Bible Study:

_**Bible Study is the practice of reading and studying Holy Scripture and discerning how God is speaking to us through the sacred Word.**_

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight.

**HEBREWS 4:12-13**

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

**2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17**
The Christian Bible, the Old Testament and New Testament, is the story of God and God’s people. Instead of being a single uniform book, the Bible is a collection of writing by people through the ages, revealing God’s story of creation, destruction, redemption and deliverance, over and over again. It is full of drama, complex characters, lament, praise, celebration, heartbreak, instruction, success and failure - all the things that real people leading real lives experience. We call the Bible, Holy Scripture and the Word of God, because “God inspired their human authors and because God still speaks to us through the Bible” (BCP 853).

The Bible is comprised of the Old Testament and New Testament; other books, called the Apocrypha, are often included in the Bible. The Old Testament begins with creation stories, continues with the birth of monotheism among the inhabitants of ancient Israel and moves throughout their history as descendants of Abraham, the chosen people of God. The Old Testament contains four distinct sections - the Torah, History, Wisdom Writings and Prophets - in part, prose, poetry, myth, proverbs, psalms and law. It is a history, not in the sense of verified dates and facts, but in the truth of the understanding that God is working through a chosen people.

The New Testament contains the four canonized Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), telling the good news of Jesus Christ. In addition to the Gospels, the book of Acts details the formation of the early Christian church and the letters to early churches offers encouragement and instruction. At the end of the New Testament, Revelation is a recording of John’s vision of the Apocalypse and revelation of God’s plan for the future. Depending on the version of the Bible, you may also find a third section called the Apocrypha, which contains additional ancient texts.

The Bible consists of 66 books, 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. The Old Testament began as oral tradition, told and retold through the ages. In the first millennia, around 1000 BCE, these oral traditions began to be recorded. They became canon (a rule or measure) around 100 CE in response to Christianity’s rise.

The New Testament also began as oral history. There is little historical evidence outside the Gospels of Jesus’ life and ministry. The events of his life, his ministry, his death and resurrection were initially shared orally by his disciples and those who joined The Way, the early name for the Jesus movement.
Paul, a first century follower of Jesus, began writing two decades after Jesus’ death. The Gospel of Mark, the earliest Gospel, was written roughly ten to fifteen years after Paul began writing. Not until 397 AD were the books of the New Testament settled upon as we know them.

Not surprisingly, many different translations of our Bible exist. The original texts were written in the languages of the people of that time and place, including Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The Bible of the middle ages was written in Latin, as a translation from the original writings. This *Latin Vulgate* began to be printed in the fifteenth century, after Gutenberg’s invention of the metal letter printing press. Unfortunately, many people in Christendom did not speak or understand Latin.

In the early sixteenth century, Martin Luther insisted the Bible be written in the common language of the people reading and hearing it. He was not the first reformer to understand the importance of being able to access Holy Scripture without the need of an intermediary. John Wycliffe, an Oxford theologian, is credited with completing the first Middle English version of the Bible in 1380. Today, there are over a hundred different English translations, all with slightly different wording and emphases. Different translations speak to different people, and study is usually enhanced by reading more than one source.

The Bible is a living, breathing holy book for people of faith. It not only tells stories of God’s revelations to ancient people but it also speaks to us today. Their stories are our stories. If you delve deeply into scripture, you may find that the truth that lies at the heart of the story is your truth, too. The facts may be different, but the truth remains the same. God is with us, always.

**NOTES:**
LEARN AT HOME

TERMINOLOGY

APOCRYPHA – the non-canonical books and letters included in some Bibles between the Old and New Testament. (See also Canon)

AUTOGRAPHS – the original texts of the Bible written by either the author’s own hand or by a scribe under their supervision. No original autographs of the Bible have been discovered yet. (See also Manuscript, Translation)


CANONS – the basis for religious beliefs, precepts, and practices. Originally meaning rule, the words canon, canonized, and canonization are used in reference to scripture and the structure of the church.

CHAPTERS – the organization of each book of the Bible, which allows the reader to locate a particular passage. The chapter is the first number after the book (ie. Matthew 25 or Genesis 3). Chapters were not introduced into the Bible until 1238 AD. (See also Verse)

COVENANT – a promise or relationship initiated by God, to which a body of people respond in faith. The Old Covenant is the one given by God to the Hebrew people. The New Covenant is the new relationship with God given by Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to the apostles and through them, to all who believe in him.

MANUSCRIPTS – copies of original autographs recorded onto papyrus or parchment. Most books of the Bible that have been discovered are manuscripts.


OLD TESTAMENT – a collection of 39 books about the God who creates, frees people from slavery, and calls them to a Holy life. The stories of the Old Testament speak to who God is and who we are as God’s people. The Old Testament has four main sections: the Torah, History Narratives, Wisdom Writings, and the Prophets. The Old Testament became canon in c. 250 BC.
(HOLY) SCRIPTURE – the books of the Old and New Testaments, commonly called the Bible. The word scripture derives from the Latin word “scriptus” and refers to writings that are considered authoritative, foundational, and sacred. In addition to Christian scripture you also have Jewish Scripture, Muslim Scripture, Hindu Scripture, etc.

TORAH – the first 5 books of the Old Testament, also called “Pentateuch” or “Five Books of Moses.” The Torah provides foundational understandings, theologies, and doctrines for both Jews and Christians.

TRANSLATIONS – Bible texts translated of the original or a copy of an earlier translation of the Bible from the original language: Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic. We have numerous translations from both the Old and New Testament books with are over 100 different translations of the Bible in English and 2,000 different languages worldwide.

VERSE – a group of words that helps the reader identify a particular phrase, sentence, or thought in the Bible. The verse number is found after the chapter (ie. Matthew 25:10 or Genesis 1:3). Verses were introduced into the Bible in 1551 AD.

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis</th>
<th>1 Kings</th>
<th>Ecclesiastes</th>
<th>Obadiah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>2 Kings</td>
<td>Song of Solomon</td>
<td>Jonah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus</td>
<td>1 Chronicles</td>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>Micah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>2 Chronicles</td>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Nahum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuteronomy</td>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>Esther</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Samuel</td>
<td>Psalms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Samuel</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>2 Corinthians</th>
<th>1 Timothy</th>
<th>2 Peter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Galatians</td>
<td>2 Timothy</td>
<td>1 John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Ephesians</td>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>2 John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Philippians</td>
<td>Philemon</td>
<td>3 John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts</td>
<td>Colossians</td>
<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>Jude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans</td>
<td>1 Thessalonians</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians</td>
<td>2 Thessalonians</td>
<td>1 Peter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN ESSENTIALS
Copyright © 2019 (TECv1) Christ Church Charlotte, NC
SMALL GROUP

GATHER

As participants gather, facilitators welcome participants and reflect on questions from last session and review individual practices from “Build it into your life.” Once all participants have arrived the group transitions.

CENTER

Hold silence for 1 minute or more to allow participants and facilitators the opportunity to center, prepare, and focus on the Christian Essentials Bible Study.

PRAY

Read aloud by a member of the group.

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

3
CHECK-IN

Check-in using one or more of the following: (20 minutes)

1. Share a response or question related to NARRATIVE or TERMINOLOGY.

2. Facilitators pick a DISCUSSION question from Page 10.

3. Is there anything you would like to share with the group that is on your heart or mind?

BIBLE STUDY VIDEO

Use the space below to capture thoughts, ideas, and questions provoked by the video.

NOTES:
SMALL GROUP

REFLECTIONS

Read aloud by different voices (5 minutes).

We read scripture in order to be refreshed in our memory and understanding of the story within which we ourselves are actors, to be reminded where it has come from and where it is going to, and hence what our own part within it ought to be.  
- N.T. WRIGHT, Scripture and Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today.

There's a lovely Hasidic story of a rabbi who always told his people that if they studied the Torah, it would put Scripture on their hearts. One of them asked, "Why on our hearts, and not in them?" The rabbi answered, "Only God can put Scripture inside. But reading sacred text can put it on your heart, and then when your hearts break, the holy words will fall inside."
- ANNE LAMOTT, Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith

Our desire to know more, read more and study more can be another expression of our culture and its acquisitive nature. Knowing God, not knowing more, is the goal.

- RICHARD ROHR

JOURNAL & SHARE

Choose one of the prompts below, journal your response, and share. (10 minutes)

Recall a time or event in your life when you turned to scripture for guidance.

What is your favorite Bible story, verse, or character and why?
SMALL GROUP

DISCUSSION

Facilitators will select one or more prompts for small group discussion. (25 minutes)

1. Share a thought or idea from the video, the reflections or a journal prompt.

2. What story, verse, or character in the Bible gives you hope or confusion?

3. Share a tradition or family story that has been passed down from generation to generation.

4. Share your favorite Bible verse and explain why it is meaningful to you.
SMALL GROUP

BUILD AS A GROUP

Facilitator will select and lead one of the practices to be experienced by the group (20 minutes)

1. **BIBLE STUDY**

Pick one of the passages (or one selected by the facilitators).

- Genesis 2:4-25  
  The second creation story in Genesis
- 2 Kings 2:6-15  
  Elijah and Elisha parting the Jordan River
- Matthew 9:35-38  
  The Harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few
- Jeremiah 1:4-9  
  Before I formed you in the womb I knew you

Pick one of the Bible Study methods (See page 14-15 for instructions)

- Lectio Divina
- AEIOU Bible Study Method
- Thematic Focused
- Character Method
- Detective Method

2. **READ A BOOK OF THE BIBLE**

3 John, with 219 words, is the shortest book of the Bible. Read 3 John twice using different translations. Share learning, insights, and applications for your life.

3. **PREPARE FOR SUNDAY**

http://www.lectionarypage.net

1. Read the appointed readings for this coming Sunday as a group.
2. Explore the themes, characters, and stories.
3. How are these readings speaking to you in your life?
4. If you were preaching this Sunday, what would you say?

*Facilitators and/or participants may enjoy www.textweek.com for a diverse set of lectionary resources for study and learning.*
BUILD IT
INTO YOUR LIFE

Select one of the practices below to focus on in the coming week. Journal about your experience.

_____ SUBSCRIBE TO BE INSPIRED

   www.chirstchurchcharlotte.org/goodbook
   Click “Sign Up”

2. Forward Day by Day. Read a daily meditation rooted in scripture.
   www.forwardmovement.org
   Click “Forward Day by Day”

_____ READ SCRIPTURE FOR 7 DAYS

1. Read the Gospel of Matthew (4 chapters every day).
2. Read Psalm 119 (30 verses every day).

_____ ATTEND A BIBLE STUDY

Attend a weekly Bible Study at your parish or inquire about starting one.

_____ MEMORIZE A BIBLE VERSE

Select a Bible verse to memorize this week.

_____ CREATE YOUR OWN PRACTICE

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
CLOSING PRAYER

Read aloud by one of the participants.

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you,
so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills,
that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated unto you;
and then use us, we pray as you will,
and always to your glory and the welfare of your people;
through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYER OF SELF-DEDICATION, Book of Common Prayer Pg. 832

RESOURCES

BOOKS:

The New Oxford Annotated Bible
The Study Bible, NRSV
The Book of Common Prayer 1979
Spiritual Disciplines Handbook, Adele Ahlberg Calhoun
The Jesus Heist, Andrew Doyle
N.T. Wright For Everyone: Bible Study Guides, N.T. Wright
The Reason for God, Tim Keller
10 Minute Talks: 24 Messages Your Students will Love: Jonathan McKee
Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds, Clinton Arnold
Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith, Anne Lamott

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.christchurchcharlotte.org/goodbook
www.bcponline.org
www.episcopalchurch.org
www.dionc.org
www.leighb.com/genesis.htm
http://sites.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis/
www.textweek.com
www.biblegateway.com
www.cac.org

Christ Church Charlotte The Good Book
The Book of Common Prayer
The Episcopal Church
The Diocese of North Carolina
Two creation story comparison chart
Gospel comparison charts
Lectionary Page and resources
Online Bible
Center for Action and Contemplation
BIBLE STUDY METHODS

LECTIO DIVINA
1. Silencio (Prepare)  Be silent and still. Prepare to receive the text.
2. Lectio (Read) Read and note words or phrases that catch your attention.
3. Meditatio (Reflect) What is this text saying to me about my life?
4. Oratio (Respond) What do you feel?
5. Contemplatio (Rest) Yield to the text. Without analyzing or thinking, listen to God.
6. Incarnatio (Live it out) What is God calling you to do?

THEMATIC FOCUSED
1. Read a short Bible passage.
2. Write down all the themes touched on in the story.
3. Draw a heart next to the theme that speaks to your heart.
4. What new thoughts or ideas come to mind?
5. What does this passage move you to do?
6. Consider how you can apply one of your insights into your life today.

CHARACTER FOCUSED
1. Read a Bible passage that has at least 2 characters.
2. Which character do you identify with and why?
3. Explore what you can learn about this character from the passage.
4. Putting yourself in the place of the character, how would you respond? What would you do differently?
5. Which character are you most like / least like in the story?

DETECTIVE METHOD
1. Read a short Bible passage (preferable from one of the Gospels).
2. Let the story take shape in your mind’s eye.
3. Imagine the scene, characters, and the movement of the story.
4. Ask the who, when, where, and what questions.
5. Once you have the facts, interpret the facts.
6. Ask the why questions.
7. Seek the answers individually or as a group.
8. Identify one new thought or idea and share with at least one person today.
AEIOU BIBLE STUDY METHOD

Read a Bible passage then as a group:

“A” – Ask questions
Brainstorm to come up with questions that will help explore the scripture passages. Use who, what, where, when, and why questions. Answer your questions with help from others or outside resources. (Examples: Why was this written? What does this mean?)

“E” – Emphasize key words and phrases
Identify a key phrase or word that captures the heart of the passage for you. Search for key words, patterns, repeated words or phrases, and things that may recur in parallel passages.

“I” – In your own words
Write a brief summary or an overview of the passage in your own words including the major theme(s), idea(s) and/or concept(s).

“O” – Other related Scriptures
List one to three other related scripture passages, examples, stories, illustrations, or contrasting thoughts that come to mind.

“U” – Use what you’ve learned to apply and put into action
Write one way to use what you’ve learned and how you can apply to your life. These can be new or reinforced learned applications.
FOOTNOTES

BIBLE STUDY

1 The New Revised Standard Version, copyright 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.
2 The Book of Common Prayer, Page 853.
4 N.T. Wright, Scripture and Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today
5 Anne Lamott, Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith, Page 73