

Bible: history book or book for life?



Introduction:

The aim of this session helps young people explore the diversity of the Bible and discuss and reflect on Scripture with their peers. Remind the young people to bring their own Bible (if they have one).

Aims & objectives:

- To explore the Bible and briefly introduce its content and context.
- To widen the young people’s understanding of the Bible.
- To understand how Scripture can be relevant to them today.
- To encourage the young people to read the Bible more.

Materials: ‘Activity’ handouts (Books of the Bible).



Activity...
Books of the Bible

To begin this session this ice-breaker quickly tests the young people’s knowledge on the books of the Bible.

Ask the group if anyone knows how many books are in the Bible? The answer is 66 - (Old Testament = 39 / New Testament = 27).

Gather everyone into the centre of the room. The leader shouts out the book names (listed on the next page) and the young people vote as to whether they are in the New Testament, Old Testament, or made up - allocate parts of the room for the answers e.g. right (new), left (old), centre (made up). Mix up the names on the next page as you read them out. With smaller groups write the names on paper and invite young people to pick them out of a hat.

At the end of the game, give each young person a copy of the ‘Activity’ handout to keep, leaving time for conversation and any questions.



Activity...
Books of the Bible



Engage...
What is the Bible?



Explore...
Introducing scripture



Going deeper...
Personalised copy



Pause...
Ignatian prayer



Bible: history book or book for life?

New Testament

Mark
Hebrews
Jude
Revelation
Philemon
Romans

Old Testament

Exodus
Proverbs
Obadiah
Judges
Song of Solomon
Numbers

Made up book names

Martha
Translation
Ascension
Samson
Poems
Emmaus



Engage...

What is the Bible?

Materials: Laptop/equipment to play a You Tube clip, 'Engage' worksheets (quiz and answers).

Watch the clip 'What is the Bible' that shows young people sharing their thoughts and understanding about the Bible - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-qHmUV6goc>

After the clip invite the young people to feedback on what it says to them about the Bible. To conclude, hand out copies of the quiz worksheet for the young people to complete and give prizes for the highest scores.



Explore...

Introducing scripture

Materials: Copies of the 'Explore' worksheets (Bible readings and Bible Facts).

The 'Explore' worksheet lists ten well-known Bible verses - Exodus 3: 3-6, Psalm 23, Isaiah 9: 2 & 6-7, Isaiah 43: 1-5, Matthew 5: 3-10, John 3: 16, John 14: 6, Romans 8: 38-39, Romans 12: 1-2, Ephesians 6: 10-18).

As a whole group select five of the Bible readings. Invite young people to read each one out aloud and ask if anyone recognises any of the Scriptures and why? State that the activity stating that this session is more than a refresher lesson of classic Sunday school stories. The fact is that the Bible is full of law, history, poetry, prophecy, letters and the Gospels that encourage Christians in their daily lives. Conclude by sharing the following list of facts:

- The Bible is rich with facts about God, the world, the universe, faith, life and death;
- Filled with law, poetry, history, prophecy, teachings, the gospels and letters;
- Brimming with stories about the people of God (over 400 key characters);
- Constantly revealing questions and answers about who God is;
- The inspired word of God as revealed through those who wrote it over many hundreds of years;
- Enables us to see and reflect the very nature of God in the world around us and how he draws us back to himself;
- The reminder that God himself lived amongst us in the person of Jesus to light the way back to him through the help of his Holy Spirit;
- Full of the rules and responsibilities for living as a Christian.



Bible: history book or book for life?



Going deeper...

Personalised copy

Materials: Copies of the 'Going deeper' worksheet and a selection of Bibles and study notes that will appeal to young people.

To help the group understand that the Bible is more than just a collection of words and stories, the following questions will help the young people discuss how the Bible connects with their own lives and faith:

- 1) Do you have a Bible? If so what version / translation and how often do you read it?
- 2) Do you have a favourite verse, story or character and why?
- 3) How can the Bible help you in your Christian journey?
- 4) If you could ask any question about the Bible what would it be?

If possible, try and answer as many of the young people's questions and be honest if you do not know the answers. To conclude, have a selection of Bibles and study notes/guides that are relevant for their age group (e.g. Mettle, YP's, Engage, Discover). Also give space for the group to browse through them now and at the end of the session.



Pause...

Ignatian Prayer

Materials: The selection of relevant Bibles and study notes from the 'Going deeper' activity.

Explain to the group that they are now going to try something called Ignatian Prayer which is a meditation exercise that Christians have used for hundreds of years as a way of engaging with the Bible. Ignatian Prayer encourages the reader to imagine themselves in a particular story as one of the characters so they can reflect on their encounter. Say that the group are going to try this meditation. A familiar Bible reading will be read three times to give everyone space to relax, focus and imagine themselves as one of the characters in the story.

Invite the group to find a quiet place in the room where they can be alone and not distracted. Encourage the young people to assume a comfortable position and if they wish, close their eyes. In the silence, affirm the group of God's presence and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide their thinking.

Invite the group to take a few minutes to practice rhythmic breathing - counting to three slowly and silently while breathing in and then counting slowly to five while breathing out. As the young people are breathing help them to focus on the silence and God being with them. Slowly and sensitively read Mark 4:35-41 - 'A Storm' for the first time (on the next page):



Bible: history book or book for life?

'A Storm' Mark 4:35-41 (CEV)

That evening, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the east side."

So they left the crowd, and his disciples started across the lake with him in the boat. Some other boats followed along.

Suddenly a windstorm struck the lake. Waves started splashing into the boat, and it was about to sink.

Jesus was in the back of the boat with his head on a pillow, and he was asleep. His disciples woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're about to drown?"

Jesus got up and ordered the wind and the waves to be quiet.

The wind stopped, and everything was calm.

Jesus asked his disciples, "Why were you afraid? Don't you have any faith?"

Now they were more afraid than ever and said to each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"



Repeat the story a second and third time so that the young people are familiar with the story. At the end, invite the young people to stay still silently resting in God's presence. After a few more moments, encourage the young people to focus on their breathing again, aware of when they inhale, exhale and when they are ready they can open their eyes and become familiar with the room and people around them.

As an option, allow time for the young people to discuss their experience using these questions :

- Who they were in the story – a disciple/Jesus/someone watching from one of the other boats?
- What did it feel like? What did they see?
- Did they encounter God through the story?
- Finish the reflection with a prayer if you feel that it is appropriate.

To conclude, encourage the young people to bring their own Bibles to the remaining sessions of 'Live Life'. This is so that they become more familiar with their own versions and grow in confidence looking up and exploring Scripture together as a group and on their own. Also plan more time here so that the young people can browse through the Bible study resources.

