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LEADER'S GUIDE

ROUTE 66

a road trip through the Bible

JANE VOGEL AND MARY SYTSMA

ROUTE 66

a road trip through the Bible

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FAITH
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Christian Resources

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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THE TRIP IN BRIEF

Welcome to *Route 66: A Road Trip Through the Bible*, an eight-session Bible survey course for high school youth. If this brief overview of your tour doesn't answer all your questions, please feel free to call us at 1-800-333-8300 or e-mail us at editors@faithaliveresources.org.

Compass Needed!

As with any trip, we need to know what direction we're headed. This course is designed to "connect the dots" for teens and help them see how the sixty-six books of the Bible together reveal to us the good news of God's love for us through Jesus, our Savior.

People and Places

This course was road-tested with ninth and tenth graders, but it's designed for traveling with youth in grades 9-12. You might even try it with young adults or with an intergenerational group. Even though adults might not be as open to some of the more fun activities, they're more willing to play when younger people are involved. If you've ever chaperoned a youth trip, you'll know all about this!

Every trip has its point of origination. We suggest a Sunday school setting, youth group meetings, or Bible classes in Christian high schools. If you're really creative, turn your meeting place into a travel agency office, a bus, or . . . let your imagination run!

Checkpoints

This course aims to help high school youth

- become acquainted with the structure and content of the Bible.
- understand the major themes that unify the books of the Bible.
- see how the Bible focuses on Christ.
- read the Bible and respond to its message in their lives.

In addition, this study is designed to help teens who are new to the faith learn how to find their way through the Bible. In the student book "Traveler's Guides" provide specific tips to help new travelers find their way through the Bible, and "FAQs" (Frequently Asked Questions)

provide further help. In this leader's guide you'll find many ways to help and involve students who are new to the Bible, including two special mentoring sessions at the back of the guide.

Every now and then, you'll want to stop and ask yourself and your students this question: Are we there yet? Then "keep on truckin'"—responding to the Bible's message is a lifelong journey!

FOR YOU, THE TOUR GUIDE

As you travel along *Route 66*, likely you'll feel somewhat like a tour guide. We've given you a detailed itinerary in this leader's guide. Here are some highlights included in every session:

- Multiple **Scripture references** to point you to the biblical basis for each session.
- Clear and realistic **session goals** to give you specific direction for each of the eight phases of the trip.
- A **Session Overview** chart that summarizes learning activities, materials needed, and the time allowed.
- "Finding Our Way," the biblical background explaining what you need to know, written by Rev. Robert De Moor, theological editor for Faith Alive Christian Resources.
- **Step-by-step directions** based on the authors' teaching of their own high school class. You'll know right away that these easy-to-use session plans are the real thing. They're creative and

SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 22:31; Proverbs 30:5;
Isaiah 55:8-11; Romans 1:16-17;
2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12;
2 Peter 1:16, 18-21;
Revelation 22:18-19

SESSION GOALS

Students will

- recognize Scripture's claims about itself as a legitimate starting point for exploring what the Bible is.
- explore four claims the Bible makes about itself.
- identify implications of the claims the Bible makes about itself.
- reflect on personal experiences that may confirm the Bible's claims.

SESSION OVERVIEW






Learning Activities	Materials	Time
1. Observations: Product Claims. Students make statements about products that they think are true.	*Packaged food (bags of chips or carrots, bottles of soda, and so on) with printed information on the package, paper and pens or pencils, board or newspaper and markers	5-10 minutes
2. Bible Exploration: Claims in Scripture. Small groups read, reflect, and report on claims Scripture makes about itself.	Bibles, student books, pens	25-30 minutes
3. Survey: Checking It Out. Students reflect privately on their experience with Scripture, then share reactions with others.	Student books, pens, week 1 "Check It Out" cards	5-15 minutes
4. Prayer: Thanks and Questions. Students spend time in prayer and reflection.	None needed	5 minutes

*If you choose to take the "Shortcut" option (p. **), you won't need the packaged foods.



interactive, and they appeal to a variety of learning styles. Best of all, they'll make your trip successful.

The following “road signs” are used throughout the session plans to alert you to some tour guide tips:

-  Before You Hit the Road (directions for major things to do ahead of time)
-  Alternate Route (slightly different ways to accomplish an activity)
-  Shortcut (tips to save preparation and travel time)
-  Road Test Notes (notes from the authors based on their field-test experiences)
-  Side Road Trip (optional activities)

Reproducible resources are also included in the back of the guide. These worksheets, game cards, and so on are used in various ways throughout the course. You'll want to photocopy these pages ahead of time for your students.

Stapled into the center of the leader's guide you'll find a large **wall chart** that you'll use in sessions 5, 6, and 7—first as a poster, then as a game board, and finally as a kingdom road map. (Be sure to save it for the duration of your trip.) You'll also find several sheets of game pieces and game cards for use in sessions 6 and 7.

The sessions are designed to take 45-60 minutes. If you have less time, you'll want to scale down or omit some activities. (Watch for **Short Cuts** in the margins.)

You'll need a small number of standard supplies to lead the sessions:

- Bibles (one per student—encourage kids to bring their own if possible)
- pens or pencils
- paper
- markers
- board or newsprint

By session 3, you'll need a few study Bibles (the kind with chapter introductions and notes). In session 8 we suggest making available a variety of Bible translations for students to compare.

If you prefer to gather the materials all at one time (or if you can find someone to do it for you), here are the additional items you'll need:

- *packaged food (bags of chips or carrots, bottles of soda, and so on) with printed information on the package (session 1)
- *novel, rule book or set of instructions from a game, songbook, advice column from a newspaper (session 2)
- small prizes or wrapped candy (sessions 4 and 5, optional)
- video camera (session 4, optional)
- Play-Doh (session 6)
- two large bowls, two mixing spoons (session 7)
- paper cups, margarine tubs, or resealable sandwich bags (session 7, one per student)
- yeast and flour (session 7)
- powdered milk, cornmeal, whole wheat flour (session 7, optional)
- large measuring cup of water (session 7)
- two dish towels (session 7)

*If you choose to do the “Shortcut” options for sessions 1 and 2, you won't need these items.

Additional Resources for Leaders

A good study Bible with notes can be invaluable, especially as you lead the Bible studies in session 3. The authors recommend the *NIV Study Bible* (available from Faith Alive Christian Resources, 1-800-333-8300) and *Quest Study Bible* (available at most Christian bookstores).

Optional: Mentoring Sessions

These two session plans might be considered directions for a side trip off the beaten path. They're intended to help teens who are new to the faith learn how to find major divisions, chapters, verses, and so on in the Bible. Designed as a follow-up to this course, they can also be adapted for youth with more Bible study knowledge and skills.

For Your Teen Travelers

Travel anywhere with a group of teens, and you'll find most of them with a bag of souvenirs, postcards, brochures, and the like. To make this *Route 66* trip memorable, we've designed two resources—all wrapped into one package.

The *Route 66 Traveler's Guide* (student book) is full of exercises designed to keep teens engaged and traveling the same road together as they become more familiar with the Bible and its message of salvation.



THE TRIP IN BRIEF

You'll want one book for each student and one for yourself as well.

Check It Out cards challenge students to read and study the Bible on their own during the week. These eight cards are bound into the Traveler's Guide and perforated for easy removal.

“Call Home!”

That's probably the last bit of advice every parent gives as their son or daughter leaves on a trip. Parents want to feel connected with their teens, and you can encourage that on this *Route 66* trip as well. Here are some suggestions for involving parents:

- Mail a letter to each student's family before you begin this course. Explain what it's about, and ask for their prayers and support. Include your phone number and e-mail address.
- Or make a phone call rather than sending a letter.
- Invite parents and teens to a kick-off meeting. Build on the travel theme, and give a brief overview of the course. Sell the trip!
- Encourage families to use the “Check It Out” cards for family devotions.
- Invite parents of teens new to the faith to join you for the mentoring sessions.

FROM THE AUTHORS

Dear *Route 66* Tour Guides,

Years ago the two of us (Jane Vogel and Mary Sytsma) signed up to be small group leaders at a youth convention. When our resource materials came in the mail, included was a note we suspected to have been written specifically for us. It encouraged us not to worry if we weren't “young, cute, and athletic”—God could still use us in youth ministry.

We laughed about that letter many times (and so have the young people we work with), because if there's anything we aren't, it's young, cute, and athletic. The letter was right on that score. It was right in its conclusion too: God can still use us.

That's one reason we're writers for this course. To put it bluntly, if we can do this, so can you. We have certain qualifications for writing this material, but we also have most of the limitations anyone else might have who hopes to teach it: outside jobs, other volunteer commitments, busy families, school-aged children.

Real Teachers, Real Kids

We've road-tested every lesson in this leader's guide on real high school students. You'll find tips about what we learned along the way in **Road Test Notes** printed in the margins. We owe a debt of thanks to the ninth- and tenth-grade teens at Wheaton (Illinois) Christian Reformed Church who willingly served as first-time travelers and whose contributions shaped much of this trip.

Sometimes our editors, after reading our students' responses, asked whether we were traveling with unusually gifted and spiritually mature kids. We tend to be biased in our teens' favor, but on most counts they're pretty typical. We did have a few advantages, though, that we'd like to share with you.

We personalized our sessions. As we wrote each session, we had these real, specific teens and their real, specific situations in mind. As you prepare to teach, you can do so with your real, specific teens in mind too. Spend more or less time on steps according to their needs, or follow a plan that goes beyond the scope of the printed material.

We know our teens. That's the only way to personalize this material! We have the advantage of working with our church high school youth group, so we already had



contact with the sophomores in our tour group. If you don't have that advantage, don't lose heart. We've found that the focused time in class helps us know our youth as well as or better than time spent with them in the larger youth group. Build relationships with your teen, and your trip will be an exciting adventure. Just ask our teens!

We pray. When we met to write these sessions, we tried to make a point of praying for each teen by name. One side benefit was that if we didn't know what to pray about for a specific teen, we knew we needed to pay more attention to that person. But more important is that praying puts the ownership of your class in the right hands: God's.

Attractions or Tourist Traps?

If you've traveled with a carload of kids, you know that what attracts one's attention may totally bore a sibling. That's the way it is in teaching too.

It's a simple fact that different people learn best in different ways. You may have heard these various ways called *learning styles* or *multiple intelligences*. On this trip through the Bible, we've tried to engage teens in a variety of ways—through words, movement, art, drama, and so on. Sometimes a learning activity that doesn't appeal to your strengths may look like a "tourist trap." We encourage you to give it a try anyway.

Somewhere along the line, some teachers have bought into the notion that we can't be serious about learning if we're having fun. We've heard enough responses to previous courses we've written to be able to anticipate some concerns you might have about potential tourist traps. We'll share a few FHCs (frequently heard comments).

"Aren't you just entertaining the kids?"

Believe us—we're not that entertaining! If that were our goal, we'd take our teens to an amusement park and turn them loose. Our goal is to *engage* them. Before you write off simulating a TV show to learn about Christology (session 4) or playing a board game to trace God's covenant with his people (session 6), read the Road Test Notes to see how teens respond to this kind of engagement.

"I don't have time for all that introductory stuff; I have so much to say about the topic of the session."

If you are one of the rare gifted speakers whose students learn best by listening to you, go ahead and lecture. But you'll probably be disappointed in our session plans, because we haven't built in much time to *tell* your teens what they need to know. We've designed the activities to lead students to uncover and explore and apply for themselves. And "all that introductory stuff"—session openers, thought-starters, games—are part of the process. If you skip the appetizer, your teens might not be ready for the "meat."

"You have teenagers drawing, using Play-Doh, and playing with Hot Wheels—isn't that stuff too immature for high-schoolers?"

That's exactly the question a leader raised with a course we've written on the Heidelberg Catechism (*Questions Worth Asking*, Faith Alive Christian Resources). She wrote to say that she had decided to give it a try anyway and discovered that her teens responded more positively than she could have imagined. Sometimes playful props can be just the springboard to launch mature thinking about deep concepts.

But don't just take our word for it—try a few "off the beaten path" ideas for yourself. And remember that for all our commitment to doing our best, when it comes right down to it, the Spirit is a better teacher than anyone around, and the Word is as powerful as a full-throttled engine. You can trust the power of the Spirit, the Word, and prayer.

Blessings!

Mary and Jane

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE

SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 22:31; Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 55:8-11; Romans 1:16-17; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:16, 18-21; Revelation 22:18-19

SESSION GOALS

Students will

- recognize Scripture's claims about itself as a legitimate starting point for exploring what the Bible is.
- explore four claims the Bible makes about itself.
- identify implications of the claims the Bible makes about itself.
- reflect on personal experiences that may confirm the Bible's claims.

SESSION OVERVIEW

Learning Activities	Materials	Time
1. <i>Observations: Product Claims.</i> Students make statements about products that they think are true.	*Packaged food (bags of chips or carrots, bottles of soda, and so on) with printed information on the package, paper and pens or pencils, board or newsprint and markers	5-10 minutes
2. <i>Bible Exploration: Claims in Scripture.</i> Small groups read, reflect, and report on claims Scripture makes about itself.	Bibles, student books, pens	25-30 minutes
3. <i>Survey: Checking It Out.</i> Students reflect privately on their experience with Scripture, then share reactions with others.	Student books, pens, week 1 "Check It Out" cards	5-15 minutes
4. <i>Prayer: Thanks and Questions.</i> Students spend time in prayer and reflection.	None needed	5 minutes

*If you choose to take the "Shortcut" option (p. 11), you won't need the packaged foods.

FINDING OUR WAY

Some claims are fairly easy to prove or disprove. If your new brother-in-law claims to have six fingers on each hand then you can easily check to see if he's fibbing. You just ask him to haul his hands out of his pockets and you can tell rather quickly if you've just welcomed another windbag into the family. But other claims are much harder to assess. Your brother-in-law might profess undying love for your sister. But does he *really* love her? How can you tell? How can he prove it to you? The only way you can test this claim is to observe how he treats her over the years. As they say about such really significant claims, only time will tell.

The same is true of the Bible. Its claim to be the Word of God that leads to salvation cannot be directly proven either right or wrong. Like most of the *really* important claims in life, its truth can only be verified through long-term experience. The proof is in the pudding.

That doesn't mean, of course, that there's no good, solid evidence to support the Bible's claims. There is. Unlike all the other holy books that claim to be God's Word, the Bible offers concrete evidence of its veracity. It bases its claim on a unique historical reality that could have been easily verified when the claim was made. That reality is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. If he died and rose again (as predicted in Scripture itself), then he *must* be who he says he is, God's Son, our Savior and Lord. Conversely, if he was either a lunatic or a liar, his claims could have been easily proven to be false. People would only have needed to produce his body, and Christianity would have been snuffed out in its infancy.

A Sure Word

But that's *not* what happened. Those who carefully investigated what happened to Jesus (see Luke 1:1-4) were overwhelmed with the evidence and became ardent believers. Just as in a court of law the jury must determine what happened on the basis of the testimony of the eyewitnesses, so we must base our judgment of the Bible's claims on the eyewitnesses whose words are recorded there. Does their testimony ring true? Is it consistent? Is it convincing?

Over thousands of years, honest inquirers who carefully read the Scriptures for themselves acknowledge that the Bible is indeed what it claims to be: the Word of God that leads us to a saving, everlasting love relationship with God. Through immersing ourselves in its message, the Holy Spirit confirms its truth in our hearts and we come to faith. That's the great miracle of rebirth that happens every time the Word takes root in our hearts and lives.

In this session, we present the Bible's own claim about itself—that it is God's saving Word to all who believe. Will your teens buy it? That's up to the Holy Spirit. Your job is to encourage them to see for themselves and to share with them your own faith. You yourself have experienced the reality of these claims in your life. Don't be shy in sharing them with these teens.

Enough Is Enough

What exactly are the Bible's claims about itself? We'll limit ourselves to just a few that are key.

■ *The Bible is God's inspired Word.*

Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:16 that "All Scripture is God-breathed." That doesn't mean that God dictated it word for word, but that God supervised human writers to accurately write down and explain what God did and said. Technically the *Scripture* Paul refers to is the Old Testament, since at the time of his writing this letter to Timothy, the New Testament did not yet exist in written form. But in Romans 1:16, Paul makes very clear that the gospel he and the other apostles preach is also God's Word. And so does Peter in 2 Peter 1:16-21. Once written down in gospels and pastoral letters, their preaching was consistently affirmed by the early church as being equally God's holy Word, brought into being through the work of the Holy Spirit. For all practical purposes, it's consistent with the Bible's own claims to apply the 2 Timothy 3:16 passage to Old and New Testament alike.

■ *The Bible is the infallible Word of God.*

From passages such as 2 Samuel 22:31 and Proverbs 30:5 we learn that the Bible is never going to let us down. The word *infallible* means *unfailing*. The Bible is completely reliable and trustworthy as our guide for

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE

faith and life. We can stake our life here and now and forever after on its truthfulness.

■ *The Bible is redemptive.*

Passages such as Hebrews 4:12 and Isaiah 55:8-11 clearly confirm that the Bible is effective in bringing us to salvation in Jesus Christ. It's not just a book of history, ethics, moral teachings, or theology. It's a book that creates faith in our hearts, connects us to God, and transforms us, bringing us into eternal life in Christ.

■ *The Bible is sufficient.*

Other Christian literature may enhance our understanding of Scripture, as might sermons, Bible studies, and the like. But the Bible itself remains the one and only primary Source that leads us to a full revelation of and relationship with God (Rom. 1:16-17). We may extend the warning of Revelation 22:18-19 not to add anything to "the prophecy of this book" to the entire Bible as well. We may neither take away from nor add anything to God's holy Word. We may only receive it in faith and live it. And in the living, through the Spirit's testimony in our hearts, we meet Jesus. That's all the proof we'll ever need.

LEADING THE SESSION

I. Observations: Product Claims

Materials:

Packaged food items (bags of chips or carrots, bottles of soda, and so on) with printed information on the package, paper, pens, board or newsprint and markers

Time:

5-10 minutes

Form groups of three or four. Give each group one of the packaged items, a sheet of paper, and a pen. (It's OK if more than one group has the same item.) Give instructions like these: **Write as many true statements about your**

object as you can in two minutes. Your goal is to get a lot of statements on paper, so abbreviate words and phrases.

After two minutes, ask each group these questions

(record their answers on your board or newsprint):

■ **Share one true statement about your food item.**

■ **How do you know that it's true?**

After each group has had a chance to respond, point to the list you've compiled and ask, **How could you test that these claims are true?**

Summarize by saying something like this: **We do this all the time. We first listen to a claim that a product makes about itself; then we check it out. We test it to see if the claim holds up.**

That's what we're going to do with the Bible. We're going to look at four claims the Bible makes about itself. Maybe you already accept these claims. Maybe you want to check them out. Either way, it's good to know what the Bible says about itself.

2. Bible Exploration: Claims in Scripture

Materials:

Student books, pens, Bibles

Time:

25-30 minutes

Hand out the student books and pens. (If students don't have their own Bibles, provide them for each person.) Ask everyone to turn to page 5, and point out the Traveler's Guide and FAQ boxes so that your teens know what these elements are when they encounter them throughout the course.

Have everyone work in the same groups of three or four as in step 1. (If space permits, have groups work in

SHORTCUT

Not enough time to gather the products needed for step 1? To convey the same idea and help students get to know one another better, play the game "I've Never." Each person tells something he or she has never done but thinks that many others in the group have done. For example, you might say, "I've never ridden a bus to school." The speaker gets one point for every person who has done that thing. (Keep score on your board or newsprint.) The person with the most points wins.

Make a transition to the rest of the session by saying something like this: For this game to work, we had to trust that others in the group were telling the truth. That's not so different from the way we get to know people in real life. People tell us about themselves, about what they like to do, about what's important to them. As we spend time with them, we check out whether what they said about themselves is true or not.

Conclude with the explanation in step 1 about how this session will introduce claims the Bible makes about itself.

ALTERNATE ROUTE

If your group is small, work together as one group.



ALTERNATE ROUTE

If you have fewer than eight students, work through all four claims together as one group.

To keep on schedule, allow

■ about five minutes to read and answer the questions for each claim.

■ a minute or two after each claim for the follow-up questions on page 12 of this guide.

ALTERNATE ROUTE

If your teens aren't used to working in small groups, consider assigning the following roles to encourage everyone to participate:

■ **reader** (reads aloud the instructions and the Bible passages).

■ **reporter** (reports the team's conclusions to the whole group).

■ **encourager** (makes sure everyone gets a chance to contribute to the discussion).

A group with more than three members can divide up the reading responsibilities. Assign the role of encourager to a teen who might be uncomfortable reading aloud or reporting to the full group.

different areas of the room or in the hall.) Assign each group one of these four claims (it's OK for more than one group to work on the same claim):

■ The Bible comes from God; it's *inspired* (pp. 6-7).

■ The Bible is trustworthy; it's *infallible* (pp. 8-9).

■ The Bible effectively accomplishes God's purposes (pp. 10-11).

■ The Bible is complete. It tells us all we need to know to be saved (pp. 12-13).

Tell groups they will have only about *five* minutes to complete questions 1 through 3 of their claim. If they have time, they should also discuss questions 4 and 5. (Encourage each person to fill in the page in his or her own book as one person records for the whole group.)

After about five minutes, call the groups back together. Invite a reporter from the first group to read aloud the Bible passages and share the group's conclusions. If more than one group worked on the same passages, have reporters from those groups alternate giving their responses and adding

anything new to the other group's ideas. If the small group didn't get to questions 4 and 5, briefly discuss them with the whole group.

Encourage students to write the first group's conclusions in their own books so that they can look back at these claims for themselves.

When the first group is finished reporting, ask these questions:

■ What questions do you have or have you heard other people ask about this claim?

■ Do you have any experience that leads you to believe that this claim is true?

Record the questions, and assure students that you will try to answer them throughout the next several weeks. Allow students to share experiences, but don't worry if no one responds; you'll follow up on this in step 3. Repeat the reporting process for the other three claims.

3. Survey: Checking It Out

Materials:

Student books, pens, week 1 "Check It Out" cards

Time:

5-15 minutes

Say something like this: **I believe all the claims the Bible makes about itself. I know that they're true. And I suspect that you may have more experience to evaluate these claims than you might think.**

Then have students turn to the survey on page 14 of the student book and complete the survey privately. When most students are finished, invite volunteers to share their reactions and responses.

BUMP ROAD TEST NOTES

At first glance, question 2 for each claim may seem too simple for your students. But the multiple-choice answers are a result of road-testing this session with ninth and tenth graders. When we asked them to come up with a statement on their own, it took more time than we wanted to allow, and some of the students missed the main point. As it's written, the student book guides students to a correct understanding but still gives them a chance to put each principle in their own words in question 3. Our favorite rephrasing was this summary of claim 3: "God's Word gets to people."

BUMP ROAD TEST NOTES

We have some students with rather strong preconceptions about being forced to give the "right" answer at church. So we work really hard to let students know that we want honesty, not hypocrisy, even when that means expressing honest doubt or skepticism. We can do this with confidence because we know that, by the working of the Spirit, God's Word gets to people. For proof, read the Road Test Notes on page 13 about the impact of the week 1 "Check It Out" cards.

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE

Ask,

- Which verses have already proved true in your lives?
- Which ones might make you wonder right now about what the Bible says about itself?

BUMP ROAD TEST NOTES

We tested the effectiveness of the “Check It Out” cards by asking our students to complete a confidential, anonymous questionnaire the following week. They were asked to tell whether they used it or not, which parts were helpful, and so on. Just under half of the students used the card for devotions during the week. A few more said they meant to and asked for another shot at it. Before you decide that 50 percent is a failing grade, consider this:

- Most students kept the cards as bookmarks in their Bibles, and we were able to refer to them throughout the course.
- One of our students, a new exchange student, who had indicated in the self-survey that she had no experience showing that the Bible is true, read the “Romans Road” and committed her life to Christ. At this writing, nine months later, her commitment appears strong and genuine.

Encourage teens to be honest. Assure them again that you know these verses to be true—you’ve experienced them in your own life. Give specific examples if you have time.

Conclude by reminding students, **Truth is not something we determine by a vote. If we all agreed that fire is cold, that wouldn’t make it true. For that matter, agreeing that fire is hot isn’t what makes it hot either. If we’re really serious about finding out, we can check out the truth of the statement “Fire is hot.” But we have to spend some time with fire to do it.**

In the same way, we’re not going to arrive at the truth about the Bible simply by sharing our own experiences. If we’re serious about it, we can

check out the claims of the Bible. But we have to spend some time with the Bible to do it.

Hand out the week 1 “Check It Out” cards from the student book. Invite students to use them to check out the Bible this week, and encourage them to keep the cards in their Bibles to use in class each week. (If some students don’t have Bibles of their own, privately give them Bibles after this session.)

4. Prayer: Thanks and Questions

Materials:

None needed

Time:

about 5 minutes

If your students are comfortable praying aloud together, suggest that they do one of the following:

- Give thanks for an experience that helps them believe the Bible’s claims (possibly something they thought of during the self-survey).
- Ask God to provide an answer to a specific question about God or the Bible.

ALTERNATE ROUTE

In our group, we’ve established a pattern that has come to be known as “prayer the way we usually do it.” Two people volunteer to record praises and prayer requests, each on a separate index card or piece of paper. When all the praises and prayer requests have been mentioned, we pass the cards around. Each person can choose one or more cards or no cards. Students who might otherwise be nervous about praying aloud are more comfortable because they have something in front of them that they can read.

STUDENT GUIDE

ROUTE 66

a road trip through the Bible

JANE VOGEL AND MARY SYTSMAN

ROUTE 66

a road trip through the Bible

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**FAITH
ALIVE**
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So What Now?

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE

What Does the Bible Say About Itself?

One way to find out about a new product is to read or hear the claims the product makes for itself. Then check out these claims to see if they're worth believing.

You can take the same approach with the Bible. If you want to know what Christians believe about the Bible, see what the Bible says about itself. Some of those claims are on the next pages. Read through them. Answer the questions to help you think through them. Then, if you're serious, spend some time with the Bible later this week to check them out further.

FAQ

Answers for Frequently Asked Questions will appear in boxes throughout this book.

You don't have to read them unless they address questions you happen to wonder about yourself.

They also make good reading if your group finishes an activity early and you're waiting for other groups to catch up.

TRAVELER'S GUIDE

You'll be seeing "Traveler's Guide" boxes often in this book. Think of them as e-mails from the travel agent who's planned this fantastic road trip for you.

If you haven't used the Bible much, the "Traveler's Guide" should give you enough tips to help you do whatever the activity is asking you to do. So buckle up, and enjoy the trip!

If you've already used the Bible a lot, you probably won't need all the tips yourself. But read them to remind yourself of what it was like to take a road trip through the Bible for the very first time. Then offer a helping hand to fellow travelers—you'll probably be amazed at what you re-discover along the way!



Claim 1

The Bible says, “ _____ .”

1. Look up and read these passages from the Bible:

■ 2 Timothy 3:16

■ 2 Peter 1:16, 18-21

TRAVELER'S GUIDE

Finding a Passage

The Bible is divided into

■ books

(2—or Second—Timothy is a book.)

■ chapters

(The 3 in 2 Timothy 3:16 is the chapter.)

■ verses

(The 16 in 2 Timothy 3:16 is the verse.)

Just like most books, the Bible has a table of contents at the beginning that lists the books of the Bible and the page number where you'll find each book.

Try This:

Instead of just flipping through the Bible to find the passages you need, use the table of contents to find them. If you already know how to do this, help someone else find 2 Timothy and 2 Peter.

POINT OF INTEREST

Note: The words *Scripture* and *prophecy* refer to what is now the Bible.

2. Once you've read the two Bible passages, choose the statement that best describes the claim the Bible is making in these verses:

■ The Bible is full of breathy hot air.

■ You need to be careful not to get carried away.

■ The source of the Bible is God.

Write the statement you've chosen in the blank at the top of this page.

3. Another way to say "God-breathed" is "*inspired*." That's what claim 1 is about. Based on these passages and drawing on what you may already know, summarize what this claim means in easy-to-understand language.



FAQ

Q. How did God inspire the Bible?

A. People have different ideas about that.

■ Some say God's inspiration was *mechanical*. They think God dictated the words or used people like keyboards or tape recorders. This means that the writers' hands were involved but not their minds. But this doesn't account for the different writing styles human writers used in the Bible.

■ Others say God's inspiration was *dynamic*. These people think that God influenced the writers but didn't directly influence what they wrote. (Check out claim 2 for some problems with this view.)

■ Still others—including the authors and publishers of this book—believe that God's inspiration was *organic*. God inspired the writers to use their own personal strengths and styles and guided them in what they wrote. As a result, the Bible shows both the individuality of the different writers and is also completely trustworthy because God safeguarded the process and the product.

Q. How much of the Bible is inspired, and how much is simply historical record or other human writing?

A. Check out again what the Bible itself claims in 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is God-breathed." Some people want to pick and choose, but if you're going to accept the Bible you have to accept *all* of it—even the parts that are hard to believe or understand.

4. If you believe that claim 1 is *true*, how will it affect the way you read and study the Bible?

5. If you believe that claim 1 is *false*, how might it affect the way you read and study the Bible?



Claim 2

The Bible says, “ _____ .”

1. Look up and read these passages from the Bible:

■ 2 Samuel 22:31

■ Proverbs 30:5

TRAVELER'S GUIDE

Finding a Passage

The Bible is divided into

■ books

(2—or Second—Samuel is a book.)

■ chapters

(The 22 in 2 Samuel 22:31 is the chapter.)

■ verses

(The 31 in 2 Samuel 22:31 is the verse.)

Like most books, the Bible has a table of contents at the beginning that lists the books of the Bible and the page number where you'll find each book.

Try This:

Instead of just flipping through the Bible to find the passages you need, use the table of contents to find them. If you already know how to do this, help someone else find 2 Samuel and Proverbs.

POINT OF INTEREST

“The Word of the Lord” or “of God” includes God’s written Word, the Bible.

2. Once you’ve read the Bible passages, choose the statement that best describes the claim the Bible is making in these verses:

- If you go into the military, take a Bible because it will make a good shield.
- God has perfect pronunciation.
- We can completely trust what the Bible says.

Write the statement you’ve chosen in the blank at the top of this page.

3. These passages talk about the Bible as “flawless.” The Christian church often uses the word “*infallible*.” That’s what claim 2 is about. Based on these passages and drawing on what you may already know, summarize what this claim means in easy-to-understand language.



FAQ

Q. If the Bible is trustworthy, how can it make reference to things like “the four corners of the earth” when the earth doesn’t have corners?

A. That’s such a good question that we’re going to talk about it in detail in the next session. Keep your seat belt buckled!

Q. If the Bible is true, how do you explain the contradictions between different books of the Bible?

A. Interestingly, many historians think that minor variations are evidence for the truth of an account. The theory is that writers who want to lie would likely get together to make sure that their stories matched perfectly. What seem to be contradictions may just be differences in writers’ perspectives. (Check out *organic inspiration* in the FAQ box on p. 7 for more on that.) In session 3, we’ll talk a little about some differences that may seem to contradict each other.

4. If you believe that claim 2 is *true*, how will it affect the way you read and study the Bible?

5. If you believe that claim 2 is *false*, how might it affect the way you read and study the Bible?



Claim 3

The Bible says, “ _____ .”

1. Look up and read these passages from the Bible:

- Hebrews 4:12
- Isaiah 55:8-11

TRAVELER'S GUIDE

Finding a Passage

The Bible is divided into

- books
(Hebrews is a book.)
- chapters
(The 4 in Hebrews 4:12 is the chapter.)
- verses
(The 12 in Hebrews 4:12 is the verse.)

Like most books, the Bible has a table of contents at the beginning that lists the books of the Bible and the page number where you'll find each book.

Try This:

Instead of just flipping through the Bible to find the passages you need, use the table of contents to find them. If you already know how to do this, help someone else find Hebrews and Isaiah.

POINT OF INTEREST
 “The Word of God” includes God’s written Word, the Bible.

2. Once you’ve read the Bible passages, choose the statement that best describes the claim the Bible is making in these verses:

- The Bible is sharp enough to give you paper cuts.
- The Bible fits inside God’s mouth.
- The Bible effectively accomplishes God’s purposes.

Write the statement you’ve chosen in blank at the top of this page.

3. Based on these passages and drawing on what you may already know, summarize what this claim means in easy-to-understand language.



FAQ

Q. If God is all-powerful, why does he need to use a book to get his work done?

A. First, think about the difference between *needing* to use the Bible and *choosing* to use the Bible. Could God have chosen another means to accomplish his purposes? Sure. But God chose the Bible. That doesn't make God less powerful.

Second, it's clear that the Bible is more than just an ordinary book. It's God's Word. Even though we don't fully understand it, God's Word is an extension of God himself. God created the world with Word (see Genesis 1). Jesus is the Word—the same Word through which the world was made (see John 1:1-3). And God cares enough about you and what goes on in your life to give you access to that same Word through the Bible.

4. If you believe that claim 3 is *true*, how will it affect the way you read and study the Bible?

5. If you believe that claim 3 is *false*, how might it affect the way you read and study the Bible?



Claim 4

The Bible says, “ _____ .”

1. Look up and read these passages from the Bible:

■ Romans 1:16-17

■ Revelation 22:18-19

TRAVELER'S GUIDE

Finding a Passage

The Bible is divided into

■ books

(Romans is a book.)

■ chapters

(The 1 in Romans 1:16-17 is the chapter.)

■ verses

(The 16-17 in Romans 1:16-17 are the verses.)

Like most books, the Bible has a table of contents at the beginning that lists the books of the Bible and the page number where you'll find each book.

Try This:

Instead of just flipping through the Bible to find the passages you need, use the table of contents to find them. If you already know how to do this, help someone else find Romans and Revelation.



2. Once you've read the Bible passages, choose the statement that best describes the claim the Bible is making in these verses:

■ Having a Bible will get you saved.

■ You shouldn't write in your Bible.

■ The Bible is complete. It tells us all we need to know to be saved, and nothing more should be added.

Write the statement you've chosen in the blank at the top of this page.

3. Based on these passages and drawing on what you may already know, summarize what this claim means in easy-to-understand language.



FAQ

Q. Does the passage in Revelation about not adding or subtracting anything apply to the whole Bible or just to the book of Revelation?

A. John, whom God inspired to write the book of Revelation, almost certainly was thinking just of that book. After all, he could have had no idea that his letter would be bound into a volume with 65 other books and be called the HOLY BIBLE one day. But it makes sense to realize that if one part of God's inspired Word is too important to be tempered with, all of it is. So it's safe to say that the principle of this passage applies to the whole Bible.

Q. Are paraphrases of the Bible wrong?

A. We know that the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. So any time we read the Bible in any other language, someone has translated it from the original languages. A paraphrase rewords a translation to make it more clear or contemporary sounding. Some Christians stay away from all paraphrased versions of the Bible. Most Christians think that paraphrases like *The Message* or *The Living Bible* can be helpful, especially if Bible scholars have checked them to be sure they are faithful to the original languages. The point of God's command not to add to his Word is not that we must always quote the Bible word-for-word. If that were true, then we'd still be using the original languages. The point is that we are not to change the message God gives us in his Word.

Q. How do we know that the Bible has been passed down correctly?

A. People have written whole books on this subject! Evidence suggests that God has taken great care to inspire the Bible and then to make sure that it has been passed down correctly from generation to generation.

4. If you believe that claim 4 is *true*, how will it affect the way you read and study the Bible?

5. If you believe that claim 4 is *false*, how might it affect the way you read and study the Bible?



Checking It Out

Read the verses below, and check the box that best describes your own experience.

Bible Passage

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret (Proverbs 11:13).

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up (Proverbs 12:25).

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you [God] are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me (Psalm 23:4).

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

For I am convinced that . . . [nothing] in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you (James 4:7-8).

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires (James 1:19-20).

I know that nothing good lives in me. . . . For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing (Romans 7:18-19).

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom (Proverbs 11:2).

This sounds crazy to me.	I've never experienced this.	This sounds as if it could be true.	I hope this is true.	I've experienced this to be true.
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