



The Book – Lesson 4
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THE BOOK

Week 4: How Do I Study the Bible?

Bible: Joshua 1:8; Proverbs 4:20–22; Matthew 3:1-11

Bottom Line: Reading the Bible is the best way to know God.

SUPPLIES

Opening Game: Cut pool noodles in half. Have enough for one half to be given to every two preteens in the group.

Teach: Sword. The bigger and more realistic the better, but a light saber will do as well.

Small Group: Bean bag, 5 colored poker chips per team, tape on the floor set up as a tic-tac-toe board, 9 locations on separate pieces of paper (Home x3, School x2, Park, Mall, Choose Your Own, When Traveling), one Bible per preteen.

OPENING GAME: Noodle Hide and Seek

How to play:

Divide your group into pairs. Give each pair one-half noodle. Tell them on go, the person with the noodle will have to close their eyes and spin around in a circle 3 times. As they do that, their partner has to run away and try and hide or at least run as far away from the other person as possible. When the spinner is done spinning, they then find and chase their partner and try and hit them with the noodle.

Once they hit their partner with the noodle, they hand the noodle to their partner, who must now close their eyes and spin around 3 times while they run off and “hide”.

Continue this game back and forth. The more groups going at a time, the crazier and fun it can be. After a couple of minutes, you can have all the preteens switch partners. Just make sure to partner a noodle holder with a non-noodle holder.

After the game, say: Like in the game we just played, we can sometimes get “hit” with the truth of the Bible. A verse really sticks out to us and it is God’s way of speaking to us. Also, we often play hide & seek with God. We live our way instead of God’s way, like we are hiding from God. The Bible can help us realize when we are off track, and bring us back to living God’s way.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What was the longest you avoided getting hit?
2. What do you think it means to get “hit” with the truth of the Bible? How can that be a good thing?
3. What does it mean to play hide & seek with God? Why is it important that we avoid doing that?

TEACH

[Slide 1 – Cover]

Welcome back! I am so excited to get into the lesson today, because over the past 3 weeks, we have been talking about the book of all books – the Bible.

Each week, we've tried to answer a question you might have about the Bible.

Week 1 we asked, "How do I know the Bible is true?"

Someone want to answer that for me? *(take responses)*

- *It never contradicts itself. (Says one thing then says another.)*
- *Nothing has ever been proven wrong from it. (In fact, it's historically perfect.)*
- *It predicted things correctly, 100% of the time.*

Great, and then in Week 2 we asked, "How is the Bible broken up?"

Someone want to give me an answer for that? *(take responses; lots of possibilities, but make sure you say that it's one continuous adventure story written by God)*

And then last week, we asked, "Why should I read the Bible?" And why should you? *(take responses; for directing, correcting, and training)*

So, you might be saying, "The Bible is important, it's useful, and it's one giant adventure story, but I don't even know how to read it. It's huge! Where do I start?"

Well, we shall answer that. Because, our question for today is...

[Slide 2 – "How do I study the Bible?"]

Here's the thing. I think we've established pretty well that the Bible isn't just some ordinary book. And we shouldn't just treat it like it's an ordinary book. You aren't going to use the Hunger Games, Percy Jackson, or Harry Potter to help give you direction, correction, and training.

The Bible is meant to be studied and understood. There is a great verse in Joshua 1:8 where God instructs Joshua about the Book of Law—which was the only part of the Bible they had at that time. God says, "Keep this book of Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

So, studying the Bible is really important! Let's look at 3 easy steps that will help you to study the Bible to grow closer to God:

[Slide 3 – 3 Easy Steps to Studying the Bible]

[Slide 4 – 1. Read it!]

Step #1 is to **read it**. I know this is being “master of the obvious”, but you can’t learn from something that you don’t actually pick up and read. More on this in a moment.

[Slide 5 – 2. Understand it!]

Step #2 is to **understand it**. If you read something and then have no idea what it is saying, then it’s not going to do you any good. It’s like me when I read any science book... it might as well be in another language. I don’t understand a thing!

[Slide 6 – 3. Apply it!]

Step #3 is to **apply it**. Even if you’ve read it, and understood it, it does you no good if you don’t apply it to your life. If you don’t let it grow you closer to God.

Over the next two weeks, we will talk more about how to **understand** and **apply the Bible**. However, this week let’s simply concentrate on **READ IT**.

Did you know that you can read the Bible on a phone, Kindle, iPad, or just about any other device? The Bible has been written in more languages than any other book in history, including hundreds of versions in English. All of this to make it super easy for you to read it, and yet how often do we?

Think about it, how many times in the last month have you actually picked up your Bible and read it? Let’s not count here at church, but on your own -10 times, 5 times, once... never?

Here’s what you really need to understand:

[Slide 7 – Reading the Bible is one of the best ways to get to know God.]

The Bible is God’s words to us; it’s a way that we grow closer to God. Let me put it like this. I need two preteens who are really close friend. (*Get two volunteers to come up front.*)

So, you two are close friends. How did you two get to be such close friends? What kind of things did you do to become close friends? (*Lead them to answer: hung out, spent time with each other, had fun together, etc.*)

So, basically what you are saying is that to become close friends, you spend time with one another, and did things together.

(Dismiss students back to their seats)

See, that’s exactly what it’s like with God and us. It’s not that God needs our friendship, but He wants us to spend time with Him, so that we can grow closer to

Him. He wants us to get to know Him, to find joy and comfort in Him. God delights in us when we hang with him.

Maybe you've seen those shirts that say, Jesus is my Homeboy . Now, that's a little crazy, but the shirts emphasize the point that God wants to be our friend.

Read Proverbs 4:20–22 (or have a preteen read it out loud)

[Slide 8 – Proverbs 4:20–22]

Proverbs 4:20–22 says, “My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart for they are life to those who find them and health to one’s whole body.”

If you want to get close to God, hang out with Him. Listen to His words. The best way to do that is to actually READ the Bible. Spend the time reading the words that He wrote down for us.

Now, I know. You guys are so busy already with school, homework, sports, playing video games and watching TV. When are you going to find time to read the Bible?

A lot of adults struggle with taking time to read the Bible, too. They do the same thing and make excuses about being too busy or not knowing where to start reading. We know how important it is and yet we don't take the time.

Here's the final thing I want you all to understand.

The Bible talks about how we are in an everyday battle. It's a battle between good and evil. And the Bible says that when you give your life to Jesus, you jump on the good side with God. God actually gives you these tools to help you fight against evil. It's called the armor of God. And we all get it.

Now, most of the parts of the armor God gives us are for defense; to protect against evil. They are things like the shield of faith, and the breastplate of righteousness.

But did you know that God gives you one weapon, one weapon to fight with.

(Pull out a sword)

It's a sword. *(Do some swings, have fun with it.)*

Now, obviously you don't get an actual physical sword like this one to fight with, but what you do get to battle evil with is this. *(Hold up your Bible.)*

This is your spiritual sword. It's your one weapon. It's a weapon because it's truth. 100% of it. **The Bible is the greatest weapon you could ever imagine.**

[Slide 9 – The Bible is the greatest weapon you could ever imagine.]

Now, this doesn't mean that you should go around whacking people with your Bible.

What it means is that because this is filled with truth, 100% truth, you can use the words in it to help give others direction, and correction, and training.

But if I gave you an actual sword and didn't teach you how to use it—if you didn't take the time to learn the best way to fight with it—then it wouldn't do you any good.

The Bible is the same way. You have to read it to know what's in it. You have to become a master at it.

Let's say a friend comes up to you and tells you that the earth was created from a giant explosion billions of years ago. Unless you knew what the Bible says about how the world was created, then you wouldn't know the truth. You wouldn't be able to use the truth of the Bible as your sword to defeat that wrong statement.

And that, my friends, is why it is so important to take time to READ your Bible: to get to know God better; to be able to use its truth as a weapon, to defend God and defend what's right.

[Slide 10 – Cover]

[Pray and Dismiss to small groups]

SMALL GROUP

Activity: Tic-Tac-Bible

Supplies: Bean bag, 5 colored poker chips per team, tape on the floor set up as a tic-tac-toe board, 9 locations on separate pieces of paper (Home x3, School x2, Park, Mall, Choose Your Own, When Traveling), one Bible per preteen.

Before the activity, discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think it's important for you personally to read the Bible?
- How is taking time to read the Bible important to your relationship with God?

Say: One of the best ways to make sure you take time to read the Bible is to figure out a specific time, and even a specific place.

- When are the best times during your day that you could take time to read the Bible? Is there a special place that you might be able to go to read?

What to do: Set up a tic-tac-toe board on the floor using tape, placing each of the 9 locations in each of the 9 squares. Tape out one line on the ground as a place to throw the beanbag from.

Divide your group into two equal teams. Have teams play a basic game of tic-tac-toe by one team at a time choosing a player to toss the bean bag into one of the board squares.

If the bean bag lands in one of the squares, then that student must list a specific way that they could read the Bible at that location. Once their answer is given, place their team marker in that square.

If the bean bag doesn't land in a square, or lands in a space already marked, then it is simply the other teams turn.

Play until one team gets 3 in a row, or until it's a tie game.

After the activity, say: We've come up with some good ideas of when and where we can read our Bible. Basically, there aren't any excuses for us not to read the Bible.

Here is one way I think could be the easiest place and way to remember. It's called the Bedside Challenge.

One of the easiest ways that I have found to make sure I read the Bible everyday is to keep my Bible open right next to my bed. Then if I read it at night, I leave it opened up for when I wake up in the morning. It's always open next to my bed.

For those of you that have never read the Bible, or aren't sure where to start. A great place is to learn about Jesus while He was on earth. You can find that story in the Gospels, starting with Matthew. Maybe each day, you just read one chapter in Matthew.

In fact, each of you take a few minutes and read **Matthew 3:1-11**. Look up those verses in your Bible and read them to yourself. Then, we'll take a few minutes and talk about their meaning. The reason we are doing this is to give us some practice reading the Bible for ourselves.

Have students read **Matthew 3:1-11**. Then, ask the following questions:

- Which verses stuck out to you the most? Why? What do you think is God trying to say in those verses?