



Activity Sheet: Guarding the Truth

Introduction: Welcome to the "Guarding the Truth" activity sheet! Inspired by Ariel's blog post, "Guarding the Truth: Standing Firm Against False Teachers," this sheet will help you and your family explore what it means to discern truth from falsehood and stand firm in faith. Dive into these fun activities, crafts, and discussions to grow in wisdom and understanding of God's Word.

Section 1: Scripture Focus

Memory Verse: "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist." — 2 John 1:7 (ESV)

Reflection Questions:

1. What does it mean that Jesus came in the flesh?
2. Why is it important to recognize and guard against false teachings?

1. The phrase "Jesus came in the flesh" emphasizes the profound Christian belief that Jesus Christ, who is fully God, also became fully human. This concept is central to the doctrine of the Incarnation and is foundational to understanding His role in salvation. Here's a breakdown of its meaning:

1. Jesus Took on Human Nature

- **God Became Man:** Jesus, who existed eternally as God, took on human form. He was born as a baby to Mary in Bethlehem (John 1:14: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."*).
- **True Humanity:** He experienced the full range of human emotions, needs, and struggles—He got hungry, tired, and even felt sorrow (Matthew 4:2, John 11:35).

2. Purpose of the Incarnation

- **To Save Humanity:** Jesus came in the flesh to offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice for sin. By becoming human, He could represent us and bear our sins (Hebrews 2:17: *"For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God."*).
- **To Fulfill the Law:** As a human, Jesus lived a sinless life, perfectly obeying God's Law on behalf of humanity (Matthew 5:17).

3. Revealing God to Us

- **A Tangible Revelation of God:** In His human form, Jesus demonstrated God's love, mercy, and character in ways people could see, hear, and understand (Colossians 1:15: *"The Son is the image of the invisible God."*).
- **Relating to Us:** Jesus experienced life as we do, which allows Him to empathize with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15: *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses."*).

4. A Rejection of Gnostic Beliefs

- **Affirming His Humanity:** In 2 John 1:7, it's stated that deceivers deny Jesus came in the flesh. This likely addresses early heresies (like Gnosticism) that claimed Jesus only appeared to be human but was not truly flesh and blood. The Bible counters this by affirming Jesus' true humanity.

5. Significance for Believers

- **Union with God:** Because Jesus became human, He made it possible for humanity to be reconciled with God (1 Timothy 2:5: *"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."*).

- **A Model for Life:** His life on earth serves as an example for how we are to live—with humility, love, and obedience to God (Philippians 2:5-8).

In summary, the fact that **Jesus came in the flesh** means He entered into human history as a real person, uniting divinity and humanity, to reveal God, live sinlessly, and accomplish salvation for all who believe.

2. Recognizing and guarding against false teachings is crucial for maintaining a strong, faithful relationship with God and ensuring the truth of the gospel is upheld. Here's why this is so important:

1. Protects the Truth of the Gospel

- **Preserves the Integrity of God's Word:** False teachings distort the message of Scripture, leading people away from the true gospel. Jesus warned about this in Matthew 7:15: *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."*
- **Safeguards Salvation:** The gospel is the foundation of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Altering its truth can mislead people into relying on works, false gods, or other pathways that do not lead to eternal life (Galatians 1:6-9).

2. Strengthens Personal Faith

- **Avoids Confusion:** False teachings create doubt and confusion about God's promises and commands, undermining a believer's confidence in their faith.
- **Builds Discernment:** By recognizing falsehoods, believers develop a deeper understanding of Scripture and are better equipped to stand firm against deception (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

3. Protects the Church Community

- **Prevents Division:** False teachings often lead to division within the church, breaking fellowship and causing strife among believers (Romans 16:17-18).
- **Encourages Unity in Truth:** Guarding against false doctrines helps the church remain unified in sound teaching and spiritual growth (Ephesians 4:14-15).

4. Avoids Spiritual Harm

- **Prevents Being Led Astray:** False teachings can lead individuals into spiritual danger, drawing them away from Christ and into practices or beliefs that harm their relationship with God (2 Peter 2:1-2).
- **Guards Against Eternal Consequences:** Jesus warned that false teachers could lead others into eternal separation from God (Matthew 24:24: *"For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*).

5. Obeys God's Command

- **A Biblical Mandate:** Scripture repeatedly calls believers to discern and reject false teachings. In 1 John 4:1, we are instructed: *"Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."*

- **Faithful Witness:** By standing firm in truth, believers serve as a light to others, demonstrating the power and reliability of God's Word.

6. Equips Us to Help Others

- **Leads Others to Truth:** Recognizing false teachings enables believers to lovingly correct those who are misled, pointing them back to the truth (Galatians 6:1).
- **Promotes Spiritual Growth:** Teaching and reinforcing sound doctrine encourages others to grow in their faith and understanding of God's Word.

In conclusion, recognizing and guarding against false teachings is essential for preserving the truth of God's Word, strengthening personal faith, protecting the church, and fulfilling God's command to uphold His gospel. It ensures that believers remain rooted in Christ and able to discern what is good, true, and pleasing to God.

Section 2: Activities

Activity 1: Spot the Difference *Instructions:* Below are two short statements. One aligns with biblical truth, and the other contains a subtle inaccuracy. Circle the differences and discuss why one is true and the other is not.

1. Jesus is the Son of God who came in the flesh to save us from our sins. (True)
2. Jesus was only a good teacher and not the Son of God. (False)

Activity 2: Truth or Falsehood Quiz *Instructions:* Mark each statement as true or false and discuss with your family.

1. The Bible is God's inspired Word. (True)
2. Jesus' resurrection is a metaphor, not a historical event. (False)
3. Following Jesus means living according to His teachings. (True)

Activity 3: Craft — Shield of Faith *Materials Needed:*

- Paper plates
- Markers
- Stickers
- Craft sticks

Instructions:

1. Draw a shield on a paper plate.
2. Decorate your shield with stickers and colors.
3. Write "Faith" on the shield, and add phrases like "Truth," "God's Word," or "Jesus Saves."
4. Attach a craft stick to the back as a handle. Use this shield as a reminder to stand firm against false teachings.

Section 3: Family Discussion Prompts

1. Share a time when you encountered a teaching that didn't seem right. How did you respond?
2. Why is it important to read and understand the Bible regularly?
3. How can we help others understand the truth about Jesus?

1. I once attended a Bible study where the teacher emphasized that if a person has enough faith, they will always be healthy and financially prosperous. While this idea sounded comforting at first, it didn't sit well with me. I remembered stories from the Bible where faithful people, like Job or the Apostle Paul, experienced suffering despite their unwavering faith. It seemed inconsistent with the larger message of Scripture.

How I Responded:

1. **Paused and Reflected:** Instead of immediately dismissing or accepting the teaching, I took a step back to evaluate what I had heard. I asked myself, *Does this align with what the Bible says?*
 2. **Searched the Scriptures:** I spent time reading passages about suffering and faith, such as Job's trials, Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7-10), and Jesus' own words in John 16:33: *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* These verses made it clear that faith doesn't always eliminate hardship but gives strength to endure it.
 3. **Sought Guidance:** I discussed my concerns with a trusted pastor and a mature Christian friend. They affirmed that the prosperity gospel teaching I had encountered didn't reflect the full truth of Scripture.
 4. **Engaged in Prayer:** I prayed for wisdom and clarity, asking God to guide me in understanding His truth and to respond with grace.
 5. **Responded Gracefully:** The next time the topic came up, I gently shared what I had learned, saying something like, *"I understand how comforting that idea sounds, but I've found that Scripture shows us faith doesn't always mean avoiding struggles. Sometimes God uses challenges to grow us spiritually."*
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What I Learned: This experience taught me to approach questionable teachings with humility and a commitment to truth. It also reminded me of the importance of studying the Bible regularly, so I'm prepared to discern and address teachings that may not align with God's Word.

2. Reading and understanding the Bible regularly is essential for spiritual growth, guidance, and maintaining a strong relationship with God. Here are several key reasons why this practice is important:

Knowing God Better

- The Bible reveals who God is—His character, love, and plan for humanity. Regular reading helps deepen our understanding of His nature and strengthens our relationship with Him.
- *Example:* Through Scripture, we learn about God's mercy (Psalm 86:15) and His faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Understanding God's Will

- The Bible provides clear guidance for how we should live, make decisions, and honor God in our daily lives (Psalm 119:105: *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*).
- By studying it, we align our thoughts and actions with God's purposes.

Strengthening Faith

- Regular reading builds a solid foundation of faith, equipping us to stand firm in the face of challenges and doubts (Romans 10:17: *"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."*).
- It reminds us of God's promises and encourages us to trust Him in all circumstances.

Discerning Truth

- With so many competing voices and opinions in the world, Scripture helps us discern what is true and pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:16-17: *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."*).
- Regular study guards against false teachings and misunderstandings.

Spiritual Nourishment

- Just as our bodies need food, our souls need regular nourishment from God's Word (Matthew 4:4: *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."*).
- Reading Scripture refreshes our spirits and gives us strength for daily life.

Encouragement and Comfort

- The Bible provides hope and encouragement during tough times (Romans 15:4: *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."*).
- Stories of God's faithfulness and promises remind us we are never alone.

Developing Christlike Character

- Studying Scripture transforms us, helping us grow in love, humility, patience, and other godly traits (Romans 12:2: *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind."*).

Equipping for Service

- The Bible equips us to share God's love with others and to fulfill the good works He has planned for us (Ephesians 2:10).
- It also helps us provide biblical counsel and encouragement to others.

Drawing Closer to God in Prayer

- Scripture enhances our prayer life by teaching us how to pray and what to pray for, aligning our prayers with God's will (Philippians 4:6-7).

Daily Renewal and Perspective

- Reading the Bible regularly resets our focus on God's eternal truth, especially in a world filled with distractions and temporary concerns (Colossians 3:2: *"Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."*).

Practical Tips for Regular Bible Reading:

- **Set a Routine:** Dedicate a specific time each day for Bible reading.
- **Use a Plan:** Follow a reading plan to cover the Bible systematically.
- **Reflect and Apply:** Meditate on what you read and think about how it applies to your life.
- **Pray for Understanding:** Ask God for wisdom to understand and live out His Word.

In summary, reading and understanding the Bible regularly keeps us connected to God, strengthens our faith, and equips us to navigate life with wisdom, hope, and purpose.

3. Helping others understand the truth about Jesus involves a combination of sharing your faith, living it out authentically, and building relationships based on love and compassion. Here are some practical and meaningful ways to do this:

Live a Christlike Life

- **Be an Example:** Actions often speak louder than words. Reflect Christ's love, humility, and integrity in your daily life (Matthew 5:16: *"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*).
- **Show Genuine Love:** Demonstrate Jesus' love through acts of kindness, forgiveness, and patience.

Build Relationships

- **Connect Personally:** Build genuine relationships with others, showing interest in their lives and listening to their stories.
- **Be Patient:** Sharing the truth about Jesus often takes time. Respect their questions and doubts, and journey alongside them.

Share Your Testimony

- **Tell Your Story:** Share how Jesus has transformed your life. Personal testimonies are powerful because they are unique and relatable.
 - **Focus on Jesus:** Highlight how your relationship with Jesus has brought peace, hope, or direction.
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4. Know and Share the Gospel

- **Understand the Message:** Be prepared to explain the basics of the gospel clearly: God's love, human sin, Jesus' death and resurrection, and the gift of salvation (John 3:16; Romans 6:23).
 - **Use Scripture:** Share key Bible verses that explain who Jesus is and what He has done.
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5. Engage in Conversations

- **Ask Questions:** Encourage dialogue by asking open-ended questions about their beliefs and understanding of God.
 - **Answer Thoughtfully:** Be ready to answer questions about faith with grace and respect (1 Peter 3:15: *"Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."*).
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6. Pray for Others

- **Pray for Opportunities:** Ask God to open doors for you to share about Jesus in meaningful ways.
 - **Pray for Their Hearts:** Pray that God softens their hearts and gives them understanding (Ephesians 1:18).
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7. Invite Them to Explore

- **Attend Church or Bible Study:** Invite them to join you for a service, small group, or Bible study.
 - **Recommend Resources:** Share books, videos, or websites that explain the truth about Jesus in ways they can explore at their own pace.
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8. Serve Together

- **Participate in Service Projects:** Invite them to join you in serving others. Actions rooted in faith can open doors for deeper conversations about Jesus.
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9. Use Everyday Opportunities

- **Seize the Moment:** Look for natural opportunities to mention Jesus in daily conversations, such as when discussing current events, personal struggles, or blessings.
 - **Plant Seeds:** Even small mentions of God's goodness can inspire curiosity and open hearts over time.
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10. Trust God's Work

- **Rely on the Holy Spirit:** Remember that it is God who changes hearts. Your role is to share the truth faithfully; the Holy Spirit will do the rest (John 16:8-13).
- **Be Encouraged:** Even if you don't see immediate results, trust that your efforts are part of God's bigger plan.