



Bible Reading in Community

Introduction

For thousands of years, readers have encountered God's voice in the poems, stories, and riddles of the Bible. The Bible is ancient meditation literature, meaning it was written to be read slowly and in community, over and over again. We want to invite you to practice this way of reading the Bible, looking at a few passages at a time with a small group of people. You don't need any prior knowledge of the Bible, but the more you become familiar with its themes and literary techniques, the more wisdom you will discover within it.

This booklet contains **four passages** to read with others. You don't have to go in order. Simply gather with a few people, set aside about **45 minutes**, and choose one passage to read together.

To structure your gathering, we've provided a simple format of reading and responding. Each passage is paired with a BibleProject video you can watch together. The video is designed to spark curiosity and model dialogue, while highlighting a few key insights hidden in plain sight. But the main event is your conversation. Lean in with curiosity, approach the Bible as ancient literary art, and remain open to encountering the wisdom of God within it.

Thank you for joining us in the communal reading of Scripture.

The Format

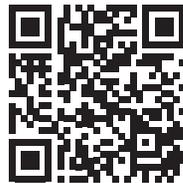
- 1. Read the Passage**
Read the selected passage slowly and with the expectation that God's voice is here for us.
- 2. Collect Questions** 5 MINUTES
Every question is good—get them all out and written down. The Bible is inviting us to lean in and be curious.
- 3. Watch the Video** 5 MINUTES
The corresponding video shows the literary shape of the passage and encourages deeper discussions.
- 4. Make Passage Observations** 5-10 MINUTES
Continue the conversation! What other details can we observe about the passage? What is the point of the repeated words? What can we see by comparing lines or sections?
- 5. Choose One Question and Discuss** 5-10 MINUTES
Which one of the questions collected during step 2 does the group find most interesting? Choose one and discuss it.
- 6. Make Hyperlink Observations** 5-10 MINUTES
What other passages in the Bible discuss the same question? What other passages have the same key words or themes? Find one or two and compare them.
- 7. Discern Wisdom** 5 MINUTES
What does God have for you as a community? What ideas are sticking with you after this study?

Tell us your story and give us feedback on this format by emailing info@bibleproject.com

3. Watch the Video



Watch



4. Make Passage Observations 5-10 MINUTES

Continue the conversation! What other details can we observe about the passage? What is the point of the repeated words? What can we see by comparing lines or sections?

5. Choose a Question and Discuss 5-10 MINUTES

Which one of the questions collected during step 2 does the group find most interesting? Which question seems most aligned with what the passage wants us to ask? Choose one and discuss.

6. Make Hyperlink Observations 5-10 MINUTES

What other passages in the Bible discuss the same question? What other passages have the same key words or themes? Let's find one or two and compare them.

7. Discern Wisdom 5 MINUTES

What wisdom can we discern for our community from the ideas in this passage?

3. Watch the Video



Watch



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Session 4

Genesis 1:1-2:3

1. Read the Passage

Chapter 1

¹ In the beginning, Elohim created the skies and the land.

² Now, the land was wild and waste
and darkness was over the face of the watery deep,
but the breath/wind of Elohim was hovering over the
face of the waters.

³ And Elohim said,
“Let there be light,”
and there was light.

⁴ And Elohim saw that the light was good.
And Elohim separated the light from the darkness.

⁵ And Elohim called the light “day,”
and the darkness he called “night.”
And there was evening
and there was morning,
one day.

⁶ And Elohim said,
“Let there be a dome
in the middle of the waters,
and let it separate the waters
from the waters.”

⁷ And Elohim made the dome,
and he separated the waters which were below the dome
from the waters which were above the dome.

And it was so.

⁸ And Elohim called the dome “skies.”
And there was evening
and there was morning,
a second day.

⁹ And Elohim said,
“Let the waters below the skies
be gathered into one place,
and let the dry ground be seen.”
And it was so.

¹⁰ And Elohim called the dry ground “land,”
and the gathering of the waters he called “seas,”
and Elohim saw that it was good.

¹¹ And Elohim said,
“Let the land sprout vegetation,
vegetative plants that produce seed,
fruit trees that make fruit according to its kind,
which has its seed inside it, upon the land.”

And it was so.

¹² And the land brought out
vegetative plants
that produce seed according to its kind
and trees that make fruit
which has its seed in it according to its kind.

And Elohim saw that it was good.

¹³ And there was evening,
and there was morning,
a third day.

¹⁴ And Elohim said,
“Let there be lights
in the dome of the skies
to separate the day from the night,
and let them be for signs
and for sacred feasts and for days and years.

¹⁵ And let them be for lights
in the dome of the skies
to give light on the land.”

And it was so.

¹⁶ And Elohim made the two great lights,
the great light to rule the day,
and the small light to rule the night,
and also the stars.

¹⁷ And Elohim placed them
in the dome of the skies
to give light on the land,

¹⁸ and to rule the day and the night,
and to separate the light from the darkness,
and Elohim saw that it was good.

Session 4: Genesis 1:1-2:3

¹⁹ And there was evening
and there was morning,
a fourth day.

²⁰ And Elohim said,
“Let the waters swarm with a swarm of living creatures,
and let birds fly above the land
against the face of the dome of the skies.”

²¹ And Elohim created the great sea-monsters
and every living creature that moves,
with which the waters swarmed after their kind,
and every bird of wing after its kind,
and Elohim saw that it was good.

²² And Elohim blessed them, saying,
“Be fruitful and multiply,
and fill the waters in the seas,
and let birds multiply on the land.”

²³ And there was evening
and there was morning,
a fifth day.

²⁴ And Elohim said,
“Let the land bring out living creatures
according to their kind,
cattle and creeping things and beasts of the land
according to their kind.”

And it was so.

²⁵ And Elohim made
the beasts of the land according to their kind,
and the cattle according to their kind,
and the creepers of the ground according to its kind
and Elohim saw that it was good.

²⁶ And Elohim said,
“Let us make human
in our image,
according to our likeness;
and let them rule
over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the sky
and over the cattle
and over all the land,
and over every creeper that creeps on the land.”

²⁷ And Elohim created human in his image,
in the image of Elohim he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ And Elohim blessed them,
and Elohim said to them,
“Be fruitful and multiply,
and fill the land,
and subdue it;
and rule over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the sky
and over living creature that creeps on the land.”

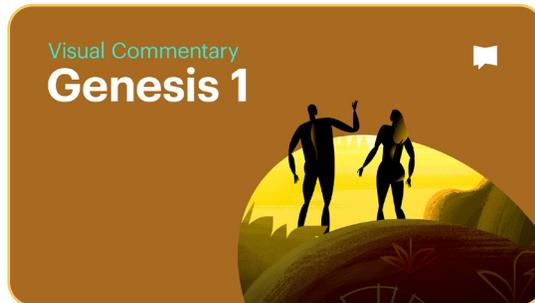
²⁹ And Elohim said,
“Behold, I have given to you
every plant producing seed
that is on the face of all the land,
and every tree which has fruit producing seed;
it shall be food for y’all.

³⁰ And for every beast of the land,
and for every bird of the sky,
and for every thing that moves on the land which has living
being in it,
every green plant is for food.”

And it was so.

³¹ And Elohim saw all that he had made,
and behold, it was very good.
And there was evening
and there was morning,
a sixth day.

3. Watch the Video



Watch



Here is a diagram of some of the literary designs from the video for reference.

1:1 Summary Prologue	
In the beginning, God created the skies and the land [7 words].	
1:2 Exposition of Prologue in Three Lines	
Now, the land was wild and waste (heb: <i>tohu va-vohu</i>) and darkness was over the face of the deep abyss (heb: <i>tehom</i>), but the breath of Elohim was hovering over the face of the waters (heb: <i>hamayim</i>). [7x2 words]	
DAY 1	DAY 4
DAY 2	DAY 5
DAY 3	DAY 6
2:1 Summary Epilogue	
Thus were finished, the skies and the land and all their hosts.	
2:2-3 Exposition of Epilogue in Three Lines	
And God completed on the seventh day his work which he had made [7 words].	
And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made [7 words].	
And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [7 words] because on it he rested from all his work which God created to make . [key word from 1:1]	

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We help people experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus so that his followers can be united and contribute to *shalom* in the world.



Explore more
BibleProject resources.