

Ninth Grade- How do we Read the Bible?

Many believers understand the merits of reading Scripture, and even desire to read it consistently! However, many find themselves avoiding the discipline simply because they don't know where to start. Even more get caught up in the trap of perfectionism, not wanting to attempt reading Scripture unless they know they can do it "perfectly". We want to take time during this session to give students tools to read Scripture on their own, as well as fight the lie that this is a task to master. This is a discipline to delight in!

Introducing the Topic

There is no one right way to read the Bible, and a few of your students may have already found a way that works for them that they really enjoy! So we want to start off by giving everyone a chance to learn from each other!

- Have you ever gotten in a rhythm of reading the Bible? What helped you get in that rhythm?
- Have you found a method of reading the Bible that you like? What do you do?
- What is the hardest part of reading the Bible for you?
- What gets in the way of you reading the Bible consistently?

Scripture Study

During this session, instead of reading through different passages to learn more about a specific topic, we will be diving deep into one passage to teach students what it looks like to read Scripture deeply and enjoy it richly.

-Explain to students that there are lots of different methods or approaches to Bible study, and encourage them to find one that works best for them! Explain that today, we're just going to practice what any good Bible study method ought to be built on, which is discerning what the text is saying rather than reading it for what we want it to say. Remind students that the truth of Scripture exists outside of us, and so we must hold our feelings, culture, and preferences up to the truth of Scripture, not the other way around.

-The best way to start any Bible study is to pray and ask God to show you something as you read. Model that with your students now!

- Open up to John 4:1-42, explain that you are going to take a few minutes to read the passage all on your own, and then we will talk about what we heard! Once they've finished reading, begin walking them through the following questions:

- What stuck out to you?
- What does this passage tell you about who God is?

-What does this passage tell you about who we are?

-What truths does this passage teach?

-How would our lives look different if we lived out those truths?

-This next step is key, spend time meditating on the truth you heard. Hopefully your group will have named a few key truths about God, themselves and life in general after having worked through these questions as a group. Take time to talk about how sweet and rich those truths are with them. Your excitement will direct theirs!

Practical Application

During the Scripture Study portion of this session, we discussed the basics of what to do during our time in Scripture. During this practical application section, we want to spend time talking through some practical steps each student in your group can make to incorporate consistent time in Scripture into their lives!

-For you personally, what are the biggest obstacles in the way of reading Scripture consistently? *(If they get stumped, ask follow up questions: Is it lack of desire? Distractions? Not having a routine you like?)*

-For each answer a student gives, first encourage them that everyone has issues, ask others in the group if they feel the same way, and then ask if the student who shared can think of anything that could help overcome the obstacle they shared. If they need help, ask others in the group to brainstorm too!

-The biggest obstacle in the way of any new routine is a failure to plan. Breaking old habits and starting new ones is hard! And this is a new, wonderful, life giving habit, that we will have to plan for if we really want to see what life is like with this habit as a part of it. Together as a group, help everyone come up with a plan for their week! Encourage student to write theirs down! Help them think through the following components:

-Time: Just like you plan time to meet with friends to make sure you get to see them, we need to schedule time in our days to meet with God in His word. Help students plan a few times in their week they have time they can reserve for Bible study. Encourage to put reminders in their phone!

-Place: Help your students think of a place they could plan to be for their time in Scripture. Somewhere where they won't be interrupted. Help them think through other aspects of their environment as well, like whether or not they need their phone there, or if they need to enlist their guardian or parent's help to keep siblings out of their space for their time in Scripture.

-Plan: We don't just need a plan of when to read the Word, we need a plan of what to read as well! Help students find a boom of the Bible they can start reading, or help them look through resources like <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans> to find a plan that they're excited about!

-Encourage your group to try and carry out their plan this week! Remember, we're not trying to hype them up for just a new habit, we want to be emphasizing just how much better life is when you consistently meet with God in His word.