

(Taken from *In Dialogue with Scripture*, Compiled and edited by The Rev. Linda L. Grenz)

**METHODS FOR USE WITH SMALL GROUPS:  
A BASIC CRITICAL-HISTORICAL APPROACH**

TIME = 1 1/2 – 2 HOURS

STEP 1. Read the text in different translations.

STEP 2. Decide what type of literature the text is (parable, poetry, history, etc.; see "What is the Bible?" above). What does the type of literature say about the nature of the content? Is this a literal or a metaphorical statement?

STEP 3. What is the historical situation? Use a Bible dictionary and commentary to gain a perspective on

- the setting for the text
- the author
- the audience
- the author's intention
- the cultural and historical influences on the author

STEP 4. How is the passage constructed? Brainstorm the key words, symbols and images. Check for cross references to other passages. Discuss what each of the parts means to the text. Summarize the message of the text.

STEP 5. What does the text say about life today? What are some social and personal issues that relate to the text? How does the text give us a perspective on those contemporary issues?

STEP 6. What have we learned and what do we plan to do?

Close the group meeting with prayer.