

Discip^Le

A Tool Box for Disciples

Part 3

Connecting with the Bible



All Saints Church

Serving the communities of Woodlands and Highfields

DiscipLe is an initiative at All Saints Church to help us on the discipleship journey. This tool box provides some ideas of how

DiscipLe

we can connect with others on this journey with Jesus. It gives ideas of how and when we can meet together; it has tools we can use either on our own, or when we meet, to learn more about Jesus, to get to know Him better, and to be equipped for everything that life may send our way – the good and the bad.

CONNECTING WITH THE BIBLE

This part of the DiscipLe resources is designed to help us connect with the Bible. DiscipLes need to know what the Bible says, how to read it and how it relates to everyday life

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If you see this symbol it means there is an idea where you can listen to something rather than reading it.



If you see this symbol it means there are apps or ideas for smartphones that you can use to help you.



If you see this symbol it means there is a website link for more resources. If you don't go online yet, find someone who does and team up with them.

CONNECTING WITH THE BIBLE

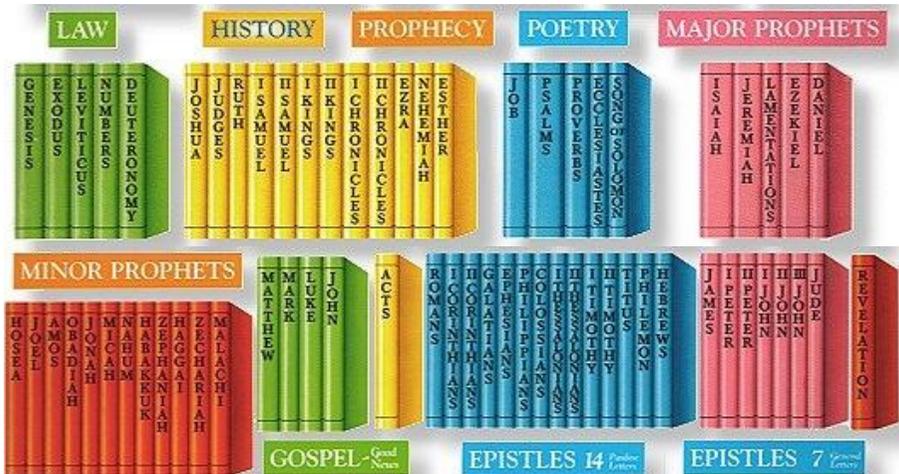
Jesus taught his disciples using the Bible – they didn't have what we call the New Testament (obviously) but they had all of the Old Testament and Jesus used it all the time to teach those who would listen.



If we want to be DiscipLes then we need to connect with the Bible too. The tools in this part of the toolbox can be used on your own or together. A bit of both is the best way to get the most from your Bible.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

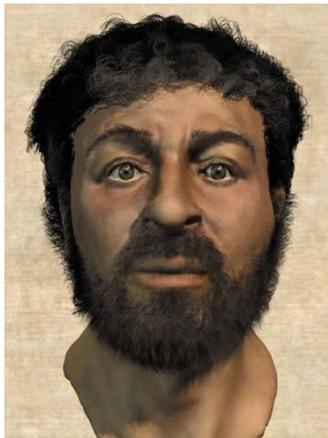
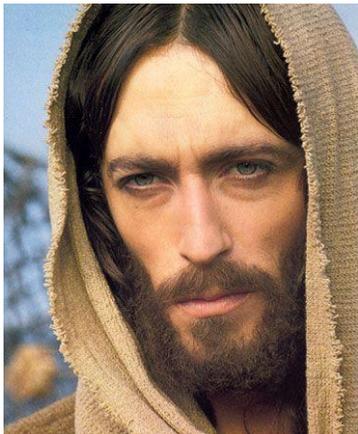
The Bible is a collection of 66 different books. There are books about laws, history, songs and poems. Some of the books are letters written to early Christians and prophecies given to God's people over several hundreds of years.



The Bible is described as “God’s Word”. Christians believe it was inspired by God – he didn’t write it himself – people did that, but they were guided and helped by the Holy Spirit.

IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME?!

The first thing to remember about the Bible is that it wasn't written in English! Jesus wasn't English – he wasn't pale skinned and blue eyed! He was a middle eastern Jew. He would have looked more like the face on the right than the face on the left!!!



The New Testament was written in Greek

John 1,1-2:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος,
καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.

Genesis 1:1-5

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, which reads from right to left not left to right like English.

1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת
הָאָרֶץ: 2 וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְהוֹמוֹת וְכָהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ
עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹמוֹת וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי
הַמַּיִם: 3 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר
וַיְהִי אוֹר: 4 וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב
וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: 5
וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה

Every English Bible is translated from these two languages. It is important to choose a good translation.

GRANDMA’S BIBLE?!

For a long time the only English translation that was available was the Authorised or King James Version (KJV – Bibles are usually known by the first letters of the translation’s name). It was used for hundreds of years, but over that time language has changed a lot, so Grandma’s old Bible is probably not the most helpful translation. Below are a few of the most helpful.

NIV – New International Version

This is the version we normally use at Church. It is relatively modern English.

NCV – New Century Version

This is a translation that uses much simpler language. It is VERY helpful for people who are new Christians, for people who find reading a challenge and for children and young people.

MSG – The Message

This is not strictly a “translation” but a re-wording of the bible using very down to earth language. Some of the language can sound strange to us Brits because sometimes the words are American slang or words we wouldn’t normally use (Sidewalk vs Pavement) It is a wonderful resource, but use it alongside another translation.



There are lots of Bible websites out there – one of the best is Bible Gateway¹ which gives you access to a huge range of Bibles and study guides. They have reading plans and a “Verse of the Day”.



The App allows you to listen to Bible passages too which is ideal for the car, the gym, the bus, or just as you sit at home. You can also buy Audio Bibles on CD. They can be quite expensive so perhaps you could ask for one for a birthday or Christmas. That might start an interesting conversation with your family!

¹ <http://www.biblegateway.com/>

READING PLANS

One way to read the Bible is use a reading plan. There are lots of different plans that can be very helpful if you want to explore more of the Bible or even take on the challenge to read it from end to end!!! There are a number of plans available on the Disciple section of the Church Website² or from a range of websites



The plan below gives you an idea of the sort of resources that are available. Why not grab a Bible and try this one? Or if you don't find reading so easy then use the Bible Gateway App or an Audio Bible on CD and listen to the readings instead.



Two Weeks on the Life and Teachings of Jesus

- Day 1, Luke 1: Preparing for Jesus' arrival
- Day 2, Luke 2: The story of Jesus' birth
- Day 3, Mark 1: The beginning of Jesus' ministry
- Day 4, Mark 9: A day in the life of Jesus
- Day 5, Matthew 5: The Sermon on the Mount
- Day 6, Matthew 6: The Sermon on the Mount
- Day 7, Luke 15: Parables of Jesus
- Day 8, John 3: A conversation with Jesus
- Day 9, John 14: Jesus' final instructions
- Day 10, John 17: Jesus' prayer for his disciples
- Day 11, Matthew 26: Betrayal and arrest
- Day 12, Matthew 27: Jesus' execution on a cross
- Day 13, John 20: Resurrection
- Day 14, Luke 24: Jesus' appearance after resurrection



² <http://www.all-saints-church.net/disciple/>

CHAPTER A WEEK

Reading the Bible with others can be a really helpful way to understand it better and it also can help us be more disciplined.

The idea of a Chapter a Week is that a group of you – it could be two or three, or even a homegroup or other group – commit to read just ONE chapter of the Bible in a week.



By doing it together you make yourself accountable to others and one chapter is a simple target to hit.



You then get together and talk about what you have learned or what you are struggling with. Accountability is really important to Disciple so this one can really help.

It can be really helpful to have a standard set of questions to start the discussion going. How about...

1. What stood out when I read it?
2. Did anything surprise me?
3. Did I struggle with anything?
4. What might God be saying to me through this chapter?

A YEAR WITH THE BIBLE

In 2011 All Saints spent “A Year with the Bible”. There are handouts available online and on paper that guide you through the whole bible. The sermons from 2011 concentrate on the Bible! We started off with an Explorers Guide, which you can download from the website or pick up from Church. The main thing is to ask questions. Don’t worry if you don’t understand everything (or even anything!!) Ask questions of other DiscipLe and you’ll find you’re not alone!



A YEAR WITH THE BIBLE

The table below might help you to ask questions about the part of the Bible you are reading – BUT DON’T PANIC – don’t think you have to ask every question in one go or be able to answer them all either!!

	Understanding the origin of the passage	Understanding the contents of the passage	Understanding the meaning of the passage
Who?	Who wrote the passage?	Who appears in the passage?	Who is the writer talking to?
What?	What happens in the passage?	What style is it in?	What’s the big idea behind this passage?
Why?	Why was this written?	Why did the events take place?	Why does the writer use certain words and phrases?
When?	When was it written?	When does the action take place?	When did it take place in the overall scheme of things?
Where?	Where was it written?	Where does the action take place?	Where is God leading me through this?
How?	How is the passage put together?	How would the original audience have responded?	How can I apply this to my life?

BIBLE READING NOTES

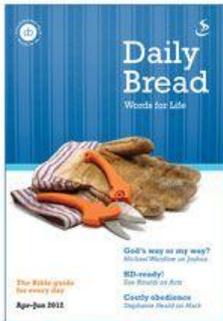
Another way to be more disciplined in reading the Bible is to use Bible reading notes. One which is very popular at All Saints is the UCB Word for Today³. They also have a version written especially for teenager Word4U 2day⁴. There is a Bible verse and then a reflection each day. You can use it in your “Quiet time” or at another point in the day.



They have an audio version online or you can have a set of printed bible notes sent to you every other month. It can sit by your bed, on your desk, or even in the loo!

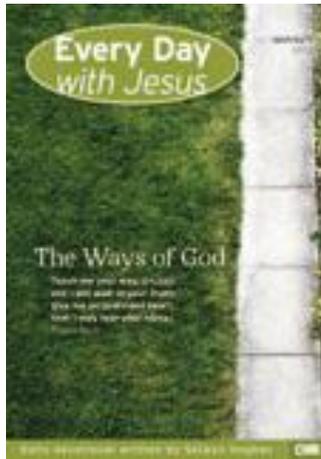


There are other daily notes too – why not go to Church’s Bookshop in town and have a look.

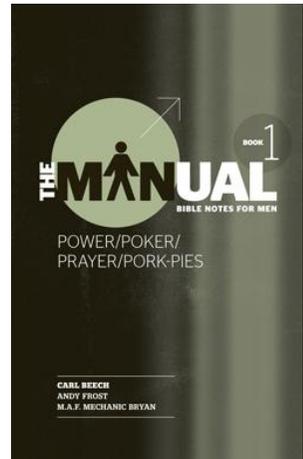


Daily Bread

Daily Bread



Every Day with Jesus



CVM The Manual

Ask around at Church – people will almost certainly have previous copies which you could borrow to “test drive” some Bible notes.

³ <http://www.ucb.co.uk/word-for-today.html>

⁴ <http://www.ucb.co.uk/word4u2day>

JUST READ IT

This is a quiet and thoughtful way of reading the Bible. It is a way coming to God's word that allows the words to almost wash over you as you spend time on a particular passage. It is sometimes known by a Latin name "Lectio Divina" – we prefer "Just Read It". It works well on your own, or in a small group with others



There are four parts but you don't have to do them in this specific order. You might find yourself dipping in and out of them as the Holy Spirit guides you.

Before you begin....get comfortable. You might want to take some long, slow breaths to slow you down, and pray a short prayer to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.



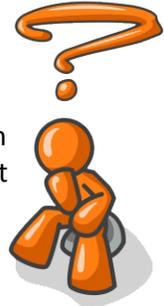
1. Just Read it

- Read the passage twice, slowly. Don't rush.
- Read it as if you were reading a long awaited letter.
- Enjoy each part of the reading, constantly listening for one word or phrase that somehow stands out. It could be something that delights you, raises a question for you, attracts you or even annoys you.
- Don't expect a lightning bolt. God is teaching us to hear His 'still small voice'.



2. Think about it

- Go back and focus on the word or phrase that seems to stand out to you.
- Repeat it gently to yourself out loud or in your head
- Listen for what God is saying to you at this moment in your life – what He might be giving you, what He might be asking you to do.
- As you think about it allow God to invite you into a conversation.



3. Say it out Loud

When you feel ready, speak to God. Tell Him the words that come from inside you as thought/reflected on the passage. God invites you to be real in your conversation with him....tell him all that the passage has brought up in you...the joys, the pains, the memories, the hopes, the doubts.



4. Stay with it

- Finally simply rest silently with God. Words can be helpful for us but sometimes we need to let go of words when they are no longer needed.
- Give yourself time to be still and allow God to give you all that he wants to give you.



Some people find it very helpful to write down what they've learnt or felt whilst reading the Bible. It can help to have made notes if you want to talk it over with someone else or to reflect on over the next few days.

YGTT – YOU’VE GOT THE TIME

The Bible Society produced a listening programme called You’ve Got the Time.

It takes 40 days and the idea is that you listen to the whole of the New Testament. It takes about half an hour each day. It would be ideal to do at a particular time of year. You could do it during lent (the 7 weeks before Easter) you could do it during the summer holidays.



It’s ideal for the journey to work, in the car or on the bus. You could listen to as you go to bed – half an hour early in bed for 40 days might be good for you in more than one way!?!



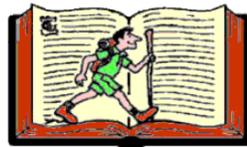
 The resources are available on learning.all-saints-church.net. They are available to buy on CD directly from the Bible Society – again, an interesting conversation starter with your family for your Birthday or Christmas present this year?!

The recordings are by the Riding Lights Theatre Company so are very easy to listen to. This is a fantastic way to hear the whole New Testament. Maybe you could gather a group of people to do it at the same time – then meet up once a week to talk about what you’ve heard.



“PART OF THE STORY”

Another way of connecting with the Bible is through our imaginations. St Ignatius of Loyola, a 16th Century Spanish Christian who founded the



Jesuit movement used to read the Bible and then imagine himself to be a part of the story. It is a sort of Virtual Reality Bible where you provide the special effects! This can be a very powerful way to bring the Bible to life, particularly the Gospels – the accounts of the Life of Jesus

Start as with “Just Read It” and “Rewind and Review” and find somewhere quiet to sit. If it’s a nice day it can sometimes be helpful to be outside with the sounds and smells of the world!

1. Pick a Bible passage that describes an event. Start with the Gospels and find an incident or encounter with Jesus.
2. Imagine the scene and ask yourself 4 questions.



- a. What..? What can I see and hear? What can I smell or taste or touch? What is the weather like? Try and imagine using all of your senses.
- b. Who else is here and what are they doing?
- c. Where am I? Which character would I be playing? How would I be feeling if I were here?
- d. What is Jesus thinking, feeling and saying? Is he talking to me?

3. To finish, ask yourself what you learned about yourself and Jesus. If it has been particularly challenging you might want to talk it through with someone.

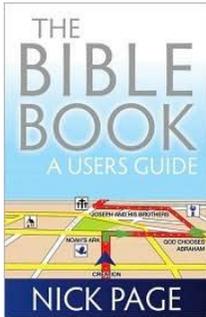
This works well in a group with one person leading the reflection. Pray as You Go⁵ has audio versions. They call it imaginative Contemplation and the link is on the homepage.



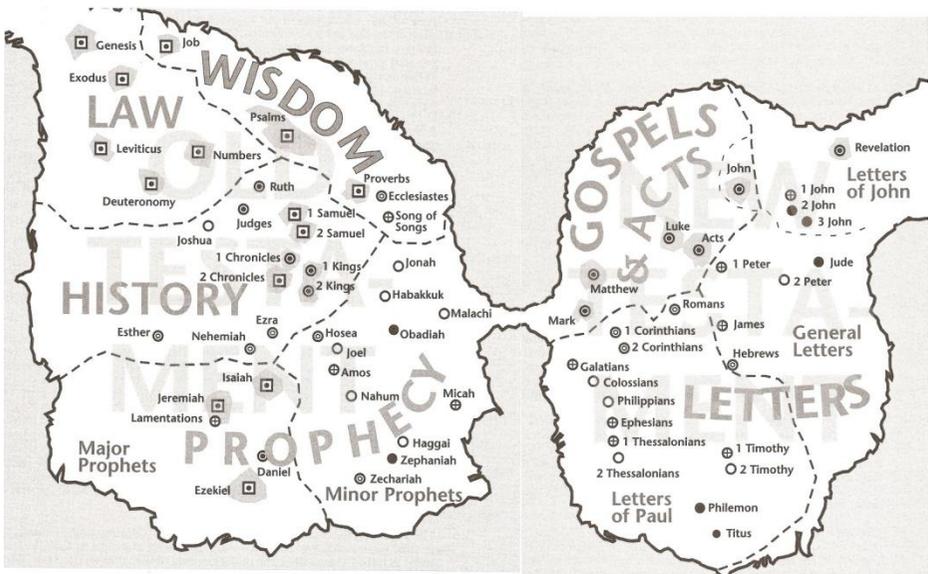
⁵ <http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/>

SOMETHING THAT HELPS

It might sound a bit obvious but find something that helps you connect with the Bible. Head along to a Christian bookshop and have a look at some of the bible study guides there.



The Bible Book by Nic Page is an excellent resource – he likens the Bible to a country and then provides a map (shown below). It is at a fairly basic level but it is a great resource. Commentaries (books by Bible scholars that go into more detail) are widely available. Ask around at Church and someone may have a good one you can borrow. Try things out and find what helps you connect with the Bible.



Disciple Question Time!

“How can I read the Bible more?”

“Can I team up with someone?”

“Could I find a new way to engage with the Bible?”

“COME HOLY SPIRIT”

The last piece of every part of the toolkit is the most important. Jesus said that when he returned to the Father he would send the Holy Spirit and that “He will teach you everything.”⁶

We are not left to “do it ourselves”. Jesus does not leave us on our own to live as DiscipLes – God himself, the Holy Spirit, is with each of us, all of the time.

He is the one who brings the Gifts of Heaven to every DiscipLe. He is the one who transforms us, changes us to be more like Jesus. He is the one who gives us strength. He is the one who whispers words of hope and love and peace into our hearts.

The Holy Spirit is always **WITH** us.

He is always **FOR** us.

He will never **LEAVE** us.

So a question... Are we prepared to go where the Holy Spirit leads?
Are we open to what He wants to do? Do we trust God?

If we are to be DiscipLes then we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. To live our lives with God each and every day. To include Him consciously in all that we say and do.

Are we prepared for the journey? Probably not! But He is, and that is what really matters.

Jesus says “Follow me!” Let’s go!

DiscipLe



⁶ John 14:26

DiscipLe

Is a resource of

All Saints Church

Serving the communities of Woodlands and Highfields



Doors that are open
Hearts that love
Faith that shines

www.all-saints-church.net/disciple