



LESSON

08

IF PEOPLE WROTE THE BIBLE, WHY DO WE CALL IT *GOD'S* WORD?

TODAY'S
BIBLE BASE

**Just for
Teachers**

Bold Bible Truth
THE BIBLE IS TRUE.

(2 Timothy 3:16)

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.”

(2 Timothy 3:16)

• **Prophecies in the Bible are inspired and initiated by God.**

2 Peter 1:20-21

Create a Bold Classroom Environment

Each week you reassure your kids they matter—and they do! They do, and their thoughts and feelings do. But that doesn't mean their thoughts—or yours—matter more than the truth shared in the Bible. There will come times you need to gently confront a preteen whose thinking is clearly contrary to a biblical worldview. Tread carefully; invite your preteen to consider what God says rather than delivering a lecture on how the preteen is wrong. And in those moments when your *own* thinking is challenged by Scripture, say so. Model what it's like to let God transform one's thinking.

Pray for Your Preteens

Preteens are constantly scanning the culture for heroes to emulate. Ask God to give your preteens wisdom about where to find inspiration.

Jot your prayer below:



What your preteens think of the Bible is foundational to their faith. No, it's not the only place they can learn about God, but it's one of the clearest. Helping your kids understand and accept that the Bible is God-inspired is a gift that will bless them their entire lives.

THIS LESSON AT A GLANCE



Section	What Preteens Do	Supplies	Easy Prep
Begin Boldly (about 10 minutes)	Enjoy a snack, review BE BOLD Values, play a game, and report on Mystery Missions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BE BOLD Values poster • paper wads • trash can • snacks • whiteboard or poster board • markers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wad up enough paper for preteens to play basketball. • Place a trash can or two where kids can throw paper wads at them.
Game (about 15 minutes)	Play Mirror, Mirror, on the Floor.		
Question of the Week (about 20 minutes)	Explore what <i>inspiration</i> means and what the Bible says about being inspired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bold Action Student Books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tear out pages 31-33 from Bold Action Student Books.
Bold Action (about 10 minutes)	Identify abilities and ask God to provide inspiration for using those abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bold Action Student Books • scissors • markers • tape • plate or box 	
Bold Blessing (about 5 minutes)	Receive a prayer blessing and a Mystery Mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mystery Mission Cards • Mystery Mission Stickers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fold and seal a Mystery Mission Card for each preteen.

BEGIN BOLDLY (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

Arrival Activity

Greet preteens warmly as they arrive. Have healthy snack stuff on a table.

Have paper wads and trash cans available for kids to play basketball. Challenge kids to shoot each basket one step farther away from the last one they made.

As you're ready to move on, remove the paper wads and trash can from view.

Welcome Kids

Ask a willing reader to read aloud the BE BOLD Values from the BE BOLD Values poster:

You're accepted just as you are.

We respect each other's thoughts and struggles.

We're all in this together.

God is here, ready to be your friend because you matter!

Say: **When I say you matter, I mean it. And you matter not just to me but also to God. You *especially* matter to God, and that's one reason God has given us the Bible—so we can see just how much we matter and why.**

So thanks for being here—I feel like I'm in a room full of VIPs!

Mystery Mission Reports

Say: **Before we dig into today's topic, I'd like to hear how your last Mystery Mission turned out. I'll report in first.**

My last Mystery Mission was...

Share a brief story of how you followed through with a bold mission and what happened. Then ask kids to partner up and share with one another.

When they've finished talking, ask if anyone would like to share with the whole group what they talked about in their pairs.

Question Collection

Say: **Thank you! I love hearing about your Mystery Missions!**

When you walk out today, you'll have another Mystery Mission—and another adventure we can talk about when we get together again.

Today we're tackling this question:

Write "If people wrote the Bible, why do we call it God's Word?" on the whiteboard.

Say: **The Bible is often called "God's Word," but *people* actually wrote down what's in the Bible. So, which is it: God's Word, or the words of people?**

I think that's a fair question. If God wrote the Bible, we have to take it seriously for sure. But if it's just good advice from people, we can sort of take it or leave it, right?

What are *your* questions about God writing the Bible? Shout them out and I'll write them, or you can come up to the board and write your question yourself.

Gather kids' questions on the board. Be sure to have enough markers so preteens can write their own questions.

Say: **Thanks. This is a place it's okay to ask questions—whether they're about the Bible or anything else. As we go through the next hour, let's see if what we discover sheds light on any of our questions.**

Today we'll focus on the Bible, but first, a quick game of Mirror, Mirror, on the Floor!



PRETEEN POINTER

Few people enjoy being told what to do and, depending on how the Bible has been presented to your preteens, they may think of it as God's Big Book of Rules. If that's the case, small wonder they're not fans. When you speak of the Bible, speak about how it's the story of God reaching out to your preteens. Invite them into the *story* of the Bible and help them find their place in that story.



PRETEEN POINTER

Since not every preteen comes each week, let kids talk about their last Mystery Mission—no matter how long ago it was.



GAME (ABOUT 15 MINUTES)

Mirror, Mirror, on the Floor

Form kids into pairs and have partners stand facing one another. Spread pairs out around the room. Give partners 10 seconds to decide whose birthday comes first in the year.

Explain the goal of the game is for one person in each pair—the early birthday person—to do actions that the other person will then mirror as exactly as possible. If the early birthday person jumps, so will the partner. If the early birthday person waves with a right hand, the partner will wave with a left hand.

The idea is that whoever is doing actions or making funny faces should feel like he or she is looking into a mirror.

Consider teaming with a volunteer to demonstrate what you're asking pairs to do.

Say: **Got it? Take 30 seconds, and let's see how this goes!**

After 30 seconds, have pairs reverse roles.

Have kids switch partners and then repeat the process.

Say: **Thanks for being such good sports! It was fun to watch you in action!**

Here's a quick question for us as a whole group:

❓ **What helped you do a good job being a mirror?**

Accept several answers from preteens.

Say: **Thanks! To be a good mirror, you have to follow someone's example. That person leads...and you follow.**

In a moment I'll ask you to turn to your last partner and talk about this:

❓ **Tell about a time you followed someone's example or did what they told you to do, and it got you in trouble.**

As for me, one of those times was...

Briefly share an age-appropriate story.

Say: **That's my story—what about yours? You and your partner take turns sharing your stories. You'll have about a minute each.**

After kids share, ask if anyone's willing to quickly share a story with the whole group that they shared with a partner. After a story or two is shared, move on.

Say: **Tell about a time you followed someone's example or did what they told you to do, and it turned out well.**

After kids share, ask for a story or two be shared with the whole group. After several stories, move on.

Say: **Thanks for sharing those good and not-so-good examples!**



PRETEEN POINTER

Stories you share with preteens get their undivided attention, so choose stories carefully. Make sure they're on-point, age-appropriate, and model the level of vulnerability you want to see as kids share.

When you follow someone’s example or do what they tell you to do, they’ve inspired you. They’ve shaped you because you’re doing what they’ve shown you to do.

Our question today is if that’s what happened with the Bible.

Were the people who wrote the Bible mirroring what God told them to say—following his lead—or just writing good stuff?

Let’s grapple with that question awhile.



**IF PEOPLE
WROTE THE
BIBLE, WHY
DO WE CALL IT
GOD’S WORD?**



QUESTION OF THE WEEK (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Distribute pages 31-32 from the Bold Action Student Books to each preteen.

Ask kids to each grab a pen or pencil and turn to the “What I Did on My Summer Vacation” page. Announce that they’ll write what happened on a summer vacation, but it’s not their summer vacation—it’s yours.

Their job is to listen closely, and then you’ll give kids two minutes to write what they heard, working individually. Stress that penmanship and spelling don’t count—they just need to get your story down as accurately as possible.

Here’s what you’ll say:

Say: **You may not know that I went scuba diving this past summer. My friend [insert friend’s name] and I took a bouncy, 12-hour flight to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and rented a boat for three days.**

We had two guides, Jasper and Jake, but we didn’t really need them. We just strapped on our oxygen tanks, made sure our masks fit snugly, and dove in.

We’re both Dive Instructor Certified through the National Association of Underwater Instructors, so we weren’t worried about getting wet.

It was incredible! There were angelfish, butterfly fish, and even clownfish!

Sharks, too, but they didn’t come near us, and that’s good because all we had to defend ourselves were our kung fu moves, and those don’t work very well underwater.

And did I mention parrotfish? They’re beautiful, sort of shimmery.

Anyway, it was a *wonderful* vacation except for the day I had a cold. Sneezing in your mask when you’re scuba diving is gross!

Tell kids they’ll have two minutes to write down what happened on your summer vacation. Let them know when a minute has passed.

Once two minutes have flown by—and they will—ask for pens and pencils down, and then have several kids read aloud what they’ve written. Be affirming of their efforts.

Say: **Nice job! A couple of questions for us as a whole group:**



PRETEEN POINTER

When you encourage thoughtful discussion, you're engaging both kids' reasoning *and* emotions—so what they discover sticks!

❓ **Would you say the story you just wrote is *your* story or *my* story? And why do you answer as you do?**

If all kids weigh in with one answer, ask if anyone can argue for the other side. Why might someone be able to say it's your story (you lived it) or their own story (they wrote it)?

When the discussion wraps up, ask with a show of hands how many kids included “angelfish” in what they wrote. How many included “Jasper and Jake”? How many mentioned “sharks”? How many mentioned your flight was “bouncy”? How many included the “Eiffel Tower”?

Say: **It sounds as if no one wrote down all the same details. But none of you added stuff you just made up, either, like me finding the Eiffel Tower underwater in Australia.**

Here's a question for us as a whole group:

❓ **Since no one got *all* the details right, would you say your stories are true or not?**

Encourage debate in discussing this question. The stories *are* true because what's there is accurate, just incomplete. The stories *aren't* true because they're not a complete account.

Say: **You just did what the writers of the Bible did. You wrote what you were told to write. You were inspired—by me—to tell my story. The Bible writers were inspired—by God—to tell God's story.**

And, like the Bible writers, you filtered that story through your own experiences and feelings.

The people God inspired to write the Bible weren't all the same.

David started out as a shepherd, so when he wrote praise songs that became some of the Psalms, he included a lot of outdoor images; that's where shepherds spend their time.

Luke, who wrote one of the Gospels, was a non-Jewish doctor and wrote for a largely non-Jewish audience.

Paul was a trained Jewish teacher and scholar, and you can tell when you read his writing.

They all wrote what God inspired them to write, but their writing reflects their own insights and personalities. They notice different details than another writer might notice.

It was the same for you. You wrote down different details, but you were *all* inspired as you wrote.

Some people wonder if the Bible is really God's Word because in places the details don't match. Those people often point to two passages we'll hear now.

Have two willing readers read aloud Angel Story 1 and Angel Story 2 on page 32 of the Bold Action Student Book as the rest of your preteens follow along.

❓ **What details match—and don't match?**

After kids comment, continue.

- ❓ **What might explain why some of the details don't match in these two accounts of people coming to Jesus' empty tomb?**

After kids comment, continue.

- ❓ **How do details about angels change or not change Jesus rising from the dead and his tomb being empty?**

After kids weigh in, continue.

Say: **How many angels were or weren't at the tomb doesn't change the truth Mark and Luke were inspired to write: Jesus died and came back to life! While you have your Bold Action Student Book pages handy, let's look at a couple more passages.**

Since we know THE BIBLE IS TRUE, let's just ask the Bible if it's inspired. Is it telling God's story the way God wants it told, or is it just telling nice stories?

Ask a willing reader to read aloud the two "God's Words...or Not?" passages on page 32 of the Bold Action Student Book.

- ❓ **If the Bible is inspired by God, and the story it tells is God's story, would you say the Bible is God's words, people's words, or a combination of both? What do you think—and why?**

Allow several answers from kids.

BOLD ACTION (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

Say: **Though God used a lot of people to write different parts of the Bible, those people had a couple of things in common. They all listened to God and then let God use their writing ability to share his story.**

God still gives people abilities. He's given each of you an ability or two—and you can use them to share God's story.

Set out the scissors, markers, and tape, and give each child page 33 of the Bold Action Student Book. Ask kids to each cut out and fill in both nametags and then tape one of the nametags on their shirts. You fill out a set of nametags, too! Allow time for kids to read aloud what's on their nametags to the whole group.

Ask kids to form pairs and for partners to exchange their second nametags with their partners.

Say: **Maybe you sing. Or write. Maybe you do art or crafts. Sports might be your thing, or you enjoy learning new stuff.**





PRETEEN POINTER

Preteens may not believe they *have* any abilities; they know there are better singers or dancers than themselves. This activity of talking about what's on nametags will affirm your preteens. What preteens enjoy doing and that comes easily—that's an ability. And no matter what it is, God can use it!

Look at what your partner has written on his or her nametag. Those are clues about your partner's abilities. What your partner *enjoys* doing...*is good at doing*...wants to get *better* at doing—all clues about abilities!

Have preteens talk about this:

- ❓ **How might God use the abilities you wrote on your nametag to help share his story with the world?**

If you aren't sure, maybe your partner can help you think of something.

Allow kids time to talk.

After kids talk, point out the plate or box you've placed in a visible spot.

- Say: **People God inspired to write the Bible listened to God and then faithfully wrote down what they understood him to say.**

When you listen to God and offer him your abilities, he can inspire you to share his story, too.

If that's something you're willing to do, then do this...

Walk to the plate or box and place your nametag in it.

- Say: **Drop your extra nametag—the one listing some of your abilities—here, as a sign of your offering those abilities to God. As a sign of your willingness to let God inspire you to use your abilities to share his story.**

That may mean, if you do art, you'll draw pictures of what God has done for you. If you sing, you'll sing songs of praise to God—like David did.

If you're good in science, you'll use it to help heal people, like Luke healed people.

I don't know how God will use your ability, but I know this: When you let God inspire you, like he inspired the Bible writers, you'll have an adventure.

You don't have to bring your nametag here and drop it in, but if you're willing, do it now.

Allow time for kids to respond and then return to their places.

- Say: **Please sit facing your partner. I want to pray for you both.**

Pause.

- Pray: **God, thank you for all the abilities you've given my friends.**

Please show my friends how to use their abilities to share your story.

Inspire them—and inspire me.

In Jesus' name, amen.



BOLD BLESSING (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Pray

Ask preteens to gather around the plate or box where they dropped the nametags and to hold their hands in front of them, palms up, as you pray.

Pray: **God, I thanked you for giving us all abilities—and I'm still thankful.**

Help us listen to you, God.

Help us be inspired and be faithful in giving our abilities to you to use.

Thank you that we're part of your story, too.

Serving you is such good fun. Give us hearts to do it more and more.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Send-Off Cheer

Have kids stay in a circle and reach over the plate or box so their hands are joined, like a sports team. Tell them that when you finish the Bold Blessing, they'll raise their hands and shout "Let's be bold!"

Say this Bold Blessing: **A Bold Blessing for you to carry home with you today: Because **THE BIBLE IS TRUE** and inspired, may you let it sink deeply into your hearts. May you let the Bible shape your thoughts. May it challenge you, change you, charge you up for the adventure of boldly following Jesus your whole lives. Say it with me: *Let's be bold!***

Mystery Mission

Say: **We discovered today that **THE BIBLE IS TRUE** and inspired—and that God can inspire us, too.**

Keep that in mind as you take on your Mystery Mission this week!

I'll now give you a sealed card that contains your top-secret mission. Don't open it until tomorrow.

We'll talk about what happened the next time we get together.

Distribute a Mystery Mission Card to each preteen. Take your own card home and complete the challenge, too!



