

LIVING
THE WORD

CARIBBEAN BIBLE LESSONS



Leaders

Adults • Ages 19 and Up • Learner Guide

May • June • July • August • 2024





Adult • Age 19 and Up • Learner Guide

The learning activities suggested in this book are used as part of the teaching plan provided in the *Adult Teacher Guide*. It is strongly recommended that each church provides a copy of the *Adult Learner Guide* for each adult and adult teacher.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Dear Brothers and Sisters,



It is certainly a privilege to continue our partnership on another inspiring adventure through the pages of the **Caribbean Bible Lessons Bible Leaders Learner Guide** for adults. This period of study comprises **May–August 2024**. Amidst our focus on God's word, we can't help but marvel at His creation, particularly the changing seasons which serve to bring renewed hope and appreciation for our Father's loving care.

We greet summer with expectations concerning the abundance of fruits in our territories which we call home. The delicious mangoes during the period and the anticipation of holidays, leisure and trips within and outside our countries. Our expectations are moderated by changes in the temperature and the required responses to ensure our wellbeing. As Christians, we appreciate caring for the whole person, hence while our spiritual health is paramount, paying attention to physical well being is also of importance. So I encourage you to enjoy the bounties of summer, while pursuing activities to mitigate the ill effects of temperature and over indulgence during the season.

In addition to leisure, summer provides opportunities for engaging in spiritually rewarding activities. Many churches have Conferences and Retreats specifically targetting men, women and young adults. I encourage you to avail yourselves of the opportunities to delve deeper into some conceptst which you find challenging.

Set aside some time to reconnect with organisations, for example Children's Homes or other instutions that can benefit from your involvement and expertise. Be reminded that just being present, offering words of encouragement and engaging in acts of kindness can bring hope to individuals in need. Persons who are not engaged in full time employment may also consider setting up activities for children in the neighbourhood who are left at home without proper supervision. Reach out to members of your group who have not yet returned to 'in person' worship, and those who attend infrequently. Be sensitive to the various challenges which some persons may be experiencing.

Sometimes by focusing on the challenges which come with serving others, we choose not to act. We justify our inaction, convinced that it is easier to "stay out of people's business". However, all that is required of us, is that our efforts, however great or small, should contribute towards bringing God's Kingdom on Earth

In this edition of **CBL Bible Leaders Learner Guide, Unit 1** is titled, **The Trinity—A Divine Mystery**, and guides us into better understanding the relationship between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. **Unit 2** invites us on a journey through the book of Joel, as we face the reality of **A Time for Judgement**. **Unit 3** examines **Grappling with Grief** and prepares us for dealing with the death of loved ones as well as taking stock of the reality that death will face us one day. By using the Second and Third Epistles of John and supporting Scripture, **Unit 4**, teaches us how to be **Grounded in God** and His ways.

May God continue to bless you abundantly!

Yours in the Lord's service,

Joan M-Mars

MEET OUR WRITERS

UNIT ONE: Zoë Simpson, Jamaica

During her high school years, Dr Simpson became aware of her Christian responsibility to help others to find Christ and to grow in Him. Since then, she has used her writing and teaching skills to disciple others. The guiding Scripture verse of her life is Ezra 7:10, because it confirms and fuels her passion of studying and sharing the Word. She has served as the Christian Education Director of her denomination. Dr Simpson is the Executive Director of a service organisation for teen mothers.



UNIT TWO: Derek Archer, Guyana



Mr Archer is a Sunday School teacher of adults in George-town, Guyana. He fervently desires to see spiritual growth in the lives of people with whom he works and enjoys observing the ways God works in the life of believers. He is a retired Lecturer in French, Modern Languages Division at the University of Guyana. Mr Archer is convinced that being a writer of CBL has aided his spiritual growth by helping him to further affirm and live out his Christian principles. Mr Archer is an elder at his church and is engaged in the church's praise, theological training and administration ministries.

UNIT THREE: Michael Shim-Hue, Jamaica

The Reverend Michael Shim-Hue is a former president of the Jamaica Baptist Union and is the current pastor of the Calvary Circuit of Baptist Churches in St. James. He relinquished his career as a pharmacist when he felt the call of God on his life to serve in pastoral ministry. For over 28 years, the Rev. Shim-Hue has been engaged in pastoral service. This cleric has a passion for mission and has served on the mission field in several countries of the Caribbean, as well as Central and North America.



UNIT FOUR: Arcelio Hartley, Panama



Mr Hartley has been a Christian for over 40 years. He is vice president of the Panama Baptist Convention and retired chairman of the Board of Inspectors of the Panama Canal Authority. He serves as a church planter, lay preacher, deacon and Sunday School teacher. He is passionate about leading people to commit to serving the Lord. Deacon Hartley believes that the more a person comes to understand God's Word, is the more that individual will worship God, and will be more likely to serve God sacrificially.

Humility - A Christian Virtue

"The humble calf sucks the most milk". This popular Jamaican proverb conveys a sentiment, which essentially suggests that rewards are given to those who have the attribute of humility.

Humility is defined as the feeling or attitude that you have no special importance that makes you better than others; lack of pride. (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary – Cambridge University Press)

The American Psychological Association defines humility as the quality or condition of being humble, characterised by a low focus on the self, an accurate (not over- or underestimated) sense of one's accomplishments and worth, and an acknowledgment of one's limitations, imperfections, mistakes, gaps in knowledge, and so on. (<https://dictionary.apa.org>humility>)

The definitions above suggest a focus on the self in relation to others. In a world where one is encouraged to compare ourselves, our attributes, whether God given or acquired, and make a determination of our importance, we may end up either over or under estimating our value of self, hence people are assessed as being proud or humble. In the secular world, humility is not very appealing as it is often interpreted as having low self esteem.

In Christianity, humility is an attitude of spiritual modesty that comes from an understanding of our place in the larger order of things. Therefore, being humble requires that we acknowledge our total dependence on God, and that without Him we wouldn't be who we are, and we wouldn't have what we have and lead the life we live. Being humble means we put ourselves in a position that points all glory and all things to God. Think of receiving an award, what would the Christian's genuine acceptance speech be like? Something to ponder; To what extent does current societal trends regarding self esteem conflict with the Bible's expectations that Christians should model humility?

Humility in the Bible

1. Galatians 5:22-23 tells us, "The Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control." In this passage, humility is listed as an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, a Christian virtue.

2. Philippians 2: 5-8 (NIV) "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death- even death on

(Continued on page 18)

One in Three—Three in One



BIBLE FOCUS

Ephesians 4:2-10; Deuteronomy 6:1-7; Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 48:16;
Matthew 3:13-17; John 14:1-11, 15-17

KEY VERSE

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

– Ephesians 4:4-6 NIV

BIBLE TRUTH

The Bible teaches that God is One but eternally exists as three distinct Persons, each of Whom is equally God.

LIFE QUESTION

How can God be three Persons yet one God?

THAT'S LIFE

The heated discussion in the lunchroom between Sister Marcia Coombs and some of her co-workers centred on the matter of the Trinity. One member sitting opposite Sister Marcia, Lorna DeFreitas, was vociferous in her pronouncements against the church. Ms DeFreitas quipped in a harsh tone: "How can you people who call yourselves Christians serve three gods?"

Sister Marcia did not take kindly to the veiled accusation. However, truth be told, she could not clearly defend her conviction. Then, she had an idea. It must be the Holy Spirit Who spoke to me, Sister Marcia

thought silently. Calmly, she said: "Lorna, think of this—you are an accountant, a mother and a daughter. For each of these three major roles, your responsibilities are different and your achievements are different. Does this mean that your name and your body change each time you perform your three major roles?"

Ms Defreitas blurted out, "Of course not!" Sister Marcia responded emphatically, "Well, we worship One God, Who operates in three distinct ways or functions in three Personalities."

Is the Trinity a mystery to you? Why?

How have you explained the Trinity to someone who never understood it?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

The Trinity is a Christian doctrine that is not easily understood. The word "Trinity" does not occur in the Bible. However, the Bible teaches and depicts the Trinity. The three essential truths are:

- (1) there is One God; (2) God exists as three distinct Persons;
- (3) Each Person is equally God.

Every Christian should understand that there is a divine fellowship and unity among the Trinity.

1. One God: Triune in Nature – Deuteronomy 6:1-7; Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 48:16

The Christian belief is that there is only One God—the God of Abraham who was the father of the Israelites and the person with whom God made a covenant. The nation of Israel had been chosen by God to be His people. Emphasis on the fact that there is One God and He alone should be worshipped, is found in the first three of the Ten Commandments given to Moses for the Israelites. (Exodus 20:3-6). These commandments about worship were of such critical importance, that Moses reinforced them, when the Israelites prepared to cross the Jordan River into the promised land, Canaan (Deuteronomy 6:1-7). Moses stated that the challenges and temptations which the people would face in the new land, would be different from those which they experienced in the wilderness, but that should not deter them from worshipping the One and Only God: *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one"* (v. 4).

God, manifests Himself in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, hence we speak of the Trinity; the Triune God; or the Godhead. **God is one in essence and three in Person.** Genesis 1:26 records that God spoke about "us" and "our" in His work in creating humankind: *"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness."*

In his prophesies, Isaiah made references to all three Persons of the Trinity as he conveyed God's instructions. *"And now the Sovereign LORD (the Father) has sent me (the Son), endowed with his Spirit (the Holy Spirit)"* (Isaiah 48:16). Other Old Testament portions of Scripture making reference to God as more than one Person are: Genesis 1:2; 3:22; Isaiah 6:8.

In different parts of the New Testament, The Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are called "God" which means they share in God's nature (or deity) and are indeed God. **They are co-equals** (Matthew 28:19). Jesus, a member of the Triune God referred to the Godhead in Matthew 22:41-45, in which he quoted Psalm 110:1. *He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit (Holy Spirit), calls him 'Lord' (Messiah/Jesus)? For he says, 'The LORD (Yahweh or God the Father) said to my Lord (Messiah/Jesus): 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet'"* (Matthew 22:43-44).

Other portions of Scripture which confirm that all Three Persons of the Trinity are known as God include: Galatians 1:1 refers to God the Father; John 20:28 draws attention to God the Son and Acts 5:3-4 make reference to God the Holy Spirit.

2. All Three Persons Are God – Matthew 3:13-17; John 14:1-11, 15-17

The oneness displayed by the Triune God throughout the Scripture was revealed at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13-17). The presence of all three Persons of the Trinity was a clear sign of unity although all Three Persons played distinctly separate roles.

1. Jesus, the Son had subjected Himself to be baptised by John the Baptist. Although He was without sin, with the act of baptism, He identified Himself with sinful humankind.

2. The Holy Spirit descended from heaven in the form of a dove and alighted on Jesus. This was a sign of blessing and empowerment just before Jesus began His public ministry.

3. The Father spoke from heaven expressing His love of, and pleasure in, His Son Jesus. At His Father's Will, Jesus had left His heavenly glory to come to Earth for the redemption of sinful humankind.

John 14:1-11, 15-17 show the existence and unity of the Triune God. Those verses reveal that God the Father is the head, the Son obeys and glorifies the Father, and the Spirit subordinates Himself to the Father and the Son.

3. The Church Mirrors the Trinity – Ephesians 4:2-10

In the body of Christ the Church, the spirit of unity and harmony should mirror that which exists among the Persons of the Trinity. Each Christian is called into fellowship with Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:9), with the Father (Ephesians 4:2; 1 John 1:3), and with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14). Additionally, God calls each Christian into fellowship with each other (1 John 1:3). Contrary to God's expectations, unity and harmony are not always present among the Body of believers. This was evident at the church in Ephesus and necessitated Apostle Paul's appeal in Ephesians 4:2-10, for there to be unity and harmony within the church.

Christ has called Christians to commit to living in unity and in fellowship with each other, daily. Fellowship entails being ready to forgive, and sharing common interests, desires and motives. It comprises encouraging one another in the Lord and in inspiring one another to accomplish positive lifestyle activities.

Reality Check

Examine the church which you attend and evaluate, on a scale of **1 to 10 (10 being the highest)**, the extent to which it mirrors the unity and harmony that exist among the three Persons of the Trinity. How can you encourage increased unity within your church?

Creator Father



BIBLE FOCUS

Exodus 33:22-23; 34:4-7; Genesis 1:1-5, 26-28;

Psalms 103:1-5; 139:1-12

KEY VERSE

Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."

– Exodus 34:5-6 NIV

BIBLE TRUTH

The Self-existent, Omnipotent, All-knowing, Omnipresent Heavenly Father Who is the Author of creation has revealed Himself to us so we can relate to Him.

LIFE QUESTION

How can a finite mortal like me relate to the immortal Creator of the universe?

THAT'S LIFE

Indescribable

From the highest of height
to the depths of the sea,
Creations revealing Your
majesty.
From the colors of fall to
the fragrance of spring,
Every creature unique in
the song that it sings
All exclaiming.

Chorus

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky
And You know them by name
You are amazing, God
All powerful, untameable
Awestruck, we fall to our knees

As we humbly proclaim,
You are amazing, God

Who has told every lightning
bolt where it should go?
Or seen heavenly store-
houses laden with snow.
Who imagined the sun and
gives source to its light?
Yet, conceals it to bring us
the coolness of night,
None can fathom

Songwriters: Jesse Reeves/ Laura Story

**What does the song tell you
about God Creator Father?**

**What characteristics
of God does
the song highlight?**

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

The word "God" is often used in the Scriptures to refer to God the Father, as well as the Triune God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In cases, however, when the word, "LORD" (Yahweh) is used, it is referring specifically to God the Father (Exodus 34:5-6).

In those instances in the Bible where "God" and "LORD" have the Hebrew meaning "El Shaddai": "God Almighty" (Genesis 17:1), and "El Eyon": "the Most High God" (Genesis 16:13), reference is being made solely to God the Father.

Today's Lesson will highlight God (the Trinity) and the role of God the Father. It will also discuss the partnership between God the Father and the other members of the Trinity.

1. Self-existent, Omnipotent Creator – Genesis 1:1-5, 26-28

Genesis 1:1, and Job 38:4, confirm that God is Creator. God is not dependent on any part of creation (Psalm 90:2; John 1:1). God was not created by anyone,—He is self-existent! God's declaration to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14), alludes to God's identity, nature and operations. The reference identifies God as the eternal One, Who is unchangeable and will never pass away. God Who provides for successive generations (Exodus 3:15-16), God's existence predates the beginning of the world and time, and He will be here after they end (Colossians 1:15-17). God is infinitely superior, stronger, supernatural, more intellectual and more excellent than persons, other living creatures and things.

In demonstrating His love, God created us. He had fellowship and companionship within His Being, therefore He did not need companionship when He created humans. As a result, the Bible teaches that the Father loves the Son: "...You loved Me before the creation of the world" (John 17:24). The Father and Son also had fellowship with the Spirit before the universe began (Genesis 1:2). Yet, there was no mention of the Spirit or the Son giving a command when Creation was taking place. In Creation, God the Father played the leading role on behalf of the Trinity. God the Father created things by speaking them into being (vv. 1-5). This is evident in the refrain: *and God said, "Let..."* (vv. 3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29).

In the creation of humankind, God collaborated with other members of the Trinity as evidenced by "*Let us make man...*" (Genesis 1:26). God the Father, also revealed that the Trinity was at work in creating humankind (Genesis 1:26, Job 33:4). The Trinity created us in their image (v. 27).

Another aspect of God's nature is His Omnipotence, which refers to God's sovereign power, authority and control over the created order. no one can exercise power over Him. God is all-powerful! There is nothing beyond His ability. God is not bound by physical limitations. Reflect on the fact that God created everything and everyone by His spoken word and they will always be at His dictates. Marvel at His omnipotence.

2. Self-Revealing Father – Exodus 33:22-23; 34:4-7; Psalm 103:1-5

God the Father is invisible to human eyes. In response to Moses' prayer, *Let me see Your glory* (Exodus 11:18) God revealed Himself to Moses (Exodus 33:22-23; 34:1, 4-7). God revealed His glory and character to Moses using His personal, covenant name Yahweh, which means Jehovah the LORD. The LORD did not allow Moses to see His face so God hid Moses in a hole in the rock and covered Moses with His Hand, when He, God, was passing by (33:22). Moses was allowed to see only God's back (33:23).

Moses experienced the brilliant, astounding presence of God again on Mount Sinai when he went with the two stone tablets to receive the Ten Commandments a second time (Moses had broken the first set of tablets). The LORD appeared in a cloud and stood with Moses (34:5). We can deduce from the passage that Moses did not see God's face. Yet, his encounter with God caused Moses to bow to the ground and worship God (v. 8).

God the Father revealed Himself to us through His Son, Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-17); His Word, the Bible; the natural environment and all His Creation. In addition, God makes Himself known to us through the words of His prophets, preachers and evangelists; and through dreams, visions and miracles.

Psalm 103 points to God's character which shows His mercy and His grace. the Psalmist David expressed gratitude for the personal mercies He had received from God (vv. 1-5). Yahweh God had delivered him from "the pit" of life-threatening danger, distress and sickness. Verses 3-5 highlight five major benefits for which the Psalmist is deeply grateful. Our self-revealing God is actively involved in our lives!

3. All-knowing, Omnipresent Father – Psalms 139:1-12

God knows everything about everyone, including you. Psalm 139:1-12 show that God has perfect knowledge of us; all our thoughts and actions are exposed to Him. God is Omnipresent, which means He is present at every place and at every time simultaneously (Matthew 28:20). He exists both outside His creation and at every point within it. God desires to have a relationship with humankind. God the Son chose to sacrifice His life to take away our sin, so we could have a relationship with the Triune God.

Reality Check

We ought to worship God for Who He is—He is greatly to be praised! On this *Mother's Day*, be mindful that God is the Father Who Fathers and Mothers us. He created us; nurtures us like a mother; while protecting and providing for us as our Heavenly Father. He is the Father par excellence in every area of our life. Surrender to your Heavenly Father.

Do you have any cares or concerns which require the Father's intervention? Tell your Heavenly Father about them. He is ready to hear from you and to address your problems and needs, according to His Will.

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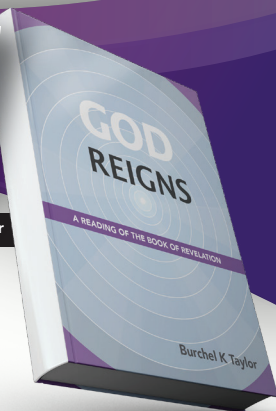


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