearch* International or going to the Web site. An excellent Leader's Guide is also available for *Growing Faith*. It includes an orientation and training section, lesson plans, and answer key.

Be Encouraged

You are on your way! Don't make it complicated. Just pray, prepare and proclaim Him. Let God do the hard part. May God use you as you take hold of this tool for the extension of His Kingdom.

