

How to Read the Bible with Your Children

A 4-session course for 3rd-5th graders and their parents

Session 1: For the first session, class is divided into adult class and children's class. Pastor talks with parents about the history of Sunday School in the U.S. and how parents eventually turned over the spiritual education of their children to "church professionals." He/she discusses the need to bring this responsibility back to the parents. A lay leader helps the children to feel comfortable with their Bibles and encourages them to write in margins and use highlighter pens (given out with bibles). Give out "Getting to Know My Bible" handouts and let learners work in groups to complete. Go over as a class. Bibles are given out at the beginning of each class and collected at the end of each class until after the official "Presentation of Bibles."

Session 2: Lay leader talks about the Bible and mentions several different approaches to reading it as a family. During this session, the emphasis is on storytelling. Discuss how to tell Bible stories. Give each family a copy of "Guide to Stories in the Bible" and "Tips for Storytelling." Leader demonstrates storytelling by telling one of his/her favorite Bible stories.

Session 3: Lay leader discusses several different approaches to reading the Bible as a family. Do one or two preselected dramatic readings. Watch a Bible story video and show how to discuss it with the children. Sign families up to demonstrate their favorite approach next session.

Session 4: Families demonstrate their favorite Bible reading technique. Have a special "Presentation of Bibles" during the next worship service.

GETTING TO KNOW MY BIBLE

The Bible is divided into two sections. They are called the _____ and the _____.

The Old Testament has _____ books.

The New Testament has _____ books.

The first book is called _____.

Write the first verse of Genesis.

What is the last book of the Bible?

Write the last verse of the Bible.

The _____ Testament was written after the birth of Jesus.

If you open your bible to where you would guess was halfway, to what book will you open?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is about the life of Jesus. They are the first 4 books of the New Testament. Name them in order.

How many psalms are included in the book of Psalms?

Is the story of Noah's Ark in the Old Testament or the New Testament?

Look up the verse John 3:16. Write it.

What familiar Bible story begins at Luke 2:1?

What is your favorite Bible story?

GUIDE TO BIBLE STORIES: OLD TESTAMENT

The Creation	Genesis 1:1-23	
Adam and Eve	Genesis 2:7 - 3:24	
Cain and Abel	Genesis 4	
Noah's Ark	Genesis 6-9	
The Tower of Babel	Genesis 11:1-9	
Abraham	Genesis 17:1-18:15; 21:1-8; 22:1-19	
Isaac and Rebecca	Genesis 24	
Jacob and Esau	Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-45	
Jacob's Ladder	Genesis 27:42-28:22	
Leah and Rachel	Genesis 29-31	
The Coat of Many Colors	Genesis 37	
Pharaoh's Dreams	Genesis 39-41	
Joseph and his Brothers	Genesis 42:1-46:30	
The Burning Bush	Exodus 1-4	
Escape from Egypt	Exodus 5-14	
In the Wilderness	Exodus 15:22-16:35	
the Ten Commandments	Exodus 19-24	
The Golden Calf	Exodus 32-34	Exodus 32-34
The Death of Moses	Numbers 20:1-12, 24-29; 27:12-23;	
The Battle of Jericho	Joshua 1-6	
Gideon's Trumpets	Judges 6-7	
Samson and the Philistines	Judges 13; 15-16	
Ruth and Naomi	Ruth 1-2; 4	
Samuel and Saul	1 Samuel 8-9; 15	
David and His Harp	1 Samuel 16; Psalms 23	
David and Goliath	1 Samuel 17	
Judgment of Solomon	1 Kings 3:16-28; 6	
The Prophet Elijah	1 Kings 17:1; 18:17-19:21; 2 Kings 2:1-15	
Esther, Queen of Persia	Esther 2:2-8:17	
The Story of Job	Job 1-42	
Daniel in the Lion's Den	Daniel 5-6	
Jonah, the Prophet	Jonah 1-4	

GUIDE TO BIBLE STORIES: NEW TESTAMENT

The Birth of Jesus	Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-20
The Flight into Egypt	Matthew 2:1-23
Jesus' Childhood	Matthew 2:19-23; Luke 2:40-52
John the Baptist	Matthew 3; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:19-34
The Temptation of Jesus	Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13
The Apostles	Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9; 10:1-4; 19:16-24; Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-14; 3:13-19; 10:17-25; Luke 5:1-11, 27-28; 6:12-16; 18:18-25
The Wedding at Cana	John 2:1-11
Curing the Sick	Matthew 8:1-4, 14-15; 9:1-8; Mark 1:23-2:12
The Sermon on the Mount	Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:17-49
Jesus Calms a Storm	Matthew 8:23-34; Mark 4:36-5:19; Luke 8:22-39
Jesus and the Pharisees	Matthew 9:10-13; 12:1-14; Mark 2:15-17; 23-28; 3:1-6; Luke 5:29-32; 6:1-11
Jesus Speaks in Parables	
<i>The Sower and the Seed</i> Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:5-15	
<i>The Wheat and the Weeds</i> Matthew 13:24-30	
<i>The Mustard Seed</i> Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19	
<i>The Wicked Servant</i> Matthew 18:31-35	
<i>The Good Samaritan</i> Luke 10:25-37	
<i>The Good Shepherd</i> Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7; John 10:14-18	
<i>The Prodigal Son</i> Luke 15:11-32	
Death of John the Baptist	Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9
Feeding the Five Thousand	Matthew 14:13-36; Mark 6:31-56; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-21
Jesus and Simon	Luke 7:36-50
Jairus' Daughter	Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-42; Luke 8:40-56
The Transfiguration	Matthew 16:13-17:20
Lazarus Raised from the Dead	John 11:1-53

The Entry into Jerusalem

Matthew 20:29-21:17; 22:15-22, 34-50; Mark 10:46-11:11, 15-19; 12:13-17, 28-34;
Luke 18:35-19:10, 29-48; 20:20-26; John 12:12-19

The Last Supper	Matthew 26:1-5, 14-56; Mark 14:1-2, 10-50; Luke 22:1-53; John 13
The Trial of Jesus	Matthew 26:57-27:5, 11:26; Mark 14:53-15:15; Luke 22:54-23:5, 13-25; John 18:15-18, 2-34; 19:1-6
The Crucifixion	Matthew 27:27-58; Mark 15:16-45; Luke 23:26-52; John 19:2, 16-30,38
Jesus Comes Back	Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20; Mark 16:1-8, 10-19; Luke 24:1-51; John 20:1-16, 18-21
The Early Christian Church	Acts 1:12-2:47
The Stoning of Stephen	Acts 6:8-7:1, 54-60
Saul's Conversion	Acts 9:1-19
Peter's Escape from Prison	Acts 12:1-17
Paul and Silas in Prison	Acts 16:16-40
The Shipwreck	Acts 27:1-28:10
Paul Preaches in Rome	Acts 28:11-31

TIPS FOR STORYTELLING

The Bible is a storyteller's treasure chest. Kids love to have stories told to them. Even these days when kids can get stories on TV, the Internet, and interactive stories on computer discs - there is no substitute for a live story told by someone they love.

Yes, you can tell a good story! Parents can tell them to kids and kids can tell them to parents. Do you have trouble finding the stories in the Bible? Here's a list of the most popular ones (attached). It's by no means exhaustive but it's a good start.

Here are some storytelling tips:

Know the Story. The more familiar you are with the story the easier it will be to tell it. Read over it to refresh your memory and to be sure you have the facts right.

Paint Details. Describe sounds and smells, sights and tastes and how things feel to the touch. Imagine how the people in the story felt about their situation and imagine other ways it might have been handled.

Don't Change the Facts. Be creative in painting details but it is important not to change the facts. Saying that the Last Supper consisted of Big Macs, fries and cokes may make it sound more up-to-date but I wouldn't want our kids to start hounding the Pastor for more creative Communion Sundays.

Make it memorable and fun. They're your children. Don't be afraid to act a little goofy in front of them. I can assure you they already think you're goofy. Make God's voice deep and commanding. When Jonah is thrown overboard, give him a bubbly, gurgling voice.

Make it Relevant. You don't have to beat them over the head with the point of the story, but try to find a way that they can apply it to their lives and convey that within the story.

Ask Questions. Keep them involved and responding and you won't lose their attention.

SAMPLE STORY FOR STORYTELLING

MATTHEW 16:13-17:20 MARK 8:27-9:30 LUKE 9:18-45

Jesus and his disciples were visiting and teaching in the villages around a city called Caesarea PhilLippi. As you might imagine, Jesus and the disciples usually had to walk when they traveled, so they walked a lot. When you're walking somewhere with your friends, how do you pass the time? I'll bet you do a lot of talking - don't you? Without all the distractions around you, it's a great chance to find out more about your friends and talk about things that are on your mind. It wasn't so different for Jesus and his friends. They talked about everything during their long walks from one village to another.

On this particular day, Jesus had a question for his friends. He had been performing miracles and doing good things for people and trying to teach everyone how to love each other and how to love god. So naturally, people were talking about him. So, as they were walking along the dusty road talking about this and that, Jesus asked his friends - "Who do people say that I am?" have you ever heard someone talking about one of your friends and wondered if you should tell them or not? I'll bet the disciples kinda felt the same way. However, since Jesus came right out and asked, they told him what they'd heard. "Some say you are John the Baptist or Elijah. Others say you are one of the prophets come back to life."

"Okay, but what about you?" asked Jesus. "Who do you say I am?" Well - Peter, who always said what was on his mind (often without thinking first), spoke right up and said, "You are the Christ! The Son of the living God!" Jesus praised Peter for knowing this but told the disciples not to tell anyone.

Then Jesus went on to tell them all the things that were going to happen to him. How he had to suffer and die and be raised to life on the third day. Well, this really upset Peter and he said, "Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!" Just as quickly as he praised Peter moments before, he now rebuked him for wanting his way instead of God's way. About a week later, Jesus took his 3 closest friends - Peter and James and John - and led them up a high mountain where they could be by themselves.

Peter and James and John got to see something very, very special. Suddenly, Jesus began to glow. His face changed and his clothes became as white as a flash of lightening. And just then, standing with Jesus, the 3 disciples saw Moses and Elijah!! Now maybe you don't know it, but Moses and Elijah had died a very, very long time ago, so Peter and James and John had to be very confused and frightened. I guess Peter must have figured he'd seen everything now because he was satisfied to stay right there on that mountaintop. He said, "How good it is to be here Lord! Let me build shelters for you and Moses and Elijah." But even while Peter was saying this, an even greater surprise was happening. A bright cloud came around them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

What would you have done if you had heard that? Well, let me tell you, the disciples were terrified and fell face down onto the ground!! But then Jesus came to them and touched

them. That must have been such a comforting touch - like when you get scared and your Mom or Dad puts their arms around you or squeezes your hand. When Jesus touched his friends he said, "Get up. Don't be afraid." When Peter and James and John looked up they only saw Jesus and themselves again. As they came back down the mountain, Jesus told them not to tell anyone what they had seen and heard until after he had been raised from the dead.

That was such a special experience Jesus shared with his closest friends. Why do you think he shared that? What would you have been thinking during that experience? Why do you think Jesus didn't want them to tell anyone what they had seen?

PRESENTATION OF BIBLES

Pastor: Will the parents or sponsors and those children who are receiving Bibles today please come forward.

Pastor: In Christian love you presented these children for Holy Baptism. In Baptism, sacred promises are made. As parents of these children, it is your calling to keep these promises:

*... to faithfully bring them to the services of God's house
... to teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments
... to place in their hands the Holy Scriptures
... and to provide for their instruction in the Christian faith*

Do you parents and sponsors renew a commitment to these Baptismal promises? If so, answer "I do, and I ask God to help and guide me."

Parents & Sponsors: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

Assistant: Congregation, do you promise to support and encourage these parents in the keeping of these sacred promises? If so, answer, "We will, with God's help."

Congregation: We will, with God's help.

Pastor: One of the ways we keep the promise "to place in their hands the Holy Scriptures" is to gift you and your child with a Bible to be used in devotions and family prayer.

[Assistant will call out each child's name and give Bible to their parent or sponsor.]

[When all Bibles have been given out, parents and sponsors will give Bibles to their children while saying together:]

Parents & Sponsors: "This word is written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. [John 20:31]

[Children kneel spaced out around the altar rail. Parents and sponsors gather behind their children and lay their hands on the children's head or shoulders.]

Parents & Sponsors: Know that we love you and are doing our very best to be good parents. Please forgive us for the times we have given you less than the love you always deserve. Every day we thank God for the wonderful blessing that you are in our lives. We will continue to carry out the promises we made at your baptism. Take these Bibles and learn from them as we share our love of God with you. Amen.

[Parents and sponsors kneel. Children stand behind them placing their hands on adults

heads or shoulders.]

Children: Thank you for loving us. Forgive us when we let you down. Please teach us. Study the Bible with us. Keep bringing us to church. We want to share your faith in God. We love you. Amen.

[Parents, sponsors, and children all stand and face the congregation.]

Parents, Sponsors and Children: Bless you for loving and supporting us to this point in our faith journeys. Thank you for the gift of the Bible. We promise to use it to learn more about God and His love for us. Please continue to keep us always in your prayers. Amen.

[All stand.]

Pastor: Wonderful and ever gracious God, thank you for the gift of children whom you place in our lives; thank you for parents and sponsors who work diligently to keep their baptismal promises; and thank you for a community of faith who takes seriously its own promise to pray for, love and support families and children. Be with us all and give us strength, wisdom and courage as we continue to grow in love for you and in service to all of your creation. Through Jesus Christ we pray.

All: Amen.