

Reading the Bible

Focus Scriptures: Deuteronomy 16:1-8; 1 Kings 14:25-30; Ecclesiastes 9:1-4; Obadiah 1:1-4; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:16-21; John 2:22; 19:23-24, 28, 36-37; Acts 4:23-31; 8:34-35; Galatians 3:22; Philippians 1:1-11; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 4:1-6

Connecting to Life

Option 1:

Begin this session with a brief discussion of reading in general. Invite your participants to respond to the following questions:

- **What do you read most often?** (For example, books, magazines, newspapers, Internet sites, E-mail, cereal boxes, etc.)
- **Why do you read these items?**
- **Does what you read vary with different needs? Explain your answer.** (For example, you read E-mail to keep in touch with others; magazines to keep informed on the latest trends; books to solve specific problems; etc.)
- **If you consider all the different items you read, how much time do you think you spend reading each day?**
- **When you totaled your reading time, did the answer surprise you? Why?**

Option 2:

Use the following discussion guide to explore with your adults opinions and facts about the Bible.

- **Name as many “facts” about the Bible as you can.** (For example, those listed by the author include: The Bible contains 66 books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.* The Bible has many different types of material in it—stories, songs, lists of genealogy, histories, allegories, prophecies, etc. The Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years by 40 different authors.)
- **What do you find most difficult about reading the Bible?**

- **What do you enjoy the most about reading the Bible?**
- **Why do you read the Bible?**
- **Do you find the Bible is relevant to our lives now? Why, or why not?**
- **What are some different methods for reading the Bible?** (The author mentions several, including developing a schedule to read so many chapters per day and studying the Bible with a group of other Christians.)

** (Just-for-Fun Bonus: If some in your group learned the names of every book in the Bible with a song, ask them to sing it for the group.)*

Transition: Though many people say they don't like to read, reading is one of the primary ways we learn. Reading and studying the Bible should be a Christian's top priority.

Connecting to the Word

Option 1:

Ask volunteers to read the following passages of Scripture aloud to the group. Then, ask the group to answer the questions that follow.

- **Luke 4:16-21**
 - **John 2:22**
 - **John 19:23-24, 28, 36-37**
 - **Acts 8:34-35**
 - **Galatians 3:22**
 - **1 Timothy 4:13**
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - **2 Peter 1:20-21**
- ▶ **What do these verses reveal to us about the Bible?** (Possible responses: It is God's Word. Scripture gets fulfilled as God intends. The Bible is for both public and private reading. We study it to learn about God and His plans for the world. The Bible explains the life of faith to us.)
- ▶ **How does the Bible help us solve personal needs in our lives?**

Option 2:

Invite your adults to read each of the following examples of the types of materials contained in the Bible. Then, ask them the questions that follow.

Old Testament

- *Law:* Deuteronomy 16:1-8
- *History:* 1 Kings 14:25-30
- *Wisdom:* Ecclesiastes 9:1-4
- *Prophets:* Obadiah 1:1-4

New Testament

- *Gospels:* Mark 1:35-39
- *History:* Acts 4:23-31
- *Epistles:* Philippians 1:1-11
- *Prophecy:* Revelation 4:1-6

- ▶ **How is each type different from the other types?**
- ▶ **How are the different types similar?**
- ▶ **What purpose can you see for each type?**

Transition: When it comes to studying Scripture, a variety of methods are available. Each Christian needs to find the reading plan that works best for him or her.

Connecting to Our World

Option 1:

Share with your adults the concepts of the “Practical Suggestions” from the author, which are listed below.

- **Write in your Bible.**
- **Pray the Psalms.**
- **Memorize favorite verses.**
- **Let the Word shape you.**

Then, share the various possible reading schedules the author suggests. Encourage each adult to choose a plan that suits him or her.

Finally, distribute blank 3” x 5” cards and pens to every participant. Ask them to write commitment words (such as, “I hereby commit to reading the Bible every day for the next 30 days.”). Then, ask each person to sign his or her card and take it along as a reminder.

Option 2:

Draw your participants’ attention to the three-year schedule (the *Revised Common Lectionary*) discussed by the author. Show them the following pattern for daily reading. Then, help them find a *RCL* resource, either in print or online.

The *Revised Common Lectionary* specifies Scripture readings for each day. Your adults could use these passages during their daily devotional time† in the following pattern:

1. **Read the Old Testament passage.**
2. **Read the suggested psalm.**
3. **Read the New Testament passage.**
4. **Read the Gospel lesson.**
5. **Record any insights gained during the reading in a journal.**
6. **Spend time in prayer.**
7. **Close by reading (or singing) the words to a hymn.** (*Sing to the Lord* lists Scripture verses pertinent to each hymn, so you can use a hymn that relates to one of the Bible readings for the day.)

† (*Informational Bonus: Share with the adults your favorite commentary which you use to accompany Bible study. Show them the features and benefits of the commentary.*)

A PowerPoint presentation of this lesson can be downloaded at SundayTeacher.com.

Use this space to record your own reflections on this scripture:

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective

(James 5:15-16).

