About the Author

Mark Eckel is assistant professor of education at Moody Bible Institute. Mark has served as an instructor of his self-developed curriculum Christian Life and World Studies (CLAWS), department head, and chaplain in Christian schools for sixteen years. Mark and his wife Robin, with their children Tyler and Chelsea, live in Wheaton, Illinois. Part of Mark's curriculum Let God Be God, a semester course for Christian high schools, was published by ACSI in 1997. Mark's self-published book Biblical Integration: Understanding the World Through the Word includes hundreds of scriptural principles of integration for immediate classroom use by Christian school teachers. Mark has taught seminars around the country on worldview, culture, apologetics, education, curriculum development, and philosophy. Mark is an ordained minister; he holds a Th.Min. in Old Testament and has begun work on a Ph.D.
About the Author

Mark Eckel is assistant professor of education at Moody Bible Institute. Mark has served as an instructor of his self-developed curriculum Christian Life and World Studies (CLAWS), department head, and chaplain in Christian schools for sixteen years. Mark and his wife Robin, with their children Tyler and Chelsea, live in Wheaton, Illinois. Part of Mark’s curriculum Let God Be God, a semester course for Christian high schools, was published by ACSI in 1997. Mark’s self-published book Biblical Integration: Understanding the World Through the Word includes hundreds of scriptural principles of integration for immediate classroom use by Christian school teachers. Mark has taught seminars around the country on worldview, culture, apologetics, education, curriculum development, and philosophy. Mark is an ordained minister; he holds a Th.Min. in Old Testament and has begun work on a Ph.D.
Unit Eight  Canonization ......................................... 63
  8.1 > To Tell the Truth ........................................... 64
  8.2 > Predictions, Prognostications, and Prophecies .............. 66
  8.3 > What Is the Canon? ......................................... 68
  8.4 > In the Bookshop: How Does It Fit Together? ................. 70
  8.5 > Enrichment and Assessment .................................. 72

Unit Nine  Preservation and Transmission of the Bible .............. 75
  9.1 > If We Can't Trust the Bible, Then What? ...................... 76
  9.2 > Show Me What You've Got ................................... 78
  9.3 > Mistakes? You Can Count on It ............................. 80
  9.4 > From Them to Us ........................................... 81
  9.5 > Enrichment and Assessment .................................. 82

Unit Ten  Two Great Translators ..................................... 85
  10.1 > John Wycliffe: The Morning Star ............................ 86
  10.2 > William Tyndale: God's Outlaw ............................. 87
  10.3 > Enrichment and Assessment ................................. 88

Unit Eleven  Language and Bible Translation .......................... 91
  11.1 > Word Origins and Translation ............................... 92
  11.2 > Mother Tongues and Elephant Ears ......................... 94
  11.3 > It's All Greek to Me ....................................... 97
  11.4 > Many Translations, One Bible .............................. 99
  11.5 > Enrichment and Assessment .................................. 101

Unit Twelve  In Other Words .......................................... 103
  12.1 > Be a Bible Translator ....................................... 104
  12.2 > Translators at Work ...................................... 105
  12.3 > In Their Own Tongue! ...................................... 106
  12.4 > Enrichment and Assessment .................................. 107

Part Three  The Authority of the Bible

Unit Thirteen  Illumination and Interpretation .......................... 109
  13.1 > Light on Light .............................................. 110
  13.2 > Open My Eyes, Lord ......................................... 111
  13.3 > Sherlock Holmes and Bible Study ......................... 112
  13.4 > Interpretation Workout .................................... 114
  13.5 > Enrichment and Assessment .................................. 115

Unit Fourteen  Interpretation ........................................ 117
  14.1 > Cancer Grows, Gangrene Spreads ......................... 118
  14.2 > Agreeing to Disagree ...................................... 121
  14.3 > Paul, the Right Man for the Job .......................... 123
  14.4 > Enrichment and Assessment .................................. 125

Unit Fifteen  Interpretation and Culture .................................. 127
  15.1 > That's in the OLD Testament! ............................... 128
  15.2 > The Ideal and the Real ..................................... 130
Introduction

“I don’t want you to believe anything I teach you!” For years, my students have heard this statement. Acts 17:11 is clear: “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” Three important points stand out in this verse: (1) The Bible was individually studied, (2) it was believed to be trustworthy, (3) it was examined to substantiate the claims of a Bible teacher. In order for students to personally own their biblical beliefs, they must be assured of Scripture’s reliability. So like the Bereans, may our students base their beliefs on their interaction with the text, then the teacher.

“No man is an island,” reflected John Donne centuries ago. A monumental work such as this course could never be accomplished alone. My wife Robin and children Tyler and Chelsea have sacrificed for and supported the work. Steve Babbitt, Mary Endres, and ACSI leadership are to be recognized for their interest, editing, encouragement, and endorsement of this project. Two of my colleagues, Colleen Averill and Marshall Mattson, not only taught segments of this curriculum but also contributed practical student projects, which are included here. Sarah Hartwig, a former student, wrote the song “What’s True for You,” which appears as Blackline Master 16.4.2. Indeed, all my students have contributed in one way or another over the years. Their questions and observations have pushed me to find answers and make the teaching about the Scriptures more understandable. Ultimately, Timeless Truth is written for my students, for their children, and their children’s children—“the next generation” (Psalm 71:14–18). All praise to the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

Mark Eckel
Wheaton, Illinois
January 2001
Part One

The Reliability of the Bible

Unit Two

The Bible: Why Does It Matter?
Lesson 2.1

You Gotta Have Faith

Objectives

The student will:

> understand the biblical meaning of the word faith
> learn how to apply biblical faith to life

Memory Verses

2 Peter 1:16 and 1 John 1:14

Interact

2.1.1 You Gotta Have Faith!

Blackline Master

2.1.1 Agree or Disagree? Why or Why Not?

Strategies

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students to identify words that are often misunderstood or misapplied. You might start with concrete words like vertical and horizontal, or clockwise and counterclockwise. Ask whether your students ever misunderstood these words, and if so, why. Also, mention words that are sometimes misapplied in advertising—honest, exceptional, new. Students will catch on and add their own examples. Why are words misused? With whom does it happen? How can we use words so that our meanings are clear?

Next, ask for a definition and application of the word faith. Most people give the word a personal, experiential meaning. How does our culture define faith? Is that the kind of faith a Christian must have? What sets biblical faith apart from other kinds of faith?

2. Read aloud the story “Cliff-hanger” from Susan Schaeffer Macaulay’s book How to Be Your Own Selfish Pig. (See the Appendix, page 335.) Invite students to tell how this story illustrates faith and what kind of faith it is.

3. Give each student a copy of Blackline Master 2.1.1 Agree or Disagree? Why or Why Not? Have the class work individually or with partners as they read and appraise each quotation, and write agree or disagree in the margin. Afterward, in class discussion, ask volunteers to give reasons for their choices.

4. Work through Interact 2.1.1 You Gotta Have Faith! along with the students. Turn to pages 178–180 for lecture/discussion prompts. Have students complete the activities as you lead the discussion.
5. If time permits, read aloud the story of Ruby from Rebecca Manley Pippert’s book *Hope Has Its Reasons*. (See the Appendix, page 337.)

**Note:** Both you and your students will benefit from your outside reading on scriptural reliability. Many books have been written on the topic. Some of those listed below will add to your understanding and provide excellent ideas for class dialogue. In addition, an Internet search on the subject will yield a wealth of information relevant to this course.

Bruce, F. F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Eerdmans)
Green, Michael. *Running from Reality* (IVP) *Ten Myths About Christianity* (Lion)
McDowell, Josh. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Volume One)
_________. *A Ready Defense: The Best of Josh McDowell* (Thomas Nelson)
Sproul, R. C. *Reason to Believe* (Zondervan)
Did It Really Happen?

**Objectives**
The student will:

> recognize communication and contact as means by which God reveals Himself
> identify faith, feelings, and facts as elements on which people base their beliefs
> appreciate the importance of the reliability of Scripture for our Christian faith

**Interact**

2.2.1 The Bible: Why Does It Matter?

## Blackline Master

### 2.2.1 Did It Really Happen?

### Strategies

1. Pose the question, *How do you know the Bible is the Word of God?* List student responses on the chalkboard. You may want to assign a class stenographer to list any questions students ask, and keep the document in a safe place to assure that all are answered by the end of the semester.

   > There are many worldviews, and Christianity is not the only one that has a “holy book.” How can we know that the Bible presents a worldview we can trust?
   > The Bible is old. How can we be sure accuracy was maintained over the millennia?

2. Ask, *Why does it matter whether you believe the Bible is the Word of God? What is at stake?* Begin with a discussion starter: *How do you know ... ?*

   > who won (a recent sporting event)?
   > why you got a speeding ticket?
   > that George Washington was the first president of the United States?

Add other questions, leading to the question *How do we know anything?* Then have students turn to **Interact 2.2.1 The Bible: Why Does It Matter?** and take notes on your lecture/discussion.

3. List the essential concepts in this lesson. Show a transparency of **Blackline Master 2.2.1 Did It Really Happen?** *Is the event historical? Did it happen in history?* Fill in the first word, *historicity*, and point out that it refers to facts. Complete the sentence on the transparency, adding the words *authenticity* and *authority*. Have the students complete the sentence at the end of **Interact 2.2.1 The Bible: Why Does It Matter?**
Ancient Forgeries or Reliable Histories?

Objectives

The student will:

> recognize the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Ebla tablets
> explain the significance of Moses’ ability to write
> determine the importance of written history over oral tradition
> identify the importance of accurate transmission of the biblical text

Interact

2.3.1 Ancient Forgeries or Reliable Histories?

Strategies

1. Remind students of a game they may have played as young children, usually called “telephone” or “rumor,” and begin by having them play it now. Whisper a sentence into the ear of one student. Allow each to whisper it once to the next until it has reached the last person. Compare the original statement with the final one. Ask what problems they encountered (such as memory lapses, misunderstandings, additions, embellishments, more people over more time the greater the possibility of error).

2. Have the students form groups of three to discuss the following question:
   *From what you know now, what facts prove the reliability of the Bible?* One student in each group should list their answers for a subsequent class discussion.

3. In a whole-class discussion, ask the questions on Interact 2.3.1 Ancient Forgeries or Reliable Histories? Lead students in a guided note-taking experience, using the commentary on page 182.

4. To conclude, ask the class to answer these questions:
   
   > What happened at Ebla, and why is it important?
   > How are the Dead Sea Scrolls significant?
   > If Moses wrote the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), how did he know what happened before his lifetime? Is this significant? Why or why not?
News Reporters and Bible Writers

Objective

The student will:

> illustrate the process of transmitting Scripture by answering questions journalists address daily

Interact

2.4.1 Putting the Paper to Bed: News Stories and the Bible

Strategies

1. Using Interact 2.4.1 Putting the Paper to Bed: News Stories and the Bible, allow students to arrive at their own conclusions about differences and similarities in written communication in Bible times and today.

2. Invite a local media personality to answer questions comparing the process of biblical reporting with processes used by the news media today.

3. Stage an “event” and ask for everyone’s eyewitness account. The scene may be of some daily occurrence acted out before the class (e.g., passing notes, cheating on a test, talking at a locker). Use the event to illustrate the need for eyewitness accounts. In addition, conduct a scientific investigation (e.g., a litmus paper test of acids and bases) to show the distinction between historical and scientific evidence.
Enrichment and Assessment

Enrichment

Use these enrichment activities to tailor unit two to the needs and interests of your specific classes and students.

1. There are many fine videos and video series that demonstrate the historical reliability of Scripture. To augment your teaching of this essential Christian tenet, you might want to acquire one or more of the following:

   > Discovering the Bible (The Christian History Institute, 1996). Programs 2 and 3 highlight the historicity of the Old and New Testaments (30 minutes each; with study guides included).
   > The Incomparable Book: Messages from the Memory Banks (The Christian History Institute, 1992). This fast-moving three-part series examines the trustworthiness of Scripture by comparing methods of biblical writers with those of today’s media. (Each part lasts about 20 minutes and includes study guides.)
   > Cliffe Knechtle. Give Me an Answer (InterVarsity, 1987). Part one of the programs gives five-minute answers to tests of belief, including scriptural reliability. (It includes a study guide.)
   > Ultimate Issues: Right Answers to Wrong Thinking (Ligonier Ministries, 1994). Part 3 addresses the truthfulness of the Bible for a college-age audience. (It lasts about 30 minutes.) Choosing Your Religion is a five-part series produced for high school students, parts of which could be used with discussions of truth claims.

2. Have your students do man-on-the-street interviews, obtaining answers to the following questions: What is truth? Is there a place to find absolutes for living? How would you describe the Bible in your own words? Is it a trustworthy historical document? Do you think Jesus’ words in the Bible are true? Why or why not?

3. Obtain a copy of Susan Schaeffer Macaulay’s How to Be Your Own Selfish Pig (Cook, 1982) and read aloud sections of chapter 7 entitled “A Bunch of Fairy Tales!” Other “messages from God” (for example, the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, the Buddhist Tripitaka, the Islamic Koran) are briefly explained and evaluated.

4. Periodicals such as Prison Ministries’ Breakpoint often contain brief articles pointing out the credible historical and archaeological evidences for the Christian worldview. Internet websites on apologetics, such as Ravi Zacharias’ International Ministries www.rzim.com, are great sources of material developed to substantiate the truth of the Christian faith.

5. Chuck Colson’s Loving God (Zondervan, 1983) contains a classic exposé of the Watergate cover-up, in which the author played a part. Colson shows the historical authority of Scripture as he relates the story behind the events that took place at the famous hotel.
6. Play a tape of a news broadcast or a talk show interview. Ask students to bring in and read aloud articles from a newspaper. Conduct a mock interview about a recent newsworthy event. Have students look for and identify the types of bias noted in Interact 2.4.1 Putting the Paper to Bed: News Stories and the Bible.


8. To review the first two units’ material, students might work in small groups and develop questions for the prosecution and defense in a trial that asks: Is the Bible trustworthy, and Why or why not? You may want to establish a minimum number of questions that each side will ask. Make sure the students can answer their own questions. Help them think of other questions that might not have been addressed in class but deserve answers. You may have the spokespersons for each group review their group’s questions and answers, or you may actually set up a mock trial with a judge, jury, lawyers for the prosecution and defense, and witnesses. If you adopt the latter alternative, allow no more than two days for the trial.

9. Do a word study on truth in the Old Testament Hebrew. Discover that the main term used in that language for truth was amen. The root of that word contains ideas of firmness and certainty; the assurance of something. The word amen also conveys the ideas of faithfulness and dependability. Relate these meanings to the common use of amen in ending prayers, where the meaning is “so be it” or “may it be done.” Have each person write a “verse prayer” (one statement) on truth. Students can take turns standing to read their verses, with the class punctuating each reading with a choral “amen.”

10. Use video cuttings from Elmer Gantry or A Simple Leap of Faith to illustrate the concept “Have faith, and all your troubles will end.”
**Assessment**

Choose one or more of the following assessment activities to evaluate your students’ mastery of unit two. If you prefer, use one of the preceding enrichment activities as assessment. First, verify that the students have access to any required reading matter. Then have them prepare a one-to-two-page written response to their reading, relating it to what they learned in unit two.

1. Have students use the objective material in this unit to design their own crossword puzzle.

2. Have students write an essay answering the question, *Is history the most important subject in the curriculum?* They should include reasons for their answer and responses to objections from the other side.

3. Organize an interaction between students and a news reporter or correspondent. The class should produce ahead of time a series of questions that they will ask their guest. After the exchange students will write a reflective document assessing the answers. They should emphasize the importance of the ideas in lessons three and four.

4. Have students work in small groups to find and analyze songs, both traditional and popular, that speak of truth, belief, faith, reliability, or any worldview question mentioned in the first two units.
Other resources from Purposeful Design Publications ...

Science (Levels 1–6)

Bible (Preschool–Grade 6)

Health (Middle and High School)

Literature (Grades 3–12)

Mathematics (Grades K–8)

Your best option

800-367-0798
www.purposefuldesign.com