

Frequently Asked Questions

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?

Kerygma publishes quality Bible study resources for adult groups. There are now over 35 Kerygma studies in print ranging from yearlong whole Bible courses, to shorter studies of four to fourteen weeks with a focus on single books of the Bible or familiar portions of Scripture (e.g. the Lord's Prayer).

For over 35 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. For that reason, Kerygma resources are currently used by over a dozen denominations and by organizations such as Volunteers of America.

4. Who can lead a Kerygma group?

Kerygma prefers to use the term "leader" rather than "teacher." Kerygma leaders are facilitators and 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?

Denominationally, they are Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian (both USA and Canada), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist.

When Kerygma resources are written, the author (a biblical expert, pastor or professor) prepares the participant Resource Book material first. Then the education specialist will develop a lesson plan with variable options based on that material for the Leader's Guide. 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, utilizing the most current and effective information available on study and educational methods and techniques. They do reflect a "Reformed" perspective. Persons in mainline congregations as well as evangelically oriented congregations have found Kerygma studies respectful, engaging and effective.

Accordingly, we understand that the conversation that arises out of any Kerygma session may differ from group to group, denomination to denomination.

LENGTH AND TIME QUESTIONS

1. How long are the courses?

Kerygma uses an academic model for setting the lengths of its courses. Whole 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 studies on a particular book of the Bible (*Romans*, *Exodus* etc.) are 14 sessions or 1 semester. Portions of scripture or shorter books of the Bible (e.g. *Commandments*, *The Gospel of Mark*) range from 4 weeks to 8 weeks (a half-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. However, many Sunday morning adult classes successfully use Kerygma resources by spreading the session material over two weeks, or by focusing on fewer learning activities offered in the session plan. [*The Bible in Depth*](#) (written in 1977, revised in 1992) was Kerygma's first study and is comprised of 34 sessions with a recommended class time of two to two and a half hours each.

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, they will become so involved in their discoveries that they elect to spend more time than this.

Leader preparation time: 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 would best engage their study group. The usual preparation time to do this is roughly twice the length of the class time (2 - 3 hours per week).

Many of our Leader's Guides are now available on CD-ROM allowing the leader to copy and paste the activities they choose, and to add their own ideas to develop a customized lesson plan.

Since 2005, Kerygma Leader's Guides include supplemental visual material for class enrichment. Studies may include: a video meeting the author, a video introducing participants to key elements of the session, power-point style presentations with visuals of maps, charts, prayers and arts. Those slides are also included in JPEG format to design your own presentation.

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, read before the group meets, ensures time for discussion, clarification, and shared discovery time in class.

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

2. Do we need a Leader's Guide?

Yes. Kerygma's particular style of lesson plan outlines makes our 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.

4. What costs should we expect?

Often times, the church/organization would assume the responsibility of covering the cost of the Leader's Guide and one Resource Book for the leader.

Participants usually purchase their own Resource Book (through reimbursement to the church) as well as ensuring they have their own study Bible.

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

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 tuition for the course which includes the cost of the text and class materials. Many set up bursaries for participants struggling with the cost.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Kerygma Program is pleased to provide leadership support and training upon request. Regional and/or denominational workshops may be arranged and customized to the group's needs. 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.

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

Training options:

Kerygma Free One-Hour Webinars: Spend an hour, not a fortune assessing Kerygma resources and having all of the basic Kerygma questions answered.

Host a One Day Regional Kerygma Workshop: Invite us and we will come!

- Lend us your facilities for one day and we will bring the workshop to you! We will work with you to invite local churches to the event. We look after regional promotion and registration. Kerygma covers all leadership travel and workshop meal expenses.
- Ask Kerygma to conduct a workshop on meeting the challenges of increasing biblical literacy at your region's gathering (e.g. synods, dioceses, presbyteries, conferences, CE events). We offer workshops of a variety of topics and lengths. For more info, visit the [workshop section](#) of our webpage or call us to discuss one that supports your theme.

Invite a Kerygma consultant to visit your church: S/he will lead a *Kerygma-Experience* class, providing an exciting opportunity to launch a registration campaign. The Kerygma consultant will meet with your leaders and committee members to help you develop a study plan from concept to evaluation and beyond.

STUDY RESOURCE QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between *the Bible in Depth* and *Discovering the Bible: A New Generation*? Aren't they both whole Bible studies?

Yes they are both whole 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 on 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: A New Generation* 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 woven throughout. Also described as a "stained glass window" method of studying the Bible, participants say that they can see 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 is the longest Kerygma study for both class time and number of sessions (2–2.5 hrs for 34 sessions). Some churches have found that completing this study over 2 years, an hour at a time, works well for them.

2. Are there different levels of courses in Kerygma?

Kerygma resources are deliberately not ranked with terms such as "beginner" or "advanced." 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 shared learning within the group.

However, there are some suggestions for making the Kerygma experience the best it can be. They are as follows:

- A. [*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. It provides a basic orientation to the Bible; information that is largely assumed in

most of our churches. When taking this study, every member finds something they didn't know previously. *Why not recommend it as a full church study?*

- B. As noted earlier, [*the Bible in Depth*](#) assumes some prior knowledge of the Bible. Similarly, it is helpful to have some previous study experience prior to the [*Bible and Theology*](#) studies.
- C. All other Kerygma courses 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: the topic, and length of commitment required.

Determine whether your study group would be interested in a yearlong commitment. Obviously, the most effective way to start studying the Bible is with a full Bible overview. For a yearlong study, we would suggest either [*Discovering the Bible: A New Generation*](#) (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 shorter time commitment, we suggest any one of the semester or half-semester 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, even if it is comprised of short-term courses. E.g. [*Good News for All*](#) (Luke) followed by [*Into the World*](#) (Acts), or [*Beginnings*](#) (Genesis) followed by [*Revelation: Visions for the Church in Crisis*](#). The Kerygma Program works best when planned as a progressive, cumulative course of study, rather than individual studies. To date, we offer over ten academic years of study with our courses. Consider creating your own **Academy of Biblical Studies** and offering a certificate program using Kerygma resources.

To aid you in selecting the best Kerygma resource for your needs, we have provided lesson samples of each of our studies online. Go to www.kerygma.com and click on the "Courses of Study" tab. We are available by email and telephone for live consultations Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm, EST.

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 for the group during the course. Check your church library; it may already be there.

5. Which version of the Bible is recommended?

All Kerygma studies are referenced to 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 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 that 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 is it to use the CD for the Leader's Guides?

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

Advantages of Leader's Guide on a CD:

- copy and paste to your own lesson plan
- customize your plan with your own ideas and comments
- inclusion of visual elements on the CD, such as the slide presentation.

8. Why do some studies have DVDs and CDs and others don't?

Since 2005, all of our new or revised studies have the Leader's Guides on CD-ROM and many offer a video component and/or supplement visual resources for in-class use. As other studies are revised, we will continue the transfer of Leader's Guides from books to disks.

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 the community what meaning the Bible has for them in their lives.
- Helps participants comprehend:
 - ✓ scripture's original context to better understand the writer's intent;
 - ✓ how scripture has been heard and understood through the life of the Church;
 - ✓ and what scripture can say to us today.
- Sound scholarship: best tools for scholarship as used by authors and as suggested for leaders and participants.
- "Reformed" perspective.
- Both Resource Books and Leader's Guides are "reader/leader friendly." The Resource Book is designed for independent preparation.
- Resource Books highlight key parts, provide session summaries, and easily allow for study in sections.
- Leader's Guides reflect the best of current educational methods and techniques for adult learning. They 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, and give guidelines for encouraging discussion and learning.
- **Best of all—Leaders and participants report great success and satisfaction, deepened personal faith, enhanced community and increased involvement in worship and further study.**

More questions? Please call us at 1-800-KERYGMA or drop us an email at explore@kerygma.com . We would be glad to answer anything you need to know, and work with you to bring some excitement back to your adult class.

Kerygma IS always there for you!