



JOY

Y²AM

Ministry Plan

2019-20

Finding Christ
Through Scripture (December 2019)



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Learning Session One December 2019	3
Learning Session Two December 2019	14

LEARNING SESSION ONE

DECEMBER 2019

Finding Christ Through Scripture

MONTH:

December 2019

GOAL:

To learn about scripture

OBJECTIVE:

To recognize how scripture is applicable to their
daily lives

ESTIMATED DURATION:

45 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank paper for each participant
2. bible for each participant
3. pens for each participant

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, we want to help You make the world a place where everybody loves You, and we all love each other. Help us to keep our attention on You and Your will for us. Help us to avoid getting distracted by the things that lead us away from You. Have mercy on us, Lord, and keep us always close to You.

Amen.

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

ICEBREAKER:

10 minutes

Tell us your name, your favorite book, and why it's your favorite.

Remember:

It's always helpful to start with an activity to help participants relax and allow community to build. Early in the session, focus primarily on getting participants to open their hearts and connect with what's happening in the group. This is an opportunity to encourage participants to share their honest opinions and thoughts, as well as listen to those of others. Take this time to connect with what's important to them, and to understand what they've connected with.

LEARNING SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

ACTIVITY 1:

10 minutes

Pass out a piece of paper, a pen, and a Bible to each participant.

Ask them to think about a time when they attended a concert, a parade, or sporting event.

Ask participants to envision that event and journal on the following questions:

How did you feel as you were waiting for the event to begin? How did you feel as the performer/athlete/parade participants began the event?

Ask participants to look up the verses below from Matthew 21:8-11 and read them.

8” A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and the children that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

11 The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

Debrief:

- What is going on in this scripture verse?
- Who are all the characters?
- What would you feel like if you were there?
- How do you think the crowds and children felt as they waited? Could it be something similar to how you felt as you were waiting for an event to begin?
- How are you able to put yourself in the shoes of the children who were waiting for Jesus to arrive?

ACTIVITY 2: DISCUSSION

10 minutes

Pass out a piece of paper, a pen, and a copy of the blog to each participant.

Read the following blog together:

<https://blogs.goarch.org/blog/-/blogs/alex>

(This is an article adapted from the original article)

I learned something listening to the soundtrack of the hit Broadway show, Hamilton. It's amazing. The creator of the show, Lin-Manuel Miranda, uses rap to tell the story of the orphan who became a delegate to the Constitutional

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

Convention and the face on our ten-dollar bill, calling him the “ten-dollar founding father without a father.”

Maybe you like learning history in school. To me, it often seems like a bunch of things that happened to a bunch of people a bunch of years ago that really has no effect on my life now.

Hamilton, however, opened my eyes to a whole new way of seeing things. Imagine the President of the United States and his top advisers having a rap battle to decide whether or not to have a national bank! Genius.

But history told using hip-hop isn't great just because of the phat beats. It actually helped me see that the problems the founding fathers faced are really no different than the problems we face today.

Hamilton shows us that politicians make deals with each other to get what they want. They do bad things, try to hide those things, and threaten to tell on one another. They get upset by silly arguments and take insults personally, calling people out publicly (even to the point of being willing to kill each other). In other words: they're just like people today.

It took hip-hop to show me this. In a lot of ways, America now looks like America then. It is not just the story of the founding fathers; it is our story, too. So, if this is true with the story of America, how much more true must it be with the story of Christianity, the story of God's people?

Often we look at the Bible and are surprised that the apostles didn't understand who Christ was; after all, they were with

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

him every day. They saw the miracles, the healings, the resurrection. We look at the stories of the Bible and feel the same way I felt about American history: good stories about people who are all dead.

Or maybe we read the Bible and think, if we had been there, we would have recognized Jesus as the Son of God. But the Gospels make it clear that most of the people who recognized Jesus as the Son of God were possessed by demons!

Suddenly, I'm not so confident I would have gotten it either. (Bonus points for knowing that Peter and the centurion are exceptions to this rule.)

If we read the Bible with the same eyes that Hamilton taught us to use for history, we might see that the story of faith is not just a bunch of things that happened to people a long time ago. It is a living story, a story that we are a part of. It is not just the story of the founding fathers of Christianity; it is the story of God's people. It is our story, too.

Maybe the cast of Hamilton has taught us that we can look back at the stories of long ago and learn from them. Maybe when we look at the stories in the Bible we can understand that we are not just reading about apostles who don't seem to get what Christ is saying; we are reading about ourselves, disciples of Christ who still don't understand what He wants. Maybe when we open the Bible we can see ourselves in its pages. Maybe we can take comfort in knowing that even those who saw Him in person had no idea what He was doing, so we,

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

too, might begin to feel a little more comfortable having our own questions about what it means to be a disciple of Christ. The story of following Jesus is different for every person who is baptized into Christ, but it is actually the same story. It is the story of a ragtag group that Christ has chosen, people He has asked to be His witnesses in every part of the world. It is a story that happens in this moment, in every moment, and it is a story with a familiar ending: Christ wins.

So while we may feel lost and confused, as if we are looking for Christ in a dark room, we can have hope, knowing that our struggle to take hold of Christ now is the same struggle people have had for the last 2,000 years. And if we can learn to rap, it'll just make it all the more fun in the meantime.”

Debrief:

- What is this blog about?
- What is one new thing you learned through reading this blog?
- How do you view scripture?
- How could scripture still be relatable today?
- What are some ways to incorporate scripture into your daily life?

ACTIVITY 3: SCRIPTURE

10 minutes

Read the following passage twice:

Luke 4:16-22

“16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; 17 and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written,
18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
19 to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”
20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” 22 And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.”

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

Debrief:

- What part of the Bible was Jesus reading?
- How is Jesus reading a similar experience to how we read books or the Bible?
- How does this scripture story connect to the theme of scripture?
- In this passage, Jesus reads from the book of Isaiah, which was written many years before his birth. How was this Old Testament passage still applicable for Christ at the moment He read it?
- How are New Testament passages written many years ago still applicable to our lives today?

LEARNING SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP

5 minutes

Go around the circle and ask each individual to name one new idea they learned during the session.

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

*“Thank You, Lord, for Your strength and guidance in my work. You are the fulfillment of all good things. Fill also my soul with joy and gladness, that I may praise You always.”
Amen.*

LEARNING SESSION TWO

DECEMBER 2019

Finding Christ Through Scripture

MONTH:

December 2019

GOAL:

To learn about scripture

OBJECTIVE:

To describe the importance of prayer and
scripture reading

ESTIMATED DURATION:

45 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. Divine Liturgy books
2. blank paper for each participant
3. pen for each participant
4. a few copies of the Saint story below
(for the facilitators)
5. a few copies of the debrief questions
(for the facilitators)

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“Christ our Lord, You gave sight to the blind man and wisdom to simple fishermen. Give to our minds the grace of the Holy Spirit. We ask for understanding to learn and choose to do good works to glorify You.”

Amen.

LEARNING SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

ICEBREAKER:

10 minutes

Tell us your name and your favorite scripture passage or prayer.

Remember:

It's always helpful to start with an activity to help participants relax and allow community to build. Early in the session, focus primarily on getting participants to open their hearts and connect with what's happening in the group. This is an opportunity to encourage participants to share their honest opinions and thoughts, as well as listen to those of others. Take this time to connect with what's important to them, and to understand what they've connected with.

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

ACTIVITY 1: SAINT STORY

10 minutes

Read the following article below. Next, break up the large group into three small groups.

Youth Workers can read the story again to their group and work together to answer the debrief questions. After a few minutes, have the groups come back together into one and have each group share their answers.

Saint Paul Inspiring and Guiding Saint John Chrysostom

<https://iconandlight.wordpress.com/2013/11/13/st-paul-inspiring-and-guiding-st-john-chrysostom/>

(Note: Story adapted below for JOY age readers.)

Saint John Chrysostom wanted nothing more than to understand the divine Scriptures, and especially loved the letters of the holy Apostle Paul, whose icon he kept in his room. Once, while writing an explanation of one of the letters of Paul, Saint John thought to himself, “Who knows if what I am writing is pleasing to God or not? Have I understood the power of this part of the sacred Scriptures?” He began to pray God to show him the truth, and soon the Lord listened to His servant, giving him this sign. One night, John was alone in his room, writing about the Scriptures by candlelight, and his attendant Proclus came to the door to tell the saint about someone who was in need. Before knocking, he looked through the keyhole to see whether Saint John was busy. He saw that the saint was sitting and writing, and an elder stood behind him, bent down toward the

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

ear of Saint John and speaking softly to him. The man looked just like Saint Paul in the icon that stood against the wall. Proclus was amazed. He did not know who was talking to the saint, nor could he understand how the elder had entered the locked room. He waited for the man to leave, and as soon as the hour for Othros (Morning Prayer) drew near, the elder disappeared. Proclus saw this for three nights in a row before he dared to ask Saint John, “Master, who is it that speaks into your ear at night?”

“No one has been with me,” answered John. Then Proclus told him what he had seen through the keyhole: an old man whispering into his ear as he wrote. Proclus also described the man’s face and clothing, and John was shocked. Then Proclus looked at the picture of Saint Paul and exclaimed, “The man I saw looked exactly like the saint in this icon!”

John then understood that it was the holy Apostle Paul that Proclus had seen, and that his work was indeed pleasing to the Lord. Falling to the ground, he gave thanks to God, praying with tears in his eyes for a long time. After this he devoted himself to the writing of sacred books with even greater commitment. These writings he left to the Church of Christ as a precious treasure.

St. John’s ear is still incorrupt to this day, and can be seen on his Sacred Head, treasured by Vatopaidi Monastery on Mount Athos.

Debrief:

- How does this story relate to the theme of scripture?
- What is the connection between prayer and scripture?
- How can we follow the example of Saint John Chrysostom and practice this type of prayerful reading of scripture?
- What is the lesson learned from this story?

ACTIVITY 2: DIVINE LITURGY

10 minutes

Read the following lines from the Divine Liturgy and then ask participants the questions below and facilitate a discussion:

“Shine in our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, the pure light of Your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind that we may comprehend the proclamations of Your Gospels. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments so that, having trampled down all carnal desires, we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the illumination of our souls and bodies, and to You we offer up glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.”

Debrief:

- Who is this prayer said during the Liturgy?
- What is the importance of this prayer?
- What is the importance of our heart and mind in prayer and scripture?

ACTIVITY 3: PRACTICE

10 minutes

Pass out a bible to each participant. Ask them to open it up to the Gospel (the first 4 books of the New Testament) and start reading for a few minutes. Ask them to stop, and then ask a few participants the following questions:

What did you read? What did you discover?

Next, you will have participants read the bible again. First, pray with the group for a few minutes. Pray the Trisagion Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, then the prayer from the Liturgy in Activity 2:

“Shine in our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, the pure light of Your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind that we may comprehend the proclamations of Your Gospels. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments so that, having trampled down all carnal desires, we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the illumination of our souls and bodies, and to You we offer up glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.”

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

Then, ask participants to turn to the New Testament and read a few lines. After a few minutes, ask them to stop, and ask a few participants the following questions:

Debrief:

- What did you read?
- What did you discover?
- Was this second experience of reading scripture different? How and why?
- How do you feel after reading the bible the second time?

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2019-20

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP

5 minutes

Go around the circle and ask each individual to name one new idea they learned during the session.

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“O Lord, You who steadied the hand of Peter as he began to sink on the stormy sea, if you are with me, no one is against me. Grant to me the shield of faith and the mighty armor of the Holy Spirit to protect me and guide me to do Your will. The future I put into Your hands, O Lord, and I follow You to a life in Christ.”

Amen.