

Session 23: Encountering God in the Bible

Big Idea: To Know the Bible is to know God

Preliminaries (15 mins)

1. Students write prayer intentions as they enter
2. Opening procession and prayer

Engage (10 mins)

1. Tell the young people to imagine that they were secretly inviting a friend to join them for Rel. Ed. class and that they have to draw a map/floor plan to show them how to find the room you are presently in.
2. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each of the participants and invite them to sketch a quick floor plan/map of the building you are presently in with an arrow leading to the room you are in.
3. Invite volunteers to share their drawings with the large group.
4. Explain that a floor plan helps us to navigate our way through an area that we are unfamiliar with. Point out how we rely on directories at the mall to show us a floor plan of the various stores and their locations.
5. Explain that, in this session, they are going to take a closer look at the floor plan for the Bible so that we can more easily find God in its pages.

Explore (35 mins)

1. Direct the young people to turn their page over and to draw the following image:

2. Next, tell them that this is the map or floor plan to the Bible. Ask them what they think the 2 columns represent. (**Old and New Testament**) and have them write those above the columns as below:

Old Testament	New Testament

- Then, see if any can recall the sections of the Old and New Testament they learned earlier in the year. When completed, the “floor plan” should look like this:

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Pentateuch	Gospels
History	Acts of the Apostles
Wisdom	Letters
Prophets	Revelation

- Distribute Bibles and Bible Bookmarks ([OT bookmarks](#) and [NT bookmarks](#)) from [The Bible Blueprint](#) and review with them where each of the bookmarks is to be placed in their Bibles.
- Arrange in pairs and distribute the Bible worksheet that invites them to locate important passages in these 8 sections of the Bible. Allow 10 mins.
- Review their answers and collect worksheets.
- Next, bring in some examples of outdated gadgets: an 8-track tape, a 45 rpm record, an instamatic camera, and so on. Show them to the participants and explain what they are for those who may not recognize them. Explain that, we need help recognizing and understanding things that are not from our own time.
- Explain that the Bible is very old and that we need help understanding how to read it.
 - Explain that one way we can get help is footnotes. Have them locate Genesis 6:14-15 which describes how Noah is to build an ark. Using the footnotes, invite volunteers to explain what *gopherwood* is and what a *cubit* is.
 - Next, explain that some parts of the Bible use symbolic language that is not meant to be taken literally. Ask the following;
 - How many days and nights did it rain for Noah?
 - How many years did the Israelites wander through the desert?
 - How many days was Moses on the mountaintop before he came down with the Commandments?
 - How many days and nights did Jesus spend in the desert without food?
 - How many days did Jesus remain with his disciples after his Resurrection?

The answer to each, of course, is 40. Explain that the reoccurrence of this number suggests that it is symbolic not factual. Point out that the Bible sometimes uses figurative language meaning language that expresses a truth but is not necessarily fact. Brainstorm examples from current times such as “it’s raining cats and dogs” or “Mr. Paprocki is like a million years old.” (If time permits, show a copy of an [Amelia Bedelia](#) book – a children’s storybook that creates humor by taking figurative language literally).

Point out that some parts of the Bible use figurative language and are not meant to be taken literally (such as the creation story or Noah's ark) but that they teach us important truths about our relationship with God

Reflect (10 mins)

1. Tell the young people that you will show them how to pray with the Bible.
2. Have them take their Bibles and tea light candles to their sacred space and open their Bibles to John 20: 19-21. ("Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.")
 - a. Invite them to quiet themselves
 - b. Slowly and prayerfully read aloud the passage
 - c. Pause
 - d. Read the passage once again, slowly and prayerfully and invite the young people to think of which word or phrase speaks to them (jumps out at them; sticks with them)
 - e. Pause
 - f. Invite them to silently read the passage and to think of how they want to respond to Jesus
 - g. Pause
3. Call them back to their places. Explain that this type of praying with the Bible is called [Lectio Divina](#) or Sacred Reading.

Respond (5 mins)

1. Tell the young people that it is time for them to take their Bibles home with them. Invite them to hold their Bibles up in front of them as you pray and to respond, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

Gracious God, we hold before you our Holy Bibles. May they be instruments for your Word to guide our lives, inspire our service, enliven our praise, and strengthen our trust in you. We pray.

Speak Lord, your servant is listening.

Draw us daily to listen and to live by your Word, that you may mold us for service the way a potter shapes clay into vessels. Then use us to bring you glory in all things. We pray.

Speak Lord, you servant is listening.

We thank you, O God, for the gift of your Scriptures, and praise you for generously blessing us through your Word; may we carry these Bibles throughout our lives and turn to you for your guidance. We pray.

Speak Lord, you servant is listening.

And may Almighty God bless us, Father.... (+)

2. Students bless themselves with holy water as they leave.

