

Momentum/Friction

Module: Foundations

Lesson 2: The Bible

Objectives:

- Students will have an understanding of where the Bible came from
- Students will lay a foundation for trusting the reliability of the Bible
- Students will explain the Bible and its importance in the Christian life as they share their faith
- Students will understand how the Bible can change a person's life

Materials Needed:

Depending on what opening game you choose to play you will need some of the following:

- ☐ Preselect verses for the sword drill
- ☐ Paper and cue cards prepared for Bible Pictionary
- ☐ Prizes (if applicable)
- ☐ Bible per student
- ☐ Dictionaries or on-line access
- ☐ Handout "The Bible" per student
- ☐ Whiteboard/flipchart with markers
- ☐ Computer and LCD to watch video clip
- ☐ Video Clip "The Bible Can Be Trusted" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnnJ4HIR6yw>

Minds On

Depending on your group choose from one of the following two icebreaker options.

A: Hold an old fashioned sword drill. Prepare ahead of time verses and perhaps some candy for each person who wins each round. To play a sword drill make sure each student has access to a Bible. To play the game each round starts with the students holding the Bibles above their heads. The leader will then say a verse or passage of the Bible. The first student to find it wins that round. For an added challenge you can prepare your verses around a common theme and award an extra prize at the end of the game to the student(s) who guess the theme. You can decide how many rounds you wish to play. This game is a good way to gauge your student's comfort level with the outline of the Bible.

B: Play Bible Pictionary. You will need to prepare a stack of cue cards ahead of time. To begin this game split your group into two teams. You can use this as an opportunity to get students who don't usually hang out on the same team. Flip a coin to see which team goes first. The winning team will begin by drawing one card from the pile. If the student doesn't know the topic on the card, have them draw another card.

The student will then draw the picture without using words, letters or numbers. The other members of the team will have 1 minute to guess. If they guess it within the minute, they get a point. If they don't, the other team will then have 1 minute to guess. If they guess correctly then they get the point. If neither gets it, there are no points.

Make sure everyone gets a turn. Reward both teams for their effort.

Action

Say something like: *The Bible is an incredible book. It is the bestselling book of all time having sold an estimated 2.5 to 6 billion copies. It has also been the subject of numerous burnings as people have attempted to destroy it. It is safe to say that the Bible is the most controversial book ever written. This lesson will take us through a journey to discover who wrote the Bible, how the Bible came together and why God gave us the Bible.*

Give your students a pop quiz on the basic facts of the Bible. You may want to gather a few candies ahead of time that you can throw out as the students get the right answers. Ask the following questions:

1. How many books are in the Bible? 66
2. How many different people wrote the Bible? 40
3. How many main parts are there in the Bible and, for a bonus point, what are they called?
4. How long did it take to write the Bible? about 1,600 years.

Say something like: *How did we end up with the Bible as we have it now? If it was written over such a long period of time by so many people, how did all the books end up in the same place?*

Distribute the handout “The Canon of the Bible.” Begin by explaining that the word canon means a set of rules that are universally binding. The Canon of the Bible refers to the collection of books that have been accepted as the words of God and collected into a single book. For Catholics, the canon of the Bible was closed following the Council of Trent in 1546. For the Church of England the canon was closed after the 39 Articles were published in 1563. Calvinists in Britain closed the canon following the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647 and the Greek Orthodox Church closed their canon in 1672 following the Synod of Jerusalem.

Once students have received the handout, walk them through the history of the Bible from its time of writing to its time of being accepted as the Word of God. To help students visualize this timeline you may want to have either a blackboard or a large piece of paper available. Choose a student to illustrate the timeline. This will be a useful tool in helping them understand how we arrived at the Bible we have today. Alternately, you can have the students do an “open book test.” Distribute the handout and then quiz the students on the material. This will enable them to both spend time reading through the handout as well as help them understand the process that took place.

Say something like: *This begs the larger question of why? Why did God give us a Bible?*

Take a few minutes to have students answer this question. You may want to utilize a blackboard or a large sheet of paper to write down the responses of students. To conclude this discussion you will want students to arrive at three reasons explaining why God gave us the Bible. They are: a. to reveal Himself to us (we gain an understanding of who God is), b. to show us how we can be reconciled to Him (be forgiven of our sins to remove the separation between humanity and God), and c. to show us how to live our lives to their fullest potential. This is demonstrated through 2 Timothy 3:15.

Say something like: *But, how can we trust the Bible? How do we know it is an accurate copy of what was originally written?* This question is fundamental in our use of the Bible. If we cannot trust its accuracy, we might as well not read it. So, to help us answer the question, we will look at a video clip from author Lee Strobel. He will give us reasons from a historical perspective as to why we can trust that the Bible we have today is a reliable representation of the original writings.

Play the video clip (see Materials List). The clip will run for 2:20. Once it is finished, give students time to reflect on the video. To facilitate this reflection begin by having students spend time on their own thinking through the following questions. Once they have had 3 or 4 minutes to think about the questions, have them pair up with another student. Give the pairs another 3 or 4 minutes to talk about their answers.

- Restate the reasons Lee gave for trusting the accuracy of the Bible.
- Why is it important to have historical evidence of the accuracy?
- How does knowing that the Bible is more accurate than many classic books that are never questioned help you to trust the Bible?

Consolidate / Debrief

Through this lesson we have traced the origins of the Bible and considered the question of why we can trust it. So, that leaves us with one final question “what do I do with the Bible?” The

obvious answer to that is to read it. But, this seems like a daunting task considering the size of the Bible. Students need to be able to both read and understand the Bible. It may be helpful here to utilize church resources to ensure students have both a copy of the Bible they can understand and a devotional that will help them in reading on a regular basis. Encourage students to put aside time to read. It may also be helpful to direct them to methods of reading other than just in printed form. Websites like Teen Daily Devotional Ministries (<http://www.tddm.org/>) are aimed at teens, is appealing from a graphical standpoint, is full of relevant material and offers daily devotionals written by people who currently work in youth ministry. It is worth checking out!

Ask the question: *What happens when we read the Bible?* and spend a moment gathering responses. Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Reading our Bibles will actually build up our faith. That's a pretty good reason! Second Timothy 3:16-17 gives more reasons for Bible study. The reality is that reading the Bible is the most important source of guidance for our daily lives.

Follow up that question by asking: *How do we make reading the Bible a part of our daily lives so that we don't forget?* Help steer the discussion so that students explore methods that they can embrace as they seek to make reading the Bible a daily part of their routine.

It is obvious that we need to read the Bible. It is also obvious that this doesn't seem like a fun thing to do. So, help your students to find ways to read the Bible that will keep them reading and not make it yet another chore on their to-do lists!

Conclude this lesson with prayer.

*As a bonus conclusion to this lesson you may want to spend a moment helping students understand the difference between a translation and a paraphrase. A translation is a version of the Bible that accurately translates a Bible from one language to another. Translations seek to find the best way to put the words of the Bible into the intended language. A paraphrase is an author's view on what the Bible is trying to say. The author will look at a passage, decide what it means and then put that in book form. The caution of either a translation or a paraphrase is

that you should never use just one version. It is important to utilize several in order to understand what the Bible is saying.

Handout: Lesson 2

The Canon of the Bible

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLICAL CANON

Adapted from materials of Professor Paul Hahn of the University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas

Development of the Old Testament Canon

1000-50 BC: The Old Testament (hereafter "OT") books are written.

C. 200 BC: Rabbis translate the OT from Hebrew to Greek, a translation called the "Septuagint" (abbreviation: "LXX"). The LXX ultimately includes 46 books.

AD 30-100: Christians use the LXX as their scriptures. This upsets the Jews.

C. AD 100: So Jewish rabbis meet at the Council of Jamniah and decide to include in their canon only 39 books, since only these can be found in Hebrew.

C. AD 400: Jerome translates the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin (called the "Vulgate"). He knows that the Jews have only 39 books, and he wants to limit the OT to these; the 7 he would leave out (Tobit, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach [or "Ecclesiasticus"], and Baruch--he calls "apocrypha," that is, "hidden books." But Pope Damasus wants all 46 traditionally-used books included in the OT, so the Vulgate has 46.

AD 1536: Luther translates the Bible from Hebrew and Greek to German. He assumes that, since Jews wrote the Old Testament, theirs is the correct canon; he puts the extra 7 books in an appendix that he calls the "Apocrypha."

AD 1546: The Catholic Council of Trent reaffirms the canonicity of all 46 books. This number is rejected by Protestant churches who affirm that only 39 books are worthy of canonization.

Development of the New Testament Canon

C. AD 51-125: The New Testament books are written, but during this same period other early Christian writings are produced--for example, the Didache (c. AD 70), 1 Clement (c. 96), the Epistle of Barnabas (c. 100), and the 7 letters of Ignatius of Antioch (c. 110).

C. AD 140: Marcion, a businessman in Rome, teaches that there were two Gods: Yahweh, the cruel God of the OT, and Abba, the kind father of the NT. So Marcion eliminates the Old Testament as scriptures and, since he is anti-Semitic, keeps from the NT only 10 letters of Paul and 2/3 of Luke's gospel (he deletes references to Jesus' Jewishness). Marcion's "New Testament"--the first to be compiled--forces the mainstream Church to decide on a core canon: the four gospels and letters of Paul.

C. AD 200: But the periphery of the canon is not yet determined. According to one list, compiled at Rome c. AD 200 (the Muratorian Canon), the NT consists of the 4 gospels; Acts; 13 letters of Paul (Hebrews is not included); 3 of the 7 General Epistles (1-2 John and Jude); and also the Apocalypse of Peter.

AD 367: The earliest extant list of the books of the NT, in exactly the number and order in which we presently have them, is written by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in his Easter letter of 367. [Note: this is well after the Constantine's Edict of Toleration in 313 A.D.]

AD 904: Pope Damasus, in a letter to a French bishop, lists the New Testament books in their present number and order.

AD 1442: At the Council of Florence, the entire Church recognizes the 27 books, though does not declare them unalterable.

AD 1536: In his translation of the Bible from Greek into German, Luther removes 4 NT books (Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelations) from their normal order and places them at the end, stating that they are less than canonical.

AD 1546: At the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church reaffirms once and for all the full list of 27 books as traditionally accepted. This is upheld by the Protestant churches.