

Four Parts of a Good Bible Study

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I have looked at many collections of Bible studies for teens and have seen that nearly every one of them has four parts. If you study the Bible with your students, even if you don't use a curriculum, I suggest that you incorporate these four parts into the structure of your time in God's Word.



Part 1: Capturing the Kids' Interest (hook)

You could start with something like, "Open your Bible to Philippians 4." But it's better to begin with something interesting that relates to the day's Scripture and hints at why the study is important. Some have called this section the 'hook.'

Some good hooks include:

- an opening question related to teen life and the topic
- a game related to the topic
- a skit that says something about the topic
- a short video related to the topic

Warning: its easy to make this section too long! Often, kids find the 'hook' fun and interesting, so it goes longer than you expect. When this happens, you may lose engagement when you shift to the Bible study. It's also good to include only one activity in the hook; more than one makes the first section too long.

Part 2: Reading God's Word (book)

Now it's time to say, 'Open your Bible to...'. Some call this section the 'book.' It's when we actually read the Bible together.

This leads to the next question: what Bible will they open? Do they all bring their own Bibles? Do you have extra Bible available in your meeting space? Do they use a Bible phone app? And will we all use the same translation or have different translations?

These are questions to consider ahead of time. Sometimes we've kept extra Bibles in the room for those who don't have one. I have also printed the text on a sheet of paper, so everyone has the same translation.

For teens I usually suggest not covering more than ten verses. You can summarize what happens before and after the passage if needed. Better to get a good understanding of a few verses than trying to cover too much.

Look ahead of time for key words in the passage that the kids may not fully understand; for example, 'grace.' Church kids have heard the word many times, but they may not really understand it. If you are not sure they know a word, ask them to tell you what they think it means.

If the passage is a story you may want to give some background, and then help them answer factual questions, like *who* is in the story? *where* did it take place? *when* did it take place? etc.

Part 3: Applying the Scripture to Life (look)

This third part is what makes our Bible study different from a history lesson. We want to learn something from this story that will matter to our lives today. Some call this section the 'look.'

Questions are a good way to help kids apply the lesson. One of the best general questions to ask is:

- What do these verses tell us about God?

Some other questions could be:

- What do these verses tell us about people?
- What surprised you in these verses?

Specific questions related to any topics discussed in the passage are also good.

When verses deal with relationships, another good application tool is role-play. Have kids get in groups of two or three to act out the Biblical principle in given situations.

Making true and false statements and having the group vote (thumbs-up/thumbs-down) can also help kids think through the scripture application.

The 'look' section is still general. It includes the things we all can learn from the passage related to God, attitudes, behavior, morality, etc.

Part 4: Making God's Word Personal (took)

Now is the time for each individual to get personal: *Is there something here that the Spirit wants to say to me?*

- Something new about God?
- Something to confess and repent of?
- A new way to look at something?
- Something I should be doing?

It's important to let kids hear from the Spirit; what He wants to say to them from the study of His Word. Some call this section the 'took' section: what will you take away from this study? It may be a new understanding about God or the world or right and

wrong, a new attitude (such as gratitude or patience), or commitment to change a behavior or do something you hadn't thought of doing before.

It's important in this section not to play the role of the Holy Spirit and 'guilt' the kids into responding. Encourage them with ideas, but without any hint of coercion or shame. If your group is really serious about growing spiritually, you could give them questions or other verses to read and think about throughout the week.

In review, the four parts of many effective Bible studies are:

- Introduction that draws attention to what the passage is going to say (HOOK)
- Reading the passage and understanding it (BOOK)
- Applying these verses to contemporary life and worldview (LOOK)
- Discovering specific applications for your own life (TOOK)

Remember, the introduction and personal reflection times should be the shortest sections; it's important not to drag them out. Most of your time should be spent in understanding and applying the Scripture (parts 2 and 3).

To dig deeper into how these four parts play out in an actual lesson you can go to the Youth Ministry 2:2 website and look at the Bible 101 lessons.

<https://www.youthministry22.com/bible-lessons-2>

May God bless you as you help kids connect to God and His Word!