

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the Bible ... but were afraid to ask
Living the Message 2020-2021
November Study Guide for Participants and Facilitators

November's Question: Is the Bible True? [Video can be watched by clicking here.](#)

Focus Statement

The stories and claims found in the Bible were not intended to present a “factually accurate” picture of God, us, and the world, but rather to tell the *truth* about our life together. Little surprise, then, that most of what is found in Scripture can't be proven scientifically “true” or “false,” but when we read these stories we discover the kind of truth that greatly shapes how we think about ourselves, each other, and the world.

Opening Prayer

Dear God, we come from many different places and bring different backgrounds and experiences. But we share a common goal: to discover the truth of who you are for us and for the world. Guide us in our conversation that we may hear you speak to us through your Word, for we believe that your Word offers us both truth and life. Amen.

Opening Questions to Consider *Before* Watching the Presentation

What do we mean when we say something is true? What makes something true? Or, to put it another way, how do we know when something is true? Is it a matter of proving it? Feeling it? Something else? Finally, is there more than one kind of truth?

Passages to Read *Before* Presentation

You are invited to read [Luke 23:33-46](#) and [Mark 15:25-37](#). These are two accounts of Jesus crucifixion and death. What do you notice that is similar about them? What is different? Is one true and the other not? Or, how is each true? That is, how does each one enrich our understanding of Jesus and the meaning of the cross?

Questions to Consider *After* Watching the Presentation

What are the most important “truths” in your life? (Regarding, for instance, your family or your political convictions or your religious beliefs?) Are they things that you could prove in a laboratory? Is it disconcerting to notice differences or discrepancies in the stories told in Scripture? Does it help to think less about “which is true?” and more about “what is the author trying to tell me?”

Going Deeper into the Word

(There is [a second video](#) devoted to this exercise if you find that helpful.)

Focus Passages: [Mark 14:32-42](#); [Luke 22:39-53](#); [John 18:1-11](#)

Each of the four Gospels shares a version of the story we call “The Garden of Gethsemane.” We are going to read three of them (Matthew and Mark are nearly identical, so we're going to read just Mark's). After you read them (individually or in a group), jot down or talk about your response to these questions:

- How would you describe Jesus in this scene? What adjectives would you use?
- How would you describe the disciples? Again, what adjectives come to mind.

Then, discuss these questions:

- Why do you think the Evangelist (the person who wrote the Gospel) told the story in this way?
- How might these stories be “true” and meaningful to us at different points in our lives?
- Could one story have captured all the things we’ve noticed and talked about?
- And... a bonus: is there a single place called “the garden of Gethsemane”? :)

Closing

Return to our Opening Questions: *What do we mean when we say something is true? What makes something true? How do we know when something is true? Is there more than one kind of truth?* How would you answer them now?

Prayer: Dear God, we give you thanks for the witnesses who shared their experiences of you in Scripture. Help us to hear their confessions and believe them, that we may have life in your name. Amen.