

# HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

## LESSON TEXT

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:24-25; 2 Peter 1:20-21

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will identify three authors whom God inspired to write the Bible.
- The students will discuss the Bible's reliability based on the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- The students will state one fact about the Bible's origins.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

*For each student:*

- 3 pieces of yarn, each 24" in length, in different colors
- pens or pencils

*For the teacher:*

- 12 balloons
- black marker
- pin
- pre-made scroll
- globe or map of the world
- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- extra Bibles

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page A, 1 copy for each student
- Page B, 1 copy for each student
- Page C, 1 copy for each student

## LESSON PLAN

### *Getting Ready*

Faithful Instruction  
Teacher Focus  
Preclass Activity: Braided Bookmark  
Starting Up  
Welcome and Singing  
Opening Prayer  
Victories  
Good News from the Kingdom

### *Getting into God's Word*

Story: Strange but True  
Scripture Study: Part A  
Activity 1: Can We Agree?  
Activity 2: Authors of the Bible  
Scripture Study: Part B  
Activity 3: The Telephone Game

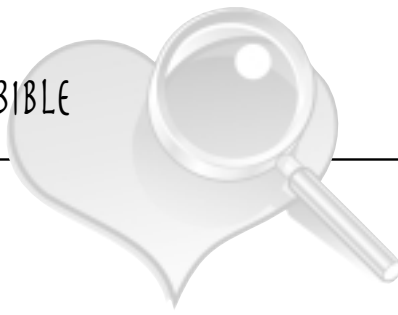
### *Getting It to Others*

Scripture Memory: Psalm 119:89  
Weekly Challenge and Snack Time  
Conclusion

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Your word, O Lord, is eternal;  
it stands firm in the heavens.

Psalm 119:89



## FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

### TEACHER FOCUS

We often face skeptics who claim the Bible is just words written by men and outdated, only created to explain things that were not understood. As a Christian, you have complete faith in the Bible as the word of God. Do you remember the emotions you felt when you came to this realization? Are your feelings stronger now than they were then? Why? What would your response be if someone asked you why you believe that the Bible is the word of God? (cohesiveness of the Scriptures, lack of contradictions, relevance.) Reflect on this and pray before preparing the lesson.

## PRECLASS ACTIVITY

### BRAIDED BOOKMARK

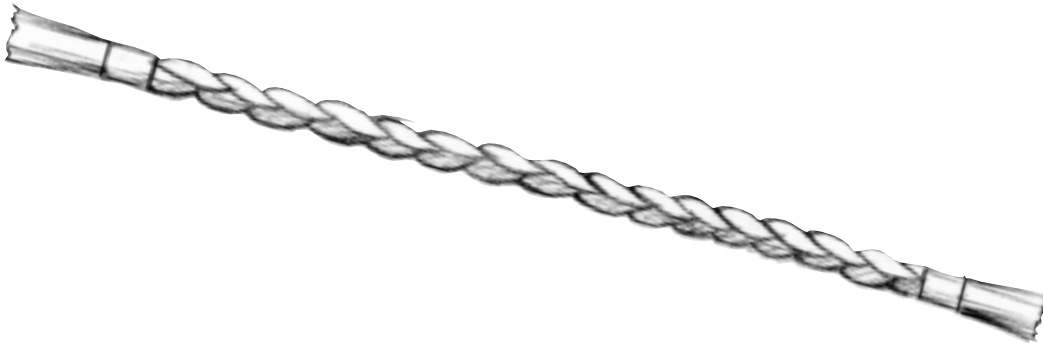
#### MATERIALS USED

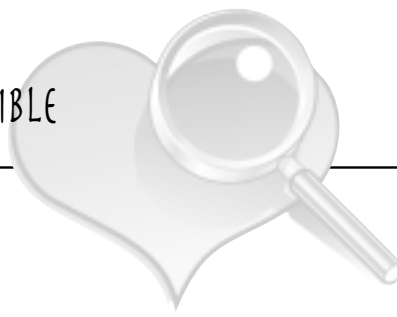
*For each student:*

- 3 pieces of yarn, each 24" in length, in different colors

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. As they arrive, direct each student to select three differently colored pieces of yarn.
2. Have the students work individually to braid these pieces together to create bookmarks for their Bibles. (Allow the students to braid in whatever fashion they wish.)
3. While they work, have the students consider this question: How could these three pieces of yarn, which are being braided into one, represent God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit?





## STARTING UP

### WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

### OPENING PRAYER

*Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together?* Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, and to be especially thankful for the chance to be together.

### VICTORIES

Take time to have the students share about the challenges they were given at the end of last week's class. *Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent quiet times?*

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week.

### GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

#### MATERIALS USED

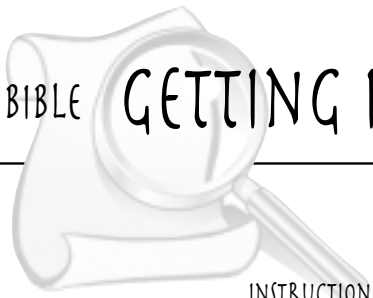
*For the teacher:*

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

#### INSTRUCTIONS

*Now let's take a few minutes to share "Good News from the Kingdom."* Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the locations as you share.





## STORY

### STRANGE BUT TRUE

This story will help the students understand how many decisions we are called to make regarding what we believe. In the same way, we must make decisions to believe the Scriptures by trusting that they are from God.

#### MATERIALS USED

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page A, 1 copy for each student

#### PREPARATION

Read the story ahead of time.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute copies of Reproducible Page A (story) to the students.
2. Read the story to the students.
3. Explain and discuss the story concept.
4. Begin the lesson by asking the students the following questions and giving them a short amount of time to respond:
  - *Who wrote the Bible?*
  - *Why was the Bible written?*
  - *Where did the authors get their ideas?*
  - *How long will the Bible last?*

### SCRIPTURE STUDY (PART A)

*Now let's read the following scriptures.* Choose students to read each of the following verses aloud:

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:24-25; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

Repeat the questions you asked above to see if the scriptures agree with the answers given by the students. Then ask the following questions:

- *How do we know that the Bible is from God?*
- *How do we know if it is accurate?*

*Let's try an activity that will help us to explain to others why we believe the Bible is from God.*

## ACTIVITY 1

### CAN WE AGREE?

#### INTRODUCTION

The following activity is intended to show the students that it is difficult for even a small group to agree on any one topic; yet the Bible, written by many men, does.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Ask the class to decide as a group which would be the best animal to be if they could choose to be any animal at all. (You may choose any topic that you feel will evoke discussion and disagreement. Examples: sports team, movie, television show, musician, etc.) Allow two minutes.

*What animal did you decide upon?*

*What problems did you have in reaching your decision?*

*If you had difficulty in a group as small as this, (mention your class size), agreeing on one thing, what do you think are the chances of forty different men from all walks of life agreeing on many things? (Discuss briefly.)*

## ACTIVITY 2

### AUTHORS OF THE BIBLE

#### MATERIALS USED

*For each student:*

- pen or pencil

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page B, 1 copy for each student

#### PREPARATION

Create an answer sheet for Reproducible Page B for this activity.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell the students: *Think about the people who wrote the Bible. There are over forty authors of the Bible. Let's take a closer look at some of them.*
2. Distribute copies of Reproducible Page B ("Authors of the Bible") to the students.
3. Have the students use their Bibles to complete the worksheet. Students may work individually or in pairs. Allow eight to ten minutes to complete the sheet.
4. Check answers as a group.
5. Discuss.

*You can see that the men who wrote the Bible had many different jobs and lived in very different times. Yet even with all this variety, the Bible is still consistent and agrees in every way. As a class of our size, we could not agree, yet the authors of the Bible were in complete agreement. Does it seem possible they wrote the Bible without God? How would you explain this to someone else?*

## SCRIPTURE STUDY (PART B)

We know that the Bible we have now does not contradict itself even though it was written by many people. But, how do we know the words and ideas we now have are the same as the original? I am going to tell you a true story that will answer that question.

This part of the lesson is intended to show the students the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and give them some factual information about how the Bible was preserved. Have the students sit in a circle and tell them the following story:

*It is the winter of 1946 (more than fifty years ago). A young shepherd and his two friends are watching their sheep near the Dead Sea in the Middle East. The boys are playing when they notice one of the small lambs is missing. The shepherd panics, knowing he will be punished if the lamb is not found. The three boys begin frantically searching for the missing animal.*

*One of the boys spots a cave above them. He suspects the lamb may have crawled into the cave searching for food. He cannot reach the entrance easily so he throws a rock into the opening, hoping to scare the lamb out. Instead the rock hits something which makes a strange noise. Just at that moment, one of the other boys shouts that he has found the lamb. It is getting dark and the boy at the cave forgets about the sound he heard. They all return home.*

*Several days later, the boy, Mohammed, returns to explore the cave. He is sure it is full of ancient treasure. After a difficult climb to the entrance, Mohammed enters the cave only to find some old clay jars. He is very disappointed. No jewels, no gold, no money. The only things there are a couple bundles of cloth and a roll of leather. The bundles contain two more rolls of leather with writing on them. He decides to take these and see if he can sell them to someone. He winds up selling the three rolls for almost \$100 which is far more money than he has ever had. Eventually, the rolls sell to the state of Israel in 1954 for \$250,000. They are now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls and are one of the greatest archaeological finds in all of history. Mohammed did find his treasure but did not know how great it was.*

Lead a follow-up discussion to this story as follows: *Why were the Dead Sea Scrolls so important?* (The scrolls ended up being copies of many books of the Bible. They were written around one hundred years before Christ. Until they were found, the earliest manuscripts were dated from 800 A.D. This is a difference of about 1,000 years!)

*How different do you think the Dead Sea Scrolls were from the manuscripts written 1,000 years later? Before you answer, let's play a quick game.*

## ACTIVITY 3

### THE TELEPHONE GAME

#### MATERIALS USED

*For the teacher:*

- pre-made scroll
- a 4-5 sentence detailed story

#### PREPARATION

1. Create a scroll using parchment or colored paper, and string to tie the scroll.
2. Write a 4-5 sentence detailed account of an event, or use the sample given below.

### SAMPLE STORY

*Kiesha, Michael and Elizabeth wanted to make a cake but they were out of butter, eggs, sugar and flour. They decided to go up to the supermarket on Sixth Street. On their way they saw a big red truck smash into a small yellow Volkswagon Bug. Luckily no one was hurt. When they got to the store, it was out of butter, so they decided to make lemon squares. They bought lemons, sugar, flour and salt. They arrived home at 2:45.*

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have the students sit in a circle.
2. Begin by whispering the story, only once, into the ear of the first student. Hand the student the scroll and tell him not to look at it.
3. Have that student whisper the same story into the ear of the next student while passing the scroll. Continue until everyone has had a turn.
4. Ask the last person to stand up and tell what he heard. Then read the original account aloud. The difference is usually significant.

*You heard how this story changed just by being told among us. Why do you think this happens? How much change might happen after 1,000 years? (discussion) However, even after 1,000 years the Old Testament text remained nearly the same! This is because the scribes who copied the Bible were very careful workers. You will take a closer look at this in your next class.*



## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Psalms 119:89

Your word, O Lord, is eternal;  
it stands firm in the heavens.

### MATERIALS USED

*For the teacher:*

- 12 balloons
- black marker
- pin

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page C, one copy for each student

### PREPARATION

1. Blow up 12 balloons.
2. With a black marker, write one word of the memory scripture on each balloon.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Hand out the balloons in proper order, each one to a student.
2. Have the students read the words from their balloons.
3. Pop the balloons after the words are read, and have the class repeat the words.
4. Continue until all balloons have been popped.
5. Have the class repeat the entire verse two to three times.
6. Distribute a copy of Reproducible Page C to each student.

## WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

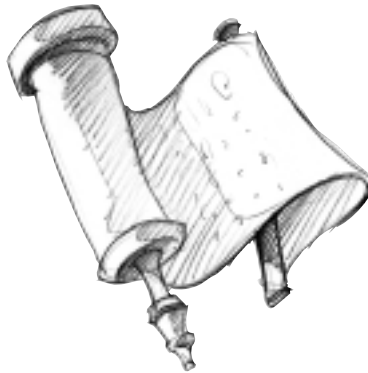
If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat it while you explain to them the challenge for the week.

Briefly discuss why you wanted to study the Bible when you first started. Share one of the things about the Bible's accuracy that impacted you the most. Be excited in your sharing.

For the weekly challenge, ask the students to think of a disciple that they would like to talk to this week. They should ask the person what he or she was most excited about when beginning to study the Bible. The students should record the answers and bring them to class next time. From this conversation, the students should be able to develop some insights about how they think the Bible should impact their own lives as they read it.

## CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



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## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will identify three authors whom God inspired to write the Bible.
- The students will discuss the Bible's reliability based on the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- The students will state one fact about the Bible's origins.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

*For each student:*

- scissors
- several sheets of lined paper
- black pen (other writing instruments may be used, but every student must have the same kind)
- piece of string, 4" in length

*For the teacher:*

- extra Bibles

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page C, several extra copies (for students who missed the last class or visiting students)
- Page D, one for each student
- Page E, one for each student

## LESSON PLAN

### *Getting Ready*

Faithful Instruction  
 Teacher Focus  
 Teacher Tips  
 Preclass Activity: Dead Sea Scroll Facts  
 Starting Up  
 Welcome and Singing  
 Opening Prayer  
 Great News Sharing

### *Getting into God's Word*

Scripture Study  
 Activity: Guidelines for a Scribe

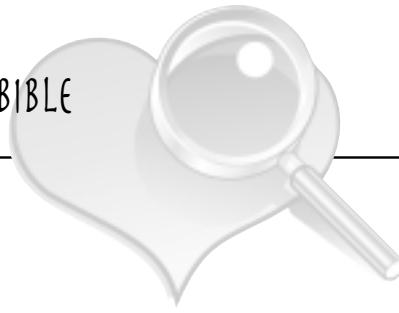
### *Getting It to Others*

Scripture Memory: Psalm 119:89  
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time  
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## SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

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## FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

## TEACHER FOCUS

We often face skeptics who claim the Bible is just words written by men and outdated, only created to explain things that were not understood. As a Christian, you have complete faith in the Bible as the word of God. Do you remember the emotions you felt when you came to this realization? Are your feelings stronger now than they were then? Why? What would your response be if someone asked you why you believe that the Bible is the word of God? (cohesiveness of the Scriptures, lack of contradictions, relevance). Reflect on this and pray before preparing the lesson.

## TEACHER TIPS

As you prepare the lesson for this week, you will want to try the Scribe Activity yourself. Copy the two verses using the same guidelines you will give your students. By doing this, you will be able to give hints to help them. You should recognize that this activity may be difficult and frustrating for some of your students. Provide as much help and assurance as you can, encouraging those students who are having difficulty to do their best and complete only what they are able to do.

## PRECLASS ACTIVITY

## DEAD SEA SCROLL FACTS

## MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- scissors

Reproducible Pages:

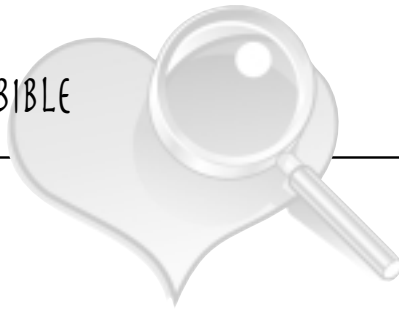
- Page D, 1 copy for each student

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. As the students arrive, give each a copy of Reproducible Page D.
2. Have the students write in the scroll outline three facts they learned about the Dead Sea Scrolls during their last class.
3. The students may cut the scroll out and roll it around their pencils to resemble a real scroll.







## STARTING UP

## WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together?* Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, and to be especially thankful for the chance to be together.

## GREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief, so that as many as possible can share.





## SCRIPTURE STUDY

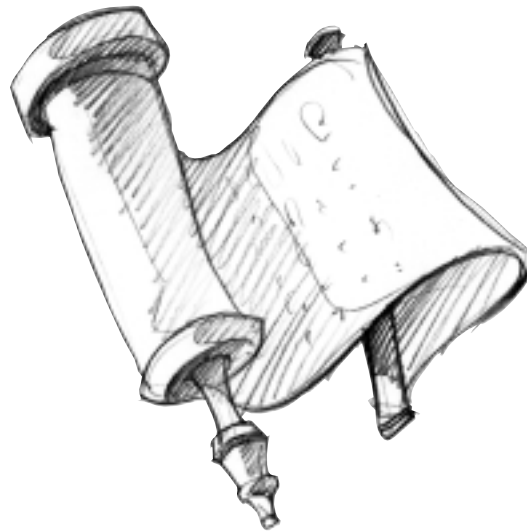
You learned in your previous class about how accurately the Bible was copied over the years. The scribes were so accurate that copies were found that were written 1,000 years apart and had few, if any, changes. Today we will spend some time discovering how the Bible was copied and what precautions were taken to ensure accuracy. The Old Testament was copied with such precision that each entire scroll was copied by hand, one letter at a time. If one mistake was made, the entire scroll was destroyed!

Consider the following guidelines the Masoretes (Jewish copyists of Hebrew Scriptures) followed:

- Each copy had to be made on a brand new writing surface and had to be prepared in a specific way.
- Each copy had to be written in a certain number of columns of thirty-letters width, with a certain number of lines to each column.
- Each copy had to be written in a certain color and quality of ink.
- Each copy had to be made from an authenticated original.

- Not even the tiniest letter could be written from memory, as one would glance at the word "to" and write the letters "t" and "o" before glancing back at the original, but every letter was copied singly from the original.
- No letter could connect with or overlap another letter. The distance between each letter was measured by a single hair or thread.
- Every letter of every page and book was counted and compared against the original. The number of times each letter of the alphabet occurred in a book was counted and compared against the original. The middle letter of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) and the middle letter of the entire Hebrew Bible were computed and indicated in the text. If one of these calculations was incorrect, the copy was discarded!

(Taken from *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door* by Josh McDowell, Word Publishing, 1992, Pages 50-51.)





## ACTIVITY

## GUIDELINES FOR A SCRIBE

## MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- several sheets of lined paper
- black pen (other writing instruments may be used, but every student must have the same kind)
- 1 piece of string, 4" in length

Reproducible Pages:

- Page E, one copy for each student

## INSTRUCTIONS

Now we are going to have some fun copying a scripture. Like the ancient Jews, we will follow very strict guidelines. See Reproducible Page E ("Guidelines for a Scribe"). If a mistake is made, you must begin again.

1. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page E, one sheet of lined paper and a black pen.
2. Have the students open their Bibles to 1 Peter 1:24-25.
3. Read the transcription guidelines aloud, answering any questions the students may have.
4. Have the students transcribe onto the lined paper, following the guidelines. They must come individually to get another sheet of paper if a mistake is made.
5. Check the students' progress. Be very strict in ensuring accuracy. Allow quite a bit of time for them to transcribe the verse.

## DISCUSSION

Stop the students about fifteen minutes before the class is over. Let them pass their papers around to compare how they did. Have a brief discussion to reinforce the fact that the Bible was copied with incredible care.

*We copied two verses today, how long do you think it took for a copyist to do the whole Bible?*

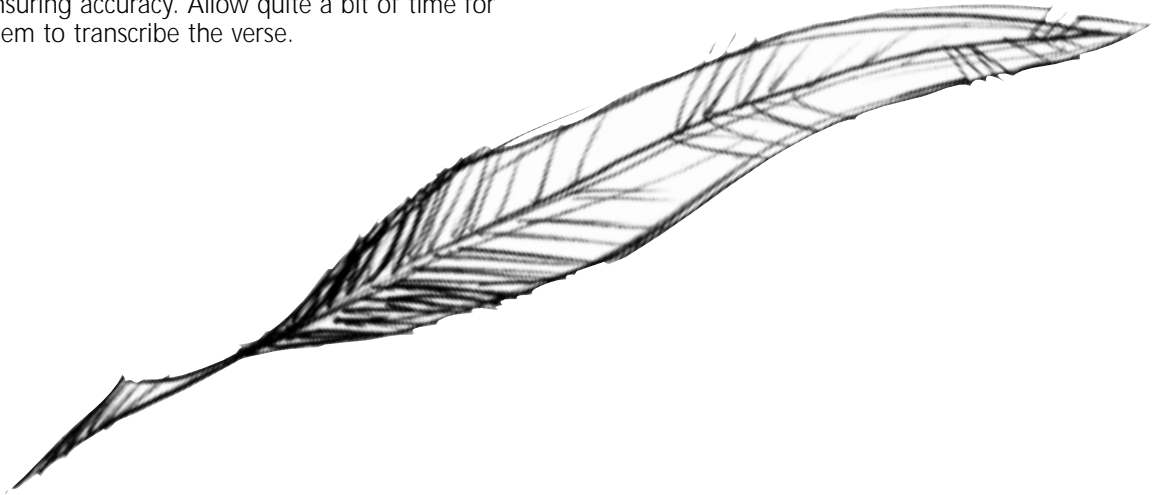
*Does it seem likely that mistakes were undetected?*

*Is it clear why the Bible changed so little through so much time?*

*How important do you think the Bible was to these people?*

*We have seen how accurately the Bible has been copied and passed down. We have looked at archaeological evidence that confirms the reliability of the Bible. We have also seen that the Bible was written by men from all different backgrounds yet agrees in every way.*

*What will you tell your friends who claim the Bible is not true? Do you feel prepared to respond to these friends?*



## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Psalms 119:89

Your word, O Lord, is eternal;  
it stands firm in the heavens.

### MATERIALS USED

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page C, several extra copies (for students who missed the last class or visiting students)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask the students if anyone can recite the memory scripture for this week.
2. After several have quoted the verse, recite it together as a class two or three times.
3. Hand out copies of Reproducible Page C to those students who don't already have it.

## WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

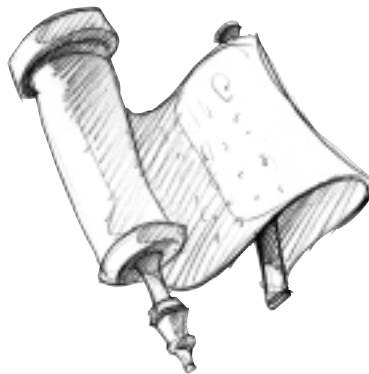
If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat it while you remind them of the challenge for the week.

(The students were to each talk to one disciple this week about what that person was most excited about when he or she was studying the Bible.) What did the students learn during their talks? Has it changed any of the students' views about how they read the Bible?

Discuss any fears or obstacles the students have encountered in carrying out the challenge this week. Give ideas on how to overcome the fears, being sure to remind them that prayer is their best weapon against fear! Encourage the students with experiences from your own life, and remind them that you are praying for their success. Remind them also to be keeping up with their daily quiet times.

## CONCLUSION

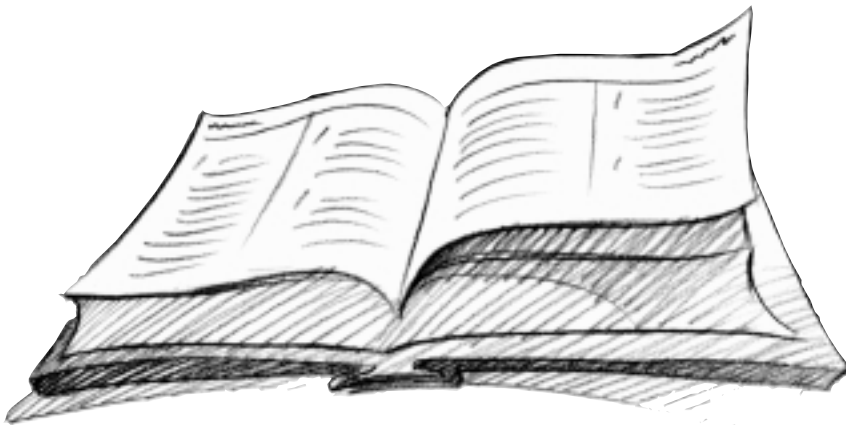
End the class with a prayer.



## STRANGE BUT TRUE

What if a stranger walked up to you and told you he had a baboon's heart. Would you believe him? What if, later on, a trusted friend told you he heard of a person who had a baboon's heart. Would you now be more apt to believe the stranger's story? Then, what if you actually read an article about a man who had a baboon's heart transplanted into him. A picture showed the procedure. With all this evidence, could you now believe the stranger's story?

Just as you might question the reliability of an incredible story of a baboon's heart in a man, so there are those who question the reliability and authenticity of the Bible. Where did it come from? How do you know the Bible is God's word? Are the biblical documents reliable? How do you know they have not been changed through time?



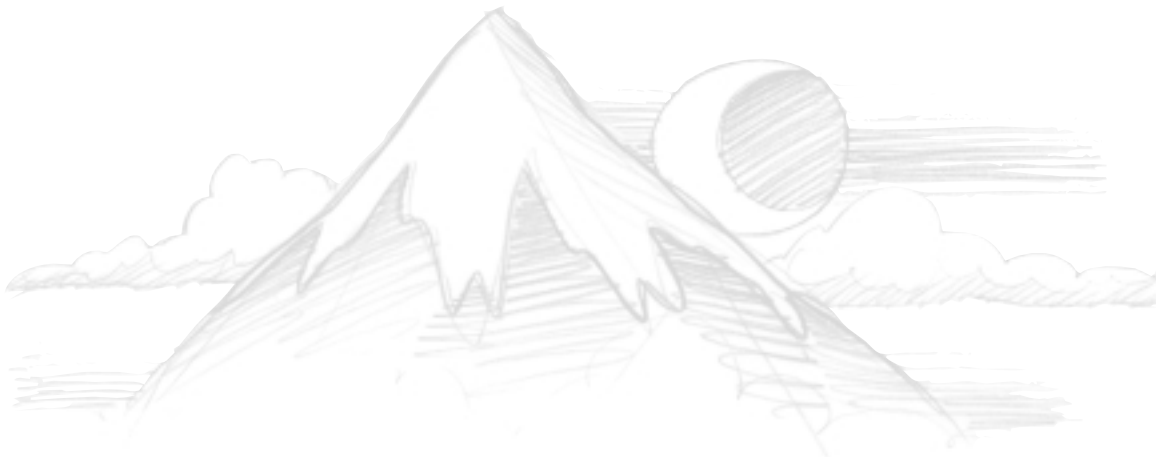
AUTHORS OF THE BIBLE

<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>	<u>TIME OF GREATEST INFLUENCE</u>	<u>OCCUPATION</u>
David	I Samuel 16:18-19	11th century BC	
Paul	Acts 18:2-3	1st century AD	
John	Mark 1:19	1st century AD	
Ezra	Ezra 7:11	6th century BC	
Nehemiah	Nehemiah 8:9	5th century BC	
Joshua	Joshua 8:1	14th century BC	
Solomon	1 Kings 1:43	10th century BC	
Daniel	Daniel 6:3	6th century BC	
Matthew	Matthew 9:9	1st century AD	
Luke	Colossians 4:14	1st century AD	

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Your word, O Lord, is eternal;  
it stands firm in the heavens.

PSALM 119:89



WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Ask a disciple of your choice to tell you what they were most excited about when they began to study the Bible.  
Record their answers and bring to class next time.

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DEAD SEA SCROLLS FACTS

1.

2.

3.

## GUIDELINES FOR TRANSCRIPTION

Each copy must be made on a clean sheet of paper.

No more than 32 letters may be written per line.

Each copy must be written in black ink.

Each copy must be made from the original.

Each letter must be copied individually.

No letter can connect with or overlap another letter.

Measure the distance between letters with the string provided.

Count the letters in the entire scripture; count the letters in your copy. They must agree exactly.

"All men are like grass,  
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field:  
the grass withers and the flowers fall,  
but the word of the Lord stands forever."

1Peter 1:24-25