

How to Use the Bible to Study

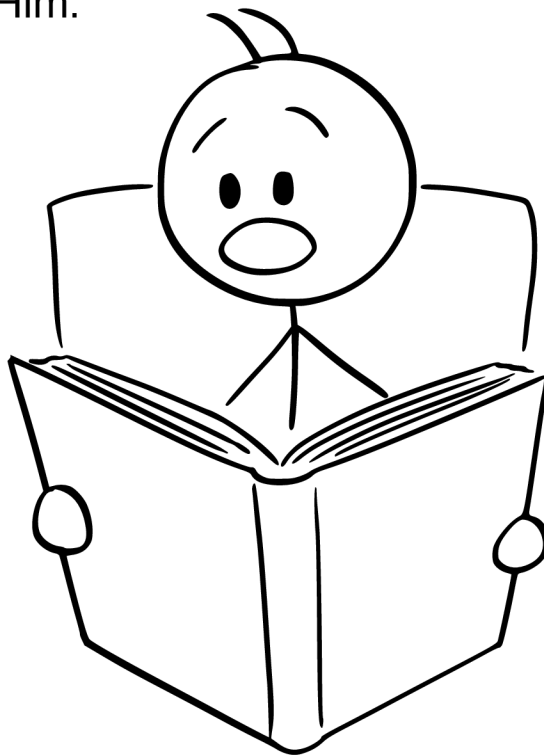
the Bible:

To study the Bible using the Bible itself, you act like a detective looking for clues left by the author. Instead of guessing what a verse means, you let other parts of the Bible explain it to you.

You can use the three main tools built right into most Bibles to do this: Cross-References, Context, and The Big Story Line.

Tool 1: Cross-References (The Hyperlinks)

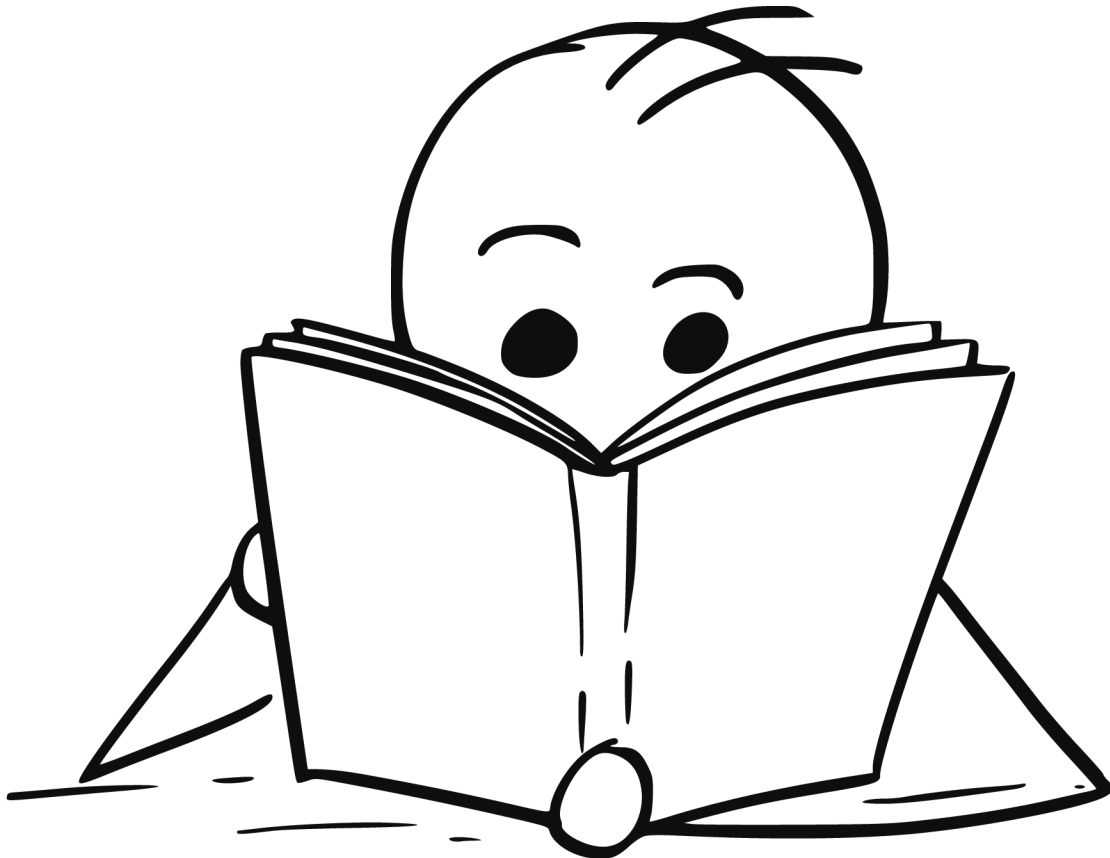
- What it is: Tiny letters or numbers next to verses that point to other pages in the Bible.
- How it works: It connects matching topics, phrases, or promises across different centuries.
- Example: You read Proverbs 3:5, which says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart." Next to it, you spy a tiny letter pointing to Psalm 37:5, which says, "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him." By letting the Psalm explain the Proverb, you learn that trusting God means actively giving your daily plans over to Him.



How to Use the Bible to Study the Bible:

Tool 2: Context (The Zoom-Out)

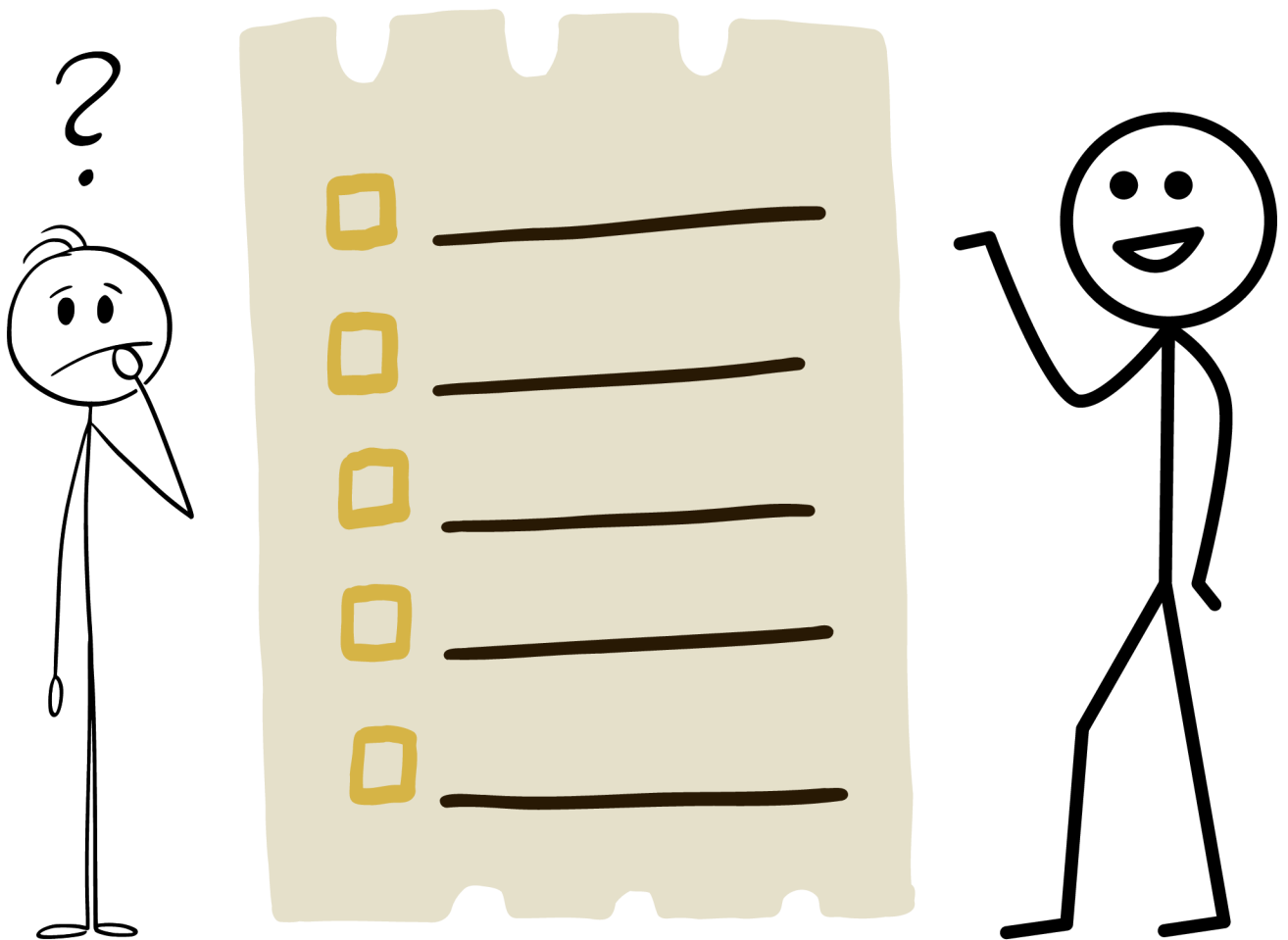
- What it is: Checking the verses before and after a single verse to see what is actually happening.
- How it works: Reading a single sentence by itself can make you miss the point, like reading just one text message out of a long conversation.
- Example: You read Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." You might think this means you can instantly ace a math test without studying. But if you zoom out and read verses 11 and 12, Paul is actually talking about being happy while being hungry and stuck in prison. The Bible explains that "all things" means surviving tough times, not getting superpowers.



How to Use the Bible to Study the Bible:

Tool 3: The Big Story Line (The Echo)

- What it is: Finding how the New Testament (the second half of the Bible) explains the Old Testament (the first half).
- How it works: The New Testament acts like a spoiler or an answer key to the mysteries in the Old Testament.
- Example: You read Genesis 22, where Abraham is told to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, on a mountain. It feels confusing and intense. But then you look at John 3:16 in the New Testament: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." The New Testament explains that the Old Testament story was a giant picture-prophecy pointing forward to Jesus on the cross.



Understanding my Testimony:

This means recognizing how God is working in your life. It is your personal story of your relationship with Jesus. In Middle School, your testimony does not need to be dramatic to be powerful.

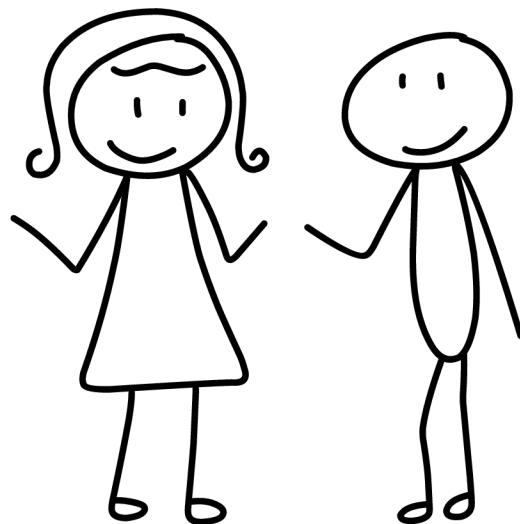
Here is an explanation of how to be aware of your testimony, written as a fill-in-the-blank exercise to help you think through your own story.

Understanding Your Story

A testimony is simply sharing what your life was like before knowing Jesus (or before *making your faith your own*), how you encountered Him, and how your life is changing now. Even if you grew up in church, your testimony is unique because it is about your personal decision to follow Him.



Understanding my Testimony:



Part 1: My Foundation

1. I first started learning about Jesus from

2. Before I really understood my faith, I used to struggle a lot with

Part 2: My Connection

3. A specific moment or time when Jesus became real to me was
_____ .

4. During that time, I realized that I needed Jesus because
_____ .

5. I chose to trust Him and follow Him because
_____ .

Part 3: My Life Today

6. Since deciding to follow Jesus, I notice He is changing my attitude toward _____ .

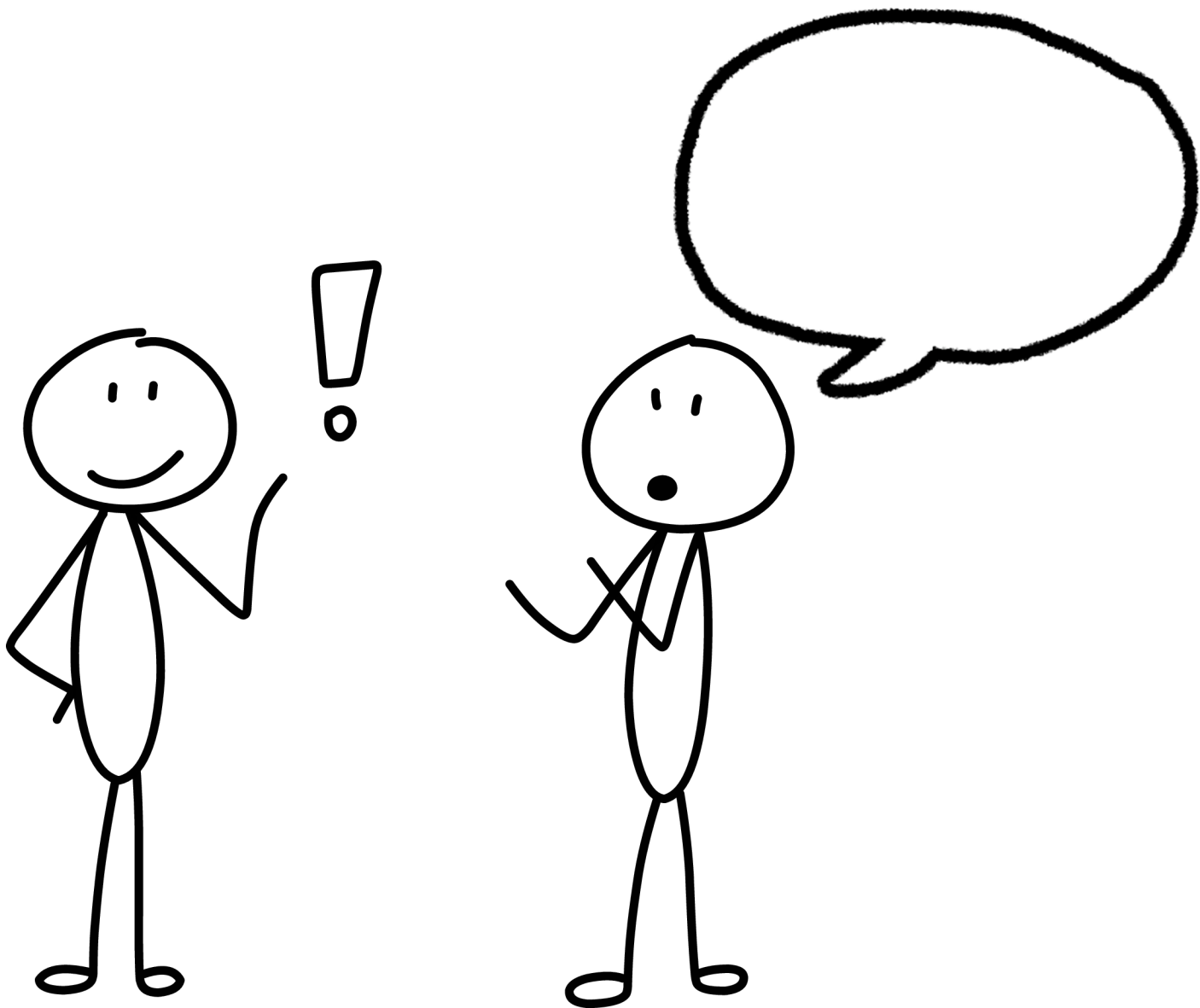
7. When I face hard times at school or with friends now, I pray about
_____ .

8. One way I can show Jesus' love to my classmates this week is by
_____ .

Understanding my Testimony:

How to Grow More Aware Daily

- Notice small changes: Look at how your reactions change when you are frustrated.
- Keep a prayer journal: Write down prayers to see how God answers them later.
- Talk about it: Share your daily faith highs and lows with a trusted Christian friend or mentor.



Making your faith your own as at your age means moving from a "borrowed" faith (what your parents or church taught you) to a personal friendship with Jesus. It is about actively choosing to get to know Him and applying His teachings to your own life.

Personalize Your Faith with Jesus

Fill in the blanks below to see how you can make your faith personal and grow your relationship with Jesus.

Have Real Conversations: "I will talk to God like a _____ every single day."

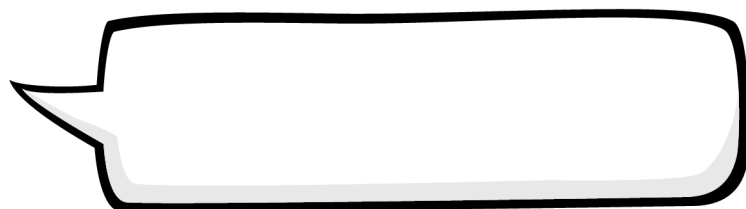
Read for Yourself: "I will read the _____ to learn exactly what Jesus says and did."

Take Action: "I will show my faith by _____ others, the way Jesus taught us to."

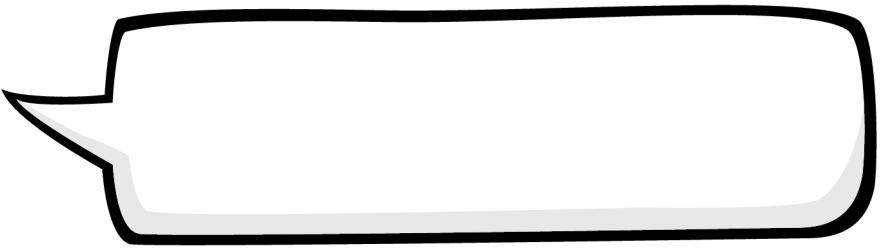
Choose Your Circle: "I will surround myself with _____ who encourage my relationship with Jesus."

Ask Big Questions: "I don't have to pretend to know everything; it's okay to ask _____ when I have doubts."

FAITH



FAITH



Perspectives on Personal Faith

Hearing how friends and young believers have journeyed through their own awareness of faith can provide great encouragement and perspective.

“God was with me, I knew He was close when the days were at their worst. And I knew He was listening, and I knew that He cared about me. *That's when my faith became my own.*”

