

10 points for Fruitful Scripture Reading.

1. **Bible reading is for Catholics.** The Church encourages Catholics to make reading the Bible part of their daily prayer lives. Reading these inspired words, people grow deeper in their relationship with God & come to understand their place in the community God has called them to in himself.
2. **Prayer is the beginning & the end.** Reading the Bible is not like reading a novel or a history book. It should begin with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to open our hearts & minds to the Word of God. Scripture reading should end with a prayer that this Word will bear fruit in our lives, helping us to become holier & more faithful people.
3. **Get the whole story! When selecting a Bible, look for a Catholic edition.** A Catholic edition will include the Church's complete list of sacred books along with introductions & notes for understanding the text. A Catholic edition will have an *imprimatur* notice on the back of the title page. An *imprimatur* indicates that the book is free of errors in Catholic doctrine.
4. **The Bible isn't a book. It's a library.** The Bible is a collection of 73 books written over the course of many centuries. The books include royal history, prophecy, poetry, challenging letters to struggling new faith communities, & believers' accounts of the preaching & passion of Jesus. Knowing the genre of the book you are reading will help you understand the literary tools the author is using & the meaning the author is trying to convey.
5. **Know what the Bible is – & what it isn't.** The Bible is the story of God's relationship with the people he has called to himself. It is not intended to be read as history text, a science book, or a political manifesto. In the Bible, God teaches us the truths that we need for the sake of our salvation.
6. **The sum is greater than the parts.** Read the Bible in context. What happens before & after – even in other books – helps us to understand the true meaning of the text.
7. **The Old relates to the New.** The OT & the NT shed light on each other. While we read the OT in light of the death & resurrection of

Jesus, it has its own value as well. Together, these testaments help us to understand God's plan for human beings.

8. **You do not read alone.** By reading & reflecting on Sacred Scripture, Catholics join those faithful men & women who have taken God's Word to heart & put it into practice in their lives. We read the Bible within the tradition of the Church to benefit from the holiness & wisdom of all the faithful.

9. **What is God saying to me?** The Bible is not addressed only to long-dead people in a faraway land. It is addressed to each of us in our own unique situations. When we read, we need to understand what the text says & how the faithful have understood its meaning in the past. In light of this understanding, we then ask: What is God saying to me?

10. **Reading isn't enough.** If Scripture remains just words on a page, our work is not done. We need to meditate on the message & put it into action in our lives. Only then can the word be "living & effective."(Hebrews 4:12).