

A Day Conference to introduce the Gospel for each year of the lectionary and to encourage deeper engagement with Scripture

Possible title: How might we 'do Bible better' in our parish and personal lives?

Timing: To coincide with the change of Gospel in the lectionary with a key note speaker who could offer an overview of that Gospel – a New Testament scholar with a 'popular touch'.

Concept: a day event at a convenient place within the diocese, hosted by the Bishop [that shows its importance in the life of a diocese], and consisting of:

- a key note speaker
- two 60 minute long workshops/seminars
- a short session on the helpful resources
- worship (a Service of the Word themed around Scripture)

Possible Workshops during such a day

- Going further into the Gospel – A follow on from the key note address for those wishing to dig deeper into the Gospel.
- Facing the challenge of biblical illiteracy in our churches – How do we challenge our congregations to know their Bible better? What are the barriers to greater biblical literacy? A workshop looking at a couple of the schemes that encourage a serious reading of the Bible over a protracted period of time e.g. 'Reading the whole Bible in a year' or 'Reading the New Testament and Psalms during Lent'.

Possible resources:

- **Bible Challenge** – an initiative that challenges congregations to read either the whole Bible in a year or large sections of it over Lent or Advent.
- **BIBLE360** – an outline of a day course created by the Diocese of Brisbane, Australia that explores how the Bible fits together and how we can engage more deeply with it. It began with the question: How can we motivate people to read their Bible more?
- **Good Book Club** – how might a congregation work its way through the Bible week by week?



- **The One-Year Bible Challenge** – another example of a one year Bible reading scheme.

- What might we do next Lent? – exploring possible Lent courses that encourage a deeper engagement with Scripture and not simply using it as a peg to hang other explorations on.

Possible resources: **Bible Study Courses suitable for Lent or several sessions** Also **Fullness of Life Course; How might Anglicans better interpret what we read in the Bible? A Study Guide**

- Understanding the lectionary – engaging with the rationale behind why, as Anglicans, we use a lectionary and what the lectionary says about our understanding of the Scriptures.

Possible resources: **Lectionary Story 1 & Lectionary Story 2**

- Making more of “Services of the Word” – we make very creative use of the ‘Service of the Word’ at Christmas in our Carol services and often around Passion-tide and Easter. We allow Scriptures to tell the story. Could we do this more often and explore other themes and areas of life biblically?

Possible resources: **Fresh Thinking about Services of the Word**

- Being more intentional about the place of Scripture in our worship – Scripture and scriptural images abound in our liturgies but do most of those in the pew know where they appear in Scripture? A workshop exploring the way Scripture is used in our liturgies and the effect these have on our worship.
- Studying the Gospels side by side – the Bible gives us four parallel lives of Jesus. Usually, we tend to either conflate them into one or simply look at one of these accounts. What might it be like to explore them in parallel with all the relevant texts before us at the same time; does this add a helpful extra dimension to our study of this part of the Bible?

Possible resources:

- **Information Sheet: Exploring the Gospels side by side**
- **Introduction to Exploring the gospels side by side**



- Understanding hermeneutics better - The British and Foreign Bible Society, one of the 'Bible Society family' worldwide has written a course to help members of congregations to understand hermeneutics – the way we seek to understand and interpret the Bible. While this workshop is not long enough to undertake the course it might be an opportunity to explore with others the possibility of putting on the course in a diocese, a deanery, a town or village.

Possible resources: **Making Good Sense, Reading the Bible course, 4C's – a helpful way of exploring the Bible**

- Windows into Scripture other parts of the Communion might offer us – the Anglican Communion has 85 million members in over 165 countries so it is likely that we will approach Scripture and see things within it differently. What, therefore, can we learn from others in the Communion? How might we enable this learning to take place?

Possible resources: **people from other parts of the Communion who might be living in your locality or visiting. Also there are eight 'windows' [Regional Reflections] into how different parts of the Communion see the Bible in their life:**

- **South Africa**
- **East Africa**
- **United Kingdom**
- **North America**
- **Australia**
- **South Sudan**
- **Cuba**
- **Hong Kong and the Philippines**
- **Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia**
- **Christ Church, Tarry Town, USA**
- **Scottish Episcopal Church**



A possible timetable for such a day

9.30am	Registration and coffee
10.00am	Welcome and introduction to the day by the Bishop
10.15am	Keynote address on the Gospel for the year – a theological and biblical overview of the Gospel for the coming year.
11.00am	Coffee
11.30am	Workshops 1 – from the list above adding others that might add to the theme of the day. Ask workshop leaders to run them twice asking participants to pick two they will attend.
12.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm	Workshops 2
2.30pm	A session outlining the kinds of material and resources that are available for use in any parish. Many of these are outlined above in the ‘possible resources’ for each workshop.
3.00pm observers	Reflections on the day given by the Bishop and/or other
3.30pm	Service of the Word taking as its theme ‘The Word of God’ [see possible outline below]



Possible Worship Outline

Your Word is a light to my path

The word of God is living and active.
It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
All is open and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we give account.
We confess our sins in penitence and faith.

May your loving mercy come to me, O Lord, and your salvation according to your word: Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Your word is a lantern to my feet and a light to my path:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

O let your mercy come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight:

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Psalm 119: 105-112

Silence

Reading: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Silence

The Word of life which was from the beginning we proclaim to you.
The darkness is passing away
and the true light is already shining;
the Word of life which was from the beginning. That which we heard, which we saw
with our eyes,
and touched with our hands, we proclaim to you.
For our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Word of life which was from the beginning we proclaim to you.

We pray for strength to follow Jesus.
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant,'
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Unless you change
and become humble like little children,
you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.'
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.



Jesus said: 'Be merciful as your Father is merciful;
love your enemies and do good to them.'
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Love one another, as I love you; there is no greater love than this,
to lay down your life for your friends.'
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Go to people everywhere and make them my disciples,
and I will be with you always, to the end of time.'
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.

God of mercy,
you know us and love us and hear our prayer:
keep us in the eternal fellowship of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

Almighty God,
we thank you for the gift of your holy word. May it be a lantern to our feet,
a light upon our paths,
and a strength to our lives.
Take us and use us
to love and serve all people
in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

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