7. The Bible

Learning Objectives

- To understand the significance of the Bible and why we should engage with it.
- To grow in love and appreciation for the Bible and understand studying the Bible can lead to powerful experiences and revelations.
- To provide some practical tools to study the Bible.

Welcome [10 mins]

Welcome the group to this session, recap the last session and review how the challenge went.

The challenge was to pray for someone else in the group and share with them something they thought God might be saying for them by this session.

🏸 **Bonus Game: [10 mins]**
Select a game that will best suit your group and setting. Consider games this week that Consider games this week that use food.

> ***Pray for the session***

Introduction [15 mins]

Icebreaker : If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be and why?

> Imagine the best meal you've ever had. Maybe close your eyes and picture it, imagine the smells and the taste. For some of us, it could be at a fancy restaurant, for others, it might be street food in another country or some fantastic home-cooked food you just can't forget. Perhaps it's Christmas dinner, with not only the great food but the family and fun and excitement that goes with it. There is something about that food and experience that creates a desire in us for more.

When you think about reading the Bible, perhaps it doesn't always leave you with that desire to go and consume it in the same way you might want to go and consume your favourite meal. But God says his words can be like that for us.

📖 King David said in **Psalm 119:103**; *"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*

Share with the person next to you your first thoughts when somebody starts to talk about reading and studying the Bible?

Maybe some of us felt guilt or shame…

BUT YOU CAN understand the Bible. Ordinary people can do amazing things.

- **Who here knows a foreign language?** – You're amazing, the rest of us just point and shout louder!
- **Who plays a sport?** – Some of us just find watching sport tiring!
- **Who plays an instrument? –** Some of us can't even hold a tune!
- **Who's a pro at computer games?** – some of can't even work out how to turn it on!
- **Who can fix a bike? –** Most of us can barely pump up a tyre!
- **Who's good at Math's or Science? –** some of us can't find the answers even with Google!
- *[Name other skills/talents you think people in the room might have – try not to leave anyone out]*

In this room, there are people with all sorts of skills and abilities, some that have taken years of study and practice. Anyone here can learn to study and understand the Bible. I'm not saying the reading and studying the Bible doesn't take effort, but it is almost certainly easier than you think.

📽️ **Video: "What is the Bible" by the Bible Project [0:00 - 3:48]**
Watch this video together

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak06MSETeo4

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📽️ **Video: "How to Read the Bible: Biblical Story"**
Watch this video together

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CGP-12AE0

Quiz

You can do this as a game depending on the size of the room and number of students. Get participants to do different actions depending on the answer they choose. For example, Stand Up/Sit down, run to different parts of the room or create some silly actions. You can get them to keep score and find a winner if you like.

1. True or False?
=The Bible is one long book written after Jesus died?
False. The word Bible comes from the Greek “biblia” meaning a library or group of books. The Bible is a collection of different books written over thousands of years, and much of it pre-dating Jesus.

2. Which sold more copies, The Harry Potter books combined or the Bible?
The Bible has nearly sold 10x more.

3. How many books are there in the Bible - 27, 66, 100?
=66.

4. True or False - The Old Testament was written by Moses and the New Testament by Jesus?
= False. In fact, there are at least 40 different authors over about 1500 years, who wrote down what they saw and experienced. They were from diverse backgrounds; Peter was a fisherman, Paul was a scholar, Daniel was a Prime Minister, Asaph was a musician, Matthew was a tax collector, David was a shepherd, then a king. Luke was a historian and medical doctor.

5. True or False - The Bible claims to predict the future?
= True. The Bible has accurately predicted historical events such as Jesus’ birth & death, the destruction of cities, and the return of the nation of Israel.

6. True or False? - The New Testament is considered a reliable ancient historical document by most historians?
= True. We’ll see why in the video we’re about to watch.

Bible Focus [25 mins]

Video: *Youth Alpha “Who Is Jesus” 3:58 – 6:31*
Watch this video together

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4C46_RQtJv0

ASK - Why do you think we should study the Bible?

Ask for feedback
Use either a Powerpoint with pictures of the illustrations below or find some physical objects.

We can think of the Bible in a couple of ways.

The Bible is…

> **Like a KEY:**
>
> The Bible is a key to knowing Jesus:
> The Bible is our number one way to know what God is like and how we can know him better. As we study his story, we can hear from him and get to know him. The more you engage with the bible, the more you understand that it is a privilege to read it more than a duty.

> **Like an Instruction Manual**
>
> Imagine you and your friends are in your attic, and you discover an old board game you've never seen before. You open it up, and there are counters, three types of dice, a board with different paths on it and pack of cards. You look around for instructions but can't find any.
>
> The game looks interesting and fun, and you all want to play it, but you all disagree about the way it should be played. It would simply be up to each person's opinion of how it should be played.
> Without the instructions from the designer, you'll have no idea what would be breaking the rules and what you need to do to win.
>
> The Bible tells us why God created us and gives us instructions on how to live life the way He intended.
> If God hadn't given us the Bible, we wouldn't know how to know Him or understand our purpose in life. It would be up to each person's interpretation and opinion.

> **Like DYNAMITE**
>
> *Encourage young people to hold their Bibles.*
>
> You are holding the most explosive and dangerous material on the planet.
> - This book has destroyed empires & changed cultures and shaped the world we live in.
> - It has been banned in dictatorships for centuries and is restricted in countries across the world.
> - It challenges human systems of power & political control.
> - Throughout centuries, people have dedicated their lives, and others have died so that you and I could have and read a Bible in our own language.
>
> What could happen if we remembered the power it contains every time we read the Bible? As if the truths in this book could change our school, our town and our world?

What could happen if we remembered the power it contains every time we read the Bible? As if the truths in this book could change our school, our town and our world?

📽️ **Video: "**Read Scripture Intro"

https://youtu.be/Y10DBGre_bA

✍️ **Top Tips for studying the Bible**

1. Do a little every day. Pick a time to read the Bible every day. It's better to be consistent, so be realistic with your goals. Therefore, we suggest you start with what you can keep up, like 10 minutes every day. As you do this regularly, you will realise how much you benefit from it, and you will find yourself wanting to do it more.

2. You can use an app to remind you and keep track of your reading.
[We suggest you pick your preferred app or devotional and recommend that to your group so you can go through it together. Your group are more likely to follow your lead on which to use.]

3. Use a daily devotional to get started. There are lots of great apps, such as YouVersion, which has lots to download on different subjects.

4. Do it with others. Study the Bible in your groups and share what you are learning. You can do this on YouVersion or group messages.

5. Understand the context of what you are reading.
The genre and context of things we read determine how we understand them.

E.g. We read a poem, a novel, an instruction manual, a history book and a newspaper article very differently. Imagine picking up a notebook someone left behind on a bus. It falls open to a page where you read in detail about some serious crimes committed in your town. You would naturally think you must call the police and report this person. This makes sense... until you realise that person was a famous author and you picked up their notebook with notes for their latest crime novel.

The Bible contains a mix of historical stories, songs, prophecy and letters. We need to know who wrote the bits we're reading, why they wrote it and what style it is written in before we can fully understand it.

You can buy a study bible or use a Bible app with commentaries and read the introductions to each book. This helps you understand the significance of what is written as you are aware of the context. Watch the intro videos for a book of the Bible from "Bible Project" on YouTube. The "Read Scripture" app has this feature built-in

6. Consider writing down things you notice or learn in a journal/

Testimony: [3 mins]

Ask a leader to share a story of how they used to struggle reading the Bible and how they came to enjoy it or read it more. Ask them to include how the Bible makes a difference in their life.

Application: [15 mins]

Choose one of these study methods below, explain it and give participants time to practice doing it quietly on their own with a set passage. We suggest passages like John 3:1-21, Phil 2, Heb 12, Acts 2:42-47

✍️ **Bonus activity [15 mins]**
Introduce an additional study method or use a different genre of scripture.

✍️ **Method 1: SOAP**

Scripture – Choose a passage. Perhaps a chapter or shorter section with a heading.

Observation - Write down what you learn. What happened? What does it show about God and people? What is the main point?

Application - What did it mean to the people it was written to? What does it mean for you?

Prayer - Pray about what you've learned and ask God to help you apply it.

🙏 **Inductive Bible Study:** (See Appendix for printout)

First choose a passage. Read it through a couple times. Then ask yourself these questions about it.

1. *What does it say about God?*
2. *What does it say about people?*
3. *Are there any commands, warnings or encouragements?*
4. *What is the Main Point?*
5. *What does it mean for me?*

🙏 **Method 3: The "Discover App"**

Download the app and follow the instructions
Step 1: Read the story or passage
Step 2: Retell the story
Step 3: Discover the story
When you feel you are familiar with the story, take some time to think over of discuss the following questions.

Questions:
What does this story tell me about God?
What does this story tell me about man?
If this is God's word, what changes would I have to make in my life?
Who am I going to tell?

Feedback

Ask the group how they found the exercises.
Were they helpful?
What did they enjoy or find difficult?

Conclusion & Challenge [2 mins]

The Bible is a key to knowing God better and growing in our faith. It is powerful and can change lives. It tells us truths about God and ourselves and also tells us our purpose and gives direction to our lives. Reading the Bible can be much easier than you think, especially if you follow those top tips of; doing a little every day, doing it with others and praying for God's help.

Challenge:

Your challenge for this session is... [*leaders pick a passage/s that you want your group to finish reading by the next session. This would be a good time to suggest an app you can all use together*].

> ***Pray to end the session***