

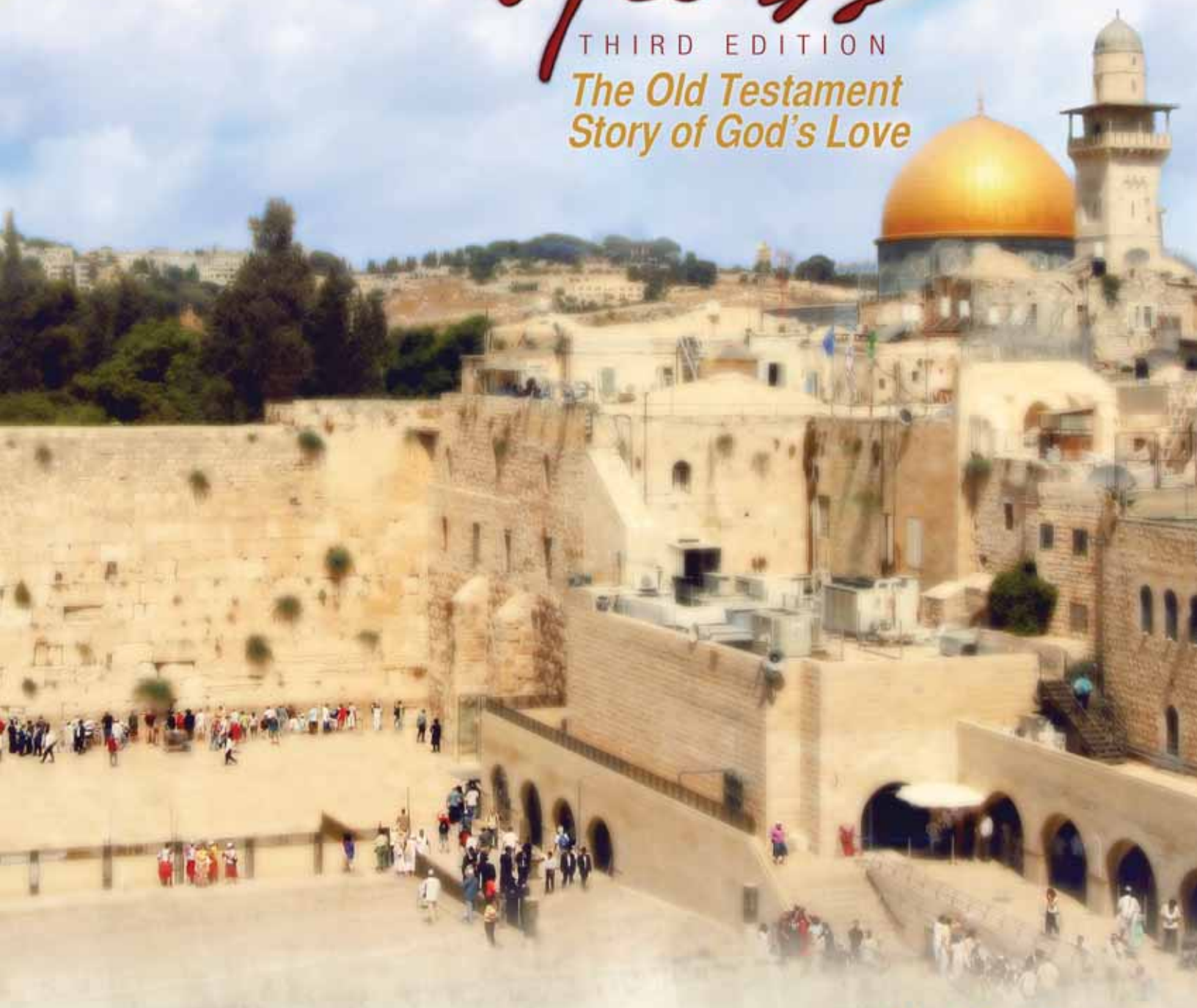
Teaching Manual for

saint mary's press

Written on Our Hearts

THIRD EDITION

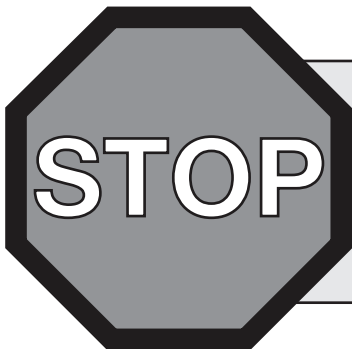
*The Old Testament
Story of God's Love*



Mary Reed Newland



Teaching Manual for
Written on Our Hearts



To access the ancillary teaching resources for this course, go to www.smp.org/OLE/WrittenOnOurHearts



Teaching Manual for

**Written on Our Hearts:
The Old Testament Story
of God's Love**

Third Edition

Student text

by Mary Reed Newland



saint mary's press

The publishing team included Steven C. McGlaun, development editor; Lorraine Kilmartin, reviewer; prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the production departments of Saint Mary's Press.

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Happy are those
 who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the LORD,
 and on his law they meditate day and night.
They are like trees
 planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
 and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.

(Ps. 1:1-3)

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Introduction for the Teacher

The Narrative Approach of This Course

The Scriptures as Sacred Stories

When family gathers for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, we wait for the stories to begin. An uncle or an aunt tells about the hard days of the Great Depression. Our father's or grandfather's face takes on a sober stare as he relates his story about going off to war in the Pacific. A teenage cousin is urged to speak about her induction into the National Honor Society. Stories whirl around the table and in the memories of everyone present, providing sustenance. The holiday meal nourishes everyone's body; the stories nourish a sense of family identity.

A family's stories form the myth by which the family members know themselves. The term *myth* in this context does not, of course, carry the reduced meaning of myth as an empty, false story or an illusion. Rather, myth is a story that reveals an inner truth. In a family where stories of the past are shared, myth is the glue that holds the family together.

Joseph Campbell, in *The Power of Myth* (p. 31), claims that myths have four functions:

1. *A mystical function.* Myths open us to "realizing what a wonder the universe is, and what a wonder you are, and experiencing awe before this mystery."
2. *A cosmological function.* Myths show us "what the shape of the universe is, but . . . in such a way that the mystery again comes through."
3. *A sociological function.* Myths support and validate a particular social order.
4. *A pedagogical function.* Myths show us "how to live a human lifetime under any circumstances."

Human beings need myths to live by; myths join us with God, Creation, and the human family.

The Old Testament (called by Jews the Hebrew Scriptures or, simply, the Bible) provides myths for Jews and Christians as a religious family. The biblical stories shed light on our identity, outline our relationship with God, and show us how to live with mystery and all of life's ups and downs. They nourish our faith, hope, and love. Robert Alter describes the Old Testament in this way:

As odd as it may sound at first, I would contend that prose fiction is the best general rubric for describing biblical narrative. Or, to be more precise, . . . we can speak of the Bible as *historicized* prose fiction. . . .

Let me hasten to say that in giving such weight to fictionality, I do not mean to discount the historical impulse that informs the Hebrew Bible. The God of Israel, as so often has been observed, is above all the God of history: the working out of His purposes in history is a process that compels the attention of the Hebrew imagination, which is thus led to the most vital interest in the concrete and differential character of historical events. The point is that fiction was the principal means which the biblical authors had at their disposal for realizing history. (*The Art of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 23 and 32)

Through stories, the biblical narrators explained their experiences of God's action in their life. They told these stories to unify and inspire, to coax and warn the people of Israel.

Stories: Interesting and Accessible

The authors of the Old Testament told stories, and Jesus himself taught in stories, for good reason: stories are interesting and accessible. Teachers know that if they want to hold students' attention, a story does the trick. Great speakers know the same thing, and they practice at being good storytellers. Why do stories work so well? Because they are interesting. They put flesh and bone on abstract ideas. The story of Ruth and Naomi puts the concepts of devotion and love on their own two feet and shows what these virtues look like in the flesh. Listening to a volleyball champion talk about her games is far more informative and interesting than studying diagrams in a book or listening to an audiotope about how to serve.

Stories tap the imagination. Religious stories tap the religious imagination. John H. Westerhoff comments:

The Scripture contains the sacred myths of the Christian community. They ought not be reduced to rational discourse. The Bible is poetry plus, not science minus. . . . For too long we have attempted to understand reality solely through reason and have forgotten the importance of symbolic narrative, metaphor, and sacred story. Christianity is a historical, but also a metaphorical, religion. (*Aesthetic Dimensions of Religious Education*, p. 23)

Because stories are metaphorical and symbolic narrative, they engage the imagination. When the imagination is engaged, interest cannot be far behind.

Stories are accessible. Jesus certainly understood this: "With many such parables he spoke the word to [the crowd], as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples" (Mark 4:33–34). The greatest teacher who ever lived realized that parables—stories—made his teachings accessible to everyone, not just the learned elite.

In the student text for this course, a strong narrative element is used for the above-mentioned reasons. The biblical stories are interesting and accessible, particularly when introduced to young readers by a storyteller like Mary Reed Newland, the author of the text.

Mature Themes in the Scriptural Stories

The stories of the Old Testament are filled with murder and mayhem, suffering and sex, betrayal and infidelity—not the stuff of children’s books. The first story after the Creation narrative is one of crime and punishment: Adam and Eve sin, and God banishes them from Eden. In the next episode of Genesis, we read of fratricide: Cain brutally murders his brother, Abel.

Few of the biblical stories have ideal endings. After the many agonies of leading the Israelites out of slavery, Moses cannot enter the Promised Land. At one point the prophet Elijah begs God to kill him. After Job lands on a dunghill, suffers with horrible sores, and loses all his property, he is still not sure why he has to suffer.

Also, consider the violent curses that are hurled in the Psalms; for instance:

Pour out your indignation upon them,
and let your burning anger overtake them.
May their camp be a desolation;
let no one live in their tents.

(69:24–25)

Consider the delight in this psalm:

I pursued my enemies and overtook them;
and did not turn back until they were consumed.
I struck them down, so that they were not able to rise;
they fell under my feet.

(18:37–38)

If we heard our students or other adults talking like that, we would probably call the police, or at least a counselor. It takes a good deal of perspective to understand such passages in their context.

In other words, extensive experience and maturity help considerably when reading the Old Testament. By the time we reach adulthood, we might more fully understand the burning anger and bitterness that the psalmist poured out. We might better comprehend the anguish of Moses or Elijah or Job because we are more likely to have experienced great disappointment, despair, and suffering.

Although the Old Testament is taught in many high schools in the ninth grade—and the student text for this course is certainly usable at that level—older students are much more likely to understand and appreciate the biblical stories. Each year of life adds to the students’ base of experience. For that reason Saint Mary’s Press recommends that this course be taught at the tenth- or eleventh-grade level.

In any case, the marvelous stories of the Old Testament can inspire and challenge all of us, no matter what age. In them we can see God’s faithful love working in the lives of fallible, scared, courageous, and sometimes humorous human beings. This course, by telling the stories and explaining key concepts, opens up the richness of the Old Testament to students and teachers alike.

Drawing Out the Meaning of Stories

Mary Reed Newland was a premier storyteller, and she used her skills and experience as a storyteller to write the student text for this course. She sought to open up the Jewish experience of God’s faithful action in history by doing what the people of Israel themselves did—telling a story first and then discussing its meaning. Mary Newland believed that knowing the Bible would lead to lov-

ing it, and that knowing the Bible meant, first and foremost, knowing its stories. (In order to become most familiar with these stories, your students should each have their own copy of the Bible, which they can feel free to write in and personalize with highlighting, reflections, and questions.)

The following three steps describe how we learn through telling and hearing stories.

1. Experience. The learning process begins with a significant experience, which is formed into a story or a history. For example, a young woman's volleyball team captures the state championship despite all sorts of adversity. When the woman comes home, her parents and siblings say: "Tell us all about the game. What did the scout from the university say to you? What did it feel like to win the game?" And so on. In formulating the story she tells, the young woman gives her own coloring to the events, adding her personal realizations and emotions. Observers of the game and ensuing celebration would tell a different story than the young woman because their experience of the event would be different. Nevertheless, for the hearer of the account, the story serves as a vicarious experience of the actual event. A story is a way of experiencing something.

The people of Israel learned in a way similar to how the family of the volleyball player did, indeed as we all do. The Israelites heard the stories of God's saving deeds among their people, and those stories were vicarious experiences for them. For instance, God (working through Moses and Aaron) led the people out of Egypt. God saved them from slavery. Time and time again, God showed mercy to the people. Eventually they reached the Promised Land. Thus every year at Passover, Jews all over the world retell the story of their ancestors, and the telling of the story becomes a way of reliving the experience. The story of the Exodus gives both Jews and Christians a sense of who they are and how God's actions have affected their lives.

Mary Newland used the Bible itself as a model for her approach to the student text. Her first concern in writing was to tell the biblical stories as clearly and concisely as possible, focusing on the main events. Then she directed the reader to the relevant scriptural passages. This approach enables students to vicariously experience the events of the stories.

One way to build on the storytelling dimension of the Old Testament is to regularly read, or have the students read, passages aloud in class, to get a sense of the oral tradition out of which the Bible originated.

2. Reflection and analysis. After our initial real-life or vicarious experience of something, often we reflect on or analyze what happened. We ponder the story. We compare our version of events with the versions of reliable sources who can broaden our understanding and perspective. The young woman on the winning volleyball team will undoubtedly talk to her teammates and her coach about the game and the season. They all will read the newspaper reports. If a video of the championship game was made, they will watch it, noting mistakes and good plays.

This process of reflection and analysis also happened with the biblical stories. The stories of the Bible began as oral traditions, not written accounts. Over time, each story became nuanced or colored by successive tellers. By the time the books of the Bible were written and compiled, long years of reflection and analysis had been integrated into the fabric of the stories. Because the Bible is the living Word of God, biblical scholars and devout people continue to add to our understanding and appreciation of the history of God's Chosen People.

3. Application. Finally, our experiences and the reflection and analysis that follow them permit us to apply what we have learned to our life. This application is a personal decision. Based on their analysis of the game, the volleyball players might try to improve their serves or spikes. So too through reflection on their collective stories, the people of Israel learned how to live righteously in God's eyes.

The textbook for this course provides students with many opportunities to apply their learnings from the biblical stories to their own way of life. And after all, a new and better way of living is the intended fruit of reading God's Word. John Shea, in *Stories of Faith*, comments:

[The biblical stories] are stories meant to disclose aspects of our relationship to God and through that relationship our commitments to each other. The stories of scripture were remembered and today remain memorable because they are similar enough to our own lives for us to see ourselves, yet different enough from our lives for us to see new possibilities. They tell us what we want to know and more. They come close to home and yet are an invitation to journey. . . . The traditional stories, both historical and fictional, reflect concerns and conflicts present in our lives and suggest ways of dealing with them. (P. 89)

The Bible lives today as we live out its lessons in our actions. The stories of Abraham, Hagar, Moses, Ruth, David, Jeremiah, and all the other great figures of the Old Testament give us models for our own life, models who were imperfect and flawed like us but were nonetheless totally loved by God.

The Contents of This Course

The Old Testament, which contains the roots of not only Judaism but also Christianity, is closely tied to the history of the biblical Jews. So in order to understand the Old Testament and its import in the lives of today's Christians, we need to understand the history of, and the challenges to, the people of Israel.

The text for this course aims to help students comprehend the wealth of the Judeo-Christian spiritual tradition and challenges them to grow in their appreciation of God, themselves, and other people. Valuing the Old Testament as a source of living wisdom—the Word of God—comes about in part when students understand how these Scriptures were written and in what contexts they inspired and were heard by the ancestors of our tradition.

An Exile Lens

The text takes the position, as do many mainstream biblical scholars, that most of the Scriptures of the Old Testament reached their final form during or around the time of the Babylonian exile. Thus the exile experience became the lens through which the ancient Jews perceived their stories. Their history made sense in light of what was happening to them during the exile, and vice versa: what was happening to them in exile made sense to them because of their history.

At many points in the student text the students are reminded of the exile “lens” as the way the Israelites interpreted their experience and found God's

past messages and deeds particularly significant. These reminders to the readers are not inserted simply to help the students become more attuned to scholarly issues in biblical criticism. Rather, awareness of the exile lens enables young people to see that their own condition of “exile,” in the various contemporary forms they may experience it, can heighten their own openness to God’s Word. The exile perspective of the text aims ultimately at affecting the level of spirituality, not just knowledge.

Goals and Objectives

This course has the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1. That the students read the Old Testament and understand it

Objective. The student text lists and provides commentary on key passages to be read from the Old Testament.

Goal 2. That the students know and appreciate the major themes and issues in the Old Testament

Objectives. The text and teaching manual do the following:

- provide commentary, analysis, and reflection on the major sections of the Old Testament
- include maps, timelines, and illustrations of important places and events
- offer group activities, questions for discussion, map exercises, background information, research and art projects, role-play situations, ideas for guest speakers, interview suggestions, case studies, writing projects, and debate topics—all designed to deepen the students’ understanding of the Old Testament
- provide review questions and test questions that may be used to check the students’ knowledge

Goal 3. That the students reflect on how biblical truths may be incorporated into their own lives

Objective. Through review questions, personal reflection exercises, prayer services, writing activities, and group discussions, the students have opportunities to consider their values and actions in light of insights from the Old Testament.

Goal 4. That the students develop a deeper understanding of how God has worked in human history and still works in the present

Objectives. The text and teaching manual do the following:

- help the students encounter the stories of people who have been touched by God and have responded in heroic, simple, inspiring, or dramatic ways
- emphasize that despite all the failings and sins of the Chosen People, God continually saved them by calling them to repentance
- show the Old Testament as the tradition out of which Jesus came and proclaimed his message
- ask the students to respond—through the prayer services and the writing of reflections—to ways God has been present to them in their own life story

These goals will be best met if the Bible, the student text, and this teaching manual are used together.

Meeting these goals does not necessarily, or even ideally, mean covering all the material in the text. The approach of this text and teaching manual is to offer material on every book of the Old Testament and to point out the

most important passages of each book. However, you must select from this material according to the needs and capabilities of your students. For ideas on selecting content from the text, see the note on pages 16 to 17 of this manual.

An Outline of Major Concepts

The following list of major concepts corresponds to the major sections in each chapter of the student text. This teaching manual is also organized according to these major concepts. This list serves as an outline of the course contents.

Chapter 1

The Old Testament: The Story of God's Boundless Love

- A. The Bible: A Time Capsule from God
- B. Interpreting the Scriptures
- C. A God Who Acts in History
- D. What Are the Scriptures of the Old Testament?

Chapter 2

Beginnings: Stories of God's Creation and Promises

- A. Stories of the Origins
- B. Abraham: The Father of Biblical Faith
- C. Jacob: A Man Named Israel
- D. Joseph: Treachery, Triumph, and Forgiveness

Chapter 3

Freedom: The Exodus and the Covenant of Sinai

- A. The Exodus: Freed from Slavery
- B. The Covenant of Sinai: An Offering from God
- C. Sealing the Covenant

Chapter 4

The Law: Living Out the Covenant

- A. Leviticus: Holiness and Ritual
- B. Numbers: Priestly Regulations and Inspiring Stories
- C. Deuteronomy: The Law and Love

Chapter 5

The Land: Finding Hope for the Future in God's Gift

- A. Making Sense of the Past
- B. Joshua: Sweeping into the Promised Land
- C. Judges: Saving Israel from Itself
- D. Ruth: An Israelite Foreigner with a Great Destiny

Chapter 6

The Kings: Becoming a Nation

- A. Stories of Transition to Nationhood
- B. Samuel: Anointer of Kings
- C. Saul and David in Conflict
- D. King David: Nation Builder
- E. King Solomon: Temple Builder

Chapter 7

The Prophets: Crying Out the Word of God

- A. The Kingdom Breaks Up
- B. Elijah and Elisha in the North
- C. Amos and Hosea in the North
- D. Isaiah in the South: The Greatest Writing Prophet
- E. Micah in the South: Sympathy from the Bottom of Society

Chapter 8**The Exile: Prophets of Warning, Consolation, and Hope**

- A. Judah’s Slippery Slope: Heading for Disaster
- B. Jeremiah: Persecuted for God’s Sake
- C. Ezekiel: From Hearts of Stone to Hearts of Flesh
- D. Second Isaiah: Toward a Joyous Return

Chapter 9**The Remnant: Making a Home After the Exile**

- A. Chronicles: History as It Should Have Been
- B. The Return: Discouragement and Struggle
- C. The Second Temple: A Focus for Faith
- D. Renewal: Drawing the Community’s Boundaries
- E. Keeping the Faith Alive Under Fire

Chapter 10**Wisdom and Wit: Seeking the Ways of God**

- A. Life According to Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes: What’s It All About?
- B. Wisdom, Sirach, and the Song of Songs: Life with God
- C. Stories of Encouragement: Faith and Goodness Triumph

Chapter 11**The Psalms: Pouring Out Heart and Soul to God**

- A. The Psalms as Songs of the Heart
- B. Psalms of Lament: Crying Out in Suffering
- C. Psalms of Thanks and Praise: Celebrating Who God Is

The New Testament: God’s Love Story Fulfilled in Jesus

We now turn to the “how” of this course—the ways you can use the student text and teaching manual to accomplish the course goals.

Lesson Planning for This Course

Tools for Teaching

During the brief explanation given here, you may find it helpful to periodically glance at one of the chapters in the text and its corresponding chapter in this manual to see examples of the teaching tools described.

Note: It is unlikely that a class—even a class of advanced students—will be able to cover every biblical figure, story, event, and book described in the student text. For instance, in studying the judges (chapter 5), you may need to focus on some of the judges’ stories and leave out others. Or you may choose to assign the scriptural readings for only one or two judges and then have the students simply read Mary Newland’s brief accounts of the other judges. If your students are assigned to read all the scriptural readings suggested in the text, they will probably find the course burdensome. Therefore, pick and choose from among the readings. This is possible throughout the course. For example, when several minor prophets are covered in a major concept, you may choose to focus on only one. Naturally, you will want to pay the most at-

tention to key figures such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, but even for those major prophets, you will probably need to select from the assigned readings about them.

Teacher Prayers

At the beginning of each chapter in the teaching manual there is a brief prayer and reflection for teachers. This is intended to help you approach your teaching prayerfully, aware that you are acting as God's instrument, a witness of faith to your students.

Use of the teacher prayers offered here is optional—perhaps you have found another way to bring faith and prayer into your work. If you choose to use the prayers offered, here are several suggestions for their use:

- The prayer can be used at the beginning and end of each chapter you teach, as suggested.
- You may choose to use a prayer from a given chapter each day that you teach that chapter.
- Perhaps there is one prayer in the manual that captures you, and you wish to use it as your reflection every day throughout the course.
- In addition to private prayer, you may also wish to gather periodically with the team of teachers for this course and spend a few minutes in shared prayer. This will strengthen you as a team and support you individually.

However you pray, entering the classroom with a prayerful heart will have a far-reaching effect on your students and the entire school-faith community.

Major Concepts

As mentioned earlier in this introduction, each chapter of the textbook and teaching manual is organized according to the major concepts of that chapter. The major concepts for a given chapter of the text correspond roughly to the major, largest headings within the chapter. Thus the major concepts are the organizing principle for teaching the material. In the chapters of the manual, these concepts are given as concise summaries of the significant ideas conveyed by the chapter. Most chapters have three to five such major concepts, and these serve as a helpful tool for planning your schedule and organizing your teaching of the course.

The major concepts in a given chapter are listed and described at the beginning of that chapter in the teaching manual, with references to numbers in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for each concept. This opening description of concepts can serve as a chapter summary for your purposes. Then each concept for the chapter is treated in turn. That is, the title of each major concept is repeated, with a reference to the related student text pages. Then review questions and activities on that concept are provided.

Review Questions

The review questions that end each section of the chapter in the student text are repeated in the teaching manual, and a suggested answer is provided for each question. The intent of the review questions is simply to check whether the students have retained the basic information for a given concept. The questions do not require full comprehension or assimilation of the material, as more analytical or reflective kinds of questions would. Students who can accurately answer the review questions demonstrate basic comprehension. It is hoped that by using other course methods, they will go beyond that level to analysis, reflection, and application.

Student Text Activities

Sidebar activities appear in the student text corresponding with student text material on that page or spread. These activities are repeated for you in this manual. Your students will not be able to do all the activities in the span of a semester, the time normally allotted for this course. So you will need to select from these activities to fit the needs of your class. Even if you do not assign a given text activity, however, the students' reading of the activity along with the regular text material can have the positive effect of helping them see the text material in a new light—perhaps a more personalized light. The text activities should be viewed not as burdensome assignments but as intriguing reflection starters that may or may not be assigned as homework or class activities.

Almost all the text activities require the students to respond in writing. This is done intentionally, to remove the teacher's burden of requiring written work for every activity. You may decide not to require written work for most, or even all, of the activities, and you may tell the students that they can accomplish the activity in some way other than by writing.

However, a typical method of using text activities is to assign them as written homework or class work. This use of the activities as written assignments will work most effectively if it is combined with some other processing of the students' reflections or findings in class. Here are some ways of using these activities:

- 1. Paired exchanges.** Have each student exchange her or his written reflections with another student (if you judge that the material generated by the activity is appropriate and that the students will be comfortable sharing it). Direct the students to read their partner's reflections and then to discuss them. Afterward a whole-class discussion could draw insights from students who volunteer their thoughts from the paired discussions. However, caution the students that they should not bring up what their partner said unless the partner gives the okay.

- 2. Quiet collection of thoughts, followed by a discussion.** Ask the students to think about the question or task presented in the activity for a few quiet minutes, rather than having them write their thoughts. Giving them a few moments to collect their thoughts before asking for class involvement in discussion often yields a more fruitful discussion than would off-the-cuff remarks. The follow-up discussion to the quiet time could be done in pairs, small groups, or with the whole class.

- 3. Brainstorming.** Brainstorm answers to the question in the text activity with the whole class. For example, an activity may call for the students to recall times when they have experienced something similar to what is in the student text. Sometimes the most effective way to generate examples like this is to have students call them out to you without discussion as you write them on the chalkboard. Once the whole list is out, you can go back and ask for elaboration on the ones that you think would be most helpful to discuss. Always treat the students' own accounts with respect, helping them reflect on their experience by the way you ask them clarifying questions or affirm them in your comments on what they have related.

- 4. Skits or role-plays.** Some activities that call for examples from the students' experiences can be extended into skits or role-plays. Of course, to pull this off, you must have willing students who are comfortable with letting

their experiences be the subject of dramatization. If you are portraying a dilemma or a “what would you do?” incident, either the student who offered the example or another student could play the principal role and try to resolve the situation. At times, activities call for the students to write imaginary dialogs between two persons. These, too, could be read aloud by two students to heighten their impact.

5. Fishbowl discussions. When a text activity calls for reflection on an issue that is likely to generate controversy or at least differing opinions, an effective way to discuss the issue is with a “fishbowl.” In this type of discussion or debate, a small group of students discusses a topic in a circle while the rest of the class observes from outside the circle.

Try to make sure that the small group is made up of students with a variety of opinions on the issue. Leave one chair in the circle empty and tell the rest of the class that if someone outside the circle wants to make a comment or a point, the person can occupy that chair, make the comment, and then vacate the chair for others to do the same. This method can sustain interest in the discussion by enabling limited participation by potentially everyone in the class. But it also avoids the pitfalls of a controversial large-group discussion, which can get out of hand.

6. Journal writing. A journal is a written record of a person’s inner dialog—the thoughts, feelings, questions, impressions, and connections that come to mind over a period of time. For this course it is strongly recommended that each student keep a journal, with the expectation that he or she will write in it almost every day. The students can write in response to assigned reflection activities from the text or from the additional activities suggested in this manual. Besides using their journals to respond to assignments, they can use them simply to record their thoughts on and reactions to daily life. Generally speaking, the more one writes in a journal, the more effective the journal keeping is. If the students truly give themselves to journal keeping, they will find that it generates as well as records their inner dialog.

7. Test questions. Text activities can often check for deeper levels of comprehension than review questions can. (In many cases, these activities require personal reflection, analysis, evaluation, application of the material to one’s personal life, etc.) Because of this, you may choose to incorporate some text activities into your quizzes and tests as, for example, essay questions. In doing so, however, remember that these activities generally require subjective responses from the students, responses that cannot be as easily judged for accuracy as can answers to review questions and objective test questions. (Sample test questions, both objective and essay, are given in appendix 1 of this manual.)

Additional Activities

For each major concept, you will find one or more additional activities. These are most often classroom activities that suggest small-group or large-group discussion. They occasionally require handouts that must be photocopied and then distributed to the students. These handouts appear at the end of the respective chapters in the manual.

Please refer to appendix 2 for additional teaching suggestions.

One attractive but potentially frustrating feature of this teaching manual is that, generally, more classroom strategies are offered than you can use in your teaching. Each chapter of this manual is set up like a smorgasbord from which you will need to select those activities that best meet the needs of your class. The need to make such decisions is a major reason for presenting here a method of planning and scheduling your teaching of the entire course.

A Method of Planning and Scheduling

This section suggests a method for developing your overall course schedule, as well as for deciding how you will teach individual major concepts. This basic approach to lesson planning consists of the following five steps:

1. Identify the total number of class periods available for this course.

If you are teaching the course within one full semester, you may have eighteen weeks or so to work with. However, each semester in a school calendar includes vacation or holidays, special school functions, test days, and so on. For purposes of planning, therefore, only sixteen of the eighteen weeks in a semester may actually be available for teaching. This results in a total of about eighty class periods in a typical semester. Naturally you will need to adjust this estimate based on the variables of your school calendar. If you are teaching the course over an entire academic year, you may have about 160 class periods actually available for teaching the material.

2. Assess for the entire course the approximate number of class periods needed for each major concept. To assist you in this step, the major concepts are listed at the beginning of each chapter of this manual. It may be immediately apparent that some concepts will have to be treated briefly, perhaps in one class period or less. Other concepts may require several class periods. You may even decide to skip certain major concepts or even whole chapters. All such preliminary decisions should be made at this stage of planning.

The primary objective here is to take a broad view of the course to ensure that you will cover all that you intend to cover. Consciously planning to eliminate parts of the student text from study is one thing; simply running out of time at the end of the course is another. This step of the planning method should help you avoid such surprises.

3. Divide the course into approximately two-week blocks of time. In advance of each two-week block, make more specific decisions regarding which major concepts to present during that block. Determine how many and which class periods will be devoted to each of those concepts. At this point in the process, you will be ready to begin more immediate plans for your teaching. Note, however, that planning in two-week blocks does not include planning for audiovisuals. You will need to order these well in advance if you are relying on national distributors or even a diocesan resource office for films and videotapes.

4. For each major concept to be taught during a given two-week block, select the pages of the student text that you will cover and the teaching strategies from this manual that you will use, keeping in mind the number of class periods devoted to that concept. You may encounter a situation in which you have two class periods available for teaching a major concept, but this manual and the student text offer enough material and strategies to fill several periods. How do you decide what to do?

In such cases always begin by asking: What approaches have the students responded well to in the past? What kinds of strategies seem ineffective with them? What am I comfortable doing in class? Which strategies just feel right to me? And of course: How much time is required by each available strategy? How much time do I have?

5. After each class period, briefly evaluate for future reference your experience with the strategies selected. Ongoing evaluation may be one of the most talked about and least practiced virtues of effective teaching. We are usually so caught up with preparing for our next task that we simply do not take the time to look back on classes we have successfully completed—or maybe only survived! The task of ongoing evaluation can seem so tedious and time-consuming that we feel oppressed by it before even attempting it.

In this planning process, the step of evaluation is so simple that it can quickly and consistently be included in your teaching. For further explanation see point 6 of the next section.

A Lesson Planning Chart

On page 23, you will find a copy of the lesson planning chart for this course that includes examples of how the chart can be used. A blank copy of the chart is provided on page 24.

Here is an explanation of how to use the chart:

1. In the first column, write the number or date of the class period. That is, you may wish to number your class periods for the semester from, say, one to eighty. Or you may prefer to specify each session by the date on which you will teach it. (*Note:* You may want to complete the chart in pencil rather than pen, knowing that you will have to make at least minor adjustments, given the students' response to the material, missed class periods, etc.)

2. In the second column, state the major concept to be taught during the class period. Use an abbreviation of the concept title listed in this manual.

3. Identify the relevant pages of the student text to be covered in class or assigned in advance as homework reading. List these in the third column. You may be teaching one concept for several class periods, so you will want to identify the specific pages of the student text for each of those periods. (This point may become clearer when you read point 5, below.)

4. Now you are ready to specify the teaching strategies, or activities, that you will use during the class. Use the activity titles along with page references from this manual to complete the column headed "Activities." Also describe briefly any modifications or additions you made to a text activity. For instance, write "Activity as brainstormed with whole class" or "Activity descriptions in paired exchange, with whole-class discussion following."

5. In the column titled "Homework Assignment," specify the student text pages to be read, the text activities to be completed, or any other task that you want to assign as homework.

6. Finally, after teaching each class, briefly jot down in the last column your evaluation of the class, particularly concentrating on the strategies you identified in the column "Activities." You will likely develop a shorthand of your own for this. Perhaps you might simply state, "Effective as described in manual; repeat next time." In another case you might write, "Too much material; drop activity." These statements, brief as they are, may be all you need to refresh your memory when teaching the course in the future.

Lesson Planning Chart

Date, Class	Major Concept	Text Pages	Activities	Homework Assignment	Evaluation
Mon. 9/28	Ch. 2: B, Abraham	39–40 (was home- work)	Discuss “Spiritually, We Are All Semites” (tm p. 57). Do activity on tx p. 39 and discuss.	Read pp. 40–42. Do activity on tx p. 42.	Some students had difficulty identifying a person who left all behind. They expressed doubt that people would really do this. It led to an interesting discussion about risk, sacrifice, and following God.
Tues. 9/29	Abraham	40–42	Two student reports on “The Bedouin Lifestyle” (tm p. 57). Then do “The Continuing Obligation of Hospitality” (tm pp. 57–58) and discuss the students’ responses to activity on tx p. 42.	Read pp. 42–47. Do activity on tx p. 44.	Students liked the bedouin reports. The “Hospitality” activity led to an intense discussion of obligation to homeless people.
Wed. 9/30	Abraham	42–47	Students share their reflections from their homework (activity on tx p. 44). Go over the review questions on p. 47 of the text.	Read pp. 47–49, up to “A Strange Encounter.” Do “A Summary of Abraham’s Role” (tm p. 58).	Needed a follow-up activity to activity on tx p. 44.
Thurs. 10/1	Ch. 2: C, Jacob	47–49	Work on activity on tx p. 48 in pairs. Have the students first reflect on and share experiences from their own life, then write a story or skit that depicts an example.	Read pp. 49–51. Do activity on tx p. 50.	The students were shy about sharing their experiences with one another—better to leave as personal reflection. The stories and skits were great!
Fri. 10/2	Jacob	49–51	Go over the homework (activity on tx p. 50). Do “World Happenings” (tm p. 59). Go over the review questions on p. 51 of the text.	Read pp. 51–53, up to “The Brothers on Joseph’s Turf.” Do activity on tx p. 52.	Discussion about issues of young people didn’t go far—students expressed that they are tired of talking about the problems and issues of young people. The map activity went well.

Lesson Planning Chart

Date, Class	Major Concept	Text Pages	Activities	Homework Assignment	Evaluation



Teaching Strategies

CHAPTER 1

The Old Testament: The Story of God's Boundless Love

Major Concepts

- A. The Bible: A Time Capsule from God.** The Bible is the word of the living God. The Old Testament and the New Testament together tell the Story of God's love for us. The Bible can be thought of as a sort of time capsule from God—a collection of ancient stories, history, poetry, and wisdom—that helps us see and understand God's boundless love for us and his longing for our happiness. The Old Testament declares how God created the world out of love, offered hope of salvation when humans rejected that love, formed a covenant with the Israelites, and promised that the whole world would be saved through them. The New Testament affirms that God sent Jesus to bring salvation to all the world, the Holy Spirit renews Christ's followers as they carry on his mission, and Christ will come at the end of time to complete God's Reign of justice and peace. The Scriptures were inspired by God, which means he ensured that they contain all the truth necessary for our salvation. In creating the Bible, God collaborated with humans by inspiring biblical writings and by guiding the Church as it selected which writings would be collected in the Bible. *See the Catechism*, nos. 54–64 (a sketch of Israel's salvation history); 101–124 (sacred Scriptures); 128–130 (the unity of the Old and New Testaments); 430–432, 457–458, 727–730 (Jesus); 702–706, 731–741 (the Holy Spirit).
- B. Interpreting the Scriptures.** We study the Bible to discover the authors' original intent in writing scriptural texts, in order to appreciate what God is saying to us through those texts today. Like the Scriptures, the Church's Tradition comes from God's revelation. The Church's Tradition is the oral preaching of Jesus' followers that has been handed down to the bishops and expressed in the Church's doctrines, teaching, and worship. The Church uses Scripture scholarship and Church Tradition to guide us as we interpret the Scriptures' meaning. The deeper intent of Scripture study is to know and love God more deeply. Study of the Old Testament is essential for Christians not only because it points to the New Testament but also because we encounter God in it. *See the Catechism*, nos. 76–84 (the relationship between Church Tradition and the Scriptures); 109–120 (interpretation of the Scriptures); 128–130 (the unity of the Old and New Testaments).
- C. A God Who Acts in History.** The history and the Scriptures of ancient Israel are intertwined. The Bible recounts salvation history, or the Story of God's actions and the people's responses over many centuries. The bibli-

cal period was from about 1850 BC, when God promised that Abraham's descendants would reveal the one God to the world, until about AD 100, when the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was defined. Through the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt to the founding of the nation of Israel, from its split to its exile and its oppression by several empires, God remained with the Chosen People. Christians see Jesus as the Messiah long awaited by the Jews. After the Jews were dispersed throughout the world in AD 70, Jewish religious leaders agreed on an official set of scriptures to guide Jewish religious life and ensure Jews' sense of identity. *See the Catechism*, nos. 54–64, 705–710 (a sketch of Israel's salvation history); 436–439 (Jesus as the Messiah); 839–840 (the Church's relationship with the Jews); 1961–1964 (the Law); 2580 (the Temple).

D. What Are the Scriptures of the Old Testament? The Hebrew Scriptures told the Jews in their own language how to live a faithful life and provided reassurance that God loved them. Because Christianity's religious roots are in Judaism, the Hebrew Scriptures have always been part of the Scriptures of Christianity. The Catholic canon of the Old Testament consists of forty-six books, including a few more texts than those in the Protestant and Jewish canon. The Old Testament is divided into four main sections: the Pentateuch, the historical books, the wisdom books, and the prophetic books. The Pentateuch (or Torah) is the heart of Israel's story and, for Jews, the primary scriptural authority in matters of faith and practice. *See the Catechism*, nos. 64 (prophets); 120 (the canon); 121–123, 702, 2569–2584 (the Old Testament); 2585–2589 (the Psalms).



Opening Teacher Prayer

Call to prayer. Be still within and without. Center yourself in the assurance of God's boundless love.

Read. Psalm 111

Reflect. In the past week, how have you experienced the work of God's hands? In what ways have you experienced God's love through the Bible?

Hold in your heart. "Holy and awesome is his name" (Ps. 111:9).



Concept A: The Bible: A Time Capsule from God



Review Questions: The Bible: A Time Capsule from God

Question. In what sense can the Bible be thought of as a time capsule from God?

Answer. The Bible can be thought of as a sort of time capsule from God—a collection of ancient stories, history, poetry, and wisdom—that helps us see

and understand God's boundless love for us and his longing for our happiness.

Question. Give a brief outline of the great Story of God's love as told in the Bible.

Answer. (1) God created the world and humankind out of infinite love. (2) God offered a promise of salvation when humans rejected that love. (3) God formed a covenant with Israel, the Chosen People, and promised that the world would be saved through them. (4) God molded Israel during the ups and downs of its history, challenging and comforting the people. (5) God sent Jesus, the divine Son and Messiah, as the human expression of his love and the fulfillment of his promises to Israel. (6) By his life, death, and Resurrection, Jesus brought salvation to all the world. (7) God the Father and Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to sustain Christ's followers, who carry on his mission until the end of time. Then Christ will return in glory as Lord of all, and God's universal Reign of justice and peace will finally be complete.

Question. What does it mean to say that the Scriptures are the Word of God? What does it mean to say that they are inspired by God? Explain how the Bible can be thought of as the result of a collaboration of God and human beings.

Answer. It means that God ensured the Scriptures contain all the truth that is necessary for our salvation: the truth about our relationship to God and all creation and the destiny meant for us, union with God forever. The Bible was created by a kind of collaboration of God with human beings in that God inspired the biblical writers and guided the Church as it selected which writings would be collected in the Bible.



Text Activities: The Bible: A Time Capsule from God

- List five *facts* about your family. Then list five *truths* about them. How have you come to understand these truths?
- Promise is a major theme throughout the Bible. What is the most important promise you ever made? Write about what that promise has meant to you and what difficulties, if any, you have faced in keeping it.



Additional Activities: The Bible: A Time Capsule from God

A Time Capsule from God

Review with the students the idea of the Bible being a time capsule from God. Ask them to reflect on what they would put in a time capsule to be opened by their great-grandchildren that would reflect the students' hopes for them and the love they have for them. Invite the students to share what they would include and why. Explore with them how the Bible is one way God shares his love with us as well as his desire for us to have true happiness.

Comparing the Old Testament with the New Testament

1. Instruct your students to thumb through the Old Testament and to note the number of pages it has. Tell them to find the table of contents and to count the number of books in the Old Testament.

2. Then have the students thumb through the New Testament and note the number of its pages. Tell them to count the number of books in the New Testament.

3. Pose these questions for discussion:

- ◆ What is immediately apparent about the relative sizes of the Old Testament and the New Testament?

- ◆ Why is the Old Testament so much longer?

The purpose of the exercise is to give the students an initial feel for the Old Testament. Point out that these Scriptures were written by many people over many centuries. On the other hand, the New Testament was written by a few people during a period of about fifty years.

4. As an additional step, encourage the students to simply sit and explore the Bible for a while to discover the kinds of things that are in it. Tell them to write down interesting things they find, questions that arise, insights, and so on. Have them share their findings in small groups or with the entire class. This activity is just intended to get them looking at what's inside (for some students, it may be their first time holding or looking through a Bible). Later in this chapter, an activity is offered in which the students explore in more detail the features of the Bible and learn about citations.

Attitudes Are Important

We live in an era when many people value passive entertainment more than disciplined activity like serious study. Thus expecting students to willingly spend time studying the Bible may be seen by some as asking a great deal. To cultivate in your students a positive attitude toward scriptural study, lead the following activity, which investigates the formation and importance of attitudes.

1. Tell your students to bring to class a souvenir or another object that has special significance for them—for example, a straw hat from Mexico, a ring, an old pair of tennis shoes. Also have them write and bring to class a paragraph or so describing what significance the object holds for them.

2. At the next class meeting, ask the students to pair off. Explain that the partners in each pair are to show their significant objects to each other—without any comments about why the objects are important. Each partner is to write a paragraph describing why the *other person's object* might be important to *that person*.

3. Next, direct the partners to take turns focusing on the significance of their objects. One partner should read her or his paragraph on why the other person's object might be important to that person. Then the owner of the ob-

ject should read her or his own explanation of why the object holds significance. The partners should then focus on the second object in a similar fashion.

4. When all the pairs have finished sharing, lead a discussion of the activity, using these questions:

- ◆ How well did your partner's perceptions about the significance of your object match your own feelings? [For an example, ask several pairs to read their paragraphs about the same objects.]
- ◆ Why can two people react so differently to the same object? [The owner has much more experience of the object and the circumstances surrounding its history; in short, the owner's attitude is unique.]
- ◆ How are our attitudes formed? [By all the experiences we have and by how we respond to those experiences.]

5. With comments like the following, explain the relationship between this exercise and the students' study of the Old Testament:

- ◆ Each of us brings to this course a variety of attitudes—perhaps some of them negative. We can be victims of these negative attitudes; that is, we can let them close our minds to this learning opportunity. Or we can overcome the negativity and open ourselves to a new learning experience. Vital to our getting the most out of this course is an openness to the truths offered by the stories of Moses, Ruth, Jeremiah, Esther, Job, and the many other characters of the Old Testament.
- ◆ An object—no matter how expensive or inexpensive it is, no matter how new or old it is—can have significance for us, but only if our attitude toward the object gives it significance. If an object is seen by someone who has no involvement with it or no appreciation of its history, it might be perceived as useless, ugly, or insignificant. Only involvement and understanding make things valuable to us.
- ◆ So our attitude toward the Old Testament, our willingness to invest time and energy in coming to know it, determines how much we will appreciate and value these sacred texts. An open mind is essential.

Scrolls and Scroll Making

The sidebar “The Treasured Scrolls” on page 10 of the student text describes how the ancients made the scrolls on which the sacred Scriptures were written. Assign one or more students to look into the scroll-making process in more detail and to report their findings to the class. Understanding the difficulties in the ancient process of writing texts can help increase modern people's respect and appreciation for their spiritual ancestors who left a written heritage.

Some creative or ambitious students may even want to try making scrolls themselves and then writing on them, as a visual for the classroom. The easiest, most practical way to demonstrate scroll making is to use two cardboard tubes from paper towel packages as the ends of a scroll and continuous-form computer paper as the “parchment.”

Pages
13–
17

Concept B: Interpreting the Scriptures



Review Questions: Interpreting the Scriptures

Question. How does Scripture scholarship help us get in touch with the intended meanings of the scriptural texts?

Answer. Scholars delve into the history, archaeology, literary forms, and culture surrounding the development of the texts to help us understand their intended meanings.

Question. What is the relationship of the Scriptures to the Church's Tradition?

Answer. Like the Scriptures, the Church Tradition comes from God's revelation—his self-communication with us. While the Sacred Scriptures were written down, the Church's Tradition is the oral preaching of Jesus' followers, the Apostles, that has been handed down to the bishops and expressed in the Church's doctrines, teachings, and worship.

Question. Why do Christians need to understand both the Old Testament and the New Testament?

Answer. They cannot understand the New Testament and Jesus without understanding the Old Testament. Also, the Old Testament has permanent value in itself because we encounter God, its inspiration, in it.



Text Activity: Interpreting the Scriptures

- Spend some time exploring your Bible. Find a passage in the Old Testament that you think is beautiful, powerful, or inspiring. Write out the passage and explain why you chose it. What does it have to say to you (what is the *truth* it offers you)?



Additional Activities: Interpreting the Scriptures

Getting into the Bible

Some of your students may not be familiar with reading the Bible, pronouncing biblical names, finding scriptural references, using footnotes, and so on; others may need a review. The following suggestions can help your students become comfortable with the Bible:

1. Personalized Bibles. Have each of the students personalize his or her Bible by covering it with paper of his or her choosing and tastefully decorating it, incorporating his or her name.

2. Contents and abbreviations. To get into the mechanics of reading the Bible, point out to the students the table of contents and the list of abbrevia-

tions (for both the Old Testament and the New Testament) that can be found at the front of every Christian edition of the Bible. Tell them to insert a bookmark there or to clip those pages of their Bible for quick reference. Mention that the abbreviations vary somewhat across different versions of the Bible: for instance, Genesis is abbreviated Gen. in some versions and Gn. in others. (See suggestion 8, below, for more on the versions of the Bible.)

3. Pronunciations. Point out the pronunciations in the index of the student text. To make sure that the students can pronounce the names of all the books of the Bible, lead a choral-type drill or chant so that they end up pronouncing each name five or six times. Students who like rap music might even want to make up a rap song using the names of the books of the Bible (or later in the course, the names of the patriarchs, the kings, the prophets, etc.). The emphasis should be on pronouncing names accurately, not on memorizing a list.

4. The structure of the books. Outline for your students the structure of the books of the Bible—that is, the fact that each book is divided into chapters and each chapter into verses. Also point out that some books have the same name but different numbers (e.g., 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, also written as I Samuel and II Samuel, which are referred to as the First Book of Samuel and the Second Book of Samuel).

5. Sources of information. Explain that each book of the Bible is often prefaced by a valuable introduction giving information about the book's author, the period in which it was written, who it was written for, and its significance. Recommend that the students read this material as well as the footnotes to each assigned passage. Questions that arise while we read the Scriptures are often answered in the introduction to a given book or in the footnotes. Show the students how to find the footnotes, explain the symbols used, and so on.



Handout **1-A**

6. Scriptural references. Most students need to learn how to look up scriptural references, or citations; do not assume that they know how to do this. To familiarize your class with the process, distribute handout 1-A, "How to Find a Scriptural Reference." With the students, go over the information on the first page of the handout. Then assign (either for small-group work in class or for homework) the matching exercise on the second page. The students are asked to look up each scriptural reference and write the letter of the corresponding summary in the appropriate blank.

7. Highlighter. If the Bibles are owned by the students, encourage the students to use a highlighter pen to mark the passages they are assigned to read. This will eliminate time spent in back-and-forth checking and will result in a Bible nicely marked up for later reference to significant passages. Let them know it is all right to write notes or questions or reflections in the Bible—God would approve of a well-used Bible!

8. Differences in versions. Explain that various versions of the Bible offer different translations. Choose a few students to look up passages in two or three versions, reporting to the class on the differences among the versions and whether they prefer any one version. Also, let the students know that the Catholic Bible includes some books that are not in the Protestant Bible: Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Judith, Tobit, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees, parts of Esther, and parts of Daniel.

The Bible and Catholic Attitudes

Before Vatican Council II, few Catholics read and studied the Bible. To explore past attitudes about scriptural study, ask your students to interview their parents (or even their grandparents or other older persons, who are more likely to have grown up before Vatican Council II) about what place scriptural study held in their early religious education. Older Catholics will probably have memories quite different from those of older Protestants. Each student should prepare a brief written report on the interview and should be prepared to comment on his or her findings in class.

Why Different Sources Tell Different Stories



Handout **1-B**

Some students have a hard time understanding why the Old Testament, if it is from God, has different sources and why those sources offer such varied and at times contradictory versions of the same events. Handout 1-B, “Writing a Family History,” may help those students and enhance others’ understanding of how the various sources contributed to the finished product of the Old Testament.

Distribute the handout, read aloud the quote by Anthony Gilles, and direct the students to answer the questions that follow the quote. Then ask them to volunteer their answers for discussion with the whole class. Finally, close with comments along the following lines:

- ◆ The Old Testament was put together over a long period of time. Like a family history that goes back for centuries, the Scriptures were formulated out of oral and written accounts composed and edited by many people throughout the years. The scriptural composers perceived God’s actions in history in slightly different ways, depending on who they were and what their experiences had been. This difference in perception is natural, and it represents the human dimension of the Scriptures. It actually makes the Scriptures more interesting and more complete—like a family history that draws from the experiences of many family members and branches of the family tree. Just as we know that family members will at times differ in their versions or interpretations of what happens over the years, we can expect that this was so in the gradual formulation of the Scriptures.
-



Handout **1-C**

Ten Commandments for Studying the Bible

Handout 1-C, “Ten Commandments for Studying the Bible,” offers guidelines for reading, interpreting, and meditating on the Bible. Give a copy to each student as a reference for the course and perhaps post these “commandments” prominently in your classroom (you could enlarge them on a photocopier). Read through the handout with your students and explain each guideline.

(These guidelines have been adapted from “Ten Commandments for Catholic Bible Study Groups,” by Matthias Neuman, in *PACE* 16, October 1985, pages 20–24. The article is included in its entirety in appendix 4 of this manual.)

Pages
18–
24

Concept C: A God Who Acts in History



Review Questions: A God Who Acts in History

Question. List the events in salvation history as given in the timeline of biblical history in this chapter.

Answer.

Abraham and Sarah arrive in Canaan.
 Jacob's descendants settle in Egypt.
 Moses leads the Exodus from Egypt.
 Joshua invades Canaan.
 The Judges lead the Israelite tribes in Canaan.
 Saul is named the first king of Israel.
 David unites the kingdom and takes Jerusalem as its capital.
 Solomon rules the kingdom and builds the Temple.
 The kingdom divides into Israel and Judah.
 The Assyrians capture Samaria, ending the kingdom of Israel.
 The Babylonians take Jerusalem. The exile of Judah begins.
 Cyrus of Persia frees the Jews to return to Judah.
 The people of Judah rebuild the Temple.
 Nehemiah becomes governor of Judah and starts a renewal.
 Ezra brings the Torah to Jerusalem.
 The Greeks conquer the Holy Land.
 The Maccabees revolt against the Greek rulers.
 The Romans conquer the Holy Land.
 Jesus is born.
 Jesus is crucified.
 The Romans destroy the Jerusalem Temple.

Question. How do Christians see Jesus Christ in relation to the promises made by God to Israel?

Answer. Christians see Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah—the fulfillment of all God's promises to Israel and the Savior of the world.

Question. Summarize Catholic teaching on Judaism.

Answer. Christians are forever linked with the Jewish people, who were the first to hear the Word of God. God's Covenant and special relationship with the Jews still stand, "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29). Like Christians, Jews work toward and await in hope the coming of God's Reign of peace and justice. But whereas Judaism looks for an unknown messiah to come, Christianity recognizes Jesus Christ as the Messiah, who has already come and who will return in glory.



Text Activities: A God Who Acts in History

- Do you find it easy or challenging to trust that God is taking care of you? Write a paragraph or two explaining your thoughts on this. If you wish, offer an example of a time you felt deep trust in God, or a time you faltered in your trust.

- List five experiences you have had of being a stranger or of being *with* strangers: for example, moving to a new city or trying to communicate with a foreigner. Next to each experience, write the emotions you felt.
- In your own words, write a paragraph explaining the meaning of Martin Buber's statement.



Additional Activities: A God Who Acts in History

The Bible Comes from the Jews

The sidebar entitled “Still the Chosen People: Catholic Teaching on Judaism” on page 19 of the student text discusses the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. To extend this discussion with your class, you could pose questions such as the following:

- ◆ Is it possible to be anti-Jewish and still be a Christian?
 - ◆ Could Christianity exist without its Jewish background, especially the Hebrew Scriptures?
 - ◆ Do you think of Jesus as a Jew, a Christian, or a Catholic?
-

A Geographical Perspective on Ancient History

A fascinating aspect of studying biblical history is the opportunity to put that history into perspective with what we know about the rest of the ancient world.

To foster a sense of what was happening in the rest of the world at various times in biblical history, the student text includes occasional sidebars about concurrent happenings around the world—including the parts of the world that were unknown to the people of the Near East. The students will have a better sense of these worldwide developments if they work with the outlined map of the world that is provided on handout 1-D, “World Map.” At the outset of the course, distribute copies of the outlined map to the students. Direct them to look up (in an atlas or an encyclopedia) and fill in the names of the following land areas and waterways. Most of these areas and waterways will be referred to in the sidebars of the text at some point in the course.

1. *Continents and subcontinents.* North America, Central America, South America, Greenland, Europe, Africa, Asia, New Guinea, Australia
2. *Countries and regions.* Egypt, Greece, India, Iraq, China, the Near East, the Sudan, Mexico, Peru, England, the Bering Strait, Turkey, the Saharan region
3. *Major waterways.* The Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Nile River

As the course proceeds and the text refers to these areas and bodies of water, have your students take out the filled-in maps and locate where the relevant happenings took place.



Handout **1-D**

Handout **1-E**

The Near East: Ancient and Modern

The map on page 20 of the student text shows the lands of the ancient Near East. Direct the students to revise the map on handout 1-E, “The Near East Today,” by drawing in (with dotted lines) the boundaries of the countries that presently occupy the same part of the world. They can consult an up-to-date atlas or encyclopedia in their work. The activity can help the students relate the ancient Near East to countries they may hear about in the news.

A Graphic Display of Israel’s Ups and Downs

A portrayal of Jewish history along a straight timeline is surely less descriptive than the chart on page 38, “The Ups and Downs of Israel’s History.” This chart shows the ups and downs of Israel’s history, according to the Bible and what we know of events in the ancient world. The last part of the chart represents the future—beyond history. In reviewing concept C with your students, copy the timeline onto the chalkboard or photocopy it onto an overhead transparency.

Note for the students that the ups and downs of Jewish history, in the sense of national victories and defeats, did not necessarily correspond with their spiritual ups and downs. That is, they were often closest to God in times of defeat, and their national victories frequently led them to forget their dependence on God. For example, the exile in Babylon was a low period from a national standpoint, but it was a time of tremendous growth in terms of the people’s spiritual development and identity as God’s people.

Family Stories and Family Identity

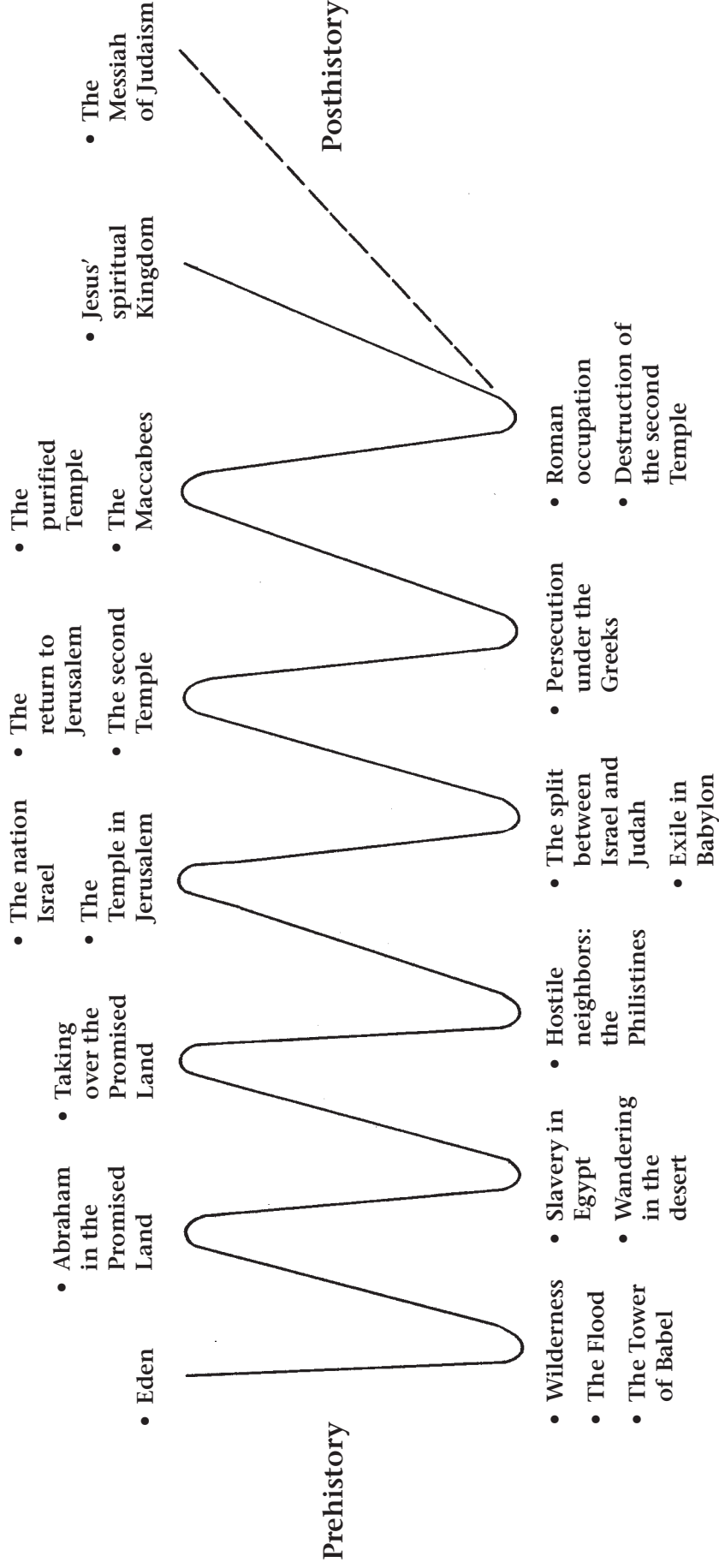
1. Ask your students to write down one story that is often told in their family about them or about some incident that is important to their family. Then tell them to write answers to these questions:

- a. Why is this story told over and over in your family?
- b. How do you feel when the story is told?
- c. Can a family have a sense of who they are as a family without stories such as this one?

2. Use question *c* to begin a discussion about how stories help to give us a sense of who we are.

3. Before your students hand in their assignment, invite them to pair off and share their stories.

The Ups and Downs of Israel's History



Pages
25–
28

Concept D: What Are the Scriptures of the Old Testament?



Review Questions: What Are the Scriptures of the Old Testament?

Question. How many books are in the Catholic canon of the Old Testament? Into what main sections are they divided?

Answer. Forty-six, divided into these major sections: the Pentateuch, the historical books, the wisdom books, and the prophetic books

Question. Name three books in each of the main sections of the Old Testament.

Answer. [Any three from each of the following sections are correct.]

- *The Pentateuch.* Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
- *The historical books.* Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, and 1 and 2 Maccabees
- *The wisdom books.* Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, and Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus)
- *The prophetic books.* Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi



Additional Activities: What Are the Scriptures of the Old Testament?

Writing a Letter to a Faraway Friend

1. For homework, ask that the students each write a letter of one or more pages to a friend or relative who lives far away. They should bring their letter with a stamped and addressed envelope to class.

2. When the students bring the letters to class, ask the following questions, in order to reveal the importance of letters:

- ◆ In general, what sort of information did you put in your letter?
- ◆ What is the reason for writing a letter to a friend or relative?
- ◆ How do you feel when you get a letter?
- ◆ What images are triggered in your imagination when you receive a letter from someone who is far away?

3. Explain to the students that the point of the exercise has been to reinforce their understanding of the purposes behind the Old Testament. In a way the Scriptures were letters from home to all the Jews dispersed throughout the world. The letters told them in their own language how best to deal with unfamiliar surroundings. Most important, the Scriptures told them that they were valued, they were loved by God, and they had a rich heritage as the Chosen People.

4. Encourage the students to mail their letters after school. Or collect the letters and mail them yourself.

An Interview: Being a Stranger

In considering the need that the Jews of the Dispersion had for the Hebrew Scriptures, arrange for your students to conduct a class interview of a refugee or an immigrant to this country. The interview may help them see the difficulties of being a stranger in a strange land. Some questions your students could pose during the interview are the following:

- ◆ What have been the most difficult aspects of adjusting to life here?
- ◆ Do you feel a need to stay in contact with your homeland?
- ◆ How do you keep a sense of your identity as a person from [name the person's homeland] while also identifying with the people from this country?

Note: In a class period before the interview, you may want to let the students develop questions they would like to pose to the visitor; this could be done in small groups. Have them turn in the questions so you can ensure they are appropriate.

Closing Prayer

This chapter's closing prayer focuses the students on the Word of God as a source of growth and life for those who are receptive to that word.

1. In advance, ask the students each to choose and write down a brief passage (one or two sentences) from a designated section of the Old Testament—a passage that they just happen to like or one that expresses something important to them. One group or row should pick their passages from Psalms 1 through 50; a second group, from Psalms 51 through 100; a third group, from Psalms 101 through 150; a fourth group, from the Book of Proverbs; and a fifth group, from the Book of Wisdom. Each student should prepare to read aloud her or his brief passage.

Also, before the prayer begins, instruct your students to put bookmarks at Psalm 1 and Psalm 103. Ask one student to be the reader of Luke 8:4–15, the parable of the sower and the seed.

2. Open the prayer with a reminder such as the following:
 - ◆ As we begin our prayer, let us first remember that God is present in this room, in each of us, and in the Word of God that we will hear today. Let us be receptive to God's presence in our midst.
3. Pray together Psalm 1.
4. Have the preselected student read Luke 8:4–15 to the rest of the class.
5. Offer this prayer or one of your own:
 - ◆ Creator God, help us be the good soil that receives your Word and lets it spring up and grow in us. Prepare us to nourish the seeds that are planted during this course, so that they can take root in our life.
6. Invite each student to read his or her passage from Psalms, Proverbs, or Wisdom. Pause for a moment of reflection between each passage.
7. Then ask the students to hold their Bibles open in their hands as you continue with this blessing:
 - ◆ We thank you for giving us your Word, for communicating it to us in the lives and events, great deeds, and even weaknesses of the people chosen as your own. Bless these Bibles, which we will come to know much better during this course. May we treat them with reverence and a sense of anticipation, knowing that the stories of your people of long ago are also our own stories. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.
8. In closing pray together Psalm 103:1–8. Or play a recording of "Bless the Lord," by Stephen Schwartz, from the sound track of the film *Godspell* (Bell Records, 1970). The song is based on Psalm 103.



Closing Teacher Prayer

Call to prayer. Be still within and without. Center yourself in God's loving embrace.

Reflect. What have you learned in the process of teaching this chapter? Was it a learning of the head or the heart? Does this reveal God more fully to you? How? What effect could this learning have on your life?

1

What gift did you receive from your students? Which students do you feel are especially in need of God's tender care today?

Pray.

Loving God,

I declare my need for you.

You are nearer than my heartbeat,
closer than my next breath.

Gracious God,

may I always remember that

I am a cherished creature

and you are Creator. Amen.

(Bergan and Schwan, *Taste and See:
Prayer Services for Gatherings of Faith*)

How to Find a Scriptural Reference

- The Bible is composed of books.
- Each book is composed of chapters.
- Each chapter is composed of verses.

A scriptural reference provides all the information you need to find a particular passage. Take, for example, the reference **Genesis 1:31**.

- The name of the book comes first. Here the name is Genesis (often abbreviated Gen.).
- The chapter number appears directly after the name of the book. The example gives the number 1, meaning chapter 1.
- The last number, separated from the chapter number by a colon, indicates the verse. The example refers to verse 31. (In some versions of the Bible, a comma, rather than a colon, separates the verse number from the chapter number.)

Look up **Gen. 1:31**. What does it say? Write it down on a separate piece of paper.

Scriptural references generally contain more detailed information. Here are some examples:

- Gen. 1:1–8 means Genesis, chapter 1, verses 1 through 8.
- Gen. 1:3,6,9 means Genesis, chapter 1, verses 3, 6, and 9. (Notice the comma between separate verses from the same chapter.)
- Gen. 2:8–10,18–25 means Genesis, chapter 2, verses 8 through 10 and verses 18 through 25.
- Gen. 1–3 means Genesis, chapters 1 through 3. (For clarity, your textbook does not use dashes between chapter numbers in scriptural references. In your book, Gen. 1–3 would be written Genesis 1:1–31; 2:1–25; 3:1–24, listing all the verses. But you will encounter dashes in your Bible’s footnotes and in future scriptural study.)
- Gen. 1:31–2:3 means Genesis, chapter 1, verse 31, through chapter 2, verse 3.



- Distinct references to different chapters are separated by a semicolon. Gen. 1; 3 means Genesis, chapters 1 and 3 (but not chapter 2). Similarly, Gen. 2:4–7,14; 3:1–3,8 means Genesis, chapter 2, verses 4 through 7 and verse 14, then chapter 3, verses 1 through 3 and verse 8.
- A long verse may be broken up into parts. To designate the first part of a verse, the letter *a* is used; for the second part of the verse, *b* is used. Gen. 1:9a means Genesis, chapter 1, the first part of verse 9.
- Some books of the Bible share the same name. For instance, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel mean “the First Book of Samuel” and “the Second Book of Samuel.” (Sometimes these are written I Samuel and II Samuel.) Notice that the number of the book comes before the name of the book. So 2 Sam. 1:11–12 means the Second Book of Samuel, chapter 1, verses 11 through 12.

Look up **Exod. 5:22–6:1,11; 7:6**. What does it say? Write it down on a separate piece of paper.

Matching

In your Bible look up each scriptural reference from the left-hand column. Then match the reference with its summary on the right, writing the letter of the summary in the blank next to the reference.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Ruth 1:16–18 | a. Jerusalem’s destruction |
| ___ 2. Dan. 3:13–24 | b. a pledge to stay with Naomi |
| ___ 3. Josh. 3:14–17 | c. the anointing of Saul, Israel’s first king |
| ___ 4. Prov. 28:15 | d. choosing life |
| ___ 5. Gen. 12:1–3 | e. how to build an ark |
| ___ 6. Ps. 51:3–4 | f. the Ten Commandments |
| ___ 7. Exod. 11:4–7 | g. the fate of Egypt’s firstborn |
| ___ 8. 1 Sam. 9:26b—10:1a | h. a wicked ruler |
| ___ 9. Deut. 30:15,19b | i. the prayer of a guilty person |
| ___ 10. Eccles. 3:1–8 | j. crossing the Jordan River |
| ___ 11. Gen. 6:14–16 | k. thirsting for God |
| ___ 12. Ps. 63:2–4 | l. a time for everything |
| ___ 13. Exod. 20:1–17 | m. Abram’s call to a new land |
| ___ 14. Jer. 52:12–14 | n. fidelity in a fiery furnace |

Writing a Family History

Read the following passage, which compares the composition of the Old Testament to the writing of a family history. Then answer the questions that follow.

Suppose you were commissioned by your relatives to write a family history. How would you proceed? You would probably go back and collect as many bits and pieces of information as you could before you started writing. You would talk to Grandma, who would tell you stories about her childhood. She might even remember stories about her grandmother's childhood—which could extend back as far as 150 years. Next, you would look at Aunt Kate's old diaries and Uncle Herman's letters, particularly the ones he wrote home during World War II. You might even use an old recipe for a section on your family's favorite dish. Or you might look up newspaper clippings in the town where your Grandpa was born.

All of these materials are sources. Some of them are oral and some written. You are the one who has to weave them together into the family history. Perhaps you write your first draft in longhand. Next Cousin Ernie comes along and types it, correcting your grammar and syntax as he does so. Then, to top it off, rich Uncle Dave decides the manuscript is so valuable to the family that he wants to have it printed [and then bound] in a leather cover. He even hires an editor to make it read as though it were a professionally written history.

The important thing to notice here is that the starting point for the finished product . . . was the original sources you collected. The Old Testament was written in pretty much the same way. As the family history of God's chosen people, it owes its existence to the sources on which it is based. (From *The People of the Book*, by Anthony E. Gilles [Cincinnati: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 1981], pages 3–4. Copyright © 1983 by Anthony E. Gilles. Used with permission of the author.)

1. Suppose you are about to write a history of your family, going back several generations. List as many sources as you can think of that you might use. (You may want to ask your parents for help on coming up with possible sources.)

2. For what event in your family history might you find different versions among members or branches of the family? Why?

3. Which family history would you prefer (circle one)?
 - a. one that is perfectly consistent but written from only one person's point of view
 - b. one that has some inconsistencies but represents the experiences of many parts of your family



Ten Commandments for Studying the Bible

- 1.** Christians treasure the Bible because it is the Word of God.
- 2.** Catholics believe that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit, meaning that a special truth from God can be found in its writings.
- 3.** The revealed truth of the Bible is found in what the various writers expressed about the meaning of faith itself.
- 4.** Thou shalt not believe every historical, biographical, and scientific detail in the Bible.
- 5.** Thou shalt not take one passage from the Bible and make it an absolute.
- 6.** Thou shalt not be surprised at finding conflicting opinions in the Bible.
- 7.** Thou shalt learn something about the history and the literary background of the various books of the Bible.
- 8.** Thou shalt read the Bible regularly to stimulate and nourish personal faith.
- 9.** The Bible serves as a “religious conscience” for the Christian Church and the individual believer.
- 10.** The Bible does not remove the responsibility of the reader to make conscientious and responsible decisions about faith.

(Adapted from by “Ten Commandments for Catholic Study Groups,” Matthias Neuman, in *PACE* 16, October 1985, pages 20–24)



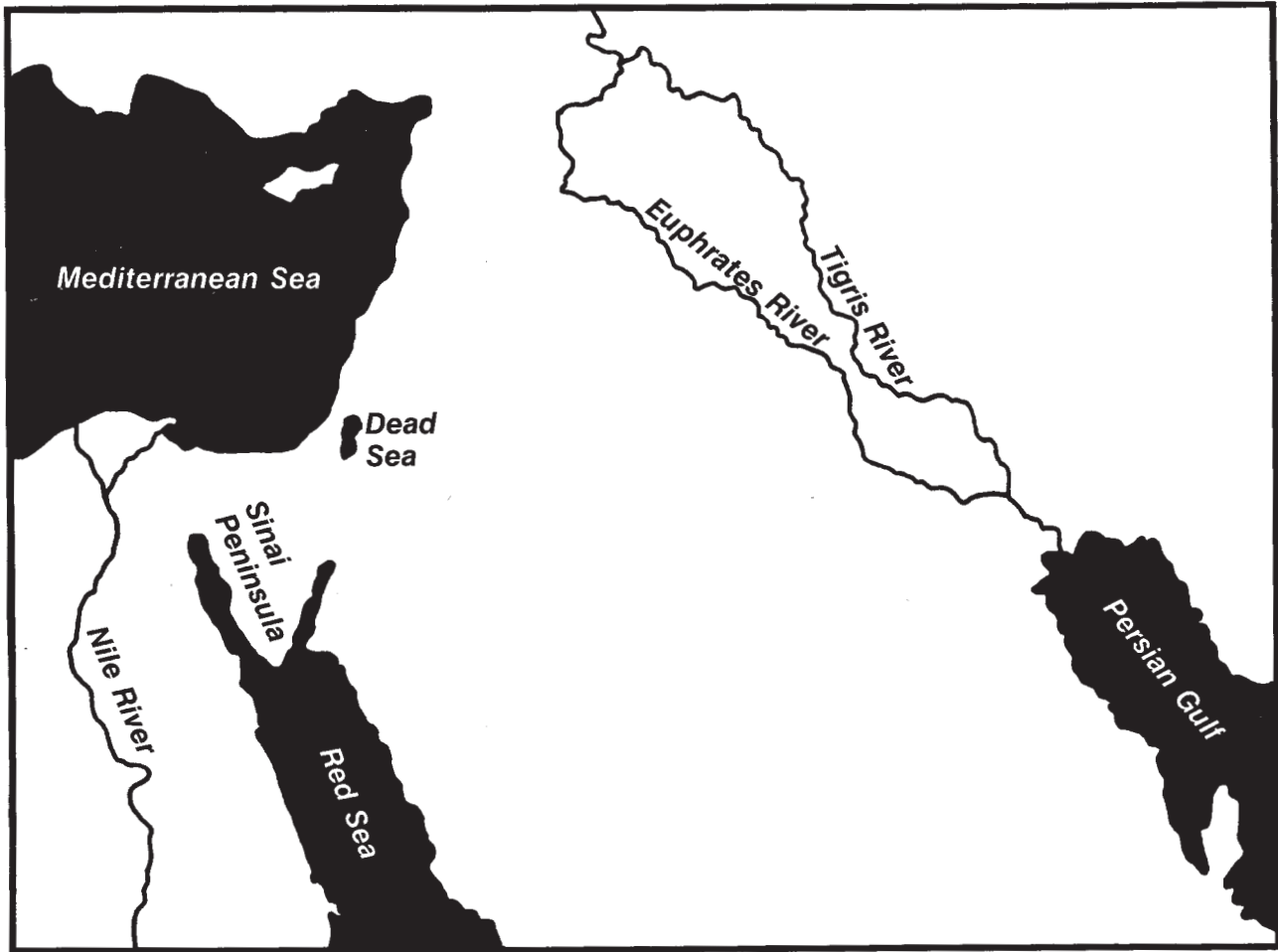
World Map

Your teacher will provide you with the names of major land areas and waterways. Write each name in its appropriate place on the map below, consulting an up-to-date atlas or encyclopedia as needed. Then keep the map for future reference during this course.



The Near East Today

This map shows the lands of the Near East as they were known in ancient times. Using an up-to-date atlas or encyclopedia for reference, draw in (with dotted lines) the political boundaries of the countries that exist in the Near East today. Write in the names of those countries.



Beginnings: Stories of God's Creation and Promises

Major Concepts

- A. **Stories of the Origins.** The first eleven chapters of Genesis portray the one God bringing forth goodness out of chaos and creating humankind in God's own image. Catholics believe the Creation story does not contradict the theory of evolution. Genesis also describes how sin entered the world through Adam and Eve's attempt to be equal to God. The stories of Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, and the Tower of Babel illustrate how sin continued to spread. God extended the first covenant to Noah because he obeyed God's Word. *See the Catechism*, nos. 54, 374–379 (humans in Paradise); 55, 311, 385–390, 396–409 (the Fall and Original Sin); 56–58 (the covenant with Noah); 159 (faith and science); 269 (the omnipotence of God); 279–297, 299–301, 337–339, 355, 373, 1700 (the goodness of God's Creation); 280, 288, 293–294 (God creates out of love); 301 (God sustains Creation); 345–349, 2168–2172 (the Sabbath); 401–402, 1865–1869, 2259, 2317 (sin's ripple effect); 458 (God's love shown in Jesus); 1730–1739, 1749, 1853 (human freedom); 2569 (Noah and prayer).
- B. **Abraham: The Father of Biblical Faith.** God calls Abraham to leave everything behind and go to an unknown land, where his many descendants would become a great nation. Responding obediently, Abraham becomes the father of biblical faith for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Abraham has a son, Ishmael, with his concubine, Hagar, because his wife, Sarah, seemed to be barren. But God's plan for Abraham to conceive a son with Sarah prevails, and Isaac is born. Later Abraham is tested when God asks him to sacrifice Isaac. An angel stays Abraham's hand at the last moment, confirming that God forbids human sacrifice. *See the Catechism*, nos. 59–61 (the call of Abraham); 64, 489 (Sarah); 144–146, 165, 1080–1081, 1819, 2570–2572 (the faith of Abraham); 201 (the one God); 422, 2619 (the fulfillment of a promise); 705–706, 709, 762, 1222, 1716 (the promise to Abraham); 841 (Abraham and the Muslims); 1150 (circumcision); 2260–2261 (human sacrifice is forbidden); 2390 (the biblical ideal of monogamy); 2572 (Abraham's test).
- C. **Jacob: A Man Named Israel.** The stories about Isaac and Rebekah's son Jacob show how God remains faithful to the promise to Abraham and his descendants. Because Rebekah believes God wants Jacob to be Isaac's principal heir, she helps Jacob in a deception that gains him what should have

been his brother Esau's birthright. Jacob flees to Haran, where he stays for many years before returning to the Promised Land. On his way back, he meets a mysterious stranger who, after wrestling with him all night, gives Jacob the name Israel. Jacob initiates his family into the worship of the God of Israel, carrying on the blessing God gave to Abraham and Isaac. *See the Catechism*, nos. 63 (Israel); 2573 (Jacob, ancestor of the twelve tribes, wrestles with an angel).

- D. Joseph: Treachery, Triumph, and Forgiveness.** Joseph's resentful brothers sell him into slavery in Egypt, where he becomes governor. During a severe famine, his brothers come to Egypt to buy grain, but do not recognize Joseph, who insists that his brother Benjamin be brought to him. An anguished Jacob sacrifices Benjamin for the sake of his people. Eventually Joseph reveals his true identity and reconciles with his brothers. Like so many other stories in Genesis, Joseph's tale shows how our all-powerful God works with sinful human beings to save the world. *See the Catechism*, nos. 312–314 (God brings good out of wrongdoing).



Opening Teacher Prayer

Call to prayer. Be still within and without. Be aware that you are the focus of God's creative love. Center yourself in that love.

Read. Psalm 104

Reflect. Recall memories and moments in your life that speak of the wonder of Creation and the loving care of God, our Creator. Which gifts from God are you most thankful for? Which gifts do you take for granted? How is God creating in your life now?

Hold in your heart. "Bless the LORD, O my soul" (Ps. 104:35).



Concept A: Stories of the Origins



Review Questions: Stories of the Origins

Question. How did the Book of Genesis lift the hearts of the exiles as they returned to their homeland, Judah?

Answer. The Book of Genesis helped remind the Jews that from the beginning their God had been in charge, bringing forth goodness out of everything. Genesis also helped them understand their origins, who they were, and why they should have hope.

Question. Summarize the difference between the Jewish view of the origins of the world and the Babylonian view.

Answer. In the Jewish view, the one God brings forth goodness—order, beauty, and abundant forms of marvelous life—out of chaos. Human beings are made in God's image and are partners with God in loving all Creation. In

contrast the Babylonians believed that self-serving, violent, and destructive gods had made the earth for their own pleasure, and humankind for their slaves. It was a chaotic world where human beings were caught in the middle of the gods' wars and tried to avoid the gods' wrath.

Question. In the Creation story, why is it said that God rested on the seventh day?

Answer. The Jews' custom of resting on the Sabbath marked them as unique and reminded them during the exile that they were God's people. So the Creation story writer included God's own resting on the seventh day to emphasize the importance of keeping the Sabbath holy as a day to rest, praise God, and be refreshed together.

Question. What is the Catholic understanding of how the biblical Creation account relates to the theory of evolution?

Answer. Catholics believe the biblical story does not contradict the theory of evolution. The Church's affirmation that much scientific evidence supports the evolution theory does not shake the religious truth of the Creation account—that God is the source of all goodness.

Question. What do Adam and Eve desire by eating of the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17)?

Answer. To be equal to God and to know all things

Question. According to the story of the Fall, who is responsible for suffering and injustice in the world—God or human beings?

Answer. God does not create injustice in the world; human beings do so by their own bad choices.

Question. Which Genesis stories tell about the spread of sin after the first sin?

Answer. Cain and Abel, a story of hatred between brothers that ends in murder; Noah and the Flood, a story about society's depravity; and the Tower of Babel, a tale of arrogance among nations.

Question. To whom does God offer the first covenant? Why is it offered, and what is the sign of that event?

Answer. God offers the first covenant to Noah because he obeyed God. The rainbow is the sign of that covenant, God's promise that the world will never again be destroyed by a flood. It is also a sign of God's love for every earthly creature.



Text Activities: Stories of the Origins

- What difference do a people's beliefs about their origins make to their attitudes about life? Make two columns, one headed "Babylonians' Attitudes" and the other "Ancient Jews' Attitudes." In each column, list the attitudes toward life you might expect to see in each group because of the beliefs its members held about how the world and humans came about.
- "[God] rested on the seventh day" (Gen. 2:2). When was the last time you rested? Create a chart of your typical week, noting how much time is given to schoolwork, school activities, job, family, friends, sleep, and other things you're involved in. Write a paragraph or two about how much time you spend relaxing and unwinding, and how you use that time. If you could say no to one "extra" activity in your life so that you would have more room for relaxing, what would you give up?

- In the Fall, Adam and Eve try to be equal to God. List three situations in the world today where human beings are trying to be equal to God and refuse to acknowledge their dependence on him. Write about one of them that you find interesting or inspiring.
- “Am I my brother’s keeper?” What does it mean to be responsible for another person? Perhaps someone in your school, neighborhood, family, or workplace, or some group in your community is at risk or in trouble. Is it your job to help them? Share your thoughts on this in a one-page essay.
- In a paragraph, compare the story of Babel, which illustrates the effect of sin, to the story of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–21), which illustrates the effect of the Holy Spirit. Find a newspaper clipping showing the effect of sin in our society, and another that shows the effect of good.



Additional Activities: Stories of the Origins

Folk Songs

The first eleven chapters of Genesis are like folk songs that capture the spirit of the history of Israel. Tell your students each to bring in the words to a song that centers on an important part of their own country’s history and that has been or probably will be sung for many generations. In addition, direct them to write a short explanation of why the song is significant. Invite some students to share their songs and ideas.

Other Creation Stories

Select some students to find the creation stories of other ancient peoples—for example, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Japanese, and a Native American tribe. After the students have found and rehearsed their stories, invite them to retell them to the class. Then lead the class in a discussion of how the stories compare with the account in Genesis.

Debate on the Theory of Evolution

Choose two small teams to prepare a debate on how the world came into being. Have one team advocate the theory of creationism and the other the theory of evolution. When the students are ready to debate, you may wish to set up a fishbowl discussion (see the introduction of this teaching manual for a description of this technique).

What Is Dominion?

1. Ask your students these questions:
 - ◆ What does the Book of Genesis mean when it says that God gave humankind “dominion” over all living things on the earth [1:26]?
 - ◆ We could easily misunderstand dominion in Genesis as the right of human beings to dominate the earth for their own purposes. What could this misunderstanding lead to?

2. Divide the class into two groups. Direct each group to recite alternate verses of Psalm 8. Then ask your students what this psalm tells us about the biblical view of human beings' relationship to the earth.

Sin, Guilt, and Nakedness

Pose these questions for discussion:

- ◆ In the story of the Fall, Adam and Eve try to hide their nakedness after they have sinned. When people sin and feel guilty, how is their experience like that of being naked in a crowd?
- ◆ When people feel guilty, how might they try to cover up, hide, or make excuses for their guilt?
- ◆ Can you think of stories from television, films, or literature that illustrate people hiding their guilt or excusing their sin? [*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, *The Simpsons*, etc.]
- ◆ What qualities of God are shown in the story of the Fall? [God knows all things and is more merciful than we might expect.]
- ◆ If we cannot hide from God, why do we even bother trying to hide from other people when we are guilty? Or do we really think that somehow we can hide from God?

Cain and Abel: More Questions

The story of Cain and Abel raises many questions for discussion. If your students did the text activity on page 36, you might wish to explore the concept further with these questions:

- ◆ Considering God's punishment of Cain, what do you think is God's answer to Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" [Gen. 4:9]?
- ◆ What might be a better word than *keeper* to describe the relationship that God wants us to build with one another?
- ◆ What are some implications of being a "brother" or a "sister" to someone?
- ◆ Is it possible to destroy someone without laying hands on them? Explain.
- ◆ What is it like to be on the receiving end of destructive behaviors like ridicule and gossip?
- ◆ Jealousy is Cain's motivation for killing Abel. Is jealousy one of the chief motives for hate and destruction between persons? between schools? between nations?
- ◆ How can we cope with our jealousy of other people? with their jealousy of us?

Bill Cosby Tells the Story of Noah

Play for the class Bill Cosby's account of Noah and the Lord from *The Best of Bill Cosby* (Warner Brothers Records). As you would imagine, this version of Noah's tale is highly amusing and can serve as a break from serious study. It is not a theological interpretation! However, Cosby's account does have a serious side. Here is one question that could start a discussion of the story as told by Cosby:

- ◆ Can you think of situations today when doing what God asks can provoke ridicule from classmates, neighbors, or others?

Comic Strips of Noah and the Flood

This activity can be a source of review and fun, if carried out with a sense of humor.

1. Before class write the following panel topics on the chalkboard or a transparency:

- a. Noah looking about in distress at his sinful neighbors
- b. Noah building the ark according to God's specifications
- c. Noah moving his family into the ark and herding in the pairs of animals
- d. the rain coming down, with Noah and crew waiting for it to stop
- e. Noah letting out the dove
- f. the dove returning with an olive branch
- g. the release of the animals, the family getting off the ark at last
- h. Noah offering a sacrifice on an altar, with the rainbow of the covenant appearing

2. Divide the class into groups of six to eight people and give these instructions:

- ◆ In our next class, your group will be given eight pages of perforated computer paper that are still connected. [Hold up and unfold some continuous-form computer paper as an example.] Each member of your group will be expected to draw one or two panels in a multipanel comic strip that tells the story of Noah and the Flood. You may use markers or crayons; just make sure that the colors are deep enough for the class to see the drawing at a distance. I encourage you to be creative and even humorous if you like. [Either plan to provide markers and crayons for the project or ask the students to bring them from home.]
- ◆ [Direct the students' attention to the eight panel topics that you wrote on the chalkboard.] Please take about 5 minutes to decide who will draw each of the listed panels. If you have fewer than eight people in your group, decide which panels to eliminate, or assign some people more than one panel. Tonight mull over the panel you will draw. Let your creativity loose.

3. At the next class session, form the small groups once again. Give an eight-page length of continuous-form computer paper to each group at a long table or on the floor. Distribute markers and crayons if the groups do not have their own. Allow about 15 minutes for the groups to draw their comic strip.

4. Provide spaces in your classroom where the groups can hang the comic strips. After the drawings are hung, allow time for the students to admire each of the masterpieces. Then ask this question:

- ◆ In looking at the comic strips, did you see any differences in how the groups interpreted the story of Noah?

The Rewards of Evil Are, Finally, Evil

The story of Noah relates the destruction of wicked people and the survival of the just man, Noah, and his family. But in real life we do not always see such a neat correspondence between goodness and good fortune, between evil and disastrous lot.

Have the students read Psalm 73 and reflect on the reality that goodness does not necessarily “pay off” in this life. The psalmist cannot see any pay-off for his righteous living; he complains that all the prosperity is enjoyed by wicked people, while he is afflicted with suffering. Yet in the end, he knows that the rewards of a life well lived are far greater than any good fortune the wicked might enjoy. Also, wickedness, it seems, has built-in negative consequences, even though these might not be apparent in the short term.

In the story of the Flood, Noah’s rewards for all his troubles are integrity, harmony with God, and finally, God’s love. He becomes stronger and wiser because of his obedience to God. These are his long-term rewards.

Starting Over

In the story of the Flood, Noah and his family are saved by God, but after they leave the ark, they must face the task of completely rebuilding their world, which has been destroyed. Here are some questions for discussing the post-ark life of Noah and his family:

- ◆ Put yourself in the position of Noah at the end of the Flood. Your whole world has been destroyed, but you and your family have been saved. When you leave the ark and walk onto dry land, how do you feel?
- ◆ When people go through a rough period and come out safely, how does the experience change them?
- ◆ After the Flood what source of security makes Noah’s situation hopeful rather than awful? [the covenant with God]

To end this activity, you may wish to play the rock song “Flood,” from the album *Jars of Clay*, by the band Jars of Clay as a meditation on Noah’s and our own dependence on God. Invite the students to listen to the song and join in on the chorus.

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Concept B: Abraham: The Father of Biblical Faith



Review Questions: Abraham: The Father of Biblical Faith

Question. Who is called the father of biblical faith?

Answer. Abraham

Question. What does God promise to Abram as the covenant? What is the sign of that covenant for Abram’s people?

Answer. God promised Abram that he would bring forth a multitude of descendants and that all the land of Canaan would eventually be his people’s. The sign of this covenant is circumcision.

Question. Why are Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed?

Answer. Abraham made a bargain with God that the just people in the cities would not be destroyed along with the wicked. But in Sodom the wicked inhabitants proposed the rape of some young men (or angels) to whom Lot had given shelter. Lot offered his own daughters in order to protect his guests—to no avail. So while Lot and his family are rescued by angels, Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed because of their wickedness.

Question. Who is traditionally known as the father of the Arab peoples?

Answer. Ishmael, son of Abraham and Hagar

Question. What is emphasized as a forbidden act in the story of Abraham's test?

Answer. Human sacrifice

Question. Which of Abraham's sons is destined to become an ancestor of the Israelites? Whom does that son marry?

Answer. Isaac. He marries Rebekah.



Text Activities: Abraham: The Father of Biblical Faith

- Create a story that shows the destructive nature of sin, especially how one act of sin can lead to another and another.
- Identify someone you know of who left behind all that was familiar to him or her in order to follow the call of some good purpose. If possible, ask the person what the experience was like and write it up in one page.
- “Is anything too wonderful for the LORD?” Sarah laughs when she hears she will have a child in her old age. But with God nothing is impossible, nothing is too wonderful! Write about a wonderful event from your life. What were the circumstances? Did you expect it to happen?

When Abraham said yes to God's call, he received the gift of expectant faith—knowing, with all his heart and soul, that God would take care of him, bless him, amaze him. This journey would be a wonder-filled, God-filled adventure. We, too, can expect that God is with us every moment of our lives.

- Expecting God's goodness to prevail, Abraham does not give up. Abraham pleads with him to protect Lot and his family. Who is someone you care about so much that you would plead with God on his or her behalf? Is it someone who is in trouble? hurting? lost or confused? angry? Write a conversation between you and God about this person dear to your heart.
- How do you define hero? Make a list of your “heroic ancestors,” including family heroes as well as national ones. Pick three and write a brief reflection for each about what makes him or her a hero. Be sure to include the hero's imperfections as well as his or her good points. How has he or she made a difference in your life?
- Write your own reactions to the story of Abraham's test. What questions does that story raise for you?



Additional Activities: Abraham: The Father of Biblical Faith

“Spiritually, We Are All Semites”

The term *Semite* is explained on page 39 of the student text. Explain that today the term *Semites* generally refers to Jews and Arabs, particularly Jews. Pope Pius XI offered the insight that “spiritually, we are all Semites.” To help your students understand this comment, read aloud Matthew 1:1 and Luke 1:39–55. Then ask your students these questions:

- ◆ What did Pope Pius XI mean when he said that “spiritually, we are all Semites”?
 - ◆ Given the passages from Matthew and Luke and the pope’s comment, what should the relationship between Christians and Jews be?
-

Abraham’s Sacrifice and the Eucharist

On the occasion of Abraham’s covenant with God in Genesis, chapter 15, Abraham makes an offering of several animals. Point out that the roots of the eucharistic celebration—the sharing of the body and blood of Christ—can be seen in Abraham’s sacrificial offering. In the sacrifices of the ancients, food was offered because food gave life to those who consumed it; offering food was equivalent to offering one’s life to God. In Abraham’s time the sacred offering was consumed by the participants if it did not burn completely, and it became a sacred meal. At the Last Supper, Jesus told the disciples that the bread and wine became his body and blood, the perfect sacrifice for the sins of many. Consuming the bread and wine—the food—became a sacred meal, giving eternal life.

The Bedouin Lifestyle

Genesis, chapter 18, opens with Abraham sitting at the entrance of his tent while the day is growing hot. It could be fascinating for the students to learn about present-day nomadic desert peoples, whose lifestyle has not changed much since Abraham’s time. Choose a team of students to research the lifestyle of today’s bedouins, or nomadic Arabs, including their shelter, food, means of travel, and so on. The team can give a report to the class, including visual aids such as a model of a bedouin tent (complete with sand and rocks), typical attire, and samples of food.

The Continuing Obligation of Hospitality

The New Testament reminds us to be hospitable. Read aloud to your students Hebrews 13:2, which is meant to remind us of Abraham and Sarah’s hospitality to the three strangers.

Then ask your students these questions:

- ◆ Why was hospitality vital in the time of Abraham and Sarah?
- ◆ Is there a great need for hospitality in our world today?
- ◆ In what sense might the persons who need our hospitality be like angels, or messengers from God, to us?

- ◆ How can we be hospitable at school? at home? in our parish? to hungry and homeless people?
- ◆ Describe the difference between these motives for offering hospitality to someone:
 - a. You are kind and welcoming to the person because you think that is what is expected of you.
 - b. You are kind and welcoming because you believe that in some mysterious way, you are meeting God in the person.

A Summary of Abraham's Role

Assign the following to your students:

- ◆ Write a short essay (about one hundred words) sketching Abraham's life and explaining why he is called the father of biblical faith.

Ask several students to read their completed essays to the class.

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Concept C: Jacob: A Man Named Israel



Review Questions: Jacob: A Man Named Israel

Question. Why does Rebekah try to maneuver Jacob into the position of principal heir of Isaac?

Answer. Rebekah believes that God wants Jacob, not Esau, to be Isaac's principal heir. She strives to obey what she believes to be God's will at great personal risk.

Question. What strange encounter does Jacob have on the way back to Canaan? What new name is he given then, and what does it mean?

Answer. While staying alone Jacob meets a mysterious being, which Scripture translators have called a stranger, a man, an angel—some even suggest a demon. This “someone” wrestles with Jacob until daybreak, when Jacob, refusing to let go, asks for a blessing. In reply the stranger asks his name, and when he says that it is Jacob, he is told that from now on he will be known as Israel, meaning “one who has contended with divine and human beings.”

Question. How does Jacob initiate his family into the worship of the God of Israel?

Answer. He builds an altar on the spot where he heard God's promise at Bethel, and orders his family to rid themselves of their pagan religious trappings in a purification rite.



Text Activities: Jacob: A Man Named Israel

- In the Israelites' understanding, things would work out the way God wanted them to—no matter what or who tried to get in the way. God could bring good out of situations that were weird, puzzling, unfair, or evil. Write a one-page reflection on this idea, including examples from your own life, if possible.

- Imagine a young person “wrestling” with God. What issues might he or she be struggling with? Write a story describing the situation.



Additional Activities: Jacob: A Man Named Israel

The Unusual Ways of God

God’s will can come about in unusual ways. An example of this is Rebekah and Jacob’s deviousness to ensure that Jacob obtains Esau’s birthright. Rebekah and Jacob, however, are not just or blameless in that incident.

1. Direct the students to read Genesis 27:1–45. Then have one student find and read aloud Hosea 12:2–3, and another, Jeremiah 9:4.
2. Ask all the students these questions:
 - ◆ What do the passages from Hosea and Jeremiah say about Jacob’s dishonesty?
 - ◆ Why do you think this story was told? [To show God’s mysterious ways in salvation history: God sometimes uses weak and sinful people to accomplish his purposes.]
 - ◆ Can you think of an incident, either from history or from your own experience, when some good effect came about in spite of, even because of, someone’s weakness or sin?
3. As a summary, refer the students to Mark 8:31–33, which quotes Jesus on how different God’s standards and methods are from those of human beings.

World Happenings

The “World Happenings from 2000 to 1700 BC” sidebar in chapter 2 of the student text describes some of the developments going on in the world around the time of the patriarchs. If the students filled in the map on handout 1–D, “World Map,” during their work on chapter 1, ask them to refer to that map and perhaps insert a word or a small symbol for each development in its respective area of the world, writing “2000 to 1700 BC” nearby. Ask them if they were surprised to learn that any of these developments happened at the time of the patriarchs.

A Summary of Jacob’s Character

When the students have read the story of Jacob’s struggle with the mysterious being (p. 49 of the student text), begin this activity.

The character of Jacob is the most skillfully drawn of any in the Old Testament. Although his story is not over until the end of this chapter of the student text, tell your students to write a hundred-word portrait of Jacob, based on their knowledge of him to this point. Tell them that later, when they have completed the story of Jacob, they will write fifty more words, commenting on the development of Jacob’s character. After your students finish their

initial portraits, encourage volunteers to read aloud their essays. File their papers for safekeeping.

(This writing exercise is continued with the activity “Completing the Portrait of Jacob” on p. 62 of this manual.)

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Concept D: Joseph: Treachery, Triumph, and Forgiveness



Review Questions: Joseph: Treachery, Triumph, and Forgiveness

Question. What do Joseph’s brothers do to him as a young man, and why?

Answer. They sell Joseph as a slave to traders on their way to Egypt. The brothers stain Joseph’s coat with blood so that their father, Jacob, will believe Joseph has been killed. They did this because they resented Joseph for being Jacob’s favorite and for being a tattletale.

Question. How does Joseph gain the pharaoh’s favor?

Answer. By doing so well at explaining the pharaoh’s dreams to him

Question. How does Jacob become a hero?

Answer. By agreeing to part with his beloved son Benjamin, so his other sons can get more grain and rescue the brother they left in Egypt as a pledge that they would return

Question. In what ways do Joseph and his brothers grow through the story?

Answer. Joseph, who in his youth was boastful and proud, gets the heart to forgive his brothers for selling him into slavery. The brothers grow by becoming ready to make sacrifices for the well-being of those they love. The whole family develops from bitterness and hate to tender appreciation of one another.



Text Activities: Joseph: Treachery, Triumph, and Forgiveness

- Do you identify with the feelings of any of the characters in the beginning of this story: the favorite son? the brothers? Reuben? Write a paragraph describing how families can be harmed by jealousy or favoritism.
- In Joseph we find a beautiful example of forgiveness: Joseph forgives his brothers for the extremely hostile and jealous act of selling him into slavery and abandoning him. Write about a person or group in our world who is in need of forgiveness. What was the wrongdoing? Describe any obstacles to forgiving. What could be the outcome of forgiveness in this situation? What might happen if forgiveness is withheld?