

Lay Speaker's Biblical Roadmap

Based on the book, "Biblical Interpretation: A Road Map," by Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe, this course will provide tools for doing and leading in-depth Bible Study. The course will be particularly useful for Lay Speakers leading Bible Studies, designing worship or preparing sermons, but is also valuable for personal study. The tools combine a variety of approaches to scripture reflective, analytical, experiential, and constructive application. They are designed for use in a faith community. The approach is a valuable "next step" for those who have participated in Disciple Bible Study and are looking for an ongoing method of biblical interaction. The Road Map sees Bible Study as a conversation between the Biblical Message (the Text), the Reader, and other Readers.

Participants will need:

...a Bible. Any translation is appropriate (The New International or The New Revised Standard Version are preferred as translations recent enough to incorporate 20th scholarly insights). It is hoped that there will be a variety used in the course. Paraphrases (Good News, The Message) are very useful but should be a companion text and not replace a translation. If you have a question, please consult the instructor.

...a copy of "Biblical Interpretation: A Road Map" by Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe, Abingdon Press 1996. (This should be ordered directly through Cokesbury as there is a reading assignment for the first class.)

...a three ring binder.

...optional but strongly encouraged...a small bible study group in their home church or community as learning partners during the Advanced Lay Speaker Course.

Note to Course Leaders: It is very important that you let the learning process outlined in this course take its cues from the participants. The leader's role is to make sure that all voices are heard, many directions explored, and the learning process remain open rather than rushing to a given interpretation. This does not mean that you shouldn't add your own "two cents worth!" But offer it as one perspective as the group learns to weave their various perspectives together. Is this "relativism"? Yes, in the sense that it recognizes that each reader brings our particular bias, experience, and reactions. No, in the sense that it does not minimize the text's meaning or the holy nature of the text. Rather it allows interpretation to be a fuller community experience than any one person could provide.

Copyright 2007, Karen L. Munson, pastor@readfieldumc.org. These materials may be used with the inclusion of the complete copy right on each copy. They may not be used for profit, sold, republished or placed on a website.

Course Summary

The Lay Speakers' Biblical Roadmap course is structured in Six Sessions lasting 2 hours each. Additional sessions may be offered for conversation and practice at the study group's own initiative (These sessions may work with passages covered in part two of the textbook or be based on passages suggested by the participants).

Session 1: Orientation to the "Road Map."

Read before the first session: Introduction and chapter 1 of "Road Map" as well as 2 Timothy 3.

Class Discussion will ask where we are; who we are; how we read; and how God leads. It will include an overview of the "roadmap" bible study approach developed by Sharon Ringe and Fred Tiffany in their book, "Biblical Interpretation: A Road Map."

Session 2:

Read "A Roadmap," Chapter 2 "Encountering the Biblical Text" and The Gospel According to Luke 14: 25-35. DO NOT consult other sources or commentaries on the passage (yet)!

Class discussion will focus on our encounter with the passage in relational terms the first impressions we receive from the text, getting to know the text better in its own words, remembering past experiences with the text. The goal of the first week is to "get to know" the text and not to define its message or come to theological clarity. More questions are usually raised than answers found in this session. Participants learn to honor the dynamic quality of biblical passages.

Session 3:

Read "A Roadmap" Chapter 3 "A Close Reading of the Biblical Text"

Assignment: As you re-read The Gospel According to Luke 14: 25-35, note the following: Verbs, characters, details or ideas that remind you of other biblical passages, "speed bumps" that make you stop and think or question (or want to avoid them!). DO NOT consult other sources or biblical commentaries (yet)!

Class Discussion will deepen our dialog with the Luke text. We will look at the structure of the passage and its relationship to other biblical passages, both in the Gospel According to Luke and in the Bible as a whole. (Any participant with access to a Gospel Parallel is encouraged to bring it). We will refine the list of questions that we have been accumulating.

Session 4:

Read "A Roadmap" Chapter 4, "Reading Contextually"

Assignment: NOW consult other sources! Some useful ones are Bible Dictionaries, any introduction to the Gospel According to Luke, commentaries on this passage. There are lists of suggested resources in "The Roadmap's" Chapter 12 and in this study guide. Make a list of the resources you have available in your own home. (Don't forget to check out the resources in your editions of the Bible). Survey the resources in your church library and public library Ask friends, teachers, your Pastor if they have resources they are willing to share with you If you use the

internet, you might make a list of useful on line references An appendix to this study guide describes ways of evaluating the quality and information accessed via the internet. It is important to note the source providing information via the Internet as well as to record the URL and access date.

Bring resources that you find particularly interesting or useful to class.

Class discussion will focus on learning about the context in which the passage was written (social, theological, geographic, and historical). We will become aware of the passage's literary form, in this case the literary form known as "gospel". We will spend time in class using the resources available to seek answers to the questions before us.

Session 5:

Read "A Roadmap," Chapter 5, "Engaging the Text, Other Readers, and Our Communities" Chapter 11 (optional) "Some Issues in Biblical Interpretation"

Assignment: Re-read the Luke passage. Record your responses to the questions raised on pages 111-112.

Class Discussion: We will identify the "living issues" in the Luke text for each of our communities. We will expand the circle of conversation partners to consider how different communities might hear it. This will include communities of other faiths. We will contemplate the concept of each participant's and community's response as a gift to God's people challenging us to trust God's vision and activity in our world.

Session 6: Communicating the Good News!

Assignment: Prepare and bring a communication project that shares the insights you have received into the selected text, The Gospel According to Luke 14:25-35. Your project may take the form of a sermon, Bible Study, visual art, drama, music, video, etc. The instructor is available to consult with you as you develop your project. You will present your project to the group. The length of the presentations will be determined by the size of the group. (Although extra time may be added for this session at the group's initiative.)

Overview of the Road Map:

Steps in the Road Map

Step One: Beginning the Journey at Home (Or becoming aware of your interpretive framework)

- A) Personal
- B) Shared
- C) Intersections of Life now and then (or issues raised by reading the passage)

Step Two: Encountering the Biblical Text

- A) First impressions, observations, and reactions
- B) How other people might feel about this text.
- C) What is said and what is assumed or otherwise left unsaid.
- D) Attentive Reading (Speed Bumps and questions)
- E) Remember previous experience with the text or themes in it.
- F) Translation (differences in wording, shades of meaning)
- G) Is all or part of the material also found elsewhere in the Bible?
- H) What type of writing is the work located in?
 - Ex: prophecy, history, Gospel....
- I) The passage's role in the biblical book where it is located.
 - How does it function in the book as a whole?
 - How does the material around it influence the theme?

This course will add a third step: communicating the Biblical Text.

Course Sessions

Instructions for leaders: Choice a gathering space that will allow the group to move between working groups of 2-3 and sharing as a whole class. If you plan to have refreshments ready, make sure they are set up before others arrive so that you can welcome each class member as they come in. You may want to have some extra pencils and papers available for students who forget to bring them.

Have name tags available for the first session (don't forget one for yourself!).

Start on time from the very first session to set an expectation that honors each others' time. Latecomers will be incorporated as they come. If this is a problem for a large percentage of the class, ask if the time needs to be renegotiated, reminding them of the covenantal nature of discipleship.

If you are going to open or close with a hymn, have hymnals ready.

You will need something large enough to be visible to the group for recording group discussions on: a white board, black board, smart board, projection system, or newsprint.

Session 1: Orientation to the “Road Map” and Locating the Readers

Preparation for Session One:

*Choose a translation of the bible to use during the course. (Paraphrase versions, such as “The Good News Bible” or “The Message,” may be used to supplement your reading but not as your primary source of scripture). Two excellent popular choices are the Harper Collins Study Bible, New York/Harper Collins Publishers, 1993 and the New Oxford Annotated Bible, edited by Bruce Metzger, New York/ Oxford University Press, 1994.

*Bring a three ring binder, writing paper, and pen or pencil.

*read 2 Timothy 3

*read the Introduction and Chapter 1, “Locating the Readers and the Reading Context,” of Biblical Interpretation: A Road Map, by Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe.

In this session the class will spend time learning about ourselves as readers of the text: where we are; who we are; how we read; and how God leads us. We will also get an overview of the “roadmap” bible study approach developed by Sharon Ringe and Fred Tiffany in the text that we are using as a guide and discuss different routes that people take to studying scripture.

Getting Started:

Note to leaders

-Ask the group members to gather.

10 minutes

- Give orienting instructions for the facilities (where bathrooms are, when you plan to take a break etc...)
- Introduce yourself and briefly tell the group why you are leading this course. (Tell them they will have a chance to share introductions in a minute).
- Verbally confirm the days of the 6 course sessions and let students know that for Lay Speaker certification they need to be in attendance at each session. If an absence becomes absolutely necessary, they should contact the instructor as soon as possible and arrange to make up the work before the next session.
- Thank the class for joining you in the great adventure of entering the scripture and for taking on the responsibility of helping others hear God's word.

Opening unison prayer: **Loving God, author of life, we thank you for the privilege of coming to your word. Thank you for this time and place that have been prepared for us, for the careful hands that have recorded, preserved, translated, and published the scripture. Breathe your life into us through the words we read and keep us open to what you would have us hear. Help us to listen carefully and speak truthfully in this conversation with your word and with each other. Amen**

Optional: You may also want to sing Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet (UMH 601.)

Note to Leaders: Consider using this song as a way of calling the class back to attention throughout the 6 sessions, singing it to re-gather after breaks or small group sessions.

Part I: 30 minutes
 Read 2 Timothy 3 aloud together. Because you will probably have several translations, this is likely to seem awkward. That's alright! Take a minute to notice where words vary in the different in the versions used.

(Suggestions to leaders:

1. Introduce the term "periscope" as a word scholars use to indicate a particular passage being examined.
2. Invite the class to use a round table method of reading. Ask the first reader to read a few lines and then stop so that the next person can continue. Tell the class that if they do not wish to read aloud they may say "pass" when their turn comes. Encourage them to help each other find the "pick-up" point for reading. If not everyone has a chance to read, remember where the reading stopped so that reading can start there at the next opportunity.)

Class Discussion: (Record answers on a white board or large sheet of paper. If there are students who want to pursue issues of varying biblical interpretation raised by this text, recommend Paul Achtemeier 's book listed in the session's additional resources.)

1. How does Paul describe the time during which this letter is written? How are people's characters affected?

2. How would you describe the times we are living in? Use brief words or phrases, no full blown lectures.

3. How does the author describe himself? What reason does he give for his experiences? What is God's role in all this?

In groups of 2, learn each other's name and some of the circumstances of each others' lives. Find out what version of the Bible you each have. You will introduce each other to the group when you are done.

Leaders: give the pairs 5 minutes to learn about each other. Ask one to be the first speaker while the other listens without interrupting. Announce the 2 ½ minute point so that they can switch. After five minutes, re-gather the group and share, going around the room as each introduces their partner by telling a little bit about them and naming the translation they are using. Note: There may be confusion about how to identify a translation. Some class members may name the publishing company or format, for example, "Harper Collin's Study Bible." If needed, give the class some brief instructions on how to identify their translation. If some have paraphrase versions, encourage class members to keep using them but in conjunction with a translation. Tell them that issues of translation will be addressed more fully later.)

Purchasing a new Bible may come up at this time. Some may ask for recommendations about study Bibles. Two excellent popular choices are the Harper Collins Study Bible, New York/ Harper Collins Publishers, 1993 and The New Oxford Annotated Bible, edited by Bruce Metzger, New York/ Oxford University Press, 1994. Some students may be used to using a bible given to them as a child, at confirmation, or a family member's bible. Affirm the value of the relationships represented by these bibles and help the student evaluate whether the version is useful for them as a study bible or might become a companion reading. Encourage them not to struggle with small font or fading or brittle pages and to think about what bible resources might be useful in a study bible. They might think of a new bible as God's gift to them, inviting them into deeper personal conversation.

Continuing discussion as a group, ask:

4. What does Paul want for the readers of this letter?

5. What do you want for yourself and for your faith community as you think about the role of the scripture in your lives?

Consider taking your 10 minute break here.

Part II. Read Together:

5 minutes

You've probably already noticed from your first reading assignments in "Biblical Interpretation: A Road Map," that we'll be studying scripture in a way different from what many of us have been used to.

*We will all work with the same passage for the entire course:
The Gospel According to Luke 14:25-35.

*We will interact with the text in a number of different ways.

*We will be oriented by and learn from our own questions and insights before hearing from “experts.”

*We will think about the scripture as a communal resource in addition to being a personal spiritual guide. The community is our own particular group with whom we live and worship, but it is also the human community of many times and cultures.

More fundamental than the answers at which one arrives in the process of biblical interpretation, or than the particular methods one uses, are the questions themselves that one brings to the text. -Tiffany and Ringe p. 17

Small Group Discussions of Chapter 1 45 minutes
Divide the class into smaller groups of 3-4. Ask them to address the question:

What passage(s) in the introduction and first chapter of “Road Map” caught your attention and why?

Overview of the Course Outline and Project. 15 minutes
See the course summary, especially session 6.

Closing: 10 minutes
**Direct Class members to the preparation for Session 2. Encourage them to record their thoughts and reactions as they reflect on the first session and prepare for the second.*

**Ask each class member to write their name on a slip of paper and place it in a container. Pass the container around as each member draws a name, trading if they draw their own. Invite them to be in prayer for this classmate during the coming week and encourage them to seek the other out before leaving to ask about specific prayer requests they may have.*

* Option 1: Read “Whether the Word be Preached or Read” by Charles Wesley, (UMH 595.)
Option 2
Close with a circle prayer that invites each class member to thank God for something that has happened or occurred to them during the session.

Additional Resources: *Try to have sample copies available for people to look at. Add resources that you have or recommend.*

Paul 3 Achtemeier, "The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals," Philadelphia/The Westminster Press, 1980.

Brian D McLaren and Tony Compolo, Adventures in Missing the Point, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003/ (See especially McLaren's chapter on "Missing the Point: The Bible.")

"Living with Scripture," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology, October 1998.

Pregeant, Russell, Engaging the New Testament, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

Urdike, John, "The Great I Am," New Yorker Magazine, November 1, 2004, pp. 100- 104.

Session 2: Encountering the Biblical Text

Note to leaders: *Make sure that a New International Version will be available for this week's group reading.*

Preparation

*Read Chapter 2 "Encountering the Biblical Text: Read, Feel, Question, React" of the Roadmap Read The Gospel According to Luke 14: 25-35.

*DO NOT consult other sources or commentaries on the passage (yet)!

*DO get to know your own Bible and the resources it contains. Does it have maps, a concordance, margin or end notes? Are these the tools you find useful? Is your type easy to read? If the Bible you are using is not "user friendly" or is lacking resources you'd like to have available, consider giving yourself the gift of a new study bible. (Think of it as "dating for a long term relationship. What would you look for?) Consult with your teacher if you have questions about what's available. Many study bibles include questions or commentaries. Be sure that you allow God to guide you to your own questions and observations before you turn to others'.

Two excellent popular choices are the HarperCollins Study Bible, New York/ Harper Collins Publishers, 1993 and The New Oxford Annotated Bible, edited by Bruce Metzger, New York! Oxford University Press, 1994.

*Arrange to be at the class site in plenty of time so you're not rushing in.

Class discussion will focus on our encounter with the passage in relational terms: the first impressions we receive from the text, getting to know the text better in its own words, remembering past experiences with the text. The goal this week is to "get to know" the text and not to define its message or come to theological clarity. More questions are usually raised than

answers found in this session. Participants learn to honor the dynamic quality of biblical passages.

Opening

5 minutes

Prayer:

Gracious God, as we come to immerse our selves once more in your word, we claim the promise made to us at our baptism, that we are incorporated by your Holy Spirit into your new creation and made to share in Christ's royal priesthood. We are all one in Jesus Christ. Keep us aware of your presence in this time we share. AMEN.

In addition or instead, you may choose to sing "Holy, Holy, Holy," Faith We Sing 2007.

*Holy, Holy, Holy, my heart, my heart adores you!
My heart knows how to say to you: You are holy Lord!*

*Santo, santo, santo, mi Corazon te adora!
Mi Corazon te sabe decir: Santo, eres, Dios!*

Last week we began the journey at home. This week we will continue to become aware of our interpretive frameworks and begin to look at intersections of life now and then.

Part A. Locating the Reader

Instructions for Journaling: Establish a section in your binder for personal reflection, a section for questions, and a section for class notes.

Note to Leaders: Introduce the concept of "pop-corning," "allowing ideas to surface quickly and be noted rather than stopping to develop or analyze them immediately."

1. Journaling

5 minutes

In your journal, use three adjectives to describe your current relationship with the Bible.
Use three adjectives to describe your past relationship with the Bible.
Use three adjectives to describe the relationship with the Bible that you hope for.
Why are you in this class?

2. READ LUKE 14: 25-35 ALOUD using the New International Version.

20 minutes

a) Divide the class into smaller groups of no more than four people each. Make sure that each person has a marker and arrange yourselves around a large sheet of paper or newsprint. Brainstorm your first impressions of the passage, what Tiffany and Ringe call "speed-bumps," and your initial reactions to it by writing them on the paper. This is not a discussion, all should write at once, but neither does it have to be done in silence. Be honest.

Note to leaders: There should be a variety of types of impressions. An alternative option for recording and displaying the first impressions is to create a "Laundry line." Use the template in the back of the book to copy outlines of shirts, pants, dresses. Give these to the groups with scissors inviting them to hang their laundry list, one item per article of clothing, on a bulletin board or an actual line with clothespins. This version has the advantage of making it easy to regroup the types of impressions later.

"... one may find it extremely helpful to discover a clothesline" on which all of one's feelings and thoughts and desires may be placed. Often the focusing of the minds upon some phase of the life of the Master will fill the whole being with irradiation, and one finds one's way to the very presence of God. When one has been thus prepared, a strange thing happens. It is very difficult to put into words. The initiative slips out of one's own hands and into the hands of God.." (Howard Thurman, The Creative Encounter, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1954, p. 36-37)

You might invite class members to pray about one phrase from the laundry list throughout the week. At the beginning of the next class, record impressions received in prayer on the individual shapes. Some possible summary words and phrases include:

- *Carry a Cross*
- *Salt*
- *War*
- *Building*
- Hate your family*

When your group feels it has completed this "download," tape the sheet of paper to a wall space designated by the leader and turn individually to the next exercise.

b) Reflecting in your journal, record a description of yourself.

"I am..."

Include your social life (including family), your own religious practices and identity, current life challenges, economic status and goals, where you encounter the Bible, who taught you (how you have learned) to read the Bible. Do you tend to read for devotions? Hear in worship? Study for content, etc.

Note to leaders: Help the groups manage their time so that they are able to spend about 10 minutes with each exercise. Encourage class members to return to this exercise in their journaling throughout the course as they learn more about their own perspectives.

3. Teaching Moment: 10 minutes

a. How the Bible came to be.

"Bible" comes from the Greek word for "little scrolls," *la biblia*. It is a collection of many kinds of writing. What began as individual scrolls were eventually bound into one book as writing

technology developed. The books in the collection, The Bible, were written over a period of at least a thousand years, many of them during the time when the people of Israel were under Babylonian rule and many others in the first 100 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. **Form critics** identify layers of writing, from different periods even within individual books of the Bible as they study language patterns in various historical eras, what a weaver might call the weft. They identify strands of oral tradition from before the period when writing was available. They look for evidence of editing and ask why? Scholars also identify different theological perspectives that run throughout the Old Testament with further perspectives running through New Testament writings, the warp. The warp and the weft form a complex weaving that conveys God's interaction with many people in many times and places. When we read, we become part of the tapestry.

*Quickly see how many types of biblical writing the class can identify.

To learn more about how the Bible developed and was preserved and translated, The Harper Collins Study Bible contains a good description by Wayne A. Meeks. The New Interpreter's Bible: Volume 1 contains a very good essay, "Introduction to the Canon," by Daniel J. Harrington, S.J.

Note to leaders: If you have a strong background in biblical studies, you may prefer to use your own knowledge and resources to give a fuller background on the Bible's history before moving on. Don't let yourself use more than 10 minutes. It should be an orientation, not a lecture.

b. The People called Methodists and the Bible

Scripture is central to the uniquely Methodist form of discernment called the "quadrilateral." When Methodists want to understand something better, we turn to **scripture**, to **experience**, and to **tradition**, exercising our ability to **reason** about the issue.

We understand scripture to be God's intentional communication through the many faithful generations who have reflected on and recorded their experiences before us, through others who have preserved those divine encounters in written form and made them available to us in a language we can read, and through our own experiences encountering scripture's words in our communities.

Although we may not always share the same interpretations, we always share the same scripture conveying God's ongoing salvation story.

4. Class Exercises

5 minutes

a. The mouth/ear (or hand/eye) connection

Read Luke 14: 27 three times using different inflections. Discuss the different interpretations created by different sound patterns. If a member of the class speaks one of the sign languages, ask them to speak the passage with the language. Think about interpretations of passages that you have heard set to music or to dance. How would you enact this passage in ways beyond words? What colors, movements, or sounds would you use?

Note to leaders about the next exercises: Share these Instructions for listeners (everyone!): In the exercises we are going to share, you may not respond to each other with “should statements” or any form of advice, correction (even if it is informational), or answer. Hear the questions or statements as they are. There are no “stupid” questions. The only questions discouraged are the ones you already have an answer to! Each person in the group should have a chance to speak about each topic below before any member speaks a second time.

b. The memory connection 5 minutes

As a group, record your memories of where you have heard or seen this passage before.
What have you thought or been told about this passage before?

c. The experience connection 10 minutes

*Re-read the entire passage (use the NRSV this time).

*Ask participants to identify the points of the passage that intersect with their life experience, with their community’s experience, with current world experience?

List these on a shared writing space.

Note to leaders: If participants need a “jump-start,” ask them to fill in the blanks, “When I hear...I...”

Some potential connecting issues: war and forethought, war and lack of resolution, army size-is bigger always better?, ownership-why should we have to give up stuff we work for?, sharing churches, building projects, war turning surplus into deficit, cults that demand people sever ties with families, modern attempt to avoid ridicule by using credit, counting the cost-systemic issues and facing Goliath, carrying crosses-life’s burdens.

d. Identify shared interpretive framework and resources 5 minutes

What do we, as a class, have in common?

What unique perspectives are represented in our class?

Use all previous resources and reflections to write a class profile, “we are...”

For example: We are a group of middle class white Methodist living in Central Maine who want to learn to study the scripture in a new way.

Break 5 minutes

Note to leaders: During the break recruit a member of the class to close Session 2 in prayer when it is done.

Note to leaders: These are all essential steps. Pace the group's work so that all are covered. If they feel rushed, encourage them to make a note of what they want to spend more time with during the week in their journaling.

1. RE-READ LUKE 14:25-35 ALOUD three times. Use a different translation each time. (Suggestions: NRSV, King James, New English)

2. In groups of three, develop question lists. What questions arise for you when you read this text? Ask what questions others might ask or things they might notice or react to (especially others from different cultural perspectives or life experiences). Be ready to share your questions with the class.

Note to Leaders: Emphasize that any question is fair game! A list of sample questions is included at the back of this study for your information. It is important that the group ask their own questions, rather than being presented with someone else's even yours! Some examples of class questions: What does verse 33 have to do with a king going off to war? Is verse 34 intentionally humorous? What might a battered woman think about or ask when reading this passage? A soldier? A head of state? A pacifist? Someone who's nation is at war?

3. As a class, assemble the questions on one sheet of paper, grouping similar types of questions.

Note to leaders: potential categories might include: Need more information, need clarification/translation, Wonder about the meaning or interpretation what might be a personal application).

4. Look at the passage one more time. As a group, ask what the texts' author seems to assume readers know about the time, place, the people involved, or other content of the message.

5. Returning to the same groups of three, remember your own past experiences with the text and its themes in church, pop culture, academic settings, etc.... Record these in your journal sections.

Note to leaders: Some themes that may emerge, in addition to others, are "Salt of the earth. "Discipleship, bearing the cross, notions of family, kings/authority/war.

If time allows: As a group, revisit your list of initial impressions and reactions (part A2), making additions if appropriate. Discuss what in your own experiences might be shaping these reactions?

Closing

10 minutes

Review the homework for Session 3

Repeat the first session's prayer partner exercise.

Close in prayer led by a class member.

You may also want to sing the optional song from this session's opening.

Note to Leaders: Combine the initial impression and question lists into one class list and make copies for use in later Sessions.

Additional Resources:

The New Interpreter's Bible: Volume 1, Nashville/Abingdon Press, 1994.

Session 3: Close Reading

Note to Leaders: To prepare for this session you will need to gather images of Jesus' face for the opening meditation. Before the group gathers, scatter the images around the room. Check your church and local libraries for books of art work. Artwork is also frequently used for book covers. Collect a wide range of cultural images from various time periods. See the Session 3 resource list for specific suggestions.

You might arrange to project NT fragments and pages of standard Greek text such as the examples available on the internet at sites like <http://biblefacts.org/history/oldtext.html>

*You will need translations of Luke 14: 25-35 in the King James Translation and in Eugene Peterson's *The Message*. If these are not among the versions being used by class members, you can download copies of the passages from www.biblegateway.com.*

If you have commentaries or articles related to the Luke passage that you are willing to loan to students for a week, have them available at this session. You might also prepare a list of area library resources that have biblical commentaries and dictionaries available. If you don't have this information, encourage the class to work together in creating such a list to share.

Preparation for Session 3:

1. Read Chapter 3 of the Road Map, "A Close Reading of the Biblical Text: Steps in the Process."
2. "Sketch" an outline of the passage's structure (the relationship of the parts to each other). There is an example on pages 74-75, but yours should show your own insights. Be sure to take a look at the passages before and after Luke 14: 25-35 (its immediate literary context).
3. In your journal section, reflect on how the text's author seems to perceive the world around him/her. It may be helpful to read the entire Gospel according to Luke.
4. Bring a Gospel Parallel and a Concordance if you have them or can borrow them. This is a great time to get to know the resources available in your church's library, local libraries, and your friend's collections.

Opening: Meditation on the Face of Christ.

10 minutes

Invite class members to slowly walk around the room looking at the images of Christ's face that you have prepared. Ask them to stop when they find one that they particularly connect with, or are interested in. Get to know the image. What is this Jesus like? What might he say to you? Re-gather the group after 5 minutes and spend the last 5 minutes in silent prayer and journaling.

Note to leaders: Ask for a volunteer to be ready to lead the closing prayer at the end of this session.

Teaching Moment: Translation

10 minutes

"If English was good enough for Jesus Christ, it's good enough for Texas."

-Miriam "Ma" Ferguson

(The Texas Governor who banned the use of foreign language texts. The alleged quote is probably apocryphal.)

In order for most of us to read scripture, it must be translated. The oldest forms of the text we have are in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, and in varying stages of those languages' development at that. (The King James Bible was translated from the Latin Vulgate to provide a popular English language translation in 1611). There are many manuscripts, few intact. So, as Keith Crim identifies in his New Interpreter's Bible essay, there are 3 stages of translation: 1. Choosing which texts to translate. 2. The text's meaning in its original language, 3. How to express the meaning in the current language. (NIB volume 1, p. 25).

Original manuscripts of scripture do not have punctuation or space between words. They sometimes use words and terms whose meanings are lost in history, or whose usage have changed dramatically. The grammars of the newer language may be dramatically different from the ancient language's grammar. What phrases should be taken literally and what phrases are figures of speech, only meaningful in their cultural context? **Text critics** and translators have a daunting task. And they must take into consideration the way reader's ears and minds have been trained by earlier translations. This is why translations considered authoritative by the Church have been entrusted to groups of experts, rather than single experts. Working together, translators bring multiple skills and insights to this important task.

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and in response to reader's changing language (have you used the once the familiar second person addresses, "thee" or "thou," lately?) new translation teams have been busy. Bruce Metzger et al, offer a great behind the scenes look at this process in *The Making of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991). Jack Lewis does the same for the New International Version in *The English Bible from KJV to NW: A History and Evaluation*. 2nd edition, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991.

A. Read Luke 14: 25-35 aloud first from the King James Version and then from the Message, translated by Eugene Peterson In groups of 3-4 make notes of differences between different translations and paraphrases. Returning to the whole group, verbally share what you've noticed. 10 minutes

B. In the same groups of 3-4, compare the structure outlines that you prepared. Look at Tiffany and Ringe's outline on pages 74-5. What themes emerge in your outlines? What further questions are raised? Returning to the whole group, ask, "how do the parts of this passage seem to relate to each other?" 20 minutes

Note to Leader: The goal is not to agree on one pattern, outline, or set of relationships but to explore different insights and identify multiple directions the passage might lead readers in.

Break 5 minutes

C. Work in your groups of 3-4 to complete the following activities: 45 minutes

1. Read the passages immediately before and after Luke 14: 25-35 and note any relationships with the primary passage.
2. Do you remember other bible passages with related themes?
3. Check a copy of Gospel Parallels. Does the Luke 14 passage correspond to any passages in Mark or Matthew? If so, what is the same and are there any differences? If not, how does this passage fit into Luke's particular voice and message?
4. Check any margin notes in your own bibles. Note useful information.
5. Check concordances in your bible or separate volumes for key words. Where else do they occur in the Bible? Make a note of passages you'd like to follow up on.
6. On page 77, Tiffany and Ringe discuss extra-canonical references such as the Gospel of Thomas. What insight does this discussion give to your exploration thus far?

Note to leaders, as you circulate among the groups, see if any need orientation to using concordances or Gospel Parallels.

D. As a whole group, re-visit your list of questions. 10 minutes

1. Add new ones.
2. Refine existing ones
3. What might others with different perspectives ask?

Closing 10 minutes

Note to leaders: Take a few minutes to discuss the mechanics of project presentations during Session 6. Think ahead about the number of presentations and the time available. Options might include negotiating a longer time period if everyone wants to share all other presentations or dividing the group into sub groups. Based on the arrangement agreed upon, let the members know how much time they will have for their presentation.

Let them know that if they want feedback from the group, they should allow time within their allotment.

Let the group know that you will be a vigilant time keeper during presentations so that the last presenters don't get short-changed. This may mean cutting someone's short if they run over time. It is part of the learning process.

Some examples of communication projects are a children's story, a piece of artwork, a power-point presentation, a sermon, a song. Encourage people to try something new and to have a specific audience in mind.

*Ask each person to share preliminary ideas they are thinking of for Session 6 communication projects.

* Review the homework for session 4.

* If you used the Laundry line version of the impressions exercise, invite each class member to take one home with them as a focus of prayer and meditation through the week.

*Exchange prayer partner names.

*Share the closing prayer led by a class member.

*You might also want to sing "Wonderful Words of Life" (UMH 600.)

Additional Resources:

Buechner, Frederick, and Lee Boltin, *The Faces of Jesus*, New York! Steam: Harper & Row, 1989.

Lawrence, Kenneth T. ed., *Imaging the Word: An Arts and Lectionary Resource*, Volumes I, II, III, Cleveland/United Church Press, 1994.

Tanaka, Masao and Ron O'Grady, *The Bible Through Asian Eyes*, Auckland/Pace, 1991.

Throckmorton, Burton H., *Gospel Parallels*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1992.

Session 4: Reading Contextually

Preparation for session 4:

- * Read the Gospel According to Luke in its entirety.
- * Read Tiffany and Ringe Chapter 4
- * Learn what you can about Luke's community and context using sources in your Church or local library, in commentary copies that the course leader may make available to borrow. In addition, look for lectionary support materials. This periscope is found in the September readings of cycle C. You may choose from the list of recommended resources at the end of this chapter, but see what you can find on your own as well. Use these resources to follow up on the questions and key words identified by the class that most interest you.

Who were the community these words were first written for? Who was "Luke"? Why do you think this book was written?

- * Choose one article or source to report to the class on.
- * Were any of your questions addressed by the reading?
- * Are any new questions raised by this secondary reading?
- * Decide what form your communication project will take. Be able to share why the form you choose is appropriate for the audience in your congregation or other setting who you will present it to.

Opening:

5 minutes

* Pray together:

God you have created each of us. You have shaped the story of our lives. You give us food for our bodies and food for thought. Feed us with your word this night as we bring our questions and insights to conversation with each other in your living presence. AMEN

* Option: Sing "Freely, Freely" (UMH 389).

*God forgave my sin in Jesus name I've been born again, in Jesus name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you; to share his love as he told me to.
He said "Freely, freely, you have received freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe, others will know that I live."*

*All power is given in Jesus' name, in earth and heaven in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you, to share his power as he told me to.
He said freely, freely you have received freely, freely give.
Go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live."*

Literary Critics use the insights of literary scholars to better understand the intent of scripture’s authors as well as the meaning created by word patterns and structures. They reveal the artistry involved in creating the books of the Bible. For example, Literary Critics point out the Gospel of Mark’s rush of words, driven by repeated use of the word, “immediately,” and its similarity to a drama. Look at the opening words of the Gospel according to Luke. What type of writing is it set up to be?

I. Discussion:

20 minutes

1. As you read the Gospel According to Luke in its entirety, what did you notice that gives insight to the 14:25-35 passage? What is the theological context of the passage we have been working with?

For example, notice the development of people who “get it.” Peter, the rich (dead) man, one leper out of nine, the criminal on the cross. What other patterns of words, actions, or questions relate to our key passage?

2. Notice questions similar to the one in 14: 28-32 that expect the answer to be “no-one, of course” in Luke 11: 5-6, 11-12; 14:5; 15:3-4; 17:7. Have class members look these passages up and read them aloud.

3. What is the literary context of the passage we have been working with? What kind of writing shapes it? Is it action, teaching, poetry, or something else?

Note to leaders: Encourage participants to take the “next step” of reading Acts.

II. Structure Alan Culpepper’s Outline (NIB Volume IX, pp. 291-4)

30 minutes

Theme: “Forewarning about the conditions of discipleship.”

<u>Verse(s)</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Literary context</u>	<u>Related verses</u>
Luke 14: 25	Address	To the crowd	18:28-30, 16:19-31, 15:11-32, 14:15-24
Luke 14: 26	Condition 1	Renounce family ties	2:49-50, 8:21, 9:59-62, 11:27-28, 12:49-53
Luke 14:27	Condition 2	Bear One’s Cross	9:23, 12:4-5, 22:39-42
Luke 14: 28-30	Parable I	Fools at work	
Luke 14: 31-32	Parable 2	Fools at war	
Luke 14:33	Condition 3	Renounce possessions	9:57-58, 10:4, 12:16-21, 16:13,17:31,33

<u>Verse(s)</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Literary context</u>	<u>Related verses</u>
Luke 14: 3435	Address	To disciples	

*Questions with obvious answers: 11:5, 11, 14:5, 15:4, 17:7

BREAK

5 minutes

III. Reports:

30 minutes

1. Have each member give a brief report on one of their resources.

Note to leaders: Depending on the size of your group, you may want to break the class into smaller groups.

2. What observations or questions did you raise that the author of the resource(s) also noticed?

3. What new questions did the resource(s) raise?

4. What did you learn about Luke and his community, his social context?

Historical Criticism is a discipline that works to identify the original context of the scripture. The bones of the text come alive as it takes on the muscle of the culture in which it was created; the tendons of the issues that moved its community of origin, and the face of the community whose lives were shaped by those issues.

We remember that Luke is known as “the beloved Physician” (Col. 4:14); that he worked with Paul (2Tim 4:11, Philemon 24); that these words were written as the early church was becoming a distinct community influenced by second temple Judaism and the market of the Roman empire. Scholars access other writings and archeological discoveries to describe life in the communities these texts are set in. Tracing pottery made with the distinct earth of one region over trade routes to the towns and villages where it was sold lets us know who was talking to whom, if not exactly what they were saying. Historical Critics attempt to read the text as the original readers would have heard it. Most of the biblical interpretation published in the late twentieth century was historical criticism and it has added tremendous integrity to our encounters with the scripture.

For example, there were many beliefs, practices, and affinity groups within the larger Jewish culture during Jesus’ lifetime. Essenes believed in order to become pure and holy, they needed to set themselves apart from what they saw as a corrupted popular form of Judaism. Sadducees were associated with the temple and established political systems. Pharisees incorporated awareness and rituals of holiness into everyday lives and Zealots advocated for a new political order. Each of these groups understood faithfulness in different ways that defined their belonging to that group. How are our own identities, our own senses of faithfulness and meaning, derived from the groups we belong to: church, friends, family, and others?

IV Write a definition of “Discipleship” in your reflections

20 minutes

Think about what discipleship meant to the early Christians in their historical context. Think about what discipleship means to us in our contemporary contexts. Where do these meanings intersect?

Note to leaders: You may want to suggest that students write a short story of their own life with God as a central character in it during the week. After writing, they should notice what important events or insights structure their own faith story.

Closing:

10 minutes

* Review Preparation for Session 5.

*Check in on progress of Projects and arrange for individual support where needed. (This may be done by encouraging partnership between group members as well as offering the leader’s time and resources).

*Body prayer:

Stand up and find a space roomy enough to stretch out your arms without touching anything or any one. Take a leisurely deep breath in as you slowly count to 6, count to 3, then slowly exhale to the count of 9. Breathe again. Breathe again. Become aware of thanking God for each part of your body and feel free to move them as the leader slowly prays:

Note to Leaders: leave a brief silence between each phrase of the prayer.

Loving God, we thank for these feet (or wheels if appropriate) which have served us so well today. Thank for providing them to bear our weight, to move us around, to dance, skip, kick, and wiggle. *Pause*

Loving God, we thank you for these ankles, these shins, these knees, these thighs which turn us, lift us, bend us, and bear us forward. *Pause*

Loving God, we thank you for our “sit-upons,” for the seat they offer and their patience when we sit too long. *Pause*

Loving God, we thank you for our body’s middle, container of essential services, the digestive systems that are so forgiving when we abuse them, the heart that beats life through us, the lungs that draw in air. For every working part of us we give you thanks.
Pause

Loving God, we thank you for our arms, elbows, and wrists that are so marvelously mobile, for their ability to reach out, to hug, to gather in. *Pause*

Loving God, we thank you for these hands, for what they are able to hold, to make, to mold, for what they are able to give up.

Pause

Loving God, we thank you for our shoulders as we lift them and allow them to relax, thank you for their ability to release the tension we store there.

Pause.

Loving God, we thank you for the heads you put upon our shoulders. For faces that express a myriad of emotion. For ears that hear, for mouths that speak, for eyes that see, for noses that smell and breathe. For minds equipped to understand and explore.

Pause

Loving God, be with each of us as we take our bodies home to rest. Renew us for the living of another day if be your will. Help us to honor and care for these bodies that are your gifts. AMEN

[When] God has become the custodian of his conscience... the shift is from some primary social group loyalty to which the individual is related and which must be violated to loyalty to the command of God.” —Howard Thurman, The Creative Encounter p. 80

Jesus’ call itself already breaks the ties with the natural given surroundings in which a person lives. It is not the disciple who breaks them; Christ himself broke them as soon as he called. ... In becoming human, he put himself between me and the given circumstances of the world. I cannot go back. He is in the middle... everything should happen only through him.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer Discipleship, Augsburg Press, 2001.

Biblical Studies Resources:

Achtemeier, Paul J., ed. Harper’s Bible Dictionary, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1985.

Barclay, William, The Gospel of Luke, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975.

**Culpepper, Alan R., “The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” The New Interpreter’s Bible: Volume IX, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994. p. 291 ff.

Limberis, Vasiliki, “Mary 1,” Women in Scripture,” ed by Carol Meyers, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

Murphy, Frederick J., The Religious World of Jesus,” Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991. Ringe, Sharon, Westminster Bible Companion Luke, Westminster/John Knox Press 1995.

Schaberg, Jane, “Luke,” The Women’s Bible Commentary, ed by Newsom, Carol A., and Sharon H. Ringe Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press. 1992.

Sanders, E.P. Jesus and Judaism, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

Sugtrtharajah, R S, *Voices from the Margins Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, New York: Orbis, 1991.

The Anchor Bible Dictionary: volumes I-V, New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Topical Articles and Essays

**Bon, Stephen C., "Living as Families in the Light of the New Testament," *Interpretation*, April 1998. pp 130-145.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Discipleship*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2001. (See especially chapter 5, "Discipleship and the individual.")

Green, Joel B. "No Cross, No Christianity?" *Circuit Rider*, Sept/Oct. 2004, pp. 4-6.

Kurlansky, Mark, *Salt*, New York: Penguin Books, 2002.

Purvis, Sally, "A Question of Families," *Interpretation*, April 1998. pp. 145-160.

Session 5: Engaging the Text, Other Readers and our Communities

Preparation for Session 5:

- 1.) Read Chapter 5.
- 2) Read and discuss the passage with another person. Try to find someone with a different cultural, religious, economic, or family background. (The more differences the better!) Record the insights you receive from them or that arise as a result of your conversation and ask permission to share them with the class.
- 3) Start developing your communication project.
 - a. will you use the entire passage or part of it?
 - b. what preparations do you need to make?

Opening

5 minutes

Sing "Come, Holy Ghost, Our Hearts Inspire" (UMH 603)
Share the prayer, "Concerning the Scriptures," (UMH 602.)

I. Share definitions of "Discipleship" (from session 4) in groups of three and craft definitions to bring back (Write them in large print on 8 1/2 x 14 pieces of paper to post.)

Discuss: To what extent is discipleship a personal choice?

To what extent is discipleship a community norm with supporting structures?

10 minutes

II. Reconvene in the groups of three. Compare your responses to the questions posed by Tiffany and Ringe on page 111-112.

*Be sure to note what issues are addressed for the author's original reading community. What issues are addressed that still "live" in our communities?

*Be sure to also note what questions or issues are raised but not answered by reading this passage. For what does the reader have to look elsewhere in Luke, the Bible, or other resources?

30 minutes

III. Break.

10 minutes

During the Break, please tell the instructor the section of the passage you will focus on and what your communication approach will be for the project to be presented next week. The instructor will arrange the order of presentations.

IV. In the large group, share your conversations with people of other perspectives. *50 minutes*

What did you learn about your own perspectives?

What questions or issues were raised that you had not previously considered?

What new insights did you receive as to meanings of this passage?

V. Spend some time in written reflection on the questions Tiffany and Ringe pose on page 125.

10 minutes

Closing

5 minutes

"Come, Divine Interpreter" (UMH 594)

Session 6: Student Presentations

Note to Leaders: You will want to think ahead about the number of presentations and the time available. Options might include negotiating a longer time period if everyone wants to share all other presentations or dividing the group into sub groups. Be sure to arrange this far enough in advance (three weeks) and let the members know how much time they will have for their presentation. Let them know that if they want feedback from the group, they should allow time within their allotment.

Be vigilant as a time keeper during presentations so that the last presenters don't get short-changed. This may mean cutting someone's short. It is part of the learning process.

Opening Prayer

5 minutes

Student Presentations

Course and Instructor Evaluations

5 minutes

Note to Leaders: Students frequently want more. Help them arrange this, if they ask for it, by directing them to additional passages studied in the Road Map book and encouraging them to continue meeting, with or without your leadership. If further meetings are not practical, they might set up an Internet-facilitated study group.

Closing:

10 minutes

Circle prayer. Forming a circle, invite each person to pray for the person to their right, thanking God for that person's gift and their contributions to the class, and for their continuing ministry as a Bible Study leader.

Outline of Tiffany and Ringe's Road Map

Step One: Beginning the Journey at Home
(or becoming aware of your interpretive framework)

- A) Personal
- B) Shared
- C) Intersections of Life now and then (or issues raised by reading the passage)

Step Two: Encountering the Biblical Text

- A) What are your first impressions, observations, and reactions?
- B) How might other people feel about this text?
- C) What is said and what is assumed or otherwise left unsaid?
- D) Attentive Reading (What speed bumps and questions arise?)
- E) Remember previous experience with the text or themes in it.
- F) Translation (differences in wording, shades of meaning).
- G) Is all or part of the material also found elsewhere in the Bible?
- H) What type of writing is the work located in?
Ex: prophecy, history, Gospel...
- I) What is the passage's role in the biblical book where it is located?
How does it function in the book as a whole?
How does the material around it influence the theme?

Trial Group Responses

Initial Impressions (Session 2)

- * Disjointed
- * Confusing
- * Hate Family?
- * Disciplinary
- * Contradictory
- * What did they/we do to deserve this?
- * Harsh
- * Martyrdom = Good News?

Questions for Close Reading (Session 2)

Did the crowds stay the same (composed of the same people)?

Who are in the large crowds, curious people?

Is Jesus happy to have them following him?

Why would you have to hate relatives to follow Jesus?

Why hate?

Did Jesus really say this?

Why would he say “hate” if so many of his teachings were to love those around you?

Doesn't God want us ALL to be disciples? If we were all disciples and hated our families, where would that leave us?

Is this a form of parable?

Why are you unable to be Jesus' disciple if you don't carry the cross?

What does Jesus mean by the cross his disciples must carry?

Where did the saying, “carrying his cross,” come from?

Was it used before Jesus died on the cross?

Would Jesus have used that phrase or did Luke embellish a bit on Jesus' actual words?

Why is a person ridiculed for an unfinished project?

Am I sometimes stopped from starting something because of the possibility of ridicule?

Why does Jesus talk about building a tower?

Is there significance to that type of building?

Wouldn't only wealthy people be able to build a tower?

If you can't afford it should you be doing it?

Must you really give up all your possessions to be Christian? (2x)

Are “costs” always financial?

If someone is very poor there is less to give up. Would that not be easier?

What is the reference about Salt? Does it mean that a Christian without focus is like salt that is now tasteless? Salt is a preservative, is it a particularly important analogy?