

EQUIPPING

for intergenerational ministry

Reading the Bible

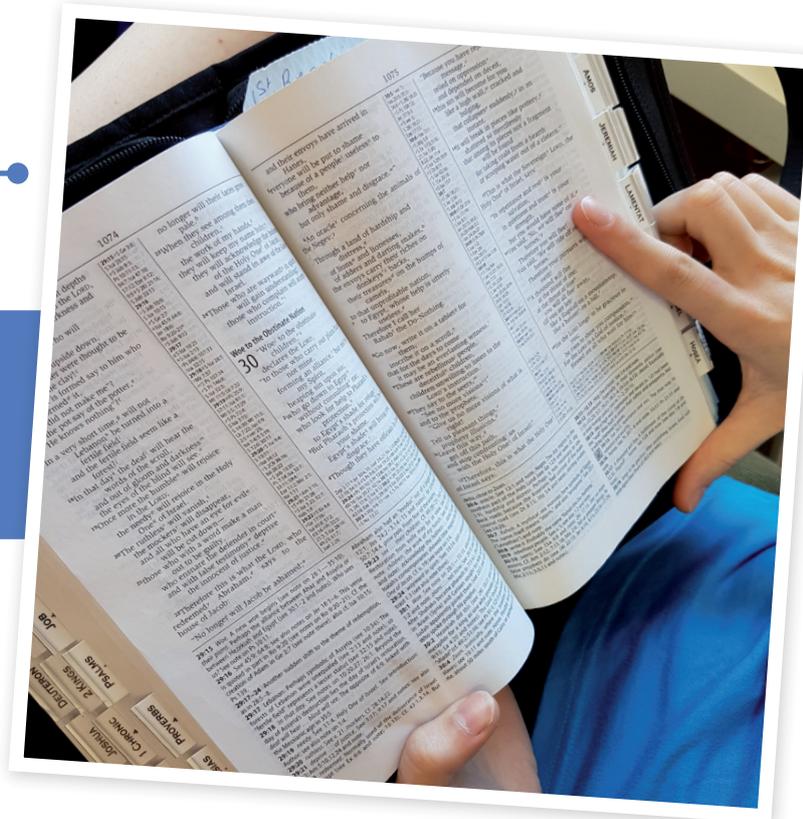
The Bible plays a significant role in the life of a Christian. We read and hear God's promises to us. The words bring us joy, comfort, peace and knowledge. But how do we read it? It is not just one book. It is a library of 66 books written by at least 39 authors over hundreds of years.

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5

Parts of the Bible are not easy to understand, and if you just open it anywhere, looking for something engaging, you run the risk of being disappointed. So how do we make the most of this divine word given to us from God?

"The Bible is the written word of God, divinely inspired and without error. It is to the Bible alone to which we turn for our teaching on all matters relating to faith, doctrine and life."
Excerpt from the Lutheran Confessions.

As with most things, the more you work at it, the easier it will become. You might like to use a Bible handbook or a version with a simple introduction.



If you plan to read a passage with children, have a look at it beforehand so you can get the flow of the story and not stumble over words. Think of questions the passage raises and if you're not sure of the answers that's okay! Continue to read and explore what God might be saying to you.

Find out the background, when and where the story happened and for whom the book was written. There are good books available that give interesting facts, dates and maps to help you get the most out of what you and your family read.

The Bible claims to be 'God-breathed, inspired and living.' Many people around the globe claim that God speaks to them as they read it. When you experience God speaking to you through it, share that with others in your family.

But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: if you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:8-10



The Bible was never meant to be read alone. We should always be sharing our ideas of faith, doctrine and life with other people. We should be sharing with our children and families. Let them hear what our faith means to us. It is here that our hearts, souls and minds are sharpened.

Questions worth asking when you read the Bible

What do you think God might be saying to us through this word?

What do you think God is asking us to do through this word?



More ideas of how to read the Bible:

CONTEXT

- What is the background of the book?
- When, in the history of the Bible, does this occur?
- What has happened before and happening after?
- How does the context affect the flow of the narrative?
- Does it change?

SETTING

- Who are the characters?
- Do they have names or are they nameless?
- What do their names mean?
- Who is not named? Why?
- What is the scene? Where does it take place?
- What symbols and metaphors are in play?

LANGUAGE

- What language was originally used?
- Why is this important to the story?
- What kind of language is it? Dialogue, narration, poetry, description?
- What analogies are used (if any)? Sports, business, 'in stuff' - i.e. symbols that only the 'in' crowd would know.

EMOTIONS

- What do the characters in the story seem to feel? Are there clues?
- What does the author want the reader to feel? (not always the same)
- What is different about reading words about emotions rather than reading faces?
- What words or phrases resonate?

WORDS

- Which words are important?
- Which words am I missing if I'm not reading carefully?
- Which words are repeated?
- Which words don't you understand (in context or just don't get)?
- Which words carry multiple meanings?

IMAGES

- What images, things, people, places or events come to mind as you read the passage?
- If you could draw a picture of this passage, what are the most important things to include?

