

The Bible Questions

Campaign Planning Guide

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The Bible Questions Campaign Planning Guide

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What is *The Bible Questions Campaign*? (Read This First)

The TBQ Campaign is a six week series designed to entice your congregation and neighbors to read and study the Bible daily.

The Campaign:

- Answers the top twenty questions people have about the Bible.
- Starts with Bible basics and ends by teaching people how to study Scripture for themselves.
- Empowers your members to be inviters.
- Develops a daily devotional habit.
- Appeals to teens, collegians, and men.
- Focuses the whole church on the importance of the Bible.
- Increases your small group attendance.
- Increases your number of small groups.
- Brings people to Christ.

The Campaign includes:

- Six weeks of inspiring sermons on the Bible.
- Four weeks of daily readings from *The Bible Questions* book.
- Four weeks of daily personal Bible studies.
- Six weeks of group Bible study discussions, including optional video clips.
- Invitational outreach tools to enable you to invite your neighbors to the series.

Four Reasons to Host a *Bible Questions Campaign*:

1. Church people aren't reading the Bible – but they need to.

- 34% church-going Christians read the Bible on a regular basis.
- 21% read it “sometimes.”
- 45% of your congregation is depending on their pastor to give them everything they need from God's Word.

The purpose of *The Bible Questions Campaign* is to equip and encourage your members to read and study the Bible for themselves.

2. Unchurched people are open to the Bible – and their lives will change when they read it.

- Almost every home in America has a Bible.
- Few people in those homes ever opened it.
- Unchurched people respect the Bible.
- Most would say they *believe* the Bible.
- BUT, they've just never read it.
- The Bible Questions will introduce people to the Bible so they will *want* to read it.

The second purpose of *The Bible Questions Campaign* is to inspire your unchurched neighbors to pick up a Bible and begin to read.

3. Our nation needs the Bible – it's the book that can transform our nation.

- God promised Joshua that if he would meditate on and carefully follow the words of Scripture, he would be prosperous and successful (Joshua 1:8).
- The 18th century Wesleyan revival gathered people in Bible studies. The 19th century became “The British Century”.
- The 19th century “Great Awakening” turned Americans to the Bible. The 20th century became “The American Century”.
- North Korea is starving, while South Korea is prospering. South Koreans spend time in their Bibles.
- There is a corporate redemptive effect to Bible-reading. The more people who participate, the better a nation becomes.

What our nation needs at this time is a Bible-reading revolution! My hope is that your church will join us in launching this revolution throughout our country.

4. Well-run church-wide campaigns can spark an attendance surge and dramatically increase the number of people in small groups.

- Churches can surge 10-20% in attendance during church campaigns.
- Small groups participation can grow by 40% during church-wide campaigns.
- The build-up to a campaign sparks members to invite neighbors.
- The building to a campaign motivates fringe members to join small groups.

Churches that host two to three campaigns per year usually have a significant percentage of their adults in groups because the ramp up for each campaign communicates that being in a small group is normal. People sign up because small group (or Sunday school) participation becomes part of the culture.

What Tools Do We Need for the Campaign?

1. One Campaign Kit per church.
2. One *The Bible Questions* book per person.

Both are available at www.pastormentor.com.

If you'd like to invite your neighbors to the Campaign, invitational tools are available at www.outreach.com/BibleQuestions.

The Campaign Kit includes adaptable sermons, message notes, PowerPoint presentations, Small Group Leader Tips, optional video clips, and the Campaign Planning Guide.

The book includes daily readings and Bible studies, and weekly Bible discussions.

What Does the Pastor Need to Do?

1. Read through this Planning Guide and adapt it to your setting.
2. Purchase the Campaign Kit and enough books for each participant.
3. Purchase invitational tools [optional].

What Do the People Need to Do?

1. Invite friends.
2. Come to church.
3. Be in a group or Sunday School class.
4. Read the book.

Campaign Description: (Read this for Details)

The Bible Questions Campaign is a six week church-wide campaign for youth and adults focused on the *who, what, when, where, how* and *whys* of the Bible. From previous campaigns, we've discovered that there is incredible power in focus. While the sun, with its diffused light, will warm you; a laser, with its focused light, will cut through steel.

For six weeks, everyone over ten years old will focus on one thing: *the Bible*. Through informative and inspirational sermons, daily personal readings, and weekly small group or Sunday school discussions, your members and guests will move from the basics of the Bible (what it is and where it came from) to a challenge to be mastered by the text over their next thirty to forty years.

The Bible Questions book has twenty chapters divided into four sections of five chapters each. Everyone comes to church one day, reads a chapter a day Monday through Friday, and attends a small group sometime during the week. The book contains six small group discussions at the back. *TBQ* and a Bible are the only tools your people will need for the campaign. Each day's reading concludes with a short personal Bible study, so participants get used to studying the Bible for themselves.

How the Sermon Series Works:

The series begins with an introductory sermon titled, "*What Can the Bible Do for Me?*" That will motivate your people to invite friends for the official launch, which begins with "*How is the Bible Different from All Other Books?*" From then on, your members will do daily readings in the book. The series concludes with "*What Do I Do with What I've Learned?*" By then your people will be equipped for the challenge of being lifelong daily Bible readers.

Week One - Sermon and Bible Discussions begin (no readings).

Week Two - Daily readings begin.

Weeks Three, Four, and Five - Sermons, Bible Discussions, Daily readings.

Week Six - Concluding Sermon and Bible Discussions (no readings).

A. THE FORMAT:

Week One: A motivational message encouraging everyone to join and attend a small group this week, and invite friends to join the campaign next week. *The Bible Questions* book contains the small group discussions we'll be using throughout the campaign, so those who haven't already picked up a copy of the book are encouraged to do so today.

Week Two: An introduction to the Bible. Everyone begins daily readings in *The Bible Questions*. There are five days of readings so that people can miss two days and not fall behind. People are again encouraged to bring friends the following week.

Week Three: An inspirational message on the transforming power of the Bible, encouraging people to continue meeting and reading, and asking them to invite more friends to come for the *Live Panel Question and Answer* time the following week.

Week Four: Live Panel Q and A. (See “How to Host an Effective Panel Q and A” to prepare for this. You’ll want to enlist your panel members several weeks ahead and collect questions from your congregation a week or two ahead.) Continued book reading and small group meetings.

Week Five: A message that encourages people to become life-long Bible absorbers. Newcomers are encouraged to attend a group this week, but also to sign up for new *The Bible Questions* groups, which will begin in two weeks.

Week Six: Final message will inspire and ask people to commit to life-long Bible reading/studying and ask them to encourage others to do the same. (Our goal is to spark a Bible-reading revolution.) Small groups meet this week to complete their learning, pact together to be life-long Bible learners, and to discuss what they will study together starting the following week. In church, newcomers are encouraged to enjoy today’s message and sign up for a *The Bible Questions* small group that will begin the following week.

Week Seven: You start a new series. I recommend you do it on a short, narrative book of the Bible, so you can reinforce the observation-interpretation-application method people have learned. (I followed our campaign with a four week series on Malachi.) New *The Bible Questions* groups are launched midweek, using *The Bible Questions* book, and letting people watch online the messages you preached during the series. (Or, if you don’t have video capture and replay capabilities, point them to www.newsongchurch.com and have them access my messages under “Messages” at the top of the page. Point them to “Messages 2012” and they’ll find *The Bible Questions* sermons there.

B. SERMON OVERVIEW:

Week One Sermon - *What Can the Bible Do For Me?*

This is a sermon designed to excite your people about the Campaign because (in the words of Lincoln) *the Bible is God’s best gift to men.*

Week Two Sermon - *How is the Bible Different from Other Books?*

This week’s sermon will cover the Bible basics. Everyone in the room will learn where the Bible came from, who wrote it, its composition and structure, its reliability and accuracy, its popularity and persecution. Patrick Henry said, “[*The Bible is*] a book worth all other books in the world.”

Week Three Sermon - *Can the Bible Make Me Better?*

This sermon inspires with seven ways the Bible makes people better, and a description of *how* the Bible transforms a person’s mind. Stories of Haddon Robinson, Hans Hauge, and the prophet Daniel demonstrate that the Bible really can make you better.

**Week Four Sermon - *Answering Your Questions about the Bible*
(Live Panel Q and A)**

The Panel discussion will take the place of a sermon today. At New Song, we budgeted time for me to show and demonstrate books that help me learn Bible answers (*The Big Book of Bible Difficulties*, commentaries, Bible atlas, concordance, and encyclopedia.) We concluded with a salvation invitation and follow-up.

Week Five Sermon - *How Can I Master the Bible?*

This sermon introduces the inductive Bible study method of observation-interpretation-application and the idea that it takes 10,000 hours to master any discipline. God's gracious hand on Ezra, who studied, practiced, and talk the Bible, is the inspiration for us becoming 10,000-hour Bible absorbers.

Week Six Sermon - *How Do I Live What I've Learned?*

This sermon reviews what we've learned and identifies the top five reasons why we *don't* read the Bible and the top five reasons why we *should* read the Bible. It outlines seven ways to read and study the Bible, and gives a concrete plan for reading/studying to achieve 10,000 hours over the next thirty years. People are encouraged to commit to a plan before they leave church today.

How to Get the Most out of the Campaign

What to do leading up to your Campaign

Great initiatives start with prayer and planning. Use this expanded checklist to help you think through the steps you'll want to take as you prepare for your *TBQ Campaign*.

Note: the suggested time frames are only suggestions. New Song has ramped up for campaigns in as little as four weeks – but doing it like that made us move *really* fast.

What to do right now:

1. Read through this guide to get a feel for what *The Bible Questions Campaign* is all about. Pray as you read. The number one factor in building excitement and momentum for an all-church initiative is the enthusiasm of the leader. Ask God to give you a vision for lots of people learning to love the Bible, lots of people coming to Christ, and lots of small groups growing together in Christ.

2. Enlist 2-5 prayer partners. Enlarge your circle of enthusiasm and power by inviting a group of close (and preferably influential) friends to pray with you about the results of this campaign. Ask them to pray daily about its impact as you ramp up.

3. Order copies of *The Bible Questions* book for your leaders. People who touch the book get excited. Ideally, you'll have books available for each leader as you vision cast with them. Since volume discounts are available at 25 copies or more, you may want to order all the copies you'll need for the campaign now, too.

4. Invite your youth pastor or youth leadership into the experience. We learned from *The God Questions* that teens and college students thrive on solid, content-oriented campaigns. They're used to learning in school settings, and sit up and take notice when the church provides them with challenging and intellectually stimulating meat. Strategize with your youth leadership how your youth department can take best advantage of this campaign opportunity.

Will the youth sit in on the adult sermons, or hear them taught in their own youth rooms? How will the youth group use the opportunity to invite their unchurched friends to the series/campaign? During *The God Questions*, our youth pastor supplemented the teaching with a weekly quiz on what they had read during the week. No way would this work with adults, but it increased the learning with our teens. Would you want to do something like that?

Almost every family owns a Bible, but unchurched youth probably don't. Should you give free Bibles? For that matter, should you give free copies of *The Bible Questions* to every teen who attends? Or, would this campaign be a good opportunity for the youth to take ownership of reaching their friends by doing a fundraiser to raise money to pay for books and Bibles they can give to their guests?

What to do six/seven weeks out:

- 1. Vision-cast to your inner circle.** During our very first campaign, I shared with our staff what we were doing and why, and asked them to each bring five friends to my house the following Tuesday night. I cast the vision to these fifty people, asking them to pray with me daily, consider leading a small group, and tell their friends about what we would be doing. Their enthusiasm and prayers radiated to our whole church.
- 2. Share the resources.** Information is power, so share every pertinent tool and resource for this campaign with every leader and potential leader in your church.
- 3. Clear the church calendar.** The key to a great campaign is focus. Encourage every ministry in your church to concentrate on this campaign while it's going on. If possible, hold off on other special events and emphases during these six weeks. If your men's, women's, couples, singles, youth, or other ministries feel like they need to hold an event during this time, encourage them to make it about the Bible.

What to do five/six weeks out:

- 1. Vision-cast with your current small group (or Sunday School) leaders.** These are the people who will experience the campaign's effects up close and personal. Let them know how important they are to this campaign. Ask them to redouble their efforts to invite new people to their group. Encourage them to encourage one or two of their most qualified members to start their own group. Get *TBQ* books to them early so they can skim the readings and go over the Bible discussions in the back.
- 2. Order invitational products.** Outreach, Inc. has developed two types of invitations, banners, and tools for getting the word to your community about your campaign. They can also customize a design for you. Contact them and begin designing your tools. Outreach has set up a dedicated page for *The Bible Questions* resources: www.outreach.com/BibleQuestions, or call 1-800-991-6011.
- 3. If you haven't already done so, order *The Bible Questions* books for the church now.** At New Song, we encouraged our members to buy 10 copies and give them to friends as invitational tools. Estimate how many copies you think you'll need and order them at www.pastormentor.com.
- 4. Announce the campaign to the church.** During the announcements or message time in your services, share why you are excited about *The Bible Questions*, how you see it benefiting everyone in the church, your hopes for them inviting friends, and the vision of being part of a Bible-reading revolution.

What to do four weeks out:

- 1. Enlist new small group leaders.** One of the cardinal rules about growing your small groups ministry is *new groups for new people*. It is easier to get a person to join something new than something that already exists. Pray and ask the Lord to give you eyes to see potential new small group leaders. Approach them and ask them to consider

leading a small group for the campaign. (Ask them for just the campaign. Midway through the campaign, if things are going well in their group, ask them to keep it going.)

2. Mention or announce the campaign again in church.

3. Announce *The Bible Questions Campaign* on your website.

4. Place a *The Bible Questions* banner out front of your church. (These are available through Outreach, Inc.)

What to do three weeks out:

1. Start taking group sign ups.

We like to make it as simple as possible for people to sign up for a group, so we offer them multiple options. From now until the fourth week of the campaign, we will have a sign-up sheet in the program. That sheet lists times and locations and types of groups (teen, college, single, married, mixed, etc.). People can sign up by filling out the form and placing it in the offering. Or, they can come to the small groups table in the lobby and sign up there.

2. Distribute invitation cards.

Boost your member's invitation power by putting a few business card sized invitation in each bulletin. (These are available from Outreach, or you can produce your own.) Have quantities available at your information desk. During the service, ask your people to write down the names of five friends they will invite this week. Repeat this announcement every week until two weeks into the campaign.

3. Have books available.

Encourage members to purchase books this week. Encourage them to buy books for friends and begin inviting them now.

4. Post on social media.

Ask your members to post "We're starting an incredible series at our church!" Or, "We're launching a Bible-reading revolution!" on their social networking sites.

5. Reread "How to Host an Effective Panel Q and A" in the sermons you received, and follow the suggestions.

What to do two weeks out:

1. Send mailers to your neighbors.

Mail invitational postcards about 10 days ahead, so you are sure they arrive, even if your mail carriers are slow.

2. Keep encouraging group sign-ups, getting books, and inviting friends.

3. Post on community calendars.

Another option is to contact newspapers, TV, and radio stations, local magazines, mail-out coupon providers, recreational centers or clubs. Sometimes New Songers will take stacks of postcard invitations to local businesses and ask if they can leave them on their front counters or tape one to the storefront window.

4. Get on the air.

Consider contacting local radio stations and newspapers to sponsor and promote the event. Develop a press release for local news outlets.

What to do the week before launch:

1. Show a portion of this video in church: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jkDWO-glr0>

Forecast the series during your announcements. Consider playing the video of the Kimyal receiving the Bible for the first time. Mention how fortunate we are to have the Bible and so many rich tools to help us with the Bible. At New Song, we played the first 3:46 of the video.

2. Keep encouraging group sign-ups, getting books, and inviting friends.

3. Hold a special prayer meeting to launch the campaign.

4. Hold a “church spruce up day,” to bring your facilities to their most presentable condition.

What to do during your Campaign

Week One:

1. Double your greeters.

Have some smiling faces in your parking lot, greeting and directing traffic. Have extra greeters in your lobby, available to guide guests to their children's classrooms and to your auditorium. Ideally, every guest should be politely greeted five times before they reach their seat, and thanked for coming at least three times on their way out.

2. Preach with joy and confidence.

Pastor, you are describing the best and most important book in the world! It's God's book and he delights to hear you talk about it. Preach well!

3. Keep encouraging group sign-ups, getting books, and inviting friends.

The sermon will mention these, but welcoming your guests during the announcement time and encouraging them to invite their friends is also good.

4. Serve refreshments.

After the service, having a clearly marked area with food and beverages. This gives people an excuse to meet and mingle.

5. Follow up with guests.

I send an email to each guest by 2 p.m. on Monday. I also write them a personal note and mail it by Tuesday night. We have a team who calls every guest by Tuesday evening.

6. Hold your first small group meetings.

This week there is/was no reading, so the first time people will interact with what they heard on Sunday will be at their small group. Everything the leader needs is contained in the small group section towards the back of *The Bible Questions* book. Pray for the success and bonding of your groups as they begin to meet!

If you would like tips and answers we have included a thorough guide called *Small Group Leaders Answers and Tips* in the ebook section of the Campaign Kit. You have permission to give a printed or digital copy to every small group leader.

Week Two:

1. Repeat what you did week one.

2. Reread "How to Host an Effective Panel Q and A" and follow guidelines.

3. Enlist two or three people to begin new *Bible Questions* groups as soon as this campaign is over.

The further ahead you ask, the easier it is for people to say "yes." You want to be ready for your week 5 and 6 guests, and for anyone who encounters a crisis and has to drop out of their group. So prepare now for a few *TBQ* groups that can start the week after the series ends. As new leaders commit, develop a new small group sign up form you can begin using on week five.

Week Three:

1. Repeat what you did week two.
2. Forecast the Panel Q and A and encourage people to invite more friends.
3. Check in with each of your small group leaders.

Encourage them to continue the group once the campaign is done. Suggest or brainstorm with them what material they might want to use. (Note: if you'd like to use my Malachi material as your next series, go to www.pastormentor.com and click on Resources.)

Week Four

1. Hold your Panel Q and A.
2. Repeat what you did week three.

Week Five:

1. Encourage this week's newcomers to sample a current group, and register for a new *The Bible Questions* group that will start in two weeks.

Have a small group sign-up form available in your bulletin and at your small groups table this week. This sign-up form should include all new TBQ groups that are forming, and *can* include other groups you'll be launching two weeks from now. If you have groups that will be folding at the end of the campaign, be sure to have groups available for those members to move to as their groups end.

2. Repeat what you did week three.
3. Enthusiastically forecast your next series.

Week Six:

1. Encourage this week's newcomers to sign up for a new *The Bible Questions* group that will start in next weeks.

Consider introducing the group leaders for the new groups that will be forming.

2. Repeat what you did week three.
3. Enthusiastically forecast your next series.

At New Song, I am including an insert on "An Introduction to Prophetic Literature" in our bulletin so that people know how to study prophecy and that we aren't dropping the quality of our presentations once TBQ is over. (If you'd like a copy of it, go to www.pastormentor.com and click on Resources.)

Week Seven:

Now that your campaign has concluded, I'd love to hear how it went. Send me an email at Hal@pastormentor.com!

What to do right after your Campaign

During New Song's first church-wide campaign, back in 2003, we completed the campaign with a big party and handed out certifications of completion. Bad idea!

The party and certificates communicated, "The experience is over, time to return to your regular lives." Our attendance increases by 10% during the campaign, and returned to our previous size the week following. We served a lot of people over a short period of time, but there was little or no net gain from the experience. I'd like you to avoid our mistake.

1. Don't hold a party, and don't conclude the campaign.

Instead, gently *transition* the church into your next series, inviting and assuming everyone will continue to attend church and their small groups.

2. Begin the transition during week two. The best way to retain newcomers is to retain them in small groups. Begin talking, praying, and strategizing with each of your small group leaders during the second or third week about keeping their group together. The most important part of the group staying together is the leader continuing to lead. Get their commitment, then ask them to prayerfully discern what would keep each of their members coming back.

Let each leader know what your next preaching series will be, and whether it would be appropriate for them to base their weekly group meetings around those sermons, or to pick a different topic and order books or study guides now.

3. Don't take week seven off. Since we're providing you with sample sermons for each of the six weeks of your campaign, you can easily let someone else preach a message or two of *The Bible Questions* series. That way you'll be fresh and ready to go with the next series. Just like it's important for the church's primary teacher to preach the Sunday after Easter, it's important that, during the concluding message of *The Bible Questions*, your leader can say, "And next week *I'll* be teaching on... and here's why I'm so excited about it." (Emphasis on the *I'll*.)

4. Include live testimonies. In the weeks following *TBQ*, a good way to reinforce the on-going value of Bible reading is to find people who have been impacted by their new or increased Bible reading and have them share their experiences and results in church.

5. Hold a newcomers' meal during the series.

Some pastors hold newcomers' briefings after each service. Others host newcomers' desserts at their house. At New Song, we hold host a lunch each month called *The R.U. New Café*. It's a free meal where newcomers can eat with our staff, learn what the church has for them, and ask questions. Mostly, it's an excuse to build a relationship. Sometime during the campaign – probably around week three or four, hold a newcomers' meal in order to get to know your newcomers.

6. Publicly forecast your next series, at least by week five. Great organizations grow from one s-curve to the next. While you still have momentum from *The Bible Questions*, leverage the excitement by talking about the practical benefits of the next series *before* your guests have a chance to start thinking about what they'll do with their free Sundays as soon as the campaign is over.

7. Learn everyone's name. One of your upfront goals should be that every newcomer's name is known by someone on staff before the series is over.

8. Meals with the leader never hurt. As the figurehead leader of our church, people think it's a privilege to have a meal with me. I like meeting new people, so I make it a point to do two or three lunches per month with newcomers. If I can, I accelerate this during times of great growth. I encourage my staff to do the same. People bond over meals, and bonded people stay far more often.

9. Pray. You know as well as I do that unless the Lord builds the house, you are laboring in vain. So pray all throughout your preparation and planning phase, then pray during the campaign, and pray as you transition to the next series. A good way to get started is to look over your *Leaders Planning Guide* right now and pray for each step and facet of the campaign.

What if Your Church Has Adult Sunday School?

The Campaign works perfectly for adult and teen Sunday Schools. Instead of asking your guests to join small groups, invite them to your Sunday School classes. Begin each class with a brief introduction from the class president, possibly show the optional video clip, and then break your class into discussion-sized groups of 5 to 12 for the Bible study discussion time. At the end of the hour, have the class president close in prayer.

A Word from Hal

I love the local church, and I love lost people. During the last few decades there's been a decline in church attendance, and a rise in the number of Americans who don't know Jesus personally. I'm praying for a reverse of this trend, and nothing but the power of the Holy Spirit working through the lives of faithful Christians can make that happen.

Imagine what it would look like if increasing numbers of Americans spent time with God and his Scriptures? How long would it take before our hearts, and our character and our outlook were conforming to the image of Christ? How long would it take before our nation began to increase in integrity and love and trustworthiness?

Where Bible reading is a habit, transformation is the norm. I pray you will join me in absorbing God's Word daily, and in doing all you can to invite people into a Bible-reading revolution.

Hal