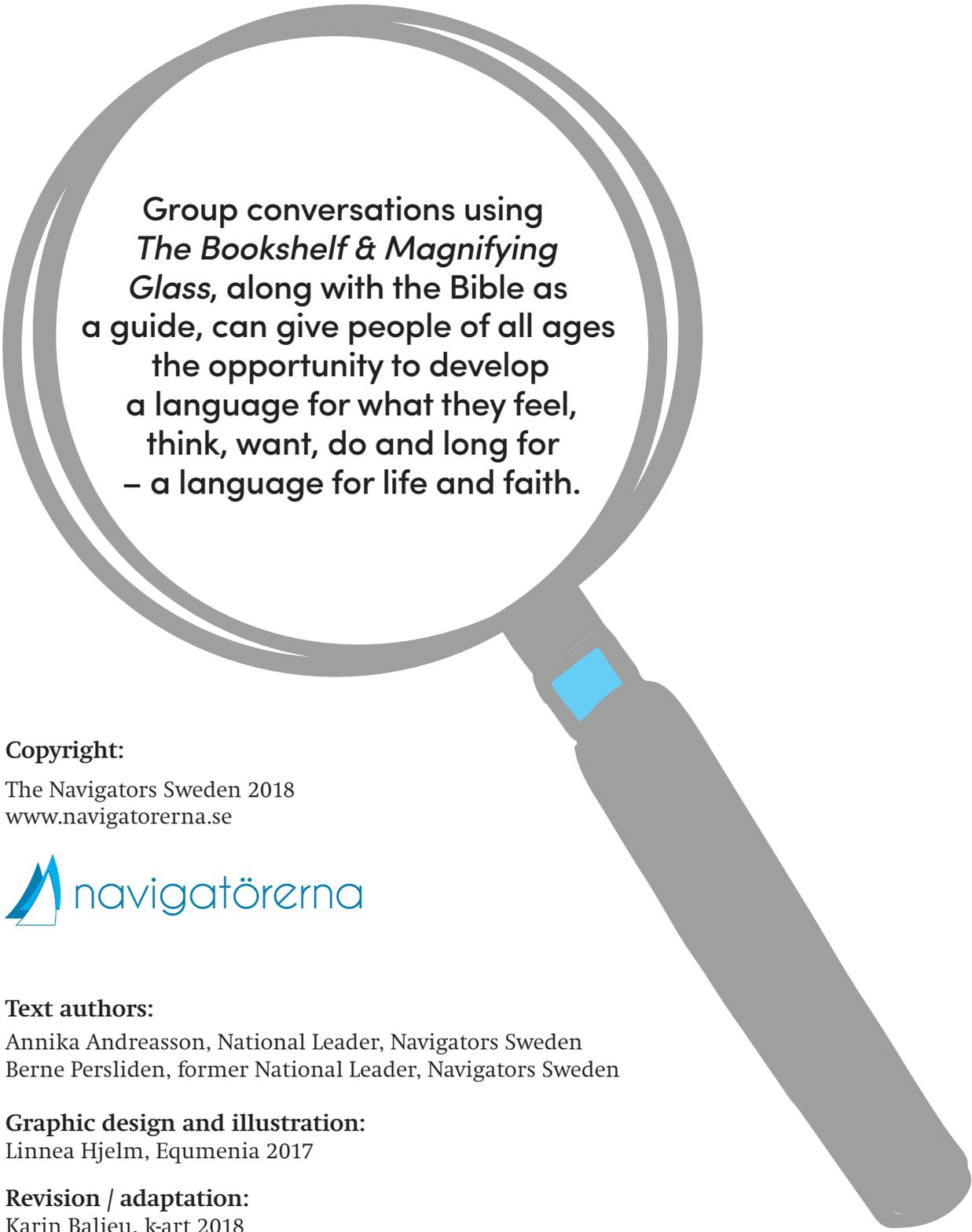




THE BOOKSHELF & MAGNIFYING GLASS

A method for personal conversations in groups, talking about life and faith based on everyday experiences and the Bible. **Leader's Guide.**





**Group conversations using
*The Bookshelf & Magnifying
Glass*, along with the Bible as
a guide, can give people of all ages
the opportunity to develop
a language for what they feel,
think, want, do and long for
– a language for life and faith.**

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Have you thought about how different conversations can be?

One conversation can be about the wind or the weather, another about coworkers and neighbors and who did or did not do what. A third conversation can be about topics that are in the spirit of the present age – politics, current crises, a controversial book or movie – or something else we’re all thinking about. All these subjects are somehow colored by the present, they are “time-bound”. But there is also another type of conversation, which touches us deeply on the inside, and which can lead us to talk late into the night.

That type of conversation, in a marvelous way, gives more energy than it takes. And strange though it may seem, it is the only type of conversation that might have sounded about the same both 100 and 1000 years ago. Perhaps even 10,000 years ago, but that is hard to know for sure, unless we could travel back in time.

Questions about life and how to live out our years here on earth, or about death and what happens then seem to be a central part of being human. While people often want to talk more about such “timeless” questions, we also know how difficult it is to get such conversations going. The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass can help us!

Initially The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass was developed to help young adults create just the kind of conversations that many

people long for. Since then this method has been used for people of various ages from 15 years and upwards, and also in mixed age groups.

The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass is built on diverse experiments and experiences starting in the 1980s. When testing the method in different contexts, we found that it works both for people with no experience of Christian belief who simply want to deepen their conversations with others and also for experienced Christians who want to develop conversations about faith and life and how we can read, understand and benefit from the Bible.

Whichever you are, we believe that you can use The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass, either to advance or deepen a conversation or Bible reading group, or perhaps to have more interesting conversations with friends and family.

Many years ago there was a game called “Mastermind” that was sold with a slogan that stated: “A minute to learn – a lifetime to master”. The art of creating good conversations is a bit like that. The basics are simple, but one can never fully master this art.

YOU ARE INVITED to start a trip towards deeper, more interesting and meaningful conversations! Getting started is easy because you don’t need to be a conversation master. Try using The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass!

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INTRODUCTION

We guess that you who have started reading this group leader's guide have heard about the positive aspects of a conversation group, or you have been in a group and have had positive experiences. Or maybe you've been in a group and did not feel comfortable with how the conversation or group worked, but would like to give it one more chance? We, the authors, have been involved in all these situations.

There is a good chance that it may be fun, meaningful, exciting, instructive, and valuable to talk with others in a group, but you can't know for sure. With a good method for facilitating conversations, the conditions get better, as good tools help you to build better. That is what The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass is all about!

Ideas that characterize the Navigators and that we find valuable to stimulate are:

- connecting life with faith – and faith with life
- meeting, accompanying one another and developing in small groups
- meeting both with those in the same age and with those of other ages
- using the Bible

The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass conversation method can be used for all of these!



The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass – how does it work?

It is easy!

In short, a group of people meet, choose a conversation theme from the “Bookshelf”, place it under the “Magnifying Glass” and talk about the theme using the various life dimensions in the magnifying glass. The Bible can be included as a resource, as a starting point and source of input. The conversation follows a specific structure, which the group leader keeps track of.

The leader is a member of the group and participates just like the others. The leader's task is to get the conversation started, keep it going following the method, and to make sure that you end at the agreed time.

Where will you get to using The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass?

You never know for sure!



But you could say that you get to wherever you are going. Barriers that may be there for personal conversations about important life and faith questions can be lowered when using the Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass. You will find that if you take the first step then you may end up travelling a long way. This method is not meant to lead to predetermined answers, but instead stimulates the group to travel together in a particular direction. The direction is about rooting and growth, for each person in the group.

The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass has made it easier for us to have good conversations about life and faith. In the conversation around different themes, you start from your own lives; your thoughts, feelings, experiences, questions... You share, listen to each other and go forward together. Towards the end of each conversation you go into how the thoughts that emerged during the conversation can have a clear practical impact in life.

We have had fun and exciting conversations in groups using The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass, as well as finding it meaningful.

THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

We here offer a more detailed view of the method, breaking it down under the following headings:

- The Bookshelf
- The Magnifying Glass
- Group conversation
- Group leader's function
- How do you get started with The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass?

The Bookshelf

Participation and relevance are needed in a conversation group in order to maintain motivation and engagement together. One way to ensure that is by developing a group bookshelf.

The bookshelf is a metaphor for what matters to us here and now. If you start with what the participants perceive as important in their lives, the conversation will already from the outset revolve around relevant life issues. When the conversation is anchored

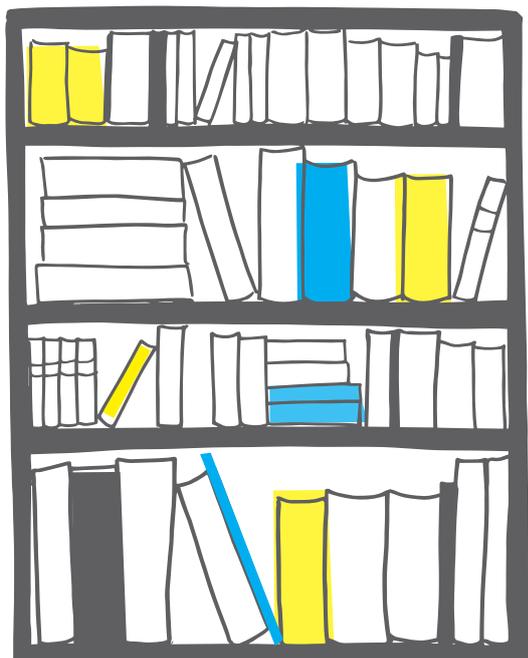
in the participant's own life and situation it can provide energy for both greater group involvement and for life. A shared bookshelf can therefore help the group take on various life and faith issues.

The bookshelf may become diverse depending on which people are in the group. Personality, age, gender, personal experiences, cultural context, life situations and more will of course affect what feels important to talk about. Yet we often find that people have similar questions and needs.

One way to create a common bookshelf is to ask the group to suggest which "books" the bookshelf should contain. By books we mean themes that can help us in life. Themes may include, for example, subjects about knowledge, lessons, worldview, preconditions for living, role models and experiences.

To create a common bookshelf you can ask, for example, the following questions:

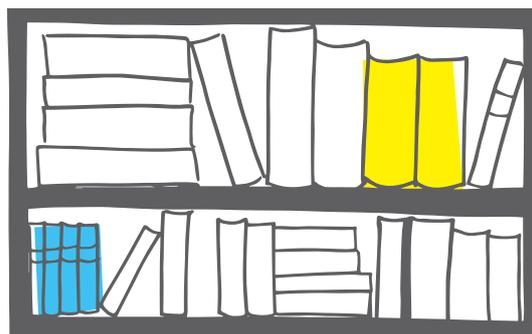
- Which books / themes do you need in order to function well in your current situation?
- Which books / themes do you need in order to live a good life?
- Which books / themes help us to work well with ourselves, our family, relatives, friends, neighbors, study or work-mates?
- Which books / themes do you need in order to move forward in life?



You can let the participants think individually and write down which books / themes they want to bring up in the group. If you write on small pieces of paper, you can easily sort them into groups if the answers appear identical or similar. All answers can be compiled into a bookshelf – well, perhaps even a small library!

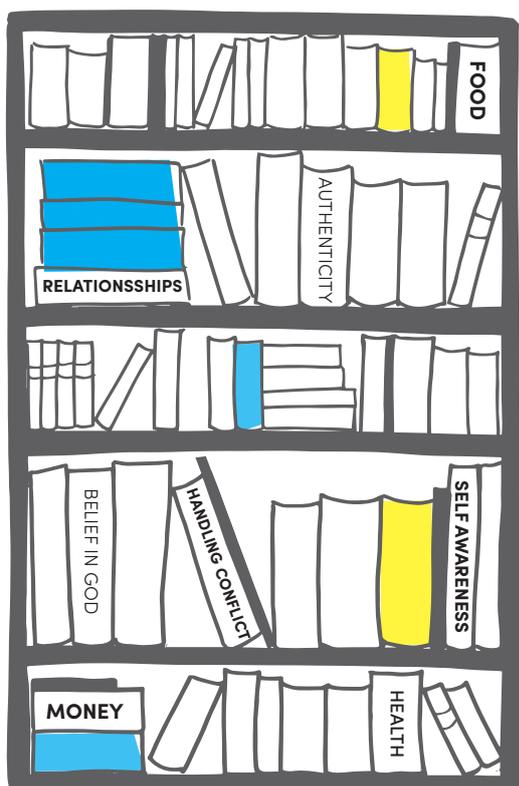
The answers to these questions can also be captured through brainstorming, where the group helps to highlight various important books for the common bookshelf. Someone may take note of the answers, preferably on small pieces of paper, or on a whiteboard or flipchart if you have access to these. Here too you can do a grouping afterwards.

In one way or another you have now created a bookshelf together. No one in the group had previously defined what was appropriate to talk about. The group has now created a relevant list and therefore owns it together. The bookshelf can motivate ongoing group togetherness and serve as the starting point for conversations with the “Magnifying Glass” as an aid. Since the bookshelf is likely to be rich in content, it can be the basis for a number of group sessions in which you can take one book – or theme – at a time.



Some examples of books that came up during the creation of a common bookshelf in previous groups:

- Health – physical and mental
- How relationships work
- Belief in God
- Self awareness
- Money
- Handling conflict
- Food and diet
- Authenticity



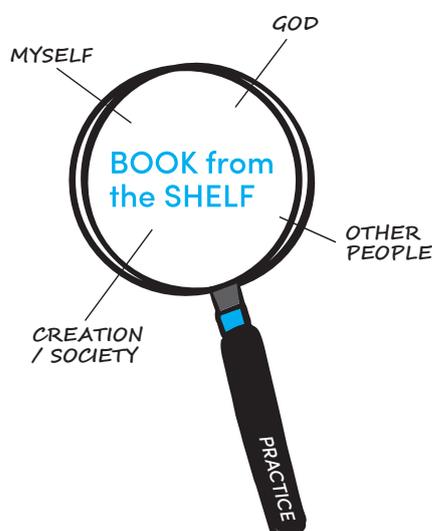
Bookshelf Summary

- It is a metaphor for what is important in the lives of the group participants, here and now
- It is created together by the group
- It contains books / themes to talk about – that is, what you need and what helps you in life
- It shows what is relevant to the everyday life of the group members

The Magnifying Glass

The Magnifying Glass helps us focus and look closer at a particular theme. Through the conversation in the group we want to give the theme space and expand it in order for us to get stimulus to grow and mature.

The different parts of the Magnifying Glass give the conversation a structure and breadth that facilitates balance between various angles and persons in the group. It also gives clarity in the conversation – both deepening around a theme and with a direction of moving forward.



The words around the circle in the Magnifying Glass show four life dimensions:

- MYSELF
- OTHER PEOPLE
- CREATION/SOCIETY
- GOD

Inside the circle it says, “BOOK from the SHELF”. The conversation starts by placing a book, i.e. a theme from the bookshelf – hereafter called a book theme – under the Magnifying Glass, and examining the theme in relation to all four life dimensions.

The handle of the magnifying glass, PRACTICE, is what comes last in the conversation. It stands for the direction we want to take: that whatever we discover and learn during the group conversation will change and strengthen our lives in the midst of everyday life.

The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass contains illustrations that are meant to be used during group gatherings and conversations. They can be printed / copied and placed in the middle of the group. The illustrations are found at the end of this leader’s guide.

Group Conversation

When you meet in a group, it’s always good if everyone gets a chance to settle down and be present. Starting with a snack or simple meal is appreciated and helps to unwind. The value of the community meal is also biblical. Sharing a meal means sharing physical human needs, and to eat something together also gives a special spiritual closeness. Often spontaneous talking will start. Maybe someone in the group is new, or the members of the group have not met before? Then it’s good, for confidence and relaxed atmosphere, if they can find their feet.

Introductions can be done in a variety of ways, ranging from simply sharing your name, age, where you live, what you do on a daily basis and so on, to more creative and playful alternatives. You could, for example, during a coffee at the start of the group session write and color your own name tags in a personal way.

It is important to, already from the start, set the tone – that is, to let everyone share in the conversation and have the chance to speak. To facilitate this you can give each person a chance to share about themselves at the start, either while eating or even if you don’t eat together.

Here are some ideas of what to talk about for getting to know one another during the first gathering and also getting started sharing with one another:

- Something fun that happened lately
- What evokes emotions in life right now
- Something I like to do ...

- Something I feel committed to
- Places I would like to visit
- Movie or music I like
- A place I enjoy
- A color I like

For more ways to introduce yourselves, to get to know and get confident with one another; think freely or ask someone you know!

If the group is new and does not have a specific theme to talk about, you can start by creating a bookshelf together, as described earlier. When you have a bookshelf, you choose a book theme from it.

To illustrate the idea of a bookshelf, books and book themes, the bookshelf illustration is placed in the middle of the group. The illustration of the Magnifying Glass is also placed there. Both illustrations are found at the end of this leader's guide.

The book theme can be written on, for example, a post-it note that is placed in the circle on the Magnifying Glass or written on a sheet of paper that is placed next to the Magnifying Glass. It's helpful if everyone can see it, so depending on where and how you sit, you may need to have several sheets that can be seen from different directions. Everyone in the group should be able to see both the theme, the Magnifying Glass's four life dimensions and the PRACTICE handle.

Now the conversation can begin. The group leader initiates the conversation by relating the book theme to the life dimensions. You start with the theme in relation to MYSELF, followed by the theme in relation to OTHER PEOPLE, in relation to CREATION/SOCIETY and finally in relation to GOD. To discuss the dimensions in this order simply seems to facilitate the conversation: start with yourself and go, so to speak, outwards.

Obviously, the four dimensions are not completely separate from each other, but hang together and overlap. They are also allowed to do so during the conversation, if it goes in that direction.

However, the important thing is:

to let all four dimensions come in to play and take space in the conversation, and it is the group leader's function to ensure that this happens.

The group leader should also make sure that everyone gets the chance to be able to speak without being interrupted, and that individuals not take too much time when they share. The group leader's function is described in more detail under the next heading.

You share your thoughts, experiences, feelings, questions or input about how to associate yourself with the book theme – the theme in relation to MYSELF. This is done one person at a time going around in a circle, either clockwise or in an alternating order in the group. It is of course also okay to say “pass, I have nothing to say right now”.

When everyone has been given a chance to express themselves, the leader initiates a conversation about the book theme and the first dimension. Perhaps there is something that seems most urgent to talk about, or something that was mentioned by several in the group? Was there a thought to learn more from or a track to follow? Is there anyone that wants to ask someone a question to understand them better? Now the conversation can flow freely and spontaneously!

With an eye on the clock, the group leader then chooses to leave the MYSELF dimension and moves to the next dimension: the book theme that relates to OTHER PEOPLE. The conversation continues in the same order: first going around the group sharing regarding the new dimension theme, then a group conversation, proceeding next to the third dimension and so on. In this way, the group covers all four life dimensions during the gathering.

Comments involving the dimension GOD:

- There is a risk that this dimension is the only one in which personal experiences of faith and Christian life are brought into the conversation, or where Bible material that feels relevant to the theme is addressed. We want to emphasize the value of including experiences, thoughts and questions about faith and Christian life, and also Bible material, in all four dimensions. It is, among other things, what we want with the group conversation to make both life and faith tangible, to unite faith and life as much as possible!
- The GOD dimension may also be termed spirituality, that is, GOD/SPIRITUALITY. It is inclusive and respectful and can give motivation for those in the group who may not believe in God but who are interested in talking about life and faith issues. That can open up a desire to be part of a conversation group even though there is clarity about Christian faith in the conversation.
- Our experience is that conversations using The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass create an added opportunity to both approach Christian faith and deepen in faith. It works very well layering Bible use and life issues in the conversation process. The Bible's words and stories can stand as one of the "voices" during the conversations. Life is reflected in the Bible and the Bible says something about life.

PRACTICE

"what we discover and learn changes and strengthens our lives"

After you have talked about all four dimensions, there is still one aspect that remains: the PRACTICE handle. The handle stands for, that what we discover, realize and learn during the conversation should be expressed and of practical use in our daily life. The leader's final task is therefore to point to the handle and ask what, in practice, the book theme would mean.

We do not want the conversation to merely lead to gathering theoretical knowledge or philosophical and theological reasoning. Rather, the conversation should also become a living part of what is sometimes referred to as the heart-head-hand: the heart's attitude, the mind's insight (head) and the hand's practice. Our actions – as seen in relation to ourselves, others, creation and God – reflect who we are and what we believe in.

The conversation therefore concludes with reflection and sharing around the dimension of PRACTICE. It might be helpful to first think about some questions on your own for a short while, maybe a minute. After that, you can share what you want to try to transform or put into practice in your life. Sharing is of course, as before, voluntary, so you have the right to say "pass".

You can also offer the group participants the option that instead of saying "pass", he or she could think about the conversation in general, or something that seemed relevant but was not directly related to PRACTICE. In that way everyone can be involved here too. Instead of relating to one's own PRACTICE, one can share what is perceived to be a general PRACTICE, that is, a humane, good and loving way of acting and living.

The group should not enter into a mutual conversation around PRACTICE. If the group does this, there is a risk that what someone has just discovered, and perhaps experiences as personal and fragile, could be questioned and "chopped apart". You may need to have time to let the PRACTICE thoughts sprout and grow. It might be better to come back to it at the next gathering or at a later time.

After the final sharing round, the gathering is over. Avoid making a summary! It is not necessary and can communicate incorrectly. Each participant has offered what he/she feels most important and it is natural for the thoughts and practical outcome to vary from one participant to another.

You may wonder how long the group should meet for each time? That should be decided by the group. In order to have time for all the rounds of the dimensions and PRACTICE, our experience suggests that around two hours are needed. You can read more about this under the heading: How do you get started with The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass?

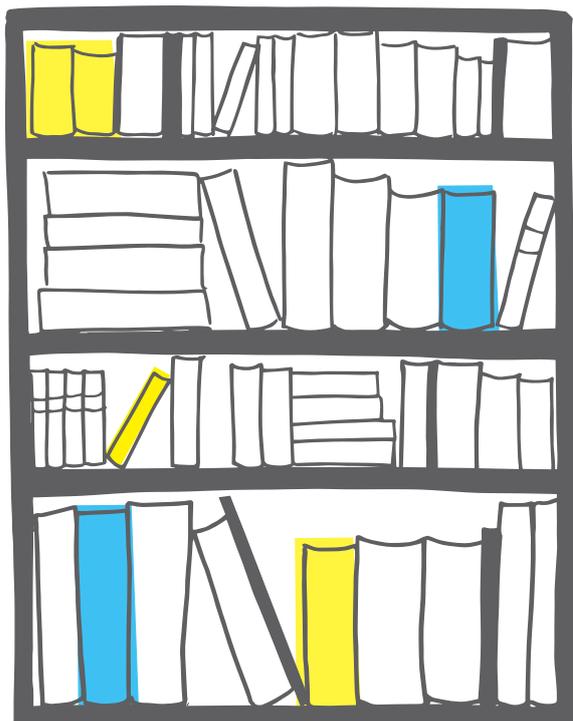
TIPS

One idea you can try is to link back to the theme and practice of the previous gathering, and ask if someone wants to share something that has happened since the last gathering related to the theme; what they have thought, felt, done, seen, heard, read... After that you can have a short group conversation before dealing with the new theme. In that way, each group session does not stand alone, by itself, but is connected through a process that you own together – an ongoing and shared life journey.

There is value in knowing which book theme to address on the following occasion. In our experience, if you have the theme in the back of your mind, and you think a bit about it, then you are warmed up for the conversation and its various dimensions. Perhaps you have read or seen something that has a link to the theme, such as a life event or a Bible passage that you associate with it. There should not, though, be any expectation that something has to be prepared, unless agreed upon beforehand.

LIST OF THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR GROUP CONVERSATIONS

- Be present
- Offer coffee or a simple meal
- Getting started to share
- Select book themes
- Now the group conversation can start
- Start with the theme in relation to MYSELF
- Everyone gets the opportunity to share
- Mutual conversation
- Round off the MYSELF dimension
- Change the focus to the next dimension
- Continue with the same order of turns
- Cover all four life dimensions
- PRACTICE handle
- Sharing round
- End



In order to stimulate and get your own thinking and sharing started, and also for mutual conversation, it may be helpful as a leader to have some questions in reserve. We have provided some suggestions for each life dimension as well as the PRACTICE handle.

GOD

- Do we have personal experiences of God and the theme? If so, what are they?
- Do we find something about this in the Bible? Where?
- How do we perceive God's view of the theme?
- What is the tradition of faith? Are there different Christian traditions?
- What place / meaning does this have in life with God?
- How can I deepen my experiences of God and the theme?

MYSELF

- How does this theme connect to me?
- What does this look like in my life? Has the theme been constant? Is it changing?
- What relevance does it have for me? How important is it?
- How do I handle this?

BOOK from the SHELF

OTHER PEOPLE

- What does this mean to other people?
- How is the theme included in other people's lives? Experiences? Attitudes?
- How do we see others handling the theme? Good/ bad?
- Do we see consequences in different relationships; our own, or in interpersonal relations?

CREATION / SOCIETY

- How do we view the theme in relation to creation and society?
- What values support / hinder the theme?
- Impact how does it look?
- What can I learn / do myself?
- What are the effects of not taking into account the theme?

PRACTICE

- What do I do with what I discovered? With what I learned?
- Is there anything new I want to start doing?
- Is there something I want to change? Something I want to refrain from?
- What do I take with me from here?
- How can what I have learned become clear and embody my life?

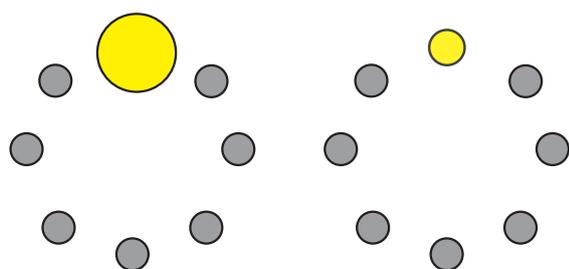
Group leader's function

Imagine the privilege of being part of a group! And imagine the opportunity to contribute to others, while others contribute also to you!

The starting point in *The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass* is to take part of a group for experiencing, learning and developing together – including the group leader. It is a common attitude that a leader of a group should have special skills and training, and in a church context there is often the expectation that the group leader should also have specific knowledge of theology. Neither of these is necessary in *The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass*!

It is of course an asset if you have a breadth of knowledge, but sometimes it can actually become an obstacle. The risk is great that the leader's own interpretation, or traditional interpretation of themes and bible texts, is unnecessarily transferred to the participants. In order to grow, it is important for the participants themselves to be in a process of discovery. Here the leader's contribution should be neither bigger nor smaller than the participants' contributions – they are all worth the same. The sense of shared ownership is likely to disappear if the leader shows too great a level of knowledge.

The group leader's function in *The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass* is less demanding than in many other group contexts. Since exploration is the objective for everyone in the group, including the group leader, the group leader does not need to know or have all the answers. The important thing is for the group leader to embrace the expectation



Traditional view of the group leader's role

View of the group leader's role in The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass

of a wider understanding, seeking new learning and insights for all participants in the group, including the leader.

The whole group can, by meeting and talking, help one another to discover thought patterns and find practical ideas for life. In this way you can all grow and mature together.

The group leader should be a participant, but with the additional function of leading the conversation. The group leader has no responsibility to prepare specifically (by for example reading in relation to the theme), other than familiarizing him or herself with the conversation method through this leader's guide. In this way the conversation can be a real discovery experience even for the group leader.

In *The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass* the group leader's function is to:

- initiate the group to meet (if not already arranged otherwise),
- start the gathering and lead the group to make a BOOKSHELF and choose a BOOK THEME to explore,
- start the conversation around the theme,
- make sure that the conversation moves forward in the order around the MAGNIFYING GLASS, covering all four life dimensions,
- end the group gathering with PRACTICE.

The leader ensures that all parts of the *Magnifying Glass* are addressed, and that enough time is given to the various parts. Sometimes the group conversation on one of the dimensions takes more time than on another. Sometimes two dimensions weave together in the conversation, because they are so close to each other in certain themes. The group leader needs to be sensitive to the possibility that a dimension conversation has been exhausted and can ask the group if it's time to move on. If there is more to draw from on a certain theme, you may feel that it is important to talk about it again at another group session, as some themes may never be exhausted.

Are there really, then, no special leadership skills needed? Well, maybe there are... Being a group leader using *The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass* is about being present, interested and human, so those are the skills that are needed. It's about seeing, listening and sensitivity. It's also about being yourself, with what you are and what you can offer, without the expectation of being someone else, or knowing or doing more than you can. The leader is a fellow traveler, not an expert.

The group leader, of course, must do all he/she can to make everyone in the group feel welcome, accepted and invited to contribute to the conversation. The leader needs to ensure that everyone in the group will be able to speak and that the conversation is characterized by curiosity and listening to one another respectfully.

In order to keep the view of the group leader's role in mind, one helpful approach would be to inform the group of the leader's function and its limits. This makes it easier for others in the group to be understanding and to feel safe. This can also help avoiding unnecessary strain on the leader by making it clear that the leader is not expected to answer all questions, know more than the others, and so on.

When the leader has this approach to his or her role and to the group, then the others can also feel free to think and interpret matters for themselves. If all are aware that everyone has limited knowledge and experience, it can be easier to see both their own valuable contribution and how others can contribute to their own life.

Theological knowledge may very well be there or be an interest of the leader or the other participants, but it should not be regarded as a prerequisite! This leadership guide is available as a help in; developing the right approach, method, conversation themes and Bible connections. If the leader or the group find themselves in need of more assistance, you may want to ask for involvement from another Christian, a pastor / priest or theologically skilled person. If the group has already determined a book theme, the leader (or someone else in the

group) can discuss the topic with someone outside the group to broaden the knowledge and get extra ideas for the group conversation.

This kind of leadership role can also be a path to the leader's own learning process and may also lead to new discoveries that make both the leadership task and participation even more exciting and meaningful.

How do you get started with *The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass*?

Even though you have read this far in our leadership guide, you may still have questions that you want to have answered in order to feel safe enough to start a group. How do you invite participants, how many people should there be in a group, where are you going to meet, how much time do you need for a gathering and can you as a leader receive support somewhere? We will now comment on such questions.

How do you invite group participants?

Depending on the target group, the age of the participants to be and what you think the setting for the group should be, it is worthwhile to consider how to express the invitation. Here are some wordings that we have used in invitations to *The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass*:

- Honest and valuable conversation about what feels important in life
- Conversations about life and faith based on everyday life
- A chance to try out one's thoughts and one's language about life and faith
- An opportunity for personal reflection and deepening with others
- An accepting and open context for conversation
- Openness and humility for responses
- Sources we return to include the Bible and Christian tradition

- Opportunity to both individually and together follow in Jesus' footprints
- Mixed age group – various life perspectives
- Try out The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass method three times in a group

Perhaps you can use one of these to formulate an invitation that suits you and your target group?

Giving oral information at meetings, putting up posters, handing out flyers, advertising on websites and Facebook events are ways to go, but we recommend first of all inviting people face to face. Tell them what you want to do yourself, be clear about what you have to offer and ask if the person would benefit from such a context. Is that something they desire? Is there something they are wondering about? Do they know anybody they think would like to join? **The personal invitation usually reaches further, it often gets people interested in participating.**

When – where – how?

When and where to meet you have to decide on your own, but here is some advice on the questions of when-where-how, and on how to prepare for group start-up and setup:

- **Leader** – one can lead alone, but in many ways it's good to have two leaders. It is enriching and provides relief. You can support, encourage and complement each other. You can share the leadership by alternate leading of the group session. Four eyes and ears see, hear and notice more than two. If one is ill, the group can still meet.
- **Number of participants** – for the dynamics of the conversation, we would like to recommend at least four and preferably no more than eight people in a group, including leaders.
- **Location** – pleasant, comfortable, undisturbed and safe. It is great to have it in a home environment, for then you automatically bring each other's everyday life a little closer.
- **Day and time** – choose one that fits

and works best for all involved. It can of course be scheduled on a weekday or a weekend and may be planned at any time of day that fits the group participants.

- **Duration** – it depends on the amount of time you can set aside for this activity, but we recommend at least 1.5 hours up to 3 hours, including the coffee / meal. Keep in mind that a break in the middle where everyone moves around is good! It allows better concentration and reveals that we are not just brains, but whole bodies. If you meet for 1.5 hours you may not have time for all dimensions in the Magnifying Glass, so you may need to cover a theme in two sessions. If you meet for 3 hours and the time still runs out without getting through all dimensions in the Magnifying Glass, then decide together if you are going to return to the theme at the next gathering or move on to a new theme.

Idea for setting up a gathering

It may be helpful to have an idea to start from when planning the timeframe for the method and its rotation order. Here is a proposal for the setup of a group session lasting 2 hours, when the group is running and there is no need to introduce the participants or method, and when a bookshelf has already been created and a book theme has been selected:

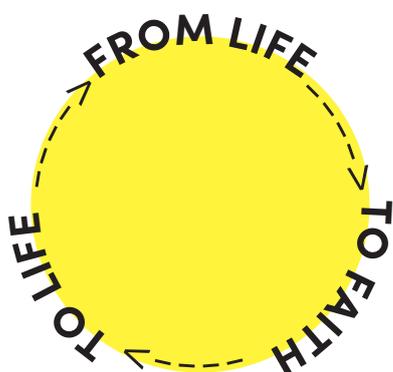
20 min	Gathering, coffee, spontaneous conversation
20 min	Group conversation starts out from the book theme and the MYSELF dimension. First sharing round and then interactive conversation.
20 min	Continued conversation, now around the OTHER PEOPLE dimension
5 min	Break
20 min	Continued conversation on the CREATION / SOCIETY dimension
20 min	Continue the conversation on the GOD dimension

10 min	Last part of the conversation, PRACTICE
5 min	Finish, refer to next gathering & say goodbyes

NEXT STEP

Now you know how a group conversation with The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass works.

The threshold for leading a group is hopefully lowered by means of this group conversation method. We hope that you are now interested in starting a group that uses The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass and the Bible to help with honest and lovely conversations about life and faith, for life and faith. Surely you would like to try this out? Surely you dare to take this step?



We know from experience that leadership in The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass is not burdensome or difficult, but fun, meaningful and instructive. The views on the leadership function are similar to those found in adult education pedagogy. We would like to see more people dare to engage as conversational leaders and thus enable more participants to take part in valuable group conversations. We encourage you to take the initiative and try!

Remember that the group implementation and use of the method is a learning process in itself. We need to dare to try, fail and succeed in order to develop. The goal is not to make the group conversation perfect. Good is good enough. Or good enough is good.

“The one who does not dare to take the next step may be standing on one leg for the rest of his life,” someone once said. Faith as big, or as small, as a mustard seed can bring about a lot of things, Jesus told. If we do not take the first hesitant step, we can never learn to walk. If you still hesitate to take the step forward, to lead a group using The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass, we – the Navigators Sweden – would gladly assist and offer support and inspiration. When we help one another, we can go a long way. Don’t hesitate to get in touch with us!

www.navigatorerna.se

We wish you a pleasant experience in “walking and traveling” – with one another in the group, with the Bible, Jesus and all the others in the Bible stories!

THE BIBLE IN THE BOOKSHELF & MAGNIFYING GLASS

When The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass is used to dive into the Bible we have actually already jumped ahead by establishing that the Bible is an important book to have with you in life and thus the Bible stands as one of the books on the common bookshelf. In addition we have suggested a number of book themes that we find relevant, valuable and important to talk about.

But, the idea with The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass is that the group itself decides what to talk about, so that everyone feels that they are part of the conversation and are real owners of what the group is doing. We therefore propose that you, if you as a group want to use the suggestions we provide, choose together what you think is important and what is of interest for conversation with one another.

The links between The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass conversation method and the Bible are structured in two ways:

*BOOK THEMES with verse references
from different books of the Bible*

TEXT SECTIONS from the Gospel of Mark

The verse references and text sections have been selected from the Bible by several individuals, including leaders, within The Navigators Sweden. We were looking for life and faith issues and have sought to capture such themes. The Gospel of Mark has been given a special focus in the reading, and therefore many references come from the Gospel of Mark.

By linking Bible texts with the conversation method, the Bible's stories and voices including Gospel writer Mark – can express something about book themes and the dimensions of the Magnifying Glass.

If you choose book themes as the basis for group conversations, you can use verse references in several ways:

- Begin by reading the verse references (or select one of them) and let the text be included as a common base in the conversation according to the method.
- Begin the conversation according to the method and gradually fill the conversation with “one more voice”, that is, the verse reference. This can happen, for example, by reading a verse as “another voice” after each sharing round, so that the text may also be included when the group conversation gets going.
- Read the verse references linked to the GOD dimension. That is a natural entrance point, but we want to emphasize, as already mentioned, that the Bible text should not only be linked with GOD. Try to connect the Bible text with all dimensions; because a holistic view of life is a healthy perspective!

Related to some of the book themes we present, we have suggested ideas that may be helpful for the conversation. They are referred to as Food for thought, some of which are related to the four life dimensions.

The Bookshelf & Magnifying Glass was originally used only with book themes under the Magnifying Glass, but we also propose to put text sections there. In this way we deepen the link between the method and the Gospel of Mark, but it can of course apply to any book of the Bible. The text sections can be used in several ways:

- Free standing, independent from each other, one section per group session.
- Reading through the entire Gospel of Mark (or another book of the Bible), focusing on text sections; we suggest dividing into approximately 10 group sessions.

- Below the heading TEXT SECTIONS... we have written *The text deals with, among other things*. Every text section of course deals with several things. The experience, understanding and interpretation of the text can be much more comprehensive and much more nuanced than a heading. Our commenting on the text is there to give a quick association into the text, if you have some Bible knowledge, but we do not want to limit the text by saying that it is only about this. Our belief is that each text section has something to tell us about several life dimensions, or even about the whole of life!

If you choose a text section as a basis for the conversation, you put the Magnifying Glass over the Bible text

(corresponding to a book theme) and reflect on what you relate to in the text, in relation to the four different life dimensions. If you use a text, the conversation's "theme" can be broader, while the order to follow in the conversation remains the same. The text can speak differently to each of us; what stays with you, touches you or what you identify with may be uniquely yours.

We want to emphasize that you should never take for granted that people are familiar with the Bible, not even if one has grown up in a Christian tradition or is familiar with the Church. Therefore do not take for granted that, for example, one is able to find their way among the books of the Bible or that one understands how they are divided into

BOOK THEMES

VERSE REFERENCES FROM THE BIBLE, chapter:verse

Authority / Power

Exodus 3:13-4:9, Matthew 28:18, Mark 1:21-27, 10:35-45, 2 Tim. 3:10-17

Being tied up
– What binds us in life?

Matthew 6:19-21, 6:25-34, Mark 10:17-22
Food for thought: Obstacles, limitations, freedom
- How do we make choices in our lives?
What makes us feel good?

Change/
Old and new in our lives

Isaiah 43:18-19, Mark 2:21-22, Eph. 2:1-10

Close to Jesus

Mark 2:13-17, 5:25-34, 8:34-38, 14:3-9, John 12:1-8, 13:1-10, 13:23, 21:15-19

Compassion /Empathy

Matthew 9:36, Mark 1:40-45, 6:31-44, Luke 10:25-38

Division/
Fragmentation

Mark 3:24-26, Romans 12:18-19, 14:7-8, 15:7, 16:17-18

Food for thought, within dimension:

MYSELF

What does fragmentation look like in my life?

When do I feel divided?

OTHER PEOPLE

What leads to, or counteracts, divisions between people?

CREATION / SOCIETY What does division/fragmentation look like in our closest environment, and in the surrounding world?
 GOD How can God give us hope in division/fragmentation?

Faith

Mark 1:40-45, 9:16-29, Luke 5:17-26, John 12:44-50, 14:1-14, 17:20

God's kingdom

Psalms 145:10-13, Mark 4:26-29, 4:30-32, Luke 8:1, 13:18-21

Worry /Fear

Matthew 14:26-33, Mark 4:35-41, 16:1-8, 1 John 4:18

Food for thought, by dimension:

MYSELF When am I worried? What affects me?

OTHER PEOPLE How do we see each other's worries /fears?

How do we influence each other?

What do we think about others?

CREATION / SOCIETY What creates, or counteracts, fear and worry in our society?

What creates, or counteracts, fear and worry about nature?

GOD Are we afraid of God? How can we, in that case, have peace and trust in relation to God?

TEXT SECTIONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK TO PUT UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

chapter:verse	The text deals with, among other things:
1:16-20	Jesus said: Follow me
2:1-12	Lame man is cured, sin and forgiveness
4:1-34	Metaphors
5:24b-34	Woman with bleeding
6:32-44	Food miracle
7:1-13	Clean and unclean
7:14-23	Clean and unclean
8:1-10	Food miracle
9:33-37	Who is the greatest
12:28-34	Most important commandment
14:3-9	Woman with expensive perfume

