

Tips on Reading the Bible

Compiled by your friends at Forward Movement



Choose a Bible that you enjoy reading. Visit a bookstore that sells lots of Bibles, and read different translations until you find your favorite. Choose one that has looks you like, so you'll enjoy seeing it want to read it. If you already have one, great – but if you don't enjoy reading it, it's time to find another one. Try another translation. If you like NRSV, try CEB. The differences can deepen your understanding and spark conversation. Not sure? Go online to a Bible webpage like www.biblegateway.com. Search for your favorite passage and read it in several translations.

Get to know your Bible. Explore the table of contents, historical information, maps – discover the special features of your Bible.

Locate your favorite parts of the Bible. Mark your favorite scriptures, prayers, and people with a ribbon, bookmark, or sticky-note. Keep adhesive flags on hand for marking passages you want to revisit.

Remember that the Bible isn't one book. It's a library, with lots of books in one place. Start with the parts that interest you most. You don't have to read it in order, and if you do, it won't be a linear story. That's okay!

Pick a consistent time of day you'd like to read. Many find it easy to link reading the Bible to prayer time, either before or after.

Be patient with yourself, and the Bible. Get help if there are parts you don't understand. Study Bibles offer commentary and explanations of the text. Online resources can offer in-depth questions and answers. At church, ask questions of your clergy and laypeople who are knowledgeable about the Bible. Find more resources at www.thegoodbookclub.org/resources.

After you read, ask yourself these questions:

- What happened? What does the text say?
- What excited, or surprised you? Any other emotions arise?
- What does the text mean?
- How does what you read apply to you?

Read the Bible with others. As you continue to read, you may have questions or the desire to talk about what you've read. Find or create a Bible study! Forward Movement can help with resources for group bible studies; visit www.forwardmovement.org to learn more.

Dig into the history of the Bible. Your Bible may have historical information, or you can find it online. Find a current map of the region and compare it to a map of the time the Bible was written.

Read the Bible out loud. Reading out loud engages your senses differently, and can lead to new understandings and meanings to what you read silently. Read aloud with a friend, spouse, family member or pets.