

middle school



Lesson 1 / June 3, 2018

Excavating God's Word

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for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 1

Focus:

Dig into the Bible to know God better.

Lesson 1

Bible Basis:

Acts 17:10-12;
2 Timothy 2:15

Lesson 1

Memory Verse:

The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.
—Psalm 119:130

Your students will watch an archaeology professor demonstrate the basics of excavating an important geographical site as they explore what it means to dig into God's Word.

Materials:

- Internet access
- Optional: Shovel, trowel, or another digging tool as a visual prop

Did you ever like digging in the dirt when you were a kid? Well, for some people, digging in the dirt isn't just fun . . . it's their full-time job. Let's watch some university students who are learning how to excavate—or "dig"—into an important geographical location.

Share this video with your students [3:05].

"The Excavation Process: How We Excavate"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcT1vGyJzyg>

When you're finished, discuss the following questions with your class:

- **Did anything surprise you about the process of excavating?** (Let students share their insights.)
- **What were some of the tools that the professor demonstrated? What are they used for?** (A trowel scrapes dirt away, a wooden skewer gently pushes away debris from an object, a screen separates small and large objects.)
- **When we study God's Word, how is it a little like "excavating" an archeological site?** (Since the Bible was written so long ago, its meaning might be more difficult to uncover. We often need to dig and scrape a little to figure out the correct context and meaning. The hard work pays off by finding something of special value!)
- **What are some things we might be able to find if we search the Bible?** (We can find historical events, truth about who God is, promises, commands, lessons and sermons, beautiful poetry, interesting people, how much God loves us—you name it!)

The Bible is a lot like an archeological site that we might have to work at in order to uncover all its secrets, artifacts, and treasures. Many people before us have committed themselves to learning what God's Word has to say, so let's follow their lead and see what's underneath the surface.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Excavating God's Word

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 1

Focus:

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Lesson 1

Bible Basis:

Acts 17:10-12;
2 Timothy 2:15

Lesson 1

Memory Verse:

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—Psalm 119:130

Materials:

- Internet access
- Pens/pencils
- Prepared index cards (1 per student)
- Whiteboard and marker
- Optional: A clear plastic cup; sand, dirt, and/or rocks of different colors

If you opt to use actual soil in this object lesson, fill up a clear, plastic cup before class with four layers of sediment such as colored sand, dirt, and rocks so that students can see each layer distinctly.

Label index cards with one of these words or phrases on the front: PROMISES, COMMANDS, NAMES FOR GOD, PROVERBS. Repeat these four labels until you have enough to give each student one card (Example: If you have 20 students, label 5 cards PROMISES, 5 cards COMMANDS, 5 cards NAMES FOR GOD, and 5 cards PROVERBS).

If you opt *not* to use the actual soil for this activity, pull up the following website so that your students can see the illustration.

Four Layers of Soil

<http://web1.pima.gov/deq/ecokids/more/FourLayersSoil.html>

This (indicate the cup or the online illustration) is a miniature version of an excavation site. We can see that as we go from top to bottom, there are layers of dirt, sand, and rocks of different colors. Even though the soil is confined in one place, each layer is a little different.

The Bible is a little bit like this. There are 66 different “books,” all with different layers! In order to really know the Bible, you can’t just look at the surface; you have to dig in and find out what’s underneath.

Today we’ve got a little homework! But it’s not for a grade—and it’s a lot better than doing a bunch of math problems. You will need a few things to help you: one of these cards—and your Bible or Bible app.

Mix the cards up and fan them as you would a deck of playing cards. Go around the room and let students pull a pre-labeled index card out of the batch. They will not know ahead of time which one they chose.

Challenge your students to “dig” into their Bibles to find at least 3-5 items that fit the label on their card. Have your students find all the other people in class who have the same label as they do; have them sit together in four small discussion circles. (You might want to assign a leader or adult helper to sit at each group to help facilitate). When they are settled, use the following questions as discussion prompts.

Take a look at your cards. They should all have the same word on the front. You’re going to begin excavating to find examples of the hidden treasure listed on your card. In one minute, see how many answers you can think of without even looking in your Bible yet. Ready . . . Go! (See if students can pull up prior knowledge of PROMISES, COMMANDS, NAMES FOR GOD, or PROVERBS.)

➤ **If someone just told you to go home and “read your Bible,” why does that seem hard for most people—even adults?** (If you just pick up your Bible, flip open a page, and start reading, you might end up pretty confused. It takes time and a little bit of direction to get going first.)

➤ **What can you do to find some examples of these items on the cards?** (You can look in a concordance, you can ask a trusted adult, use a Bible app, you can even do an Internet search! There are lots of ways to find things in the Bible you didn’t know before.)

Write the following websites on the board so that your students can copy them on their index cards: www.Biblegateway.com and <http://www.gqkidz.org/>

Encourage your students to take their cards home and bring them back next week with the back of the card filled with examples of their Bible “excavation.”

Close in prayer, asking for wisdom and perseverance to keep digging into God’s Word.

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