



## How to Start a Seeds of Faith Book Group?

### Gathering Book Fans:

First step is ensuring members will have different ways to access the books:

If you belong to a church find out if the church budget allows, offer the first book for free, it helps to get the club started. If not, there are plenty of other avenues to ensure book cost doesn't prevent someone from attending.

- Library
- Local bookstore
- Amazon
- Book Bub
- Used Thrift books

Another alternative is digital books either an eBook or audiobooks, which gives great access and no worries about receiving right away.

### Where and How Often Will You Meet?

You can always meet at the church but meeting in someone's home brings a different aspect to the meeting. Having coffee afterwards lends a time for socializing and keeping the book discussions centered on the book. If you are the host for all meetings, the group can contribute by bringing snacks. A library, coffee shop can also work.

### Frequency:

When thinking of frequency, 5-6 times a year works well which gives enough time to read and contemplate. Usually take July/August/Dec off the schedule due to vacations and holidays.

### When to meet:

Timing is also important: Depending on your group, Saturday afternoons, Sunday after church or some evenings may work. You'll need to find out what works best for them.

### Communication:

Getting everyone's email is the easiest way to ensure good communication. If not, a telephone chain will also work.

Some clubs create a Facebook page so there can be interaction, social media.

Depending on your situation you can also meet by Zoom. During the pandemic this was an important way to keep things going and you may consider extending it so that shut-ins could also join. Clubs can do a combination of both in person and zoom.

### Facilitating the Discussion:

*Let everyone have a chance to speak.* This is key to ensuring everyone feels included and one person doesn't monopolize the conversation.

## From Book Browse Blog:

It is interesting to note that 75% of those in book clubs with a facilitator say they are "very happy" with their book club, compared to 65% in groups without a facilitator

*A good facilitator can handle the overly dominant member by asking for another's comments.*

### **Set time limits:**

Some groups limit the amount of time each person has to express their opinions, sometimes using a physical prop as a reminder.

It is good to gently nudge those who haven't spoken by directing a question to them. Anything to add Susan?

### **Having a good set of questions is key.**

Some books include questions but definitely review them ahead of time. Book questions can be very personal and your group may not be ready to share their thoughts and feelings in the first couple of meetings.

### **Here are some ideas for general questions to get started: With contributions from Lobash and Oprah.**

- Overall, did you like this book?
- What were your thoughts about the main character(s)?
- Did you find them relatable? Likable? Why/why not?
- What was your favorite part/s of the book?
- What did you think of the writing? Any favorite passages?
- Was there anything you didn't like?
- Which scene stuck with you the most and why?
- Did you feel in general it was believable?
- What brought this Bible story to life?
- What are some of God's qualities in this story that touched your heart?
- Did you race to the end or was it a meander?
- Did the ending surprise you, or did you anticipate it?
- Who would you cast in a movie adaptation?
- If you could ask the author anything about one of the characters, what would it be?
- Other points or ideas to discuss?
- On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the best, how would you rate this book?

### **What book should you choose?**

A terrific start is with the Seeds of Faith book selections. You may also want to follow a writer's website. Other great sources are Readers of Biblical Fiction Book Club Facebook page, BookBub has a Christian Fiction section.

### **What about the next book?**

The facilitator should gather a list of suggested books with description for next selections. The choices can come from the group and reading the groups interest, i.e., one book group really enjoyed WWII stories, one really wants only Biblical fiction, and yet others more contemporary. Ensure everyone has a voice in the decision.

## **“How Reading Historical Biblical Fiction Enhances Our Understanding of the Bible.”**

**By New York Times Bestselling author Angela Hunt shares...**

“What a trustworthy biblical novelist does is take the scripture and bring it to realistic life with layers of color and texture and sensory details. We research the historical time period and read dozens of works written in that time period whenever possible, so we can get a feel for how people actually wrote, lived, and spoke.

Why not forget fiction and read only the Bible? Because the human spirit resonates to STORY. When I was a little girl, before they had invented children’s church, I had to go into the adult service with my parents. As a four-, five-, and six-year-old, I tended to fidget and often put my head in my mother’s lap to sleep. But whenever the preacher said, “Reminds me of the time when . . .” I sat up, all ears and wide awake. Why? Because those words signaled the beginning of a STORY, and I loved story. Nearly everyone does. So why read fiction based on biblical events?

- Because a trustworthy author will not violate Scripture.
- Because the fictional elements should be logical and based on historical facts.
- Because human nature is consistent over time. We often think our problems are unique, and we discover that we aren’t alone. Others have been in similar situations.
- Because historical fiction helps us better understand the culture and history of familiar story events.
- Because we learn from the lives of other people.
- Because God Himself recorded stories, and Jesus taught with them since humans are hard-wired to appreciate story. Who would know that better than the God who created us?

God gave us Scripture, and the doctrine of biblical sufficiency states that the Bible gives us all we need to know about God. But it does not give us all we want to know, and our quest for knowledge is a God-given gift.

We yearn to know more, and well-written biblical, historical, and contemporary fiction can meet that need. So don’t hesitate to open your heart and mind to a well-written biblical novel. You may be surprised to learn a truth you had never before considered.

~~Angie

To read the entire piece, please go to Angela’s website at [www.angelahuntbooks.com](http://www.angelahuntbooks.com)