

UNIT 2: JESUS AND THE NEW COVENANT

UNIT ONE: THE PROMISED ONE COMES

Lesson 4: How do I Read Scripture?

CONTENT:

1. Just talking about scripture is not enough. The Church wants all of us to read the Bible often and so come to know Jesus in a real way. [CCC133] "Ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ." St. Jerome.
2. While reading scripture, we take into consideration what the writers were trying to say and what God was trying to say through them. [CCC109] We also consider the background to the passage: time, place, language, customs, etc.
3. At the same time, we must read it with the help of the Holy Spirit; otherwise it will be a 'dead letter'. [CCC111]
4. We should also make sure we read it with the mind and heart of the Church, because the Holy Spirit guides the Church to interpret scripture correctly.
- ☺ 5. Bible study: I meet Christ and he speaks to me through the Gospels.

ASSIGNMENT: Revise all that has been learnt so far.

REFERENCES: GDC127; CCC 109;111;113;133. John 4:7-15; 10:11-18; 11:17-27; 14:1-7.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Blackboard; Bibles (New Testaments will do).

[Students need to handle the Bible and get familiar with it, hence, we will occasionally ask them to use them in class.] Students use the back of Handout 3. We will not give a new handout as there is not much information given. This class is mainly a Bible study.

I. STARTER:

- Saint Jerome said, **"Ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ."**
[Write on BB and ask students to copy as a heading on their papers (Reverse side of Handout 3)]
- Do you agree with this statement? It means that if I do not read or listen to the words of the Bible, I cannot know Christ. And if I do not know him, then I cannot really have a relationship with him. It is through the Bible that I get to know Jesus. Shall we try today to 'get into' the Gospels and see if we can get to know Jesus a little better?

II. DEVELOPMENT:

Before we do that, just a few points about how to read the Bible: *[As you talk, write the points on the BB, as shown. Ask students to copy what is written.]*

1. Before we read, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide us, so that we can really understand what God is saying. It was the Holy Spirit who inspired the writers, and it is only with the help of the Holy Spirit that we can understand what God is saying to us.

2. Some people just read a sentence from the Bible and say, "I think it means this or that." The Church follows a different method. We try to see what the writer was trying to say and what God was trying to say. We also take into consideration the background: where, when, the language used etc.

'IGNORANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES IS IGNORANCE OF CHRIST.'

Saint Jerome

HOW DO WE READ?

1. *With the help of the Holy Spirit.*
2. *Asking: What is the background? What is the writer trying to say?*
3. *With the heart & mind of the Church.*

STEPS:

1. *Invite the Holy Spirit*
2. *Read and listen.*
3. *Underline and reflect.*
4. *Share.*
5. *Write.*

[BLACKBOARD SUMMARY]

3. It is important that we read with the heart and mind of the Church. If we know the teaching of the Church, we will be able to correctly follow the message. If not, we may go off track.
- The story is told of a woman who took her Bible and said, “Let me find out what I should do today!” She opened her Bible randomly, closed her eyes, and jabbed her finger in the middle of the page. She found the words, “And Judas went and hanged himself.” “No, no, This is just a practice!” she said. She opened the Bible again and this time she got the verse, “Go then and do the same!”
 - I don’t know if she went and hanged herself or not, but the point is that we must read the Bible in the correct way or we may land in trouble.
 - The Church teaches that it is a sin to kill ourselves, so obviously God was not telling the woman to hang herself.
 - Secondly, if the woman had read the whole passage, she would have got a better understanding.
 - And thirdly, if she had been open to the Holy Spirit, she would have known what God was saying through the words she read.

III. BIBLE READING AND GROUP SHARING:

[Get the students to sit in groups of about 3 or 4. They should have at least one Bible per group, but preferably one per student. Allot one Bible reference per group:

1]John 4:7-15 2]John 10:11-18 3] John 11:17-27 4] John 14:1-7.

Instruct them as follows:]

- Begin by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide you. Ask Him to keep you open to God. Someone in the group can say a prayer aloud.
- Read the passage quietly, by yourself, trying to understand what God is saying. Ask: What does this passage tell me about Jesus?
- Read it again and underline any line or word that is especially meaningful to you.
- Share what you have underlined and what you feel the words are saying. Let each one in your group get a chance to share.
- Write down what you discovered about Jesus through the passage.

[After 15 minutes, let a representative from each group share what they have written.]

IV. PRAYER:

[End with a short time of silence. Encourage the students to speak to God quietly in response to what they have read.]

HOME ASSIGNMENT: Revise all you have learnt in the last 4 lessons.