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Studying the Bible

Key Theme

- God's Word is the foundation for our lives.

Key Passage

- Psalm 119:73

Lesson Focus

- God wants us to study His Word.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will play with play dough.



Circle Time

Prayer—Using the prayer page of the Flip Chart, discuss prayer and give each child the opportunity to pray after determining what type of prayer you will offer today.

God's Word—God wants us to know as much as we can about Him. That is why He has given us His Word, the Bible. When we read and study God's Word, we know more of who God is and what He is like.

Song—Children will sing the Proverbs 30:5 Memory Verse song and the Oh Be Sure to Read the Bible song.



Activity 1: Bible Pass

Students will pass brown paper lunch bags around in a circle until you say "stop!" The students will open their paper bags to see who has the paper Bible in their bag. That student will "read"—repeat back—the memory verse from the paper Bible with help from the teacher.



Activity 2: Take Home Bible

Students will decorate and color a paper Bible with the memory verse.



Memory Verse Review/Snack

Children will review the memory verse while enjoying the snack for the day. You may want to use the snack as incentive to recite and/or repeat the memory verse.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



FOR THE TEACHER

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



COME ON IN

- Set play dough at each child's seat before class begins.

- Play dough
- Alphabet cookie cutters



CIRCLE TIME

- Bring a stuffed animal for prayer time.
- Practice the songs on the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.

- Stuffed animal for prayer time
- Lesson Flip Chart



BIBLE PASS

- Print and cut out one paper Bible from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Bring a brown paper bag for each student.

- Paper Bible
- Brown paper bags for each student



TAKE HOME BIBLE

- Print and cut the Take Home Bible coloring sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Bring at least one sheet of construction paper per student.
- Gather various items to decorate the Take Home Bibles (stickers, sequins, yarn, etc.).

- Take Home Bible coloring sheet for each student
- Construction paper
- Stapler
- Crayons
- Glue
- Decorations



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW/SNACK

- Prepare and bring snacks.

- Lesson Flip Chart for memory verse review
- Snacks



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

God has revealed Himself to us in the words of the Bible—His only written revelation to man. We are called to diligently study what has been revealed and apply it to the way we live our lives. Within the pages of Scripture, we find many exhortations to use what God has revealed in a way that honors Him.

In the Old Testament, we find examples of the Israelites abandoning what God had revealed to them. As a result, the people of that nation became corrupt.

We see in Nehemiah 8 the reading of the book of the Law of Moses before the assembly of Israel after it had been neglected for so long. Hearing the words, the people again understood what God required of them and sought to live accordingly.

Jesus chided the scribes and Pharisees for their failure to understand what God had revealed. “Have you not read?” was His way of pointing out their misunderstandings (Matthew 12:3–5, 19:4, 22:31). They had added their own ideas into the Scriptures rather than seeking to understand the plain meaning.

As Jesus taught, He constantly referenced the Scriptures as authoritative for guiding our lives. That same idea persisted as the apostles and disciples continued to spread the gospel after Christ’s ascension.

In Acts 17:10–12, we read of the Bereans, who were commended for searching the Scriptures to confirm what Paul was teaching.

In the New Testament epistles, there are many examples of examining the Bible to understand the truth. For example, in Hebrews 4:11–13, we are told that the Bible is like a sword that helps us discern truth from error in our thoughts. And Paul exhorted Timothy to study diligently God’s Word in order to discern what is true (2 Timothy 2:14–19).

We trust that God has revealed to us those things that we need to live lives that honor Him. Peter relates this idea to us in 2 Peter 1:2–4 when he tells us that “all things that pertain to life and godliness” have been given to us “through the knowledge of Him.” How do we know about God? We know primarily by what He has revealed to us in His Word. The doctrine known as the *sufficiency of Scripture* doesn’t mean that the Bible is an exhaustive manual on everything, but that its principles are sufficient to guide us in the different situations we face.

In this lesson, we will teach the three-step inductive study method which will then be used throughout

this curriculum to discern what the text of Scripture says. Laying such a foundation is critical if we are to study the Bible in a way that will not distort the text or make it conform to our thoughts. We are to submit ourselves to the Scriptures, not the other way around.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Many people chide Christians for reading the Bible literally. The Bible contains many different types of literature, but all of them communicate God’s truth to us. When we say we take the Bible literally, we really mean that we take it in the sense that it was written. Some sections of Scripture are meant to be read as historical accounts, while others are poetic.

The process of understanding what Scripture says is called *hermeneutics*—a big word describing the process of trying to understand what the Bible means. Learning proper hermeneutics opens a whole new world of truth found in the Bible. There are many different schools of biblical interpretation. These range from liberal approaches (mystical interpretation, naturalistic interpretation, etc.) to the more conservative approach we’ll be using (where ideas are considered in context and Scripture is used to interpret Scripture). This second, more conservative method, may be new to you. It is often referred to as the grammatical-historical method of interpretation because it takes into account the grammar and context of the passage as well as the historical and cultural setting of the author and the original hearers. We will call it the inductive Bible study method.

As Christians, we recognize that the Bible is God’s very breath revealing His words to us. As we seek to understand what He has said, we should not import our own ideas into Scripture but rather allow Scripture to inform and evaluate our ideas. Drawing ideas out of the text is called *exegesis* (ex- meaning “out of”), while adding our ideas into the text is called *eisegesis* (eis-meaning “into”).

Take Genesis 1 for example. If we simply read that chapter as it is plainly written, we would conclude that God created the universe in six normal days—an accurate exegesis. On the other hand, if we consider that same text by starting with a belief in evolutionary processes occurring over millions of years, we might be tempted instead to interpret those “days” as long ages. In that case, we would engage in eisegesis since we imported the idea of long ages into the text—a practice

which can lead to the dangers of compromise and distorted conclusions.

In order to properly exegete a passage, we include three essential components in an inductive Bible study: observation, interpretation, and application. These steps can be subdivided in various ways, but we will stick to three basic parts to teach the process.

To **observe**, we simply ask *who, what, where, when, why, and how* questions about the study passage. For example, we Who is the author writing to? What words are repeated or emphasized in the passage? Where is the event taking place? When was this written? What type of literature is being used (history, poetry, parable, etc.)? What is the main point of the passage?

By taking time to observe the text, we become familiar with the important words, commands, and main themes that are present. Once we are familiar with the passage, we are ready to interpret what we have read.

To **interpret**, we look at the passage in light of what the rest of the Bible has to say on the same topic. We may identify cross-references, cultural considerations, specific word meanings, context, commentaries, or parallel passages that tell of the same account or provide the same idea. We should be careful during the interpretation stage because there is always the danger of trying to read our own ideas into the text.

After we have observed what the text says and interpreted the key ideas, the next step is to **apply** the Word to daily life. Scripture is full of God's commands to believers to apply what He has communicated—we are to be doers of the Word, not just hearers (James 1:21–24). We know from 2 Timothy 2:14–19 that Scripture is to be the source of truth in our lives.

As we examine various texts, our goal will be to help the students see that the Scripture is profitable to them when they apply the passage's teaching to one or more of the four areas identified in 2 Timothy 3:16–17:

- **doctrine** (understanding of fundamental beliefs)
- **reproof** (pointing out sin)
- **correction** (identifying right actions)
- **instruction in righteousness** (living by God's commands and principles)

The Word may expose an error in their thinking or a flaw in the way they are living and thus present an opportunity to repent of those sins and to be conformed to the image of Christ.

In summary, right theology leads to right living. We can praise God for the grace He has shown us by saving us and sanctifying us. We can ask Him to mature us and change us into the image of His Son through the power of His Spirit.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Evangelical tradition is built on the understanding that every Christian can read and understand God's Word. The fancy term for this idea is the *perspicuity of Scripture*. The Reformers fought to make the Bible available in the language of the people—a privilege we enjoy today—in stark contrast with the teaching of other groups who historically opposed the idea.

The fear that motivated this opposition was that people would take the Bible and misunderstand and misapply it. This has indeed happened on occasion, but those who distort the Scriptures do so “to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:14–18). Many cults and false religions have been founded on careless use or intentional distortion of the Bible. This makes it all the more important that we handle the Word carefully as God would have us do.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord, your Word is a precious treasure. Please guide me to rightly study it and to discern your message accurately. And please help me to present this lesson in such a way that my students will learn how to properly study your Word. Please help us all to be responsive to the guidance we discover and to be willing to turn from any impurities we discover in our lives when studied in the light of your guidelines.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will make letters with the play dough and alphabet cookie cutters you set out earlier. Talk to them about how letters form the words we read in the Bible.

During this time you should be at the door welcoming the children as they come in and directing them to sit down at the tables and begin the activity. Have an aid/helper ready to engage the children with the activity.



REVIEW

Using the Flip Chart, quickly review the previous lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the lesson pages from the Flip Chart. Remind the children of each lesson's focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds, and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Circle Time

In an orderly manner, have the children assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your Flip Chart and any other props you brought or prepared for this lesson.

PRAYER

This prayer time is designed to get children to begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to get them to understand that they can pray. Use a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—or appropriate object to pass around the circle as each child gets his/her turn to pray. Only the child with the stuffed animal is allowed to pray or speak during this time. Using the same stuffed animal or other object all year will add continuity and structure to this time.

After the children are situated in the circle say:

We start our Bible Study with prayer. Let's pray. *Turn to the prayer page in the Flip Chart. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there. Then determine which type you want the children to pray today.*

- I love you prayers—Adoration
- I'm sorry prayers—Confession
- Thank you prayers—Thanksgiving
- Please prayers—Supplication

Today Supplication is suggested. You might proceed this way.

Today let's say prayers of supplication—and ask God for something we need.

I'll start. Dear God, . . . *(insert personal prayer here).*

The prayers you begin with should be specific to your needs. This will model to the children that you believe God does care about all the details of your life and you pray to Him about these things. Your example will increase their own confidence in praying to God.

Pass the stuffed animal around the circle giving all the children an opportunity to say a prayer of supplication.

➤ Prior to making your transition to circle time, we suggest you take time for restroom breaks and hand washing.

➤ Preschoolers need to move. This is a good opportunity to get them to move. Make an orderly transition to the circle time. You can have carpet squares if you want to sit on the floor, or help them to move their chairs into the circle.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away and we'll get into God's Word.

GOD'S WORD

These first four questions will be repeated each week. The repetition of these questions will help to solidify these simple but foundational truths in the children's minds at a young age.

? Before we begin, what is this? *Hold up your Bible. The Bible!*

? What is in this Bible? *God's Holy Word!*

? What does the Bible tell us? *Everything we need to know!*

? And all God's words in this Bible are what? *True!*

► As you teach, refer often to the Flip Chart picture to keep the children engaged.

Very good! Now let's learn from God's true Word. Today we are going to hear about how God wants us to read and learn His Word. First let's take a look at this picture on our Flip Chart. *Show the Flip Chart.*

? Who do you think these people are? *A dad with his daughter.*

? What are they doing? *They are reading.*

? What book do you think they are reading? *The Bible.*

? Where are they reading? *They are reading outside.*

? What do you see around them? *Birds, trees, clouds, sun, grass, flowers.*

? Do they look happy or sad? *They look happy.*

Good job! We just studied the picture to learn more about it. We answered questions to help us understand what we see in this picture. When we study the picture, like we just did, we can understand it better.

God wants us to study His Word just like we studied this picture. Listen as I read Psalm 119:73. *Open your Bible and read from it.*

Psalm 119:73

Let's study this verse. Listen as I read the first part of the verse again. *Read the first part of verse 73 again.*

? Who made us? *God!*

Yes. This verse tells us that God's hands made us. He is our Creator. He created me, you, everyone! Now let's look at the rest of the verse. *Read the second part of verse 73 again emphasizing "understanding" and "learn".*

? What should we ask for? *Read the verse again, if necessary. Understanding.*

God wants us to study His word, to understand it better, so we will learn more about Him, about Jesus, about heaven, and about hell. He wants us to study His Word.

? In this verse His Word is called His commandments. His Word and His Commandments mean the same thing. What do they mean? What book are they talking about? *Hold up your Bible to give them a hint. The Bible!*

God wants us to understand His Word so we can know Him better. The Bible tells us about God. Isn't it great to think that we can know God, the one who created us just by reading His Word? God gave us the Bible so we can know about Him and do what He says. What a special gift! I am glad I can read so I may read God's perfect Word.

? Do any of you know how to read yet? *Let the children answer.*

Many of you will learn to read soon.

? Do you like to read books with your mommy and daddy? *Let the children answer.*

? Refer to the Flip Chart picture. What is this little girl doing? *Reading with her father.*

? And what is she reading? *The Bible!*

That's right. She may just be learning how to read. And she probably can't read the Bible all by herself yet. But someone can read the Bible to her, right?

? Who could you get to read the Bible to you? *Allow for answers.*

The Bible seems like a really big book doesn't it? But it is a wonderful book. And the more we read the Bible, the more we know about who God is. God wants us to read the Bible and study it so we can know Him!

➤ Musical instruments, marching, and motions can be added to this section to add interest and help learning.

SONG

Now let's sing a new song about reading our Bible. We will sing it a few times to help you learn. I need you to clap (or stomp or both) at just the right time. OK? Let's stand up to sing this song. Sing "Oh, Be Sure to Read the Bible." The lyrics are at the back of this Teacher Guide. They can also be found on the song page of the Flip Chart. If time allows, sing the Proverbs 30:5 Memory Verse song and the songs from last week.



Bible Pass

We are going to play a game now.

MATERIALS

- Brown paper bags
- Paper Bible to put in one bag

INSTRUCTIONS

Everyone listen carefully. Each of you will be given a brown paper bag. Do not open it! I will start to sing the songs we just sang but with a twist! As I sing, pass your bag to the person next to you on your right (point to the right) and when I stop, everyone open your bag. One of the bags has God's Word

inside! Whoever gets it, gets to read what it says to the class—with my help, of course!

It is our memory verse! Repeat this giving several children the opportunity to get the bag with the Bible in it.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God wants us to read and study His Word so we can know more about Him.

? How can we know God better? *By reading and studying God's Word.*

OK. Everyone sit down. We are going to move back to our seats and make a Bible we can read to someone at home! *Oversee children going back to their seats.*



Take Home Bible

It will look like this when we're finished.

Show a finished sample of the Take Home Bible. The inside will have Proverbs 30:5. That's our memory verse. I want you to color it very nicely and then we will help you staple it inside your "Bible" cover and decorate it.

It is good to take God's Word and read it! Reading the Bible helps us to know God! God wants us to study His Word!

MATERIALS

- One Take Home Bible coloring sheet for each student
- Construction paper
- Stapler
- Crayons
- Glue sticks
- Decorations (stickers, sequins, yarn, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONS

Students will color the Bible verse. They will then assemble this sheet onto a piece of construction paper by stapling and folding both pages to make their own "Bible" with the memory verse inside. Depending on your class, you may want to staple the verse inside the construction paper cover before class starts. Give each student the sheets to color and/or decorate.

Color the memory verse inside and decorate the cover of your Take Home Bible.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Each of you have a little Bible with our Bible verse inside. The Bible is God's Word to us, and He wants us know what He says in it.

? **What does God want us to do with His Word?**
Read and study His Word so we can know Him better.

The more we read and study His Word, the more we'll know about God! And He is amazing!



Memory Verse/Snack

Proverbs 30:5 Every Word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

After thanking God for your snack, review the memory verse with the children while enjoying the snack for the day. You may want to use the snack as incentive to recite and/or repeat the memory verse.

Use the Memory Verse page in the Flip Chart. Sing the song with them. Explain the verse to the children as you go over the verse together. Say the verse and point at each picture several times. Ask the children if anyone wants to try to say it on their own.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

God wants us to know as much as we can about Him. That is why He has given us His Word, the Bible. When we read and study God's Word, we know more of who God is and what He is like. It is important to learn how to read so you can read the Bible for yourselves.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

A lot of people think the Bible is just too hard to understand. It is such a big book. And it can be very difficult to understand. They don't even want to read it. But God wants us to know His Word and to study it. You can start that now by asking others to read it and explain it to you. It's really not that hard. And you will love it once you start!

Did you know that when you pray, you are talking to God? Let's talk to God now.

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



Group Prayer Time

- Thank God for sending His Son Jesus
- Praise God for giving us His Word
- Ask God to give us understanding of His Word

Do you still have more time? Review the past lessons using the Flip Chart, add another coloring page, recite and review the current and past memory verses, sing more songs, bring out play dough. Keep the children occupied with intentional, God-centered activities until their parents come to pick them up.

Song Sheet

OH BE SURE TO READ THE BIBLE

(To the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")

Oh be sure to read the Bible every day.

(If you're happy and you know it clap your hands.)

Clap clap or stomp stomp.

Oh be sure to read the Bible every day.

(If you're happy and you know it clap your hands.)

Clap clap or stomp stomp.

For God's Word is what we learn,

(If you're happy and you know it,)

From our sins it helps us turn.

(Then your face will surely show it.)

Oh be sure to read the Bible every day!

(If you're happy and you know it clap your hands!)

Clap clap or stomp stomp.

PROVERBS 30:5 MEMORY VERSE

(To the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush")

Proverbs 30:5! (Shout!)

Every word of God is pure,

(Here we go round the mulberry bush,)

Stand up when saying "God is pure."

God is pure, (The mulberry bush,)

Sit down when saying "God is pure."

God is pure. (The mulberry bush.)

Stand up when saying "God is pure."

He is a shield to those who put,

(Here we go round the mulberry bush,)

Put your arm out in front of your body like a hook.

Who put their trust in Him.

(So early in the morning.)

Point finger up.

Proverbs 30:5! (Shout!)