



Group Leaders' Guide for 'Progressing Together: Level 1'

November 2017

Group study

Even if you are able to study these courses on your own, we strongly recommend that you find a few other Christians to join you. You could then meet once a week as a small group to discuss the answers you have found beforehand in your personal study of the lesson. Each of the eleven courses has five lessons and finishes with an exam. We suggest that you set aside one hour for personal study per week, plus one hour for group sharing, that is, 2 hrs per lesson, or 10 hours per course. In this way, you could complete a course in five weeks.

In order for a study group to get started, a church leader, or a believer who has already studied the courses, needs to take the initiative to invite others to join him to form the group. He/she must then ensure that they persevere with the study, and that the discussions remain centred on the word of God and the subject in hand. We call this person a "group leader". The leader should be a mature Christian, preferably one who has followed a tutors' training course.

The leader's role is to facilitate the study of these courses. He/she is not a teacher who knows all the answers, but rather someone who encourages mutual sharing around the word of God.

It is not necessary to do the courses in the suggested order, but it is preferable to follow the order of the lessons within each course.

Practical guidelines:

- Prepare the studies: It goes without saying that you must answer all the questions for yourself first, and note possible complementary questions that you could ask.
- Have enough copies of the lessons ready for each participant to receive his lesson a week in advance. Make sure there are enough Bibles, and a concordance for each meeting.
- Be sure to create a good atmosphere: share, and invite others to share, the week's experiences, pray together, sing, praise God.
- Simplify the study if necessary: depending on the group, the suggested questions may be too difficult. So think of some easier questions that will help the participants find the answers. Sometimes it is good to give a personal example of how you have applied the biblical truth being discussed, or to invite others to share testimonies with regard to the passage under discussion.
- Always keep the goal in mind: it is the study of specific texts, not a "free for all" sharing. People often tend to answer a question immediately from their own personal experience. So it may be that the question you most often ask will be: "But what does the text say?"
- Guide the study: encourage those who are timid, by asking them questions that are a bit easier. Graciously correct those who talk too much, or who have a tendency to wander away from the subject. A good way of directing the conversation is to ask questions which will bring it back to the main topic and purpose of the lesson.
- You should avoid questions which can be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Ask rather: 'How?', 'Why?', 'Who?', 'Where?', 'When?'.
- Organise an examination: after each course of five lessons, give a short written exam of not more than one hour. The student will choose one question from a list of four and write an answer to it of one or two pages. He will have the right to use a Bible and a concordance. Give the answer sheets to a church leader or another mature Christian who will be able to correct them.

- If you send the results to the organisers of the 'Progressing Together' programme, each student who successfully completes the eleven courses can receive a certificate. Whether or not you desire this, please let us know how you have been able to use the courses and any comments that you have on them, by writing to the following address:
E.R.B., B.P. 10112, 13425 Cedex 12, Marseille, France
Or email us at : info@progressingtogether.org

Alternative method of study

If you cannot meet every week, we encourage you to organise study weekends and to study the five lessons of the course all together. In the meantime, the participants can do the lessons by correspondence with their group leader. But it is always worthwhile to meet at least once for each course in order to:

- enjoy fellowship and mutual encouragement
- deal with misunderstood questions
- emphasise again the important points of the course
- do the exam
- prepare the following course.

Have you understood these instructions? Test yourself with the following quiz!

1. Is it better to study the courses on your own or in a small group?
2. How many hours are needed to complete each course?
Private study: _____ hours
Group meeting: _____ hours
Total study time: _____ hours
3. What do we call the person who leads the group?
4. Do you need to have studied theology to lead a group?
5. Can you change the order of lessons within a course?
6. What will you do during your group meetings?
7. Is it helpful to give examples from personal experience in order to illustrate a biblical point?
8. How should you handle shy members of the group?
9. How should you handle over talkative members of the group?
10. What is a good way of guiding the conversation towards the goal of the study?
11. Which of the following two questions would be better to ask:
 - a) Why did Jesus die on the cross?
 - b) Jesus died on the cross to save us from eternal death, didn't he?
12. What should be held at the end of each course?
13. Who can correct the students' exam answers?
14. How can students receive a certificate on completion of the ten courses?
15. Do we want to hear your comments on this study programme?

Answers: in a small group; 5+5=10; a group leader; no; no; discuss the answers to each question, share the experiences of the past week, pray together, sing and praise God; yes; encourage them to participate; graciously keep them in check; ask suitable questions; the question 'a'; an exam; a church leader or a mature Christian; by corresponding with the organisers of the programme 'Progressing Together'; Of course!



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Questions for the final exams

Each participant should write about one page in answer to one of the four questions proposed. Two ways of communicating the questions are permitted :

- 1) Do not divulge the questions before the exam, then allow them to choose any one during the exam.
- 2) Show them the 4 questions in advance, and tell them they will have the choice between only 2 which will be revealed once the exam begins.

He/she will be able to use the Bible and a concordance. The length of the examination will not exceed one hour. At the top of the answer sheet must appear:

- the student's name
- the number of the course
- the number of the question chosen
- the date of the exam.

The student should be careful to leave a margin at the side.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

1. Situate Abraham in the general history of the Bible. What do we learn from him concerning salvation, the plan of God, etc.?
2. Why, in one sense, do we say there is only one gospel, and in another that there are four?
3. What makes the Bible a unified whole?
4. Why are some prophecies and other texts from the Old Testament quoted in the New Testament?

2. WALKING IN THE LIGHT

1. What gives you the assurance that you are a child of God?
2. Where does temptation come from and how can we resist it?
3. According to 1 John 2:18-28 and 4:1-6
 - a) How does one recognise an anti-Christ or a false prophet?
 - b) Compare the spirit of the anti-Christ with the Spirit of God.
 - c) How can one avoid yielding to temptation?
4. What does "walking in the light" mean? Name things that hinder our walk and others that help it.

3. THE CHRISTIAN'S RESOURCES

1. With reference to Psalm 119, choose one of the sections (composed of eight verses) that these lessons have not touched on, and show the importance of the word of God according to the section chosen.
2. Using John 14 and 16 as a basis, describe the role of the "Comforter" in the life of the believer.
3. According to Matthew 6:1-15, how does the prayer of a child of God differ from the prayer of people of other religions?
4. What similarities are there between the temptations of Jesus (Mt 4:1-11) and those of the believer?

4. THE CHURCH

1. Choose one of the Biblical illustrations for the Church, explain its meaning, and then describe some practical applications from it for yourself as a child of God and a member of the Church.
2. Show the origins of the "ordinances". Who can administer them? Who can participate in them? When and how often?
3. Describe the circumstances which led the first Christians to hold the first Council of the Church. What was the result of it?
4. What qualities should a church leader possess? Describe some ways he can put these into practice in your church.

5. PERSECUTION

1. You are in North Africa. Explain how you would encourage a brother in Christ who has been summoned to the police station in order to respond to questions about "his Christian activities".
2. What lessons about persecution can we draw from the life of Joseph?
3. How does our personal relationship with Jesus Christ help us when we are persecuted?
4. How, according to the example of Jesus and the apostles, can we face up to unfair treatment?

6. CHRISTIAN ETHICS

1. Why is it important to avoid all lying, even what are called "white lies"?
2. What attitude should a Christian adopt towards pornography? What biblical teachings should be taken into consideration?
3. Should a Christian offer or accept bribes? What biblical teachings should be taken into consideration?
4. A young Christian writes to you that he feels he is not making progress in his spiritual life. He even has the impression that he is a bigger sinner now than before his conversion six months ago. Write an answer.

7. CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS

1. Ephesians 5:21-6:9
How does the relationship between Christ and the Church help us understand what God desires in the life of a married couple? Within the family, what are the responsibilities of the parents and of the children?
2. What should be our attitude towards civil authorities? Answer using biblical arguments. Explain Romans 13:10 *"love is the fulfilment of the law"*.
3. Comment on 2 Corinthians 6:14 *"What do righteousness and wickedness have in common?"* Or *"What fellowship can light have with darkness?"* Explain why the Christian is the *"light of the world"* and the *"salt of the earth"*.
4. Describe the *"clothing of the old man"* and that of the *"new man"* (Colossians 3). What should a Christian do with the "clothing"? How will obedience to these instructions affect relationships between believers?

8. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH

1. "God is love" affirms John in 1 John 4:8,18. Where do you see this love in the first three chapters of Genesis?
2. A friend writes to you: "Adam's sin has nothing to do with the rest of humanity. Man is essentially good, even if he is weak ..." Answer!
3. Is God unjust in making a righteous man (Jesus) die in the place of sinners?
4. A Muslim also believes in the second coming of Jesus. Tell him what he does not yet know about this subject.

9. SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND OCCULTISM

1. We are in a spiritual struggle against the spirits of evil. List some tactics used by these spirits against the believer.
2. Is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross victory or defeat? Explain.
3. How are the believer's spiritual weapons to be used?
4. What have you in Christ and why is that important for spiritual warfare?

10. CHRISTIAN SERVICE

1. In certain churches the "pastor" is paid for his work. Bring out the positive and negative aspects by referring to Bible passages that relate to this subject.
2. How does Mt. 20:26-28 apply to church leaders?
3. The group of Christians in your town is growing, and you feel that one or more leaders should be appointed to ensure that the group functions in the right way and continues to grow. How are you going to proceed?
4. A new convert is full of zeal and talks to you about obvious problems in your group. According to him no-one is exercising the necessary authority. He proposes taking things in hand himself. How would you answer him (in the form of a letter)?

11. PARDON ET RECONCILIATION

1. Give a biblical definition for forgiveness and reconciliation. What is the relationship between the two ?
2. What is your responsibility before God to forgive a) brothers and sisters in Christ ? b) other people?
3. Someone in your house group or church verbally insulted you and shows no signs of recognizing any error. Nevertheless you are so hurt that you want to avoid him/her. How will you resolve this problem? (You can either write down a plan of action or prepare a role play with another person.)
4. Describe an event when someone wronged you. Explain how you responded. Then in the light of what you learned in this course evaluate how well you acted.