

How do we connect teenagers' spiritual hunger with the bounty of nourishment found in Scripture? Here are four keys to energizing small-group Bible study:

1. Find out what young people want to know. Reaching teenagers means targeting their needs. What are *your* kids eager to know about faith and life? Try gathering information by using a question box. This anonymous tool enables teenagers to ask without ridicule or unwanted attention. Regard the questions seriously and use them to aim your study design.

2. Do your homework. Read commentaries and textbooks; search through software; know the settings, characters, and cultural backgrounds. Watch for entry points. Attitudes and emotions expressed through biblical characters are where kids might glimpse themselves.

3. Have a goal for the study that you can write in one sentence. What's the one point you hope each person will gain from this time of study? When the study begins, state the goal and have teenagers write it, or print it poster-size and hang it in plain view.

4. Invite learning—avoid the lecture. Young people hope to experience a Bible that comes alive. "Where am I in this book?" they wonder. Provide access points by having teenagers act out the Scripture as it's read or by inviting each person to concentrate on what a specific character is saying, doing, thinking, or feeling. Break the passage into small chunks so kids can process each scene. When young people offer their opinions or feelings, affirm where you can and redirect where you must in order to keep moving toward your end goal.