

What is the Bible?

Intro: When it comes to Christianity, the cornerstone of the faith has always been the Bible. Over the centuries, however, how Christians approach the Bible has diverged. Once upon a time, virtually all of Christendom believed the Bible was absolutely factual and should be taken literally, right down to the four “corners” of the earth (Isaiah 11:12; Revelation 7:1). This *inerrancy* of the Bible is still the view held by the majority of Christians according to recent Gallup polls, though with a measure of metaphor added when it comes to things like “four corners.” But a growing segment of the church is unsure about the Scriptures and hold other views. There are many approaches when it comes to reading and understanding the Bible. Below are five of the more commonly held approaches that are held by many people in church.

1. The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God.
2. The Bible is inspired, inerrant, and infallible in matters of faith.
3. The Bible contains the Word of God, but not everything is factual truth.
4. The Bible contains spiritual truth, but equal spiritual truths are found in other religious traditions.
5. The Bible is a history of two religious traditions—Judaism and Christianity.

What the Bible Teaches: Break into Groups of Four, read the following Bible verses, and discuss the questions. You may want to jot down notes and thoughts on the back of this page.

Exodus 34:27-28; Jeremiah 30:1-2; Psalm 119:11. How do each of these passages understand the written Word?

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 Corinthians 2:13. How do each of these passages express the inspiration of the Scriptures?

Matthew 5:17-19; John 10:34-36. What does Jesus say about the Scriptures?

Matthew 4:4,7,10; Mark 7:6-13. Jesus regularly quoted the Scriptures to support His teachings. How do you think Jesus viewed the Scriptures?

What I Believe: Take ten minutes for silent reflection and thought. Ask yourself what you believe about the authority of the Bible. Use the back of this page to formulate a response to the question:

“What do you believe about the authority of the Bible?”

Write your final response here: _____

Articulations: Pair up with one other person and share your response with one another. Take five minutes each. Try to *not* look at your written statement; instead, try to tell your beliefs from your heart. This will prepare you to share whenever you are asked about what you believe.

Therefore: Jesus said His followers should Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). One of the first steps in making disciples is being ready and able to share the reason for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15), in other words, knowing what we believe, why, and then being able to share it. Sharing your faith is important. This week, find someone—it can be *anyone*—and articulate your belief about this issue. If you have an unchurched/unreached friend whom you can share with, all the better (you can always say you have a homework assignment from church and you'd like to share it with them). Be ready to talk about your experience next week over the meal at your House Church.