

TOGETHER

MIDDLE SCHOOL SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Session 2

Session Topic: Why Read the Bible?

Session Overview: The Bible gives us direction to help us live our BEST life possible and also shows us how much Jesus loves us so that we can build a relationship with Him.

Begin this session with a prayer.

- We're continuing our series called The Bible, where we are learning about the greatest story ever written in the greatest book ever written. Last session, we talked about how the Bible is structured. We saw that even though the Bible is composed of many books written by over 40 authors over a period of almost 1,600 years, it tells one story – God’s Story. This week we are going to build on that.
- You might say, “Great, the Bible is true, and it tells one continuous and giant story. So what? It was written thousands of years ago. Why should I read the Bible?” Well, that will be our topic today. How could something written so long ago be useful for someone your age now? Well, a great verse in the Bible that answers that question is **2 Timothy 3:16–17**. 2 Timothy 3:16 was the verse we were challenged to memorize last week.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 in your Bible or on your Bible app. Then, read this translation as well:

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

- This verse is saying that no matter how old or young you are, or whether you were born 1,000 years ago or 1,000 years from now, the Bible is USEFUL because it was breathed by – or inspired by – God, who never changes!
- Let's look at the verses closer. What is the Bible useful for? It's useful for teaching. It gives us instructions and directions to live the BEST life possible. It says that the Bible is useful for rebuking and correcting, turning us around if we're headed the wrong way, or nudging us back on the right path if we've wandered off.
- The Bible is like a mirror. If you looked in the mirror and saw that you had something stuck in your teeth, would you just leave it there and go on to school? No way! The Bible helps us see the sin in our lives and how God can help us correct that sin.
- The verse also says the Bible is useful for training in righteousness. In other words, it trains us to live in a way that brings glory to God and helps others see Him. So, why is the Bible important to read? **Well first of all, the Bible gives us direction, correction, and training.**
- What navigation app do your parents use most often? Apple Maps, Google Maps, Waze...? These navigation apps use GPS, or a Global Positioning System, to work. These navigation apps are awesome because they show you the BEST way possible to get somewhere specific!

- Maybe it's to someone's house, or a special landmark, or a sports practice. You simply enter the name or the address of where you want to go, and the app will calculate the BEST way to get there. It's great!
- The app even gives step-by-step instructions to get you to the exact spot you entered. It tells you to turn right or left, which exit to take to get onto a specific bridge, and so on. If you make a mistake or ignore the directions, it will give instructions to correct your route. It will say things like, "Please stay on the highlighted route," or "When possible, make a U-Turn."
- The navigation app will continue to correct you until you choose to obey and get back on the right route. And it will continue to give you directions until you reach the desired destination. So... why are we talking about a navigation app?
- Well, we can compare this app to the Bible. The Bible – like the app – gives us the best instructions on how to travel through our journey of life. The Bible – like the app – also corrects us when we've allowed sin to knock us off the best path.
- It corrects us by saying, "Wrong way," and helps us get back on the best path. The Bible is like our navigation app. God has given us the Bible to help us live our lives in the BEST way possible to grow more and more like Jesus.

Read Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them."

Reflect and Discuss: Look up the definition of "handiwork." What does "handiwork" mean?

Now read the verse below. It's the same verse in a different translation (NLT).

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT): "For we are God's *masterpiece*. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

Reflect and Discuss: How does it feel to know you are God's masterpiece?

Read Jeremiah 29:11: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

Reflect and Discuss:

1. What sticks out to you from this verse?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that God has great plans for your life?

Read Psalm 119:105.

Reflect and Discuss:

1. How do you feel when you're trying to walk somewhere in the complete dark?
2. How do you feel when you're trying to walk somewhere in the light?
3. What do you think "a lamp for my feet" and "a light on my path" mean?
 - God's Word is our guide... our navigation app... our way of knowing the BEST possible direction to take in life. It's a flashlight out in front of us, showing us the wonderful and exciting things God has planned.

- This verse, **Psalm 119:105**, is our memory verse for this session. Take a moment to write down the reference (Psalm 119:105) on your challenge sheet.
- So, why should we read the Bible? Notice that none of those verses say that the Bible is only meant to guide older people or that God only prepared stuff for older people to do. The Bible is for you! Right now! You're at a really important age in your life. You're starting to think about who you really are and where you want to go.
- Reading the Bible will guide you and help you discover God's great plans for you. The Bible also has the answers to the big questions about life, and it teaches us more about God's grace and love for us. It teaches us how to live a life that brings glory to God.

Reflect and Discuss:

1. Do you think going through life without God's guidance and instruction would be difficult? Why or why not?
2. What are some other things we use to help guide our lives?
 - There are so many great reasons to read the Bible. Watch the following video that talks about more reasons to read the Bible:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlTHR_hqH9I

Reflect and Discuss: What other reasons are there to read the Bible that were mentioned in the video?

- Here are several more reasons why reading the Bible is so important:
 - Reading the Bible helps us learn about God's character... it helps us truly KNOW God
 - Reading the Bible helps us realize how much God loves us

- Reading the Bible helps us see life through Jesus' perspective
- Reading the Bible changes us and helps us become more like Jesus
- Reading the Bible helps us discover our true purpose in life
 - As you can see, it's also important to read the Bible to learn about God and Jesus. But *why* is it important to learn about them?
 - As Christians, it's our goal to follow Jesus. But why would you want to follow someone who you don't know anything about?
 - Jesus wants to be your closest friend, and He promises He will never leave you. But why would you want to be friends with someone you don't know?
 - Jesus wants to spend eternity with you in heaven. But why would you want to spend eternity with someone you don't know?
 - It is so important to get to KNOW our Lord, and the best way to learn about how much He loves us is by reading the Bible. When we understand how much Jesus loves us, we will want to follow Jesus, be His friend, and spend eternity with Him.

Session Challenges

- Now for our challenge. How often do you pick up and look at your phone? Is it the first thing you do when you get out of bed? Do you scroll on social media while going to the bathroom? While eating breakfast? While walking up or down the stairs? While going to bed?
- Imagine if we treated our Bibles like our phones. Imagine if we read it every extra second we had during the day. What if we were addicted to it like it was a phone? Let's watch this funny video about this... <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZT8kk5Bo8/>

- You have two options for your challenge this week. The first option is to read your Bible for 5 minutes before touching your phone or any other device in the morning. The second option is to read your Bible for 5 minutes right before going to bed. No devices afterward. Don't know what to read? Try reading one of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.
- Write down this week's challenge on your challenge sheets.

End with a closing prayer thanking God for His Word and for the opportunity to get to know Him by reading His Word.