



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Compass / Week 1

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PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

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## SERIES SUMMARY

A 4-week series about navigating the Bible.

**SERIES BOTTOM LINE:** Navigating what the bible is, how we can use it, and what it means for our life today.

**WEEK 1:** We read the Bible because God is in it.

**WEEK 2:** Context helps us understand the Bible.

**WEEK 3:** The Bible points us to Jesus.

**WEEK 4:** The Bible gives us wisdom.

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## SCRIPTURE

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true (2 Timothy 3:16a NLT).*

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## TEACHING SLIDES

All scripture, bottom lines, and prompts that are bolded in this script are also provided as teaching slides for Premium Tier Subscribers.

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## OPTIONAL MEDIA

### OPTIONAL MEDIA available in the Annual Subscription to the XP3 MS Media Package:

- Compass Countdown Video (10 minutes)
  - Compass Week 1 Teaching Video
  - Compass Week 1 Integrated Teaching Video
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## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

- What comes to mind when you hear the word compass? Turn and tell someone next to you.
- A compass is a tool that helps us navigate in a direction we're going (like a GPS!).
- When we're unsure of how to get where we're going, we need a tool (something or someone) to help guide us each step of the way. As believers in Jesus, the Bible is that tool.
- The Bible is like a compass that helps us make decisions, take the best next steps, and decide what's good for our lives.
- In this series, we'll navigate what the Bible is, how we can use it, and what it means for our lives today.

### TENSION

- Sometimes the Bible feels hard to read and understand.
- It can feel like we need a tool, like a compass, to help us know where to start, what to read, and how to apply it to our lives.
- *Tell a personal story about some specific questions you had about the Bible over the course of your faith.*
- Tell someone near you one question you've had about the Bible.
- God isn't afraid of or offended by the questions we have about our faith and the Bible, and our ministry is a safe place for you to ask questions and speak honestly.
- We may have questions about the Bible, but the Bible provides a lot of answers.
- *Tell a personal story about a time the Bible gave you an answer or direction that you really needed.*
- The Bible can be an important tool to help us navigate the good, bad, and everything in between in our lives.

## TRUTH

- We're going to look at a verse from a letter written by Paul. Even though Paul started out completely against Jesus followers, he eventually became a believer and spread the news about Jesus after he had an experience with Jesus Himself.
- Paul wrote to a young pastor named Timothy, who Paul supported, encouraged, and mentored.
- In the letter he wrote this: *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true (2 Timothy 3:16a NLT)*.
- We can understand this important verse by looking at the "who," "what," and "why."
- Who:
  - Paul didn't know he was writing Scripture when he wrote to Timothy. He just knew he was writing a letter inspired by God.
  - When Jesus left Earth, He left His Spirit to lead, encourage, and inspire His believers.
  - God's Spirit worked and spoke through Paul.
  - All Scripture is inspired by God and God's inspiration works through us as we read it and apply it to our lives.
- What:
  - God's Spirit is in Scripture. Paul knew that for the message of Christianity to spread, people needed to know where to find God at work: in God Word.
- Why:
  - The Bible teaches us what's true and guides us to do what's right.
  - The Bible is a way to get to know God better and build a relationship with God.
  - The Holy Spirit lives inside of each of us and can speak to us through Scripture.
- We read the Bible because God is in it.
- While God isn't only found in the Bible, God is found *uniquely* in the Bible.
- When we read Scripture, God comes to life in new and unexpected ways and we learn so much about God in the process.
- In the Bible, we read about people's struggles, joys, questions, and experiences with God.
- When we read the Bible, we're part of a bigger story; we aren't alone in trying to know God.
- We read the Bible because God is in it.

## APPLICATION

- You probably didn't know everything about your best friend the moment you first met. You had to hang out, talk, text, and share experiences in order for it to grow into a good relationship.
- The Bible can work in a similar way. We learn more about God and God's purpose for our lives when we spend time reading the Bible.
- Start getting to know God through the Bible by:
  - Putting in time. Commit to reading the Bible each day and write down your thoughts and questions you have. Share them with a trusted adult who can point you to God's truth.

- Being consistent. Keep reading your Bible even if you don't understand, things don't change, or you just aren't into it.
- Asking God to teach you. Ask God's Spirit to work in you and teach you as you read.

## LANDING

- We read the Bible because God is in it.
- Your small group is a great place to talk through and navigate the Bible.
- Question: What's one thing you want to know about God?

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## NOTE TO THE COMMUNICATOR

Throughout this series, keep in mind that your students will likely have a variety of experiences when it comes to reading the Bible. Some may have read the Bible from cover-to-cover, some may have read individual passages or books, some may have never opened a Bible, and others fall somewhere in between! For this phase in your students' development, remember that application of content is more important than the actual amount of content. We want to help middle schoolers know what to do with the words in the Bible, not just know what the Bible says. So, try not to get overwhelmed with providing tons of content and instead, focus on how your students can actually apply the Bible's wisdom to their everyday lives. The goal is to equip your middle schoolers with the tools they need to navigate the Bible themselves and put its wisdom to work. We want them to meet and get to know Jesus, as well as discover in Jesus how much God loves them and likes them. This is huge during a phase where belonging and significance matter more than ever! And don't forget to contextualize the content of this series to reach your students in a way that's specific to your denomination.

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## THINK ABOUT THIS

Keep in mind that every student will come into your talk this week with a different background and experience level when it comes to reading Scripture. Some may come from families who have made the Bible a part of their lives since childhood. Some may be new to faith and discovering the Bible in new ways. And some may have never read it or even learned much about it before this week. Be inclusive in your conversation, being careful not to call out or ostracize students who have little-to-no experience or knowledge with Scripture. The goal here is to equip middle schoolers with the tools they need to navigate the Bible themselves and put its wisdom to work in their lives. But beyond that, we want to see them meet Jesus and come to know more about what God is like in the pages of Scripture.

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# INTERACTIVE: NAVIGATING LIFE

## OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll use a compass and a Bible as props to explain how the Bible is like a compass that helps us navigate our way through life.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A compass
- A Bible
- Adhesive Velcro strips
- *Optional:* Go big! Do you know someone with a 3D printer or have access to one through a public library or university? Consider printing out a huge compass to use as part of this Interactive as well as your set design.

## PREP

- Adhere a piece of Velcro or painters tape to the back of the compass and on top of a Bible.

## HOW TO

1. Introduce each prop individually when you talk about them in the Introduction of your talk.
  2. When you explain how the Bible is like our compass, Velcro the two props together.
  3. Motion to and interact with your "Compass Bible" throughout the rest of your talk.
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# TEACHING SCRIPT

Compass / Week 1

PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

## BOTTOM LINE

WE READ THE BIBLE BECAUSE GOD IS IN IT.

## INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

Hi everyone! We're kicking off a new series today called *Compass*. Before we go any further, what comes to mind when you hear that word, "**compass**"? Turn and tell someone beside you! *[Pause to give students time to share.]*

### INTERACTIVE: Navigating Life

*This is where you'll use a compass and a Bible as props to explain how the Bible is like a compass that helps us navigate through life. You'll introduce each prop individually when you talk about them in the next few paragraphs. Then, when you explain how the Bible is like our compass, Velcro the two props together. Motion to and interact with your "Compass Bible" throughout the rest of your talk.*

You might have learned what a compass is in your social studies class. Maybe you've even used one before! A compass is simply a tool used to help us navigate the direction we're going. People used it like a GPS before a GPS existed! It guides you to the destination you're trying to reach, one step at a time. Unless you're into camping, or navigating the open waters on a boat, or working in special-ops in the military, chances are high you'll never actually use a compass in your everyday life.

What's the point of this little navigational lesson I just gave you? Well, when we're unsure of how to get where we want to go, we need a tool to help us. We need something or someone to guide us, step by step, to our destination.

As believers in Jesus, we think the Bible is that tool. If I want to find the wisdom I need to be really good at life, I'm going to look to the Bible to find it. It's the compass I use to help me make decisions, take next steps, and decide what's best for my life in any given situation. And that's exactly what we're going to unpack together in this series! Over the next few weeks, we'll navigate what the Bible is, how we can use it, and what it means for our lives today.

# TENSION

6 MINUTES

Before we go any further, I have to admit something: Sometimes I find the Bible hard to read and understand. It almost feels like I need something like a compass to help me know where to start, what to read, and how to understand what it means for my life.

Because of that, I've found myself asking a lot of questions about the Bible.

## TELL A PERSONAL STORY

*Tell a story from your own life that illustrates the following thoughts or ideas....*

- *Talk about some specific questions you had about the Bible over the course of your faith.*
- *These can be things like, "How is this book different than any other religious book?" or, "Is everything in the Bible real?" or, "How does this book written thousands of years ago actually help me today?"*
- *The goal here isn't to give any answers, but to model for students that, when it comes to the Bible, it's okay to ask questions.*

Maybe you can relate! In fact, take a second to tell someone around you one question you've had about the Bible. *[Pause to give students time to share.]*

Our list of questions could probably go on and on! And honestly, I think that's great! Because God isn't afraid of our questions. God isn't offended, or hurt, or mad that we aren't always sure how to understand the complicated parts of our faith. In fact, we want *[insert name of church/student ministry]* to be a safe place for you to ask all the questions you have about things like the Bible. We want this to be a place you can speak honestly and think about what Scripture really means so that we can discover the truth together!

Because while I've had a lot of the same questions that you may have about the Bible, I also know that the Bible has given me a lot of answers. It has helped me navigate so many parts of my life with wisdom, love, patience, and more.

## TELL A PERSONAL STORY

*Tell a story from your own life that illustrates the following thoughts or ideas....*

- *Talk about a time the Bible has given you an answer or a direction that you really needed.*
- *Maybe when Scripture helped you make a tough decision, or encouraged you in a difficult time, or just showed you something new about God.*
- *Be sure to make your example middle school friendly!*
- *The point is to show how exciting and helpful it can be to learn something new from the Bible.*

Because the Bible has impacted my life this way, I don't want to just stop reading when I'm confused, or lost, or just don't see the point. I don't want you to, either! So today, I want to dive in to why the Bible can be an important tool to help us navigate the good, the bad, and everything in between in our lives?

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# TRUTH

4 MINUTES

To do that, we're going to take a look at a verse from a letter written by a guy named **Paul**.

Paul started out as a guy who was completely against Jesus followers. He actually imprisoned a lot of them. But after an experience with Jesus Himself, Paul became a believer. From that point on, he was all in with his faith. As a result, Paul started sharing about what he'd experienced with others. Why? Because God changed Paul's life, and he knew God could do the same for others.

In this letter, Paul wrote to a guy named **Timothy**, a young pastor who Paul supported, encouraged, and mentored in his ministry. Remember, these were real guys who lived real lives. They had real struggles and real questions. Even though we're not in the same situation that these two guys were in, I think what Paul told Timothy here can still encourage us as we try to figure out what the Bible can do for our faith.

Take a look:

***All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true (2 Timothy 3:16a NLT).***

Okay, so even though this verse is short, it's super important to our faith. And I think the best way we can navigate it is to look at three things: **who, what, and why.**

First, let's focus on *who*. **Paul was writing to Timothy** about Scripture. Of course, at the time, Paul didn't know that what he was writing would actually become part of the Bible. To him, it was a letter that God inspired him to write.

Now let's stop here a second. You might be thinking, *Wait, what? God inspired Paul to write this letter that would become part of the Bible?* The short answer is, yes! When Jesus left the Earth, He left His believers with His Spirit to lead them, go with them, encourage them, and inspire them. As Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, it was with God's Spirit working in him, influencing him, and speaking through him.

As Paul said from the start of this verse, all Scripture is inspired by God. God is the *who* behind it! God's inspiration worked through the people who wrote Scripture. And God's inspiration works through us as we read it and apply it to our lives today.

For *what?* Paul knew that God's Spirit is in Scripture. He knew that Scripture would instruct us, inspire us, and challenge us. Paul understood that, in order for the message of Christianity to keep going, he had **to make sure people knew where to find God at work in God's Word.**

*Why?* Well, look back at what Paul said. The Bible is useful to us because **it teaches us what's true.** It helps us see the parts of our lives that aren't right or lining up with that truth. It guides us in changing those things so that we can do what is right.

What's even more amazing is the Bible is also a way to connect directly with God. It's a way for us to know God better and build a personal relationship with God. Because God's Spirit speaks to us in the pages! The Holy Spirit lives inside of you and the Holy Spirit can speak to you about a passage of Scripture as you read! That's one of the reasons God gave us the Bible, so we can know God and God can speak to us in it.

In other words, **we read the Bible because God is in it.**

When we read it, we learn how to recognize what God has inspired. It helps us see God's inspiration in our lives and in the world around us.

Now, that leads us to something important. God inspired everything. God created the Earth and everything in it, and we can find God in so many places. In a worship song. In nature. In a great conversation with a friend. When we open God's Word, God comes to life in new and unexpected ways. We learn so much more about God in the pages of Scripture!

You see, we can learn things about God in Scripture that we wouldn't necessarily be able to learn anywhere else. Inside its pages, we read about people's experiences with God from thousands of years ago. We read about the questions they asked about life. We learn about their struggles and their joys.

As we read the Bible, we find that we're part of a bigger story. We aren't alone in trying to know God. There have been a bunch of people asking the same questions and going through a lot of the same things we're going through today. And I think there's a lot we can learn about God through their stories and their faith.

**We read the Bible because God is in it.**

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## APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

What does this mean for you right now?

Think of it this way! If you have a best friend, you probably know a lot about them. But you probably didn't know those things the moment you first met. Getting to know them took time. You hung out together, you texted each other, you talked about your days, you shared experiences. Eventually, all those moments added up to a really good relationship.

The Bible can work in a similar way in your life. **We read the Bible because God is in it.** We learn more about what is true about God and God's purpose for our lives when we spend time reading the Bible. But like any relationship, we can't simply talk to God once and expect to know it all right away.

When you read the Bible, God's Spirit can work in both the words on the page and in your heart to guide you, encourage you, and teach you. And the more time you spend getting to know God through the Bible, the better your relationship will be.

This week, here's where I want you to start:

- 1) **Put in the time.** Commit to spending some time reading the Bible each day. Even if it's just ten minutes, give it a try. Write down thoughts or questions you have as you go, and share them with your parent, small group leader, or another trusted adult. Just like God's Spirit can speak to you in the Bible, God can use people in your life to help point you toward God's truth as you read.
- 2) **Be consistent.** Don't give up when you don't understand, or things don't change, or you just aren't feeling it. Instead, keep going. Be consistent in your reading, even if it's just for this week. Give God a chance to speak to you through the Bible as you read each day.

- 3) **Ask God to teach you.** Finally, remember that God's Spirit is at work in you. So, ask the Spirit to help teach you as you read. Ask for help to see how reading the Bible is impacting your life. Maybe even keep a journal of things you're learning, the questions you're asking, or the prayers you're praying as you read. Then, you can look back at how God has worked to teach you things, or change your perspective, or even answer your prayers over time.
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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

Remember, **we read the Bible because God is in it.**

I know the Bible can be hard to understand around sometimes. That's one of the reasons we have small groups here at *[name of church/student ministry]*. It's a place where you can find encouragement in your walk with God. And it's also a place where you can talk through things that can be hard to understand, like the Bible! We'd love for you to do that by participating in this week's devotional reading plan with your group. Together, you can encourage each other to spend time reading God's Word and asking God to teach you as you read.

As you go to your group, I want you to think about this: **What's one thing you want to know about God?**

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TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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