

getting equipped



Volume 1

***Understanding God, the Bible and
Building Christian Character***

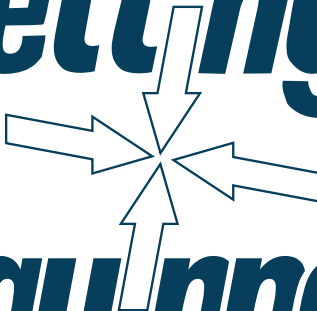
**Bible Based
Group Study Materials**

for use with the



BibleProject

getting equipped



Volume 1

Understanding God, the Bible and Building Christian Character

Bible Based Group Study Materials

Getting Equipped, Volume 1

Bible-Based Group Study Materials

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Getting Equipped, Volume 1

Bible-Based Group Study Materials

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This discipleship series has been designed for use with BibleProject videos which are available online at: www.YouTube.com/BibleProject and at BibleProject.com

The songwriting team at the Covenant School of Worship has written Indian language songs that fit the themes of the BibleProject videos featured in this series.

For more complementary resources for the “Getting Equipped” series, go to: www.equippers.in



Introduction to the Series

Getting Equipped, Volume 1 is the first in a series of discipleship curriculum from Equippers. It is specially designed for use in India for those who have decided to follow Jesus and are looking to grow in knowledge, understanding and faithfulness. To accomplish these multi-faceted goals, we have designed this curriculum with many distinctive features: character dialogues that introduce the lesson topics, group singing, videos from the BibleProject, discussion questions, and a variety of learning activities.

This learning is rooted in biblical teaching, the most reliable source of divine knowledge. While the sessions are intended to be informative, the focus is not on presenting a lot of information. Rather, these sessions utilize learning tactics designed for participants to learn as a group, to explore the deeper meanings of the Bible, and to consider how God's people are called to live.

Getting Equipped uses participatory learning methods which contrasts with lecture methods that are so common in India. It is intended that the leader using these lessons be a facilitator of learning, not the expert who has all the answers. In the learning process to discern God's will, understanding is developed through a process of examining Scripture and then discussing open-ended questions with other learners. One of the goals is to consider how to put biblical principles into practice in everyday life.

The target audience for *Getting Equipped* are Christians aged 15 and above. As you go through these lessons, you will notice they follow a consistent pattern. In the margin, you will notice a variety of icons. These make it easier to identify when to sing, perform a dialogue, or play a video. The first one you will encounter is the music icon shown in the corner below. This indicates time for a group worship song. You may choose to sing one of the [recommended songs](#) or select other songs, in any language, that fit the theme of the lesson. On page 66, you will see there are also songs that have been written in Indian languages with Indian style music following the themes of the BibleProject videos.





The next icon you will notice in these lessons features theatre masks. This is the symbol for an opening dialogue that introduces the topic of the lesson. For those working with younger audiences, we encourage you to consider using puppets from Kleine Kinder, a partner of Equippers Resources. For more information, go to:

www.kleinekinder.in



The most notable feature in *Getting Equipped* are the videos from the BibleProject. These brief but information-packed animated videos represent the main ideas and lesson content for most of the sessions.

The entire collection of English BibleProject videos are available at:

www.YouTube.com/BibleProject

The BibleProject has many learning resources available on their website. You may download your own copy of the videos, posters, video notes, find links to related podcasts, and more at:

BibleProject.com

We hope that *Getting Equipped* will be part of a life changing experience as you gather together with like minded individuals who want to deepen their understanding of the Bible and grow in their knowledge of God. May these lessons help you develop your character so that you live a life worthy of the Lord, bearing fruit in love and good works.

Understanding God

Session 1 – The Good News of God’s Kingdom

Lesson Objectives: Participants will be introduced to the biblical theme of the Kingdom of God. This helps to explain the identity of Jesus, the mission of God and what is referred to when the Bible talks about “good news”.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Let Your Kingdom Come](#)”, “[Seek Ye First](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “The Good News of God’s Kingdom”. We assume that participants are aware that many things are not going right in their society and in the world. For example, there is lots of crime, many people are living in severe poverty, business people cheat their customers, employers don’t pay their workers what they earn, people get sick and die, and some nations are at war. In the midst of such circumstances, Christians have hope for the future. Participants should have an opportunity to critically examine why Christians look forward to a day when wrongs will be set right. The good news of God’s kingdom means God is preparing for a day when there will be peace, justice, no more sickness or death. That is the day when God’s anointed king will rule over the earth. In the meantime, we can recognize Jesus as our king, obey his commands, and experience this good news firsthand.

The Kingdom of God is the main theme of Jesus’ teaching ministry. Despite this, it is often overlooked and its implications are misunderstood. For example, many aren’t sure whether God’s kingdom is something we build or something that we cooperate with, whether the kingdom is a present reality, a future hope, or both. If considered a present reality, people are confused with whether its primary nature is spiritual, social, or political.

This lesson will not answer those complicated questions. Rather, it aims to introduce the topic of the Kingdom of God. This is a theme that needs to be considered if one wants to understand the overall message of the Bible and the role of Jesus of Nazareth as God’s Messiah, his anointed ruler who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.



Opening Dialogue: “Can we hope?”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Kumar: Oh, hi Sneha. I almost didn’t recognize you. How are you?

Sneha: *(dejected and looking downward)* Hi Kumar. I’m okay.

Kumar: You sound so sad. Is anything wrong?

Sneha: I don’t really like talking about it, but suppose I can tell a good friend like you, Kumar. Things are not going well with my family. We are facing so many problems. My aunt is sick. It seems she might be dying.

Kumar: Has she seen a doctor? Is there any hope for her?

Sneha: *(pauses to think)* The doctors want us to buy some expensive medicine. They could try surgery but it is risky and very expensive. Right now, we don’t have the money.

Kumar: Do you know a moneylender?

Sneha: That could help us pay the hospital bill, but then we might never be able to escape our debts. Now, things are even more complicated. One of my father’s coworkers accused him unjustly. So, he is not eligible for a promotion and may even lose his job!

Kumar: How terrible. Can you file a case or see a judge?

Sneha: The evidence is on our side, but I’m not sure we can trust the legal system.

Kumar: Is there any way out of this mess?

Sneha: I feel like I am swimming in the middle of an ocean and need to be rescued. I just don’t know if a savior is on the way.

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- ☐ Have you ever faced circumstances similar to Sneha’s, where it seemed everything was going wrong and that there was no hope for things getting better?

Bridge:

We live in a world with many problems. Sometimes, those problems are so severe it seems we need to be rescued. This lesson will look at God’s plan for rescuing the world. This plan is centered on Jesus, who came to announce the good news

of God's kingdom. Understanding his teaching on the Kingdom of God is complex and takes more study than we have time for today, but we want to introduce this topic and begin the journey of understanding why the good news of God's Kingdom is the source of hope for those who believe in and follow Jesus.

Read: [Mark 1:14-15](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ What do you think is meant by the "Kingdom of God"?

Read: [Isaiah 9:6-7](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ What kind of expectations does Isaiah's prophesy create in the people of Israel?

Watch BibleProject Video: ["Gospel of the Kingdom"](#)

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.



Video Discovery Questions:

- ☐ What are the differences between the terms "gospel" and "good news"?
- ☐ Why do you think the Kingdom of God is declared as "good news"?

Read: [Isaiah 52:7-10](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What would the people of Israel understand by the message, "Your God reigns"?
- ☐ Why would the city of Zion's watchmen shout for joy?

Read: [Mark 4:11-12, 30-34](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think that the teaching of the Kingdom of God is such a mystery?

Bridge:

The theme of the Kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus' teaching. It is also a theme that runs throughout the Bible. As you read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, you may be surprised how often this theme appears, even if that exact term is not used.

Activity

Look in the Gospel of Luke chapters 9-13 and see how many references to "good news" or the "Kingdom of God" you can find. List the verses below. (Limit = 3 minutes)

Summary: In this session, we have introduced the theme of the Kingdom of God. As you study the Bible, look for how this theme helps you understand the different events and teachings you find throughout the books of the Old and New Testaments.



Group Sing: "[Let Your Kingdom Come](#)" or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together, reciting [Matthew 6:9-13](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Session 2 – The Holiness of God

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will consider what it means to be holy, going beyond their initial thoughts and stereotypes. They will then reflect on how holiness relates to and informs our understanding of how to approach God's presence.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: "[You Are Holy \(As for Me and My House\)](#)", "[Revelation Song](#)" or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is "The Holiness of God". The terms "holy" and "holiness" are used to describe both people and God. Sometimes, the connotations are positive while other times they conjure up negative reactions. In this lesson, we will look at how holiness describes God and how the holiness of God affects people who interact with God.

God is the creative force behind the whole universe, the only being with the power to make a world full of such beauty and life. These abilities make God utterly unique, which is the meaning of the word 'holy'. There is a paradox at the center of God's own holiness. If a person is impure, God's presence is dangerous.

In the Bible, the solution to this danger is to become "pure", which involves living with moral purity. But the Bible also talks about being ritually pure. That is why God gave the Israelites clear instructions in the Torah for knowing when they were impure. He also provided steps to become pure so that people could go into the temple again and survive being in God's presence.

The meaning of ritual purity remained a mystery until the arrival of Jesus. He touched people who were impure. When he touched them, their impurity should have transferred to Jesus, making him impure. Instead, Jesus' purity transfers to them and actually heals their bodies.

Jesus claimed he was the human embodiment of God's own holiness and that he and his followers were now God's temple. Through them, God's holy presence goes out into the world to bring life, healing and hope.



Opening Dialogue: “Spreading the Infection”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Sneha’s head is facing down. Her hands are picking through her hair. Just as Kumar enters, she screams in frustration.

Kumar: What’s wrong, Sneha?

Sneha: Ahhh! Oh, Kumar. This is horrible! I have lice in my hair!

Kumar: How did that happen?

Sneha: Well, I was with my friend, Shreya and I borrowed her churidar. She later discovered she had lice, but it was too late. Now I have them, too!

Kumar: Oh, that’s too bad. I wish I could help you. *(He stops to think.)* Hey, if a dirty cloth can give you lice, maybe a clean cloth can take them away. What do you think? I’ll go get my sister’s churidar, soak it in medicine and we’ll see if it takes away your lice!

Sneha: *(surprised)* You think that might work? I’m so stressed out, I’ll try anything.

Kumar: I’ll get the stuff and we’ll see if I can make you better!

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- ☐ How many of you have ever caught an illness or disease from someone else?
- ☐ Catching a disease from someone else is not so unusual. But consider the other way around. Do you think it is possible to spread health and healing?

Bridge:

Spreading health is not a common experience, unless you are working in health care but this concept might help us understand holiness, the theme of this lesson.

Read: [Isaiah 6:1-8](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What do you think about the symbolic meaning of the coal touching Isaiah’s lips?
- ☐ How do you think God’s holiness can affect us?

Watch BibleProject Video: "[Holiness](#)"

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.



Video Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What were some of the symbols of God's holiness you observed in the video?
- ☐ How do you think our actions, demonstrations of love and speaking truth, brings health and healing to those around us?

Read: [Genesis 2:3; Exodus 3:5, 19:6, 40:9-10](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why would God need to declare something as holy?

Read: [Isaiah 5:15-16](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ According to this passage, how will God's holiness be demonstrated?

Read: [Isaiah 35:8, Matthew 7:13](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ What do you think the "highway of holiness" refers to?

Read: [Psalm 15:1-5](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ According to this passage, what kinds of people are allowed to enter into God's presence?
- ☐ How do these ideas affect the way you approach prayer? What about worship or other areas of your spiritual life?
- ☐ How does the concept of holiness affect your relationships with other people? What about the way you approach serving others?

Group Activity

Being holy, living a life that seeks to do what is right and is set apart for God's service, affects our ability to be in the presence of God. Identify some of the characteristics of the holy person described in [Psalm 15](#) and write them below.

[illegible]

Summary: In this session, we have explored what it means to be holy, both for God to be holy and for his people to be holy. We have then considered how that informs our understanding of how to live in God's presence.



Group Sing: “[You Are Holy \(As for Me and My House\)](#)” “[Revelation Song](#)” or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 96:7-10](#) , then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Session 3 – The Lordship of God

Lesson Objectives: Participants should explore the concept of God being Lord or King from both the Hebrew Bible and the gospels. They will also consider the implications of this for how his followers are to live in faithful obedience to him.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Jesus Messiah](#)”, “[Lion and the Lamb](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: Leader briefly explains the theme of this session, “The Lordship of God”. The theme of God’s authority and his role as lord over all runs throughout the Bible. Nowhere is this more evident than in the title we associate with Jesus: the “Christ” or “Messiah”. But many people don’t really understand the meaning or implications of God’s lordship. It starts with the plans God had for humans to rule over his earth, while remaining faithful to his authority over them. When humanity rebelled against him, the peaceful order of the earth fell apart.

So God made a plan to restore the goodness of the earth, in his timing. He promised to send a king who would redeem the world, right the wrongs, and restore God’s authority. This is who we refer to as the “Messiah”. Through prophets, God had prepared his people, the nation of Israel, to expect a Messiah, a ruler who would establish God’s rule over his people and over his creation.

When Jesus came and talked about the coming of the Kingdom of God, many people did not recognize how his teaching fulfilled the expectations of the law and the prophets. The Jews were expecting a king more like David, who would rule on a throne in Jerusalem. But Jesus had a broader perspective of the kingdom. He was looking forward to the day when he will come back and finish the work, destroy death and evil once and for all, and restore the goodness of the garden of Eden.

After his resurrection, Jesus told his followers he has been given all authority, in heaven and on earth. Because of this delegation, they were to go and make disciples. Disciples are people who live under God’s authority by listening to his voice and obeying all of Jesus’ commands. The good news is that Jesus is king, the Messiah. This is the good news of the Lordship of God.



Opening Dialogue: “Who is in charge?”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Kumar and Sneha appear on the stage. On the other side of the stage is a bowl of fruit on a table.

Kumar: I am so hungry and that fruit looks so good. I’m going to eat it!

Sneha: What? You know your mom told us that is to be saved for the guests who are coming later this evening.”

Kumar: I know, but I am too hungry.

Sneha: But we have to obey your mom. Who do you think is in charge of this home?

Kumar: *(pauses, looks back and forth at the fruit)* Right now, my stomach is in charge!”

With that, he devours the fruit and they exit the stage.

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- ☐ How often do you act like Kumar, allowing your own interests to take priority over respecting whoever is in authority?

Bridge:

Throughout our lives, we deal with the issue of either cooperating with authority or resisting authority. That theme is also central to the story of the Bible and to the promise of a Messiah, God’s anointed authority, which will be the focus of this session.

Read: [Genesis 2:15-17](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was the only one God forbid the man to eat?
- ☐ How do you think the tree represented God’s authority?

Read: [Genesis 3:5-7](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ What do you think lured Eve to eat the forbidden fruit?
- ☐ What were the effects or consequences of their disobedience?

Watch BibleProject Video: "[Messiah](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What do you think about the God's promise to send a king to deal with the problem of evil?
- ☐ Why do you think God's promised king who has to suffer? How does the battle with the serpent relate to God's plan for deliverance?

Read: [Matthew 2:1-6](#)

Discovery Question:

- ☐ When King Herod was asked about the newly born King of the Jews, where did the Jewish scholars look for answers?

Read: [John 4:25-26](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ What were the expectations of the Samaritan woman regarding the promised Messiah?

Read: [Matthew 16:13-17](#)

Discovery Question:

- ☐ How did Peter come to believe that Jesus was the Messiah?

Read: [Matthew 28:18-20](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ Why do you think it was important for Jesus to declare he had been granted all authority in heaven and on earth?
- ☐ How does Jesus' claim to authority establish the basis for his followers' task of making disciples?
- ☐ Why do you think the Messiah's commands need to be carefully followed?

Group Activity: Finding the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible.

Look up each of the following verses and identify what it says, sometimes in mysterious language, about the coming Messiah:

[Jeremiah 31:31](#) _____

[Psalms 118:22](#) _____

[Isaiah 7:14](#) _____

[Isaiah 53:4-6](#) _____

[Deuteronomy 18:15-19](#) _____

[Zechariah 9:9](#) _____

[Zechariah 11:12-13](#) _____

[Zechariah 12:10](#) _____

[Malachi 4:5-6](#) _____

[Hosea 11:1](#) _____

[Daniel 7:13-14](#) _____

[Micah 5:2](#) _____

Summary: In this session, we have explored the theme of the Messiah and how the concept of God being Lord has far reaching implications for how his followers are to view God and live in faithful obedience to him.



Group Sing: “[Jesus Messiah](#)” “[Lion and the Lamb](#)” or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalms 103:17-19](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Session 4 – The Holy Spirit of God

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will examine a biblical perspective regarding the Holy Spirit. Included will be a study of the Hebrew word for spirit: ruakh, whose meaning should provide insight for better understanding God, humanity, death, and new life.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Spirit of the Living God](#)”, “[Here I Am to Worship](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: In this lesson, we will be learning about the Holy Spirit of God. The Spirit is the way the biblical authors talk about God’s personal presence. When most people talk about spirits, they seem to presume that the spirit is something that can, and sometimes does, exist apart from one’s body. However, the biblical concept of spirit is more like the life within one’s body.

The Hebrew word for spirit, ruakh, refers to a number of different things. All of them are related to energy. Ruakh can refer to the invisible energy that makes the clouds move, the tree branches sway, or the energy in your body that you get from breathing deeply. This is the same word the Bible uses to describe God’s personal presence. Just like wind and breath are invisible, so God’s Spirit is invisible. Wind is powerful and so God’s Spirit is powerful. And just as breath keeps us alive, so God’s Spirit sustains all of life.

While God’s Spirit created a really good world, humans gave in to evil, unleashing chaos into the world through their rebellion and injustice. To solve the problem, the prophet Jeremiah said God’s Spirit would come and transform the human heart to empower people to truly love God and others. This new heart was connected to the promise of a new covenant and the new creation that would be accomplished through Jesus.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he explained that he must go so that he could send the Spirit. Today, the Spirit is still hovering in dark places, revealing the knowledge of God, pointing people to Jesus, and empowering them so they can love God and others.



Opening Dialogue: “Grandpa Died. What now?”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Sneha enters the stage, holding a tissue and crying. Kumar enters, sees Sneha and pauses.

Kumar: (cautiously) Hi Sneha. What’s the matter?

Sneha: (sniffing, composing herself) My grandpa passed away. It’s hard to imagine that I’ll never be able to talk with him again.

Kumar: Were the two of you close?

Sneha: (thinks for a moment) Maybe not as much as my sister, but I loved him very much. He loved to sing... read to me. He could really make me laugh. I have so many memories. But now, that’s all I will have...”

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- ☐ How many of you have seen the body of someone after they died? Describe the difference in their body before and after the person expired.

Bridge:

The presence of spirits is one of the profound mysteries in life. In this lesson, we will be exploring the concept of God’s Spirit. Such awareness can help us better understand both ourselves and God.

Read: [Genesis 1:2](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Imagine the Spirit of God hovering over the waters. How does God’s Spirit give life to physical elements like water?

Read: [Exodus 28:2-3, 35:31](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why would a person doing tailoring work or crafting metallic objects need God’s Spirit to give them wisdom?

Read: [Leviticus 20:6, 27](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think God would forbid people from consulting the spirits of the dead?

Watch BibleProject Video: "[Holy Spirit](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Question:

- ☐ What did you think of how the video described the Holy Spirit as God's personal presence?
- ☐ What are some of the different things the word "spirit" or "ruakh" represents?

Read: [Psalms 104:27-30](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ How are these ideas different from what you normally think of when people discuss the word "spirit"?

Read: [Genesis 41:15-16, 38-39](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ Why do you think Pharaoh concluded that Joseph would make a good ruler of Egypt?

Read: [Numbers 11:25-29](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How were the 70 leaders, including Eldad and Medad, empowered to prophesy to the people of Israel?

Read: [John 16:7, 13-15](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think Jesus would need to leave this world in order for God's Spirit to come?

Read: [Matthew 12:18, 28](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How do these verses describe Jesus' relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Activity

Read [1 Corinthians 2:9-16](#) and note down each verse that refers to a “spirit”. Identify whether it refers to God’s Spirit or another kind of spirit.

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What are some of the ways that God’s Spirit interacts with people?
- ☐ Are all people able to discern God’s Spirit?

Summary: In this session, we have examined the biblical reference to spirit, both in a general form and as a reference to the presence of God. By seeing many ways the Hebrew word *ruakh* is used, participants should have a more reliable understanding of spirit and its implications for understanding both God and humanity.

Group Sing: “[Spirit of the Living God](#)” “[Here I Am to Worship](#)” or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 31:1-5](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 5 – The Covenant Faithfulness of God

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will be introduced to the concept of a covenant and how covenants are a major theme in the story of the Bible. They reveal the character of God and the source of hope for the future.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Great is Thy Faithfulness](#)”, “[Take My Life and Let It Be](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: This lesson, “The Covenant Faithfulness of God” focuses on the covenant relationships that run throughout the Bible. Four times in the Old Testament we are told God initiates a covenant relationship: with Noah, Abraham, the nation of Israel, and with King David. In a covenant, God makes promises. Some are unconditional, reliant only on God’s faithfulness. In God’s covenant with Israel, he asks his partner to be faithful to certain commitments and observe the laws of this covenant.

However, Israel breaks the covenant. They worship other gods and allow horrible injustice. So, they lose their land and are forced into exile. During this time, Israel’s prophets talked about a day when God would restore these covenants in spite of Israel’s unfaithfulness. They called it the ‘New Covenant’.

In the Gospels, Jesus is introduced as the one who fulfills all of these covenant relationships. He is from the family of Abraham, so he will bring the blessings of that family to the whole world. He is the faithful Israelite who truly obeyed the law. Jesus is the king from the line of David who announces that God’s unending kingdom of justice and peace is at hand.

Through these events, we see that God is the faithful covenant partner we are all made to be, but have failed to be. Through Jesus, God has opened up a way for anyone to be in a renewed partnership with him. Despite the failures of humanity, Jesus is committed to making them into partners who become more and more faithful.

The story of the Bible ends with a vision of a renewed world full of goodness and peace. This renewed humanity is there, partnering with God to expand the goodness of his creation. The stories of God’s faithfulness to his covenants in the past give us hope for the fulfillment of his promises for the future.



Opening Dialogue: “A Broken Promise”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Kumar: (*expectantly*) Hi, Sneha.

Sneha: (*casually*) Oh, hi Kumar.

Kumar: (*impatiently*) Well, is it ready?

Sneha: (*confused*) What are you talking about?

Kumar: (*raising his voice*) What?!! You don’t remember? You said that if I helped you paint your house, you would stitch my sister’s dance costume. Her performance is today, and she is depending on me to get it for her. She’ll be humiliated if it’s not ready!

Sneha: I’m so sorry. I completely forgot!

Kumar: Well, is it ready?

Sneha: I got busy with so many other things and forgot about it.

Kumar: (*growling*) Arrg! I can’t believe it. You promised!

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- ☐ Have you ever failed to keep a promise you made?
- ☐ What kind of affect do you think broken promises have on your friends, family and loved ones?

Bridge:

Promises are a common part of close relationships. Keeping them establishes trust while breaking them can harm or even destroy relationships. In this lesson, we will explore the theme of God’s covenant faithfulness and how it informs how we are to love God and love one another.

Read: [Leviticus 22:31-33](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ How do you think God wanted the Israelites to honor his holiness?
- ☐ How do you think God made the Israelites holy? How were they to observe this holiness?

Watch BibleProject Video: "[Covenants](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Question:

- ☐ How are covenants central to the story of the Bible and to understanding the faithfulness of God?

Read: [Deuteronomy 30:15-20](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ This passage is set at the time when Moses has presented the laws of the covenant before the nation of Israel. How might the people of Israel have benefitted if they had been faithful to the covenant?

Read: [Luke 16:10](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How does faithfulness in small things relate to having greater responsibilities and commitments?

Activity

Look up 4 passages that refer to different covenants. For each of these passages, identify the following:

1) Who is the covenant between?

[Genesis 6:18; 9:1-17](#) _____

[Genesis 15:18; 17:1-22](#) _____

[Exodus 19:3-6](#) _____

[2 Samuel 7:8-17](#) _____

2) What is the promise God makes?

[Genesis 6:18; 9:1-17](#) _____

[Genesis 15:18; 17:1-22](#) _____

[Exodus 19:3-6](#) _____

[2 Samuel 7:8-17](#) _____

3) What were the conditions to the covenant?

[Genesis 6:18; 9:1-17](#) _____

[Genesis 15:18; 17:1-22](#) _____

[Exodus 19:3-6](#) _____

[2 Samuel 7:8-17](#) _____

4) What was the sign of the respective covenants?

[Genesis 6:18; 9:1-17](#) _____

[Genesis 15:18; 17:1-22](#) _____

[Exodus 19:3-6](#) _____

[2 Samuel 7:8-17](#) _____

Group Discussion:

- ☐ How do these examples of covenants help us better understand the role of faithfulness in our relationship with God and our relationships with others?

Summary: In this session, participants have been introduced to the concept of a covenant. As we have seen, covenants are a major theme in the story of the Bible, revealing the character of God and the cause for hope for the future.



Group Sing: “[Great is Thy Faithfulness](#)” “[Take My Life and Let It Be](#)” or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 40:1-3](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Understanding the Bible

Session 6 – Learning What the Bible Is

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will be introduced to the history of the Bible. They will examine the concepts of divine revelation and divinely inspired prophets and apostles. We will also introduce the major sections of the Bible.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Revelation](#)”, “[Thy Word](#)”, “[Living Word](#)”, “[Ancient Words](#)”, “[Voice of Truth](#)”, “[Word of God Speak](#)”, “[This is the Air I Breathe](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: In this lesson, “Learning What the Bible Is” participants will learn about the nature and structure of the Bible. The Bible can be compared to a small library of books which emerged from the nation of ancient Israel. Among this civilization were a long line of individuals called prophets. They were God’s messengers who provided a means for humanity to know about God and his will. Biblical prophets viewed Israel’s story as a central part of what God was doing for all humanity.

Altogether, the prophetic texts from Israel tell an epic story about how God is working through the nation of Israel to bring order and beauty out of the chaos of our world. The narrative woven throughout this literature builds up to a hope for a new leader who would come and renew all creation.

The Gospels introduce Jesus of Nazareth as Israel’s Messiah. He fulfilled what was foretold by many of these prophets, including suffering and dying on a cross. But his followers claimed he was raised from the dead. They said Jesus was the long-awaited leader who would restore the world.

Jesus’ earliest followers, called apostles, composed new literary works, forming a “New Testament”. The Gospel tells about the life of Jesus. Acts describes how the Jesus movement spread. The apostles also circulated letters to different Jesus communities all around the ancient world. They saw these writings as part of the Scripture. The apostles wrote all of these as the fulfillment of that epic story found in the earlier prophetic writings. They believed God was speaking to His people through these texts, alongside the Scriptures of Israel to reveal himself, his purposes and his will to all of humanity.



Opening Dialogue: “Learning about God”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Sneha enters and notices Kumar thinking deeply.

Sneha: Hi, Kumar. What are you thinking about?

Kumar: *(slowly turning toward Sneha)* Oh, hi Sneha. I had a dream last night and I can’t stop thinking about it.

Sneha: What was the dream about?

Kumar: I dreamt that I was standing before God. I tried to explain why I am doing what I am doing, but I couldn’t justify myself.

Sneha: Wow, that’s a pretty serious dream! How did it end?

Kumar: My alarm woke me up. *(Pause)* But I can’t stop thinking about it. I’m not sure where all my ideas about life and God came from. Of course, my parents have a big influence, but that’s not good enough. I have also studied in school, but that seems to steer me away from God more than toward God.

Sneha: Sometimes I visit my family’s village. It is so quiet and so dark at night, I love to just look up into the sky and look at the stars *(looking upward)*. It makes me think of how vast the universe is and how awesome is the God who created everything.

Kumar: That’s cool, but sometimes I want to hear from God himself. It seems everything else is just guessing.

Group Discussion: Think about the different ways that people around the world learn about God. Nature, tradition, reasoning, and divine revelation, such as the Bible, are the main sources.

- ☐ What do you recall as your earliest thoughts about God?
- ☐ When you have a question about God today, where do you look for answers?

Bridge:

While nature reveals something about the characteristics of God, human interpretations of natural observations are generally quite vague. Tradition grounds people, but sometimes it doesn’t withstand the scrutiny of questions. Reasoning appeals to the modern person but relies on a finite mind and biased motives to explain complex ideas and seeming contradictions. That leaves

us with divine revelation, what is uncovered in sacred literature. In this lesson, we are going to look at the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament to see what they reveal about God, uncovering mysteries we could not know otherwise.

Read: [Numbers 12:6; Deuteronomy 18:17-20; Galatians 1:12](#)

Discovery Questions:

- ☐ What are some ways that prophets and apostles receive their messages?

Read: [Proverbs 29:18](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ According to this verse, what happens to people when there is no divine revelation?

Read: [Deuteronomy 29:29; Psalm 119:9-11; Ephesians 1:17](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What do you think are God's intended outcomes when he give words or makes secrets things known to us?

Watch BibleProject Video: "[What is the Bible?](#)"

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.



Video Discussion Question:

- ☐ How does God speak to his people through the books of the Bible?
- ☐ What are the three sections of the Hebrew Bible?

Read: [John 5:39](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What do you think Jesus was referring to when he said that the Scriptures testify about him?
- ☐ How do you think the Hebrew Bible is connected with the Gospels and the writings of the apostles?

Activity

Find a list of all the books of the Bible. Then, identify which books are included with the following sections of the Bible:

Torah (Law)

Nevi'im (Prophets)

Ketuvim (Writings)

Gospels

Apostles' Writings

Remind participants to start memorizing the books of the Bible. In the next session, there will be a chance to test their memory.

Summary: In this session, we have introduced participants to the history of the Bible and how the Bible is organized. We examined the concepts of divine revelation and divinely inspired prophets and apostles. These foundational concepts will help participants read and better understand the Bible and will be reinforced in the next four sessions.

Group Sing: "[Revelation](#)", "[Thy Word](#)" "[Living Word](#)", "[Ancient Words](#)", "[Voice of Truth](#)", "[Word of God Speak](#)", "[This is the Air I Breathe](#)" or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 8:1-9](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 7 – The Story of the Bible

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will learn that though the Bible is a large collection of books, it forms one unified story. Participants will become aware of the major events and themes that shape the Hebrew Bible and lead to the story of Jesus and his followers. This familiarity will help participants put individual stories into their broader context.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Revelation](#)”, “[Thy Word](#)”, “[Living Word](#)”, “[Ancient Words](#)”, “[Voice of Truth](#)”, “[Word of God Speak](#)”, “[This is the Air I Breathe](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The focus of this session is “The Story of the Bible”. From the beginning of the world to the vision of a new creation, the Bible tells the story of humanity’s journey of being made in God’s image to cooperate with God in ruling the world. When humanity rebels against God, the peace and order that God created turns into violence and chaos. The Bible tells the story and shares the hope of how God offers the chance for a new way forward.

A large part of the story of the Bible follows the family of Abraham. The rest of the Bible story is about this family who became the nation of Israel. Despite God’s personal guidance, Israel gives in to that same temptation to redefine good and evil on their own terms, apart from God. Israel was warned by their own prophets that these choices would lead them back to Babylon, which is what happened. But God doesn’t end the story there. He promises to send a new leader to Israel to cover for their unfaithfulness.

As the part of the Bible called the Old Testament ends, these promises are left unfulfilled. The story continues into the New Testament with Jesus of Nazareth. He said he was bringing all of God’s promises to their completion. The Jesus Movement quickly spread throughout the world, forming new communities of people who follow the way of Jesus.

The Bible ends by pointing to the future day when all wrongs are made right, when evil is eradicated, heaven and earth are united, and humanity can rule the world, together in the love and power of God.



Opening Dialogue: “Family Heritage”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Kumar enters and notices Sneha looking at an old photograph.

Kumar: Hi Sneha. Whose photo is that?

Sneha: Hi, Kumar. This is my great grandfather. He died before I was born. My mom just came across this photo and showed it to me. Now I’m interested to know more about my family heritage.

Kumar: That’s interesting. I love learning about family history.

Sneha: Yeah. My great grandfather built our family home in our village. My dad moved to the city after he did his studies but my uncle still lives in the family home. We visit on special holidays when I can see all my cousins.

Kumar: Did your great grandfather do any great things in his lifetime? Was he a freedom fighter, a school teacher, or a village elder? How many children did he have?

Sneha: Those are some of the questions I have. Now that I have seen his photo, I want to hear more stories about my family. I need to go home and ask my parents to tell me all they know.

Kumar: Sounds great. You go and learn about your family and I will go and ask my parents to tell me stories about mine.

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue.

- ☐ How often do you hear stories of your family history?

Bridge:

Stories help us make meaning out of our lives. They connect one generation with another and show continuity between one’s roots and current reality. In this session, we will explore how individual Bible stories shape a grander narrative that don’t just tell the story of one nation but of all peoples.

Group Discussion: Think about your favorite stories in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament.

- ☐ Who are the characters in your favorite Bible stories?
- ☐ How do stories in the Bible help to shape our understanding of God and human history?

Read: [Leviticus 26:42,45](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think the promises made to Israel's ancestors were so important to God and to the people of Israel?

Activity #1

Ask if any of the participants are ready to recite all the books of the Bible. Give people a chance to try and see how far they can get.

Watch BibleProject Video: "[The Story of the Bible](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- ☐ How does the choice presented to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden relate to the later events of human history?
- ☐ What do you think Babylon represents?
- ☐ How was Israel given a chance to make a new way forward, for themselves and for the rest of humanity?

Read (scan): [Matthew 1:1-17](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think the Gospel of Matthew begins with a review of Jesus' family lineage?

Read (scan): [Acts 2:5-36](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What do you think was the significance of Peter quoting the prophet Joel in verses 17-21? How does this connect the Hebrew Bible with the story of Jesus?
- ☐ What do you think was the significance of Peter quoting King David in verses 25-28 and 34-35? How does this relate to Jesus' identity as Messiah?

Read (scan): [Acts 7:2-53](#)

Discovery Questions:

- ☐ How does Stephen's sermon differ with Peter's sermon in Acts 2?
- ☐ In what ways is it similar?

Activity #2

Divide into groups of 4-5 persons each. Have each group go through Peter and Stephen's sermons. See if they can identify how many times they make references to the Hebrew Bible. When they have finished, have them discuss the relevance of events in the Hebrew Bible to the life of Jesus.

Activity #3

Ask participants if any more of them are ready to recite all the books of the Bible, in order. Once again, select volunteers to judge their recitals.

Summary: In this session, we have learned that though the Bible is a large collection of books, it forms one unified story. Participants are now aware of how the major events and themes that shape the Hebrew Bible lead to Jesus.

Group Sing: "[Revelation](#)", "[Thy Word](#)", "[Living Word](#)", "[Ancient Words](#)" "[Voice of Truth](#)", "[Word of God Speak](#)", "[This is the Air I Breathe](#)" or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 119:4-8](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 8 – The Literature of the Bible

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will be introduced to the main literary styles of the Bible. Awareness of literary styles is one of many elements that will strengthen the reader's ability to analyze and understand the Bible for themselves.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer. Group

Sing: "[Revelation](#)", "[Thy Word](#)", "[Living Word](#)", "[Ancient Words](#)", "[Voice of Truth](#)", "[Word of God Speak](#)", "[This is the Air I Breathe](#)" or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is "The Literature of the Bible". The Bible is a collection of many books telling one unified story from beginning to end. But all those books were written in different literary styles. Think of it being like a bookstore where there are different categories of literature such as history, poetry or nonfiction. They are all literature but they communicate in different ways. The same thing is true for the Bible. If you do not pay attention to the style it is written in, you will miss some of what it is trying to say.

There are three main types of literature in the Bible: narratives, poetry, and prose discourse. Narratives are stories, the most universal form of human communication. Stories train us to make sense of the seemingly random events that happened in life by taking those events and then putting them in a sequence. Together you can start to see the meaning and purpose of it all.

Poetry speaks through creative language linking together images that help us envision the world differently. Prose discourse are speeches, letters, or essays. The focus is constructing a sequence of ideas into one linear argument that requires a logical response.

Most books of the Bible have more than one literary style. They have a primary literary style, like narrative. But then embedded in the narrative, you will come across poems, parables, or a collection of laws. Every biblical book is a unique combination of literary styles. To read a book of the Bible well, we should be familiar with each literary type and how it works.



Opening Dialogue: “The Book Store”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Sneha: Hey, Kumar. Wait up! Where are you going?

Kumar: Hi Sneha. I’m on my way to my favorite bookstore.

Sneha: Wow. Those are not so common these days, with digital books and online booksellers.

Kumar: You’re right. But I just love browsing the books, going from one section to another.

Sneha: What is your favorite kind of book?

Kumar: It depends on my mood. Sometimes, when I have more time, I like to read a long story or a biography of a famous person. On rainy days, though, I like to read poetry. When I feel sad, certain poetry helps me reflect on my troubles.

Sneha: I didn’t know you were such a complex person!

Kumar: What do you like to read?

Sneha: That changes from one time to the next. Right now, I am enjoying reading political philosophy. But, who knows? Next week, I might get tired of that and prefer to read a collection of song lyrics.

Kumar: Well, it sounds like you might want to join me. Let’s spend our afternoon getting lost in a book or two. Let’s get going.

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue.

- ☐ In this age, do you still read books, or just online media?

Bridge:

Literature comes in many styles and are seldom mutually exclusive. Narratives connect people with events and help us make meaning out of life. Poetry appeals to our creativity, emotions and imagination while prose discourse satisfies our need for logical reasoning. The Bible features all of these styles of literature, reflecting the complexity of our humanity.

Group Discussion: Think about your favorite stories in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament.

- ☐ Which style of literature are you more drawn toward? Would you rather read the stories in Genesis, the poetry of Psalms, or the prose discourse of Romans?

Watch BibleProject Video: “[Literary Styles in the Bible](#)”

Video Review: Based on what was presented in the video, discuss the following passages and their corresponding questions.

Read: [Psalm 23](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How does poetic language like this speak differently to you than, say a logical argument or a persuasive speech?

Read: [2 Samuel 17:41-47](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ What do you think is the purpose of reading narratives like the battle between David and Goliath?

Read: [1 Corinthians 15:12-14](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ How is this passage different from the previous two passages? How is its style different? How is its purpose different?

Video Review: Replay the video once again, looking for the answers to the questions below. Pause the video and discuss as needed.

Video Discovery Questions

- ☐ Are you inclined to read stories to see their characters as moral examples? What is wrong with that?
- ☐ What are the different kinds of narrative found in the Bible?
- ☐ What are the different kinds of poetry found in the Bible?
- ☐ How are the logical arguments of prose discourse used?
- ☐ Where do we find the different kinds of prose discourse?
- ☐ How do the different literary styles make complementary contributions to the Bible?

Group Activity #1

Identify the literary type of the following passages by labeling them as either: narrative (N), poetry (P) or prose discourse (D).

_____ Exodus 2:1-9	_____ Luke 1:5-20
_____ Exodus 15:1-5	_____ Luke 1:46-55
_____ Exodus 20:1-17	_____ Luke 6:20-23

Group Activity #2 (Optional, preparation required)

Divide participants into groups. Print the names of all the books of the Bible (without groupings) and distribute a copy to each group. Have participants assign the sections for each book (shown below). If you want to make a competition, the first group to identify all of the groupings correctly is the declared winner.

Law (Torah): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Prophets (Nevi'im): Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Writings (Ketuvim): Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1-2 Chronicles

Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

Apostles' Writings: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation

Group Activity #3

Ask participants if any of them are ready to recite all the books of the Bible, in order. Encourage the rest of them to continue memorizing them, as we will ask again in the next session.

Summary: In this session, we have learned about the main literary styles of the Bible, elements that will strengthen the reader's ability to understand the Bible for themselves.

Group Sing: "[Revelation](#)", "[Thy Word](#)", "[Living Word](#)", "[Ancient Words](#)", "[Voice of Truth](#)", "[Word of God Speak](#)", "[This is the Air I Breathe](#)" or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 3:3-8](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 9 – The Timeline of the Bible

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will learn an overview of the biblical story separated into 16 chapters. This will help them better understand the chronological order of the events and how different parts of the Bible relate to one another. Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Revelation](#)”, “[Thy Word](#)”, “[Living Word](#)”, “[Ancient Words](#)”, “[Voice of Truth](#)”, “[Word of God Speak](#)” “[This is the Air I Breathe](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this lesson is “The Timeline of the Bible”. This will help you understand the flow of the biblical story. Knowing this 16-part summary will help you read the Bible for yourself and see how one part relates to another. The Bible is a collection of many books written over a long period of time. Altogether, they tell one unified story.

The sixteen chapters presented in this lesson are as follows:

- 1) Creation and Fall
- 2) The Covenant with Abraham
- 3) The Exodus from Egypt
- 4) The Covenant at Mt. Sinai
- 5) The Wilderness
- 6) The Promised Land
- 7) The Rise and Fall of Israel’s Kingdom
- 8) The Prophets Before the Exile
- 9) The Wisdom of Israel
- 10) The Prophets of the Exile
- 11) The Return from Exile
- 12) The Prophets After the Exile
- 13) The Story So Far: Chronicles
- 14) Jesus and the Kingdom
- 15) The People of the Kingdom
- 16) The Revelation

These sixteen chapters do not exactly follow a timeline or the book order found in most Bibles. Nonetheless, it will help readers understand the flow of the biblical story and how one part of the Bible relates to the others and how they all lead to Jesus.



Opening Dialogue: “History’s Timeline”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Sneha: Hi, Kumar. What are you reading?

Kumar: *(looking up from his paper)* Hi Sneha. I’m studying for my history exam tomorrow?

Sneha: Oh, I love history. What about you?

Kumar: It’s all just random names and dates to me. It doesn’t seem to be relevant or very interesting. I hardly know the difference between the Emperor Akbar and Mohandas Gandhi. I couldn’t tell you where they came from or which one came first.

Sneha: What? You can’t understand history by just memorizing a list of names and dates. It just won’t make sense. If you know their stories, you will see the connection between them. For example, Akbar was one of the Mughal emperors who ruled much of India and built some of our greatest structures such as the Taj Mahal. Gandhi came much later, while the British ruled India. He led a non-violent resistance movement that led to our independence.

Kumar: Okay, back up. If I’m going to understand history, you will need to slow down a bit and tell me their stories, one at a time. That sounds more interesting than this list of facts.

Sneha: Yes, and once you know the stories, the timeline of history will make much more sense!

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue.

☐ When have you found history to be interesting?

Bridge:

Today we are going to learn the basic chronology of the Bible. We will follow the timeline of the Bible by dividing the books into 16 chapters that help us understand the connection between the different parts of the Bible and how they lead to one, unified story that leads to Jesus.

Watch Bible Project Video: “[Intro to the Read Scripture Series](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Question:

☐ Which of the 16 parts presented in this video seem to be out of chronological or book sequence order?

- ☐ How different would the story of Jesus be if there were no Abraham, Moses, or David?
- ☐ What are the similarities between “Creation and Fall” and “The Revelation”?



Group Activity #1

Identify the order of the chapters from the video by numbering the titles shown below.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ___ Jesus and the Kingdom | ___ The Return from Exile |
| ___ The Exodus from Egypt | ___ The Story So Far: Chronicles |
| ___ The Prophets Before the Exile | ___ The Wilderness |
| ___ Creation and Fall | ___ The People of the Kingdom |
| ___ The Promised Land | ___ The Prophets After the Exile |
| ___ Rise and Fall of Israel’s Kingdom | ___ The Revelation |
| ___ The Prophets of the Exile | ___ The Covenant at Mt. Sinai |
| ___ The Wisdom of Israel | ___ The Covenant with Abraham |

Group Activity #2

Using your list from Activity #1, identify which chapter from the video the following passages would be part of:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| _____ Proverbs 29 | _____ Daniel 3 |
| _____ Exodus 5 | _____ 2 Chronicles 15 |
| _____ Numbers 3 | _____ Joshua 12 |
| _____ Acts 12 | _____ Revelation 21 |
| _____ Genesis 2 | _____ 1 Samuel 8 |
| _____ Exodus 20 | _____ Nehemiah 11 |
| _____ Malachi 1 | _____ Genesis 19 |
| _____ Luke 10 | _____ Joel 2 |

Group Activity #3

Organize the following biblical characters in chronological or sequential order.

___ Jeremiah	___ Matthew	___ Judah
___ Noah	___ Elijah	___ Adam
___ Sarah	___ Moses	___ Jonah
___ Balaam	___ Joshua	___ Paul
___ John	___ Ezekiel	___ Daniel
___ Mary	___ David	___ Ruth
___ Isaac	___ Samuel	___ Isaiah
___ Cain	___ Rachel	___ Esther
___ Nehemiah	___ Peter	___ Timothy
___ King Saul	___ Samson	___ Jesus

Group Activity #4

Ask participants if any of them are ready to recite all the books of the Bible, in order. Select volunteers to judge their recitals.

Summary: In this session, participants were introduced to an overview of the biblical story separated into 16 chapters. This will help them better understand the chronological order of the events and how different parts of the Bible relate to one another.



Group Sing: “[Revelation](#)”, “[Thy Word](#)”, “[Living Word](#)”, “[Ancient Words](#)”, “[Voice of Truth](#)”, “[Word of God Speak](#)” “[This is the Air I Breathe](#)” or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 119:9-16](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Session 10 – The Public Reading of Scripture

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will become aware of the practice of publicly reading Scripture and will be encouraged to participate in this practice themselves.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Revelation](#)”, “[Thy Word](#)”, “[Living Word](#)”, “[Ancient Words](#)”, “[Voice of Truth](#)”, “[Word of God Speak](#)”, “[This is the Air I Breathe](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this lesson is “The Public Reading of Scripture”. These words come from Paul’s letter to Timothy, but the practice started much earlier. After the Israelites were rescued from Egypt, they needed to understand their identity. As Moses gathered the people together to read the Scriptures aloud, he reminded them of where they came from, who they were, and the future they were to live for.

When the people finally settled in the Promised Land, Joshua pulled the people together. Once again, they listened to the Scriptures read aloud. After this, the practice of reading Scripture in public seems to have ceased and the people forgot their story. When King Josiah re-discovered the Scriptures centuries later, he was so excited that he called Israel to resume this practice. It sparked a renewal movement. That is, until the people forgot once more and ended up in exile. So when Ezra and Nehemiah came back from the exile, they reminded the people who they were and how they were to live by reading the Scriptures.

Reading Scripture together became a core part of Jewish life. It was done every week as they gathered in the synagogue. Jesus himself did this. When the early church was being established, Paul told Timothy to keep this practice going, to immerse the whole community in the story of the Scriptures.

Something happens when you hear God’s Word read aloud with other people. You do not need anyone to preach or teach. You just listen to the Scriptures then talk about what you have heard. This is what God’s people have always done when they enter into new and uncertain times. They remember their story and who they are through the public reading of the Scriptures.



Opening Dialogue: “The Habits of Life”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Sneha: Hi, Kumar. How are you?

Kumar: Oh, hi Sneha. I’m feeling so hungry. I left the house early this morning and haven’t eaten anything all day. Now, I’m ravenous. Look, there’s a sweet shop. Maybe I can get some kind of snack there.

Sneha: What? If you haven’t eaten all day, you need something nutritious, not a sugary snack. Don’t you eat meals with your family?

Kumar: Oh, we’re all too busy. Our schedules are different so we just find something and eat it on our own.

Sneha: Things are much different in our family. We sit together for a quick meal in the morning but our evening dinners are a great event. My mother cooks a full meal. We sit and talk together long after the food is eaten. We almost never miss it.

Kumar: Wow, that sounds great. I wish our family kept that kind of pattern. Maybe I wouldn’t be so hungry right now!

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- ☐ In your childhood, did one of your parents or siblings ever read aloud to you? What do you remember from these readings?

Bridge:

Private habits are much more difficult to maintain than public habits. For example, if children didn’t attend school regularly, most of them would not read, do maths, or study science. Public activities create shared values and mutual accountability. In this session, we are looking at the practice of publicly reading Scripture. Public reading provides a different dynamic than private reading in that it gives us a basis for discussing common issues and keeps the word of the Lord in the forefront of our thoughts.

Public Reading of Scripture: [Luke 4:16-17](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How do you think Jesus’ own education was influenced by the custom of his synagogue reading the Scriptures publicly?

Watch BibleProject Video: “[Public Reading of Scripture](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.



Video Discussion Question:

- ☐ How did the public reading of Scripture remind the Israelites who they were and how they were to live? How does it tell us today who we are and how we should live?

Public Reading of Scripture: [Nehemiah 8:1-9](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ What kind of effect did public reading of Scripture have on the people of Israel after they returned from exile in Babylon?

Public Reading of Scripture: [1 Timothy 4:13](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Where did the public reading of Scripture fit into the broader scheme of instruction for the church?

Public Reading of Scripture: [2 Timothy 3:16](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ According to this passage, what are the primary uses of the Holy Scriptures?
- ☐ How do your Christian friends help hold you accountable to the teachings of the Bible? How would the public reading of Scripture affect common values and accountability?

Public Reading of Scripture: [2 Kings 22:1-23](#)

Select several volunteers to publicly read the passage above.

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think the king tore his robes when he heard the words of the Book of the Law read?
- ☐ Why was the Lord’s anger so great against Israel? (vs. 16-17)

Activity #1

Ask participants if any of them are ready to recite all the books of the Bible, in order. Select volunteers to judge their recitals.

Activity #2

Divide into groups of 4-5 participants and discuss the following: It takes roughly 90 hours to read through the entire Bible. So, it would take less than 20 minutes per day or 2 hours per week to read all 66 books in less than one year. This is roughly equivalent to one mealtime per day. Alone, one is likely to fall away from such a private practice. However, if it were to become part of one's public life, it is much more attainable.

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ How could you structure more Scripture reading into your life?
- ☐ What are your options for reading privately or listening to the Bible being read?
- ☐ What are your options for being part of the public reading of Scripture?



Summary: In this session, participants were made aware of the practice of publicly reading Scripture. Our hope is they will look for ways to participate in this practice themselves. There are many tools that can help, especially for private reading. For example, the YouVersion Bible is a free smartphone app that features many reading plans, a wide variety of translations and even audio Bibles that you can listen to with a group or on your own. Another good source for free audio Bibles in more than 1300 languages is www.FaithComesByHearing.com.

Group Sing: “[Revelation](#)”, “[Thy Word](#)”, “[Living Word](#)”, “[Ancient Words](#)”, “[Voice of Truth](#)”, “[Word of God Speak](#)”, “[This is the Air I Breathe](#)” or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 119:17-24](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Building Christian Character

Session 11 – Listening to and Obeying God

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will learn about the importance of listening to God. After all, faith is our response to the word of God. Faith comes by hearing yet listening involves more than just hearing the words. True listening includes a response to words, including discerning the source of the words and understanding the meaning of the words. We will explore these and other foundational concepts of listening, learning and growing in the knowledge of God.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Step by Step](#)”, “[To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this lesson is “Listening to and Obeying God”. In this next section of lessons, we will examine a variety of topics aimed at building the character of those who choose to follow the Lord, according to the teachings of Scripture. Hearing the word of the Lord and growing in the knowledge of the Lord is the foundation of discipleship, but the process is not complete until the follower is living out the commands of the Lord. That idea is not that complex, but its importance is often overlooked.

In Session 6, we looked at the concept of divine revelation as the source of the Scriptures. In this session, we will look at divine revelation as the source of personal faith. As Jesus said, “My sheep know my voice.” Discerning God’s voice is integral to a fuller understanding of listening to and obeying God.

Beyond discerning the Lord’s voice, listening connects hearing with doing and understanding metaphors and other symbolic language. In this lesson, we will explore these broader implications of listening and then see how they connect to the process of learning and growing in the knowledge. After all, to build Christian character, one must assume the posture of an active learner, where ideas are translated into loving action and faithfulness to our Lord.



Opening Dialogue: “Are you listening to me?”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Sneha is chatting non-stop about her friends and all kinds of trivial details about their different habits, dress preferences, hair styles, etc.

Kumar is uninterested and his eyes and thoughts wander from their conversation.

Sneha: (noticing Kumar’s inattention) Are you listening to me?

Kumar (*shaken, hesitating*) Uh, uh, well, I heard a lot of noise coming from you.

With that, Kumar and Sneha exit the stage.

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue.

- ☐ How often do you hear words as if they were noises?
- ☐ How do you prioritize your listening to filter out noise and concentrate on what is really important?

Bridge:

At first glance, it would seem that listening was a rather simple concept. But upon further examination, we see that there are many complexities related to listening, such as discerning the Lord’s voice, connecting hearing with doing, and understanding metaphors and other symbolic language. In this lesson, we will explore these broader implications of listening.

Read: [Deuteronomy 6:1-3](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why would parents want to make sure their children carefully listened to and obeyed all their instructions?



Watch BibleProject Video: “[Word Study: Shema/Listen](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discovery Question:

- ☐ How does the meaning of the Hebrew word for listen, *shema*, add an extra element to the concept of listening?

Read: [Genesis 26:4-5](#)

Discovery Question:

- ☐ What was it about Abraham that God considered him faithful and blessed him and his descendants?

Read: [1 Samuel 3:1-10](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think Samuel was unable to recognize the voice as coming from the Lord the first 3 times he heard?

Read: [1 Kings 19:11-13](#)

Discovery Question:

- ☐ In which element did Elijah hear the voice of the Lord?

Read: [John 10:27](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ How does the metaphor of a sheep listening to its shepherd represent God's Spirit communicating with a person?
- ☐ Have you ever discerned that God was speaking to you? Describe your experience.

Read [Matthew 13:13](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How is it that we can hear something like a parable yet not understand its meaning?

Read: [Matthew 7:24-27](#)

Discovery Questions:

- ☐ What is the difference between the wise person and the foolish person? How do they listen differently?

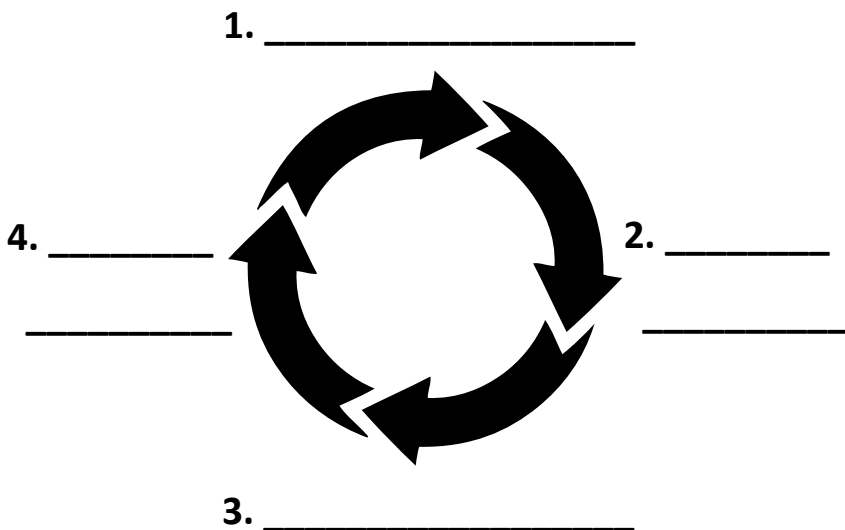
Bridge:

As we have seen, listening involves much more than receiving information. Altogether, it represents a spectrum of the process of learning, which we will examine in this session's final activity.

Activity - The Cycle of Learning

The prayer in [Colossians 1:9-10](#) gives us insight into the learning process of those who follow Jesus. See if you can identify four parts of what may be referred to as the “cycle of learning”. Fill in the labels for each stage in the blanks provided.

The Cycle of Learning



Summary: In this session, we have learned about the importance of listening to God. Listening involves more than just hearing the sound of the words, but includes a faithful response to what is heard. As we can see in the cycle of learning, being filled with the knowledge of God’s will is just the beginning of the process. True hearing leads to living a life worthy of the Lord, pleasing him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in a personal knowledge of God. Going through this process develops greater spiritual insight and wisdom about God’s will so that the cycle can continue toward increasing faithfulness.



Group Sing: “[Step by Step](#)”, “[To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice](#)” or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 17:6-9](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Session 12 – The Beginning of Wisdom

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will look inward to develop their personal character, starting with the fear of the Lord. We will introduce the idea that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and will give space for participants to consider the meaning of this precept. Participants will also become familiar with the book of Proverbs, its structure and main themes. In particular, they will learn about the Hebrew concept of wisdom, *chokma*, and how it is a resource for experiencing the good life.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[The Fear of the Lord](#)”, “[Be Thou My Vision](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “The Beginning of Wisdom”. In today’s global culture, young people are taught to avoid fear. Questioning authority seems to be an admirable quality. Yet, the Bible instructs us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. How does fear lead us to wisdom? We are usually afraid of something that has the potential to destroy us. If we are walking near a street with cars passing by, we are wise to fear the cars since they can harm us. We are taught that God is love. If that is true, why should we fear God? Well, fear is not the fruit of God’s Spirit, but it is the first step toward outcomes of love, joy, peace, patience and other godly virtues.

For most of us, wisdom means knowledge. But the Hebrew word *chokma* means much more than just mental activity. It refers to action such as a skill or applied knowledge. The purpose of Proverbs is to help you develop a set of practical skills for living well in God’s world.

So wherever people are making good or just or wise decisions, they are tapping into *chokma*. And whenever someone is making a bad decision, they are working against *chokma*. It is like a moral law of the universe. It is a cause-effect pattern and no one can escape it. You show you possess *chokma* when you put it to work and develop the skill of making a good life.



Opening Dialogue: “Meeting with the Boss”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Kumar is trying to fold a necktie and is not doing it very well. Sneha enters and observes his foolishness. Finally, she breaks the silence,

Sneha: (looking puzzled) What are you doing, Kumar?

Kumar: (jumps) Oh, I didn’t see you. I’m getting ready for an important meeting with my boss. I want to make sure I impress him with my manners and good dress.

Sneha: Let me see if I can help. Why is it so important to impress this man? You are usually so calm.

Kumar: You need to understand, receiving my boss’ favor can really have an impact on my career. If he sees what I am capable of, I will have opportunities.

Sneha: What does that have to do with dressing so nicely?

Kumar: I have to show him respect. Last month, a young guy in our office was late to a meeting with the boss. Not only that, he showed up with messy clothes and uncombed hair. The boss was so offended by his lack of respect, he was removed from an important project. The boss is a nice guy, but we need to show him proper respect. For me, wearing a tie makes that statement.

Sneha: (pausing to consider his words) Well, then, let’s see if we can get this tied correctly!

They proceed with tying the necktie and exit the stage.

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- ☐ How did Kumar feel about going into a meeting with his boss?
- ☐ How did his preparations for the meeting reflect the respect he has for his boss?

Bridge:

God’s people are to reflect to the wisdom of their Lord. Wisdom comes with time and faith filled learning. But it has a starting point and a purpose. In this lesson, we will examine both of those, as we also study the Hebrew word for wisdom, *chokma*.

Read: [Psalm 111:10](#)

Discovery Question:

- ☐ What do you think is the difference between the beginning of wisdom and the end of wisdom?

Watch BibleProject Video: "[Wisdom Series: Proverbs](#)"

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- ☐ How does Lady Wisdom offer those who pursuit of the good life?
- ☐ Why do you think fearing the Lord establishes a foundation for one to gain wisdom?

Read: [Deuteronomy 8:6](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think fearing the Lord is evidenced by obeying his commands?

Read: [Exodus 3:1-6](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ Think about being in front of a burning bush, like Moses. How would you react?
- ☐ Would you also be afraid to see the Lord's face? What else do you think you would be concerned with?

Read: [Proverbs 2:6-8](#)

Discovery Question:

- ☐ What is the connection between wisdom and righteousness (doing what is good and right)?

Read: [Proverbs 2:12-16](#)

Discovery Question:

- ☐ What are some of the ways that wisdom saves us?



Group Activity

Consider how you would react in different circumstances. When would you find strength, courage or fear? Look up the following passages and decide whether you would be more likely to react with fear or courage.

Abraham, Isaac and the Sacrifice – [Genesis 22:1-12](#)

The Pharaoh and the Plagues – [Exodus 9:23-30](#)

Israel's Request for a King – [1 Samuel 12:12-22](#)

Jesus' disciples in the stormy boat – [Matthew 8:23-25](#)

Summary: In this session, we have looked inward to develop participants' personal character, starting with the fear of the Lord. We explored the idea that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We also studied the Hebrew concept of wisdom, *chokma*, which is central in the book of Proverbs and is a critical resource for experiencing the good life.



Group Sing: “[The Fear of the Lord](#)”, “[Be Thou My Vision](#)” or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 19:7-9](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Session 13 – Loving God and Loving Others

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will consider how to live according to God's will, which can be summarized by loving God and loving one another. Since love is the heart of God's character, it is central to how he wants his people to live.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: "[Love God Love People](#)", "[I Will Follow](#)" or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is "Loving God and Loving Others". By carefully looking at the biblical teaching on loving God and loving others, we will examine the more complete meaning of the Hebrew word for love in the Bible, ahavah. Ahavah refers to the kind of affection or care that one person shows another.

God doesn't love people because they earn or deserve it. His love simply emanates from his character. It is what comes naturally and is expressed both in God's sentiments toward people and in his actions.

Human love is easily corrupted by humanity. But, when humans are led by God and filled with his Spirit, human love becomes more like God's love and shows itself through actions. God-like love is selfless and looks out for the well-being of others. This takes on many forms, including helping those in need, such as defending the cause of the fatherless, sharing food with the hungry, or providing the homeless person with shelter and warm clothing to protect them from the cold of winter.

God's people are to imitate God's love by showing love for others. When we consider what the Lord asks of his people, we read it is to fear the Lord, to walk in his ways, to love him, serve him and to keep his commands. Even his commands, however, are centered on putting love into action. As we will see in this session, God delights in people being in right relationship with one another. In fact, we could even say that the main way that God wants us to show our love for him is to love our neighbor as ourself.



Opening Dialogue: “Who is my neighbor?”

Two Characters: Kumar and Sneha

Kumar: Hi Sneha, what are you doing?

Sneha: Hi, Kumar. I am getting ready for a neighborhood celebration. We’re going to have delicious food, musicians, games. It should be a very memorable occasion. Right now, I’m preparing the invitations.

Kumar: Wow, that sounds great. Who are you inviting?

Sneha: (*pauses to think*) Well, it’s a neighborhood celebration. So, we’re inviting all our neighbors.

Kumar: Will that include all the different communities? Some of them don’t get along very well.

Sneha (*putting her hand on her chin, responding slowly*) Hmm, I hadn’t thought that through. This could get complicated.

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- ☐ What does it mean for someone to be your neighbor?
- ☐ How can you treat all of your neighbors in an honorable way?

Bridge:

As we pursue the task of building Christian character, we need to establish a solid understanding of the most basic and important commands: loving God and loving others. In this lesson, we will explore some of the dimensions of love and the actions toward which love leads us.

Read: [Luke 10:25-29](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think the law expert is asking this question?

Read: [Luke 10:30-37](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What do you normally think of when someone refers to a neighbor?

- ☐ Who was the neighbor in this story?
- ☐ How did he act differently from conventional expectations of a passerby?



Watch BibleProject Video: “[Word Study: Ahavah/Love](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What is most commonly meant when people refer to love?
- ☐ Which kinds of love can be selfish?
- ☐ How does the meaning of the Hebrew word for love, “Ahavah” contrast with selfish forms of love?

Read: [Matthew 22:36-40](#); [Mark 12:28-31,33](#); [Luke 10:27](#)
[Matthew 7:12](#); [Romans 13:9-10](#); [Galatians 5:14](#)

Discovery Questions:

- ☐ Which of these six passages summarize the Law and the Prophets with two commands?
- ☐ Which of these passages summarize the Law and the Prophets with just one command?
- ☐ When the Law and the Prophets is summarized with just one command, which one is it?
- ☐ So, which command do you think is the most important?
- ☐ According to [Matthew 22:36-38](#), which command did Jesus consider to be the most important?

Read: [Deuteronomy 10: 11-13](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Where did love fit into the broader array of what God asked of his people, upon giving them his covenant laws?

Read: [John 15:10-14](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How are keeping God's commands related to a life of loving others?

Activity

Go through the following list of the 10 Commandments and identify whether it relates to loving God or loving others.

- _____ Have no other gods
- _____ Do not make graven images
- _____ Do not misuse the name of the Lord
- _____ Keep the Sabbath day holy
- _____ Honor your father and mother
- _____ Do not murder
- _____ Do not commit adultery
- _____ Do not steal
- _____ Do not give false testimony
- _____ Do not covet

Application

Have each participant think about a neighbor who is facing some kind of need or someone who might not know you well or even regard you as an enemy. Identify a specific thing they can do this week for that person to heal a wound and show them loving kindness.

Summary: In this session, to better understand God's will, we have considered the implications of the most important of all of God's commands: loving God and loving others. We have also considered how to put this into practice in our personal lives.

Group Sing: "[Love God Love People](#)" , "[I Will Follow](#)" or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 103:1-6](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 14 – Seeking Justice

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will explore the complexities of justice and how it relates to understanding the character of God and his command to love your neighbor.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Micah 6:8 Song](#)” , “[Days of Elijah](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this lesson is “Seeking Justice”. The Bible teaches us that humans are created in the image of God. Consequently, all people are viewed as being equal before God and are expected to treat one another with dignity and fairness. Perhaps this is why, throughout history, humans have always seemed to care about justice, especially when there is an absence of it, which is nearly universal. After all, humans have fought to define good and evil for themselves. This has brought much injustice.

The Bible teaches God’s people to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice. The biblical Hebrew word for righteousness is *tsedeka*. Doing righteousness implies being a good person. But *tsedeka* goes beyond that, with an ethical standard that expects people to be in right relationship with others, treating them as being made the image of God.

The Hebrew word in the Bible for justice is *mishpat*. This can refer to retributive justice, paying for the consequences of our actions. But most often, *mishpat* refers to restorative justice. This means going a step further, actually seeking out vulnerable people who are being taken advantage of and helping them. Some people call this charity but *mishpat* involves much more. It means taking steps to advocate for the vulnerable and changing social structures to prevent injustice. So, justice and righteousness are about a radical, selfless way of life.

God’s response to humanity’s legacy of injustice is the life of Jesus who lived righteously and pursued justice. Yet he died on behalf of the guilty. His resurrection points us toward the renewed creation when God will restore justice and righteousness throughout.



Opening Dialogue: “Injustice”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Kumar and Sneha enter the stage together. Kumar is shaking his head and looking frustrated.

Sneha: Hi, Kumar. You look upset. What’s wrong?

Kumar: Oh, hi, Sneha. I can’t believe it. I trusted that guy and now I see that he cheated me.

Sneha: What are you talking about? What happened?

Kumar: I was working on a project at the office. I spent all weekend finishing our team’s work. On Monday morning, I left for the office but the tire on my bike got punctured. So, I called one of my teammates and emailed him the finished work. When I got to the office, I learned that he had turned it in and took credit for all the work I had done.

Sneha: That’s not right! What happened next?

Kumar: He was given the role as team leader.

Sneha: Unbelievable! I would be so mad. We can’t let him get away with this. Can we?

Kumar and Sneha stare at each other, shrug their shoulders and exit the stage.

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- ☐ Why do you think people care so much about fairness?
- ☐ How do you feel when you are a victim of injustice?

Bridge:

It seems that we are born with a desire for justice. When we experience injustice, we react, sometimes strongly. When facing powers and authorities too great to bend to our protests, however, we learn to silence our dissatisfaction and yield to those powers. In such cases, we might ask why the Lord allows such injustice to prosper. In this session, we will explore these themes and seek some answers.

Read: [Micah 6:8](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What do you think is the difference between justice and mercy? How can people demonstrate humility?

Watch BibleProject Video: "[Justice](#)"

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.



Video Discussion Question:

- ☐ What were some of the ways that God expressed his concern for justice with the nation of Israel?

Read: [Exodus 23:1-9](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ These laws are called the "Laws of Justice and Mercy". Which of these are about justice and which are a reflection of mercy?
- ☐ What do verses 3 and 6 say about how to treat poor people in lawsuits?
- ☐ How are biblical principles of justice and mercy different from the assertion of civil rights in modern legal system?

Read: [Deuteronomy 16:18-20](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ Why do you think God gave special commandments concerning the appointment of judges?

Read: [Deuteronomy 25:13-16](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think the Israelites were specifically instructed not to use dishonest weights and measures?
- ☐ How could corrupt judges, false witnesses or dishonest weights and measures affect the justice of a society?

Read: [Hebrews 1:8-9](#)

Discussion Questions:

- ☐ If God promises justice in his eternal kingdom, does that mean we have to wait for justice here and now?

Activity

Look at the following commands or exhortations from the Bible and identify whether it represents justice or mercy.

- _____ Leave 2nd harvest for the poor ([Lev. 19:10](#))
- _____ Don't take advantage of workers ([Deut. 24:14](#))
- _____ Pay laborers their wages each day ([Deut. 24:15](#))
- _____ Advocate for the stranger ([Job 29:16](#))
- _____ Don't accept bribes ([Isaiah 33:15](#))
- _____ Share food with the hungry ([Isaiah 58:7](#))
- _____ Defend the just cause of the poor ([Jer. 5:28](#))
- _____ Don't deny justice to the oppressed ([Amos 2:7](#))
- _____ Forgive wrongdoers ([Matthew 6:12](#))
- _____ Care for widows and orphans ([James 1:27](#))

Application

Have each participant think about first-hand situations that result in injustice. Have them consider if there is a way they could be involved to bring justice and mercy to those involved.

Summary: In this session, we have explored the complexities of justice and how it relates to understanding the character of God and his command to love one another.

Group Sing: "[Micah 6:8 Song](#)" , "[Days of Elijah](#)" or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 33:1-5](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 15 – Becoming a Peacemaker

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will learn about the role of a peacemaker, looking at the biblical words for peace, the ministry of reconciliation and how peacemaking fits into the broader scope of the Christian life. Participants will consider the implications of how peacemaking reflects the kingdom of God and how the people of God should live with and love their neighbors.

Pray: Have someone open the session by leading in prayer.

Group Sing: “[Reconciliation Song](#)”, “[I Could Sing of Your Love Forever](#)” or other selection.



Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “Becoming a Peacemaker” which is the final lesson in the section on *Building Christian Character* and in Volume 1 of *Getting Equipped*. In the previous sessions in this section on Building Christian Character, we have seen that God delights in his people being in right relationship with one another. Yet, being in a world that is living with the consequences of humanity defining good and evil for themselves results in violence, dishonesty, and many forms of hostility. In other words, the world needs peacemakers.

When people talk about peace, they are usually referring to the absence of war. In the Bible, peace also points to the presence of something better in its place. The most basic meaning of the biblical words for peace is complete or whole. In verb form, they mean “to make complete” or “to restore”. This can apply to both repairing physical damages and restoring broken human relationships.

In the book of Proverbs, to “bring peace” means to reconcile and heal a broken relationship. In the New Testament, we learn that Jesus’ followers are called to create peace. Becoming people of peace means representing a king who promises peace throughout his kingdom. This will be inaugurated when all his creation is made new and he exercises his authority over all creation. Participating in the ministry of reconciliation gives people a prophetic foretaste of the peace that will characterize God’s kingdom and the New Creation. This fuels hope for the future God has in store for us.



Opening Skit: “Neighbors Divided”

Two characters: Kumar and Sneha

Sneha: Hi, Kumar. How are things going for you today?

Kumar: Hi Sneha. It’s not good. There’s a lot of tension between our neighbors today. There’s a scarcity of water and now I’m afraid things could get violent.

Sneha: What happened?

Kumar: Our neighborhood had come together to repair the bore well that provides water to most of our homes.

Sneha: That sounds good. How is it so bad now?

Kumar: Well, we were making progress until the leaders from one of the communities stated they deserved a greater portion of the water. They insulted people from my community. Now, no one wants to contribute for the repairs, but we cannot afford the work unless we combine our resources.

Sneha: It sounds like you need a peacemaker to bring your communities together. Otherwise, you will all suffer.

Kumar: I think you are right. But who will come forward?

Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- ☐ Have you ever found yourself in a situation similar to Kumar’s neighborhood, where people are against each other? How did you respond?
- ☐ What does it take for someone to come in and arbitrate peace between opposing sides?

Bridge:

There are many ways that peace is destroyed, hurting families, communities and even nations. Broken promises, rivalries and struggles for power and control are some of the common sources. In such situations, we need peacemakers. In this session, we will look closer at the meaning of peace and the dynamics of reconciliation and peacemaking.

Read: [Matthew 5:9](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think peacemakers are called “children of God”?

Watch BibleProject Video: “[Word Study: Shalom/Peace](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What do you think about the idea of peace being more than just the absence of war, representing wholeness?

Read: [James 3:17-18](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How are wisdom and righteousness related to peacemaking?

Read: [Matthew 5:23-24](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think it is a higher priority to restore a broken relationship than to make an offering to the Lord?

Read: [Matthew 18:15-17](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ What is the process for dealing with wrongdoing by those in your same church fellowship?

Read: [Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:19-20](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ How do you think Jesus’ death on the cross reconciled us with God, or made peace between us?

Read: [2 Corinthians 5:17-19](#)

Discussion Question:

- ☐ Why do you think the new creation is connected to the ministry of reconciliation?



Activity

Read the stories of these biblical characters and consider how they served as peacemakers.

Abraham & Lot ([Genesis 13:5-12](#))

Isaac & the Wells of Gerar ([Genesis 26:12-22](#))

Joseph & His Brothers ([Genesis 45:1-11](#))

Application

Think about a situation in your family, school, workplace or neighborhood where there is tension between people who act like one another's adversaries. In groups of 4-5 participants each, discuss ways you might be able to serve as a peacemaker, restoring wholeness to the people involved in this situation. Share some of your ideas with the larger group.

Summary: In this session, we have learned about the vital role of peacemaking. God desires for his world to live in peace. But while that world is in rebellion against his rule, he desires for his people to represent him in the ministry of reconciliation and peacemaking. This is the good news of God's Kingdom!



Group Sing: "[Reconciliation Song](#)" , "[I Could Sing of Your Love Forever](#)" or other selection.

Pray: Together as a group recite [Psalm 29:7-11](#), then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Appendices

Alternative Lesson Arrangements

The lessons contained in *Getting Equipped* are designed to be used either as stand-alone lessons for group meetings that last 90 minutes or more. The lessons also complement one another so that they can be used together as part of a longer-term learning series. These 15 lessons were initially used for a 5-day camp. Each day, participants followed 3 lessons, one from each of the categories: Understanding God, Understanding the Bible and Building Christian Character. Some groups may prefer to make their own arrangement and order of lessons, but the chart below shows one way these lessons may be put together.

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Day	Understanding God	Understanding the Bible	Building Christian Character
1	<u>The Good News of God's Kingdom</u>	<u>Learning What the Bible Is</u>	<u>Listening to and Obeying God</u>
2	<u>The Holiness of God</u>	<u>Learning the Story of the Bible</u>	<u>The Beginning of Wisdom</u>
3	<u>The Lordship of God</u>	<u>Learning the Literature of the Bible</u>	<u>Loving God and Loving Others</u>
4	<u>The Holy Spirit of God</u>	<u>The Timeline of the Bible</u>	<u>Seeking Justice</u>
5	<u>The Covenant Faithfulness of God</u>	<u>The Public Reading of Scripture</u>	<u>Becoming Peacemakers</u>

BibleProject Videos

The lesson content in *Getting Equipped* are designed around themes from the series of animated videos created by the BibleProject. Equippers collaborated with BibleProject, localizing these videos into Indian languages and developing resources for engagement. Below is a chart that identifies the lesson topics and the videos that correspond with those lessons.

Lesson Topics and Corresponding BibleProject Videos		
Understanding God	Understanding the Bible	Building Christian Character
<u>"The Good News of God's Kingdom"</u> Video: <u>Gospel of the Kingdom</u>	<u>"Learning What the Bible Is"</u> Video: <u>What is the Bible?</u>	<u>"Listening to and Obeying God"</u> Video: <u>Word Study on Shema/Listen</u>
<u>"The Holiness of God"</u> Video: <u>Holiness</u>	<u>"The Story of the Bible"</u> Video: <u>The Story of the Bible</u>	<u>"The Beginning of Wisdom"</u> Video: <u>Proverbs</u>
<u>"The Lordship of God"</u> Video: <u>Messiah</u>	<u>"The Literature of the Bible"</u> Video: <u>Literary Styles of the Bible</u>	<u>"Loving God and Loving Others"</u> Video: <u>Word Study on Ahavah/Love</u>
<u>"The Holy Spirit of God"</u> Video: <u>Holy Spirit</u>	<u>"The Timeline of the Bible"</u> Video: <u>Intro to Read Scripture Series</u>	<u>"Seeking Justice"</u> Video: <u>Justice</u>
<u>"The Covenant Faithfulness of God"</u> Video: <u>Covenants</u>	<u>"The Public Reading of Scripture"</u> Video: <u>Public Reading of Scripture</u>	<u>"Becoming Peacemakers"</u> Video: <u>Word Study on Shalom/Peace</u>



BibleProject

Group Singing

We recommend groups to sing worship songs together, to usher in a spirit of attentiveness, listening and learning. While styles and preferences will vary and you may choose to sing in other languages, we have selected a sampling of English songs whose lyrics fit the themes of the lessons and whose music styles are more appealing to a contemporary audience. All these songs can be found with displayed lyrics by searching on YouTube. If you have the digital interactive version of Volume 1, you can find the song by clicking on the hyperlinked text.

Session 1: "[Let Your Kingdom Come](#)", "[Seek Ye First](#)"

Session 2: "[You Are Holy \(As for Me and My House\)](#)", "[Revelation Song](#)"

Session 3: "[Jesus Messiah](#)", "[Lion and the Lamb](#)"

Session 4: "[Spirit of the Living God](#)", "[Here I Am to Worship](#)"

Session 5: "[Great is Thy Faithfulness](#)", "[Take My Life and Let It Be](#)"

Sessions 6-10: "[Revelation](#)", "[Thy Word](#)", "[Living Word](#)", "[Ancient Words](#)", "[Voice of Truth](#)", "[Word of God Speak](#)", "[This is the Air I Breathe](#)"

Session 11: "[Step by Step](#)", "[To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice](#)"

Session 12: "[The Fear of the Lord](#)", "[Be Thou My Vision](#)"

Session 13: "[Love God Love People](#)", "[I Will Follow](#)"

Session 14: "[Micah 6:8 Song](#)", "[Days of Elijah](#)"

Session 15: "[Reconciliation Song](#)", "[I Could Sing of Your Love Forever](#)"

Notes

[illegible]

Getting Equipped

Bible Based Group Study Materials

Volume 1

Understanding God

1. The Good News of God's Kingdom
2. The Holiness of God
3. The Lordship of God
4. The Holy Spirit of God
5. The Covenant Faithfulness of God

Understanding the Bible

6. Learning What the Bible Is
7. The Story of the Bible
8. The Literature of the Bible
9. The Timeline of the Bible
10. The Public Reading of Scripture

Building Christian Character

11. Listening to and Obeying God
12. The Beginning of Wisdom
13. Loving God and Loving Others
14. Seeking Justice
15. Becoming Peacemakers

Volume 3

Jesus

1. The Gospel of Jesus
2. The Royal Birth
3. Announcing the Kingdom
4. Teaching the Followers
5. The Journey to Jerusalem
6. The Suffering Servant
7. Surprised by the Resurrection
8. All Authority

The Church

9. The New Temple
10. The Gospel to Judea & Samaria
11. To the Ends of the Earth
12. Faith on Trial

New Creation

13. Previews of the Kingdom
14. Signposts of Eternity
15. The New Creation

Volume 2

Divinity

1. The Mystery of God
2. The Name of God
3. Spiritual Beings
4. Mysterious Servants
5. The Son of God

Humanity

6. The Mission of Humanity
7. Human Heart and Soul
8. Human Brokenness
9. Human Belonging
10. The Hope of New Humanity

Overcoming Evil

11. Evil in the World
12. Overcoming Social Conformity
13. The Spirit of Love
14. Atonement & Forgiveness
15. Judgment Day



Getting Equipped, Volume 1

is the first in a series of discipleship curriculum from Equippers. It is specially designed for use in India for those who have decided to follow Jesus and are looking to grow in knowledge, understanding and faithfulness.

This group study curriculum is designed with many distinctive features: dialogues that introduce the lesson topics, group singing, videos from the Bible Project, discussion questions, and a variety of learning activities.

Learners who are eager to break from lecture style teaching will appreciate the way Getting Equipped uses participatory learning methods and draws from a variety of teaching resources. Leaders will value how these tactics grab and keep the attention of your group. More importantly, these lessons are a gateway to opening up deeper meanings of the Bible and finding a path that guides your group toward a collective identity and sense of purpose.