



Biblical Vocabulary Lesson Plan

Say it, break it, define it, use it. 41 faith and Bible words with phonetic breakdowns, definitions, and example sentences, taught the Mr. O way.

Lesson at a Glance

Grade level	Grades 3–8 (adaptable for high school and homeschool groups)
Subject	English Language Arts: Vocabulary, Phonics, and Religious Literacy
Time	5 sessions, about 45 minutes each (one word group per day, plus review)
Big idea	Long faith words get easy when you break them into syllables, find the sound patterns, and use them in real sentences.
Standards	CCSS RF.3.3 / RF.4.3 (decode multisyllable words), L.4.4 (determine word meaning), L.4.4c (use references for pronunciation), L.4.4b (Greek and Latin affixes and roots)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Pronounce each vocabulary word correctly by breaking it into syllables and finding the stressed beat.
- Spot phonics patterns inside big words: **-tion** says /shuhn/, **ph** says /f/, **ch** can say /k/, and silent letters like the **t** in apostle and the **p** in psalm.
- Define each word in their own words and use it correctly in a sentence.
- Connect word families (repent → repentance, devout → devotion, religion → religious).
- Speak about different faiths with accurate words and respect.

Materials

- This lesson plan and the vocabulary tables (one printed copy per student)
- Whiteboard or chart paper; index cards for flashcards
- A simple hip-hop beat (any instrumental at 85–95 BPM) for the syllable chant
- Highlighters in 3 colors (syllables, phonics pattern, stressed beat)
- Optional: a children's Bible or Bible storybook for finding words in context

Mr. O's Phonics Keys

Teach these sound patterns first. Students will see them again and again in the word list.

Pattern	Sound	Examples from this lesson
-tion / -sion / -xion	/shuhn/	revelation, devotion, resurrection, crucifixion
ph	/f/	prophet
ch (Greek words)	/k/	Christian
Silent letters	no sound	apostle (t), psalm (p, l), righteous and enlightened (gh)
Soft c and soft g	/s/ and /j/	disciple, grace, mercy, Genesis, religion
Bossy r (ar, er, ur, or)	/ar/, /ur/	charity, sermon, surrender, church, worship
-ous / -eous	/uhs/	religious, righteous
-le at the end	/uhl/	tabernacle, apostle, disciple, parable
Stress (CAPITAL beat)	the loud beat	rih-LIJ-uhn, rez-uh-REK-shuhn

How to read the tables: the dots (·) split syllables. In the “Say it” column, CAPITAL letters show the stressed beat. uh = the quick, lazy vowel sound (schwa).

Vocabulary Word Bank

Group 1: Places, Practices, and Worship

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
1	tabernacle	tab·er·nac·le TAB-er-nak-uhl	4 beats; final -cle says /kuhl/	A tent used as a holy place of worship by the Israelites in the wilderness; today, also a word for a place of worship. <i>Example:</i> Moses’ people carried the tabernacle as they traveled.
2	offering	of·fer·ing AW-fer-ing	Base word offer + -ing	A gift given to God, a place of worship, or people in need, such as money, food, or time. <i>Example:</i> The family gave an offering during the service.
3	church	church CHURCH	ch digraph + bossy r (ur)	A building where Christians worship; also the community of Christian believers. <i>Example:</i> We sang in the church choir on Sunday.
4	religion	re·li·gion rih-LIJ-uhn	-gion says /juhn/	A system of faith and worship shared by a group of people. <i>Example:</i> Every religion has its own traditions.
5	religious	re·li·gious rih-LIJ-uhs	Suffix -ous means “full of”	Related to religion, or deeply devoted to a faith. <i>Example:</i> She reads religious books every morning.
6	worship	wor·ship WUR-ship	or after w says /ur/	To show deep love, honor, and praise to God through prayer, song, or service. <i>Example:</i> People worship in many different ways.
7	baptism	bap·tism BAP-tiz-uhm	-ism says /iz-uhm/	A ceremony using water as a sign of being cleansed and joining the Christian faith. <i>Example:</i> His baptism took place at the river.

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
8	sermon	ser·mon SUR-muhn	er says /ur/	A talk or lesson given by a preacher during worship. <i>Example:</i> The pastor's sermon was about kindness.
9	scripture	scrip·ture SKRIP-cher	scr blend; -ture says /cher/	Holy writings, such as the Bible. <i>Example:</i> He memorized a scripture about patience.

Group 2: Books and Holy Writings

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
10	Genesis	Gen·e·sis JEN-uh-sis	Soft g says /j/	The first book of the Bible; it tells the story of creation. The word means "beginning." <i>Example:</i> Genesis begins with "In the beginning..."
11	Revelation	rev·e·la·tion rev-uh-LAY-shuhn	-tion says /shuhn/	The last book of the Bible (often called "Revelations" by mistake). A revelation is also something surprising that is made known. <i>Example:</i> The Book of Revelation is full of visions.
12	testament	tes·ta·ment TES-tuh-muhnt	Suffix -ment	One of the two main parts of the Christian Bible: the Old Testament and the New Testament. <i>Example:</i> The New Testament tells about Jesus' life.
13	gospel	gos·pel GOS-puhl	-el says /uhl/	"Good news"; the first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) about Jesus' life and teachings. <i>Example:</i> Gospel music grew out of the church.
14	psalm	psalm SAHM	Silent p and silent l	A sacred song or poem; the Book of Psalms has 150 of them. <i>Example:</i> Psalm 23 begins, "The Lord is my shepherd."
15	parable	par·a·ble PAIR-uh-buhl	-ble says /buhl/	A short story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson. <i>Example:</i> Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Group 3: People and Leaders

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
16	apostle	a·pos·tle uh-POS-uhl	Silent t	One of the twelve followers Jesus sent out to spread his teachings; also a messenger of faith. <i>Example:</i> Peter was an apostle.
17	disciple	dis·ci·ple dih-SY-puhl	Soft c says /s/	A follower and student of a teacher, especially of Jesus. <i>Example:</i> A disciple learns by following the teacher.
18	prophet	proph·et PROF-it	ph says /f/	A person believed to speak messages from God. <i>Example:</i> Isaiah was a prophet in the Old Testament.

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
19	elder	el·der EL-der	Base word old → elder	An older, respected leader in a church or community. <i>Example:</i> The elders prayed for the new members.
20	Messiah	Mes·si·ah muh-SY-uh	Double s; -iah says /eye-uh/	The promised savior and deliverer; Christians believe Jesus is the Messiah. <i>Example:</i> Handel wrote a famous song called "Messiah."

Group 4: Faiths and Peoples

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
21	Jewish	Jew·ish JOO-ish	ew says /oo/	Relating to Judaism or the Jewish people, whose faith follows the Torah. <i>Example:</i> Passover is a Jewish holiday.
22	Christian	Chris·tian KRIS-chuhn	ch says /k/; -tian says /chuhn/	A person who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ; relating to Christianity. <i>Example:</i> Christmas is a Christian holiday.
23	Hebrew	He·brew HEE-broo	Open syllable he = long e	The ancient Israelite people, and the language most of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) was written in. <i>Example:</i> The Torah was written in Hebrew.
24	Muslim	Mus·lim MUZ-lim	s says /z/ here	A follower of Islam, a faith that follows the Quran and Prophet Muhammad and also honors Abraham, Moses, and Jesus as prophets. <i>Example:</i> Many Muslims fast during Ramadan.
25	enlightened	en·light·ened en-LY-tuhnd	Silent gh; -ed says /d/	Having deep understanding or spiritual wisdom; in Buddhism, enlightenment means freedom from suffering. <i>Example:</i> The teacher felt enlightened after quiet reflection.

Group 5: The Inner Life of Faith

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
26	spirit	spir·it SPEER-it	sp blend	The invisible, non-physical part of a person; in Christianity, the Holy Spirit is God's presence. <i>Example:</i> Her spirit stayed strong in hard times.
27	soul	soul SOHL	ou says long o here	The deepest, spiritual part of a person that many believe lives forever. <i>Example:</i> Music can feed the soul.
28	devout	de·vout dih-VOWT	ou says /ow/	Deeply committed to one's faith. <i>Example:</i> My grandmother is a devout believer.
29	devotion	de·vo·tion dih-VOH-shuhn	-tion says /shuhn/	Strong love and loyalty; also time set aside for prayer or Bible reading. <i>Example:</i> They read a daily devotion before school.

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
30	righteous	right·eous RY-chuhs	Silent gh; -teous says /chuhs/	Doing what is morally right and fair; living in a way that pleases God. <i>Example: A righteous person stands up for what is right.</i>
31	holy	ho·ly HOH-lee	Open syllable ho = long o; y says /ee/	Set apart as sacred and connected to God. <i>Example: The Bible is called a holy book.</i>
32	faith	faith FAYTH	ai vowel team + th	Trust and belief in God or in something you cannot see. <i>Example: Faith helped him keep going.</i>
33	grace	grace GRAYS	Magic e; soft c says /s/	God's love and kindness given freely, not earned; also a prayer before meals. <i>Example: We said grace before dinner.</i>
34	mercy	mer·cy MUR-see	er = /ur/; soft c; y = /ee/	Kindness and forgiveness shown to someone who doesn't deserve punishment. <i>Example: The judge showed mercy.</i>

Group 6: Big Events and Actions

#	Word	Syllables / Say it	Phonics clue	Definition and example
35	crucifixion	cru·ci·fix·ion kroo-suh-FIK-shuhn	Soft c; -xion says /kshuhn/	The act of putting someone to death on a cross; in Christianity, the death of Jesus on the cross. <i>Example: Good Friday remembers the crucifixion.</i>
36	resurrection	res·ur·rec·tion rez-uh-REK-shuhn	s says /z/; -tion = /shuhn/	Rising from the dead; Christians believe Jesus rose on the third day (celebrated at Easter). <i>Example: Easter celebrates the resurrection.</i>
37	repentance	re·pent·ance rih-PEN-tuhns	Base word repent + -ance	Feeling truly sorry for wrongdoing and choosing to change. <i>Example: Repentance means turning around and doing better.</i>
38	surrender	sur·ren·der suh-REN-der	Double r; ur and er	To give up control; in faith, to trust God fully. <i>Example: He chose to surrender his worries in prayer.</i>
39	saved	saved SAYVD	Magic e + -ed says /d/	Rescued; in Christianity, being freed from sin through faith in Jesus. <i>Example: She said she was saved at age twelve.</i>
40	charity	char·i·ty CHAIR-ih-tee	ar says /air/ here; y = /ee/	Love shown by helping others; also giving to people in need. <i>Example: Our class collected cans for charity.</i>
41	covenant	cov·e·nant KUHV-uh-nuhnt	o says short u /uh/	A serious, sacred promise or agreement, such as God's covenant with Noah or Abraham. <i>Example: The rainbow was a sign of the covenant.</i>

Word Family Connections

Base word	Related words	What the ending does
religion	religious	-ous turns a noun into a describing word
devout	devotion	-tion turns a describing word into a noun
repent	repentance	-ance names the action or feeling
resurrect	resurrection	-ion names the event
crucify	crucifixion	y changes to i, then add -xion
reveal	revelation	Shows something that was hidden
right	righteous	-eous means “full of” what is right
Christ	Christian, Christianity	-ian means “a follower of”

Lesson Procedure (Each Session)

Step	Time	What happens
1. Hook: Beat Drop	5 min	Play the beat. Mr. O (or the teacher) claps out one big word, like res-ur-REC-tion , and asks: “How many beats? Where’s the loud one?”
2. Phonics Warm-Up	5 min	Review 2–3 Phonics Keys. Students hunt for the pattern in today’s word group and highlight it.
3. I Do: Model	8 min	Teacher models each word: say it, clap the syllables, point to the phonics clue, read the definition, read the example sentence.
4. We Do: Syllable Chant	8 min	Whole group chants each word over the beat: “Break it down: a-POS-tle! Silent t, don’t let it fool ya!” Students echo, then chant in pairs.
5. You Do: Word Work	12 min	Students make flashcards (word on front; syllables, say-it, and definition on back) and write one original sentence per word.
6. Share and Check	5 min	Volunteers read sentences aloud. Class gives a thumbs-up for correct pronunciation and meaning.
7. Exit Ticket	2 min	Students break one new word into syllables and define it in their own words.

Five-Day Pacing Guide

Day	Focus	Words
Day 1	Places, practices, and worship	Group 1 (tabernacle through scripture)
Day 2	Books and holy writings + people and leaders	Groups 2 and 3
Day 3	Faiths and peoples	Group 4, plus a respectful discussion of how different faiths are related
Day 4	Inner life of faith + big events and actions	Groups 5 and 6
Day 5	Review, chant performance, and quiz	All words; students perform a group chant and take the quiz below

Mr. O's Vocabulary Chant

Clap it out, break it down, every word gets a beat,
TAB-er-nak-uhl, that's four, keep it neat.
PROF-it got a p-h, but it's sayin' /f/,
a-POS-tle hides the t, keep it silent, yeah.
rih-PEN-tuhns, break it down nice and slow,
Turn around, do better, now you're ready to grow.
rez-uh-REK-shuhn, rise up off the floor,
Say it, break it, define it, use it, then you know it for sure.

Differentiation

- **Younger or emerging readers:** Start with the short words (church, soul, holy, faith, grace, saved, elder, spirit). Use picture cards.
- **On-level learners:** Complete all six groups with flashcards and original sentences.
- **Advanced learners:** Research word origins (Genesis comes from Greek for "origin"; apostle from Greek for "one who is sent"; Messiah from Hebrew for "anointed one") and write a short paragraph using 8 or more words.
- **English learners:** Add a translation in the student's home language to each flashcard and pair with a buddy for the chant.

Respectful Classroom Note

Some of these words (such as Jewish, Christian, Hebrew, Muslim, and enlightened) describe real communities and beliefs. Remind students that people practice faith in different ways, and that the goal is to understand words accurately and speak about every tradition with respect. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all trace their roots to Abraham, which is a helpful connection to share.

Assessment: Vocabulary Quiz

Part A: Match the word to its meaning. Write the letter on the line.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. ____ disciple | A. The first book of the Bible |
| 2. ____ Genesis | B. Feeling truly sorry and choosing to change |
| 3. ____ repentance | C. A follower and student of a teacher |
| 4. ____ tabernacle | D. Deeply committed to one's faith |
| 5. ____ devout | E. A holy tent used for worship in the wilderness |
| 6. ____ charity | F. Helping and giving to people in need |

Part B: Break it down. Split each word into syllables and circle the stressed beat.

7. resurrection _____ 8. religion _____ 9. crucifixion _____

Part C: Find the phonics clue.

10. Which letter is silent in **apostle**? _____ 11. What sound does **ph** make in **prophet**? _____
12. What sound does **ch** make in **Christian**? _____ 13. Which two letters are silent in **psalm**? _____

Part D: Use it. Write one sentence for each word.

14. righteous _____
15. surrender _____
16. prophet _____

Answer Key

1. C 2. A 3. B 4. E 5. D 6. F 7. res-ur-**REC**-tion 8. re-**LI**-gion 9. cru-ci-**FIX**-ion 10. t 11. /f/ 12. /k/
13. p and l 14-16. Answers will vary; check for correct meaning and spelling.

Extension Activities

- **Word Hunt:** Find 5 vocabulary words in a Bible story (Noah, Moses, or the Good Samaritan) and copy the sentence where each appears.
- **Write Your Own Verse:** Write a 4-line rap or poem using at least 6 vocabulary words, then perform it over the beat.
- **Vocabulary Bingo:** Call out definitions; students mark the matching word on their card.
- **Family Connection:** Students teach 3 words to a family member and explain the phonics clue for each.

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