

CONVERSATION #1 - What is the Bible?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

Welcome to one of the most exciting adventures you'll ever have! The adventure begins in the Old Testament of the Holy Bible. Get ready for the creation of the universe, narrow escapes from the enemy's sword, and a showdown on a mountaintop! The trip then continues through the New Testament of the Holy Bible. In the New Testament, you will meet an evil king, an angel who opens prison doors, and Jesus - who will change your whole life.

The Bible was written long ago, but what it says is still important today. Many different people wrote the Bible - but each writer had a message especially for you. The Bible has many exciting adventures, beautiful poems, and good advice. But wherever you look, you will find the One Great Promise: The Savior is coming! The Savior has come!

3. Read the Bible:

Randomly open the Bible several times and just read a few lines from the pages where it opens. Note the variety of topics, tones, pictures painted by words, etc.

4. Conversations Starters:

- a) Why do you think it is important to learn about the Bible?
- b) What is the most important thing that you have learned about the Bible?
- c) How would your life be different if you didn't have the Bible?

5. Prayer:

God, we thank you for the Bible. We praise the wisdom you have given the writers who were inspired by You, who wrote Your Words, so that we can learn from them. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #2 - What Makes the Bible So Special?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

The Bible is a very special book. As Christians, we believe that the Bible is our most important book. It is our treasure. Psalm 119 tells us that God's Word is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. The Bible has many readers because in this book, God talks to people exactly like us. Someone has said that the Bible is a book with a thousand heartbeats. It throbs with life. More specifically though, the Bible tells a long story, made up of many shorter stories. It tells how God, the Creator of the universe, made people and how God wanted these people to be like God. It is through the Bible that God speaks to us today. As we meditate on God's Word, we grow in our insight and understanding. The Word keeps us headed in the right direction becoming a lamp unto our feet and a light for our path. From it we gain understanding about the direction God wants us to go. As we read and study God's Word, we will become aware of the grace and love of God poured out for us in Jesus Christ. In the last 2,000 years, the Bible has changed many people's thinking and in turn changed their lives.

3. Read the Bible:

2 Timothy 3; 14-17

2 Peter 1:16-21

4. Conversation Starters:

a) How do you think the world would be different today if people had not cared enough to write down God's Word into the books that are collected to form the Bible?

b) How does knowing God's Word change your behavior?

5. Prayer

Holy God, we thank you for the opportunity to hear your words and read your words. Help us to honor you by listening, studying, and learning your messages for each of us. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #3 - How Is the Bible Organized?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

The Bible is not one book, but a collection of 66 books. The 39 books of the Old Testament are in four groups: Law, History, Wisdom and Prophecy. The 27 books of the New Testament include History, Letters, and Prophecy. The word Bible comes from the Greek word *Biblia*, which means "books".

The Old Testament tells the story of Israel. The story begins with Abraham about 2000 BC (Before Christ). Other tribes were moving from place to place in the desert, but the Israelites settled in a land of their own and became an important nation.

The New Testament covers a period of about 100 years from the birth of Jesus, throughout the lives of the Apostles, and the spreading of the early church.

The Bible is much more than just a history book. The Bible tells the story of God's relationship with the human beings God created. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible shows us what God is like, and how we can come to know God better.

3. Read the Bible:

Genesis 12:1-3, Psalms 89:1-4, and Revelation 5:11-14

4. Conversation Starters:

- a) What are some of the messages we hear in the Bible?
- b) What do you do when you don't know how to interpret what the Bible says?

5. Prayer:

O God of Wisdom, in the Bible you have given us stories, history, poems, prophecies, and words of your Apostles. Thank you, for in all of this variety, we know the one true promise of your love for each of us. Help us to remember in all the places and busyness of our lives that your promise is always with us. Thank you for loving each of us. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #4 - What Stories Does the Bible Tell Us?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

Long ago there were no written Bible stories. The people told the stories from memory. Parents told them to their children, who told them to their children. They did not read them, because the Bible had not been written. We call this "word of mouth" telling of the Bible stories and teachings. It worked well for a long time, but a written record finally became possible. As printing became more advance, people also developed tools like dictionaries, concordances, and other references to help us understand the meaning of God's Word.

3. Read the Bible:

Luke 1:1-4

1 Samuel 17:41-51

4. Conversation Starters:

- a) Do you have a favorite story from the Bible?
- b) Which one is it?
- c) Can you use the tools in your Bible to find it?

5. Prayer:

O God of Light, we thank you for all of the ways that you help us to figure out the puzzles in our lives. How blessed we are to know that you are the way, the truth, and the life. You are there when we need knowledge. You are there when we need to understand. You are there when we need to find our way. You are there when we need to know things in new ways. Thank you. Help us to remember to rely on your goodness. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #5 - What Laws Does the Bible Teach Us?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy: The books of Law are the first five books of the Old Testament. They are called the Pentateuch. These include the stories of the beginning of the world and creation of the nation that God called God's own. God freed this nation from slavery, brought them through a raging sea with dry feet, and sent them food from the sky and water from the rocks. All God asked was that they obey God's laws. Was that so hard? Over and over again the people disobeyed. From the first time people disobeyed, God promised a way to make things right again. What an amazing God!

3. Read the Bible:

Genesis 9:8-17

Exodus 7-12

4. Conversation Starters:

- a) Noah, Abraham, and Moses... all thought God was asking them to do something that was too hard for them to do. But, trusting in God, each of them succeeded. Is there a story like that in your life?
- b) Is there something that you are afraid to try?
- c) Can you think of a time that you recognized God's strength was with you and when this strength helped you to be successful?

5. Prayer:

O God, our Parent, you have given us all the rules we need to live good, just, and righteous lives. Walk with us as a gentle reminder that you also give us the strength, support and courage that we often need to live in a way that you would want us to live. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #6 - What is the History of God's People?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First Samuel, Second Samuel, First Kings, Second Kings, First Chronicles, Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther... God brought God's nation to a new homeland. The twelve historical books from Joshua through Esther cover approximately 1,055 years. During these years, God helped defeat enemies and pick out kings to rule. Sometimes the people remember God and His laws. More often they did just what they wanted and got into trouble. The nation divided itself into half. Both halves ended up being carried away by their enemies. Then the people had only God's promise to give them back their nation and to send the greatest King of all time.

3. Read the Bible:

Joshua 24:24-28

Judges 2:11-15 and Nehemiah 10:28-29

4. Conversation Starters:

- a) Remember a time when you were having a terrible, no-good, awful, horrible day. You were choosing to break rules, misbehave, and be as bad as possible. Think about that day, and remember that through it all, your parents loved you, even though they didn't like what you were choosing to do. Describe that day, and what happened that finally made it right? God's love is like that. We call it - grace.

5. Prayer:

Thank you God! When we are not our best, you still love us. When we have run out of patience with others, and ourselves you still love us. When we have forgotten our laws and commandments, you still love us. When we ignore the reminders that those who care try to throw out to rescue us, you still love us. How wonderful for each of us that you are the one, true, loving God, who is there, always loving us. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #7 - How Can We Be Wise In God's Way?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have One Person Read the Following:

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon... These books tell about the greatness of God and the beauty of God's creation through poetry and wisdom. They also give us good advice on how to live the life that will please God. These books display every emotion we encounter in religion in life: abandonment, hope, joy, anger, grief, confusion, resignation, yearning, and gratitude. There are answers in these books for all of our questions. Many of these poems promise wonderful things when God will send a great new leader for God's people.

3. Read the Bible:

Turn to the Book of Psalms (Remember how to get there quickly - Hold Bible in lap, spine down and open edge up. Place one hand on each side. With thumbs, divide the pages in half. The book of Psalms is in the middle of the book.)
- Read several

Turn to the Book of Proverbs - Find some good advice

4. Conversation Starters:

- a) How is God like a nice warm comforting quilt when you are feeling bad?
- b) How is God like a wise old grandmother who talks gently, reminding you to do your best?

5. Prayer:

O God of Beauty, you hear our songs, our sadness, our prayers, and our joys. We thank you that you are the One we can turn to in confidence that all things are for the good for those who trust you. Help us to find the confidence to trust your wisdom, and the patience to allow you to show us your plans for us.
Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #8 - The Bible Has the Words of Majors and Minors? Is this Baseball? No, it's the Prophets!

1. Share the Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi...God sent messages to God's people through special messengers called prophets. Many times the message was a warning to obey God's laws or be punished. Most of these prophets were sent during the time of great trouble as the nation was being attacked by its enemies. Later, when the people were slaves in a foreign land, the prophets gave them God's promise of a new King and an exciting future for their nation.

3. Read the Bible:

The words of the prophets are fascinating and describe God in many different ways. Choose a few verses from some books of the prophets and read together.

4. Conversation Starters:

- a) Who are your heroes? Why?
- b) Do you know any prophets now? Can you think of someone who seems to be telling you how to live in God's way, and making you think about what you need to do differently?

5. Prayer:

God of the prophets and our God, we thank you for sending us prophets to remind us of your presence and your coming again and again. Open our eyes to those around us who you also have sent with words of encouragement, warning, and blessing. Open our ears to hear your message through them. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #9 - What Good News Does the Bible Tell Us?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John... The first four books of the New Testament referred to as the *Gospels*. The New Testament reports how God's Promise came true. People who saw the promise come true wrote down exactly how it happened. They wrote many important things about what God's promise can mean to everyone. The *Gospel* writers report how God's promise of a new King came true. They tell us about the special birth of Jesus, God's Son. They tell us about Jesus' life and how Jesus loved to help people and tell them about God. They also tell us how Jesus made the words of the prophets come true when he died on the cross. The most exciting part of the *Gospels* is the last event - how Jesus came back to life.

3. Read the Bible:

What is your favorite story about Jesus' life?

Birth? Matthew 1:18-

Baptism? Luke 3:21-

Miracles? Mark 6:30-

Last Supper? John 13:1-

4. Conversation Starters:

- a) What difference does it make in your life, that you know Jesus?
- b) How might your life be different if you didn't know Jesus?
- c) What is the hardest story or idea about Jesus for you to believe or to understand?

5. Prayer:

O God, Giver of All, we are so thankful that you sent Jesus to teach, heal, and guide us. Help us to show our gratefulness in all that we do and say. Let Jesus' example guide our every step. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #10 - How Did the Church Get Started?

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

Jesus died on the cross, rose from the dead, appeared to his friends, and told his disciples to tell the good news to the whole world.

The Book of Acts, written by Luke, is the story of the men and women who began to spread the news of a risen Savior to the most remote corners of the known world. The book of Acts provides an eyewitness account of the flame and fire - the birth and spread of the church. Acts is an accurate historical record of the early church - how Christianity was founded and organized and solved its problems. But Acts is also a theological book, with lessons and living examples of the work of the Holy Spirit, church relationships and organization, the implications of grace, and the law of love. The book of Acts tells us how people listened to the good news and believed.

3. Read the Bible:

What did the Apostles do?

Acts 3: 1-10

Acts 4:32-35

Acts 8:4

4. Conversation Starters:

a) What are ways that we can be disciples and apostles? When?
How?

5. Prayer:

O God our Strength, we thank you for the brave ones who first took your Word and shared it with others, even when they were in danger and persecuted for the sake of Jesus. Help us to find the ways that we can be sharers, tellers, and doers of your Word so that by our words and deeds your Good News can continue to be known throughout the world. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #11 - What is the New Testament full of? Letters!! (Joke! Get It?)

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, First Peter, Second Peter, First John, Second John, Third John, Jude...

Paul was a man who had once tried to destroy Jesus' followers, but he became one of Christ's best-known disciples. He went to many countries, starting new churches wherever people listened and believed. When Paul left a group of Christians, he often wrote letters to them. These letters explained what they should believe and how they should act. Paul also wrote letters to individuals.

Other followers of Jesus also wrote letters that gave the new churches the help that they needed. These letters gave more information about Jesus. They also taught how to be good examples of the Christian faith. Being a Christian was not easy, and these letters encouraged new believers.

3. Read the Bible:

Read the story of Saul's conversion to become Paul:

Acts 9:3-19.

Look through the Books of Letters and read some of the advice.

4. Conversation Starters:

- a) What would Jesus like about First Presbyterian Church?
- b) What advice would you give our own church about what it needs to do to be more like what Jesus taught that a church should be?

5. Prayer:

Gracious God, thank you for the women and men who went out into the world to share the Good News. Help us to be the kind of people who also go out into the world every day to share the message of Jesus. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.

CONVERSATION #12 - What a Vision

1. Share Highs and Lows

2. Have one person read the following:

The book of Revelation is a book of hope. The Bible promises that Jesus will return. The book of Revelation is also a book of warning. Things were not as they should have been in the churches, so Christ called the members to commit them to live in righteousness.

Jesus gave a revelation to John, which John wrote down for the "Seven Churches" named in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Although the revelation was revealed nearly 2,000 years ago, it still stands as a comfort and challenge to God's people today. We can take heart, as we understand John's vision of hope - Christ will return to rescue His people.

Revelation is not an easy book to read or understand. But, we can be full of hope, knowing that God is in control, Christ's victory is assured, and all who trust him will have eternal life.

3. Read the Bible:

Revelation 1:7-8

Revelation 22:20

Read some other passages of Revelation - use your imagination!

4. Conversation Starters:

a) What do you think about the scenes that are described in Revelation?

Many people have tried to analyze, interpret, and understand the book or Revelation. There are many interesting symbols, numbers, and images. Look back and read a few to each other.

b) Do you know what they might mean?

5. Prayer:

Almighty God, you have been with us long before we even knew your presence. You will be with us forever and ever. Thank you for your gift of life. Thank you for the Bible and all it tells us about you. Thank you for all who teach us about Your way for us. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

6. End with a blessing.