









FOLLOWERS – LESSON PLAN

Age	Term	Mod.	Module Theme	Module Title	Lesson Number and Title
17	1	1	FAITH	SCRIPTURE	75: Biblical Interpretation

Use the syllabus framework to complete above. Infants: 20 minutes; Juniors: 30 minutes; Middles & Seniors: 45 minutes (Mod. = Module Number, Module Theme - in the heading, Module Title - uppercase in the cell, Lesson Num [NO. column] and Title)

							
Verbal V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Logical L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Spatial S	Kinaesthetic K	Musical M	Intra - personal P1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inter - personal P2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural N

Tick the appropriate box(es) above [copy this:] for the modes of learning being used in this session.

Prayer: “Shine into our hearts, O loving master, the pure light of your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds to an understanding of your Gospel teachings. Amen”

Starter: Share some bad ways of trying to interpret the Bible (eg., as a personal oracle, by taking verses out of context, by treating everything read as either literal or symbolic without reference to the type of text etc.)

Learning objectives:

1. To understand the Bible as the “Church’s Library” – the key to interpretation lies in the prayerful insights of the saints and fathers of the Church. (Refer back to the session on the formation of the canon – the Church always has an active role in her own sacred texts).
2. To understand both the “use” and “abuse” of the biblical text in interpretation and application.

Core Activities and Learning

Explanation from the Leader as to why we need to consult the Fathers when interpreting the Bible and how their own methods of interpretation varied.

Some Church Fathers emphasise the straight forward historical or even literal meaning of the text, (the Antiochian School). Others emphasise deeper more symbolic meanings – typological and allegorical - (the Alexandrian School).

Discuss ... What are the dangers of sticking to one of these two approaches rather than trying to apply both?

Example: Origen of Alexandria, in a passage that was later quoted by St Gregory the Theologian, made the following remarks concerning the account of Creation in Genesis:

“For who that has understanding will suppose that the first, and second, and third day, and the evening and the morning, existed without a sun, and moon, and stars? And that the first day was, as it were, also without a sky? And who is so foolish as to suppose that God, after the manner of a husbandman, planted a paradise in Eden, towards the east, and placed in it a tree of life, visible and palpable, so that one tasting of the fruit by the bodily teeth obtained life? And again, that one was a partaker of good and evil by chewing what was taken from the tree? And if God is said to walk in the paradise in the evening, and Adam to hide himself under a tree, I do not suppose that anyone doubts that these things figuratively indicate certain mysteries, the history having taken place in appearance, and not literally. ”

Where do we need symbolical meanings in the Scriptures? Where would these be out of place?

Share some other examples. Use the bibles but you may have to guide the students to some examples, (eg., the Book of Job – did God really have a conversation with Satan? Who was there to record it? What sort of a book is Job then if not simple unadorned history?)

Resources: Bibles; Note Paper.

Review: Scriptural interpretation is not a matter of person interpretation unguided by study and reference to the Fathers. Sensible answers and conclusions only come from consulting and researching widely.

Follow Up: Research “Sola Scriptura” [a Protestant doctrine]. Why is this not acceptable from an Orthodox point of view?