

# THE BIBLE

## The Bible is God's Special Letter to You

### FOLLOWING UP ON TODAY'S LESSON WITH CHILDREN

#### 1. Recount

Ask your kids to tell you what they learned in class today. Listen to their version and their impressions.

#### 2. Ask Questions

Ask what they think about everything they've seen and done today. What did they think about the things they learned? What did they learn about God? What role do they think the Bible could play in their own lives? Why?

#### 3. Help Interpret

Offer some of your own insights from the adult lesson today, and help develop their understanding of the topic, not by lecturing, but by asking questions and gently guiding them toward the answers. The more they discover on their own, the more it will take root in their young minds.



## Why do we have the Bible?

Our parish is embarking on a project to read the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, as a community. We will not read every word, but we will work our way through the most important parts of the Old and New Testaments.

God created us and He understands us — and He knows that we need help understanding the world around us. Through the Bible, He reveals Himself and He reveals His great love for us.

For many years, many people who loved God passed down His stories by telling them over and over again, and finally they began to be written in books. The books were written over many centuries, and more than 400 years after Jesus walked the earth, the Church gathered the books and chose those that would become the Bible.

Our Orthodox Bible contains more books than other versions of the Bible used by non-Orthodox Christians today.

## READ AT HOME FOR OUR NEXT LESSON

Read about the Creation:

Genesis 1:1 - 2:25

Read aloud and discuss.

God has promised a special blessing to those who read His Scriptures. When we read together as a family, we receive that special blessing together.

## WORD ALERTS!

As we read through the Bible together, we'll notice important words that keep coming up again and again, making important connections that God uses to teach us.

We haven't even started yet, but already we might think about another name for the Bible –

- **The Word of God** - we sometimes call the Bible the 'Word of God' because the Bible is the written word of God. Before the Son of God took human flesh and was called Jesus, the Scriptures refer to Him as *Logos*, or 'the Word'. The gospel of John begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." (John 1:1-2) Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Word of God! When we seek Christ in the Bible, we find Him, so this is a very beautiful connection that emphasizes the holiness of the Word.

The Bible is totally unlike any other book, because it is written for you, so that you can know God. When you read the Bible, certain elements or insights will jump out at you and make an impression — and then the next time you read, something else will jump out at you instead. God sends what we need, when we need it, if only we can be available and attentive.

Unlike other books, the Bible can be read out of order. You can pick up the Bible and read any of the books first — you don't have to start at the beginning. You might even skip around, because some of the books are more important than others. (The Church teaches that the most important books of the Bible are the four gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.)

There are many kinds of books in the Bible: they can be biographies or poems, prayerful hymns and prophecies.

## Let's Read Together

Read the Bible together as a family so that you'll know the story for our next class before you arrive. Pray first, that God will illuminate our understanding. Set aside some time during the week to read the next reading together as a family, and to talk about it. We'll revisit it together as a parish on Sunday.

### What do we mean by Re-Entry?

On Sunday morning, we gather together for Divine Liturgy, and the priest begins, "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages." He is announcing and blessing the Kingdom of God. The people respond, "Amen," signifying their agreement, their fervent desire to enter into the Kingdom in faith and love. The liturgy culminates in Holy Communion; the faithful receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. As humans, we receive the divine, and it transforms us. We complete the Divine Liturgy and then go out into the world, carrying Christ and the Kingdom within us. How are we to re-enter the world? How will we guard the grace that we have received? How will we prepare ourselves to go out?

Let's gather together and study God's word, nourishing and fortifying ourselves for our re-entry in to the world, where we will hold onto the grace we have received, and answer the call to show the love of Christ to all we meet.