

CHRISTIAN PRACTICES WITH CHILDREN
Session 7: Bible Study

Resources

Audience	This class is designed for parents of children ages 3- 11.
Setting	Sunday afternoon Lunch and Learn Series
Time Frame	Approximately 1 hour class, 12:15 – 1:30
Environment	Fellowship Hall, round tables, chairs, dry erase board, CD player, DVD player and TV.
Leader Preparation	Bring laptop, <i>The Children's Illustrated Bible</i> , <i>The Pilgrim Book of Bible Stories</i> , <i>The Family Story Bible</i> , and <i>The NIV Adventure Bible</i> ; <i>What's What in the Bible</i> , <i>If You'd Been There in Bible Times</i> , <i>Come Worship With Me</i> ; and <i>A Journey through the Church Year</i> ; <i>Moses</i> , <i>Old Turtle</i> , <i>At Break of Day</i> , <i>Thank You World</i> , and <i>In Our Image: God's First Creatures</i> ; <i>Harper Collins Study Bible</i> , <i>The Rhyme Time Bible</i> , <i>Storybook</i> , and <i>Dog Encyclopedia</i> , Andy Griffith DVD episode #93; maps of Mexico, Bolivia, France, Saudi Arabia, India, and China; trash bags; and closing liturgy.
Study Focus	Practicing Bible Study with Children

**Invitation
(4 minutes)**

Listen to Mercy Me sing *Word of God Speak* and watch accompanying video.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JK_6osCH74

**Encountering the Biblical Word
(15 minutes)**

“Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Watch this clip from PBS documentary on Martin Luther:
http://www.pbs.org/cgi-registry/mediaplayer/videoplayer.cgi?playeraddress=videoplayer.cgi;media=%2Fmartinluther%2FLuther_world56.rm%2C%2Fmartinluther%2FLuther_world220.rm;title=The%20World%20of%20Luther;undefined=

Repeat Dr. Susan Karant-Nunn’s last few sentences:

“Now devotion means also interest in matters religious. Thus when Luther opens his mouth and says, as it were, ‘Say, we’ve got to return to the scripture.’ He may be able to divert his audience from thinking in terms of paintings and confraternities to thinking about the superior, the superiority, the superior validity of scripture for measuring what they do and what they believe.” Dr. Susan Karant-Nunn, Director of the Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation Studies, University of Arizona

Tell this story:

“Hans-Ruedi Weber opens his book *Experiments with Bible Study* by relating a story from East Africa:

A simple woman always walked around with a bulky Bible. Never would she part from it. Soon the villagers began to tease her, ‘Why always the Bible? There are so many books you could read!’ Yet the woman kept on living with her Bible, neither disturbed nor angered by all the teasing. Finally, one day she knelt down in the midst of those who laughed at her. Holding the Bible high above her head, she said with a big smile, ‘Yes, of course there are many books which I could read. But there is only one book which reads me!’

This, Weber goes on to say, ‘is the whole secret of Bible study. People start out by listening to an old message, by analyzing ancient texts, by reading—naively or critically—the biblical documents of antiquity. They experience this exercise as dull or instructive, as something Christians ought to do or something they have been led to do by their own...interests. Yet a mysterious change of roles can then occur. Listening, analyzing, and reading, students of the Bible meet a living reality which begins to challenge them...This divine presence starts to question, judge, and guide us. Perhaps gradually, perhaps quite suddenly, the book which was the object of our reading and study becomes a subject which reads us.”¹

I think most of us would agree that we want for our children to be wise and full of sense, and to understand the superior validity of scripture for measuring what we do and what we believe. So, how shall we listen, analyze and read the Bible with children?

Today we are going to explore practicing Bible study with children.

Encountering Bible Study

I will have four tables set up. In one large group we will go to table #1 and encounter a Bible study. Then, we will explore the materials on tables 2, 3, and 4. On table #1 I will have a Bible study plan using the different types of materials

¹ Quoted in: Dykstra, Craig. *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practice*. 2nd Edition Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press. 2005. p. 151-152.

that will be displayed on the other tables. On table #2 I will have various children's Bibles and Children's Bible story books (*The Children's Illustrated Bible*, *The Pilgrim Book of Bible Stories*, *The Family Story Bible*, and *The NIV Adventure Bible*); on table #3 I will have informational books and maps (*What's What in the Bible*, *If You'd Been There in Bible Times*, *Come Worship With Me: and A Journey through the Church Year*); on table #4 I will have midrash stories (*Moses*, *Old Turtle*, *At Break of Day*, *In Our Image: God's First Creatures*, *How Big Is God?*, and *The Flood, the Ark, and the Rainbow, Noah's Ark*).

Encountering Bible Study—the Plan (30 minutes)

We will each get a copy of a weekly Bible study plan and together we will complete the plan.

The Plan

(I will lead this study as if I am the parent and ask the participants to play the role of a child.)

Monday

Read Genesis 1 aloud in the *Harper Collins Study Bible*.

Ask your child to close her eyes while you are reading and image each new day. Ask her to think about what each new day smells like? tastes like? feels like? sounds like? looks like? Investigate the outdoors during the day to discover all that you can of your child's touches, sounds, sights, tastes, and smells.

(I will read aloud Genesis 1 from the *Harper Collins Study Bible*, asking participants to close their eyes and listen, feel, hear, taste, and smell. We will take a walk outside in groups of two and pay attention to God's creation using our senses.)

Tuesday

Read Genesis 1 aloud in the *Children's Illustrated Bible*.

Look at and talk about the pictures at the bottom of the page.

Ask: What do you see on day one? Day two? Day three? Day four? Day five? Day six? What day is your favorite? What makes day ? your favorite? What day is your least favorite? What makes day ? your least favorite?

(I will read aloud Genesis 1 in the *Children's Illustrated Bible*. I will hold open the book for all to see and point out each day's illustration. I will ask the group to choose their favorite and least favorite; we will break into groups of two and discuss our favorite and least favorite day of creation.)

Wednesday

Read Genesis 1 aloud in *The Rhyme Time Bible Storybook*.

Ask your child to pick out his favorite fish or bird or plant or animal. Explore with your child his favorite fish or bird or plant or animal. (Look online, in encyclopedias, visit a nature museum and talk to a naturalist, walk through the park, visit a garden, look through a hymnal to see if there are any hymns that reference his fish, bird, plant, or animal, consider other songs that celebrate his favorite fish, bird, plant, or animal, look in magazines, watch a nature program, look through a concordance and see if his favorite fish, bird, plant, or animal is mentioned in any other part of the Bible, etc...) This can be as elaborate or as simple as you have time and energy.

(I will read Genesis 1 aloud in *The Rhyme Time Bible Storybook*. We will explore my favorite animal, the dog. I will bring in pictures of my dogs; we will watch a clip from an Andy Griffith episode #93 Dogs, dogs, dogs; and we will glance at my *Dog Encyclopedia*.)

Thursday

Read *In Our Image: God's First Creatures* written by Nancy Sohn Swartz and illustrated by Melanie Hall. Let your child hold the book and turn the pages and as you get to the pages where the animals consider the gifts they have to share ask her, "What gifts does the tiger have to share? The lamb? The clam? The ant? The whale? The cheetah? The snail? The lizard? The bee? The swan? The chimpanzee? The ostrich? The giraffe? The fish? The birds? The eagle? The nightingale? The owl? The hawk? The dolphin? The shark? The moon? The sun? the stars? The trees? What gifts does God share? Ask your child what gifts she has to share with tigers, lambs, clams, ants, whales, cheetahs, snails, lizards, bees, swans, chimpanzees, ostriches, giraffes, fishes, birds, eagles, nightingales, owls, hawks, dolphins, sharks, the moon, the sun, stars, trees, God. Make two lists, one that contains her gifts to give and the other that contains the gifts others share with her. Write or draw a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication, thanking God for the gifts we get and asking God for help to share the gifts we have.

(I will read aloud *In Our Image: God's First Creatures*. We will make a list of the gifts to us from creation and God, and in another column we will make a list of our gifts to share with creation and God. Using our list, we will write a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication. We will say our prayer together, out loud.)

Friday

Read aloud *Thank You World* written by Alice B. McGinty and illustrated by Wendy Anderson Halperin. Let your child hold the book and turn the pages. Stop on each page and ask your child to describe the different places—notice the different trees, people, grasses, animals, colors, plants, clothes, foods, birds, weather, flowers, mothers, families, etc... Explore these places—Mexico, Bolivia, France, Saudi Arabia, India, and China—on a map.

(I will read aloud *Thank You World*, asking participants to pay close attention to the particulars of each setting. I will bring in maps of Mexico, Bolivia, France, Saudi Arabia, India, and China. I will ask if anyone in the group has ever been to any of these places. If the answer is “yes,” I will ask them to describe their experience. I can share my husband’s reminiscences of Mexico if needed.)

Saturday

Read aloud Genesis 1 in the *Harper Collins Study Bible*. Ask your child to close her eyes while you are reading and image each new night. Ask her to think about what each new night smells like? tastes like? feels like? sounds like? looks like? Investigate the outdoors during the evening when it’s dark to discover all that you can of your child’s touches, sounds, sights, tastes, and smells.

(I will ask participants to close their eyes while I read aloud Genesis 1 in the *Harper Collins Study Bible*. I will ask the participants to share their imaginings of nighttime feels, sounds, sights, tastes, and smells in groups of two.)

Sunday

Read aloud Genesis 1 in the *Family Storybook Bible*. Take a walk through your neighborhood and pick up trash together, taking care of God’s creation. While walking together, take a memory journey with your child back through his week of Genesis 1. Share your favorite memories, ask for his favorite memories. Talk about your questions; ask him if he has any questions.

(I will read aloud Genesis 1 in the *Family Storybook Bible*. We will walk around the church yard, pick up trash, and discuss our remembrances of our Genesis 1 study.)

Responding Out Of (10 minutes)

Invite participants to thoroughly investigate all the other tables. Encourage them to consider all the different kinds of tools for Bible study.

Come back together as one large group. Stress the importance of knowing the difference between the scripture verses stories. Ask: “What other kinds of tools or ideas do you have for studying the Bible with children?”

Closing Liturgy

One: Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;

Many: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

One: I will open my mouth in a parable;

Many: I will utter dark sayings from old,

One: things that we have heard and known,

Many: that our ancestors have told us.

One: We will not hide them from their children;

**Many: we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD,
and his might,**

All: and the wonders that he has done.²

*This series of lessons was prepared by Union-PSCE student Kim Lee, MACE,
Fall 2009.*

² Adapted from Psalm 78:1-4 (NRSV).