

HINTS AND HELPS FOR SMALL GROUP AND BIBLE STUDY LEADERS USING RUNNING FROM A CRAZY MAN (and other adventures traveling with Jesus)

Timing:

Running from a Crazy Man is comprised of **70 short chapters**, each with an **essay** followed by **Ponder the Perplexities** – scripture references and questions related to the message of that chapter. Lastly, a **Remember** line contains the main point of the message. Some of the Ponder the Perplexities sections have **assignments** for readers related to that essay.

The book is easily divided into either:

- 10 weeks covering 7 chapters per week
- 7 weeks covering 10 chapters per week (average 30 pages per week)
- 14 weeks covering 5 chapters per week
- 35 weeks covering 2 chapters per week (good for Sunday morning classes w/short sessions)

Leader Preparation:

Peruse the chapters you'll assign that week and take note of:

- The subtitle describing the type of situation addressed by the essay
- The scriptures, questions and assignments in Ponder the Perplexities section
- The Remember section containing the message to remember from that essay

Read all the scriptures referenced for those chapters. Make a list of the scriptures referenced to hand out or to assign for read aloud during the small group session. God's word should take pre-eminence in every gathering over any author's writing, commentary, or opinion.

Be prepared to give direction or encouragement in the context of your culture and congregation related to the assignments. (for example, some assignments encourage people to seek counsel from mature Christians in their fellowship – be prepared with the avenues for that to happen in your congregation.)

Some chapters reference movies or TV shows. You may want to find a quick clip from these on the Internet to play for fun so that those not familiar with the reference will gain an understanding.

Consider who in your group might be able to specifically relate to each chapter and ask them to come prepared to share their thoughts. (ie, Chapter 39 ask someone to share who works with the poor, Chapter 32 ask someone to share who has ministered in Haiti, Chapter 65 ask someone to

share who's experienced an unexpected change) It can be beneficial to have someone share who has faced the situation in the past and someone share who is currently facing that situation.

Sessions (There are many ways to organize sessions around this book.) Here is one example:

Open in prayer.

*Handout the list of scriptures referenced in the week's chapters and have people look them up. Ask people to share what God taught them specifically through these passages this week or if they saw anything that related to their own lives through the passages. How did they apply them to their own situations? (This is a good time for those prearranged testimonies) (20 min)

Split the group into two's and three's. Ask people to share with their partner their favorite chapter or chapters from the week and why they were their favorites. Which chapter did they think contained a message just for them? After 10 minutes, ask people to share what they heard from their partner. (20 min)

Go through the Ponder the Perplexities assignments and ask who tried which one. Why did they try it? What were the results? (There may be one the group can do during session. Be prepared to give them time to work on it.) (15 min)

**Ask, "How do you see yourself applying one truth or lesson from this week's readings and how can the group support you in following through on that?" (You can have people share aloud, write this down on slips to be collected, or write on post-its to apply to a group bulletin board or poster to grow throughout the course of the book. If your group is large, ask people to share in groups of two or three.) (10)

Close in prayer for these things. (5)

Modify this format depending on the time you have for session and the number of people in your group. The more weeks you have, the fewer chapters you're covering in session at one time, the deeper you can go with each essay and scripture passage. Whatever you do, don't shortchange the *time in God's word and the time discussing **how people will apply what they've learned and what support they need to do it!

Some small groups find it beneficial (and fun) to set up a closed Facebook group while they're studying the book together so they can comment, react, question, or ask for prayer throughout the week.

I'm eager to hear from you as you're working with the book with your group! I've been leading Bible studies and small groups for thirty+ years and I have lots of ideas so contact me with questions or challenges. If you try an idea that works well with your group, considering sending it my way so I can share it with others! Contact me through the website at www.loriroeleveld.com or by email at lorisroel@gmail.com or through Facebook. I'll be praying for everyone reading the book and leading discussions about it! May God have His way in all our lives. Enjoy the adventure! Lori