Running a discussion group series on the Yale
**‘Introduction to the New Testament’**lecture series

**About the material**

This study series utilises some excellent online lectures and materials from Dean Martin at Yale University. Professor Martin provides a solid and engaging introduction to the New Testament as a whole, as well as its historical context, including an introduction to critical historical work done on the NT over the last two centuries.

The whole series and its associated resources can be found [at the Yale page](https://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/rlst-152). The ‘Sessions’ tab brings up the full list of lectures, and clicking on each brings up the video, audio, transcription text and any other resources (occasional handouts, etc.) relating to that session.

While the full course is available directly from the Yale site, this *IF* version seeks to make it slightly easier to ‘consume’ in local ministry contexts. In addition to the links to the various videos on the Yale site, we’ve formatted the transcripts up into easily printable PDFs with paragraph numbering for ease of reference in small group conversations.

The full lecture series is quite long — 26 sessions! — so this *Illuminating Faith* version of the material suggest breaking it up into a number of parts for use either consecutively or with pauses in between, although it can also be run straight through.

This study series has the advantage that it requires minimal initial effort by group members – around 45mins to listen to the lecture at normal speed, but will expose groups to a wide range of important material then to be discussed in a small group setting.

**Preparing for the sessions**

Prior to each session, group members should:

1. ***Watch the lecture*** via the links on the *Illuminating Faith* web page, or read the transcript. There is also an audio-only version of the lectures available on the course homepage under the 'sessions' tab -- click on the session you want and the audio can be downloaded at the bottom of the session page. (An alternative to this would be to watch the video together in the small group, which would require that the session time be longer but would mean less preparation by members prior to the session would be required).
2. ***Reading some of the Bible texts*** which will feature in each lecture. These are sometimes quite long -- a skim will often be enough to familiarise yourself with each selection. Again, the suggested reading is available on the web site.
3. *OPTIONAL:* Further help can be found via the links to brief summary videos from ‘The Bible Project’ included below, which give a quick summary of what is going on in each Bible book. These videos are about 6 or 7 minutes long and, although they approach the books from a different perspective than does Professor Hayes, are quite useful overviews of the biblical books nonetheless.

This preparation being done, the small group setting becomes something of a ‘tutorial’ on the material for the session. The printed transcripts will be helpful for recalling the material, with the paragraph numbers useful to get everyone on the same page in the discussions. Group leaders should have viewed the material themselves and come prepared to prompt and lead discussion around the themes of the lecture for that session.