

The Bible 101: An Introduction, or Refresher

Welcome to a 4-part online project offered by St. Peter's Church Faith Formation! Although designed for families of children receiving their first Bible, anyone can use these sessions to get to know, or simply revisit, the written word of God.

What Next? Family Bible Time



If those three words make you nervous, you are not alone! Many parents and individuals feel unequipped and unprepared for regular Bible study, but you can absolutely start a tradition of Bible study in your own family life (especially if you've made it this far in our series!). We will give you a few models of study to get you started...try a few and see which ones work best for you. Also, relax! This isn't meant to be a class or formal

session—that's why we changed "Bible study" to "Bible time"—it's just a conversation. Start by leaving your Bible in an accessible place at home—maybe even on the coffee table or nightstand. For younger children, include a children's Bible and other faith stories in the regular reading rotation at playtime or bedtime. Identify a few times you and your family can take 5, 15 or 30 minutes to spend looking at a passage and talking it over. Maybe this is once a week after dinner, or on specific occasions, or during seasons like Advent or Lent. Be forgiving of yourselves and your fellow participants, but persevere!

Where to Start?

You can start anywhere—don't feel obliged to start at the beginning of Genesis and go chronologically! You can pick a favorite Bible story and go from there, or use the lectionary (Bible reading schedule) starting on page 889 in the Book of Common Prayer.

The lectionary lists four different passages for each week: an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, a New Testament reading, and a passage from a Gospel. Ask a family member to choose one of these, in full or in part—rotate the selection privilege each week to keep it fresh! Readings and discussion ideas are also found on the *Taking Faith Home* page found in the bulletin.

Some Online Resources

The site growchristians.org has quickly become one of my favorites, especially for offering advice and ideas for real-life family faith formation. Here are links to a few of their more recent posts specifically about families and Bible time:

- [The Bible is full of people making bad choices, and that's good for us](#) by Wendy Claire Barrie reminds us that God uses flawed and frequently unwilling (sound familiar?) people for his work.
- [What if all we did was tell our kids the story?](#) by Ben Irwin reflects that a simple approach is often a good one.
- [My teens won't read the Bible](#) by Miriam McKenney is the beginning of a series describing her family's new Bible study—it's not always smooth, but it's still going!

Find us online: www.stpetersfreehold.org

Two Bible Time Examples...

You can use any Bible for these two methods: a children's Bible, an illustrated Bible, a more traditional Bible or a newer translation such as The Message.



The SOAP Study

Scripture: write or read a verse or two that is meaningful to you.

Observation: what was interesting in this passage? What did you learn? What was God saying to you?

Application: how can you apply this piece of Scripture to your life?

Prayer: respond to God in prayer! Give thanks for his Word and ask him to apply this verse in your life.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina ('divine reading') aims to treat Scripture not as text to be studied but rather as the Living Word. It is a mindful approach that can be used by Christians of all ages to engage with short passages of Scripture.

Choose one verse or short passage from the Bible:

Lectio (Read): What does this passage say? What do you think are the important parts?

Meditatio (Think): What does this passage say to me, today? How is it relevant to my life?

Oratio (Pray): What can I say to God in response to this passage from his Word?

Contemplatio (Rest): How do I think this verse can change my heart, mind, and life?

TIP:

Be realistic about a time limit. Smaller children might be done in a few minutes but circle back to it a few times over the next day or two. Older children can start with 15 minutes—you might be surprised when the conversation lasts even longer!

Some topics will resonate more than others—don't be discouraged if this week is less than enthusiastic—keep at it!