

The Teen Bible Challenge



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Center for Biblical Studies and The Bible Challenge
www.thecenterforbiblicalstudies.org



Dear Friend:

Bible reading can transform your life. Taking time each day to read a little bit of the Bible is the number one way to develop as a Christian along with being active in a church. We have developed several options to help teenagers engage God's Word. We recommend these options:

1. Read the New Testament in a year using our Read the New Testament in a Year reading plan – This is a great way to develop an understanding of the Christian message, deepen your faith and encounter Jesus. Participants in this ministry will read one psalm and a chapter of the New Testament each day. After you finish reading each day, ask yourself: 1) What does this text tell me about God? 2) What does it tell me about other people? 3) What does it tell me about myself? Ponder these questions alone, with a friend or a group.

2. Read a One-Year-Bible – A One-Year-Bible consists of selected readings for each day taken from the Bible, using lessons from both the Old and the New Testament. The more difficult, boring and violent passages are omitted. This is an excellent way to become introduced to regular Bible reading. At the conclusion of each reading, ask yourself: 1) What do today's readings tell me about God? 2) What do they tell me about other people? 3) What do they tell me about myself? Ponder these questions alone, with a friend or a group. A One-Year-Bible consists of selected readings for each day taken from the Bible, using lessons from both the Old and the New Testament. Google: *one year Bible* to find several good options available from Amazon.com

3. Harness the power of technology and download the Bible for free – Consider downloading the Bible on your iPad, iPhone, Kindle or Nook.

Keep the Bible with you at all times. YouVersion.com and bible.com offer numerous Bible reading plans from read a Bible in a year to plans exploring faith, love and other topics. The site includes downloads of mobile apps and apps for smart phone, iPad, Blackberry and Android phones.



Oneyearbibleonline.com offers a reading plan divided into daily readings containing a passage from the Old Testament, the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs. Biblegateway.com is a great searchable Bible with multiple options for finding just what you need. Bibleresources.bible.com is another site with good resources. Amazon.com, Zondervan.com, and BN.com offer an array of Bibles and downloads available for Kindles, Nook Readers, Smart phones, Blackberry and Android Phones, NIV Audio Bible Dramatized and CD.

4. Listen to the Bible – There are many resources today that allow you to listen to the Bible as you drive to school, walk your dog, exercise, travel or relax at home or in bed. This is great for audio learners. You can listen to the Bible in a variety of translations by using apps and programs from:



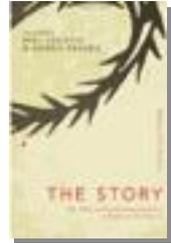
Audio.com/Bible, listenersbible.com, BibleGateway.com, YouVersion.com or www.faithcomesthroughhearing.com., which provides audio programs to listen to the Bible in 692 languages. You can listen to the entire New Testament in 28 minutes a day for 40 days.

5. Scripture Memorization – Scripture memorization is a great way to develop your faith and increase your knowledge of the Bible. When we memorize something, we can recall it, recite it and use it to form our thoughts, guide our decisions and articulate our beliefs. Bible memorization helps to form our character and shape our virtues. There is even an app called *BibleMinded* that allows you to memorize verses on your own or by following one of several plans. We suggest reading a chapter of the Bible a day and highlighting one verse to memorize. Write it down on an index card. Spend a few minutes trying to memorize it. Take the index card with you and practice reciting it throughout the day. By the end of the day, you should have it memorized. Review your favorite verses once a week.

6. Read *The Message Remix* by Eugene Petersen – *The Message Remix* is a teen version of a best-selling paraphrase of the Bible by the Eugene Petersen. It is a great introduction to the Bible for those who struggle with reading Scripture in its original form, and it makes biblical stories and verses come alive in a fresh, new way. After reading this, you can read the Bible on your own. Visit: www.messagebible.com to order a copy.



7. Read *The Story Teen Edition* – This seamless collection of Bible stories published by Zondervan has been stitched together into one continuous story that reads like a novel. Long dietary codes, genealogies and repetitive portions of the Bible are eliminated. After reading this, you will be ready to read the entire Bible on your own. Visit: www.thestory.com to order a copy.



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8. Read the entire Bible in a Year – For teenagers with a mature faith who have read the entire New Testament, *The Message Remix*, *The Story Teen Edition* or a *One-Year-Bible*, we recommend reading the entire Bible using our Read the Bible in a Year reading plan, which can be downloaded from our website at: www.thecenterforbiblicalstudies.org. At the conclusion of each reading, ask yourself: 1) What was the most surprising about the Bible reading today? 2) How do these texts challenge or affirm my faith? 3) How is God inviting me to grow based on what I read today?

9. Read the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts – If reading a lot of the Bible seems too daunting, begin slowly. Read Luke, a gospel rich in stories about Jesus' life and ministry and full of great parables. This will give you an introduction to the life of Jesus. The Book of Acts will teach you about how the first Christians began to spread Jesus' message and love.

10. Join an ongoing Bible study or start your own – The Bible comes alive when we read and study it with others. The heart of religion is not about having all of the answers but asking the right questions. Bible studies help us to formulate good



questions and learn from others. If there is not an on-going Bible study at your church, start one in your home, school or church. Invite friends to join you. Begin by reading a gospel. Then consider reading the Book of Acts and Paul's Letter to the Romans and First and Second Corinthians. For the Old Testament, start with Genesis and Exodus.

Testimonials

The Bible Challenge is going really well. I haven't been able to read as much per day now that school has started, but I make sure that I always read at least a little bit every day. More importantly, though, it's become something that keeps faith on my mind pretty much all the time... Also, I can tell that it's something I want to continue. Not only am I sure that I'll finish it, but I'm also sure that once I do, I'll go back and study individual parts again. I am confident that daily reading will definitely remain a part of my schedule. Thank you for introducing me to this challenge; it's been a wonderful thing in my life. – Allie (age 17)

The Teen Bible Challenge gives me the opportunity to read the Bible in an organized way. With college on my mind and a busy school schedule, having an outline to help me read through the Bible is really helpful to me.” – Alec (age 17)

I am reading away---and using what I'm reading. Just last night, at the Junior Youth Group Meeting, I was able to insert a Bible quote from Matthew at just the right moment; and for a few minutes we had 14 6th-8th graders focus on the question at hand. "So the last shall be first, and the first last." It was quiet as they considered the meaning of the quote and how it applied to their lives. We had a focused discussion where no one interrupted the speaker for about ten minutes (which is a Junior Youth Group record) – Jim (a youth group leader)

Before you get started on The Bible Challenge, here are some things to consider before you get started:

When do I start The Bible Challenge?

You can start The Bible Challenge whenever you desire. January 1 is an ideal starting date, if you want to make a spiritual resolution to read some of the

Bible each day for the coming year. Otherwise, start on any given day. Read a little of the Bible prayerfully each day, and let God's Word to penetrate your heart, mind and soul. Our website:

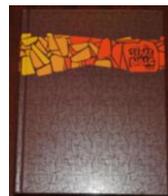
www.thecenterforbiblicalstudies.org offers many resources to help you.

Which translation of the Bible should I read?

We encourage teenagers to read the *Spark Bible*, a New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. It is an excellent, highly readable translation with helpful notes and suggested questions.

Visit: <http://www.wearesparkhouse.org/bibles/> to order We also recommend the *Common English Bible* translation of the Bible. It has no footnotes, is light and easy to carry.

Visit: www.commonenglishbible.com to order it. There are many fine translations of the Bible. First time Bible readers should avoid the King James Version, because it is very challenging.



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How do you recommend that I begin reading the Bible?

- Because the Bible is not a newspaper, it is best to read it with a reverent spirit. We advocate a devotional approach to reading the Bible, rather than reading it as a purely intellectual or academic exercise. We encourage you to begin each session by putting yourself in the presence of God as you start to read.
- Read with a desire to understand and follow the teachings of Scripture so that your life might be transformed by the Holy Spirit working within you.
- We like the ancient monastic practice of *lectio divina*, where you read the text, meditate on a portion of it, then offer a prayer to God and listen in silence for God to respond. We encourage all readers to read the Bible prayerfully.
- We encourage you to read for 15 to 30 minutes each day. If you can read the Bible in the morning, it will spiritually enliven the rest of

your day. If you cannot, read the Bible later in the day and let it refresh your spirit.

- If you are reading the Old Testament, we encourage you to skim or skip over long genealogies, lengthy descriptions and dietary codes. Get the gist and move on.
- Establishing a good practice of reading the Bible each day is most critical for the first 21 days. After that, you will have established a good Bible reading habit.
- We encourage you to have fun and to find spiritual peace and joy as you read God's Word.
- Our ultimate goal is to have you discover God's wisdom for your daily life and develop a lifelong spiritual practice of daily Bible reading.

Team strength and reaching out for support in reading the Bible

- One way to insure that you read a portion of God's Word each day and understand what you are reading is to start a Bible study in your home, church or school and read the Bible with friends. You can support one another, ask questions, discuss what you are reading and share how God's Word is transforming your life.
- After a year or a set amount of time reading the Bible together, we encourage you to hold a celebratory meal to commemorate your spiritual accomplishment.
- If you have questions about what you are reading, contact the clergy or youth leader at your church.

Life after The Bible Challenge

- If you have found reading the Bible to be a blessing, then share the blessing with others. Invite several of your friends or family to participate in The Bible Challenge.
- We encourage participants to make daily Bible reading an important spiritual practice for the rest of their lives. The Bible is a never-ending fount of wisdom that can bestow blessings upon us on each day of

our lives. President John Adams, our second president, read through the Bible each year of his adult life and felt greatly blessed by doing so. We commend this practice.

The Lord will honor the effort you make in reading God's Word.

If this spiritual experience touches your heart and nourishes your soul, we invite you to make a small contribution to the Center for Biblical Studies to help us promote The Bible Challenge so that others may benefit from the daily reading of God's Word and participate in The Bible Challenge. Your gift can be made out to "St. Thomas Episcopal Church" with a memo for "The CBS" and sent to St. Thomas Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 247, Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, 19034.

May God's light and love shine through you each day,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marek", followed by a small plus sign.

The Rev. Marek P. Zabriskie

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and Founder of The Bible Challenge and the Center for Biblical Studies.

To join The Bible Challenge, please e-mail me at:

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St. Thomas' Church

W H I T E M A R S H

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