

Reading the *Word*

Overview

Students will read the *Word* themselves as encouragement to do so regularly.

Prepare to Teach

Gather copies of the *Word*. Print copies of “Books of the *Word*” for students (see next page).

Materials Needed

- enough copies of the *Word/Bible* for each student to use one
- multiple translations of the *Word/Bible*, including Old King James & New King James versions
- copies of the handout about the Books of the *Word* (see below)

Directions

1. It’s important to get to know your way around in the Lord’s *Word* for yourself. One of the best things you can do for yourself in this life is to start a daily habit of reading the *Word*.
2. People read the *Word* in different ways. Some people start at the beginning and go straight through. Some people pick a favorite part. Some people go from one part to another as they get interested in different parts. Some people read a few verses a day. Some people read a chapter. Some people pick a version of the *Word* that has notes at the bottom of the page explaining cultural and historical references in the stories. The important thing is not which way you read the *Word*. The important thing is to READ the *Word*.
3. There are different translations of the *Word*. When you discover which translation you are using you know who read the *Word* in its original language and translated the words into English. New Church groups often use the New King James version. There is even a version of the *Word* that has been translated by New Church ministers in Kempton, PA who are experts in the original languages of the *Word*.
4. Why might translations be slightly different from each other? Each translator writes down what he or she thinks is the most accurate translation of what the original language says. It’s like what would happen if each of you tried to explain the word “true” to a small child. If a child asked you what “true” means, what would you say? [Let students answer to show how they explain the word differently, even though they’re all talking about the same word.]
5. Let’s take a minute to look at some translations of the Lord’s *Word*. [Show the Old King James, the New King James and other versions. Talk about the differences. Compare the twenty-third Psalm in the different translations to get a feeling of how they are different from each other.]
6. We are now going to choose part of the *Word* and quietly read by ourselves. If you already read the *Word* each day, you can read the part you are reading at home. If not, why not start the habit today?
7. Let’s take a look through the books listed in the table of contents to give you some idea of what you might choose to read. [Distribute the handout about “The Books of the *Word* and discuss it.]
8. We are going to spend the rest of our time reading the *Word*. As you read, remember what the Lord tells us in one of the books written down by Emanuel Swedenborg called *Apocalypse Revealed*, number 224:

“Read the *Word* and believe in the Lord, and you will see the truths which should constitute your faith and life. Everyone whose soul desires it is capable of seeing the truths of the *Word* in light.”

The Books of the *Word*

Note: Some books are short, some are long. Some are stories, some are prophecies of what will happen, and one is songs.

Five Books of Moses:

Genesis - Stories of Creation, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph

Exodus - Moses, escaping from Egypt, Mt. Sinai, the tabernacle

Leviticus - Laws and rules

Numbers - Numbering the people of Israel, wandering in the wilderness

Deuteronomy - Laws, death of Moses

Historical Books:

Joshua - Joshua leads Israel in battles to conquer Canaan

Judges - Stories of different judges, including Gideon and Samson

1 Samuel - Samuel and King Saul

2 Samuel - David

1 Kings & 2 Kings - Solomon, Judah and Israel conquered, captivity

Psalms - Songs about different kinds of experiences in human life.

Prophets:

Isaiah - Isaiah the prophet and King Hezekiah, prophecies

Jeremiah - Jeremiah the prophet, his experiences, prophecies, Jerusalem captured and the temple destroyed

Lamentations - Jeremiah's sadness about the capture of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple

Ezekiel - The words of the prophet Ezekiel to the Jews in captivity

Daniel - Daniel and the lion's den, the fiery furnace, the writing on the wall, also prophecies

Hosea - Prophecies and warnings for the people of Israel about the evil they are involved in, also the Lord's good plans for them

Joel - Prophecies about what will happen to Judah, trying to warn them, as well as prophecies for something better

Amos - Prophecies about Israel's future and about the Messiah

Obadiah - Punishment of the nation of Edom for enjoying Judah's misfortunes

Jonah - The prophet Jonah, swallowed by a great fish, experiences in Nineveh

Micah - Prophecies of terrible judgment followed by a new life

Nahum - Predictions of the fall of Nineveh, the Assyrian capital

Habakkuk - Predicts the downfall of the Chaldeans, also talks about dealing with suffering and trusting the Lord

Zephaniah - Prophecies about the punishment of Judah's evils

Haggai - Prophecies about rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem

Zechariah - Story of rebuilding the temple, also symbolic parables and prophecies

Malachi - The prophet after the temple was rebuilt and the Jews started backsliding again, prophecies of Christmas

The Four Gospels:

Each gospel gives details of the Lord's life on earth.

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Revelation: Visions of John on the island of Patmos, prophecies of the New Church