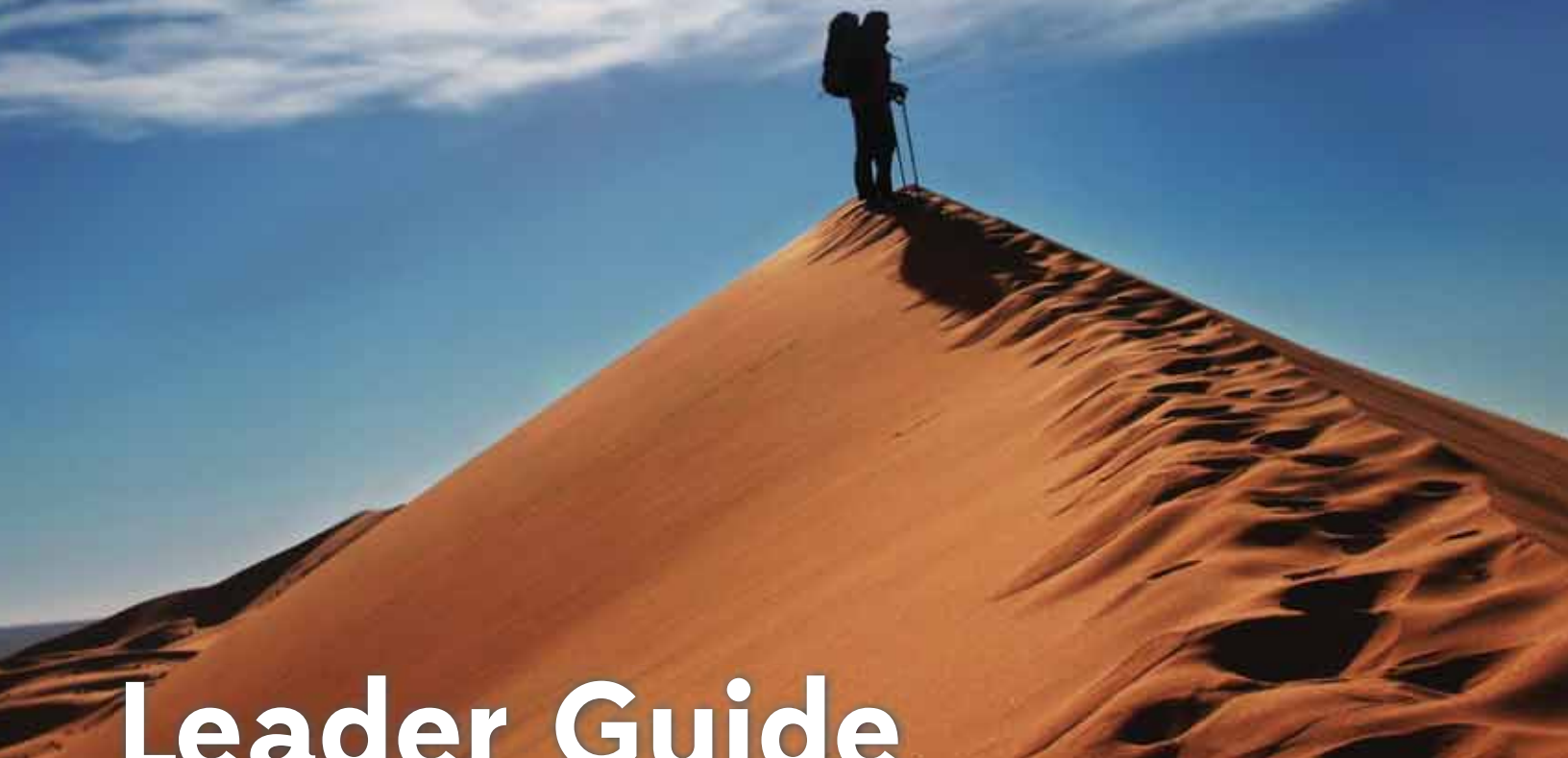


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# THE JOURNEY BEGINS!

Stephen Valgos



## Leader Guide

An Introduction to the Old Testament, Third Edition Revised

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*An Introduction to the Old Testament*

Third Edition Revised

## **LEADER GUIDE**

Stephen Valgos



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This book is dedicated to my wonderful wife, Jill, who so patiently waited for me to finally come to bed as I labored late into the night time and time again. And to my sons, Mark and Luke, that they may one day search the Scriptures for themselves and experience the excitement and joy of encountering God in its pages.

I want to offer my sincere appreciation to my beloved students at St. Stanislaus Parish School (Modesto, California), classes of 2003 and 2004, for your love, patience, enthusiasm, energy, and willingness to celebrate and share with me the joy of studying the Sacred Scriptures as this work was created. May God bless you and make his presence known to you through them always.

I want to thank my student aides, Anthony Palermo and Kristin Garke, for their help in editing and formatting earlier editions of this work. Finally, my thanks to the Central Catholic High School English Department teaching staff for their willingness to edit this work in addition to the piles of student essays through which they courageously wade each quarter.

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped  
for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life.

*Dei Verbum* 21

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# Contents

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Letter to Teachers and Leaders . . . . .	5
Reflect before Reading the Old Testament . . . . .	7

## Resources

Map: Abraham’s Journey and the World of the Patriarchs . . . . .	9
Map: The Exodus from Egypt . . . . .	10
Map: The Tribes of Israel in Canaan . . . . .	11
Map: The Kingdom Years . . . . .	12
Map: The Assyrian Empire (c. 700 BC) . . . . .	13
Map: The Babylonian Empire (c. 600 BC) . . . . .	13
Map: The Holy Land in Modern Times . . . . .	14
Genealogies from Genesis, Luke, and Matthew . . . . .	15
Your Family Tree . . . . .	21
Old Testament Religious History in Brief . . . . .	22

## **The Book of Genesis . . . . . 24**

Chapters 1 to 5 . . . . .	24
Chapters 6 to 10 . . . . .	26
Chapters 11 to 15 . . . . .	28
Chapters 16 to 20 . . . . .	30
Chapters 21 to 25 . . . . .	32
Chapters 26 to 30 . . . . .	34
Chapters 31 to 35 . . . . .	36
Chapters 36 to 40 . . . . .	38
Chapters 41 to 45 . . . . .	40
Chapters 46 to 50 . . . . .	42

## **The Book of Exodus . . . . . 44**

Chapters 1 to 4 . . . . .	44
Chapters 5 to 10 . . . . .	46
Chapters 11 to 15 . . . . .	48
Chapters 16 to 18 . . . . .	50
Chapters 19 to 24 . . . . .	52
Chapters 25 to 31 . . . . .	54
Chapters 32 to 34 and Chapter 40 . . . . .	56

## **The Book of Leviticus . . . . . 58**

Chapters 4, 11, 17, 19, 23, and 26 . . . . .	58
--	----

## **The Book of Deuteronomy . . . . . 60**

Chapters 24, 27, 28, 31, and 34 . . . . .	60
---	----

<b>The Book of Joshua</b> .....	<b>62</b>
Chapters 1 to 6 .....	62
Chapters 13 to 15 and Chapters 23 to 24 .....	64
<b>The Book of Judges</b> .....	<b>66</b>
Chapters 1 to 6 .....	66
Chapters 13 to 16 .....	68
<b>The Book of Ruth</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>The Book of 1 Samuel</b> .....	<b>72</b>
Chapters 1 to 7 .....	72
Chapters 8 to 12 .....	74
Chapters 13 to 17 .....	76
<b>The Book of 2 Samuel</b> .....	<b>78</b>
Chapters 1 to 6 .....	78
<b>The Book of 1 Kings</b> .....	<b>80</b>
Chapters 1 to 3 and Chapters 5 to 6 .....	80
<b>The Book of 2 Kings</b> .....	<b>82</b>
Chapters 1 to 3 and Chapters 17 and 25 .....	82
<b>The Book of Psalms</b> .....	<b>84</b>
Psalms 22, 23, 51, 103, and 136 .....	84
<b>The Book of the Prophet Jonah</b> .....	<b>86</b>
Write Your Own Faith History .....	88
Reflect after Reading the Old Testament .....	90
A Note to the Student .....	92
Acknowledgments .....	93

Dear Teacher or Leader,

Thank you for considering this tool for educating our Catholic youth in the joy of finding God in the Sacred Word. As I began teaching middle school religion in August 2002, I was pleased to see that my students were required to purchase a Bible, but I was frustrated by not finding a worksheet for them to use alongside their reading of the Bible as a primary source. Their religion text referenced the Scriptures, some studies focused on particular people or events, but no workbook that I found provided students and teachers with a tool that would walk them from the beginning of the Scriptures to the end over three school years, a 120-week time frame. With that goal in mind, I began my work.

This student workbook and leader guide provide an overview of the story of the Hebrew people: God's Chosen People. Not all of the books in the Old Testament can be covered in a single school year, so this workbook covers entire books where possible and introduces only the most important chapters of other books selected from the Old Testament. My goal is to help students understand the story of salvation in a thorough, comprehensive, meaningful way.

I intend that this work be used as a critical supplement to the regular religious instruction in the classroom. Biblical literacy is paramount in the Church today. Especially since the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, reading the Sacred Word has been encouraged universally. I needed my students to read it and reflect on it at home so that we could discuss it in class. This Bible study program invites them to do exactly that.

Students read the Scriptures, find the answers to the questions, write down the chapter and verse where they find each answer, reflect on a particular short-answer question, write down their favorite verse, and come to class ready to share. The questions, as you can see, are to ensure that students are doing the prescribed reading. The classroom teacher has total control over the discussion of the Scriptures themselves. He or she is able to explain in greater depth and apply what is said to students' lives, to what is going on in the classroom or in the contemporary world. The emphasis on particular verses or values is up to the teacher.

Although I initially intended the study to be a supplement to the religious curriculum, I understand that some teachers are using *The Journey Begins!* as a lens through which to teach the religion standards for their particular grade level. Fantastic! Teachers will no doubt find a number of ways to use this study not only to enhance their students' understanding and love for the Scriptures but also to increase their level of participation and engagement at Mass. My students come into class excited to have heard a previously reviewed Scripture passage proclaimed during the Liturgy of the Word that Sunday.

The end of each lesson has an opportunity for critical reflection on a verse or point made by someone in the text. Students are invited to share their personal experiences, reflections, difficulties, or understanding of the particular lesson reviewed. I understand that students enjoy this component most. In some cases they illustrate their point, sometimes they are asked to write prayers, and still other times they thank their teacher or their parent or parents. Many of my high school students tell me they still have their Bible study worksheets

from more than five years ago. The story of salvation is exciting and fun, and God uses the Sacred Scriptures to speak to his children. I invite you to give them the opportunity to hear his voice by using this program.

I used *New American Bible* Revised Edition (NABRE) to create the work. Consequently, students will have an easier time finding the answers by using the NAB, but it is not necessarily required. Schools within the Diocese of Stockton in California typically ask students to purchase the NAB *Catholic Youth Bible*, from Saint Mary's Press. Additionally, students can always go to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Web site (<http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/>) and access the NAB online if they need to do so.

I would not get too wrapped up in having the right answers. Remember that the goal is to get our students to read the Bible so that a meaningful, informed discussion can take place in the classroom. I make the worksheet due on the Wednesday of each week. We dedicate that class period to our Bible study. As we review the correct answers and discuss them, I invite students to grade their own workbooks, correct missed questions, and fill in incomplete questions with the correct answer. I make a point not to nitpick the correct answers. If the students make a genuine attempt, that's good enough for me. I want them to read it so we can discuss it. The worksheet is only a means to accomplish that end. I have to remind myself of that fact often.

I always allow the prompting of the Holy Spirit to guide the class and the discussion. If we are unable to complete the grading because of an important and meaningful discussion, then so be it. The students enjoy the discussion greatly (and learn the most that way too).

At the end of the class period I have the students open their workbooks to the correct page and have them stack them and pass them to the front. I grade with a check for fully complete work, a plus for almost complete, and a minus for halfway complete (or less) so that my whole day is not consumed with correcting. Remember that this is a fun supplement and an opportunity to break open God's Word. Don't kill yourself. Come prepared, and your students will love the discussion!

Thank you for using this work in your schools and classrooms. I hope you find this tool as helpful and exciting as I have. Please don't hesitate to e-mail with questions concerning the program or ideas for its use. I use teacher comments to enhance the quality of the program by taking cues from those who use it in the field. You can e-mail me at [stephen@catholicangelist.com](mailto:stephen@catholicangelist.com) or write to me care of Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1320.

God bless,  
Stephen Valgos

## **Reflect before Reading the Old Testament**

In the space provided, write what you know about the Old Testament: its main figures, events, books, or accounts. Who are the main figures in this story of God's covenant with humanity? Why do you think Christians concern themselves with reading the Hebrew Scriptures, also called the Jewish Scriptures? What do you hope to learn this year by reading these accounts of the Hebrew people and their experiences with the God of Israel?

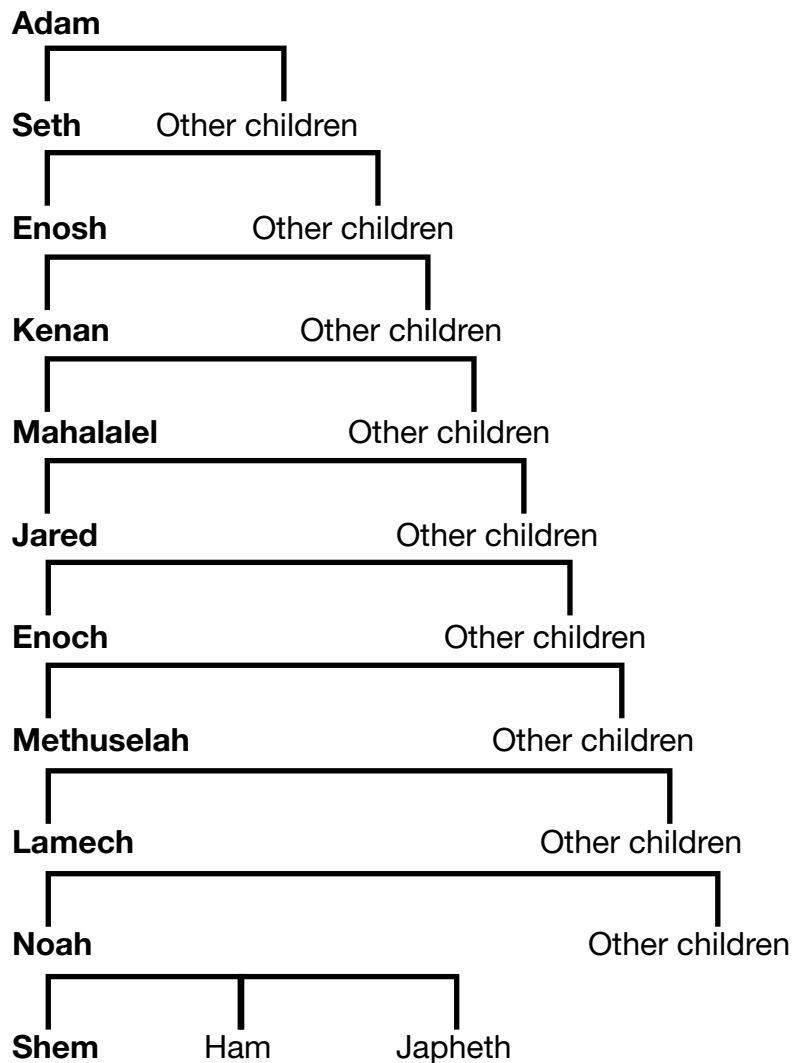






# Genesis Chapter 5: Genealogy from Adam to Noah

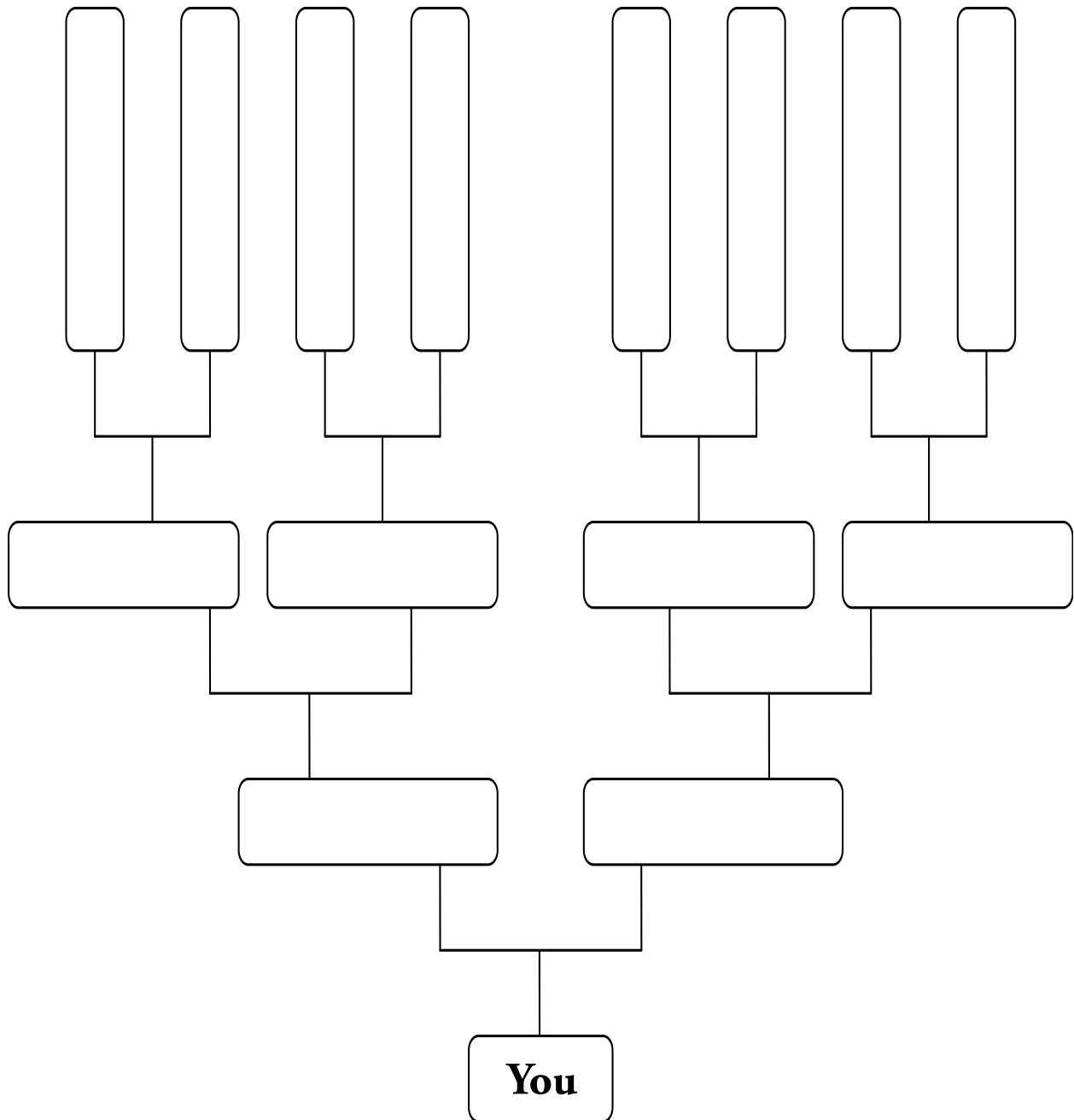
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# Your Family Tree

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What is your genealogy? From whom do you descend? Create a family tree in the space below, or go online and download your own. Go back as far as you want, adding older generations as needed. Include both sides of your family, as many people as possible. Talk to your mother, father, and especially grandparents to fill in the blanks.



# Old Testament Religious History in Brief

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Before 1850 BC: The Primeval History

- Adam and Eve
- Cain and Abel
- Noah and the flood
- Tower of Babel

1850 BC: The Call of Abraham; the Patriarchs and Matriarchs

- Abraham and Sarah
- Isaac and Rebecca
- Jacob and his wives/concubines: Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah

1750 BC: Hebrews Settle in Egypt

1290 BC: Exodus from Egypt; the Wandering in the Wilderness

1200 BC: The Hebrews Enter Canaan; Period of the Judges\*

- “Major” judges: Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson
- “Minor” judges: Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon

1020 BC: Israel’s Monarchy Begins

- Saul (1020-1000 BC)
- David (1000-961 BC)
- Solomon (961-922 BC)

922 BC: The Kingdom Divides: Israel (North) and Judah (South)

- Kings of the divided kingdoms
  - Israel: Jeroboam I, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri Tibni, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea
  - Judah: Rehoboam, Abijam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah
- Prophets: Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, and First Isaiah

721 BC: The Assyrians Conquer Israel

- Prophets: Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel

---

\*Modern scholars categorize the judges as “major” and “minor” based only on the length and substance of their accounts in Sacred Scripture. The Hebrew Scriptures do not classify the judges in this way.

587 BC: The Babylonians Conquer Judah: Babylonian Exile

538 BC: Persians Conquer the Babylonians; Exiles Begin to Return to Jerusalem

- Prophets: Second Isaiah, Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi

458 BC: Additional Exiles Return to Jerusalem

- Prophets: Nehemiah and Ezra

332 BC: Greeks Conquer the Persians

142 BC: Maccabees Defeat the Greeks; Hasmonean Dynasty Begins

63 BC: Romans Conquer Israel

Student Learning Objective:  
To identify God as the source of all creation, and humanity as central to God's creative activity on our behalf.

## The Book of Genesis Chapters 1 to 5

1. What does God create on each of the first six days of creation, according to Genesis chapter 1?  
*Day 1: Light and darkness (1:1-5)*  
*Day 2: A dome called "sky" (1:6-8)*  
*Day 3: Earth and vegetation (1:9-13)*  
*Day 4: Greater and lesser light and stars (1:14-19)*  
*Day 5: Swimming creatures and winged birds (1:20-23)*  
*Day 6: Cattle, creeping things, wild animals of all kinds, and people (1:24-31)*  
*(Ask the students to note that God is a God of order. He creates order out of "chaos" and commands humans to be stewards of his creative work.)*
2. God blesses man and woman and then gives them a command. What is his command to them?  
*God's commandment is to "be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it." (1:28)*
3. What is the greatest difference between the first and second creation accounts?  
*Answers may vary but should include that in the first creation account, man is created last, but in the second man is created first; or in the first account God creates man and woman at the same time, and in the second, Eve is created out of Adam. (2:7, 22)*  
*(Explain that these are two stories of God's creation side by side—and there is no need to reconcile the two. They both teach the truth that God is the author of all life and created humans as the epitome of his creative activity.)*
4. What order does God give to man after settling him in the garden of Eden?  
*God orders the man not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and bad. (2:17)*  
*(Ask the students to note that although God did not burden the first humans with many rules, they were still unable to keep that one.)*
5. What does the serpent tell Eve will happen if she eats from the tree of knowledge?  
*The serpent tells Eve that from the moment she eats it, her and Adam's eyes will be opened, and they will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad. (3:5)*  
*(Ask the students to note that the serpent lies from the beginning. He says they can be like a god, but they are already like God—created in his very image. Sin disfigures that image of God within us.)*

6. What do Adam and Eve do after eating the fruit, when they hear God coming?  
*Adam and Eve hide from God after eating the fruit. (3:8)*  
*(Remind the students that sin causes us to hide from God as a result of our feelings of guilt.)*
  
7. After punishing the serpent, the man, and the woman, how does God show his mercy?  
*The Lord makes leather garments, to clothe the man and the woman. (3:21)*
  
8. How does God punish Cain for killing his brother, Abel?  
*God punishes Cain by banning him from the soil. Cain becomes a restless wanderer on the earth. (4:11, 12)*
  
9. What is Cain's response to God's punishment? How does God show his mercy and love to Cain?  
*Cain says that his punishment is too great and that someone will kill him. God shows his love by marking Cain to protect him. (4:13, 14, 15)*
  
10. What happens to Enoch after living for 365 years?  
*Enoch walks with God, and then God takes him. (5:24)*

### **Reflection Question**

In the first two chapters of Genesis, we read two very different accounts of God's creation of the world. How are they different? How are they the same? What do you think is the main point of these two stories? In other words, what is the author of Genesis trying to tell us about the world and all that is in it? Please explain.

My verse to share is \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_ because . . .