

YEAR OF
BIBLICAL
LITERACY

1. YOBL Week 50: End-of-Year Reflection Pt. 2

2. Recap & Preparing for CG:

Daily Reading for Week:

- James 4-5, Psalm 32 (Wednesday, December 7)
- 1 Peter 1-2, Psalm 33 (Thursday, December 8)
- 1 Peter 3-5, Psalm 34 (Friday, December 9)
- 2 Peter, Psalm 35 (Saturday, December 10)
- 1 John 1-2, Psalm 36 (Sunday, December 11)
- 1 John 3-4, Psalm 37 (Monday, December 12)
- 1 John 5, 2 & 3 John, Psalm 38 (Tuesday, December 13)

Resources for Week:

- Sunday Sermon: 12/11/16
- Read Scripture Videos: 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1-3 John

Preparing for CG (Homework):

- Watch Read Scripture Videos: 1 & 2 Peter, 1-3 John
- Read Hebrews 11:1-12:3, Hebrews 13:1-8, and James 2:14-26

Supplies Needed for CG:

Leaders to Bring:

- 4 Poster boards or large pieces of paper
- A stack of Post-Its
- Scotch Tape

Everyone bring:

- Something to write with

3. Focus of our time together:

To reflect on our year-long journey together through the Year of Biblical Literacy and to take an honest examination of the joys and difficulties of this year-long endeavor.

4. Weekly ground rule / goal / value:

Our goal for the week is to practice the skill of *community examen* where we corporately reflect on the communal experience we've had this year and take the time necessary to celebrate, grieve, and practice gratitude.

5. Connection and Unity Exercise (Mutual Invitation):

The Connection and Unity Exercise will take place in our Questions for Large Group Discussion section this week.

6. Opening Prayer:

Have someone open your time in prayer. Pray specifically for the Holy Spirit to bring your group clarity as you reflect on and discuss the ways your CG interacts and relates to one another.

7. Intro to Discussion:

We made it. This is our final week of YOBL material. With the holidays upon us and many in our communities traveling, we have decided to end our time here. For 50 weeks, we have spent time hearing, reading, exploring, and learning about the story of God that the Bible tells. Together in community, we have discussed, reasoned, learned, and opened our hearts to God and one another. We did our best to practice faith, humility, hospitality, and rootedness. While no community did it perfectly, our hope was that this practice of opening our hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit as we read the Scriptures and met together would form us in new and profound ways.

This final week, we will look back on our journey together. God constantly exhorted Israel to remember their own journey, history, and story. Similarly, we too want to reflect on the common memory we have built together over this year. This communal reflection is broken into two parts:

- 1) A brief study of a wonderful Advent poem by Eastern Orthodox poet Scott Cairns that will ground us in both the Advent season and the scope of the Biblical narrative.
- 2) An interactive reflection exercise meant to unearth the different ways we have experienced, responded to, and related to this Year of Biblical Literacy journey as a whole and to remind us of the ways Jesus has been with us throughout.

8. Questions for Large Group Discussion (80 minutes):

There will only be large group discussion tonight. Please be sure to save enough time to answer the Practicing Community questions.

Reflection Exercise (20 minutes):

These questions are to help us look at ourselves, be aware and honest about who we are in light of our interaction with Scripture, and consider any appropriate action.

Read:

Have someone read the following poem by Scott Cairns. Read it deliberately and slowly. As you read it, try and notice any Biblical imagery or allusions that the language and images of the poem bring to mind. The hope is that this poem would attune us to the Advent season and help us see how rooted Christmas is in the Bible's story of Israel and her God, Yahweh.

"Annunciation" by Scott Cairns

Deep within the clay and O my people
 very deep within the wholly earthen
 compound of our kind arrives of one clear,
 star-illuminated evening a spark igniting
 once again the tinder of our lately
 banked noetic fire. She burns but she
 is not consumed. The dew lights gently,
 suffusing the pure fleece. The wall comes down.
 And—*do you feel the pulse?*—we all become
 the kindled kindred of a king whose birth
 thereafter bears to all a bright nativity.

Ask:

Which words, lines, phrases, or images bring to mind stories you have read over this past Year of Biblical Literacy?

Read:

Have different people read the following passages. After each verse/passage is read, pause to reflect on this question: Which line of the above poem reflects this verse or passage?

- Genesis 1:24-26
- Genesis 2:7
- Exodus 3:1-3
- Joshua 6:20
- Judges 6:36-40
- Micah 6:3
- Ephesians 2:14
- 2 Corinthians 4:6-7

When you have read each section of Scripture and made connections to the poem, have someone read the poem all the way through one more time. Notice the ways your

understanding, appreciation, and/or response to the poem changes after its images have been connected to the Biblical narrative.

Questions for Practicing Community (60 minutes):

These questions are to help us reflect thoughtfully on our felt experience together in light of our shared ground rules, goals, and values.

As our Year of Biblical Literacy ends, we want to take the time to reflect on what we learned, how God has been present with us, the things we loved, and didn't love about our year-long journey.

Setup (5 minutes):

Write one of the following questions at the top of each of the four poster boards/pieces of paper and tape them up around the room.

- What happened because of or during YOBL that you would like to celebrate or express gratitude to God and your community for?
- What was difficult, confusing, frustrating, or unhelpful about the Year of Biblical Literacy?
- What was one way you remember God significantly meeting you during the year?
- What was one passage, book, character, or story from the Scriptures you learned something new about this year? What did you learn?

Reflect (25 minutes):

Take the next 25 minutes to think back on the year and answer the four questions on the posters. Write your answers on the Post-Its provided and post them on the appropriate posters. You can post multiple things on each poster if you have multiple answers to a question.

Share (25 minutes):

After everyone has been given adequate time to reflect and post what came to mind, take each poster down and read each post-it aloud to one another. After all the content on a poster has been read, ask and answer the following question as a group:

Were there any themes or commonalities that you noticed?

9. Questions for Small Group Discussion:

There will be no small group discussion this week.

10. Closing (5 minutes):

Close your time with a Unity Prayer, offering to God all that was written and shared during your time and anything that the Year of Biblical Literacy brought up in you and your community over the year.

Read the following verses from Revelation 22 to close your time of prayer:

"I, Jesus, sent my Angel to testify to these things for the churches. I'm the Root and Branch of David, the Bright Morning Star."

"Come!" say the Spirit and the Bride.

Whoever hears, echo, "Come!"

Is anyone thirsty? Come!

All who will, come and drink,

Drink freely of the Water of Life!

He who testifies to all these things says it again: "I'm on my way! I'll be there soon!"

Yes! Come, Master Jesus!

The grace of the Master Jesus be with all of you. Amen!