KINGDOM ON DISPLAY

MATTHEW 8-16

KINGDOM ON DISPLAY

How to be a good Growth Group member at MBM

Be There

The power of just turning up to encourage others is phenomenal. We don't think of our groups as events we might go to, but people we do life with. Seek to commit yourself to your small group family weekly. The blessings we give and get from one another are of eternal value!

Be Active

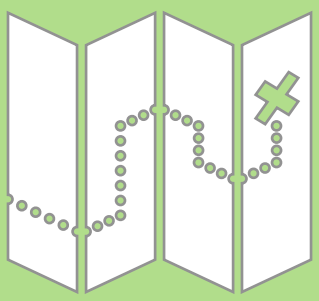
It's true, the more you put in, the more you'll get out of your small group. Look through the study or passage before the group meets. Engage in conversation, answer questions, share opinions, be willing to pray, read, lead, help set-up or pack-up. Jesus wasn't lying when he said "*it is more blessed to give than to receive*".

Be Open about yourself, your joys and your struggles.

One of the greatest blessings of a small group is knowing others and being known more personally. So share and listen openly. Similarly, be honest about when you don't understand a question or part of scripture. Chances are, someone else has been through a similar experience and appreciates you sharing it, or had a similar question to you but were too shy to ask it.

Be Concerned for others.

Resist the temptation to think "*the group must serve my needs*" before asking, "*how can I serve the needs of others?*" It's also not just the leaders' role to care for the needs of the group; Each member plays their part as we all care for one another. Be concerned for how people are travelling. Ask questions about their week and their life and be active in caring for them as they share. Seek to connect with members outside of the meeting.



Be On About God

One of the temptations of a good small group is to get caught up in each other's interests and end up talking about lots of not-so-meaningful things. Be *on about God* and what He's doing in each other's lives. Share His word with each other, pray for each other, encourage mission and godly living, rebuke, correct and train one another in righteousness.

Term 1 Teaching Plan

Week	Passage	Sunday Date
1	Matthew 8	05/02/2023
2	Matthew 9	12/02/2023
3	Matthew 10	19/02/2023
4	Matthew 11	26/02/2023
5	Matthew 12	05/03/2023
6	Matthew 13	12/03/2023
7	Matthew 14	19/03/2023
8	Matthew 15	26/03/2023
9	Matthew 16	02/04/2023
10	Good Friday	07/04/2023
10	Easter Sunday	09/04/2023

Explaining Christianity

Tuesday nights, 7:00pm, Feb 21st, 28th, Mar 7th, 14th.

Belonging

Saturday, March 4th, 9:30am & Saturday, April 29th, 9:30am

Visit the website to register or for more info

mbm.org.au/events/

How to engage with God's Word

Introduction

All communication has a purpose.

If I ask a friend to pass me a cup, I don't want them to just say "Okay" and get back to what they were doing. I want the cup, right?!

If I tell my child, it was good of them to share their toy with their sibling, I want them to feel encouraged, but I also want them to (I hope they) keep doing that good thing.

All communication is trying to achieve something, whether intellectually, emotionally, relationally or physically.

God's word is no different. When God speaks, He achieves things.

> *10As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*
> *~Isaiah 55:10-11*

The God who spoke the universe into being also transforms lives by His Word. John 1 tells us that Word became flesh and walked among us.

Jesus Christ revealed God's truth and grace to us, so that we would know and worship God in truth and through His grace.

The Old Testament Scriptures point forward to Jesus as the full and final revelation of God to us. We now find the testimony about Jesus, and how to live for Him in the writings of the New Testament.

> *1In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his*

powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ~Hebrews 1:1-3

These words of God in scripture about the person of Jesus were written by people who had personal encounters with God, yet were inspired by the Holy Spirit. So they are genuine personal testimonies from real people in real times but are also the timeless, powerful life-giving words of God's Spirit.

Listen to one of those testimonies:

> *[20] Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. [21] For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. ~2 Peter 1:20-21*

And as we've said, God speaks for a reason. He is not merely interested in giving information but transformation!

The whole bible story, and the purpose of God's actions therein, is helpfully summed up here:

> *[11]For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. [12]It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, [13]while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, [14]who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. ~Titus 2:11-14*

When God speaks, lives change!

When we come to read the bible, what are we doing?
We are relating personally with God, listening to Him, seeking to understand Him and ourselves better. As we do that, we're learning what God wants to see happen in our lives and in the world around us, through His Son, by His Spirit, for His glory and our joy.

So then, how do we properly understand what He's saying?
The same way we understand what anyone is saying when they're speaking to us! We consider the context (the situation), ask clarifying questions about the content (what is said), then reflect and respond to the purpose or intention.

Let's have a think about those things and how they help us.

Step 1: Consider the Context

Context is the circumstances that form the setting for an event or statement or conversation.

To understand the context, we survey the scene:

- What's happening?
- What's just happened/been said?
- Who are the characters and what's their relationship?
- Where are they? Does that tell us anything significant?
- How does the context of what is being said, help us understand it better?
- How does the overall context of the whole book or letter help this small section become clearer? (A writer usually writes a letter with an audience/situation in mind. How does that audience/situation help us understand what is being said and why?)
- How does the context of this book or letter fit into the context of the whole bible?
- We also take into account the type of writing it is (a letter, a Psalm, a Proverb, Historical account, etc.)

Context gives clarity to content.

Understanding the context clears the way for us to better understand the meaning of the content (what is said) and its purpose (why it was said).

For example:

If i ask for a coffee at the counter of a cafe, the barista will immediately understand what I'm wanting/meaning. Whereas, if I'm at the beach, about to go into the water and I turn to the lifeguard and say, "one large latte", he's probably going to be very confused and need to ask some probing questions because the context has made what I've just said, quite confusing. I could very well be asking him for a coffee, or I could be describing what the buoy looks like out in the ocean. Questioning the content will be what's needed to clarify why I said that in that context.

Step 2: Think about the Content

Content is what is actually said, or written in the passage.

We consider what is said in light of what is happening by asking:

- Is there a logical flow of the argument?
- Is it a question or a statement? (Are there answers to questions?)
- Is it a command or a long explanation of something?
- Are there certain words or phrases that need defining/explaining to understand the whole? Any Metaphors?
- Are there repeated words or phrases?
- What are the joining words: because, for, if, when, by, and, then, since, therefore, but, now, etc.
- With all that's being said, is there a main idea (or more than one idea)?

It may help to rephrase what is being said in your own words, or try to summarise it as if you were going to repeat it to a child (simplify it).

If you're a visual learner, you might like to draw out the scenario, or liken it to something in your life.

Once you've worked out the situation (the Context), and what is actually being said (the Content), you can move to what we should do with it (the purpose or intent).

This is an extremely important step in the process and is often missed in bible reading. We can often be guilty of stopping at information and not working hard at transformation. God doesn't want to create smarter sinners, but more godly disciples. He doesn't merely want us to listen to the word, but do what it says (James 1:22). It is the hardest, but arguably the most important step. To apply God's word well, we must be ruthless with our own limitations and expectations. Let your mind and heart remain open to whatever renovations God wants to do each time.

Step 3: Understand the purpose

This is the reason or intended outcome of what is written.

We ask:

- what was the writer hoping to achieve by what they wrote?
- What did they expect the reader to know, feel or do?

It's important here to remember that God's word was written for us, but not to us.

We are beneficiaries of the word, but we were not in the Corinthian or the Galatian Church when Paul wrote to them. We have much to learn from them because we share a similar context with them (we are also humans, with sinful hearts, living in a time of pressure to believe the false teachings and temptations of our culture), but not everything is the same.

With this in mind, it's important for us to consider how their context overlaps with ours. Then we can consider how the content speaks into each of those contexts.

We must be careful not to directly apply Biblical content to our particular context if it was never meant to apply that way. We must also be humble enough to apply it even if it might not be popular in our day.

Examples of the purpose of a passage:

- A character trait of God the author wanted us to see and appreciate more.
- A connection from the Old Testament that paints a brighter picture of who Jesus is and why He came.
- Encouragement to trust God more in a certain area of our lives, or live out our worship of Him in a more committed way.
- A deep reflection on our own hearts, considering why they don't always trust God's promises.
- It may be setting us up now to see something bigger later; something that is realised in a future passage.

The purpose won't always simply be - therefore go and do this or that.
However, it can usually be summed up in a slogan or movie title. This helps condense the ideas to a practical "take away" point.

It helps to use our usual skills in conversation/communication here.

Just as we ask ourselves, “what is this person meaning and wanting as they say this or that thing to me?” So we ask of the author, what was he intending us to hear, understand, or do when he said this?

Note: The text will never mean for us, what it never meant for them!
The answer for us, is in what the text meant for them, then!

The true meaning and purpose of the text for us will be in line with what God intended it to mean for those who first received it (especially in New Testament passages).

So only when we work out the meaning of the text (the main point and purpose) for them, then, can we work at applying it to our own cultural context (our lives today).

Engaging with God’s Word is best done in community.

This is one of the great blessings of growth groups: learning from the wisdom and experience of others. We all pick up different aspects and offer different insights as we read Scripture. This comes from our life experience, our reading skills, our previous bible knowledge and personality types. So having different people in the room to engage with can be a great blessing.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of reading and engaging with God's word is to be transformed: conformed to the likeness of Jesus.

> *1Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:1-2*

Remember to pray for God's Spirit to help you understand His words as you read them.

Here's a couple of prayers from scripture you might like to use.

> *17I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19and his incomparably great power for us who believe. ~Ephesians 1:17-19a*

> *…We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ~Colossians 1:9b-14*

In summary, each time we approach the word, we aim to:

1. **Consider the Context** - what's the situation?
2. **Think about the Content** - what is actually being said?
3. **Understand the Purpose** - what was intended to happen from what was written?

Some other popular methods for engaging with God's Word

1. Simple Gospel Exploration Method:

Pray and ask God to help you understand His word and your heart in light of it. Then read the passage through twice.

1. What did I learn about who Jesus is?

2. What did I learn about why Jesus came?

3. How will knowing this affect how I live?

And If you want to go deeper

1. What do I see as the main point of this section?

2. Do I associate with any of the characters in the story?

3. What are the big truths in this passage?

4. What questions does it raise? Are they answered here?

5. What do you think the writer wanted you to know, feel and do?

Pray for God's help to do what you felt the passage moved you to.
Share what you learned with someone.

2. Swedish Method:

The Swedish method is a simpler method, especially for new believers. It helps you consider how you're responding to God's word.

This simple way of reading the Bible was popularized by Ada Lum, a staff worker with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. She named it after the Swedish student group where she first saw it used.

It goes like this:

1. Read the passage aloud.

2. Each person then spends 5-10 minutes reading back over the passage on their own, looking out for three things:

A light bulb/spark: anything that shines out in the passage and sparks your attention; it can be something important, or something that particularly strikes the reader.

A question mark: anything that is hard to understand; something that the reader would like to be able to ask the author about.

An arrow: anything that applies personally to the reader's life.

3. Each person should write down at least one thing and no more than three under each category. You might like to ask each person to come to the meeting with at least one light bulb, one question mark, and one arrow already from the passage. You will need to allow 5-10 minutes for this, depending on the length of the passage.

4. You each share your light bulb/s, and discuss. Don't feel you need to solve all the issues/questions here. It is open sharing time.

5. You each share your question mark/s, and then do your best to work out answers together from the passage (although it doesn't matter if you can't find an answer. You can come back to it at a later time, or ask others at church).

6. You each share your arrow/s, and discuss.

7. You pray together about what you have learned and what you want to put into practice.

As you gain confidence and grow in your familiarity with the Bible, you could expand the range of things you look for or consider as you read the passage. For example:

A Heart: The central idea of the passage

A Speech Bubble: write down the names of people who might benefit if you shared with them what you've learned.

It's really up to you as to how much you vary and expand the basic method.

3. C.O.M.A Method

C.O.M.A stands for: Context — Observation — Meaning — Application.

C.O.M.A is a method that helps you consider the true meaning and intention of a passage in its own context. It then helps you work at applying it meaningfully to your life.

C.O.M.A is an excellent group study method, but is also great for personal bible reading or a 1-to-1 setting.

Step 1: Read the passage aloud.

Step 2: Ask some context questions of the text:

- What sort of writing is this? (A letter, a narrative, a poem?)
- Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?
- What has happened so far?

Step 3: Ask some observation questions of the text:

- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text?
- What is the main point or points?
- What surprises are there?
- What are the key words?
- What words or ideas are repeated?

Step 4: You ask some meaning questions of the text:

- How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
- How does the passage relate to Jesus?
- What does this teach us about God?
- How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?

Step 5: You ask some application questions of the text:

- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) my understanding?
- Is there some attitude I need to change?
- How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?

Step 6: Pray together about what you have learned.

Context, Content & Purpose of Matthew 8-16

Context

Matthew 7 closes with:

> *"When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." (Matt. 7:28–29)*

What follows are examples of this reality: Jesus' having authority as God's Son - i.e. God. The one who holds all the authority to bring this new kingdom He's just been speaking of. The one through whom this kingdom comes and under whom it exists; the one who "must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (Matt. 16:21)

Content

In this section of Matthew, Jesus is demonstrating the Kingdom. He makes visible in the lives of broken sinners what He's promising by His words. He heals physical illness, restores life, sight, and movement. He gives freedom from demon-possession and religious oppression. He offers a new vocation to those who are willing. But He also challenges and exposes the hearts of those stuck in sin, pride and faithlessness. And the piece that holds it all together — the way to take hold of what's on show — the step to take towards submission to this new kind of King is — faith! Faith is central to this section and to the effects of this kingdom's life-changing power.

Matthew seeks to build a picture not only of the good that's in store for citizens of this kingdom: "come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28) but also the challenges that lay ahead: "whoever is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30) and "whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

Purpose

In the midst of words about hardship and sacrifice, Jesus is proving that His kingdom will bring life everlasting, for "the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18) and "whoever loses their life for Me will find it" (Matt 10:39; 16:25).

For His people there is:

- **Providence**
  "they all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over." (Matt. 14:20)

- **Protection for the fearful**
  "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (Matt. 14:27)

- **An invitation to the broken**
  "Come!" (Matt. 11:28)

- **Freedom for the guilty**
  "take heart, son; your sins are forgiven" (Matt. 9:2)

Matthew invites us to consider what our part in this kingdom will be. Will we entrust ourselves to this King who is worthy of God's title - The Christ!?

Matthew 8 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 8 • Growth Group Notes

Matthew 9 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 9 • Growth Group Notes

Matthew 10 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 10 • Growth Group Notes

Matthew 11 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 11 • Growth Group Notes

Matthew 12 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 12 • Growth Group Notes

Matthew 13 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 13 • Growth Group Notes

Matthew 14 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 14 • Growth Group Notes

Matthew 15 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 15 • Growth Group Notes

Matthew 16 • Sermon Notes

Matthew 16 • Growth Group Notes

Prayer Points

Prayer Points

Prayer Points