

## **Questions and Answers about Kerygma Resources**

<http://www.kerygma.com/>

### **Introducing Kerygma**



#### ***1. What does the name Kerygma mean?***

Kerygma is a Greek word meaning “Proclamation” as in “the Good News.”

#### ***2. What is Kerygma?***

There are now over 30 Kerygma studies in print ranging from year long full Bible courses, to shorter studies of four to fourteen weeks with a focus on single books of the Bible or familiar portions of Scripture (eg. *The Lord's Prayer*).

For over 25 years, The Kerygma Program has been making a difference in the lives of individuals and their congregations. That difference is best described in their words. They write that Kerygma “is deeply satisfying”, “has exceptional scholarly quality made accessible to all”, that “this study is what keeps me going to church!” and “words cannot express the gifts we have all received through this study of the Bible.”

#### ***3. Who uses Kerygma resources?***

Kerygma is an ideal match for congregations that want to increase adult biblical literacy but are looking for an educational approach that can be characterized as “come and discover” rather than “come and we'll teach you something.”

Because Scripture is allowed to speak for itself, Kerygma studies are not doctrinaire. They are currently used by over a dozen denominations.

#### ***4. Who can lead a Kerygma group?***

Kerygma prefers to use the term “leader” rather than “teacher.” Kerygma leaders are “learners among learners” and so are not required to be education professionals, clergy, or biblical experts. A leader can be anyone dedicated to shepherding the group through the lesson plan and skilled in encouraging others to explore the material for themselves.

#### ***5. Who are the authors of Kerygma resources?***

By denominations they currently are: Episcopal, Presbyterian, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, United Methodist.

By profession: Participant Resource Books are written by biblical experts; pastors and professors. Leader's Guides are written by experts in Christian education.

## ***6. Is there a theological slant or denominational bias?***

Kerygma studies are intentionally written to avoid any slant or bias. They are designed to offer a guided reading of the Scriptures taking seriously the best information on study and educational methods. They do reflect a “Reformed” perspective. Persons in mainline congregations as well as evangelically oriented congregations have found Kerygma studies respectful, engaging, and effective.

## **Length and Time Questions**

### ***1. How long are the courses?***

Kerygma uses an academic model for setting the lengths of its courses.

Full Bible courses are two semesters in length (from 28-34 weeks depending on course)

Shorter courses range from 4 to 14 weeks depending on the subject. Most complete book of the Bible studies (*Romans, Exodus* etc.) are 14 sessions or 1 semester. Portions of scripture or shorter books of the Bible (*The Ten Commandments, The Gospel of Mark*) range from 4 weeks to 8 weeks (half a semester).

### ***2. How much time is required?***

**Class time:** All resources (except for *The Bible in Depth*) were developed with a class time of 60 to 90 minutes in mind. *The Bible in Depth* (written in 1977, revised in 1992) was Kerygma's first study and is comprised of 34 sessions of two to two and a half hours each in length.

**Participant preparation time:** Kerygma invites participants in their own time between classes to explore selected passages of scripture and reflect on what they have discovered. The Resource Book is their guide for this exploration. In general, participants will spend an equal amount of time on their own as they do in class (60 to 90 minutes per week preparing for class). Quite often, study participants will become so involved in their discoveries, that they elect to spend more time than this.

**Leader preparation time:** When Kerygma resources are written, the biblical expert prepares the participant Resource Book material first. Then the education specialist will develop a lesson plan based on that material.

The group leader will first read the Resource Book material for the week's study and then will develop a lesson plan from the material provided in the Leader's Guide. There is always more material than could be used in a class of 60 to 90 minutes, so the task of the Leader is to choose activities that s/he would best engage their study group. The usual preparation time to do this is roughly two times the length of the class time. (2 - 3 hours per week).

## **Questions about Purchasing Resources**

### ***1. Does every participant need a Resource Book?***

Yes. Kerygma studies are designed as intentional learning experiences and the Resource Book acts both as guide and journal. The background reading in the Resource Book that the participant does before the group meets ensures time in class for discussion, clarification and shared discovery times.

The Leader will also require a Resource Book for session planning.

**2. Do we need a Leader's Guide?**

Yes. The lesson plan outlines make Kerygma classes unique. Leaders receive guidance to develop creative, lively and participatory class sessions. Leaders do not teach or lecture, they use suggested exercises and guidance from the Leader's Guide to help participants learn for themselves and from each other.

**3. Is there an Enrollment Fee for churches?**

No. There was until 1990, but it was discontinued.

**4. What costs should we expect?**

The cost of the Leader's Guide and one Resource Book for the leader.  
Participants usually purchase their own Resource Book and good study Bible.

**5. Do you have suggestions for churches concerned about the cost?**

Without a doubt, Kerygma resources are more expensive than many, but it is true that the in-depth quality of the study experience is worth every penny. One church reports that their Christian Education committee decided that "if we aren't willing to pay for the very best material for adult biblical literacy available, we should question why we are doing anything at all."

Churches have found the following suggestions to be helpful:

- when the Resource Book price is broken into weekly payments, it is rarely more than \$2 per week.
- some share the cost of the whole group's study resources by passing the plate weekly for free-will offerings.
- some churches will pay for the first group's study materials and the participants at the end of that study will purchase the resources for the next group to use. By the end of the study, most participants want for others to have the same experience as they have enjoyed.
- some churches will charge a tuition for the course which will include the cost of the text and class materials.

**Leadership Training**

Kerygma offers regional one day Leadership Training Workshops in the spring and fall of each year. Workshop participants have an opportunity to engage in conversation about the challenge of biblical literacy, explore Kerygma resources, experience lesson planning and new approaches to encountering scripture, build leadership skills, and plan for developing a comprehensive and meaningful course of study for adults in their own congregations.

Workshop attendance is not required to lead a Kerygma group. It is a confidence builder, but Leaders Guides are written for "on the job training."

## Study Resource Questions

### ***1. What is the difference between *The Bible in Depth* and *Discovering the Bible*? Aren't they both full Bible studies?***

Yes they are both full Bible studies. The difference lies in their approach.

*Discovering the Bible* introduces the people, places and stories of the Bible in an orderly way, starting with 15 sessions for the Old Testament, and concluding with 15 sessions on the New Testament. It is an ideal place to begin for people who have little or no knowledge of the Bible because it is so inviting and makes no assumptions of familiarity. However, this course has been enthusiastically received by those who have had lots of experience with Bible study. They say that the unique approach helps them to relate The Story with their own stories. Everyone regardless of prior experience comes away from *Discovering the Bible* with a feeling of great satisfaction.

*The Bible in Depth's* approach is a thematic one. Participants explore ten great themes of the Bible, each with Old Testament and New Testament strands. This “stained glass window” method of studying the Bible results in participants seeing the whole picture rather than disjointed stories, often for the first time in their lives. Because each session will reference scripture passages from both Testaments, this study is not generally a good choice for those who are just beginning their encounter with the Bible.

*The Bible in Depth* study is the longest for both class time and number of sessions (2-2.5 hrs for 34 sessions). Some churches have found that taking this study over 2 years an hour at a time works well for them.

### ***2. Are there different levels of courses in Kerygma?***

Kerygma courses are not designated by levels of difficulty as, for the most part, adults with all abilities and degrees of familiarity with the Bible are able to find their own place within the group. Learning activities are about personal and group discovery and sharing of learning within the group. However there are some suggestions for making the Kerygma experience the best it can be.

*Your Bible: The Study Begins* is ideal for people brand new to the Bible and makes a great study for new members and older teens/Confirmation classes.

However, this study covers material about how the Bible came together and is organized, information that is largely assumed in most of our churches. Every member would find something they didn't know previously when taking this study. Recommend it as a full church study!

As noted earlier, *The Bible in Depth* assumes some prior knowledge of the Bible. Similarly, it is helpful to have some preparation for the *Bible and Theology* studies.

All other Kerygma course would be easily undertaken by anyone regardless of their biblical knowledge. Kerygma appreciates that one of the main reasons adults avoid Bible study is that they believe they know too little. Kerygma courses invite the participant to discover the Bible in a safe environment where everyone is a learner.

### ***3. Where do we begin? How do we choose where to start?***

Two things usually determine what study a congregation will embark on: length of commitment required and the topic.

Determine whether your study group would be interested in a year long commitment. Obviously, the best way to start studying the Bible is with a full Bible overview. If they agree to meet for a year, we would suggest either *Discovering the Bible* if the group has mixed levels of familiarity, or *The Bible in Depth* if the group members are well acquainted with the Bible.

If your group needs to start at square one, we suggest *Your Bible: The Study Begins*. (7 sessions)

If your group wants to start with a lesser time commitment, we suggest any one of the shorter courses. *Parables*, *Discovering the Psalms*, or *Lord Teach Us to Pray* (The Lord's Prayer) are engaging courses to begin with.

We would recommend that you have a year's worth of study planned out even if it is comprised of short term courses. eg. *Good News for All* (Luke) followed by *Into the World* (Acts), or *Beginnings* (Genesis) followed by *Visions for the Church in Crisis* (The Revelation).

The Kerygma Program works best when planned as a progressive, cumulative course of study rather than individual studies. To date we offer over 10 academic years of study in our courses.

We recommend that after considering the study options available as listed in a current booklet of resources, you order a Leader's Guide and a Resource Book to examine the study more closely. Please allow two weeks minimum before the class starts to order your participant Resource Books.

### ***4. What are the Supplementary Texts listed with some studies?***

Some authors highly recommend one particular commentary to be a companion text to their study. It is not essential that you purchase this commentary, but you may find it helpful to have at least one copy available to the group during the course.

### ***5. Which version of the Bible is recommended?***

All Kerygma studies are referenced to the Revised or the New Revised Standard Version. However, participants will find Kerygma studies effective using any good study Bible. It may be helpful to introduce the group to the world of Bible translations by showing the video resource *History of the Bible in English*. (available in VHS and DVD)

### ***6. Can Kerygma studies be used on Sunday morning?***

All of our studies, with the exception of *The Bible in Depth*, can be adapted to suit a one hour time frame on Sunday morning. The Leader will need to focus on key activities from the Leader's Guide to ensure the core of the lesson plan is covered in each session and there is time allowed for good group discussion. Home preparation, as always, is still assumed.

### ***7. How easy to use are the new CD Leader's Guides?***

Very easy! They are formatted using Adobe Acrobat and are usable by both Mac and PC users.

CD Leader's Guide advantages: copy and paste your own lesson plan!

*Job and the Life of Faith* has video clips of the author included to make the material more personal.

## **Key Strengths of Kerygma Resources for Adult Bible Study**

- Focus is on a guided reading of the Bible for adults who want to discover on their own and within community what meaning the Bible has for them in their lives.
- Helps participants comprehend scripture's original context to better know the writer's intent as well as how, through the life of the Church, scripture has been heard and understood, and what scripture can say to us today.
- Sound scholarship: Best tools for scholarship both as used by authors and as suggested for leaders and participants.
- “Reformed” perspective.
- Both Resource Book and Leader's Guides are “reader/leader friendly.”
- Resource Book designed for home preparation by participants and leaders. Resource Books highlight key parts, provide session summaries, and easily allow study in sections.
- Leader's Guides reflect the best of current educational methods on how adults learn and: provide ample material for small and large group activities, provide varied exploration experiences to suit a variety of learning styles, provide specific goals with step by step instructions for the leader to assist in developing lively sessions, give guidelines to encouraging discussion and learning.
- Leaders and participants report great success and satisfaction, deepened personal faith, enhanced community, and increased involvement in worship and further study.

**For more information and for answers to questions you may have, please feel free to contact the Kerygma office at 1-800-KERYGMA. We would be glad to help!**