

Helpful Tips for Reading the Bible

- 1. Set aside time** to read the Bible on a regular basis. Be realistic. For some families this might be a few minutes once a day. For others, it may be a longer time a few times a week. Try to make it about the same time each day.
- 2. Gather the family.**
- 3. Begin with a short prayer.** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the Scriptures you will be reading.
- 4. Select a passage.** Use one of the ways below to find a passage.
 - choose a Bible reading plan (brandonvogt.com)
 - pick a passage of personal preference
 - follow the lectionary readings from daily mass (see home kit)
 - start with the Gospel of Matthew, then read Genesis
 - read or pray the Psalms
- 5. Considerations regarding the chosen passage:**
 - In what Book of the Bible is this passage found?
 - Is this a prophetic book, an historical book, a poetry book, a gospel, or a letter?
 - What happens immediately before and after the passage? In other words, what is the context?
- 6. Read the passage the first time.** One or more family members can read the passage without stopping in order to gain an overall sense of the text. As a family, notice your initial reactions to the text, positive or negative and anything that is unclear.
- 7. Read the passage a second time.** This time read slowly, pausing to consider the following questions. You might want to read through the questions first so you can be aware of what to look for.
 - Who are the main characters in this passage?
 - Do they speak or do others speak for them?
 - How are these characters related: family, friends, enemies, bystanders?
 - What is the relationship between God and the characters in this text?
 - Where do these things take place? What is the historical context?
 - Notice words or phrases that are repeated in the passage. These carry particular meaning and significance.
 - Are there cause and effect relationships in the passage?
 - Are any comparisons made or similarities pointed out?
 - Are there any contrasts made between people, things, or ideas?
 - What is the overall intent or purpose of the passage?
- 8. Read the passage a third time and reflect on your answers to these questions.**
 - What did we learn about God from this passage?
 - Did we learn anything about human nature?
 - How does this passage apply to us?
 - Does this passage suggest ways in which we need to change our lives?
- 9. Don't be afraid to underline words or passages or write notes in the margins of your Bible.**

- 10. Don't be intimidated or get bogged down.** If there are things you don't understand, read the notes in your Bible or seek out other Catholic resources that explain the passage. (See the Home Kit). Joining a Bible study group will be an enormous help.
- 11. Write down a verse or part of a verse you would like to remember.** You might want to carry it on an index card and refer to it during the day.
- 12. Finally, end with a prayer thanking God for the time you had to read from the Scriptures.** Ask God to help you make the changes in your lives that you identified in the reading.

Family Bible Reading Plan

What time of the day will we read? (hour of the day): _____

What day or days of the week will we read? _____

Where will we read? (what room): _____

What will we read (lectionary readings, reading plan, etc.): _____