

In the Word Bible Studies from Concordia Seminary is a unique, complete electronic Bible study-in-a-box. All the materials you need to facilitate the Bible Study topic are downloadable – the Student study sheets, the Leader Guides and four video presentations. The “Who is the Greatest? (It’s Not Who You Think)” series is presented in 4 separate video vignettes discussed by Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs with Dr. Jeffrey Kloha in a casual, fun setting. The Leader Guides and Handouts were written by Pastor Gary Ellul. The flexible format allows the facilitator to complete this study in as little as one meeting or up to four.

For additional background and study of the text, see Dr. Gibbs commentary on Matthew:

Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1-11:1*, Concordia Commentary Series (St. Louis: CPH, 2006).

<http://www.cph.org/p-685-matthew-11-111-concordia-commentary.aspx>

Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 11:2-20-34*, Concordia Commentary Series (St. Louis: CPH, 2010).

<http://www.cph.org/p-17762-matthew-112-2034-concordia-commentary.aspx>

Here is a recommended format, using one video per session:

Opening prayer

Almighty God, be with us this day as we grow in Your Word. Prepare our hearts for the love You have poured out for us through Your Son our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Allow the seed of the Holy Spirit to flourish within us so that we can come to a fuller understanding of the many gifts you have given us, especially the precious gift of faith. This we do for the glory and honor of our Redeemer, Christ the Lord. Amen.

Warm-up Discussion (15–20 minutes)

Student study sheets pique the student’s interest and curiosity of the video topic to be presented. Relevant Scripture readings are introduced to prepare the student for the deep dive of meaning and understanding that will be presented in each video vignette.

Video Vignettes (15–20 minutes)

Concordia Seminary Professors discuss the relevant Scripture verses and dig further into the meanings, symbolism and application into the present day and individual lives. The informal round-table discussion format puts the student at ease, enabling concentration and meaningful thought into what is being discussed.

Follow-up Discussion (15–20 minutes)

Student study sheets continue with in-depth questions that refer to information presented in the vignettes. The follow-up is designed to reinforce the student’s comprehension and application of the information provided.

Closing prayer

Ever living loving God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we thank You for allowing us to be in Your word today. Help us always to grow in Your Word given and shed for us. Help us to flourish in the love our Lord poured out for us. Help us to share Christ’s love with the world that is around us. It is in His name that we pray. Amen.

Suggestions for a successful *In the Word* Bible study

- Decide the timing of how you want to format your Bible study (will students be asked to meet once, twice or four times).
- Advertise the study at least a month in advance; promoting this is presented by the professors of Concordia Seminary. A very unique and entertaining Bible study.
- Familiarize yourself with the materials. The Leader's Guide refers to significant topics that will be raised in the video vignettes. For deeper understanding, facilitators are encouraged to steer conversations to these topics.
- Ensure television or projection device is available to present DVD presentation.
- Have enough Student study sheets, Bibles and pens/pencils available for all in attendance.
- Study should be held in a room that encourages a relaxed setting, with tables to write notes. Lighting that can dim is better than completely turning off the lights during the vignettes, so that students can see while they take notes.
- Serving light refreshments will entice Lutheran students to attend.
- A collection basket for free will offering is always a wonderful addition. Donations may be collected and a check made payable to "Concordia Seminary" to be sent to: Theological Research and Publications, Concordia Seminary, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO, 63105–3196.
- Remember to relax. The Concordia Seminary professors are actually doing the teaching with this *In the Word* study series. As the facilitator, you are reinforcing the ideas that are being presented.
- Please complete the voluntary e-survey after completion.
Facilitator survey <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5PXZLXF>
Participant survey <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5P82ZPH>

About the Authors

Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs joined the faculty of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, in 1992, where he teaches New Testament. Jeff is a husband, father, grandfather, teacher, writer, a pastor and a preacher. Ordained into the pastoral ministry in 1979 he served two congregations in northwestern Oregon. After serving there for ten years he entered doctoral work in Bible Studies in 1989 at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, Richmond, VA. He was awarded a Ph.D. in 1995, focusing his research and writing on the Gospel according to Matthew. He is nearing completion of a three-volume commentary on the Gospel of Matthew in the Concordia Commentary Series.

Since being called to teach at Concordia Seminary, Jeff has been a conference speaker for pastors and laity in many venues. He is at present also the part-time pastoral assistant at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in south Saint Louis, and preaches and teaches the Scriptures there regularly.

Jeff and wife, Renee (nee Snyder), were high school sweethearts. When they are not traveling the country to visit their grown children and (increasing numbers of) grandchildren, Renee and Jeff are both avid runners—Jeff has a regular goal of running at least 1000 miles each year. Since turning 50 in 1992, he has completed 10 full marathons in eight different states.

Rev. Gary J. Ellul is a 2005 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and is pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, in Jonesburg, Missouri. Gary is blessed to have a wonderfully supportive wife, Shirley, who has never ceased encouraging her husband as he follows the Calling of the Lord. The Ellul's have four lovely daughters ranging in age from 10 to 30, and are blessed with three delightful grandchildren.

Gary dedicates this work in memory of his dear departed brother, Andrew C. Ellul. In all that we do let us do it for the glory and honor of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.