

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the Bible ... but were afraid to ask
Living the Message 2020-2021
October Participants Guide

Values Embodied in our Study

- Faith is not the opposite of doubt, but the ability to hope and believe in spite of our doubts. Similarly, questions are not the mark of a lack of faith, but an indication of a deep and lively faith and an openness to learning. For this reason, it is important to share our honest questions and to listen to each other with care and respect.
- The Bible was written centuries ago and came from cultures very different from our own. For this reason, many Christians struggle to make sense of the Bible. This is nothing to be embarrassed about, as reading the Bible can be challenging.
- We have a lot to learn from each other. We can learn from the insights and questions of each other and even grow in our faith when we disagree respectfully.

October Question and Theme: *What is the Bible, Anyway?*

Focus Statement

The Bible is a collection of confessions of faith that, taken together, function something like a scrapbook, telling the story of the family of God, a story that seeks to make sense of everything, including our lives.

Questions to Consider Before Viewing the October Video

- How comfortable are you with asking questions about the Bible and about faith?
- What are some of the questions you've had?
- When you think of the Bible, what comes to mind?
- Have you ever noticed how many different kinds of literature - stories, wisdom sayings, poems, etc. - are contained in the Bible? If so, how do you make sense of all those different things being held under one cover?

Questions to Consider After Watching the October Video

- What difference does it make to realize that the Bible is not just one book but made up of a number of books (66!) written over two to three thousand years ago and composed by persons living in cultures that in some ways are quite different from our own?
- One of the key statements of both pastors in the video is "We don't read the Bible because of what it is -- holy, divine, even magical -- but because of what it does -- introduces us to the good news of God's love for the world." What insights does that statement offer you? What questions does it prompt?
- In what ways can you identify with the Bible being a very human book? In what ways can you identify with the Bible being a divine book?
- How does it help or hinder to think of the Bible as a scrapbook telling the story of the Family of God? What other images or metaphors for the Bible come to mind?

Looking Ahead: Our next session is entitled, "Is the Bible True?" and the video will be sent out on Nov. 3. You can prepare for that session by thinking about what questions you have ever had about the "truth" of the Bible? And you might also wonder what comes to mind when you think about "truth"? See you then!