

Divine Principle Masters Course

Leader Guide

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Preface

This guide is a work in progress. The purpose of the guide is to help study group leaders to facilitate an in depth study of the most recent edition of the Divine Principle, *Exposition of the Divine Principle, 1996*.

The DP Masters Course is organized into units; each unit is based on a section of the source text. Hard copies of the text can be purchased online at www.hsabooks.com. Or you can use the online version here <http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Books/dp96/0-Toc.htm> Each unit assigns pages to read in the hard copy, but there are no page numbers in the online version. Students using the online version will have to rely on the Chapter and section numbers to follow the course. On the other hand, the online version contains bible verses that are hyperlinked to biblical sources and to references in other sections of the Divine Principle.

Students should prepare in advance. You will get more out of the course if you review the questions and consider them in each section before the meetings. A facilitator could set up a blog or discussion board for this purpose so students can carry on discussions during the week at their leisure.

The questions are divided into two categories. The first category is based directly on the content of each unit. The purpose of these questions is to focus on understanding the original text. The second category of questions pertain to applications of the content in our personal lives of faith or put the content in historical or contemporary context to better understand the value of each section.

This course is just a beginning. It originated in The New Jerusalem Family Church in New Jersey under the leadership of Rev. Dong Woo Kim and Rev. Barry Geller. Later, Scott and Megan Simons with Dave Hunter and Jatoma and Camia Gavin developed the course further. Finally, Henri Schauffler did some simple editing and compiling to produce the course you hold in your hands. It is by no means the finished product.

This program is offered in the spirit of collaboration and “open source software,” wherein users will adapt the material to their specific needs. For example, a group leader or participant may be given a good study question by God that is not offered here. Please use it!

Each numbered section is meant to be the aid for a group meeting, with the participants reading the designated pages and considering the questions prior to the group meeting.

Each meeting should begin with a review of the source material with the group leader asking,

- “Are there any parts of this anyone does not understand fully?”

After discussion on that point, the leader should ask,

- “Did anyone have a realization, inspiration or revelation this week as a result of your study?”

Then, on to the question in the lesson.

The box on each lesson page is for notes by the participant.

The Purpose of Your DP Masters Small Group:

It is paramount to keep the overall purpose and goals of your DP Masters group in you mind and heart at all times as you undertake this incredible journey:

- For the participants to grow
 - spiritually
 - heartistically
 - intellectually (in their understanding of the DP)

The inner core of a successful DP Masters group will be that the participants do the readings during the week and prepare by seriously thinking and praying about the content. The purpose for the discussion time is to give the group members a chance to have give and take. It is also to give them a chance to know and trust the group leader and allow themselves to be guided by the group leader.

The group leader must not monopolize all the time himself. ***This is not the time for you to give a lecture!*** Lively give and take is our goal. **You must listen.** We must trust the group members to share their ideas, to show themselves. We do not want the situation where everyone is afraid to talk. Also the situation where one participant does all the talking is to be avoided. Arguing participants and controversy are often good for eliminating the silence, but be sure they give others a chance to talk. “Thank you ... Let’s give someone else a chance to speak too.” Be respectful of opposing points of view and try to understand why they have that point of view and from where it comes.

Start the group effectively

Suggestions for the First Meeting

1. Help them to understand what is expected of them in the group and why.

A suggested opening orientation when the group first gathers might be like this:

“For purposes of organization and education, we’ll be doing many things as a group. This group will be a small group and is designed to be like ‘home’ during your investigation of the Divine Principle and you growth in heart and spirit. Please commit to being at all the scheduled group meetings until the course is completed.

“There are, by design, many different types of people in this group, as you can see. Please challenge yourself to get to know different people from different backgrounds, not just to stay with the same old friends you have now. If we are going to talk about world peace and unification, at least we can try to get to know some new people in this situation. You’ll have a much better and more growing experience.

2. Start group interactions with individual introductions.

This makes it easier to talk to each other and feel comfortable. It also allows you to quickly find out basic information about each person. One suggestion is to write these questions on a paper and pass the paper around.

- What is your name and age, and where did you grow up?
- Describe your family.

- What are you studying or what career are you in?
- What are your favorite hobbies?
- What are your good points, and what points about yourself would you like to change?
- What do you hope to gain from this group?"

3. Explain the Divine Principle study and goals of the group:

Please say these things to the group as an introduction, but make sure to internalize and make your own – in other words – *don't just read this*:

“We are going to be studying the Unification Principle, week by week.

“The readings will be covering a broad range of topics of interest to you: human potential, the purpose of life, good and evil, the purpose and laws of history, and so on. You are all conscientious people who think about things deeply, or you wouldn't be here. You are certain to have opinions already on many of these topics. The goal here is not that you give up your own ideas and agree with the group. We only ask that you consider the readings thoughtfully and listen carefully to all the discussions in the group before you evaluate whether you agree or not. We have found these ideas to be valuable for our lives, and we want you to think about them.

“Please feel free to share your honest opinions and feelings and questions. It is not impolite to disagree. Challenge the Principle and think about it in terms of your own life.”

“Our purpose is a thorough understanding of the Principle and an idea of how to apply it to our lives. There is much wisdom and insight to be gained, not only in the readings but also from the relationships we will create together. Many experience finding new hope for themselves and the world, an inner peace, a better ability to give love, greater self-understanding and self-respect, a sense of value and potential, good friends, and other benefits. *You will gain, however, only what you invest.* Let this be a time to become a better person. Look to receive as much as you can by participating 100%.”

Another important purpose of the DP Masters group is to help you develop a personal relationship with God, with Christ, and with each other as true brothers and sisters. We are going to learn how to grow spiritually, how to change ourselves and become the kind of person we want to be. We'll learn how to make better relationships with others, how to become a person of true love.

“God wants to work through this group to speak to you and touch your life. You've already reached out to him by joining this group, don't you think? Challenge yourself as much as you can, and you will grow spiritually as a result.

“The Principle is mainly about heart and love. We'll all have emotional experiences during this time, sometimes as we face parts of us we do not like, sometimes as we're reminded of painful experiences we had in the past. We all want true love and we've all lived without it. Tears are not unusual here. Let's all be sensitive and be supportive of each other. Let's give each other the respect and appreciation we would like to receive. Let's be sensitive to each other's process of restoration.”

Objectives for the discussions:

- To review the main points of the reading according to the specific needs of your group.
- To let new students clear out their questions and concerns so they can be receptive to the next presentation.
- To help new students develop their understanding and relationship with Divine Principle

- To help new students learn how to apply Divine Principle in their daily lives
- To give new students the glorious experience of principled relationships
- To facilitate participants' growing relationship with God and True Parents

1 . Basic Guidelines:

A. One person speaks at a time.

B. The speaker is to be respected by others.

You should dominate the time to educate the group; do not let the inspiration of the lecture dissipate through trivial arguments and endless opinions. Especially in the Preparatory Seminar, if your group does not allow a fruitful review and meaningful discussion, then end the meeting early and go for a walk together or do another exercise. Let them relax so they can be ready for sitting again, while you perhaps focus on personal discussion with a few interested guests.

C. Involve every person

The ideal is to involve every person as you draw out important points of inspiration and agreement as well as misunderstandings and unaddressed issues, doubts and fears.

At the same time, you want to answer those concerns and clarify the main points of the Principle. This requires a balance of speaking yourself and getting the guests to speak.

D. Some good strategies include:

Open by asking if there are any questions or comments on this week's assignment, and then guide the discussion into a simple review of the main points. Then go the questions in the Study Guide.

E. Listen well (see active listening)

Learn how to draw out people by your sincere interest in them. Try to sense the unspoken questions and concerns of your group members and answer them.

WHAT NOT TO DO! (learn to be participant-centered)

- Don't let disagreements over ideas dominate your relationships of heart.** Demonstrate parental love and be tolerant of divergent opinions.
- Don't try to prove the Principle.** Let the Principle stir up concerns and questions, but don't expect to convince them with such a brief overview of our teaching. Seek to interest them in further study. Intrigue them, challenge them, and inspire them into wanting to investigate more. Show such confidence in your beliefs that you do not need them to agree with you. Our expression of true love is the most persuasive.
- Don't talk about your own spiritual problems** with or around your group members. Also don't talk about our Family traditions or activities that would be confusing.
- Don't lecture!** Group Leader is not teaching "about" the Principle, but rather *facilitating learning about how to live by the Principle*, therefore he / she has to show through every activity in the group that The Principle is what we live, not just talk.

Active listening guidelines

Group leading requires effective communication at all times. We must listen well and express our thoughts and our hearts carefully. Group leaders must become expert listeners in order to win the trust of your group and fulfill your role effectively. Below are some skills involved in active listening.

1. Try to understand what the person is saying and *how they feel about it*. We need to listen for feelings, not just the thoughts that our guests express.
2. Show understanding and acceptance by nonverbal behaviors, such as
 - Facial expressions
 - Posture
 - Gestures
 - Tone of voice
3. Restate the person's most important thoughts and feelings. Try to do this in your own words, (not just repeating everything they say like a tape recording)
4. Of course you should not interrupt; and do offer advice or give suggestions unless you are invited to do so.
5. Remain neutral in listening to their opinions. Don't take sides.
6. Ask open questions to understand better what's on their mind.

Listening for feelings:

We need to distinguish thoughts from feelings; to understand the part feelings play in conflict; to listen to the feelings behind statements.

Often when someone is asked what they feel, they will state a thought instead of a feeling. Sometimes it is too risky to share a feeling, so we offer what we think about the feeling, our opinion or conclusion.

For example: "I feel that you don't understand me." (What is the feeling?) = I feel embarrassed or hurt.

Use your creativity to lead the group – let God guide you and don't be a "slave to a script."

The Participant Guide gives you a "roadmap" to lead the group; however, if the Spirit really picks up the group, you will find the discussion may move away from the scripted questions in the guide. This is OK! Let God guide you. The two main issues are:

1. That the students clearly understand the Divine Principle sections being studied
2. That they are connecting that DP content to real life

Participant Progress

As the group leader, it is important to keep the main goal of this group in the forefront of your mind and heart: for the participants to grow spiritually, heartistically and intellectually (in their understanding of the DP). Here are some ideas to help you consider how you, in the role of parent, can look out for their growth.

1. General situation

- Motivation
- Expectations
- Commitment to change

- External situation
- Family situation
- Understanding and foundation of relationship with God.

2. Spiritual situation

- Belief in God
- Belief/experience that God loves them
- Experience of God's love in/through the creation
- Feeling of God's suffering heart of separation from His Children
- Feeling of own fallen nature and desire to repent
- Desire to become a better person
- Appreciation of the role of the Messiah
- Desire to follow God and/or the Messiah
- Desire to help the world
- Prayer life, conditions

3. You can introduce a Spiritual Checklist as a way of charting their progress and learning self-discipline. This checklist is offered at the end of the Participant Guide.

This develops good habits and makes a stronger common base with God so they can receive more from Him. You might include:

1. Pray
2. Study God's Word
3. Practice vertical relationships
4. Serve others.
5. Challenge to love difficult people
6. Challenge to do difficult things

Each day the checklist is simply marked yes (I did this), or no (I did not do this).

4. A journal (several sheets of paper in a folder) can also be introduced, for each group member to write their reflections in every day.

This can be done as part of quiet time or closing meeting. Then they can hand it in to you at night as a way of communicating with you. Write comments, and you can have intimate give and take with each guest without taking a lot of time.

A Spiritual Checklist (DP in action)
7 Habits for a Healthier and Happier Life

- 1. Morning and Evening Prayer** – Open and close your day with prayer so your entire experience that day becomes an extended prayer. Pray for the world, pray for peace, pray for all mankind, then pray for the nation, your community, your friends, and then your family and yourself. This helps to take God’s perspective. Be 100% honest in front of God. Ending today well is the best preparation for tomorrow. This is quality time with your Father.
- 2. Daily Morning Reading** – Read the Divine Principle to find answers, to learn, and to discover. Through the reading try to connect to God’s heart and intention for you. Apply it throughout the day and see how much your day improves. Test it out for a certain period of time.
- 3. Communicate with a Role Model** – Find a role model who is spiritually higher than you. This means, they love God and are living for His dream more. Our mentors help us check our motives, thoughts, and actions to see how they are connected to God. They give advice centered on God’s perspective and aren’t afraid to challenge us with “tough love.”
- 4. Reflect** – Confucius said, “Study the past if you would define the future.” Learn from every experience. Set time aside at the end of every day, every week, every month, and every year to reflect. Notice your patterns, how you grow best, what connects you to God, what pulls you away from God. Study your behavior and determine what you want to change. Prayer, writing in a journal, going for a walk, or talking to a role model can be effective ways to reflect.
- 5. Practice Inside Out** – The “inside-out” principle states that internal victory brings external results. Father Moon’s life motto is, “Before you desire to have dominion over the universe, you must first gain dominion over yourself.” Your own personal transformation leads to a wider transformation in your relationships, your family, and the world. Be the one to take responsibility and change first. You need to first find your internal responsibilities given by God in each situation and fulfill them.
- 6. Set Internal Goals** – God is actively engaged in your everyday life and always educating you. Declare your goals to God and see how He helps you achieve them. Make your intention clear for each day. If you reflect well on your day, you can see the next point you need to challenge yourself on. Your goals should be reachable but challenging.
- 7. Serve** – As you come to understand God’s will, you will naturally want to contribute to the fulfillment of His dream by developing a tradition of service in your life. This is how you substantiate your faith in God’s Will in society, your nation or the world. As you invest your whole heart into your work, you deepen your relationship with God. When you take responsibility for others, your internal growth and stability has more meaning because it affects those around you.

The first seven points are basic life of faith building blocks. The next points have to deal with reaching out. Get to the point where you can gain clarity and confidence when you share your faith, take a stand for your values, take a stand for another’s spiritual life, or just practice loving others.

Speak to others about your faith – Rev. Moon mentions you must think three times before you speak. Jesus said it is not what goes into a man that defiles him it is what comes out that is what

defiles him. We want to be clear and consistent what we share of our family, faith, and movement. As well be consistent with one another. Develop a little “elevator speech” to describe your faith to those you love and those with whom you work and study.

Create or get involved with a step one program- get in touch with what you love, you can do this at your home the local Lovin Life Learning Center, a coffee shop wear ever get out of yourself , bring God into the mix, invite others, serve, and be consistent.

Get to the point where you share your heart with others. God’s longing to be able to be with his children. In order to truly do this we must break down the barriers that make us separate.

As you consistently practice these points in all circumstances, you become stable, spiritually mature and happy individuals!

Provided is an actual checklist/reflection paper you can use to help see where you`re at, what you need to do, as well as to keep a record of your progress. The checklist is not mandatory, but a tool for you to use if you like.

Remember that it`s not just about checking off on a list, but finding how to make these things a lifelong habit. This is something you can continue to use after the DP Masters study group is completed.