Thanks for downloading the **Getting Started Guide** from *So What?* youth Bible studies! This file contains information to help you understand how to use the studies:

- Step-by-Step Prep (pp. 2-3)
- Understanding What’s Here (pp. 4–5)
- Leading an Effective Study (p. 6)
- Using Digital Resources (p. 7)

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**SO WHAT...**

... does the Bible say?
Teenagers have questions. God’s Word has answers. That’s why Scripture is the heart of each session. Students will examine what the Bible says, learn what it means, and see how it relates to their lives.

... questions does the Bible answer?
A good question has remarkable power to stimulate and engage critical thinking skills. Each session of *So What?* zeros in on 1 major question and answer, allowing students to focus on the truth of Scripture.

... difference does it make?
Students are asking, *How does the Bible apply to my life? How can I live out what I believe? So what difference does faith in Christ make?*

The question “So what?” captures in a nutshell this series’ primary purpose: that God the Holy Spirit will work through the study of his Word to bring about students’ ownership of their faith in Jesus Christ.

Learn more at [www.sowhatstudies.org](http://www.sowhatstudies.org)
Ready to go? Step-by-step session prep:

**STEP 1: Understand the big picture.**
- Read the major question and answer.
- Look over the session aims and the materials needed.
- Read Getting on Target. This is the “why” of the session. It sets the parameters of the study. Every passage of Scripture has many truths to explore, but they all can’t be covered in 30 minutes to an hour. This focuses your attention on the scope of the session and what will be covered in later sessions or in other series.

**STEP 2: Pray and read the Scriptures.**
- Pray, asking God to teach you as you read and meditate on the Bible passage. Make notes on what you learn.
- Ask yourself: How does the Scripture passage apply to me? What would my students think about this passage? What questions might they ask? How does it relate to their world? Pray for your students.

Don’t cheat your students! The student Bible study contains diagrams, questions, quotes, and illustrations not in the Leader Guide or PowerPoint shows. It’s essential for students to use as a discovery tool, teaching them how to study God’s Word.
Getting Started Guide" on page 1.

**STEP 3:** Read the Session Outline.

- This is your in-class discussion guide. Familiarize yourself with the questions and the study. The explanations and answers to the questions are on the following pages, in Leader Prep.
- Make notes about other questions to ask your group.
- **Bonus!** A PowerPoint show for each session is included with the Leader Kit purchase. Browse the slides to determine how you will use them during your session. See more on p. 7.

**STEP 4:** Study Leader Prep.

- **Leader Prep** contains Bible commentary, answers to in-class questions, and other tips to prepare, including activity options and more.
- Study it in conjunction with the Session Outline and student Bible study, titled Examine, which contains material not in the Leader Guide.
- Note that it is divided into three sections, which match the Session Outline: Kicking Off, Examining God’s Word, and So What? (Read about this in detail on pages 4–5.)

**STEP 5:** Complete Examine Bible study.

- The student Bible study, called **Examine**—noted with the letter X and session number, as in X1—is used by each student during the study. Fill it out as you study the Session Outline.
- The major question and answer will always be printed in the studies, along with Scripture passages, questions, places to take notes, diagrams, and more. Examine contains material that isn’t in the Leader Guide and vice versa, so don’t leave this piece out! They are integrated together. It’s essential to keeping your students’ attention while teaching them to study God’s Word.

**STEP 6:** Complete devotional Journal.

- Complete the devotional that relates to the session to encourage your own growth. Then remind students to use it during the week for their personal Bible study and prayer. You may also use it as a guide for your midweek meeting.
- **Bonus!** A digital version of the devotional is included with the Leader Kit purchase. Use it in the way best suited to your group: email or text students with a question each day, post it to your group’s Facebook page, or more. See more on p. 7.
At first glance, you may think that the best way to use this material is to lecture from the Leader Prep pages. But no—your students will retain much more from class if they discover truths for themselves as they read the Scriptures and discuss what it means together, with you as their guide. This material is designed to help you accomplish this task. It may take a little more thought and preparation on the front end, but it is well worth the effort!

After you have studied God’s Word and the leader materials, you will be prepared to help your students discuss and apply the biblical truths set forth in each session. Pray that the Holy Spirit would illumine your hearts and minds to understand and embrace the truths of Scripture.

Session Outline

1. Kicking Off
2. Examining God’s Word
3. So What?

Leader Prep

1. Kicking Off
2. Examining God’s Word
3. So What?

So What?

Through an activity, game, or discussion, Kicking Off 1 is a time to introduce the topic and get students talking about it. As you spark interest, you are helping your teens understand the importance and relevance of the session.

It is also time to “set the hook” for the lesson. If your students don’t
connect to the central question, they will tune out. Allow time for them to become personally engaged in the topic and interested in learning the answers to their own questions. This is a time for you to learn what questions or misconceptions they might have, to put the topic into context, and to find out what they know and don’t know. It’s equally important for the students to realize at the outset that they don’t have all the answers! Provide a safe, accepting atmosphere for individual responses and comments. Wrong ideas may be raised here, which will be corrected and answered through their study of Scripture. Don’t be put off by silence; give your students time to think about questions. Resist the temptation to fill silences with your own words.

examine\textit{God’s Word}

Once you capture your students’ interest, you will proceed to the heart of the session—the study of the Bible in \textit{Examining God’s Word}. This is where the major question of the session is posed. It is printed in the student Bible study, \textit{Examine}, and is the guiding question.

The most important thing is to allow your students to explore the Scripture for themselves. Through these modified inductive Bible studies, your students will discover the truths of Scripture with you as their teacher and guide. See page 6 for a detailed explanation of a modified inductive Bible study and tips on leading your group.

This section closes with the major answer to the major question. The major answer summarizes the main truth for your students to learn and retain. The Q&A are also printed in the student \textit{Examine} Bible study. There are many truths in each passage of Scripture. The major Q&A are intended to help you focus the session and avoid “rabbit trails” when you only have 30 minutes to an hour. Students will learn much more than just the major Q&A. Trust the Holy Spirit to instruct and transform the hearts and lives of your students as they study God’s Word.

so what?

Relating faith to life and life to faith is the point of this series. After your teens have explored the Scripture and discovered what it says, they need to actively engage with its truth. What difference does this make in the way your teens think and live? Because we all need to see relevance in what we study, this last part of the session stresses personal application of biblical truths.

So What? is the time to drive home the point. You are challenging your teens to interact with the passage and apply it to their lives. Asking the “so what” questions pushes them to think beyond a simple summary to broader implications and application of biblical truths. Use this time to encourage them to think, believe, or act differently because of what they have learned.

Plan your discussion time carefully so that you don’t omit this section. It is possible for students to study the main point of the session without answering the “so what” questions for themselves. You may need to choose just one or two of the application questions if time is limited, but don’t let this opportunity slip by without some response to God’s Word!

understanding what’s here (continued)

\textit{Scripture}

All Scripture in this series is from the English Standard Version (ESV). There are a number of excellent study Bibles that will help in your preparation. Consult your pastor for recommendations.

\textit{Examine Bible Study}

Essential to every session!

Don’t Lecture!

The Session Outline comes before the Leader Prep section. It’s organized this way to help you, as leader, remember to teach from the Session Outline and not the study notes. This reflects the goal of the \textit{So What?} Bible studies: your students will relate their faith to their lives when they are engaged with God’s Word, you, and each other. Lecturing does not accomplish this.
leading an effective study

The So What? series of Bible studies may be used with small groups, large classes, Sunday school classes, discipleship groups, and more. However you use it, So What? is designed to provide your group with a modified inductive Bible study. What is a modified inductive Bible study? Read on...

Bible study

Each session is rooted in the study of the Bible. The Scriptures are your “textbook” and the Examine student Bible studies are the guide for each passage. Because the Bible is the infallible Word of God, the source of life, and the gospel of Christ, each session is centered on reading and understanding God’s Word.

what is “inductive”?  

A good question has remarkable power. By asking questions during the study of Scripture, the students discover answers from the Bible. There are three ways the inductive method does this:

1. **Observation**: What does the passage say?
2. **Interpretation**: What does the passage mean?
3. **Application**: What does the passage mean for me, others in the group, and others in general?

Additional specific questions are posed in the Session Outline and the Examine Bible studies in each of these three areas as well.

what is “modified”?  

This inductive approach is called “modified” because you are not only asking the observe, interpret, and apply questions. You have the essential role as teacher-leader. The session is not the time for you to encounter the text for the first time and ask inductive questions. Instead, you lead while also teaching. You provide background, contextual information, and definitions of words and terms—teaching—if the students are going to discover and understand what the Scriptures say. However, this does not mean you will be lecturing.

How are you a leader and a teacher? You:
• determine what will be studied,
• see that the lesson aims are accomplished,
• add your own additional questions to the session outline,
• keep the discussion focused,
• summarize the truths, and
• see that students understand the main question and answer for each study. (See “What’s Your Role?” sidebar as well.)

We will be adding resources and help on leading a modified inductive Bible study at www.sowhatstudies.org. Join the conversation with others in ministry today as you “relate faith to life and life to faith.”
Using Digital Resources

When you purchase a Leader Kit, you get access to digital downloads to help you get the most out of each session. (The free lesson download includes samples of the digital items.)

PowerPoint

A PowerPoint show is provided to accompany each session. It does not replace the Session Outline or Examine student Bible studies. The slides are supplementary, providing extra visuals, illustrations, and other items as they relate to the session. It may help in a large classroom setting to keep students tracking along, reminding them of the major Q&A or what Scripture passage you’re studying. To best use PowerPoint, go through each show before class and think about the most effective way to use it with your students. You may also print one copy to display if you don’t have access to a projector. Note that these slide shows are copyrighted and may not be distributed.

System requirements: Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007 and newer.

If you don’t have PowerPoint, a free viewer is available at www.microsoft.com/downloads. Note: We are unable to provide technical support.

Digital Devotional

The printed student devotional Journal contains 13 sessions with Scripture passages and questions for students to reflect on during the week. The digital devotional is a Word document that contains the same Scripture and questions as the printed version. The electronic text can be used in a variety of ways:

• **Email:** Copy and paste the day's Scripture passage and question. Send it to your group or individuals and invite them to reply. Use the opportunity to remind them that you are praying for them.
• **Text:** Send your students a text message of a verse or question. Or simply remind them of the weekly major question and answer. You may also use texting to ask how their week is going or check in another way.
• **Facebook/group website:** Post the verse and question on your group’s page and encourage interaction. Your students will enjoy hearing others’ thoughts and ideas, and it may encourage them to use their devotional Journals when they see peer responses.

System requirements: Microsoft Office Word 2007 and newer. Note: We are unable to provide technical support.

Website

Visit www.sowhatstudies.org to find more training resources and interact with others in ministry. It is also place to let us know what you think about So What? youth Bible studies.

www.sowhatstudies.org

• Bonus Resources
• Articles
• Training Videos
• Tips and more!

“The best thing that came out of the devotional email connection was some of the kids emailed me individually, which I responded to. And one of the students emailed me a school situation that was an excellent illustration of the previous session: exchanging the truth of God for a lie.”

Leader using So What?