

BIBLE BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

Foundations Home Lesson

Month 4–Week 1

WHAT'S THE POINT?

A beginner's overview of the Bible and how to use it.

BE PREPARED

Have your Bible(s) hand, as well as several bookmarks or post-it notes.

Lesson

What do you know about the Bible?

Do you think it's a big book that is only for adults to read?

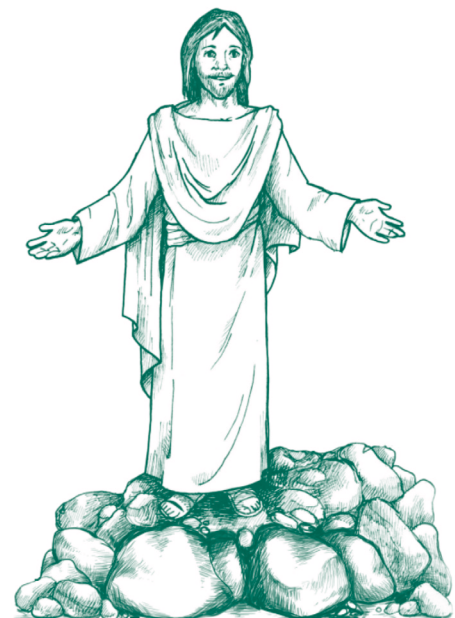
Do you think it's a long list of rules?

Do you think it's filled with boring stories of people who lived a long time ago?

Well, if this is what you think, you are partly right.

The Bible is for adults, but a lot of it is also just right for kids to read. The Bible does give us some rules, but mostly it is a story of God's love for us and how sometimes following the rules is the key to our happiness. The Bible does contain stories of people who lived long ago, but they are stories filled with adventure and romance, fierce battles and brave warriors, daring princesses, great miracles, and the greatest love story ever!

The Bible is not an ordinary book. It is usually one volume, but inside this one book you will find stories, poems, songs, letters, history lessons, and predictions for the future. All of it was written by many men, a long time ago, but the not-so-secret author of it all is God. He inspired each of them to use their own writing style and language, but with hearts and minds that were so full



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of His love that what they wrote were the messages He wanted us to have, with nothing extra added. God wove all their work together into one big, amazing story about how much He loves us.



A FLYOVER VIEW OF THE BIBLE

There are two main parts to the Bible that we know as the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament is the story of God's chosen people, the Israelites, and how through them God would one day bless the whole world. God gave His people instruction on how they were to live differently so He could form them into a people who would love Him completely.

Sadly, they failed in many ways. Every time this happened, God forgave them and renewed His promise that one day He would send them a Hero who would not fail. This Hero would rescue God's people and show them what His love is truly like. The Israelites waited a very long time for that Messiah, and that time while they were waiting is recorded in the Old Testament stories. They are stories of remembering God and forgetting about Him, good kings, and kings who really were not all that good, faithful people who served God well, and others who forgot about His love and decided to worship other false gods. The Israelites wrote down these stories and passed them on to their children so they could learn and remember. God did many miraculous things for His people, and they did not want to forget that He loves them like a good father. The Old Testament contains books of rules, history, wisdom, songs of praise, and instruction. The Old Testament books were teachings that Jesus would have known very well.

The New Testament begins by telling the historical facts of Jesus' life, and it records His words and teachings in the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The New Testament also includes letters of instruction that were sent and shared amongst the early churches, and the book of Revelation tells about a vision that God gave to the Apostle John about the final battles of good versus evil. In it, we learn the good news that God is victorious over all evil!



OPEN YOUR BIBLE

1. Find the first page of the Old Testament (the book of Genesis) and put a bookmark or post-it note there.
2. Find the first page of the New Testament (the book of Matthew) and put a bookmark or post-it note there.

The next way the Bible is divided is by books. There are 73 books in a Catholic Bible (66 in a Protestant edition), and they each have a name. Some of them are known by the name of the person who wrote them, some of them are named for the group it was written to, and some are named to remind us of the overall character or message of the book.



OPEN YOUR BIBLE

Open the cover of your Bible and flip through the first few pages until you find the index page. Read through the names aloud, or listen to them all mentioned in order in this song. (Scan the QR Code to access the *Books of the Bible* song.)

SCAN HERE



Some of the names will sound very familiar, and some are probably hard to pronounce, but all of them are important for you to know. Put a bookmark or post-it note in the index page to help you find the books in the future.

PARENTS: knowing where to find things in a Bible is a foundational skill. If your kids are readers, play a game of “Old or New?” It is very simple. Each player needs a Bible turned to the index page, or they can use the [Sample Index Page](#) included with this lesson. As the game leader names a book of the Bible, players look at their reference pages to see if it is part of the Old Testament or the New Testament. Make this game a little more challenging by requiring your players to also point to the name on the page as they call out their “new” or “old.” Non-readers can also play a version that reinforces the “old or new” division and helps increase familiarity with the names of the books. For this, simply first read the books in order, and then mix it up by naming random books and pointing to them on the list.

HOW DO I FIND WHAT I’M LOOKING FOR?

Once you have a pretty good idea of whether books are in the Old or New Testament, the next step is finding specific bits of text.

Originally the text of Scripture was written on scrolls and in letters, and it was probably difficult to find a specific quote or piece of instruction.

Once the Bible was a book, it was time to copy it. At first, every copy of the Bible was made by hand. A monk spent his days hand-copying the entire Bible so instead of one, there would now be two copies. Can you imagine?! It was a labor of love though, and these scribes not only had the great privilege of spreading the Word of God through their work, they also got to read it for themselves. This was almost unheard of at that time as most people could not read and even if they could, Bibles were extremely rare and they would not have a copy to read.

When the printing press was invented over 550 years ago, the first book to be printed on it was a Bible. Chapters had already been added to divide up the books, but as the machine-printed Bibles became more widely read, people saw the need to make it easier to share specific bits, so they looked for a way to organize it all.



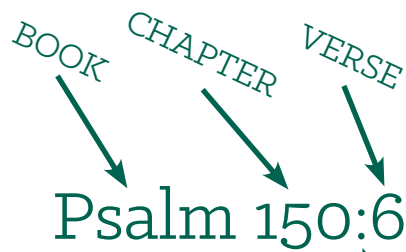
OPEN YOUR BIBLE to almost any page and you will see tiny numbers by the words. These mark the verses, and make it very easy to find specific places in Scripture.

When you are looking up Bible verses, you always start from the biggest divisions and go to the smaller.

1. First ask yourself, is the book you need in the Old Testament or the New? (If you are not sure or need a page number, check the index.)
2. Next, you look up the chapter. They are in 1-2-3 order and are probably noted with bigger numbers, or the words (e.g. "Chapter 1"), so they are easy to find. Each book has a different number of chapters, depending on how long it is. Some of the books have only one chapter, and Psalms is the longest, with 150 chapters.
3. Finally, look up the verse. Again, these are noted by a number, but the numbers that help you find verses are tiny, and are often mixed in with the words.

LET'S PRACTICE

Bible verses are written like this:



CHAPTER and VERSE numbers are separated by a colon

When you look up Psalm 150:6, what do you find?

Keep practicing by looking up these additional Bible verses.

Genesis 1:1
 Jeremiah 29:11
 John 3:16
 Luke 6:31
 Matthew 19:14
 1 Timothy 4:12


Colossians 3:20
 1 Corinthians 16:13-14
 Proverbs 3:5
 Deuteronomy 6:5
 Isaiah 43:5
 Joshua 1:9

Scan the QR code to
Go Deeper with this
 month's lessons.



Family Formation is designed to help parents respond to the Church's call to be "the first and foremost educators of their children"* and to help families grow in the transforming love of God by understanding and living the Catholic Faith.

*Gravissimum Educationis, 3

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