

LOVE, CHILDREN, and FAMILY PLANNING DISCUSSION GUIDE

INSTRUCTION MANUAL FOR DISCUSSION GROUP LEADERS

Thank you for leading a group in your church through this Bible study discussion on love, children, and family planning (FP), also known as healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (HTSP). This guide hopes to encourage the church to talk about Bible passages on love and families, and help us clarify our values about couples, sexuality, and the importance of children. It also encourages us to be open to ideas and information about FP/HTSP. Please follow the directions below and let your team leader know if you have any questions.

PREPARATION: Steps to take before beginning the Bible study sessions

1. Read the entire *Love, Children, and FP* discussion guide and this entire instruction manual. Ask your team leader if you have any questions.
2. Identify which church group you will conduct the *Love, Children, and FP* discussion guide with, such as a men's group, women's group, or mixed group.
3. Contact the group's leader(s) and ask if you can add a one-hour session on "Love, Children, and Family Planning" into their regular monthly/weekly meetings. There will be nine sessions in total: session 1 is for the pre-discussion survey, session 2 - 8 will cover the *Love, Children, and FP* discussion guide content, and session 9 is for the post-discussion survey.
4. Give each group leader a *Love, Children, and FP* Bible Study Guide and have them read the entire booklet. Encourage them to ask you any questions they might have, so that you are all in agreement before the content is presented to the larger group. The group leaders may help you answer questions or guide the discussion once it begins.
5. **A week before the first meeting:**
 - a. If your first session is scheduled more than three weeks in advance, check in with the group leaders to ensure they have read the Bible study guide. Ask them if they have any questions before you begin.
 - b. How to set up the survey packets (attached):
 - i. Make sure you have one pre-discussion and one post-discussion survey for each group member.
 - ii. Sort the surveys into stacks: put one pre-discussion and one post-discussion survey in each stack. Label the pages of each stack with the same number, e.g. all the pages in the first stack should be labeled #1, the second stack #2, etc. This system allows you to anonymously measure the difference in attitude of each survey taker.
 - iii. Write the name of the church on the first page of each survey.

ADMINISTERING PRE-DISCUSSION SURVEYS

For your first meeting, devote the hour to administering the pre-discussion survey (6 pages total, see attached pages labeled "Pre-Discussion Survey"). Once the group is finished taking the survey, spend the rest of the hour reviewing the Introduction and How To Use This Book sections of the booklet. Ask participants if they have any general questions or hopes for the Bible study. End the meeting in prayer and say that you will start the Bible study at the next meeting. [See next page for additional instructions]

Please follow the instructions below on administering the pre-discussion survey to literate vs limited-literacy groups. **In either case, participants should take a pre-discussion survey before receiving a Bible study booklet.**

For Literate Groups:

Choose this option if all your participants can read the survey on their own, or if you only have 1 or 2 people who need help. If the majority of people in your group can complete the survey on their own, help the one or two participants who need assistance to complete the survey.

1. Hand out a pre-numbered copy of the survey to each person and ask them to fill it out individually, without consulting each other. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.
2. As surveys are handed in, calculate the “total score” for each section by adding up the numbers they have circled. Write down that number under “Individual Total Score” in the scoring sheet at the end of each section (see pages 2, 4, and 6 of each survey template).

Interpreting participant scores:

Remember to add up scores as the surveys are turned in. As you do so, keep note of the following guidelines. This way, you can quickly get a feeling for how your participants feel about family planning:

Section 1

Total Score of 5 - 13: Respondent is more likely to be supportive of family planning.

Example: Michael’s total score for section one is 5. He may be a good candidate for a cohort of family planning advocates.

Total Score of 14 - 25: Respondent is less likely to be supportive of family planning.

Example: Felicia’s total score for section one is 24. She may express hesitation or opposition to family planning messages.

Section 2

Total Score of 5 - 13: Respondent is more likely to be supportive of family planning.

Total Score of 14 - 25: Respondent is less likely to be supportive of family planning.

Section 3

Total Score of 5 - 13: Respondent is less likely to be supportive of family planning.

Total Score of 14 - 25: Respondent is more likely to be supportive of family planning.

Limited-Literacy Groups

***Choose this option if 3 or more people in your group cannot read. If the majority of people in your group can complete the survey on their own, follow instructions above and work one-on-one with those who need help.*

Read each section aloud to the group. Before you read the reactions following each passage, explain how the scale for expressing your opinion works, i.e. 1 is “strongly agree”, 2 is “agree”, 3 is “neutral”, 4 is “disagree” and 5 is “strongly disagree.” After you read aloud each reaction, ask everyone to close his/her eyes and raise the number of fingers that correspond with his/her feelings. For example, if Karen strongly disagrees with a reaction, she should raise 5 fingers. Pages 2, 4, and 6 of each template provide charts where you can record responses for non-literate participants.

Interpreting scores:

Section 1 & 2: If there are more 1s and 2s than 4s and 5s, the group is more likely to support family planning.

If there are more 4s and 5s than 1s and 2s, the group is less likely to support family planning.

Section 3: If there are more 4s and 5s than 1s and 2s, the group is more likely to support family planning.

If there are more 1s and 2s than 4s and 5s, the group is less likely to support family planning.

CONDUCTING BIBLE STUDY SESSIONS

During sessions 2 - 8, go through one section of the discussion guide per session. Remember that each person should have a booklet or one to share for each discussion. If the survey results show that the majority of your group does not practice or support family planning, you may need to take more time on each section of the Bible study guide. Do not feel you need to “move on” if people still have questions or concerns. Remember to utilize Section 2 for technical questions on contraceptive methods.

A note regarding different Bible translations: Some group members will be carrying their own Bibles (in English or in African languages) which may have different translations of the original Hebrew and Greek passages. Their groups will be accustomed to comparing different versions as they discuss Bible passages. If the group asks about doing that, say “That’s fine!”

ADMINISTERING POST-DISCUSSION SURVEYS

At the final meeting, open by asking if anyone has any final questions about the discussion guide content or technical questions about family planning methods. Have referral information ready in case someone should speak with a doctor or nurse. Finally, administer the post-discussion survey seen on pages 10-15. See the instructions under “Administering Pre-Discussion Surveys” for steps to take for literate vs low literacy groups.

The charts for scoring participant responses are on pages 11, 13, and 15.

Note: Remember to record all participant scores in the score tracker on page 4 of this manual.

Our hope is that you see an overall trend toward acceptance and interest in family planning thanks to the Bible reflections. Do not hesitate to contact Christian Connections for International Health (ccih@ccih.org) with any questions or concerns regarding the tracking tools.

SCORE TRACKERS

Literate groups:

At the end of the first and last sessions, record all the pre-discussion or post-discussion survey results in the tracker below. Note that this is only a sample table. If you have more than six participants, create a separate, larger table.

In order to decide whether an individual may have become more supportive of FP after completing the discussion guide, note that a *decrease* in score for sections 1 and 2 and an *increase* in score for section 3 shows positive change.

	Pre-Discussion Survey Totals			Post-Discussion Survey Totals			Did the individual become more supportive of FP?		
Survey #	Section 1 Total	Section 2 Total	Section 3 Total	Section 1 Total	Section 2 Total	Section 3 Total	Section 1 (Y/N)	Section 2 (Y/N)	Section 3 (Y/N)
#1									
#2									
#3									
#4									
#5									
#6									

Limited Literacy Groups

At the end of the first and last sessions, record all the pre-discussion or post-discussion survey results in the tracker below. The group may show an increase in support of family planning if the number of 1s and 2s increases in Section 1 and 2 between pre- and post-surveys, and if the number of 1s and 2s decreases in Section 3 between pre- and post-surveys.

	Pre-Discussion Survey Totals			Post-Discussion Survey Totals			Did the group become more supportive of FP?	
Survey Section	Total # 1s & 2s	Total # of 3s	Total # 4s & 5s	Total # 1s & 2s	Total # of 3s	Total # 4s & 5s	Write Y or N in the spaces below.	
Section #1								
Section #2								
Section #3								

Pre-Discussion Survey

Name of Church: _____

Thank you for participating in this group Bible study on Love, Children, and Family Planning. Please complete the survey below before starting the Bible study discussion. Each section has a short Bible passage followed by several responses gathered by actual Bible study participants. Answer each question based on your opinion - remember that there are no wrong or right answers!

SECTION 1

Please read the following passage: Luke 14:25-29

Once when large crowds of people were going along with Jesus, he turned and said to them, "Those who come to me cannot be my disciples unless they love me more than they love father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and themselves as well. Those who do not carry their own cross and come after me cannot be my disciples. If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and figure out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job. If you don't, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and all who see what happened will make fun of you."

Below are real reactions to the bible verse above. Please use the scale below to indicate whether you agree or disagree with these statements:

1 = strongly agree 2 = agree 3 = neutral 4 = disagree 5 = strongly disagree

1. "The act of giving birth is given by God and should be well thought out. You have to take responsibility for raising the children all the way to the end. Otherwise, it's a sin. You have to plan births according to the resources that will be needed."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2. "When my husband and I were first married, we planned to have six children. But later, we decided to stop with two. Why? To raise our two children properly, and also so that we could give our time to our work, which is to help poor and needy children."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. "Like any project which needs a plan and an organization to be successful, a family also requires a plan, an organization and methods to succeed in the education of the children."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. "Get married, and the God of all comfort will provide the rest in his immense love."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. "You should not burden yourself with children you will not be able to educate and raise correctly. It is necessary to choose a number of children related to the means your family possesses."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

PRE-DISCUSSION SECTION 1 SCORING SHEET
For Bible Study Discussion Leader Only

Individual Total Score: _____

OR

	# of "1"s raised	# of "2"s raised	# of "3"s raised	# of "4"s raised	# of "5"s raised
1. "The act of giving birth is given by God..."					
2. "When my husband and I were first married...."					
3. "Like any project which needs a plan..."					
4. "Get married, and the God of all comfort..."					
5. "You should not burden yourself ..."					
Sum of each column					

SECTION 2:**Please read the following passage:** I Corinthians 7: 1-6

Now, to deal with the matters you wrote about. [You say that] a man does well not to marry. But because there is so much immorality, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband. A man should fulfill his duty as a husband, and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs. A wife is not the master of her own body, but her husband is; in the same way a husband is not the master of his own body, but his wife is. Do not deny yourselves to each other, unless you first agree to do so for a while in order to spend your time in prayer; but then resume normal marital relations. In this way you will be kept from giving in to Satan's temptation because of your lack of self control. I tell you this not as an order, but simply as a permission.

Below are real reactions to the bible verse above. Please use the scale below to indicate whether you agree or disagree with these statements:

1 = strongly agree 2 = agree 3 = neutral 4 = disagree 5 = strongly disagree

1. "The couple owes each other mutual fidelity, and they should have sexual relations regularly. To avoid sexual abstinence, and also to avoid unwanted pregnancies, they should use a contraceptive method."

1 2 3 4 5

2. "Prayer has to be the cornerstone for good family planning. It helps a couple plan their pregnancies."

1 2 3 4 5

3. "God himself, who gave the law, will also plan the births at the right time."

1 2 3 4 5

4. "A man and woman should not deprive each other. They should have regular sexual intercourse, always ensuring both partners are consenting, to strengthen their love and avoid the temptations of the devil."

1 2 3 4 5

5. "But, during certain fertile periods, they can use means to prevent a non-wished pregnancy."

1 2 3 4 5

PRE-DISCUSSION SECTION 2 SCORING SHEET***For Bible Study Discussion Leader Only***

Individual Total Score: _____

OR

	# of "1"s raised	# of "2"s raised	# of "3"s raised	# of "4"s raised	# of "5"s raised
1. "The couple owes each other mutual fidelity..."					
2. "Prayer has to be the cornerstone for good family planning. It helps a couple plan their pregnancies."					
3. "God himself, who gave the law, will also plan the births at the right time."					
4. "A man and woman should not deprive each other..."					
5. "But, during certain fertile periods, they can use means to prevent a non-wished pregnancy."					
Sum of each column					

SECTION 3:**Please read the following passage:** Genesis 38: 6-10

For his first son Er, Judah got a wife whose name was Tamar. Er's conduct was evil, and it displeased the LORD, so the LORD killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and sleep with your brother's widow. Fulfill your obligation to her as her husband's brother, so that our brother may have descendants." But Onan knew that the children would not belong to him, so when he had intercourse with his brother's widow, he let the semen spill on the ground, so that there would be no children for his brother. What he did displeased the LORD, and the LORD killed him also.

Below are real reactions to the bible verse above. Please use the scale below to indicate whether you agree or disagree with these statements:

1 = strongly agree 2 = agree 3 = neutral 4 = disagree 5 = strongly disagree

1. "God punished Onan because he wasted his semen on the ground."

1 2 3 4 5

2. "God punished Onan because he did not obey his father's request."

1 2 3 4 5

3. "God punished Onan because he had no love for his brother."

1 2 3 4 5

4. "Onan was punished by God for his selfishness, for disobeying his father and for throwing (spilling) his semen on the ground, which looks like an abortion or a murder."

1 2 3 4 5

5. "In God's eyes, by casting his semen on the ground, Onan was a murderer like Cain who killed his brother Abel."

1 2 3 4 5

Thank you for completing this pre-discussion survey! Please give this to your facilitator when you are done.

PRE-DISCUSSION SECTION 3 SCORING SHEET***For Bible Study Discussion Leader Only***

Individual Total Score: _____

OR

	# of "1"s raised	# of "2"s raised	# of "3"s raised	# of "4"s raised	# of "5"s raised
1. "God punished Onan because he wasted his semen on the ground."					
2. "God punished Onan because he did not obey his father's request."					
3. "God punished Onan because he had no love for his brother."					
4. "Onan was punished by God for his selfishness..."					
5. "In God's eyes, by casting his semen on the ground..."					
Sum of each column					

Post-Discussion Survey

Name of Church: _____

Thank you for participating in this group Bible study on Love, Children, and Family Planning. Please complete the survey below before starting the Bible study discussion. Each section has a short Bible passage followed by several responses gathered by actual Bible study participants. Answer each question based on your opinion - remember that there are no wrong or right answers!

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Please read the following passage: Luke 14:25-29

Once when large crowds of people were going along with Jesus, he turned and said to them, "Those who come to me cannot be my disciples unless they love me more than they love father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and themselves as well. Those who do not carry their own cross and come after me cannot be my disciples. If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and figure out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job. If you don't, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and all who see what happened will make fun of you."

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1 2 3 4 5

2. "When my husband and I were first married, we planned to have six children. But later, we decided to stop with two. Why? To raise our two children properly, and also so that we could give our time to our work, which is to help poor and needy children."

1 2 3 4 5

3. "Like any project which needs a plan and an organization to be successful, a family also requires a plan, an organization and methods to succeed in the education of the children."

1 2 3 4 5

4. "Get married, and the God of all comfort will provide the rest in his immense love."

1 2 3 4 5

5. "You should not burden yourself with children you will not be able to educate and raise correctly. It is necessary to choose a number of children related to the means your family possesses."

1 2 3 4 5

POST-DISCUSSION SECTION 1 SCORING SHEET
For Bible Study Discussion Leader Only

Individual Total Score: _____

OR

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1. "The act of giving birth is given by God..."					
2. "When my husband and I were first married...."					
3. "Like any project which needs a plan..."					
4. "Get married, and the God of all comfort..."					
5. "You should not burden yourself ..."					
Sum of each column					

SECTION 2:**Please read the following passage:** I Corinthians 7: 1-6

Now, to deal with the matters you wrote about. [You say that] a man does well not to marry. But because there is so much immorality, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband. A man should fulfill his duty as a husband, and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs. A wife is not the master of her own body, but her husband is; in the same way a husband is not the master of his own body, but his wife is. Do not deny yourselves to each other, unless you first agree to do so for a while in order to spend your time in prayer; but then resume normal marital relations. In this way you will be kept from giving in to Satan's temptation because of your lack of self control. I tell you this not as an order, but simply as a permission.

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2. "Prayer has to be the cornerstone for good family planning. It helps a couple plan their pregnancies."

1 2 3 4 5

3. "God himself, who gave the law, will also plan the births at the right time."

1 2 3 4 5

4. "A man and woman should not deprive each other. They should have regular sexual intercourse to strengthen their love and avoid the temptations of the devil."

1 2 3 4 5

5. "But, during certain fertile periods, they can use means to prevent a non-wished pregnancy."

1 2 3 4 5

POST-DISCUSSION SECTION 2 SCORING SHEET
For Bible Study Discussion Leader Only

Individual Total Score: _____

OR

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2. "Prayer has to be the cornerstone for good family planning. It helps a couple plan their pregnancies."					
3. "God himself, who gave the law, will also plan the births at the right time."					
4. "A man and woman should not deprive each other..."					
5. "But, during certain fertile periods, they can use means to prevent a non-wished pregnancy."					
Sum of each column					

SECTION 3:

Please read the following passage: Genesis 38: 6-10

For his first son Er, Judah got a wife whose name was Tamar. Er's conduct was evil, and it displeased the LORD, so the LORD killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and sleep with your brother's widow. Fulfill your obligation to her as her husband's brother, so that our brother may have descendants." But Onan knew that the children would not belong to him, so when he had intercourse with his brother's widow, he let the semen spill on the ground, so that there would be no children for his brother. What he did displeased the LORD, and the LORD killed him also.

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1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2. "God punished Onan because he did not obey his father's request."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. "God punished Onan because he had no love for his brother."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. "Onan was punished by God for his selfishness, for disobeying his father and for throwing (spilling) his semen on the ground, which looks like an abortion or a murder."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. "In God's eyes, by casting his semen on the ground, Onan was a murderer like Cain who killed his brother Abel."

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Thank you for completing this post-discussion survey! Please give this to your facilitator when you are done.

POST-DISCUSSION SECTION 3 SCORING SHEET***For Bible Study Discussion Leader Only.***

Individual Total Score: _____

OR

	# of "1"s raised	# of "2"s raised	# of "3"s raised	# of "4"s raised	# of "5"s raised
1. "God punished Onan because he wasted his semen on the ground."					
2. "God punished Onan because he did not obey his father's request."					
3. "God punished Onan because he had no love for his brother."					
4. "Onan was punished by God for his selfishness..."					
5. "In God's eyes, by casting his semen on the ground..."					
Sum of each column					