

KEEPING THE FAITH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GATEWAYS BIBLE STUDY LEADERS' GUIDE

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE:

a Bible scholar
a dynamic speaker
an education expert

You do need to have a willing heart to see parents, educators, and students blessed in your local public schools. You have the exciting opportunity of see people *move from fear to freedom* as they learn how to advocate for appropriately including teaching about the Bible and Judeo-Christian history, thought, and values in their schools. What you and those in your small group do as you go through the study can bless your schools for years to come!

Starting a Bible Study Group

There are two primary types of Gateways Bible Study groups: (A) Church-based. Participants attend the same church, but may be involved in different schools; (B) School-based. Participants are involved in the same school, but may attend different churches. There are benefits and draw backs with each arrangement. For example, it may be easier to start a small group in your church and participants who attend the same church have the benefit of regular fellowship. However, because they are in different schools (and possibly different districts) they can't work on the same classroom or school issues. On the other hand, while a group involved in the same school can work together on a particular issue, it may be harder to start the group if you do not already have a network of potential participants.

Step One:

Pray that God will guide you as you assess which group (Church-based or School-based) you sense He would like you to start.

Step Two:

Introduce your personal network of friends to the idea of conducting a Gateways small group.

Step Three:

For Church-based—

Work with the senior pastor, children's pastor, or youth pastor to officially launch the group. Keeping the Faith in Public Schools can work in an adult Sunday school class, a women's ministry Bible study, a mid-week series, or in a small group. Use the existing channels of announcements, newsletters, and ministries. Talk to your church's leadership about the percentage of families in your congregation who send their children to public schools (usually the majority), and the need for a relationship-centered way to educate and support them (which the Gateways Bible study supplies). Use the Bible study promotional materials supplied from www.GatewaysPartner.org and host an introductory meeting.

For School-based—

After building an interest from people, decide on a date and time for hosting an introductory meeting. (Note: Public school teachers *can* have the study at school during their personal time.)

Note: As a long-term plan, after completing the first study with one group (church-based or school-based) consider expanding its reach by encouraging participants to host the study in their own sphere of influence (their own church or their own school).

Hosting an Introductory Meeting

1. Pray that those who will be attending your meeting will sense God's guidance about whether to join you.
2. As people arrive, have a time of fellowship and light refreshments.
3. Open your meeting with prayer.
4. Begin your meeting by asking each person why they are there. Answers may include: "I want my school to be more faith-friendly," "I was disappointed at the Christmas program last year," and "My child is starting school this year and I want to be prepared."
5. Explain to the group the reasons you want to start this Bible study.
6. Give each person a copy of the one-page description of the Bible study, "Introducing the Gateways Bible Study" (See the promotional materials at www.GatewaysPartner.org), and lead them through its contents by reading it to them.
7. Show the group your copy of *Keeping the Faith in Public Schools* Bible study.
8. Decide, as a group, what would be the best time and place to meet. Your group could meet weekly (10 weeks), bi-weekly (20 weeks), or monthly (10 months). However, meeting only monthly may cause the group to lose momentum. If you decide to meet monthly discuss ways to connect between meetings.
9. Answer any questions people may still have.
10. Distribute index cards and ask people to write their names and contact information. Then, ask them to write:
 - "Yes" (to participate)
 - "Next time" (to indicate interest in participating when the study is offered in the future)
 - "Not now" (to indicate no interest in participating)
11. Close in prayer.
12. Have the people who indicated, "Yes," order *Keeping the Faith in Public Schools* Bible study from Gateways to Better Education. You can order for the group or they can order individually. Quantity discounts are as follows: 1-4 copies are \$24.95; 5-9 copies are \$18.95; 10+ copies are \$16.95. For postage, add \$3.00 for the first copy and \$0.50 for each additional copy in the same order. *Allow a minimum of two weeks shipping.*

After the Meeting

1. Use the Participant Roster in this guide to keep contact information for each participant.
2. Order copies of *Keeping the Faith in Public Schools*.

To order by mail, send a check to *Gateways to Better Education*, P.O. Box 514, Lake Forest, CA 92609. To order by telephone, call (800) 929-1163. To order online, visit www.gtbe.org/store.

Facilitating the *Keeping the Faith in Public Schools* Bible Study

The Bible study is designed to make it easy for you to facilitate discussion. For each meeting you can follow the same basic format.

Start

- As people arrive, have a time of fellowship and light refreshments. Building relationships during the study is an important part of supporting one another as you journey through the public schools.
- Begin with a prayer related to the subject of the study the group will be discussing.

Praise Reports

- Ask if anyone has a school-related praise report. Did God open a door of opportunity?
- Review the checklist of results on the *Measuring Results* page. Mark results. Each time, do this for every study you have already completed.
- Ask if anyone has any other non-school-related praise reports.

Check Answers & Discuss

This will take the majority of your study time together.

- Read aloud the introductory page of the topic.
- Beginning with lesson one, ask people to volunteer their answers for each “fill in” section. When you get to a discussion section, ask participants about their answers. When you get to the “Teaching Your Children” box, if anyone used it with their children, discuss how it went.

Prayer Time

- Discuss prayer requests of issues related to school and outside of school, as well.
- Have each person pray aloud for their *own* prayer request while the others in the group agree with the person in prayer.

Preview the Next Topic

- Read aloud the introductory page for the next topic.
- Ask if anyone has a comment in anticipation of the next topic.

Close in Prayer

- Close the meeting in a prayer of commitment and a request for God’s guidance at school.

Participant Roster

Completing this roster will help you remember to pray for and encourage each participant as they go through the study.

1. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

2. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

3. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

4. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

5. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

6. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

7. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

8. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

9. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

10. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

11. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

12. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

13. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

14. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

15. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

16. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

17. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

18. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

19. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

20. Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: (_____) _____

Measuring Results

Gentle reminders and accountability are good for everyone. At Gateways, we want your group to think “results, results, results” as they go through each topic. To help us measure the study’s impact across the country, please send us this completed form at the end of your study.

Measure the results people in your group have seen because of applying the Bible study toward those in their spheres of activity. Each time you meet, review the check list (for the all the lessons you have completed to that date) with the group and check the boxes as the results are accomplished.

Topic 1—Having a Heart for People at Your School

- Praying regularly for list of people in their path related to school.
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity from p. 11. (Group total: _____)

Topic 2—One Nation Under God

- Gave the poster to an educator. (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of posters given by people in your group: _____)
- Gave poster to more than one educator. (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of posters given by people in your group: _____)
- Gave poster to students (other than their own). (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of posters given by people in your group: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 35. (Group total: _____)

Topic 3—Students’ Religious Liberties

- Gave Religious Freedom Day (RFD) info. to a teacher. (Group total: _____)
- Gave RFD information to a principal. (Group total: _____)
- Gave RFD info. to a district admin. or board member. (Group total: _____)
- RFD was recognized by the: teacher; school; district. (Group total: _____)
- Info. about students’ religious liberty was distributed by the: teacher; school; district; children & youth at church; student club
- Started a student Bible club. (Group total: _____)
- Volunteering to help a student Bible club. (Group total: _____)
- Saw a teachers’ prayer group start at school. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 51. (Group total: _____)

Topic 4—Restoring Thanksgiving

- Gave *Happy Thanksgiving* card to an educator. (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of cards given by people in your group: _____)
- Gave *Happy Thanksgiving* cards to more than one educator. (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of cards given by your group: _____)
- Teacher(s) taught about religious aspects of Thanksgiving. (Total: _____)
- Visited class and shared about Thanksgiving. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 65. (Group total: _____)

Topic 5— Recognizing Christmas

- Gave *Merry Christmas* card to an educator. (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of cards given by people in your group: _____)
- Gave *Merry Christmas* cards to more than one educator. (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of cards given by your group: _____)
- Teacher(s) taught about religious aspects of Christmas. (Group total: _____)
- Visited class and shared about Thanksgiving. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 75. (Group total: _____)

Topic 6—Academic Standards & the Bible

- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 89. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 93. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 104. (Group total: _____)
- District enacted Bible reading guidelines like p. 101. (Group total: _____)
- Gave Gateways’ summary of our state’s standards to: teacher (total # _____) admin. (total # _____) board member (total# _____)

Topic 7—Addressing a Concern

- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 115. (Group total: _____)
- Talked to an educator about a concern. (Group total: _____)
- Talked to an educator about a concern *and had a good result.* (Total: _____)

Topic 8—Resurrecting Easter

- Gave *Happy Easter* card to an educator. (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of cards given by people in your group: _____)
- Gave *Happy Easter* cards to more than one educator. (# of group members who did it: _____; total # of cards given by your group: _____)
- Teacher(s) taught about religious aspects of Easter. (Group total: _____)
- Visited class and shared about Easter. (Group total: _____)
- Gave “The Easter Story” lesson to an educator. (Group total: _____)
- Gave “The Easter Story” lesson to more than one educator. (Total: _____)
- Used “The Easter Story” lesson at my church. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 132. (Group total: _____)

Topic 9 —Tolerance & Character

- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 143. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 146. (Group total: _____)
- Gave the “Model Policy Regarding Profanity” (p.147) to a school administrator. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 151. (Group total: _____)

Topic 10 —Transitioning

- Wrote a “thank-you” note to an educator. (Group total: _____)
- Applied the “Teaching Your Children” activity, p. 157. (Group total: _____)
- Listed the like-minded Christians at your school. (Group total: _____) (Total # of like-minded Christians listed by the entire group: _____)
- # of study participants who plan on starting their own “Keeping the Faith in Public Schools” Bible study at their school: _____
- # of study participants who plan on talking to their church’s leadership about starting a “Keeping the Faith in Public Schools” Bible study in their church: _____
- Contact information of people willing to be Area Coordinators:

Name _____

Home telephone (_____) _____

E-mail address _____

Name _____

Home telephone (_____) _____

E-mail address _____

After completing the study, fax or mail a photocopy of this page to Gateways (keep the original for future meetings).

Fax: (949) 457-6361; Address: P.O. Box 514, Lake Forest, CA 92609

Bible Study Leader’s Contact Information

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Home telephone (_____) _____

E-mail address _____

Continuing to Meet After Completing the *Keeping the Faith in Public Schools Bible Study*

When you have completed the study, we highly recommend you continue to meet for mutual support and encouragement. You don't have to meet as frequently as you did while going through the study. However, you should meet at least once a month. Here is a suggested format for your meetings.

Start

- As people arrive, have a time of fellowship and light refreshments. Continuing the relationships you built during the study is an important part of supporting one another as you journey through the public schools.
- Begin with a prayer.

Praise Reports

- Ask if anyone has a school-related praise report. Did God open a door of opportunity?
- Review the Bible study topic titles that are relevant for the time of year. You could also review the checklist of results on the *Measuring Results* page. Update any results.
- Ask if anyone has any other non-school-related praise reports.

Review a Topic & Discuss

- Choose a topic that is timely. For example, if you first completed the study in the fall, you will want to review topic 8 (Easter) prior to the Easter season.
- Review the study contents and discuss what could be done at school based on what they've learned previously and what opportunities they may, now, see.
- Ask if anyone has plans for applying the study topic. Discuss possible options.

Prayer Time

- Discuss prayer requests of issues related to school and outside of school, as well.
- Have each person pray aloud for their *own* prayer request while the others in the group agree with the person in prayer.

Determine the Next Topic

- Unless the group wants to address a different topic, choose a topic that will be timely for your next meeting.

Close in Prayer

- Close the meeting in a prayer of commitment and a request for God's guidance at school.