

Catechetical Area: Catholic Understanding of Scripture

Specific Catechetical Theme: Reading and Understanding the Bible as God's Word:

Event Focus: Entering into the Season of Fall

Summary:

Hopefully after tonight, you will walk away with a tad bit more understanding and excitement about the wonderful book we call the Bible and reading it in a way that opens us up to God's Word for us. We will look at five main points, using the acronym **B.I.B.L.E.**

▪ **BELIEVERS**

As Catholics we believe the Bible is the Word of God...what does that mean??? Does it mean that God dictated to the scripture writers and they took every word from God and wrote their books..NO! The words of the Bible are just words. To become God's Word for us, we need to **approach the Bible as believers**, people of faith. Seeing the Bible as God's word refers to taking actions and events of the past and seeing them through those eyes of faith. Taking the words of the Bible and seeing the self-expression or revelation of who God is through the writings of the prophets and storytellers and finally through the person of Jesus. The Bible is one of God's ways of telling us what is important in life...how he wants us to live in order for us to be happy and experience him in the fullest way. The truths or messages are sometimes hard to understand or see, but with help and some direction, God's word will become more and more alive for us. Truly understanding God's word is to experience God working in the lives of our ancestors and in our lives today.

▪ **INSPIRATION**

The word inspiration means "breathe into," thus leading us to see the Bible as God's "breath," the same word use in the Bible for spirit. This means that the religious content in the Bible comes by way of a special form of the Spirit's influence. This Spirit of God influences the writers to convey messages important to our salvation. God has important things he wanted us to know and so he used human experience, human beings, human skills and knowledge to convey to us what he felt we need to know in order to gain eternal life. When we read scripture, we take into account the time and culture during which it was written and look not for facts or information but **for the inspired truth** behind the story.

▪ **BOOKS**

73 books...can you imagine 73 different ones!. There are story books, poetry books, historical books, books on the life of Jesus, and even books telling us the stories of the first Christians. In fact the Bible is like a miniature library. Various types of writings are contained in the different books. But these books are different from any other in that, like we have already heard, they are God's word inspired through the Spirit to human authors. Some books have many authors...some we have no clue who really wrote them...some

tell stories that conflict with known history...why so many strange things...because the Bible isn't meant to be read as a history book or a biography of God...it was written to bring truths about our faith in God into reality. They are never to be seen through a human history "lens" as we understand history—rather through eyes of faith and desire to understand God's presence in our lives today . We must be careful not to put words into God's mouth by focusing on only the literal understanding of scripture or by the separation of the old testament from the new testament without seeing the continuity of God's presence and persistence in helping us to understand his love and his constant presence, which brings us to the next letter.

▪ **LOVE**

The L letter is better understood if we look at it through the eyes of relationships...in other words...it is a book about the loving relationship that God chooses to have with his people...each of us. We must always remember that when trying to understand God's Word, we must look at it and interpret through the eyes of love between our creator and ourselves. How many different ways did God try to show his people in the Old Testament how much he loved them and would never leave them orphans...would never abandon them even in the face of danger or suffering. And then in the New Testament...he brought this love into human reality by sending his own Son, Jesus Christ to be one of us and to reflect the love of his father in everything he did. Sometimes we come across a difficult passage (like when God seems angry or punishes someone). For these to become God's Word, we must always search for how these passages show us something about God's **desire for a loving relationship**. And also remember that emotions of God in these challenging passages attribute emotions or responses to God that are not always of God but how the author perceives that God would react.

▪ **EVERYWHERE AND EVERYONE**

The Bible is **for all of us, everyone and everywhere**. It speaks a language and shares a message that we all can put to practice in our lives if we really choose to do so. What really makes the Bible God's words is when we take the messages and apply it to our lives...The words aren't meant to be static or passive...they were meant to bring life and hope to all us in living through the pattern of our daily lives. The best opportunity we have in doing this is by hearing the word of God proclaimed in Sunday Mass, listen to the practical insights given to us by the homilist, and going home with thoughts of how am I going to live our this week's message. Applying God's words to our daily lives allows spirit of God to be alive and active in the world. Because it is God's Word for everywhere and everyone, however, it means that we can never simply take our own individual interpretation as the final word. The words of the Bible need to become God's Word for each of us but always within a wider understanding of how they are God's Word for all of us everywhere.

FALL: CHANGING OF THE SEASONS, BEAUTY OF CREATION, HARVEST

SOME SCRIPTURE PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS TO HELP US CONNECT GOD'S WORD TO THIS TIME OF ENTERING THE FALL SEASON

Take a moment to reflect on the season of fall. What images come to mind for you? What experiences of the season have been ingrained into your memory? Then take one or more of the following passages, reading them carefully, maybe three or four times. Reflect on the questions provided. At the end, say a prayer of thanksgiving for the season of fall, that it might be one of great blessing to you and those around you.

1. **Genesis 1:27-31**
What does this passage teach us about God?
2. **Isaiah 55:10-11**
How does God's word water the seed of faith within you?
3. **Luke 13:18-19**
How is the kingdom of God like a mustard seed?
4. **Mark 4:26-29**
What fruit, or good deeds, sprouts forth from your family?
5. **Luke 6:43-45**
What good qualities does your heart store?
6. **Psalms 1:1-3**
How does following God's law and making good decisions help me to grow and prosper?
7. **Joel 2:18-19**
What blessings has God given you?
8. **Jeremiah 5:24**
How does God provide for you?
9. **2 Corinthians 9:6**
What good deeds have you sown bountifully?
10. **Luke 12:16-21**
How do you share you harvested treasures with others?