

SOS Scripture Guide

What is the SOS Journey?

The name, *Sword of the Spirit Devotional Journey*, is taken from Ephesians 6:17, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” The SOS Journey is how we put on or apply the truth of the Word of God (the Bible) in a way that transforms our thinking, our emotions, and our living. The SOS Journey is more than a Bible reading plan. It is a “devotional” journey, a way of expressing and “fanning into flames” our devotion to God.

The SOS Journey includes Bible reading but also journaling, meditating, praying, and living. We recommend that you plan for 30 minutes a day at least 5 times a week for this journey. That’s our recommendation. But you do what is best for you and your schedule. Here are the steps for the *Journey*. The readings for the *Journey* are on the church website or can be requested by calling the church office.

Begin with a short prayer

Before you begin reading, prepare your heart by confessing any known sin and asking God to reveal his majesty and wonder “in the face of Jesus” as you read. This step is critically important and often overlooked. We need to be mindful that the Bible is not just a book, but the Word of God and the Spirit uses it to speak to us. Consider praying the Lord’s prayer slowly and meditatively (Matthew 6:9-13).

We Read

There are 5 readings a week (usually one chapter each) in the SOS Journey. These readings are from both the Old and New Testaments and may, at times, coordinate with our current sermon series or the season of the year. As you read, ask the Spirit to guide you to a verse or a few verses to focus on for that day.

We Think

We do this by journaling. This simply means writing some thoughts related to the verse or verses the Spirit has you focusing on for that day in a notebook (You can receive a free notebook in the mail by contacting the church office). We use the word *SOMA* to guide our thinking. Soma means ‘body’ in Greek and in Swahili it means ‘to read’. Until you are familiar with the process you may wish to write SOMA across the top of your

page, or the individual letters or words as headings as you go through the journaling/thinking process. To see what this looks like, let's assume you read Philippians chapter 4 as your SOS reading for today.

Write the date on the top of the page. The letter **S** in SOMA stands for scripture so here we focus on our key verse or verses for the day. Let's say we decide to focus on Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice" as our key verse for this day. We write that verse or the reference if the verse or verses is long or just a phrase or word from the verse first.

The next step is to observe, (the **O** in SOMA). Here you ask who, what, where, when, and why? You are just observing what the author was saying to the people in that day. You may write something like "the Apostle Paul wanted the Philippians to rejoice all the time." We are just noting what the passage says. It might seem obvious, but observation is key to understanding. You are asking the question, "What does it say (to the original audience)?" To help understand the verse consider the context of what you have read in the rest of the selection as well as up to this point in the book.

The letter **M** stands for meaning. Now you begin to interpret the passage (all literature needs to be interpreted — even this morning's news website!). You ask meaning questions like "What does the word 'rejoice' mean?" Or "How can people rejoice when they are suffering?" Or you ask some other interpretive question. Here you are asking the question, "What does it mean?"

The last letter of SOMA is **A** which stands for apply. You must apply the truth and meaning of the passage to your life. Here you ask how the truth of the passage intersects with your life for that particular day. "How do I rejoice always today? Or "How does this verse affect how I think about my day?" Here you are asking "What does it say to *me* today?"

When we are journaling, we are doing what the Bible calls meditating. To meditate means to think deeply or to ponder. When we wrestle with what the text says, means, and apply it to our lives, we are meditating. God calls us to not only read but to think about what we read!

We Pray

Now pray the passage. Prayer is how we respond, bringing our hearts into alignment with God's Word. Ask God to make this truth true in your heart and life. Slowly pray the passage, verse or verses asking the Spirit to help your mind and heart believe it. Perhaps write out a short prayer. "We pray what we read, working our lives into active participation in what God reveals in the word."[\[1\]](#)

We Live

Now go out and live the truth you have just been reading, journaling, and praying about. As the Spirit reminds you of the reading and thinking you did earlier, you have a chance to reorient your life, your heart, your thinking, in alignment with the truth of God throughout the day.

Family Devotions — We recommend that you take your key verse(s) and, if you are married, read it together with your family. Then talk about it for a few minutes. “What does it mean?” “How do we apply it?” and then pray together as a family. Ordinarily the husband/father will lead in this time. But he will call on other family members to read or comment. It should be a conversation, not a monologue.

Bible Project Videos — You will see listed with the SOS Journey readings various videos from *The Bible Project*. These excellent videos introduce different books of the Bible and there are also some that are on Bible themes. We encourage you to make use of these videos as you are able.

[1] Eugene Peterson *Hearing God* p. 109.

Download past Sword of the Spirit guides here:

[SOS Scripture Guide – Q1 2020](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – May 2020](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – June 2020](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – July 2020](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – August 2020](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – September 2020](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – October 2020](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – Nov/Dec 2020](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – Q1-Easter 2021](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – Q2 2021](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – Q3 2021](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – Q4 2021](#)

[SOS Scripture Guide – Q1 2022](#)

View [The Bible Project](#) videos here:

Books: [Genesis 1-11](#), [Genesis 12-50](#), [Matthew](#)

Series: [How to read the Bible](#)

Themes: [God](#), [Image of God](#), [The Covenants](#), [The Messiah](#), [Sacrifice and Atonement](#), [The Son of Man](#)