

TEACHING THE BIBLE

CCCNZ
Together Works Better.



This booklet is designed to help you, a church leader, train others to serve and lead in the local church.

WHY BOTHER WITH TRAINING?

Most churches would love to have a few new leaders. But new leaders don't just magically appear! Leaders need to be identified, trained, and encouraged.

- Even naturally 'gifted' leaders benefit from training. People who are 'gifted' musicians received lessons and training at some point, and they have to practice regularly.
- Timothy was a 'gifted' leader (he received a 'gift from God' for ministry, 2 Timothy 1:6). But Timothy also received training, instruction, encouragement and feedback from Paul, an older and more experienced leader (see 1 and 2 Timothy).

WHO DOES THE TRAINING?

Future leaders can receive training and input from books, helpful websites, conferences, and classes. It makes sense for people with more experience in ministry to help those with less experience.

- Long-serving Sunday School teachers can train newbies. Veteran preachers can mentor newcomers. Skilful Bible study leaders can give input to those still learning how to lead.
- The Bible tells us that Bible-teaching leaders in the church have a responsibility to train and equip others for ministry and service. Ephesians 4:11-12 says that pastors and teachers are to "prepare God's people for works of service".

HOW CAN WE TRAIN?

Many of us are not professional teachers. Many of us wish we had received better training (instead of being ‘thrown in the deep end’!) So how can we train others well?

Planning a training programme is a lot like planning a journey on ‘Google Maps’.

Choose Destination: Where are we going? What is the goal of the training you are planning to offer? It’s good to clearly answer this question: “By the end of this training, what should the trainees know and be able to do?”. It’s also worth asking “how can we know that we have arrived?” – in other words, how will you assess the trainees to check that they are making good progress?

Choose Starting Point: Where are we starting from? How close, or far away, are the trainees from the final goal? What do they already know? What can they already do?

Choose Travel Mode: On Google Maps you can choose to drive, walk, bike, or take public transport. There are different ways to travel depending on your situation. There are also different ways to train others for ministry. Would it be best for the trainees (and you) to read and discuss a book together, go to a conference together, meet for informal Bible studies, should you run a class in your local church or enrol in online Bible College courses? You may try a number of different options.

Choose Your Route: Sometimes Google Maps will suggest a few ways different ways to get to your destination. You could take the fastest route or the slow and scenic way. What would be best for the people you are trying to train? What points do you need to cover to reach your destination? What themes and passages of the Bible will you need to visit along the way? Will you offer some short training opportunities to get them serving quickly, or would it be wise to take your time and not rush the process?

HOW DO I USE THIS BOOKLET?

These training booklets offer busy church leaders a plan for training people in the local church. They are designed to be:

- Short—each course is usually 5 sessions
- Interactive—a discussion not a lecture
- Flexible—you can use the bits you want and leave the rest
- Manageable—each session might take between an hour and 1.5 hours
- Realistic—they require minimum preparation and resources
- Scalable—you can use these with one trainee or 20

TEACHING THE BIBLE: COURSE OVERVIEW

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course learners will be able to read a passage of the Bible carefully to understand its meaning. They will be able to prepare a short talk that explains, illustrates, and applies the main idea of the Bible passage.

ASSESSMENT:

- Trainees will work to understand a Bible passage, discussing what they discover with their trainer.
- Trainees will deliver a short talk at the end of the course which explains, illustrates, and applies the main idea of a Bible passage.

COURSE PLAN:

Session	Points to cover
One	The importance of faithful Bible teaching The two main steps to prepare a Bible talk
Two	Listening carefully to God's Word: asking questions and the structure
Three	Listening carefully to God's Word: the context and main idea
Four	Speaking God's Word: planning a short talk
Five	Speaking God's Word: giving the talk and receiving feedback


TEACHING THE BIBLE: SESSION ONE

SESSION AIM

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Explain from the Scriptures why accurate Bible teaching is important.
- Describe the two main steps when preparing a Bible talk.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Discussion	<p>Think about the Bible talks we hear in our church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunday sermon• Bible teaching for children• Bible talks at youth groups or camps• Preaching at special events, like a men's breakfast <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) What makes a GOOD Bible talk?2) What makes a BAD Bible talk? <p><i>If working in a group, you could write your thoughts on a whiteboard and discuss them together.</i></p>										
Bible study	<p>It is important that God's Word, the Bible, is taught honestly, truthfully, and faithfully.</p> <p>Look up these verses and discuss what they tell us about the importance of accurate Bible teaching.</p> <table><tr><td>Deuteronomy 4:1-2</td><td>Psalms 33:4-6</td><td>Jeremiah 23:25-32</td></tr><tr><td>2 Corinthians 2:17</td><td>2 Timothy 2:15-16</td><td>Titus 1:10-11</td></tr><tr><td>James 3:1</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Deuteronomy 4:1-2	Psalms 33:4-6	Jeremiah 23:25-32	2 Corinthians 2:17	2 Timothy 2:15-16	Titus 1:10-11	James 3:1			
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<p>Reflection</p>	<p>Preparing a Bible talk requires two main steps. These are represented by the two arrows in the diagram below.</p> <p>ONE: LISTEN The Bible is God speaking. Bible teachers must listen carefully to hear what God is saying in his Word. We should hear what is there, and not invent words or ideas and force them into the text!</p> <p>TWO: SPEAK Once the Bible teacher has heard, understood, and obeyed God’s Word they must think carefully about how to teach others. We need to speak so that our hearers receive and believe God’s message also.</p> <div data-bbox="563 607 1417 880"> </div> <p>Discuss with other leaders or Bible teachers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever had any training to help you ‘listen’ to the Bible well? What parts of the Bible do you find most difficult to understand or apply? How could you make progress to become a better Bible reader this year? How much experience have you had as a Bible speaker or teacher? How confident are you when it comes to explaining the Bible to others and answering their questions? Where do you think prayer fits into the process of listening and speaking? When Bible teachers pray, what are they asking God to do for them and their hearers?
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>At the end of this course all trainees will present a short Bible talk. Assign trainees a passage to work on throughout this course. For ‘homework’ this week, complete the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray, asking God to help you understand your passage. Read and re-read your assigned verses as often as you can during the week. Make a note of anything that stands out in your text, and also any questions you have about the passage. <p><i>Some verses you may like to assign include: Proverbs 3:5-6; Mark 2:1-12; Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Peter 1:13-16.</i></p>

TEACHING THE BIBLE: SESSION TWO

SESSION AIM

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Read a Bible passage carefully to understand what it is teaching.
- Discover the structure of a Bible passage.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Practical Activity: Asking Questions

How do we get to know people we haven't met before? We ask them questions and listen carefully to their answers. It is the same with a Bible passage we want to get to know—we need to ask lots of questions and listen carefully to what it says! Below are a few examples of questions we could ask a Bible passage.

WHO	Who is writing? Who are they writing to? Who are the characters in this story?
WHAT	What are these verses mostly about? What happens in this story? What has gone wrong? What is the problem this passage is addressing? What images and word pictures does the writer use?
WHERE	Where is this action taking place? Where is God in this story?
WHEN	When are these events taking place? When is this passage set in the overall storyline of the Bible?
WHY	Why has the writer emphasised these main points? Why does that character respond the way they do? Why does the writer use that metaphor? Why does the writer use that word or phrase?
HOW	How does the trouble in this story resolve itself? How does the writer want us to feel about each character? How are the main ideas in this passage linked together?

If working in a group, chose a short passage such as Matthew 4:18-22 or Philippians 1:3-8. List on a whiteboard as many “Who, What, Where, When, Why, How” questions as you can think to ask your passage. Then try to answer them together, using only the passage (or the surrounding verses) to discover the answers.

<p>Practical Activity:</p> <p>Structure</p>	<p>Asking questions helps us to pay attention to WHAT the Bible is saying. We also want to consider HOW the Bible is saying it. In other words, how has the Bible writer structured this passage to get their point across?</p> <p><i>Discovering the structure of a passage will be very useful later when we think about how to structure our Bible talk.</i></p> <p>Here are some hints for finding the structure of different kinds of Bible books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPISTLES (the letters). Think about how the ideas flow. Underline the main point(s) the writer is making, or circle important and repeated words. Is the writer making a statement and then giving reasons or supporting illustrations? Are they comparing two different ideas? Are they listing commands? Are they applying a truth to different areas of life? • POEMS. Many poems are filled with images. Try circling the different images and metaphors in the passage to discover the structure. For example, Psalm 1 can be organised into two sections based on the healthy 'tree' and the dead 'chaff'. • STORIES. One simple way to understand the structure of a story is to turn it into a simple comic strip. This will help you notice the action of the story, important dialogue and changes in scene or character. <p><i>Try working together on your practice passage (Matthew or Philippians) to find the structure.</i></p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>At the end of this course all trainees will present a short Bible talk. Last session you assigned each trainee a passage to work on throughout this course. For 'homework' this week, complete the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray again, asking God to help you understand your passage. • Ask your passage as many questions as you can, and find as many answers as you can from the verses themselves (or the surrounding verses). • Discover the structure of your passage by noticing the flow of ideas, observing the images, or drawing a comic strip. Ideally you should be able to break your passage up into 2, 3 or 4 main sections. Too many will be too confusing.

TEACHING THE BIBLE: SESSION THREE

SESSION AIM

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

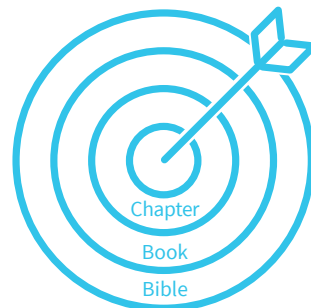
- Explain why context is important for understanding the meaning of a passage.
- Identify the 'main idea' of a passage.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Practical Activity: Context

Did you know that the Bible says these words: *"There is no God"*? To understand those words properly, look up Psalm 14:1-3. It is very important that you read Bible passages in context to understand what they are saying!

Any Bible passage you read is part of a chapter. Each chapter is part of a Bible book. And each Bible book is part of the big story of the whole Bible.



Putting your passage in context is important to understand its meaning. But we also need to think about the context to understand the **PURPOSE** of our passage. In other words, the context helps us to answer the question: **WHY did the writer say these words here?**

If working in a group, look at the following passage: Mark 8:22-26. Briefly discuss what it is teaching. Now, as a group consider WHY Mark wrote about this healing here. What was his purpose for including this miracle at this point? Look at the context (especially verses 14-21 and 27-30).

Notice how Mark compares physical blindness and spiritual blindness. Has Jesus done another miracle healing alongside the physical one?

<p>Practical Activity:</p> <p>Main Idea</p>	<p>The ‘main idea’ is a one sentence summary of our passage.</p> <p>Finding the ‘main idea’ is an important step for Bible teachers because we will have made lots of interesting discoveries about our passage—often too many to communicate clearly in a talk! Therefore we need to consider what the Bible writer wanted to communicate most of all (the ‘main idea’) and allow this to shape our talk.</p> <p>To write your ‘main idea’, ask these two questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) THEME: What is this passage mainly about (in ONE word)? 2) MAIN IDEA: What is this passage saying about its theme (in ONE sentence)? <p>For example, look at Mark 4:35-41.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) THEME: Jesus 2) MAIN IDEA: Jesus has authority over creation! <p><i>As a group, try to complete the following.</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Psalm 150</i></td> <td><i>Luke 12:13-21</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>THEME: Praise.</i></td> <td><i>THEME: Treasure</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>MAIN IDEA: ?</i></td> <td><i>MAIN IDEA: ?</i></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Psalm 150</i>	<i>Luke 12:13-21</i>	<i>THEME: Praise.</i>	<i>THEME: Treasure</i>	<i>MAIN IDEA: ?</i>	<i>MAIN IDEA: ?</i>
<i>Psalm 150</i>	<i>Luke 12:13-21</i>						
<i>THEME: Praise.</i>	<i>THEME: Treasure</i>						
<i>MAIN IDEA: ?</i>	<i>MAIN IDEA: ?</i>						
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>At the end of this course all trainees will present a short Bible talk. They have been assigned a passage to work on throughout this course. For ‘homework’ this week, complete the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray again, asking God to help you understand your passage. • Look at the context of your verses (the passages before and after your own). Consider how the context helps you to understand the author’s purpose: Why did they write these words at this point in the book? • Try to come up with a ‘main idea’ sentence to summarise your passage. 						

TEACHING THE BIBLE: SESSION FOUR

SESSION AIM

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Plan a simple Bible talk to explain, illustrate and apply the main idea of your Bible passage.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Practical Activity: State and Explain

Here is a simple way to structure a short Bible talk. It is not the only way, but it can be a very helpful way to begin as a Bible teacher. *(This structure is adapted from a book by John Chapman called “Setting Hearts on Fire: A Guide to Giving Evangelistic Talks” – Matthias Media).*

- 1) STATE the point (what is the main idea?)
- 2) EXPLAIN the point (tell me what it means)
- 3) ILLUSTRATE the point (show me what it is like)
- 4) APPLY the point (tell me what to do with it)

Let’s use this simple structure to start writing a Bible talk.

Last session we said that the main idea for Mark 4:35-41 might be: “Jesus has authority over creation!” So, a Bible talk on this passage would begin by reading the Bible passage, and then the speaker would STATE the point using a simple phrase like:

- “What these verses show us is that Jesus has authority over creation”.
- Or “In today’s Bible talk we are going to see that Jesus has authority over creation”.

Next, the speaker would explain this ‘main idea’ by referring to the Bible passage. How does this Bible story show us that Jesus has authority over creation? What needs to be explained, retold, or emphasised from the Bible verses to help people understand the point? How can we briefly retell and summarise the Bible verses to convince the hearers that Jesus has authority over creation?

If working in a group, discuss how you would EXPLAIN the main idea from Mark 4:35-41. You could take notes using bullet points on a whiteboard.



<p>Practical Activity:</p> <p>Illustrate and Apply</p>	<p>After the speaker has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the Bible verses • Stated the main idea • Explained the main idea from the Bible passage <p>It is time to ILLUSTRATE the point to help people understand it better.</p> <p>Illustrations use something familiar to explain something that is not familiar/a new concept. Illustrations are often short stories or word pictures to help the hearers ‘see’ what the main point is like.</p> <p>To illustrate the main idea of Mark 4:35-41, that Jesus has authority over creation, the speaker might talk about another well-known example of authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might talk about the coach of their rugby team, and how she has authority over the players in the team as well as the game plan every week. In a much greater way Jesus has authority—not just over 15 people on a Saturday morning, but even over the seas and storms! Only Jesus can do that! <p><i>As a group, try to come up with one or two different illustrations that will help people understand Jesus’ authority.</i></p> <p>Finally, the speaker should APPLY the point. They want to help the hearers think about what to do with the truths they have heard.</p> <p>Consider what you learned when you looked at the CONTEXT of your passage (back in session three). “Why did the writer say these words here?” What response, or application, did the writer want from their first readers? This will give you a clue about how people should respond and apply the passage today!</p> <p><i>As a group, discuss the application of Mark 4:35-41. It is surrounded by stories about Jesus’ powerful words (4:1-34) and his authority over demons, sickness and death (5:1-43). What did Mark want his readers to know about Jesus? What is an appropriate response to his power/authority today?</i></p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>In the next session all trainees will present a short Bible talk on their assigned passage. For ‘homework’ this week, complete the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray again, asking God to help you plan your Bible talk. • Write down the words you will say under the headings STATE the point/main idea, EXPLAIN the point, ILLUSTRATE the point, APPLY the point. (Don’t forget to read the Bible passage out to the hearers before you give your talk!) • Practice saying your talk at home. It should only take 5 or 10 minutes.

TEACHING THE BIBLE: SESSION FIVE

SESSION AIM

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Give a short Bible talk that you have prepared.
- Give and receive feedback about your Bible talk.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Giving the talk	<p>Now is the time for trainees to deliver the talks they have prepared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray for them—they will be nervous!• Remind them to read their passage first.• After they have spoken, share feedback using the feedback structure below (or your own).
Feedback Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) How did the speaker feel about the experience? What did they find easiest and hardest?2) Overall, how well did the speaker LISTEN to the passage? What did they do well, and what needs improvement?3) Did the speaker clearly explain the passage to the hearers? What went well and what needs improvement?4) Were any illustrations or stories helpful in clarifying the Bible's message, or were they distracting/off topic?5) Was the main idea clear, and was it helpfully applied?6) What's one thing the speaker could work on for 'next time'? What's one thing they did well—and they should keep doing?

Conclusion	<p>There is much more we could have addressed when it comes to giving Bible talks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about introductions and conclusions? • How can I prepare a longer talk? • Should I read my notes or try to speak ‘off the cuff’? <p>Here are a few ideas to continue training Bible teachers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Read through some more thorough books on Bible teaching, such as John Chapman’s “Setting Hearts on Fire” or Haddon Robinson’s “Biblical Preaching”. 2) Set new preachers up with more experienced mentors to prepare together. 3) Start a ‘Bible Teachers Club’, getting together once a month to share short talks and give each other feedback. 4) Take a preaching or teaching course in person, or online, offered by Christian ministries or Bible colleges.
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SAMPLE TALK: MARK 4:35-41

Throughout the sessions we have been using Mark 4:35-41 as an example passage. The following talk is based on those exercises to illustrate what a short Bible talk might look like.

(READ THE VERSES - Mark 4:35-41)

(STATE the point)

In today's Bible talk we are going to see that Jesus has authority over creation.

(EXPLAIN the point)

Try to imagine this scene in your mind. Jesus and his disciples are in a boat. Many of Jesus' disciples were actually fishermen. They were used to boats. They weren't scared of the water. But in this story, they are very scared! Look at verses 37 and 38. *(Read these verses again).*

These disciples sound frightened for their lives. They are in a boat, in a storm, the wind is howling and the waves are huge! Water is starting to come onto the boat, and these disciples think they are going to drown. They wonder if Jesus really cares about them.

These disciples knew a lot about boats, and they knew a lot about the sea. Maybe they even knew a lot about storms. But they didn't know something very important about Jesus... Jesus has authority over creation! Look at what Jesus does next in verses 39 to 41. *(Read these verses again).*

Isn't that amazing? Just by speaking a word, the wind and the waves died away. Jesus rescued his disciples from death, just by saying "Quiet! Be still!". Jesus had authority over creation. His disciples saw that for themselves, and verse 41 says they were terrified! Not of the storm anymore, but terrified of Jesus' power!

(ILLUSTRATE the point)

I used to play rugby in my younger days. Our coach was a lady called Megan. She was a very good coach, and I think all of us were a little bit frightened of her! She used to make us work hard at practice and tell us exactly what we did wrong. She was certainly the boss of all the players!

And on game day, she was still the boss. She knew how the opposition teams liked to play, and she would come up with our plan to beat them. Even though she wasn't on the field, Megan was in charge!

In Mark's gospel, Mark is showing us that Jesus is in charge! He has power and authority. He's not in charge of a rugby team... he has much more power than that! He's in charge of the wind, the waves, and of creation. And in the next few verses we see that Jesus has power over demons, and sickness, and even death. Jesus has power and authority that only God has!

(APPLY the point)

So how should we respond to this powerful Jesus? There's a hint in verse 40—"Do you still have no faith?" Jesus wanted his disciples to put their faith, their trust, in him. We should trust that Jesus really is God's one and only Son, because he can do what only God can do! We should trust that Jesus can help and save us, and we should trust that Jesus deserves our praise—because he has authority! Jesus has authority over creation.