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WHO IS GOD?

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TIPS FOR LEADERS

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A good discussion leader doesn't need to have all the answers. Who has all the answers about following Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit? Only God. You will probably learn more about following Jesus in the power of the Spirit than anyone in your group, because you will have a chance to practice depending on the Spirit each time you lead.

Discussion Leader's Job Description

Your job is simply to:

1. Prepare for each meeting
2. Keep the discussion moving so that it doesn't get stuck on one question
3. Make sure everyone has a chance to talk and no one dominates (it is not necessary that every person respond aloud to every question, but everyone should have a chance to do so)
4. Bring the discussion back on track if it veers off on a tangent
5. Decide when to move on to the next question
6. Make sure the discussion remains respectful

Preparing for the Discussion

The discussion questions are on the DVD discs for the three films under the "Session 1" and "Session 2" headings respectively. All of the discussion questions appear on-screen. As you cycle through the questions, video clips from the film will pop up to provide context and reminders. As you come to each question, have someone read it aloud. Likewise, you can have someone read the Bible passage aloud when you get to it.

It's a good idea to review the questions before each meeting. If you can, view the film as well.

It may be helpful to arrange chairs in a U shape around the television so that everyone can see the screen and one another. You'll want to dim the lights in the room somewhat so that the screen is clear, but provide enough light so that people can see one another's faces. (You could darken the room to view the film and then turn on a light for your discussion.)

Also, pray before each meeting for the Spirit's leading. Ask Him to help you sense His guidance as you lead the discussion. The on-screen discussion guide does not provide you with the only right answers to the questions. In some cases the right answer is whatever the Spirit is saying to your unique group. In other cases some answers are more true to the Bible than others, and if you're not sure your group is on track, you can ask your pastor, do some research on your own, or investigate books on the subject.

Most important of all, spend time praying for your group. You can't talk anyone into fearing God or being filled with the Spirit. Pray that the Spirit of God would fill your lives and do the impossible in and through you. In the book of Acts, the human actors were just ordinary, weak people, but the Holy Spirit accomplished unbelievable things through these ordinary people as they prayed and submitted themselves to following His leading. May that be the case with your group.

Guiding the Discussion

A few ground rules can make the discussion deeper:

1. Confidentiality: Whatever is said in the group stays in the group. Nothing is to be repeated to those who weren't there.
2. Honesty: We're not here to impress each other. We're here to grow and to know each other.
3. Respect: Disagreement is welcome. Disrespect is not.

The discussion should be a conversation among the group members, not a one-on-one with the leader. You can encourage this with statements like, "Thanks, Allison. What does everyone else think?" or "Does anyone have a similar experience, or a different one?"

Don't be afraid of silence—it means group members are thinking about how to answer a question. Trust the Spirit, and wait. Sometimes it's helpful to rephrase the question in your own words. Then wait for others' responses, and avoid jumping in with your own.

Be honest with the members of your group. If you desire to grow and change, you will motivate others to do the same. Be open about areas in which you welcome the group's prayer and support. Allow people to challenge your thinking.

Answers that are true to biblical teaching are important, but the BASIC series is most concerned that people may study God and never know Him, never be changed by Him. With every session, keep asking yourself and your group: "How should this change us? If we really submitted our lives to God and opened ourselves up to His power, what would He have us do? Where would He have us go?" At the end of the day, it's about following Jesus in the power of the Spirit in order to accomplish what God has placed us on this earth to do. It's about advancing the kingdom of God. It's about His will being done on earth as in heaven.