

**52**  
**great**  
**Bible**  
**STUDIES**

.015



**FOR YOUTH**

- EASY-TO-USE
- REPRODUCIBLE
- DESIGNED FOR STUDENT-LED GROUPS

KEITH STULP



Faith Alive Christian Resources thanks Keith Stulp for writing this course for high school students. Stulp is a Young Life leader from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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# USER'S GUIDE

*52 Great Bible Studies* offers one-page Bible studies on topics of interest to high school youth. The material is simple to use, complete, and biblically based. It treats high schoolers as responsible young adults who want to learn more about the Bible and its meaning for their lives; the goal is to help them practice that Word in their daily living.

*52 Great Bible Studies* is readily adaptable to a variety of settings and uses. The complete course is available for purchase at [FaithAliveResources.org](http://FaithAliveResources.org); individual units are also available for purchase online.

Much of this material appeared earlier as part of the "Great" Bible Study series. However, all previous lessons have been revised and updated, and over a dozen entirely new lessons have been added.

## WHERE TO USE THESE STUDIES

### STUDENT-LED GROUPS

*52 Great Bible Studies* was written especially for student-led groups of high schoolers who are conducting their own Bible study without the direct supervision of adult leaders.

You'll want to read author Keith Stulp's comments on using this material for that purpose on pages 7-8.

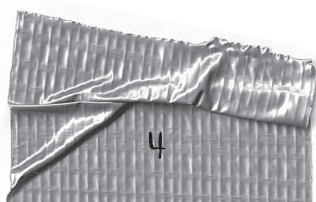
Student-led Bible study groups remain popular in high schools, youth group meetings, retreats, and other settings. Adult leaders of such groups usually work with student leaders (of small groups), helping them select materials, plan their meetings, and handle any problems or special needs. Typically, adult leaders also convene the various small groups into large group meetings.

If you are working with student-led groups, you'll want to give your leaders a copy of "How to Lead a Bible Study" on pages 9-10. Student-led groups usually work best with five to ten students in each small group.

As part of your interaction with student leaders, be sure to get their feedback on how the Bible studies are going and what came out of their time together, along with any suggestions for improvement.

### YOUTH GROUPS

If you are looking for high quality Bible studies for your youth group that require minimal preparation for you as an adult leader, these materials will serve you well.



Within your youth group, you might do the Warm-up questions with the whole group, then break into smaller groups for the Bible study itself, and finish by returning to the large group for the MoreTalk questions at the end of each study. Or, if you prefer, walk with kids through the entire study.

Each Bible study will take from thirty-five to sixty minutes, depending on how many of the questions you use and how talkative the group is.

## RETREATS

Planning an “away from church” getaway is a lot easier once you’ve selected a theme on which to focus. Check out the topics of the various units in this course, then use the Bible studies from one unit—say “Decisions” or “Stressors”—as the core of your time together. Build your retreat around the studies, letting kids run their own small group Bible studies. Supplement the studies with topic-related activities, games, guest speakers, recreational time, and so on.

## CHURCH SCHOOL

High schoolers in church school settings often need a break from longer blocks of curriculum. Slip in a short unit from *52 Great*, maybe on gossip or service or stressors or relationships. Consider letting teens run all or part of their own Bible studies. If kids enjoy the material, let them choose other topics for additional study.

## FORMAT

You can choose from fifty-two Bible studies (plus two optional start-up meetings) clustered in units (of three to seven meetings) on topics including decisions, gossip, kingdom, self-image, relationships, stressors, and more. It doesn’t matter what order you take the units in, but you’ll probably want to stick to the sequence of the topics within a unit.

Each Bible study is complete on two sides of a single page. Of course, you don’t have to discuss every question on the sheets. If a question bombs, drop it and move on to the next one. If a question produces some good talk, stay with it for a while. Going through all the questions will probably take your group at least forty-five minutes.

Meetings should begin with the **Warm-up** questions. The first question is often just for fun; the second and third questions edge the group toward the theme of the meeting.

After the Warm-up questions, have group members take turns reading the **introductory comments** (under the title of the session on side 1). These comments take kids into the topic and prepare them for the Bible study on side 2.

On side 2, you’ll find a **Scripture passage** and six related questions. Before reading Scripture, have someone read question 1, which gives the group something to look for while reading. Questions 1-3 usually get at important facts in the passage; questions 4-6 interpret and

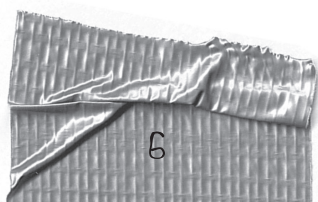
apply the passage. Question 6 is especially important because it asks teens to personalize the Bible study and (often) to practice during the week what they learned. Author Keith Stulp encourages his student leaders to buy a notebook and keep track of how people respond to question 6. That way, at the next meeting, leaders and their groups can talk about how things went that week. "I believe it's very important for teens to realize that just getting together for Bible study isn't enough; it's *practicing* their faith that counts," says Stulp.

The **More Talk** questions at the end raise some additional "real life" issues related to the topic. They offer a good format for group members to give each other practical help and advice.

## **START-UP MEETING**

You may want to use one of the two optional "start-up" sessions for your initial meeting (pp. 11-14). If so, choose only one: they're strictly for letting kids get to know each other a little better.

Feel free to contact Faith Alive with your questions or comments at [editors@faithaliveresources.org](mailto:editors@faithaliveresources.org). You may also contact the author directly at [flashy1@yahoo.com](mailto:flashy1@yahoo.com).





# AUTHOR'S COMMENTS ON USING *52 GREAT WITH* STUDENT-LED GROUPS

The contents of this course were created for a high school Bible study group called Young Life Campaigners at South Christian High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Once a week for the past seventeen years, students have met at 7 a.m. in the library of the school and have used these resources in small group Bible study.

One goal of these Bible study sheets has been to enable groups of high school students to complete a topical Bible study without the direct supervision of adult leaders. As leaders, we supply donuts for the groups (group members help pay for them) and then spend time in "big group" singing. We also listen to "big group" praises and prayer requests.

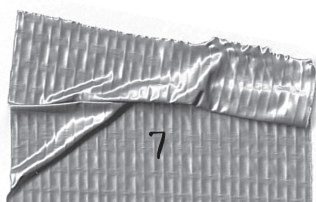
After about fifteen or twenty minutes, the groups split up and do the Bible studies. Student leaders know they have wide latitude with their group. For example, if a group member has been through a traumatic experience, the group may need to spend time addressing that need.

I've found that the Bible study sheets usually have more material than the groups can cover

in the thirty-five minutes available. I usually place the studies in the lockers of the student leaders one or two days before the meeting; that way they can spend some devotional time with the material and decide what parts of the study they want to use. I tell my leaders never to cut back on reading Scripture in their group meetings and always to spend time praying for each other (group members often hold hands while praying). Everything else is ancillary.

While adults often lead the big group meetings, students do too, playing guitars and taking turns leading devotions. It's been my experience that the more you expect and encourage students to be involved, the more invested they become.

Each month I have student leaders over for dinner at my house to hang out and to check in. That's when we deal with any issues that arise and discuss any ideas that come up. It's become a bit of a mantra for me to remind student leaders that I am there to serve them; it's *their* ministry to run for their fellow students.





Choosing leaders is a difficult process and probably never done exactly right. I use high school seniors as small group leaders. We look at where we believe seniors are spiritually and how much experience they have in Campaigners. We also look at how involved they are in their churches and how they interact socially. We try very hard never to set someone up to fail. Given the choice between someone who is a charismatic leader and someone who is more spiritually mature, we opt for the latter.

The Spirit has worked positively through these Bible study groups at South Christian. What has made the groups work—besides the great blessing of God—has been our commitment to giving students permission to lead themselves and to give their own direction to the groups.

Over the past seventeen years, students have been able to count on the meetings happening on schedule. I'm convinced that it's important to give young people, who have so much change in their lives, something they can depend on.

We try to make this a place where young people feel secure. No put-downs are allowed (beyond the obvious and familiar type among friends). When someone shares in the big group meeting, the person first has to say, "My name is \_\_\_\_." And everyone replies, "Hi, \_\_\_\_!" before the person continues—think of a big AA meeting! It's very important that the Bible study does not become a place for

"those kind" of people. *Everyone* must be gladly accepted and made to feel welcome.

Many people have helped with these studies, both by giving ideas and by offering critiques and editorial comments. I especially want to thank the many students at South Christian who cared enough about their Lord and their fellow students to make this Bible study a reality.

I value your questions and comments (and especially your ideas for improvement!).

Please let me know if I can be of service.

In Christ's service,  
Keith ("Flash") Stulp  
flashy1@yahoo.com

# HOW TO LEAD A BIBLE STUDY (FOR STUDENT LEADERS OF SMALL GROUPS)

Small group Bible study is about lots of things, including food and enjoying each other's company. But Bible study and prayer are the big reasons why we get together. Remember to keep that focus if and when new people come into your small groups—especially people who just want to “hang out” and don't come to the large group meeting. You are there for them too, for the shy people and the noisy people, for those who come faithfully and those who don't. But always keep your focus on Scripture and prayer.

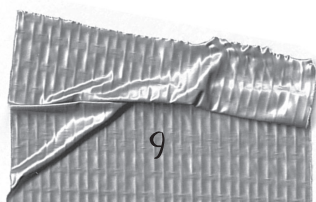
Each Bible study is complete on both sides of a single page. Just print and hand out. No further equipment or knowledge needed. Don't feel that you have to discuss every single question on these sheets. If a question bombs, drop it and move on to the next one. If a question produces some good talk, stay with it for a while.

Begin with the **Warm-up** questions. There are usually two or three of these. The first is often just an icebreaker to get people talking. It may or may not have anything to do with the topic. The second and third questions should take

the group into the topic of the meeting. By the way, always give people enough time to answer the questions—it usually takes about ten seconds to hear a question, process it, and come up with some semblance of a coherent answer. Count to ten in your head after asking a question before you prod anyone. Don't be afraid of silence.

After the Warm-up questions, have group members take turns reading the **introductory comments** under the title of the lesson (Have volunteers read whole paragraphs; don't switch readers so often that it becomes distracting). Before reading, you may want to say, “Let's read this and see if we agree or disagree with it.” Giving people a reason to read (seeing if they agree or not) will help them follow along with more purpose. After you're done reading, you could ask, “Do we all agree with this?” See where that might take you.

On **side 2** you'll find a **Scripture passage** and **six questions**. Before reading Scripture, have someone read **question 1** aloud—it gives people something to look for while reading.



Next, take turns reading the **Bible passage** or read it yourself. Remember, you're reading God's Holy Word, not just another book that you carry around in your backpack. So read it carefully, slowly, reverentially.

Then discuss the questions. **Questions 2 and 3** are usually intended to help get at the important facts in the passage. **Questions 4-6** help the group interpret and apply the passage. **Question 6** is especially important because it asks group members to personalize the Bible study and (often) to put some part of the Bible study into practice—and unless studying the Bible makes a difference in our lives, what's the point? You may want to jot down people's responses to question 6 in a notebook. Then, at the next meeting, follow up by asking how people are doing with whatever they decided to try.

**More Talk** questions raise some important real-life issues related to the topic. The questions should help the group share ideas for solving problems based on their own everyday experiences.

Be sure to **pray for each other** at the close of your small group meeting.

That's it! I hope these studies help you grow closer to God and to the people in your small group.

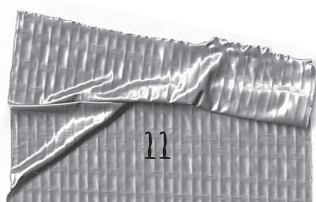
In Christ,  
Keith ("Flash") Stulp



# OPTIONAL START-UP MEETING 1

Welcome to your small group! Just for fun and to get acquainted (or reacquainted), everyone should choose one item from the list below to share with the group. Then go around the circle and take turns telling about . . .

- a time when you won a contest and how it made you feel.
- the wildest (dumbest) prank you were ever involved in.
- your dream job.
- a computer disaster that happened to you.
- an ability or skill you wish you had.
- a "learning to drive" misadventure.
- the happiest day of your life.
- a brush with someone famous.
- your favorite video game.
- the sport they couldn't pay you enough to be part of or even watch.
- the worst/best movie you've ever seen.
- a favorite author or book.
- a babysitting nightmare.
- something else halfway interesting: \_\_\_\_\_.





## **GALATIANS 5:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

### **THE WAY TO HAVE GREAT MEETINGS**

What if your Bible study group took this passage seriously this year? Brainstorm six ways your group could “live out” these words in your meetings. For example, “Be *faithful* by showing up for every meeting.”

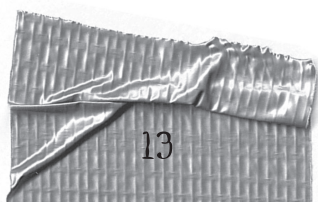
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Close the meeting by sharing your prayer concerns and praises. Then pray for each other.

# OPTIONAL START-UP MEETING 2

Welcome to your small group! Just for fun and to get acquainted (or reacquainted) with each other, choose any one of the “mosts” below and share your experience with your group.

- most dangerous car ride
- most courageous act
- most scary moment
- most disgusting injury
- most memorable animal story
- most amazing athletic feat
- most radical hunting/fishing adventure
- most disastrous date experience
- most lost you’ve ever been
- most trouble you almost got into
- most (use your own idea): \_\_\_\_\_







## ROMANS 12:9-18

<sup>9</sup> Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

<sup>10</sup> Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

<sup>11</sup> Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

<sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

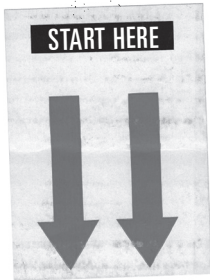
<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not think you are superior.

<sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

### LIVE AT PEACE . . .

Romans 12:9-18 is a beautiful passage about how we should act and how we should treat one another. Divide into pairs and assign a verse or two to each pair (you do the math). Have each pair talk about how their verse(s) might apply to the way you treat each other within the group. Then get back together with the whole group and read through the passage, pausing after each verse to allow the pair(s) assigned to that verse to share how it might apply to the group.

Close your meeting by praying for each other.



## WARM-UP

### 1. How do you decide what to eat for breakfast?

- Whatever's on the table (easy-to-please)
- Anything but lumpy oatmeal (fussy)
- Always a bowl of Cheerios or other cereal (predictable)
- Whatever takes the least time (hassled)
- Whatever I can take with me in the car (fast-food addict)
- Anything other than what I'm told to eat (independent)
- Whatever's left from supper—cold pizza or stew (taste challenged)
- Breakfast? What's that? (wise guy)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Check off all that apply on the following list of "tough decisions I would make regarding my siblings":

- Donate internal organ (hero)
- Lend your new iPhone (noble)
- Do a chore (humane)
- Blow away his or her work on the computer (inhumane)
- Take early-morning pictures of him or her and give to yearbook staff (friend of a tyrant)

### 3. Jesus made a very difficult decision in the garden of Gethsemane. What did he decide to do?

# DECISIONS



## GOD IS IN CONTROL

Decisions, decisions. We spend every waking moment of our days making decisions: Do I turn off my alarm and sleep or get up for school? Do I take a plain bagel or raisin? Do I want to sit in the driver's seat or steer from the passenger side? When you think about it, we make decisions while we sleep too: Do I run from the green monster or do I fight?

Of course, some decisions are much more difficult to make: Should I get a part-time job or try out for track? Should I ask so-and-so out? Should I stay in this relationship or break it off? Should I go to college? If so, which one? Decisions can be gut-wrenching and time-consuming.

Over the next few weeks, we'll look at how we, as Christians, should approach our decision-making. There's one overriding truth about decisions: God is in control! No matter what happens as a result of our decisions, we know we have a loving God on our side. *That*, at least, can bring some peace.

1. As you read this Scripture passage, notice what God does.

2. What are some of the great things God does for people?

3. What are some of the images that show what will happen when we hope in God?



## ISAIAH 40:28-31

<sup>28</sup> Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,  
and his understanding no one can fathom.

<sup>29</sup> He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;

<sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.

4. Why does the writer seem surprised at the beginning of this passage? Should we be surprised God is like this?

5. What part of this passage encourages you the most right now? Why?

6. What will you try to practice from this passage?

## MORE TALK

1. What sometimes stops you from making the right decisions?
2. As a Christian, can you ever make a wrong decision? (Not a decision to sin like deciding to shoplift, but a life decision about what sport to play or what class to take.)
3. Give an example of how God is capable of making our bad decisions right.
4. As a decision-maker, how would you like to change?

