

Lesson 42

Question

How is the Word of God to be read and heard?

Answer

With diligence, preparation, and prayer; so that we may accept it with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

Memory Verse

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17

Main Idea

The Word of God should be read and heard prayerfully and with reverence and humility.

Lesson Outline

Open in prayer

Introduction: Explain to the children that before we get into today's Bible lesson, they will need to do some imagining. Ask them to pretend that they are the citizens of a small kingdom. Their land is in the middle of a famine, but their king has been wisely storing food for years so that, should a famine come, his people will not starve. However, he has only enough food to feed his own people.

Tell the children that word reaches your city that other kingdoms are plotting to steal your kingdom's food. For this reason, the king has stored the food in a secret location outside the city walls, far away. He knows that when the other kingdoms attack, he may be killed, so he calls his citizens into his throne room.

"Listen carefully," he says. "We are about to face a great battle. I don't know which of us will survive the attack on our city. I am going to tell you where I have hidden our food. Without that food, you will not survive the famine. But it is hidden far away. If you do not listen carefully and follow every word of my directions, you will never find it."

Ask the children: What kind of listeners would those citizens be? Do you think they would be distracted? Would they be thinking about other things? Would they talk to each other while the king was talking?

Confirm to the children that when you know someone is telling you a message of life-or-death importance, you will listen attentively. God has spoken to us in his Word, and his message is the most important that there ever has been. We should listen with as much attentiveness and respect as those citizens would have listened to their king!

Activity: Divide the children into small groups. Invite the children to come up with a movie trailer for a film about the Bible. Tell them that the trailer should tell the audience a bit about the story of the Bible (but not the ending!) and also all the many reasons why people should be interested in the Bible. After a little while, invite each of the groups to act out their movie trailers while you film them on a smartphone.

Lesson: Remind the children that God speaks. God has caused his words to be written down by human writers so that people can know everything necessary for life and salvation. Try to encourage the children to grasp the magnitude of the truth that God revealed himself in his Word. He is not an unknown deity, nor is he some thoroughly mysterious being. God delights in making himself known, and he longs to be known.

Explain to the children that the Bible is the most important book ever written because it is God's primary way of communicating with humanity. God still speaks through his Word to his world today.

Ask the children to consider whether they think they should listen to the Bible in the same way as every other book. Ask the children if they think that any preparation is needed before reading the Bible.

We need to think carefully about how we read and hear the Word of God.

Explain that Paul's letter to Timothy will help the group think about how to approach God's Word.

Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17. Provide Bibles for the children to read along.

Explain to the children that as they prepare to read the Bible, they must realize that they are about to hear from the living God and they need to be ready to listen to his Word.

Explain to the children that in this section of 2 Timothy, Paul is encouraging Timothy to be different from the world, to stand for what he believes in the face of doubters and critics. Paul is encouraging Timothy to have confidence in the truth he has come to believe, which he observed in Paul's life and encountered in God's Word.

Paul tells Timothy that all Scripture is God-breathed, fully inspired by God. He identifies God as the origin of Scripture. But he also describes the purpose of Scripture: it is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." Tell the children that the Bible is God's means of bringing Christians to maturity.

Remind the children that when someone becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to live in him or her. When a Christian reads the Bible, the Holy Spirit applies it to his or her life. So every time Christians read the Bible, they are hearing God's Word. We must determine to listen well and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our life.

Ask the children to give some examples of what they think "teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness" means.

Ask them where they will encounter God's Word in their lives each week.

Ask them how and why they should prepare to listen to God's Word.

These are some of the attitudes we adopt as we come to God's Word:

Prayerful

Thanking God that he speaks

Rejoicing that he has given his Holy Spirit to apply the Word

Asking that God would teach, reprove, correct, and train us

Reverent

Remembering that it is God who speaks through Scripture

Humble

Expecting God to work and sanctify

Thanking God that he wants to change and mature his people

Help the children to understand that we should be eager to meet God in his Word, and in order to do that, we must approach reading the Bible respectfully. We should prepare to hear God's Word. We

should pray before we hear God's Word, and we should seek to listen carefully to what God is saying to us by his Spirit.

God longs to see his people transformed as they seek to glorify him. When we have listened well to God's Word, we will respond in how we live.

Recite: Finish the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 42 and the answer to memory.