

**LESSON 2: KEEP READING**

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

**1. LEADER PREPARATION****LESSON OVERVIEW**

Young Christians need to understand the importance of reading Scripture regularly. It's an incredible way the Holy Spirit helps us know Jesus better and become more like Christ. This lesson will help students understand that God's Word is powerful—and different from any other book. Young people will also discover how to avoid sin and grow in their relationship with Jesus.

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. **WHAT:** The Bible is powerful and alive, and reading it regularly is vital for every Christian.
2. **WHY:** When students grasp the life-changing power of God's Word, they'll understand the immense value of reading it often.
3. **HOW:** Students can choose what Bible-reading habits they'll incorporate in order to open themselves to Jesus' power in their lives.

**PRIMARY SCRIPTURE**

Hebrews 4:12

**SECONDARY SCRIPTURE**

Psalms 119:9-11

**TEACHING PREP**

**LEADER  
TIP**

**Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.**

Read Hebrews 4:12 and Psalm 119:9-11.

The book of Hebrews was written about 70 A.D. to Hebrew Christians who weren't very mature spiritually and lacked an understanding of biblical truth. The author of Hebrews (traditionally thought to be Paul but not certain) compares God's Word to a sword, a weapon that people living during Jesus' time definitely would have understood. The Roman sword was typically two-edged and could easily penetrate flesh, straight to the heart.

In verse 12, the imagery of a sharp sword cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow, would have conjured up realistic pictures in the original readers' minds. The author was helping them understand that God's Word cuts to the truth. It's just as important for modern-day believers to read the Bible, because it helps them discern Jesus' truth.

Psalm 119, the Bible's longest psalm, focuses on the value of God's Word. Verses 9-11 are a reminder that we live in a broken, impure world. The only way Christians can stay pure is to stay intimately connected to Jesus, and the Bible helps us do that. When we read and learn to understand Scripture, we get guidance on how to live God's way. On our own, without Jesus' guidance, we're more vulnerable to Satan's temptations and lies. But when we know and rely on the Bible for direction, Jesus gives us the wisdom and strength to live like him.

The Holy Spirit is a powerful force for helping us know and live out God's Word, but this lesson doesn't directly address that topic. You can certainly talk about it if it comes up during your discussions, but a later lesson will address the Holy Spirit.

## THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

### TEXTS OR TWEETS

**Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.**

- *What does a sword have to do with your spiritual life? Come find out!*
- *Jesus has a secret weapon to help you follow him—and it's awesome. Don't miss a fascinating conversation!*

### PARENT EMAIL

**Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.**

Dear Parents,

We're continuing our series called "My New Life With Jesus." This lesson addressed the power of reading the Bible, which changes how Jesus' followers live.

We focused on two Bible passages: Hebrews 4:12 and Psalm 119:9-11. The Hebrews verse compares God's Word to a sharp, powerful, two-edged sword. Because God's Word is alive, it "cuts" to Jesus' truth for our lives. Psalm 119 shows how reading Scripture can help us recognize where we need to make adjustments to live more like Jesus.

Please spend a few minutes talking to your teenager about this week's lesson. That will help increase the value of our group discussions. Here are some questions to get started:

- *What's your reaction to the Bible being compared to a sword? What jumped out at you the most about that comparison?*
- *When have you felt motivated to read God's Word, and why? Have you come up with a plan to read it more?*
- *How does memorizing Bible verses help you in your everyday life? I'd love to do that with you!*

We greatly appreciate your prayers for our students and our ministry. May God bless your week as you live for him!



## LESSON 2: KEEP READING

## 2. LESSON GUIDE

## GETTING THINGS STARTED



Preview the following video clip for your group: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_xeaOCpsqs&nohtml5=False](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_xeaOCpsqs&nohtml5=False) (or find another video about swords). You'll need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your participants.

**Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then introduce the video clip.**

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *What was your best-ever Halloween costume? Did any of you ever dress up like a ninja or a pirate? If you've ever had a costume with a sword, you know what I mean. Let's watch a video clip about a guy who seems to think he's a real-life ninja. Check this out.*

Play the clip.

**ASK:**

- *What was your favorite item this guy sliced? What else would you want to see him slice with that weapon?*
- *Tell about a time you cut yourself on something sharp. What's that feeling like?*
- *We avoid getting cut, but sometimes a cut is just what we need—can you think of any positive things that have happened to you because you got cut? Explain.*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *We usually think of a sword as a dangerous weapon, and most of the time it is. But today we'll talk about the power of reading God's Word, which is sharp like a sword but actually makes us better.*

## TEACHING POINTS



Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

**Read Hebrews 4:12 together as a group. Because this passage is so brief, consider having students read the verses several times, from different translations of the Bible.**

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *The imagery in this verse is cool. In the video clip, we saw some crazy stuff a sword can cut. But as we heard in today's Bible verse, God's Word is also a sword. Let's see if we can figure out how reading Scripture relates to a sword.*

## 1. GOD'S WORD IS ALIVE

### ASK:

- When you think of something powerful, what do you picture?
- Would you say power is generally positive or negative, and why?
- The Bible says God's Word is alive and powerful. What does that mean to you?
- If you want to experience the power of God in your life, reading his Word is important. How have you experienced God's power by reading or hearing Scripture?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** As we saw in the video, a sword can be extremely sharp and powerful. This image reveals how Jesus wants to use his Word in our lives. It cuts away the junk and shows us the truth about ourselves and him. As we consistently take time to read the Bible, it comes alive and offers us practical, relevant guidance for our daily lives.

## 2. READING GOD'S WORD HELPS US KNOW OURSELVES

### ASK:

- We talked about God's Word being a sword. What do you think the verse means about cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow?
- Why do you think Jesus wants to expose our innermost thoughts and desires?
- When you realize something about yourself that isn't the way Jesus wants it to be, how do you feel about yourself? How do you think Jesus feels about you?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** It's much easier to work with our weaknesses when we know what they are. As we read the Bible, we start to get a clearer understanding of why we need Jesus so much. We begin to understand how much he loves us and wants to help us.

**Read Psalm 119:9-11 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.**

## 3. READING GOD'S WORD CHANGES HOW WE LIVE

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** The writer of this psalm reminds us that we have a role to play in allowing Jesus to change us. If you decide you want to do things his way, reading the Bible is part of that strategy.

Ask students to form groups of two or three to discuss these questions.

### ASK:



PAIR  
SHARE

- While playing Hide and Seek, what's the best hiding place you've ever had?
- What does it mean to hide God's Word in your heart?
- We all sin because we're human. If that's true, why does it matter when we sin?
- How might knowing God's Word better help us avoid sin?

Bring everyone back together, and ask a few people to share answers to the previous questions, as time allows.



## LIVING IT OUT

### ASK:

- *During today's discussion, what jumped out at you the most, and why?*
- *If you think consistent Bible reading is important, what are two "next steps" you plan to take so it becomes a habit?*
- *As you read God's Word and discover more about your strengths and weaknesses, who can you talk to about what you learn and where you need to grow?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Reading God's Word is so important to growing as a Christian. Just take small steps and read a little at a time. When you run into something that doesn't make sense, find someone to ask about it or make a note to come back to it. And when you read something that seems really important to your life, underline it and read it again and again. Memorize the verse so you can be more ready to follow Jesus and experience his love in a more personal way.*

## SUMMARY



LEADER  
TIP

Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

## FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

*"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires" (Hebrews 4:12).*