

middle school



Lesson 1 / June 6, 2021

Excavating God's Word

By RLD Editorial Team

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 footage of rescuers digging for survivors after the rocket attacks in the Israeli and Palestinian conflict as they explore what it means to dig into God's Word.

Materials:

Internet access

Many of you may have heard about the recent conflicts happening between Israel and Palestine. In this conflict, many explosive attacks have been used, causing the destruction of cities and buildings. In the midst of the destruction, rescuers are committed to digging through the rubble and looking for survivors.

Share this video with your students [2:18; stop at 0:55].

Israel and Palestine heading for 'uncontainable' crisis, UN chief warns

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/16/un-chief-warns-israel-palestine-heading-uncontainable-crisis>

When you're finished, have a discussion with your class:

In the midst of explosions and devastation, the natural response would be to flee and get as far away from the destruction as possible. These rescuers have bravely chosen to help look for survivors.

- **Did anything surprise you about the way the rescuers were looking?** (Let students share their insights.)
- **How might having the proper tools for digging make the rescuers' job easier?** (Accept all reasonable answers. A common response might be: They could spend less energy digging and more energy on actually finding people.)

While the rescuers didn't have a lot of tools to work with, their job would be much easier and more efficient with the right tools.

- **When we study God’s Word, how is it a little like “digging” to find what’s below the surface?** (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 requires some digging that we might have to work at in order to uncover all its secrets 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:

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2 Timothy 2:15

Lesson 1

Memory Verse:

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—Psalm 119:130

Materials:

- Internet access
- Pens/pencils (1 per student)
- Prepared index cards (1 per student)
- Whiteboard and marker or screenshared document

Before class, 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 your class is meeting online, invite students to bring pens/pencils and index cards with them to class. You can assign the words or phrases above to students ahead of time.

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 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.

Take a look at your cards. At home this week, 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! (Encourage students to 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 at 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: biblegateway.com and blueletterbible.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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