



# DECONSTRUCTING FAITH

SMALL GROUP GUIDE



ST. ALBERT  
ALLIANCE CHURCH

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## WELCOME!

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Thank you for your willingness to be a small group leader. It is no small or simple task. You are a shepherd of God's people, on the front lines of making disciples. I am so grateful for your willing sacrifice of your time and energy to bring others closer to Jesus. Creating spaces where spiritual growth can happen is an integral part of ministry at St Albert Alliance Church, and because of each one of you, many of those spaces have been created. Know that you are a gift to our Church family and to the Body of Christ as we seek to help people grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus.

We have created this guide to help provide resources as you lead your small group during our sermon series "Deconstructing Fatih." The Discovery Bible Study Method (DBS) is a simple, structured way of opening the Bible with someone so that they encounter God directing through His living Word. The aim is to allow participants to discover God's truth for themselves, rather than relying on a leader. As the leader, you are there to empower them to pray, not to have all the answers. This guide will help you to facilitate your group as you engage in the Bible with one another.

I am incredibly grateful for each one of you. It is an honor to serve Jesus with you.



Pam Loepky  
Group Life Pastor

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## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DECONSTRUCT FAITH?

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de-con-struct | deken'strekt | verb [with object]

1. To analyze (a text of a linguistic or conceptual system), to expose hidden internal assumptions and contradictions and subvert their apparent significance or unity.
2. To reduce (something) to its constituent parts to reinterpret it.

Deconstructing faith is the new norm. According to author A.J. Swoboda, 60% of people raised in the church will, at some point, question their accepted beliefs and express doubt about the things they have learned. Deconstructing your faith does not mean rejecting faith; instead, as Swoboda writes, "To struggle with one's faith is often the surest sign we actually have one." Swoboda defines deconstruction as,

*"The dismantling of anything that's been constructed. In architecture, it's a building demolished to make room for the new. In baking, it's the cookie torn apart for a pie crust creation. In child's play, it's an eight-year-old dismantling his LEGO invention. Deconstruction describes many aspects of everyday life. But since the 1960's, it has meant so much more. Deconstruction is now more broadly applied to literature and philosophy, representing the dismantling of traditional cultural values, norms, and ideologies ... Theological deconstruction, as such, is the process of dismantling one's accepted beliefs." (A.J. Swoboda, *Beyond Doubt*, 7)*

Deconstructing faith is also not about dishonouring your family or others who passed on their beliefs to you. The most honouring thing one can do is examine the beliefs passed onto you. We examine the beliefs passed on to us to consider if what we have received will help us draw closer to Jesus and enable us to worship him more or if something needs to be left behind so our family and those, we pass our faith onto can know Jesus more fully.

Deconstructing faith is not about losing your faith; it is about thinking deeply and reflecting on what you believe and why. By questioning and analyzing one's accepted beliefs and traditions, we create space for something new, a deeper love for God, His church and each other, and experience the Kingdom of God now. Our goal in deconstructing faith is to draw closer to God and live more in His presence.

## HOW TO FACILITATE A GROUP

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Thank you for serving Jesus and His church as a small group leader during the “Deconstructing Faith” series!

Small Groups are groups where friends/family come together to see for themselves what the Bible says and how it can affect their lives. For the “Deconstructing Faith” series we will be using the Discovery Bible Study method to guide our Small Group gatherings.

Anyone can facilitate a group! Just gather some friends/family and **follow the outline and ask the questions below:**

### Connect

Ask a regular group member to pray and begin your group time by connecting with God. Then use one or more of the following questions to connect as a group:

- What are you thankful for?
- What’s a challenge you are facing?
- How did you do with your last ‘I Will’ statement?
- Did you share what we talked about with anyone?

In the “Connect” section, we will occasionally include questions about beliefs and doubts. We want our groups to be a safe place where people can be open and honest about their beliefs and doubts. A key statement we will make in this series is that “faith is not the absence of doubt; it includes doubt.” To create a safe space where people can be open and honest, leaders will need to be comfortable with doubt and be on the watch for attempts by members of the group to fix or resolve someone else’s doubt. Our goal in this series is to provide a framework by which everyone can process their doubts with Jesus and trusted friends. That framework and process starts with recognizing and bringing our doubts to Jesus and continuing to lean in even when we don’t receive answers. Our hope in crafting the small group guide is that the “Connection” section will help create a space to air beliefs and doubts, and the “Discover” section will help group members encounter Jesus and hear what he has to say about what is being discussed.

## Discover

Read the scripture passage and then have someone put the passage in their own words.

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

*The three questions listed above will be the standard questions used in the Discover section each week. An additional question may be provided from time to time in the Discover section to connect the passage with that week's sermon.*

## GO

The goal of this section is for each person to create "I will \_\_\_\_\_" statements that move group members from thinking and processing to action. Encourage members to share their "I will" statements with the group or to email them to the group within 48 hours so that the entire group can pray for them and encourage them as they apply what was discussed to their lives. Use the following questions to guide you through this section:

- How can you live this out in the next few days? (Create an 'I Will' statement)
- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered?

## Pray

Ask one or more members of the group to pray for any of the challenges identified during the connect time and for each member, that they will carry through with their "I will" statements.

## Tips for Facilitating

1. Ask Questions, Don't Teach (let scriptures teach, not you)
2. Focus on Obedience, not just Knowledge (knowledge best flows from obedience, not the opposite)
3. Pass off Leadership (don't let it be dependent on you)
4. Stay in the passage (puts everyone on the same page)
5. Always model easy reproducibility (don't complicate the process too much)

## Principles to Remember:

Discovery Bible Studies are about:

1. *Discovery Learning (not Proclamational Teaching)*
  - o Discovery Groups allow people to not just consume information, but instead to actively pursue truth.
2. *Obedience-Focused Discipleship*
  - o Learning information doesn't change lives. DBS's focus on applying what Jesus tells us, and it's in that step of obedience we experience something way more powerful than mere knowledge.
3. *Immediate Sharing & Multiplication*
  - o Changed lives make others notice. When people share what's happening, it tends to go viral...

Adapted from <https://www.dbsgroups.com>



## Deconstructing Your Faith

### Connect

What are you thankful for?

What questions do you have about God or faith that remain unanswered?

How do you respond/handle unanswered questions about God or faith?

### Discover – Acts 17:16–34

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people and say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Deconstructing the Bible

### Connect

What are you thankful for?

What part, if any, does the Bible play in your faith journey?

Do you ever struggle with things you read in the Bible?

### Discover – Psalm 119

Psalm 119 is split into 8 verse stanzas identified by a Hebrew alphabet letter. For this week's Discovery time, assign each member of your group a different 8-verse stanza from Psalm 119 and ask them to work through the three Discover questions. Alternatively, you can split your group into pairs, with each pair taking an 8-verse stanza. Then, have each member or pair share what they discovered in their 8-verse section.

- What stands out to you?
- What does this passage reveal about God?
- What does this passage tell you about people and say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Deconstructing God

### Connect

What's a challenge you are currently facing?

Is the theology that is guiding the way you live moving you closer to God?

What, if anything, is keeping you from deeper intimacy with God?

### Discover – 1 John 4:7-21

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people or say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Deconstructing the Trinity

### Connect

How was January for you? What are your highs and lows from the month?

What are you thankful for?

Does your understanding of the Trinity impact your relationship with God?

### Discover – John 14:15-31

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people or say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Deconstructing Jesus

### Connect

What is causing you stress?

How does what you believe about Jesus impact you at home, work/school, and play?

Does what you believe about Jesus draw you closer to him? Why or why not?

### Discover – Philippians 2:1-10

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people or say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Deconstructing the Church

### Connect

How did you do with completing your "I will" statement from last week?

Do you believe being part of a church is vital to your relationship with Jesus?

How does what you believe about the church impact the way you interact with the church? (keep in mind when we talk about the church, we are talking about people, not an organization)

What is the purpose of the church?

### Discover – Ephesians 4:1-16

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people or say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Deconstructing the Kingdom

### Connect

What was the best part of your week?

What challenges are you experiencing? How can we help?

How would you define the Kingdom of God?

### Discover – Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people or say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Deconstructing Sex

### Connect

How did you do with your last “I Will” statement?

Did you share what we talked about with anyone?

### Discover – Ephesians 5:1-14

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people or say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray



## Deconstructing Sin

### Connect

What encouraged you this week?

How did you do with your last 'I Will' statement?

What is sin? How do you know if something is a sin or not?

### Discover – Romans 3:21-31

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people or say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Deconstructing Redemption

### Connect

What are you thankful for?

What challenges are you currently facing?

In what ways (if any) does the redemption of Jesus offers impact your daily life?

### Discover – Romans 5:1-11

What stands out to you?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What does this passage tell you about people or say about you?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

## Reconstructing Faith

For this week's Small Group, plan a potluck gathering to celebrate the end of the series. Take some time after the meal to process what was discovered and experienced during the series. This week's Small Group time will be discussion-based (as opposed to a Discovery Bible Study) to allow your group additional time to process what they discovered through the series. End your time together in prayer.

### Connect

What filled your heart with joy this week?

What impacted you the most from the Deconstructing Faith series?

Are there questions you have that we didn't discuss during the Deconstructing Faith series?

### Discover

What has God been saying to you through the Deconstructing Faith series?

### GO

What will you do? I will \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you tell about what you discovered? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pray

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Remember the Discovery Bible Study method involves **Connecting, Discovering and Going.**

***Connecting (ask these questions to build connection with your group each week)***

- What are you thankful for?
- What's a challenge you are facing right now?
- How did you do with your last "I will" statement and did you share what you learned with others?

***Discovering (follow these steps to help your group hear from God)***

1. Read the Passage.
2. Someone re-tells the passage in their own words.
3. Ask:
  - a. What stands out to you?
  - b. What does this text tell us about God?
  - c. What does this text tell us about people?

***Going (ask these questions to help your group apply what they have discovered to their life)***

- How can you specifically live out what you are learning in this text?
- Everyone creates an "I will" statement.
- Everyone share who are they going to share what they discovered this week with.

Visit [DBSGroups.com](http://DBSGroups.com) to learn more, discover tips on how to facilitate a Discovery Bible Study and lists of passages you can use with your group.

For more information on the following events, please visit our website <https://staalliance.org/events>



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