How to run a Bible Study?

What is a Bible study?

A Bible study is a time to read, reflect on, and discuss passages from the Bible in a way that helps our young people understand scripture and apply it to their lives. Creating time and space to explore what the scripture means, asking questions, and thinking about how it connects to their everyday experiences.

What should a Bible study include?

- An opening prayer
- A scripture passage
- Time to reflect
- A chance for discussion and to share
- A closing prayer

There is no set way to lead a Bible study every session will differ depending on the young people and the scripture chosen. When we look back at Catholic tradition the prayer ancient form of prayer called Lectio Divina which translates from Latin into 'Divine Reading' provides us with a structure. This is a chance to see where God is in their lives,

What you will need:

- A space which is welcoming, is there enough seats for people? Is there a certain way you would like the chairs to be? Is there music you would like to play as they enter to create a prayerful atmosphere? Remember this isn't a RE lesson!
- Bibles! Are you using physical Bibles? Are they bringing their own? Is the scripture available to see on the board? Is there print outs of the scripture for those who might not have a Bible.

Things to consider before you begin . . .

- What is the reason for your Bible study? Is it to encourage young people to read the Bible more? Is there something they want to gain through attending the Bible study? Is there certain scripture they are interested in? Is it to understand the weekly Gospels? Is it to explore the Churches teachings? Gaging what your young people are interested in is a great way to help form what your Bible study might look like.

- Who is your Bible study for? All young people will be in different stages of their faith journey some will know exactly how a Bible works some may have never picked one up. Is it offered to a certain year group, or is there a way to make it accessible for all students.

- When will your Bible study happen? Is there a way its accessible to all students even those in Year 11 and sixth form. They are often bombarded with all things exams allowing them time in the day to step back and reflect on where Christ is in their lives.

Useful Links

- Ascension's Free Bible Study Leader Training
- BibleProject Guides - Free Online Bible Study Lessons

Example Bible Study Plan

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
thank you for bringing us together today. Help us to be open to your Word and to hear what you want to say to us. Give us the confidence to share, the patience to listen, and the kindness to respect one another. Be with us in this time, and help us to find peace, understanding in your word.
Amen.

Read the Scripture Passage

If you are unsure what passage to read start with one of the Gospels, even if its a passage you may have heard over and over again. Challenge yourself and your young people to search for a deeper understanding, approach this with an open mind and an open heart. Encourage a different young person to read the scripture each time. Invite the young people to close their eyes and listen, what images come to mind.

Time to reflect

Encourage the group to take a few minutes to recognise what stood out to them. What is God trying to tell them through that passage. There is no right or wrong answer and its important to take time to discover what they think before a time of discussion. It is helpful if they can all see the scripture at this point and have the chance to write anything down that comes to mind.

Discussion

You could chose to do this in one big group or in smaller groups depending on the number of young people there are. Make sure that all the young people have the opportunity to share and make sure they are listening respectfully to each other. Encourage to them to share: **What does the scripture mean to them? How did it make them feel? What might God be trying to tell them? How can they apply the message to their lives?**

Read the passage again . . .

After hearing what others think and feel listen to the scripture again. Does anything different stand out, do you have a different understanding of the scripture? Invite one or two young people to share what might have changed for them or how they might understand the scripture differently.

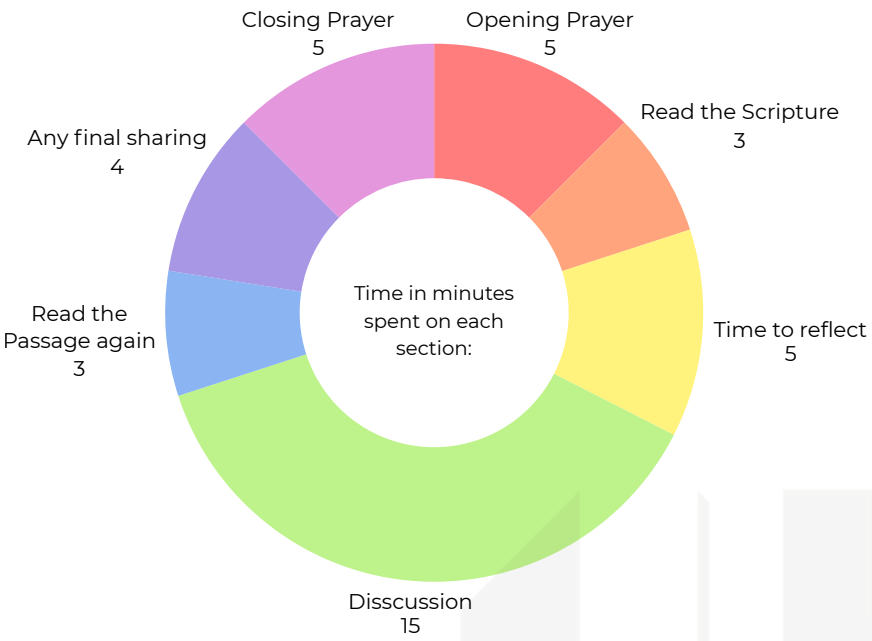
Closing Prayer

God our Father,
thank you for this time together and for what we have shared and learned.
Help us to carry this into our lives, and guide us in all we do.
Stay with us as we go from here, and fill us with your peace.
Amen.

Things to Remember

This is just a suggested structure of a session if the discussion is flowing don't feel you have to end the session just because of the time. It's not a lesson plan to be followed neither is there a set message that everyone should take away with them. This is about accompanying young people on their journey of faith and providing them with the opportunity to explore scripture.

Session Timings



Its is best to make sure you have between 40mins-1hr to run a Bible study. However this is not always possible within the busy school day. If you have a committed group of students you could read and reflect in 15mins in one part of the day and regather at the end of the day or even the next day. Challenge them to re-read and sit with the scripture at different parts of the day. This works especially well with Year 11 and sixth formers.

Scripture Suggestions

This table shows some suggested scripture for your Bible study for the rest of the academic year based of the Sunday readings at Mass. **If you click on the link of each box it will lead you to a short reflection on each of the scriptures.** They include a wide range of reflections and videos from different sources. It would be good to read or watch before you lead the Bible study so you can grasp your own understanding of the scripture.

	W/B	Psalm	Gospel
Orinairy Time	14/9	Psalm 130	Matthew 18:21-35
	21/9	Psalm 145	Matthew 20:1-16
	28/9	Psalm 25	Matthew 21:28-32
	5/10	Psalm 80	Matthew 21:33-43
	12/10	Psalm 23	Luke 6:20-26
	19/10	Psalm 96	Matthew 22: 15-21
Half Term			
Ordinary Time	2/11	Psalm 24	Matthew 5:1-12
	9/11	Pslam 63	Matthew 25:1-13
	16/11	Psalm 128	Matthew 25:14-30
	23/11	Psalm 23	Matthew 25:31-46
Advent	30/11	Psalm 80	Mark 13:33-37
	7/12	Psalm 85	Mark 1:1-8
	14/12	Luke 1:46-54	John 1:6-8, 19-28