

God and His Holy Word

Lesson # 3 of 27

Scripture/Memory Verse

“All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3: 16 – 17

Lesson Goal & Objectives

Goal

- The students will come to an understanding that God *wants* us to know Him. He does not make Himself impossible to find; He reveals Himself to us through the writers of Holy Scripture.

Objectives

- The students will choose 1 verse of any Scripture which is concerned with God speaking to someone and either write or say aloud in their own words that it is God revealing Himself to that person.
- Examples of Scripture:
 - The call of Abraham: Genesis 12: 1 – 4
 - Moses and the burning bush: Exodus 3: 1 – 8
 - The call of Isaiah: Isaiah 6: 1 – 8
 - The Father speaks at Jesus’ baptism: Matthew 3: 13 – 17 (Lk 3: 22)

Introduction and Background for the Teacher

To many people in today’s world, God seems absent or silent. People wonder how they might be able to find God. However, down through all the ages, God has been seeking to let human beings know about Him – to know Who He is and what He is all about. God is not playing, “hide and seek” with us, or making it impossible for us to know Him. *Christianity, like Judaism, is a religion of revelation.* We believe that God wants us to know the truth about Himself because he loves us and cares about us. He is not hiding from us. He wants us to decide freely to seek Him and get to know Him. For this reason He reveals Himself to people – particularly through the writers of Holy Scripture. The Bible is God’s revelation to us.

That is, God gives us genuine, useful knowledge about Himself. He does this by encountering real people and showing and telling them about Himself. They then go on to pass on what they have learned about God to others. This knowledge is written down and becomes “Holy Scripture.” The word “scripture” simply means writing. The scriptures are “holy” because they come from God and are all about God. Holy Scripture has traditionally been called: “God’s Word, written.” God speaks to people about Himself, and they write down what they have learned for us to learn about God as well. The Scriptures which prove themselves to be authentic by genuinely helping people to know God and passing the test of time, have come to form the Bible.

This process has proceeded down through history from the patriarchs (such as Abraham and Jacob) and prophets (such as Isaiah, Elijah, Joel, Hosea and many others) of the Old Testament down to Jesus and His apostles. In Jesus, God Himself has been born into our world in order to speak to us directly. Everything that Jesus says to us is God telling us about Himself in His own words. The apostles and other disciples listened carefully to Him and wrote down what He told them.

Reading and learning about Holy Scripture therefore enables us to come to know God as He is – as he reveals Himself to us. For thousands of years, the Bible has led people into a real relationship with God. We can see that the revelation of the Bible is true because it has the power to open up this living relationship with God to anyone who takes it seriously. Also, the Bible has remained to be the greatest “Best Seller” all over the world for thousands of years. If we read the Bible like it was any other book, we may find it to be dead and dry. However, if we read it prayerfully and with genuinely open minds, we will find that God, Himself, is speaking to us and inviting us to get to know Him in a real relationship with Him. God wants to have this relationship with us all. It is up to us to accept that relationship for ourselves.

Materials Needed for Lesson

- Bible
- Book of Common Prayer

Opening Prayer (5 min.)

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of your love – the light of your Truth. Lord, send forth Your Spirit and we will be made new and Your will renew the face of the earth. (Let us pray) *together*: O God, You instructed the hearts of your faithful people by the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in that same Holy Spirit to become truly wise and always to rejoice in His consolation, through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Have someone read 2 Timothy 3: 16 – 17. Give the students a few minutes to voice any concerns or petitions they may have. Close with Collect, Proper 28 BCP page 236

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*.

Review (5min.)

- Last week we learned that God created everything that exists. Some people think that after God created the universe, He just went off somewhere else or forgot about it, or just ignores it. If that were so, why would God have bothered to create the universe in the first place? God cares about His creation, and He cares about us. He did not create us just in order to ignore us.
- ***Give the students some time to discuss this.***
- Present the Genesis “Rap” to the class if you picked that take-home activity.

Intro Activity (5-10 min.)

These ideas are intended to ensure a live and exciting atmosphere for people to arrive into. Each parish will approach this differently and that is ok. Choose one activity that suits your group best.

Choose 1 or 2 students who are good sports and enjoy a little gentle teasing – it would be good to arrange for this before the class. Make up some silly and unrealistic descriptions of them. *Examples:* say that you admire how this student can speak 45 languages including Chinese, Swahili and Urdu; or, say that a very small student chops down giant pine trees all on his/her own with only a small ax; or, that a very athletic kid has read every single book in the New York City Library and sings the lead role at the Metropolitan Opera. (Make up your own – the more ridiculous the better). Give the students time to tell the whole class that this is NOT who they really are. Point out how silly it is to try to describe someone based on your own ideas instead of on the person's own real characteristics. Divide the students into pairs, and have each pair tell each other (briefly) 3 things they like about themselves.

Culminate the activity by explaining that the only really useful way that we can get to know someone is to let *that person* tell us about him- or her- self. When we tell others about ourselves, then they can know who we really are. God wants us to know Who He really is, so He tells us about Himself – He tells people Who He really is.

Lesson (20-25 min.)

A big part of what it means to be a person includes wanting to have friends (*students add a few brief insights here*). God also wants us to know Him. He loves us and therefore wants us to be His friends. In order to accomplish this, He lets people know about Him – he tells us Who He is so that we can get to know Him. Down through the ages He has called to people and revealed Himself to them so that they could get to know Him. Some examples are:

- The call of Abraham: Genesis 12: 1 – 4
- Moses and the burning bush: Exodus 3: 1 – 8
- The call of Isaiah: Isaiah 6: 1 – 8
- The Father speaks at Jesus' baptism: Matthew 3: 13 – 17 (Lk 3: 22)

(You may pick one or more scripture verses to discuss)

Give the students some time to discuss this

As people have come to know God, they have shared this knowledge with others. When the knowledge they pass on to others about God proves to be reliable and authentic, people come to understand that this is real revelation from God. God's self-disclosure or self-revelation then becomes recognized as part of Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture – the Bible is the written record of God's revelation to people down through history.

Give the students some time to discuss this

When human history had progressed enough, the Son of God (part of the Trinity that is the one God) became incarnate as Jesus Christ. Jesus is God Himself telling us and showing us Who He is. Everything that comes from Jesus is direct revelation from God about Himself. Jesus' closest friends – his apostles – wrote down the things that Jesus had told them and also wrote the stories of the things they had seen Jesus do. This is the part of the Bible known as the New Testament.

Finish discussion.

Reflection (10-15 min.)

Discussion in groups of 2 or 3.

- What would you like other people to know about you, that perhaps not very many people know?
- What would you like to know about God?
- What lines or statements from the Bible have you heard or read in church that you remember because you found it to be particularly impressive – or that got your attention and interest?

God is speaking to YOU and answering your questions through the readings of Holy Scripture.

Take-home activity (5 min.)

This activity is optional and each parish will approach this differently and that is ok. Choose one activity that suits your group best. Take a few minutes to explain the activity and at the beginning of the next lesson you will review this lesson and review the take-home activity.

Choose 3 or 4 verses from one of the four Scriptures we looked at during this class:

- The call of Abraham: Genesis 12: 1 – 4
- Moses and the burning bush: Genesis
- The call of Isaiah: Isaiah 6: 1 – 8
- The Father speaks at Jesus' baptism: Matthew 3: 13 – 17 (Lk 3: 22)
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After saying a little prayer for guidance from God in your own words, re-write these verses in your own words. At the bottom, add a few sentences explaining how God calls to people and speaks to them.

Optional: Have you ever had a sense of God speaking to you? – or – What do you think it would be like if God was trying to tell you about Himself?

Closing Prayer (5 min.)

Father thank you for what you have revealed to us in your Holy Word. Help us to understand who you are better through all your created works. Father please make yourself know to us so we may better understand you. Thank you in Jesus name I pray amen.

-or-

Have the students make up their own prayer.

Scripture References

- 2 Timothy 3: 16 – 17;
- The call of Abraham: Genesis 12: 1 – 4
- Moses and the burning bush: Exodus 3: 1 – 8
- The call of Isaiah: Isaiah 6: 1 – 8
- The Father speaks at Jesus' baptism: Matthew 3: 13 – 17 (Lk 3: 22)

Resources

- Bible