

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

We can approach the Bible as an opportunity for a relational encounter with God, letting him speak to us as we read, reflect, and respond.

SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 3:16

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite work of fiction or non-fiction?
2. Today we are talking about how to read the Bible. Barna Research found that 87% of people in churches want help reading the Bible. Would you put yourself in that category? Why or why not?
3. Read 2 Timothy 3:16. The Bible shapes us as a community, connects us to God, and equips us to be his people. In what ways have you experienced this?

BIBLE READING LAB

As a group, let's practice reading, reflecting, and responding to God.

4. **Read Romans 8:31-39.** What do you notice? Try to make as many observations as a group as you can. Don't worry about connecting this passage to other passages in the Bible or solving theological problems for now. Pay attention to the text you are reading. Read it multiple times. You can practice reading it out loud, silently, or reading in different translations. What do you notice?
5. **Reflect on the text.** What is its meaning? What theological points is it making about God, humanity, the world, and how those are connected? What is it saying about how we should live? Try putting that in your own words.
6. **Respond to God.** This last part is a chance for us to speak back to God about what we're learning. Write a one or two-sentence prayer to God. It might help to have the following questions handy. How could I apply what I learned to my life? What encouragement can I take away from what I read? What challenges do I feel from today's reading? What will I do differently because of what I just heard?
7. **Debrief the experience in your group.** What was that like to read the Bible in this way? Can you see yourself practicing reading the Bible regularly? How might you practice this kind of reading this week?