

## Bible Study Methods

There are many good Bible studies out there. Here are a few:

*A Quick Journey Through the Bible*

<https://ascensionpress.com/collections/unlocking-the-mystery>,

*Jesus: The Way, the Truth, and the Life*

<https://ascensionpress.com/collections/jesus-way-truth-and-life>

*A Biblical Walk Through the Mass*

<https://ascensionpress.com/collections/a-biblical-walk-through-the-mass>

There are also great Bibles to assist you in studying God's word – check out these listed below:

- *The Didache Bible* with commentaries based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church (published by Midwest Theological Forum)
- *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The New Testament* with Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch (published by Ignatius Press)
- *The Word on Fire Bible* (published by Word on Fire)
- *The Great Adventure Catholic Bible* (published by Ascension Press)

Here's a good article that can assist you in opening up God's word with teens: "Ten Questions to Ask Yourself When Leading a Teen Bible Study" <https://media.ascensionpress.com/2019/02/14/10-questions-ask-leading-teen-bible-study/>.

We can also study on our own as we read through Scripture. Below are methods to assist you in encountering God's word and growing in relationship with him through contemplation and study of the scriptures. **Some of these make for great experiences with young people to discuss the Faith with them.**

When we approach God's word, we must read it "in the Spirit" – in the same Holy Spirit in which it was written. Bear in mind the following principles when studying God's word (these are found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 112-114):

- 1. Take the Bible as a whole** – some verses of the Bible may be challenging or confusing on their own, but understood in the context of the entire Bible – it makes more sense.
- 2. Read scripture in the light of the living tradition of the Church** - bear in mind the entire doctrine of the Church. The Magisterium (the teaching office of the Church) cannot err on matters of faith and morals. So if a passage of Scripture seems to contradict what the Church believes, give it a little more study and look into the Church's teaching on that matter.
- 3. Be attentive to the analogy of faith** – similar to point 2 above, consider what you read in the entire unity of faith. As the Catechism states "By analogy of faith, we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation." (CCC 114).

With these principles in mind, below are methods for digging deeper into the meaning of Sacred Scripture – and for praying with Scripture. After reading a particular story in Scripture, use one of these methods to reflect on what you are learning or how to apply it to your life.

*Journaling is encouraged on all of these methods so the reader can see themes over time that the Lord is driving home to them, and also see themselves growing as they record their applications.*

### 1. The Coe Method for Studying any Gospel passage (easier)

- 1) What did Jesus think or feel?
- 2) What did Jesus say?
- 3) What did Jesus do?
- 4) Now, as a follower of Jesus, what will I think, feel, say or do today to be more like him?

### 2. Questions to ask about any passage in the New or Old Testaments (moderate)

- 1) What do I learn about God's character?
- 2) What do I learn about myself (or mankind)?
- 3) Where did I see Jesus? (He is at work in the Old Testament too!)
- 4) What can I do this week to grow in God's character?

### 3. Senses of Scripture Method (moderate) The senses of Scripture (literal, allegorical, moral, anagogical) provide us with a framework for contemplating the many layers of meaning of God's word.

- 1) Read – with the mere **literal** meaning in mind
- 2) Re-read – considering the **allegorical** meaning – what does this passage teach about Christ?
- 3) Re-read – with the **moral** meaning in mind – what does this passage have to teach me about how I should live my life?
- 4) Pray. Take a deep breath. What does this passage tell me in terms of my final destiny in Christ (the **anagogical** meaning)?

### 4. Bridge Method (*Rick Warren*) (moderate) - building a bridge between the world of the Bible and our world.

- 1) What did this Scripture mean to the original audience?
- 2) What is the timeless truth behind what God is saying?
- 3) How does it apply now to me, and what active steps will I take this week to put it into practice?

### 5. Swedish Method (moderate) (a symbol denotes each question)

- 1) Light bulb - What stuck out to you this time?
- 2) Question mark - What questions did this passage raise for you?
- 3) Cross – where did you see Jesus in this passage?
- 4) Arrow – what is an application for my life today?
- 5) Talking bubble – how might I share the joy, peace, conviction or truth given by God with others?
- 6) What is the author's main point?

### 6. Lectio Divina (moderate)– a prayerful reading of Scripture

- 1) Lectio (read) – read the passage 1-3 times. Focus on a word or phrase.
- 2) Meditatio (meditate) – seek understanding, engage thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. Allow the Holy Spirit to give meaning to the text. Perhaps reflect on: why does this word or phrase stand out? What is the *truth* of this passage.
- 3) Oratio (pray) – enter into dialogue with God. Share your thoughts with him; seek to understand his will.
- 4) Contemplatio (contemplate) – spend time in silent prayer, fixed on Christ himself.