

## Church Leader's Guide for Youth Groups, Adult Education, and Small Groups

Welcome to Our Daily Bread Christian University, a fully online, FREE, nonacademic credit Christian university with content from leading biblical and theological educators. The content is presented in three learning levels: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced.

These courses can easily be used in a small group or in church education settings. The following suggestions will help you begin and facilitate discipleship and training programs.

### **Step 1:** Select courses and create user accounts.

Our Daily Bread Christian University offers courses to meet a variety of ministry needs. To determine the best fit for your group, carefully review the course descriptions online. A complete description for each course can be found on each course's homepage.

Each participant may create an optional individual user account by going to the Our Daily Bread Christian University homepage at [www.ChristianUniversity.org](http://www.ChristianUniversity.org). New users can click "SIGN UP" in the top right corner of the screen to create their free account and begin their studies. This allows the user to maintain course records, and also receive updates on new courses.

### **Step 2:** Organize and prepare for group meetings.

Determine and announce a start and completion date for the course or series. A minimum of one lesson per week is suggested in order to maintain a reasonable schedule. Reference Appendix 2 for suggested course schedules for the church calendar.

Prior to the first group meeting, the course facilitator should carefully review all content in the lesson for the week. The facilitator is also encouraged to enroll in and complete the [Group Dynamics](#) course. This course will assist the facilitator with the various group dynamics and issues that he/she may experience during the study. Please see the promotion sequence in Appendix 1 for more detailed ideas.

### **Step 3:** Facilitate group meetings.

The step-by-step approach to all Our Daily Bread Christian University lessons will guide facilitators and students through the course to ensure that all are well prepared for group meetings. The following options are available to assist facilitators in leading the courses.

#### **Facilitation Option 1:**

Provide a brief overview of the lesson content (10 to 20 minutes) to ensure that those who were unable to complete the suggested outside study are able to participate. Utilize the resources that are a part of the Our Daily Bread Christian University lesson as a part of the overview. Examples of available resources include the following:

1. Objectives are provided for each course (see course Syllabus). Review lesson objectives at the beginning of each session. You will also find Listening Guides and Leader's Guides for many of the courses.

2. The Old and New Testament survey courses include suggested readings from a basic Bible commentary that can be referenced for additional ideas and notes.
3. Many of the courses offer charts and maps that can be printed for distribution and discussion.
4. Most lessons include a lecture transcript. Participants should be encouraged to print the lesson transcript and bring it to class, including questions or comments related to the lecture. Provide extra copies of the transcript.
5. Read and/or listen to select Bible passages for discussion.

Encourage additional class discussion and participation once you have completed the lesson overview. Use the remainder of the class time for discussion. At the end of your discussion, announce the lesson for the following week and encourage the group to review it prior to the group meeting.

### **Facilitation Option 2:**

Utilize an Internet-connected computer and projector to show portions or all of the lesson video (if available), which can replace a portion or all of the lesson overview mentioned in Option 1.

Although some lessons are 30 minutes or more in length, consider breaking the lecture into short video segments of 10 minutes or less followed by discussion questions related to the video segment. In this format, 3 or 4 video segments can be handled during a typical meeting. Use the remainder of the class time for discussion. Discussion ideas are noted in Facilitation Option 1 and are not repeated here. At the end of your discussion, announce the lesson for the following week and encourage the group to review it prior to the group meeting.

## **Appendix 1—Promotion Sequence and Resources for Launching**

The Our Daily Bread Christian University studies are designed to meet learners at every level, from beginner to advanced Bible student. This approach should be emphasized in all communication in order to ensure maximum participation.

Prior to launching an Our Daily Bread Christian University group study, the ministry leadership team should become well acquainted with the courses and curriculum. The Our Daily Bread Christian University content is unique and is filled with various opportunities for learning. Familiarity with the content ensures the enthusiasm from the ministry leadership needed in promoting the program. The following is a suggested promotion sequence.

### **3 to 6 months prior:**

1. Meet with the ministry leadership to review the course content and selected study tracks to ensure full support of the effort.
2. Identify a launch date for Our Daily Bread Christian University group study and solicit small- group and adult-education leaders as course facilitators. Course facilitators should begin their own study at least three months before the launch and should meet together biweekly to share ideas and support one another. Encourage facilitators to take the Group Dynamics course at Our Daily Bread Christian University in order to be trained in leading their group.
3. Develop a group of prayer supporters who meet regularly for updates and to pray for the ministry.
4. Secure facilities and manage any other logistics needed to launch and facilitate the program.

### **1 to 2 months prior:**

1. Place an announcement in the church bulletin, e-newsletter, and other media communications such as web, email blast, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, etc.

2. Place promotional posters around the church.

3. Commission a group of 10 or more “buzz agents,” either leaders or participants, to become familiar with Our Daily Bread Christian University and to invite others to participate. A personal invitation is very effective in bringing people to the launch as well as in building spiritual community.

### **1 month prior:**

1. Invite friends and neighbors to attend and to promote the event with posters and bulletin inserts at their local churches. Consider inviting non-Christians who may benefit from courses such as World Religions Basics and Worldview Basics that examine the foundations of the Christian faith.

2. Make weekly Our Daily Bread Christian University announcements from the pulpit beginning one month prior to the launch.

3. Ask each participant to bring at least one friend to the official launch.

### **Launch Date**

1. The week of the launch, it is helpful to include a related sermon subject and set aside time during or after the church service for an informational and commissioning service. Reference the bulletin insert with the course options and ask that people visit the website for more information. Note that maximum benefit will be attained by supplementing individual study with participation in an adult education class or small group.

2. Using a computer connected to the Internet and a projector, display the Our Daily Bread Christian University website. Demonstrate the easy-to-use features as you browse through portions of one of the courses, such as Spiritual Life Basics, Bible Basics, or SoulCare.

3. Encourage the congregation to visit the Our Daily Bread Christian University website during the week and commit to attend one of the adult education classes or small-group opportunities the following week.

4. Pray for God’s wisdom and guidance as your congregation begins this spiritual journey together to go deeper in His Word through the Our Daily Bread Christian University program.

## **Appendix 2—Suggested Annual Calendar**

### **Level 1: Repeat yearly for newcomers\***

\*Instruct newcomers to go to Our Daily Bread Christian University to create a free account and review courses. Courses can be taken in any order of interest, but a suggested order is below.

Series Introductions/Tutorials/Goals - Month 1

Spiritual Life Basics - Month 1

Bible Study Basics - Month 2

Bible Basics - Month 2

World Religions Basics - Month 3

Worldview Basics - Month 3

Old Testament Basics - Months 4-7

New Testament Basics - Months 8-11

Theology Basics - Month 12

**Level 2:** Repeat yearly; Level 1 prerequisite suggested

Old Testament Survey - 12 courses; one or two courses per month

New Testament Survey - 12 courses; one or two courses per month

**Level 3:** Select individual courses or tracks from Our Daily Bread Christian University.

When participants have completed Levels 1 and 2, they will have an excellent foundation for further study. Any course from the Course Series can be used as a single course for a short-term study. Our Daily Bread Christian University offers more than 160 courses, providing many years of theological studies for dedicated students. Series include subjects such as SoulCare, Expository Preaching, Ultimate Leadership, and First Steps in Christian Ministry.