

**Objective**

The confirmands know the structure of the Holy Bible and its value. They can make use of it for the benefit of their personal life of faith.

**Contents**

The Bible is the basis for the teachings of the New Apostolic Church.  
The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Bible.  
The significance of the Bible for us; its role in our daily life.  
The structure of the Bible.

CNAC-QA 12–27

**Hint**

If according to the yearly plan for confirmation instruction two sessions are scheduled for this lesson then all of the material is to be covered. On the other hand if only one session is available everything marked with a dotted line in the left margin may be omitted.

**1** Lead-in**A student tells (homework)**

*The treasurer from Ethiopia*

At the time of the early Apostles there was a man who was the treasurer of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. He was reading from the scrolls of Isaiah the prophet, but did not understand what he was reading. Philip had been sent by an angel of God and heard the treasurer reading from the book of this prophet. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The treasurer replied, “How can I when there is no one to instruct me?” Philip began with what the man had been reading and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to him. When they came to some water the treasurer said, “Look! There is some water! What is there to prevent me from being baptised?” Philip baptised him and the treasurer went happily on his way (cf. Acts 8: 26–39).

**2** The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Bible**A student reads aloud (homework)**

To show them that the Bible is not always easy to understand the confirmands are to put themselves in the treasurer’s position. Ask one of the confirmands to read Isaiah 53: 4–9 aloud.

**Hint**

The texts in Isaiah and Acts do not correspond word for word. The reason for this is that the text in Isaiah is taken from the Hebrew language. The text in Acts however, was translated from the Greek. Here the confirmation teacher can point out to the confirmands that there are linguistic differences among the existing editions and translations of the Bible. For the most part however, the meaning remains the same.

**Explain**

The treasurer was interested and was reading the Scriptures, but he could not understand what he was reading. Philip on the other hand was able to explain

to him that here the prophet had described the Lord Jesus' sacrifice and death.

**Ask**

**Why did Philip understand the Scriptures whereas the treasurer did not?**

**Listen to answers and supplement**

We must realise that the human intellect is not capable of fully understanding divine truths (cf. 1 Corinthians 1: 18–21). Only the Holy Spirit is able to explain God's plan of salvation, His wisdom, and His will through those sent by Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 2: 10). Through the Holy Spirit Philip was able to explain the Scriptures.

**Explain**

Holy Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit. God's will—and thus also the Holy Scriptures given by Him—can only be interpreted in all its depth through the activity of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2: 10–12). As "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4: 1), the Apostles are also commissioned to interpret Holy Scripture.

### **3** The significance of the Bible for us; its role in our daily life

**Ask**

**Are we able to understand the Bible?  
Of what benefit for us is reading the Bible?**

**Listen to answers and supplement**

- The Holy Spirit can help us understand much of what we read in the Bible. When we do not understand something or are not quite sure we can always ask our bearers of blessing.
- By reading the Bible we can increase our understanding and knowledge concerning God's plan of salvation.
- God can give us an answer to a question through a passage from the Bible.
- Through a passage from the Bible God can comfort us (e.g. Psalm 23), provide new strength (e.g. Ephesians 3: 14–17), and show us that He loves us (e.g. John 14: 21).

### **4** The structure of the Bible

The confirmands are to learn to use the Bible. Its structure is explained in this section.

**Ask**

**Which books of the Bible are you familiar with?**

**Elaborate on answers through further questions**

- Which books describe the Lord Jesus' life?
- Where is the Israelites' journey through the desert described?
- Which prophets do you know?
- Which of the Apostles has written many letters and to whom are they addressed?
- Where in the Bible can we read the story of Abraham?

## Hint

To show the confirmands the structure of the Bible they should try to arrange the answers to these questions according to the following format. If possible the confirmation teacher should prepare this table before the lesson using a sheet of paper or the board. The confirmands are to realise that the Bible comprises various types of books: historical books, doctrinal books, and prophetic books. Through a few examples they are to learn where the books are to be included.

Old Testament	New Testament
17 historical books	5 historical books
5 doctrinal books	21 doctrinal books
17 prophetic books	1 prophetic book
15 apocryphal books	

## Workbook exercise

The confirmands open up their workbooks to pages 14 and 15. They check whether they answered the questions correctly. They should then read all of the names of the various books of the Bible.

## Explain

The **Old Testament** comprises

- the story of creation,
- the development and history of the people of Israel, as well as
- doctrinal and prophetic books dating from the time before Christ's birth.

The **New Testament** contains the records which have been handed down concerning the

- mission and activity of Jesus Christ and His Apostles,
- Apostles' letters to the congregations of the early church, as well as the
- Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The later writings of the Old Testament contained in many editions of the Bible are also called **Apocrypha** (hidden [Scriptures]). These are Judaic writings that came into being between the third and the first century BC. In terms of content, they constitute an important binding agent between the Old and New Testament. Significant convictions of faith of the New Testament are prefigured in these writings. In the New Apostolic Church, these later writings of the Old Testament are just as binding for faith as the other canonical writings of the Old Testament. In the New King James Version of the Bible, the Apocrypha are situated between the Old and New Testaments.

*The Bible – the basis of our faith*

The Bible relates accounts from the past, brings comfort and knowledge into the present, and reveals the future. Everything that is taught has its basis in Holy Scripture. Nothing of this doctrine can contradict Holy Scripture.

*The significance of the Apostles and the sacraments*

Insights into God's plan of salvation and the doctrine of Jesus Christ are important for us. The necessity of the Apostle ministry, the dispensation of the sacraments, the proclamation of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and the forgiveness of sins are attested in the Bible.

As a practical exercise for this section the confirmands are to find and read aloud a few Bible passages. The confirmation teacher will have selected these in advance.

**A student  
reads aloud**

The following are recommended examples:

Genesis 39: 9	"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"
Psalms 23: 1	"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."
Isaiah 2: 2	"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it."
Matthew 24: 42	"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming."
1 Timothy 6: 12	"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life."
Revelation 3: 11	"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."

**Hint**

The purpose of this exercise is for the confirmands to know where they can find a particular chapter in the Bible. For this reason the Bible passages should be chosen from different books.

**The main points**

**I also want to ...** ... make use of my Bible!

**Homework**

The confirmands do the exercise on page 15 of their workbook.

## Teacher's solutions for the homework:

### Answer the following questions!

1. In which books are the accounts about the Lord Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection found?

*In the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*

2. Which book covers the events following Jesus Christ's resurrection and the activity of the first Apostles?

*The Acts of the Apostles*

3. Which verses in Jonah 2 describe how Jonah prayed to God in the belly of the fish?

*Verses 3-10*

4. Which events are referenced in the following Bible passages?

John 14: 3

*Christ's return*

1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17

*The transformation of the living and the resurrection of the dead when the Lord Jesus returns*

Acts 1: 9-11

*The Lord Jesus' ascension and the promise of His return*

Revelation 19: 7

*The marriage of the Lamb*

5. Which men of God are mentioned in the following Bible passages?

Genesis 39: 9

*Joseph*

Exodus 19: 24

*Moses*

Judges 7: 19-22

*Gideon*

1 Kings 19: 5-8

*Elijah*

6. Read Revelation 1: 1-3 and answer the following questions:

Who received the Revelation?

*John*

Whose revelation is it?

*Jesus Christ's*

Who delivered it?

*One of His angels*

What does this book refer to?

*Events that will happen soon*