



theme: Scripture #1 (Worship) – Word & Flesh
materials: Bibles

The theme for the month is Scripture. How might we be challenged in our perceptions of what the Bible is and is meant to be? Should we always put ourselves in the position of the scripture writer or is it possible to uncover meaning blind to context or history? What new ways could we use the Bible? Certainly, proof and argument vs. dialogue, conversation and search – which is the best way to approach the Bible? What is the Bible? Have we under or over-estimated the Bible's importance in the Christian life?

welcome

What is your favourite book, and why? What was your favourite book as a child?

interact

Read Colossians 3:15-17. Hymns and songs have been used throughout Christian history to worship God and pass on the teachings of Christ. Pick a hymn or song that most people know and sing it together.

This scripture also says that the word of Christ is to dwell in us richly, and that whatever we do we are to do it in the name of Jesus. Write down a list of everything you did today. Think about what it means to have the word of Christ in you at all times, and how you could do all your daily activity "in the name of" Jesus. Share your thoughts with the rest of the cell.

read

Read John 1:1-18 together.

What do you usually think of when you hear the phrase "the word of God?" The Bible, or Jesus? Which is it? Are the Bible and Jesus – Both described as the Word of God – Basically one and the same? (Would you ever think of worshipping the Bible?) If not, what is the difference?

What do you think the Bible is? How would you describe it?

What place does the Bible have in your life? Do you believe the words in it are true? Do you think it reveals God to us?

Can we be Christians without the Bible?

If not, what about all the Christians around the world who do not have access to a Bible, or to the whole Bible?

If so, why do we even need the Bible?

What are the different ways God reveals Himself to humanity in this passage?

think

Read Matthew 7:24-29. Jesus' words are not meant to be just heard, they are meant to be put into practice; otherwise they are just nice words on a page, trapped between the covers of a popular book.

So read out Matthew 7:12. Commit together to putting these authoritative words of Jesus into practice this week, and report back on how it went the next week.



live & pray

Read the "Red Letters" this week. That is, read all the words of Jesus in the gospels (and a few in the first chapter of Acts). It is not just Jesus' words that are considered authoritative, but they are not a bad start. How are you doing at putting into practice the teachings of Jesus? How well do you understand them? What might you need to do to understand and practice them better?

useful resources

Website: www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/february/36.90.html
Book: *The Light Has Come*, by Leslie Newbigin
Website: <http://www.ibs.org/>

leader's guide

The written word of God (Scripture), the spoken word of God, and the Word of God (Jesus) are all properly called the Word of God.

Jesus and the Bible are not one and the same, however. Jesus is the eternally existing Word of God made flesh, the one true God. The Bible is not God, and should never be worshipped.

God's word cannot be entirely contained within a book, but the Scriptures we have do point us and lead us to Jesus, and do contain the authoritative words of the Lord.

It must be possible to be Christian without having read the Bible, as many have done so. The New Testament was not written when Jesus was alive, but people still chose to follow Him. However, the Scriptures are incredibly important for the passing on of sound doctrine (teachings) and for telling us the story of how God interacted with his people, in particular the story of Christ. Those of us who do have access to Scripture have the responsibility to let the words dwell richly in our hearts, to pass on this word to others around us, and to make these words available to others around the world, particularly to our brothers and sisters in Christ who do not have access to it.

God is shown to be revealing Himself in this passage through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, who has seen the Father. This is the greatest revelation imaginable. God also reveals Himself to us through His written Scriptures, through the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, through the Church, and through the created world.