

Breathed By God



The Bible and You

Teacher Manual



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By order of
Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

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The Bible and You

A high school course on the Bible
Teacher Manual

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

1. Reading the text

A sixteen-week course on *all* of the Bible takes some doing! So, one of the first things you'll notice about this mini-course is that there is a great deal of text which students need to read. Considering the shortness of time, the difficulty of assigning these for homework and the potential tediousness of getting all this material read, here are some techniques to vary the task interestingly and effectively:

- A. Ask volunteers to read aloud. Give students a highlighter and tell them to highlight important points as they listen to the text being read.
- B. Divide the class into small groups to do the reading. The best time to do this is when there is an exercise or activity connected with the reading. Have the groups complete the exercise together. Then ask each group to share their answers.
- C. Divide the text into sections and assign small groups or individuals to read different sections and summarize for the class.
- D. Have students work with a partner in reading the text and completing the activity.
- E. Give a mini-lecture on part or all of the reading.

2. Dividing into groups or partners

There are a number of ways to assure that students are divided into groups randomly and fairly. A few suggestions:

- A. Count off according to the size of your class and the number of groups you want to form.
- B. Distribute small candies or playing cards (in a variety according to the number you want in each group) and have students with the same candy form groups.
- C. Be creative. If students are wearing a variety of colors that could be divided into groups, simply say, "everyone wearing red, sit together" etc.

3. Special Features

You will notice a number of sidebars featured in the Student Text. **Did You Know? The Armenian Angle** and **Word Watch** contain enrichment material and vocabulary that can enhance the learning process. Whether you use this material as an actual part of the lesson, a casual reference for students to pursue in detail at another time, or not at all, is up to you. **Looking In** features deeper thinking and is occasionally used as a lesson activity. Again, use these sidebars as you choose.

The **Quik Quiz** at the end of almost every student session is designed for fun and tests some basic knowledge. Use these at the end of each session or the beginning of the next.



These special features will only occasionally be mentioned in the teacher manual. Use them often, however, for the best learning experience.

Keep in mind also that these 60-minute lesson plans are designed for a solid one-hour session of focused attention. If your classroom is typical of our Sunday Schools, then varying schedules, latecomers, and other distractions will mean less class time. Edit or adapt accordingly or extend the class beyond 16 weeks.

It would be helpful for each student to have a Bible Concordance. Note: Bible quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). If you are using another Bible translation, there might be a slight difference.



Session One

Introducing...The Bible!

Key Concepts

1. There are many kinds of writing in the Bible; therefore, it is really a collection of books rather than one book.
2. The Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the book of God's people.
3. The Bible is central to our faith. We should know it and be comfortable using it.

Objectives

Students will

1. Locate Bible passages.
2. Use a Bible concordance.
3. Identify divisions in the Bible and some common biblical terms.

Materials: Bible and concordance for each student, paper and pencils.

Background: This session will help students feel familiar with the Bible as something they can use and benefit from. As they understand more about its structure and how to use it, they will feel more confident in doing so. And as they come to understand how central the Bible is to our faith, they will see the importance of using it and knowing it well. Those two understandings are the goal of this session.

Procedure

1. Begin with the prayer from Psalm 119. Inform students that this is from one of the many beautiful prayers in the Bible. Write the word Bible on the board. Ask the class to share whatever words come to their mind when they hear that word. Accept all answers (even “boring”) but add your own from Bible stories, names of books, etc. Tell the group that it's clear we all know something about the greatest and most widely read book in the world. Explain that in your sessions together you will be looking at the Bible both in a general way as Christians and in a more particular way as members of the Armenian Church. (10 min)
2. Have students read the section **Introducing...the Bible!** and do the exercise of finding different kinds of writing from the Old Testament books listed. Let them share their answers with the rest of the group. (Don't worry about right or wrong answers; the idea is to see the variety of kinds of writing.) (15 min)
3. Have students open their Bibles. Look together at the table of contents, the abbreviations of book titles, the order in which the books are listed. Note how much longer the Old Testament is than the New Testament. Review information and definitions covered so far. (5 min)



Go on to **Finding Your Way Around in the Bible** and have students read the text. Then have them do the exercise on page 4. The half-verses are as follows:

- *2 Peter 3:7a*—But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire (Note: the 2 before Peter tells us that this passage is in the second of his 2 letters.)
- *Proverbs 14:1a*—The wise woman builds her house
- *Lamentations 3:3a*—Against me alone he turns his hand
- *John 14:1a*—Do not let your hearts be troubled (Note: This reference is to the Gospel of John. If a 1, 2, or 3 appeared before “John” we would know that it was a reference to one of his 3 letters.)
- *Ezekiel 40:38b*—Where the burnt offering was to be washed
- *Wisdom of Solomon 15:3b*—And to know your power is the root of immortality
- *Deuteronomy 22 1b*: You shall take them back to their owner
- *2 Chronicles 36:2b*: he reigned three months in Jerusalem (Note: The number 2 before “Chronicles” tells us that there are 2 books of Chronicles, as also of Samuel and Kings in the Old Testament, and the letters to the Corinthians, Thessalonians, and Timothy in the New Testament.)

The exercise on using the concordance has no right or wrong answers. Let students enjoy finding something of interest and sharing it with the rest of the class. They might want to locate favorite Bible stories and memorize where they appear in the Bible. (20 mins)

4. Ask students to work with a partner (and later at home) on **Looking In**. It will be discussed next week.

5. Close with prayer (10 min)

QUIK QUIZ #1 answers: (1-T, 2-F, 3-the Greek translation of the Old Testament, 4-deuterocanonical, 5-10: N, N, O, O, O, N)



Session Two

How Our Bible Came To Be

Key Concepts

1. The Bible was completed over many centuries from many sources.
2. The Bible reflects the authentic relationship of God and His people.
3. The Bible is consistent, complete, and true, despite some insignificant errors of fact.
4. Sts. Sahag and Mesrob made it possible for Armenians to read Scripture in their native tongue.

Objectives

Students will

1. Read about oral tradition and its place in the formation of the Old Testament.
2. Identify sections of the Bible for which they have made bookmarks.
3. Describe the work of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob.

Materials: One set per student of 10 construction paper strips (1" by 5") with five strips in one color, and five in another. Scissors, several colors of thin-point and thick-point markers, and vari-colored stick-on stars with which students will decorate their strips as Bible bookmarks. For this and for all upcoming sessions, have Bibles, pencils, paper.

Background: This session answers some common questions about Bible origins, authorship and inerrancy (meaning the belief that each word of the Bible is to be taken as literally true) from the perspective of the Armenian Church. It is important for students to know that their Church has a logical and solid "stand" on these matters, particularly when so many opinions about the Bible and its contents are being aired on every side today.

The session also emphasizes the universal character of the wonderful work done by Sts. Sahag and Mesrob. They are true examples of apostleship, carrying the Good News far and wide to many places and peoples.

Procedure

1. Begin with prayer. Review last week's **Looking In** section. For your information: The "I" in the passage is God, and the "you" is God's people, including us. To have words "upon your heart" means to know them well and take them seriously. Changes in one's life if one takes the words seriously might include wasting less time, not gossiping or idle chatter, and more time spent thinking about and praying to God. (15 min)
2. Give each student a set of ten paper strips, on which they should write with markers the names of the following sections of the Bible: on five (all the same color) have them write Old Testament, Pentateuch/Law, History, Wisdom, Prophets. On the other set have them write New Testament, Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Epistles, Revelation. (Make sure they write the titles on the strips in a way that will allow the writing to be seen once the strips are inserted into the Bible.)



They can use the markers and stars to decorate the strips as they wish to. Have students insert their two strips marked “Old Testament” and “New Testament” at the beginnings of those divisions as markers. Then have them place the other strips at the beginnings of the section titles as follows:

Pentateuch/Law: beginning of Genesis
 History: beginning of Joshua
 Wisdom: beginning of Job
 Prophets: beginning of Isaiah
 Gospels: beginning of Matthew
 Acts of the Apostles: beginning of that book
 Epistles: beginning of Romans
 Revelation: beginning of that book

Look through the sections together to note the books each one contains. (You might consider asking students to laminate their bookmarks for next week. Self-stick laminating sheets are widely available.) (15 min)

3. Have students read **How It All Began** in the Student Text. (5 min)

4. Read “**Breathed By God**”: **Asdvadzashoonch**. Help students memorize the passage to be learned.

- a. The phrase “all that I have commanded you” means that Jesus wants His disciples to do more than teach others His moral and ethical principles. He wants them to show and teach others to love each other as He loved everyone. In saying “I am with you to the end of the age” Jesus does not mean any limited time that we can measure on earth. He means that in everything He is with us until He returns for the Second Coming, when all earthly life will end. In other words, He will be with us forever.
- b. He helped share the Good News of salvation by giving three entire nations their own alphabet.
- c. All of us have opportunities to share the Good News with people right where we are in the spirit of St. Mesrob. Examples: Teaching Sunday School, sharing our faith heritage through public school presentations and papers, and being a good neighbor. (15 min)

5. As a review, divide the class into teams with the same number of players on each team. Each team should have one Bible to use. Call out the names of books of the Bible, and let the teams use the Bibles to tell you what section each book appears in (according to the bookmarks they made earlier.) Keep score on the chalkboard, and give the winning team a round of applause. Review the memorized passage; close with prayer. (10 min)

QUIK QUIZ #2 answers: (1-F, 2-F, 3-“breathed by God,” 4-5: Jesus; the Bible, 6-oral tradition, 7-Georgia or Albania, 8-B, 9-B, 10-A)



Session Three

Christians and the Old Testament

Key Concepts

1. The Old Testament is important because it prepared God's people for the coming of their Savior.
2. The worship and teachings of the Christian Church constantly refer back to the Old Testament.
3. The Book of Genesis contains several stories which are not literal accounts of events, but signs of God's sovereignty and of His love for His creation.

Objectives

Students will

1. Examine some Old Testament passages related to our beliefs and our liturgical services.
2. Read Genesis 1–3 and list ways in which human sin changed the relationship between God and humanity.
3. Develop theme for collage on creation (in small groups).

Materials: Items to make creation collage in groups of 3 to 5. Poster board or oak tag – 14 X 22 is a good size, magazines with appropriate pictures (nature, people, etc.), glue, tape, scissors, markers.

Background: There are many efforts today to “debunk” the Bible. It will help our students resist these efforts and retain their respect for the Bible if we can show them that modern scientific theories of how the world came into being do not threaten the Genesis story. That story is about a loving creator God who cares for His creatures; it is not a literal creation account. The story of Adam and Eve is a poetic illustration of the disaster that befalls humanity (which Adam and Eve represent) when we turn our backs on God and try to be our own gods. These points are presented in this session.

The session also shows students that human beings are free creatures, with choices to make. Much of the evil in the world is due to our wrong and sinful choices.

Finally, the session helps students see the Old Testament as an integral part of our worship and beliefs today. This underlines the important fact that God has always been with His people, and He is present—however mysteriously to our limited minds—in all of human history.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer. Review the meaning of the word *Asdvadzashoonch*. Review passage to be learned (memorized.) Also, go over the titles and contents of the sections of the Bible that students marked with their paper bookmarks. (10 min)



2. Read **The Old Testament in Our Church** and **Interpreting the Bible**. For the matching exercise, let students work on their own. When everyone is ready, go over the answers together:

1) *i* 2) *a* 3) *b* 4) *g* 5) *h* 6) *e* 7) *c* 8) *f* 9) *j* 10) *d*.

Point out that these are only a small sample of the many references to the Old Testament in the worship of the Church. Also, Christ and the apostles constantly referred to the Old Testament to show how Jesus had fulfilled its promises. (Note: Make sure students understand that *Jesus* is the human name of God's Son. *Christ* is a title and means "messiah" or "anointed." This is why Our Lord is sometimes referred to as Jesus the Christ.) (15 min)

3. Have students work in pairs to read the first two chapters of Genesis in the Bible, and then the section **The Book of Genesis**, up to the section subtitled **The Fallen World**. Let each pair come up with their own answers about the changes that took place as a result of sin, and share their findings with the rest of the group.

Here are some possible answers:

Nakedness now became a cause for self-consciousness rather than a symbol of innocent closeness to the Creator; rather than gladly answering God when He called them in the Garden, Adam and Eve were now fearful and wanting to hide; trust and openness between man and woman were replaced by recriminations and mutual accusations; the harmony between humanity and the rest of creation was destroyed; humankind now doubted the promises of God rather than trusting Him and being willing to obey Him.

As you go over the answers the students have come up with, emphasize the uniqueness of the Hebrew (and Christian) understanding of our relationship with God—His personal love for us, and our freedom to respond to or reject it.

Have the pairs of students finish by reading **The Fallen World**. (20 min)

4. Divide the class into groups of three to five, and let them think about a theme for a creation collage i.e. nature, human diversity, sin, male/female, animals, etc. They can begin planning and working on the collages. Close the session with prayer. (15 min)

QUIK QUIZ #3 answers: (1-4. law, prophets, gospels, apostles, saints, would be correct, 5-8. His birth will be a virgin birth, He will suffer and dies for us, He will be like a shepherd who gives his life for his sheep, He will come from a small, insignificant place, He will be silent before His accusers – all acceptable answers, 9-T, 10-T)



Session Four

The Covenant Through the Generations

Key Concepts

1. Examine some Old Testament passages related to our liturgical services.
2. God fulfilled His covenants with Noah, with Abraham, and with His people at all times.
3. The history of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—is the beginning of our history as God's people.
4. We are descendants of Abraham and inheritors of the covenant made with him by God.

Objectives

Students will

1. Read biblical accounts of God's dealings with the Old Testament patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their families.
2. Finish work on creation collage.

Materials: Items to continue work on posters

Background: As we study the lives of the patriarchs, we see the beginning of what is sometimes called “salvation history”—the Biblical accounts of God's actions for His people from the Old Testament to the time of Christ. (Note: the period of Adam and Eve, if we use this chronology, is called “prehistory.”)

The goal of this session is to help students see how the Church ties the lives of the patriarchs to our life as Christians today. The Christian Church is the “new Israel,” open to all who live by the teachings of Jesus Christ. Abraham was Jesus' human ancestor, but Jesus is the co-Creator and Savior not only of Abraham but of all of us. This is the mysterious truth lying hidden at the heart of the stories of the patriarchs.

Procedure

1. Begin with prayer. Review previous sessions. (5 min)
2. Read **God Keeps His Covenant**. The many Bible readings called for as part of the text are very important, so make sure students understand them as you go through them. You may want to do some of the reading yourself, or have students read some Bible passages silently and discuss them afterwards, to vary the reading.

As you read, point out the ways God's servants changed and grew. For example, Jacob is seen to struggle and overcome his cheating tendencies. Esau shows forgiveness to his brother instead of harboring a grudge. (You might ask students how they would act in Esau's place, meeting his brother after so many years.) Joseph matured from a braggart to a responsible person with the generosity of heart to forgive his brothers' terrible betrayal. (Again, ask students how they might have reacted in Joseph's place,



meeting his brothers again, and for the first time being in a position of power over them.) Yet the Bible doesn't give us an unrealistic picture of "perfect" people. Ask students whether they think Jacob was a wise father to his twelve sons. (Showing such obvious favoritism to Joseph was hardly a wise or just thing to do.) In spite of our continuing imperfections, God loves us and makes us part of His plan for the world's salvation. So we should not be discouraged when we have to keep struggling in life. (20 min)

3. Direct students to the portion of a prayer from the Marriage Service of the Armenian Church. Point out to the class that a couple being married today in the Church is linked, through this prayer, to the Old Testament couples we have talked about during this session—the patriarchs and their wives. The couple is also linked to important people in the New Testament—the parents of Mary the mother of God, and the parents of John the Baptist. (10 min)
4. Let the class continue work on their collages, and decide how and where you will display the finished products. Close with prayer. (25 min)

Optional/Enrichment: A Bible Passage to Learn: "What are human beings, that you are mindful of them, mortals, that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor." (*Psalms 8:4-5*.)

Put this passage on the chalkboard, and discuss: What emotion is the speaker feeling? (The emotion seems to be wonder at God's graciousness in giving mere mortals such an important place in His creation.) How do these words relate to the prayer from the Marriage Service? (Once again, human beings are valued by God, being crowned with glory and honor.) Tell students that the words "man" and "him" in the passage refer to all human beings—the use of these words is due to language and translation, not to sexist feelings on the writer's part. Work with the students to memorize the passage.

QUIK QUIZ #4 answers: (1-c, 2-b, 3-a, 4-a, 5-a, 6-c, 7-an event that foreshadows..., 8-10: baby, wedding, angel)



Session Five

The Books of the Law

Key Concepts

1. The first five books of the Old Testament show us how God gave His people the law and rules for the way in which they were to worship Him.
2. Moses was a great leader of the people and servant of God.
3. Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea prefigure two events important to Christians: Easter and baptism

Objectives

Students will

1. Play a review game based on the TV game-show Jeopardy.
2. Identify Puah, Shiprah, Miriam, Aaron and Mt. Sinai.
3. Read about Moses, the exodus out of Egypt, and the Ten Commandments.

Materials: For the review game, have bells, whistles, or party-favor noisemakers for teams to signal with.

Background: The Book of Exodus, which is the focus of this session, has several important things for students to grasp. The courage of Puah, Shiprah, and Miriam and their place in the destiny of Moses is a good example for all Christians. Then there is the great Moses himself—a person capable of killing another, and of immense self-doubt, yet still a man whom God could use in important ways.

Exodus contains some of the most important of God's laws—the Ten Commandments—which are still the basis of our civilization.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer. (5 min)
2. Have a review game of the sessions 1-4. Divide the class into teams of at least 3 people, with more on each team if your class is large (or fewer if you have a small number of students).

There are no categories in this Jeopardy game, but there are three sets of responses/questions with one set worth 5 points each, one 10 points each, and one 15 points each. There is also a “final Jeopardy” item worth 50 points.

The game will be played by teams rather than individuals (unless your class consists of 3 students, who would then play against each other.) Teams will take turns requesting responses/questions at whatever level of difficulty (5, 10, or 15 points) they feel confident to answer. They may consult with each other, use the Bible, and use their text to find answers. When they are ready to answer, they will signal with whatever device you have chosen (see suggestions in the “Materials” list above).



The first team to signal gets the chance to answer. (A coin toss will determine who gets to answer if there are simultaneous signals.) To keep score, points can simply be added up rather than the more complicated scoring and betting done on the TV show.

You will give the responses to which players must give an answer in question form (as on the TV show.) You will also need to keep track of what questions have already been used. So, for example, if all the 10-point and 15-point items have been used, teams will have to go to the 5-point items. As noted, some items are “daily doubles” and worth double the number of points. If one team tries and fails to answer a question correctly, the others may signal and try to answer it.

5-point items:

- 1) This is the country in which Joseph, son of Jacob, prospered even though that’s not what his brothers had in mind. (What is Egypt?)
- 2) You know about all those animals in the ark—I was the one God called to build and fill it. (Who is Noah?)
- 3) This man was a catholicos, and a good friend of Saint Mesrob. (Who is Saint Sahag?)
- 4) Don’t call me Jacob anymore; I have a new name. (What, or who, is Israel?)
- 5) This substance smeared on a beautiful coat fooled Joseph’s father. (What is goat’s blood?)
DAILY DOUBLE—DOUBLE POINTS
- 6) Abraham became my father-in-law after I made a good impression on his servant. (Who is Rebekah?)

10-point items:

- 1) These three men are the great Patriarchs of the Old Testament. (Who are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?)
- 2) This is the place from which Abraham started out on his long journey to the land promised by God. (What is Haran?) DAILY DOUBLE—DOUBLE POINTS
- 3) My name used to be Sarai, but God changed it, just as he changed my husband’s to Abraham. (Who is Sarah?)
- 4) Isaac was not sacrificed by his father; this animal was, instead. (What is a ram?)
- 5) This book is a list of key words in the Bible and all the places where they are found. (What is a concordance?)



- 6) Saint Mesrob helped this country develop its alphabet after his work in Armenia was finished. (What is Albania or What is Georgia?) DOUBLE POINTS FOR GIVING BOTH NAMES.

15-point items:

- 1) This word, beginning with the letter “c”, means an agreement or mutual promise. (What is “covenant?”) DAILY DOUBLE—DOUBLE POINTS
- 2) My younger brother worried that I might harm him after he cheated me out of my inheritance, but I forgave him when we met years later. (Who is Esau?) DAILY DOUBLE—DOUBLE POINTS
- 3) The twelve tribes of Israel have the same names as the twelve sons of this man. (Who is Jacob or Who is Israel?)
- 4) This word is based on the word “seventy” and it’s the name of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. (What is the Septuagint?) DAILY DOUBLE—DOUBLE POINTS
- 5) This is the Biblical verse from which the Armenian name of the Bible, *Asdvadzashoonch*, is taken. (What is *2 Timothy 3:16*?)
- 6) This is the country in which Joseph’s father and brothers were living when severe famine forced them to look for help in Egypt. (What is Canaan?)
- 7) FINAL JEOPARDY: This prophet named the small, unimportant town from which the Savior would come. (Who is Micah?) Note to teacher: The passage is *Micah 5:2*, but players are not asked to give the reference.

After finishing the game, take five minutes to review any questions that players had trouble with. (25 min)

3. Read **The Torah**. In reference to the midwives Puah and Shiphrah, ask students what they would have done or said if questioned by the king (Pharaoh) as these women were. Do they feel that these women were part of God’s plan? Could they have played their part in His plan if they had lacked courage? (Since Moses would have been killed as an infant without the intervention of these women, we can say that they had a part in the divine plan, and that if they had not been courageous enough to spare the baby, the plan could not have been fulfilled. Human beings really do work cooperatively with God to bring about His will.)

Point out that Miriam, Moses’ sister, was just a young child. Her courage in speaking up to Pharaoh’s daughter also helped to save Moses. (10 min)

4. Read **God Calls Moses to Lead the Exodus from Egypt**. As you go, discuss the question concerning Moses in the text, “How would you react to such a call [from God]?” After the third paragraph, pause and point out to students that two very important events for



Christians are described here. They are two things that prefigure (are an earlier example of) what Christ would do later. The first is the Passover, when God “passed over” the houses of the Hebrews whose doors were marked with blood while allowing death to come to the houses of their enemies. (Read the account in *Exodus 12:21-27*.) This is a prefiguring of Easter, or more properly in Armenian “Zadig” (which means “pass over”). Christ, the lamb, was sacrificed and shed His blood so that we might be saved from death. So the Church sometimes refers to Easter as the “new Passover,” and that has nothing to do with bunnies and jelly beans.

Another event that prefigures Christ’s work is the crossing of the Red Sea. Normally, to be thrust into the sea would mean death, but the Hebrews emerged from the sea and were saved. In baptism, we are also immersed in water, and we do not die but emerge as new people. We “die with Christ” by entering the water, and we “rise with Christ” by emerging again from it to be with Him forever. (15 min)

5. Discuss *Looking In* question with class. Close with prayer. (5 min)

QUIK QUIZ #5 answers: (1-F, 2-T, 3-T, 4-F, 5-F, 6-b, 7-a, 8-c, 9-d, 10-a)



Session Six

The Rest of the Pentateuch (Books of the Law)

Key Concepts

1. Four of the five books of the Pentateuch deal with the Hebrews' journey in the wilderness—a time God deemed necessary for their preparation to enter the land He had promised them.
2. These books present laws for worship, rituals, social order, and moral living.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Read about and discuss the contents of the Books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
2. Relate the need to “give God our best” as outlined in Leviticus to their own lives.

Materials: The session mentions *Yom Kippur*, the Jewish Day of Atonement. If you know someone who observes the Jewish feasts, you could invite that person to speak to the class about Yom Kippur. If that isn't practical, perhaps the person would let you record him or her speaking about the meaning of Yom Kippur (even on your cell phone), and you can play this during class. Or you might take some notes from the person, or look up some information to share with the class; a brown bag and slips of paper for the atonement activity.

Background: There is a tendency today, in our world in which “anything goes,” to dismiss these Books of the Law as antiquated, rigid sets of rules. According to this way of thinking, they no longer apply or should apply to our society or our life.

The purpose of this session is to show that while it's true that some specific rules in these books can no longer be applied to our life, the books are still basic to our faith. God has called us to live up to high standards, both in our worship and in our relationships with each other. Those standards are evident in these Books of the Law, and we are still called to uphold them.

Procedure

1. Begin with prayer. Review “Word Watch” vocabulary to date. (5 min)
2. Read **The Torah Continued**. Share with the class the information you have gathered about Yom Kippur as you read about it. (15 min)
3. An interesting activity to make “atonement” and the scapegoat tradition more concrete and meaningful is the following. Tell students you intend to demonstrate the power of the atonement ritual practiced among the ancient Israelites. Distribute slips of paper and have students write one transgression or “sin” they regret committing during the past week (or anytime in the past). It



might have been disrespecting their parents, or hurting a friend, anger, etc. Then go to each student with the paper lunch bag and have them rip their paper into pieces into the bag. When all are collected, throw the bag into the garbage. Discuss. How did students feel? Do they feel like their transgression can be more easily put behind them? (10 min)

4. Have students complete the exercise *Codes of Living*. If class is large, have them share answers in groups of three. Otherwise, discuss as one group. Explore reasons behind the answers. Ask class to notice any patterns about favorite and least favorite rules. Do favorite rules benefit mostly the individual, least favorite, the family as a whole? What do community rules achieve? (Balancing the good of the community with the well-being of the individual, for one.) (15 min)
5. Do the **Looking In** exercise with students. (Ways we can offer our best to God might include such “best” things as coming to church on time, taking care of pets, helping at home without being asked, avoiding drugs and other things that harm our bodies, using our minds by reading good books, etc.) Close with a prayer. (15 min)

QUIK QUIZ #6 answers: (1-b, 2-d, 3-Levi or Levites, 4-he died, 5-Pentateuch or Torah, 6-c, 7-d, 8-e, 9-b, 10-a)



Session Seven

History and Some Famous Names (The Historical Books)

Key Concepts

1. The nation of Israel changed from a theocracy (rule by God) to a monarchy (rule by a human sovereign) because the people wanted to be like all the other nations.
2. Human rule did not bring immediate or lasting peace and happiness to Israel.
3. David, who became king after Saul, is one of the greatest figures of the Old Testament.

Objectives

Students will

1. Develop a biographical sketch of one of the Old Testament judges.
2. Complete readings from the historical books and answer questions based on these readings.
3. Examine the story of Ruth

Materials: Bible dictionaries (enough for each group) for students to use as their groups report on the three judges, paper, pencils.

Background: The Old Testament figures of Joshua, Ruth, and David are among the best-known in the Bible. All of them have special connections with Jesus Christ. Ruth, though a member of a people despised by many of the Hebrews, is a human ancestor of Christ, reminding us that He is the Lord for everyone, not just the “Chosen People”—whether that term refers to the Hebrews of the Old Testament or to us, the “new Israel,” the Church.

Joshua’s name translates as “Jesus” in Greek, and like Jesus he led his people to their Promised Land. David is also an ancestor of Jesus Christ. When Christ came, He didn’t come just as a divine being who “dropped from the sky.” He was truly one of us, even to the point of having a traceable human ancestry from the time of Abraham. He was born into a specific human family, at the same time always and forever being the Divine Son of God. This is the uniqueness of the God we worship, whose love for us is so great that He becomes one of us (though without sin). In this session, keep the ties of these Old Testament figures to Christ in your mind, and try to share them with the class as you go through the session.

This session covers an important historical period: the time of the Judges, followed by the establishment of a Hebrew monarchy under King David. Make sure students know the order of events, and the names of some of the important figures.



Procedure

1. Open with the prayer. (5 min)
2. Have students read **Warriors, Judges, and Kings** up to **The Book of Ruth** subheading. The famous last phrase is: “But as for me and my household we will serve the Lord.” Now go to the boxed activity. Divide the class into three groups, and assign each group one Judge: Gideon, Deborah, or Samson. They can find information in their Bible dictionaries. Take fifteen minutes for the research and ten for the group reports to the rest of the class. (25 min)
3. Have students continue reading. Be sure they understand that Ruth was a “foreigner” and thus, in the ancient world, mistrusted and looked down on. Yet our God is full of surprises, and she is honored as one of the line of human beings in the genealogy (or line of ancestry) of Jesus Christ. Her words in verse 16: “Where you go I will go and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God.”

The answers to the three questions about the people wanting a king are b, c, b. Discuss with the class: When was a time when you did something just because you wanted to be like everybody else? How did it turn out? (There may be some positive and some negative memories that students will share.) Continue reading the Student Text. For the questions about Samuel’s uncertainty, try to help students see that Samuel was looking for the most impressive among the brothers, thinking that that person would naturally be God’s choice for king. But God’s reply has a special, comforting resonance for our teens who so often are concerned about their outward appearance and the impression they make: “For the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7) When you get to David’s grief in 2 Samuel 19:4, it might interest students to know that the Nobel Prize writer William Faulkner was inspired by these verses to title his novel about a wayward son *Absalom, Absalom!* (30 min)

QUIK QUIZ #7 answers: (1-5, 2-4, 3-2, 4-1, 5-3, 6-b, 7-a, 8-c, 9-d, 10-a)



Session Eight

More History and Famous Names

(The Rest of the Historical Books)

Key Concepts

1. The kingdom of Israel was great because it was based on allegiance to God.
2. When that allegiance faltered, the kingdom of Israel faltered too.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Read and discuss the story of Solomon's rule.
2. Analyze and solve a "problem" applying the wisdom of Solomon.
3. Review the important events in the history of Israel covered in this session.

Materials: A large supply of newspapers or news magazines from which students can find a "dilemma" which they will try to solve with the wisdom of Solomon. (You may want to borrow news magazines from friends, or from the public library if your library allows magazines to circulate. If you subscribe to or buy a newspaper, keep several days' worth, or borrow these from friends. Figure on having at least four print sources for each group of three or four students for this activity.) Pre-prepared 8½ X 11 pages with titles in large letters as follows (and this is in proper order): Reign of Solomon; Division of the kingdom into Israel/north and Judah/south; Conquest of Israel by Assyrians; Conquest of Judah by Babylonians and "Babylonian captivity"; Defeat of Babylonia by Persia and return of many Jews to their homeland; Revolt against "Hellenizers" by the Maccabees; Dominance of the Roman Empire over Palestine-the setting for the coming of Jesus Christ. (see procedure #3).

Background: The history of the kingdom of Israel tells us a great deal about God's plan for His people. God allowed them to have a king because of their desire to be like all the other nations, as we have seen in a previous session. Yet this would still not solve the problem of their inability and unwillingness to keep the law and follow His will. The history of Israel leads up to the coming of Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the only One who could fulfill the Old Testament law perfectly on behalf of the human beings who never could. He is also the only One who could be an example for us of how to do the will of His Father completely.

In this history we meet many wonderful and important people who paved the way for the coming of Christ. These figures of the Old Testament are honored by the Church because they tried to live as God called them to, even with often glaring human imperfections. The Church teaches that even though they did not know Christ as the people of the New Testament were privileged to know Him, they will be with us in the Kingdom.



Procedure

1. Open with prayer. Review previous sessions. (10 min)

2. Read **Victory and Loss**. Discuss the question in the text. Emphasize the wisdom and humility Solomon showed in asking God for the ability to lead well and understand good and evil, rather than asking for personal power or riches. Then read the story of Solomon's famous judgment with the two mothers claiming a baby to be their own.

Divide the class into groups of three and four, and give them newspapers and magazines (at least four print sources per group.) Ask them to find a story involving two opposing claims, and to apply the "wisdom of Solomon" in deciding which claim will prevail. Their decision must reflect Christian love and concern to the greatest possible degree, and must actually end the problem so no further disputes are possible.

Give the groups ten minutes to find a problem and to discuss and choose a solution for it. Use another ten minutes for each group to report to the rest of the class. The report should include a description of the problem, how they came to their decision regarding a solution, and how they think their decision meets the requirements set out in the previous paragraph. (30 min)

3. Finish reading the Student Text. As a review of the events described, tape the 7 pages on the wall or board in random order. (See *Materials Needed* for the events and their actual order.) Have students work individually, and write them in order in their texts. When everyone has finished, call on volunteers to put the pages, from first to last, in proper sequence. (10 min)

4. Help the class memorize this passage from *1 Kings 2*: "Obey the Lord your God by walking in His ways and keeping His statutes and His commandments and His laws, as it is written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you turn." Close with a prayer and encourage students to keep up their efforts. (10 min)

QUIK QUIZ #8 answers: (1-Temple in Jerusalem, 2-Cyrus, 3-Maccabees, 4-Judah and Benjamin, 5-wisdom, 6-T, 7-F, 8-F, 9-T, 10-T)



Session Nine

Wisdom Is a Gift From God

Key Concepts

1. In suffering, the Hebrew people began to look beyond Jerusalem and the Temple to understand God's promise of everlasting life in His Kingdom.
2. The Wisdom Books of the Old Testament deal with questions of the meaning of life, the presence of suffering in the world, and God's purpose for us.

Objectives

Students will

1. Read an overview of the purpose and contents of the wisdom books.
2. Do a Bible study activity on what the Book of Job says about our personal relationship with God.
3. Compare the messianic character of Psalm 22 with matching gospel verses.
4. Chant a psalm in the traditional Armenian manner.
5. Create a proverbs poster.

Materials: For an activity on proverbs, have for each group of three students a piece of 8½ X 11 poster board and materials for decorating: markers, magazines (for pictures), stickers, sequins or other items, glue and tape, scissors.

For singing (or chanting) the psalms, arrange for someone to come in and show the class how the psalms are sung or chanted in church services. If you cannot have someone come during class, have someone record an example of the proper way to sing or chant in English. You might ask your priest or a choir member to do this.

Background: The Hebrew people's loss of their Temple, the holy Ark of the Covenant, and much of Jerusalem itself made it impossible for them to consider these physical places as being the "home" of God's promised Kingdom. The Wisdom Books reflect their thinking that God had some other kind of Kingdom in mind. It was a kingdom "not of this world," as His Son Jesus Christ would say.

The Wisdom Books also reflect the considerable amount of thought that the Hebrews gave to questions about the meaning of life and how it was to be lived. The wonderful sayings and maxims that we find in these books are the fruit of that thought. Try to help students see what a gift these are to us—to be used, pondered on, and lived by.



Procedure

1. Open with prayer. Review previous sessions. (10 min)
2. Read **What Are the Wisdom Books?** and **The Book of Job**. Then, form groups of two or three for the Bible study. Allow 10 minutes for the small group work and 5 for feedback and discussion. (20 mins)
3. Read **The Book of Psalms**. To give students a solid understanding of the royal or messianic psalms that point to Christ, using Psalm 22 as an example, put two lists on the chalkboard:

First list: *Psalm 22:1; 22:6-7; 22:12-13; 22:28*

Second list: *Matthew 27:46, Luke 23:35-36, Matthew 27:36, 44, 1 Corinthians 15:23-24.*

Students can see for themselves how the items in these lists match up in order. You can have students each look up a different verse and read them aloud. Ask them to point out the similarities. Let them find other verses in this psalm that also point to Christ (Verses 16 and 18). Ask students: "How does this psalm help us see what God was doing in the Old Testament?" (He was preparing everyone for the coming of Christ by describing what would happen when Jesus Christ came as our Savior. These things were done to help us believe that Jesus Christ really is the divine Savior and Son of God.) (10 min)

4. Point out to the class that the psalms are sung or chanted, usually by two groups chanting one after the other, as part of worship. If you engaged someone to come to class, have that person get the class to choose some psalms to sing or chant. (Psalms 136 and 150 would be good choices.) If you don't have someone coming, use a recording or lead the chanting yourself. (5 min)
5. Continue reading in the Student Text to the end. Return to the paragraph on the Book of Proverbs for a special activity. Divide students into groups of three, and let them peruse the Book of Proverbs. They can choose one they like, and then use the poster board and decorative materials to make a small, simple poster of their chosen proverb.

When students have finished the posters, display them in the room or somewhere else. Clean up as necessary, and end with a prayer. (15 min)

QUIK QUIZ #9 answers: 1-d, 2-b, 3-c, 4-a, 5-b, 6-d, 7-c, 8-10: Gospel, epistle, Torah (as not relating to Wisdom literature)



Session Ten

The Prophets: God's Human Messengers

Key Concepts

1. The prophets were people who spoke for God to the people and told them His will.
2. God gave the prophets a vision of His Kingdom to share with the people.
3. Just as foreign conquest was the result of the people's sin, God's promise of His Kingdom was the result of His love for His sinful people.

Objectives

Students will

1. Read a survey of the contents of the books of the prophets.
2. Complete small group work on readings in Isaiah.
3. Compare messianic prophecies from Isaiah with their fulfillment in the life of Christ.
4. Discuss Jeremiah's call and prophecies.

Background: Like the rest of the Old Testament, the Books of the Prophets point toward and prepare readers for the coming of Jesus Christ as Savior. What is special about the prophets is that they had visions and specific callings from God, and delivered His messages directly to the people.

This was not an easy or welcome task, as we see in the case of Jeremiah. Yet the prophets, this group of men from various backgrounds and with various abilities, did what the Lord had commanded them to do, despite all obstacles.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer. Review previous sessions. (15 min)
2. Start the class by putting the word "prophet" on the board. Ask for any definition or words students can think of when they see that word and record them by connecting them with a line to the word "prophet." (This exercise is called "webbing.") Then announce that today's class will be a lesson on the prophets and their world. Read up to **Isaiah**. Put the definition of "prophet" on the chalkboard. Make sure students know that "prophecy" is a verb and the last syllable is pronounced like "sigh." The noun is "prophecy" and the last syllable is pronounced like "see." You might also put this on the board. As you go through the Student Text, put the names and dates given on the chalkboard too. (5 min.)
3. Divide class into two groups and have them read the section **Isaiah**. Instruct them to look up and read all Bible references (they might want to choose one person in the group to read references aloud. Allow 15 minutes for the group work and 10 for feedback and general discussion.



The listed passages “match” with Christ’s life as follows:

7:14—A young woman bore a son to whom Christians give the title “Immanuel.”

11:1—Jesse was the father of David, and the genealogy at the beginning of Matthew’s Gospel shows, as we saw in a previous session, how David is the human ancestor of God.

50:6—Christ was humiliated and hurt in just the ways described here.

53:7—Christ did not answer His accusers when He was arrested before the crucifixion.

Make sure students understand that these are examples of “messianic prophecies.” Some of the passages may be familiar from previous sessions, but they are so important that that is perfectly all right. For Group Think Tank questions, discuss freely but stress:

- 1) Like Isaiah, we have the privilege of coming in contact with God in Holy Communion, receiving His body and blood on our lips as Isaiah’s lips were touched with a burning coal from God’s holy altar. And
 - 2) It is one of God’s great surprises—to send a divine King who is humble and willing to be humiliated for our sake. (25 min)
4. Continue reading in the Student Text. Make sure to read and say a little about each Bible passage in the text. If time is short, you may have to skip over or summarize some of the material. To the question of whether Amos is saying we should do away with worship, the answer is an emphatic NO. The faithful people of the Old Testament knew that God’s glory and goodness calls for worship. Jesus honored and took part in the Temple worship. But by itself, worship is not enough. We know there are people who can justify their own sins by saying, “But I go to church every week. So I’m sure God considers me to be a good person!” What Amos is saying here is that worship must not be an empty ritual. It must reflect what we are doing in our lives—helping others, and trying to live by God’s word. Continue through the section on Jeremiah in the Student Text. To the questions about his calling, the answers are:
- 1) God says that He chose Jeremiah as a prophet even before he was in the womb.
 - 2) Like Moses, Jeremiah tries to excuse himself from God’s call on the basis of lack of ability.
 - 3) God tells Jeremiah that he will have to do some negative things (break down, destroy, overthrow) along with the positive ones He mentions. Obviously, this means Jeremiah will have to suffer the consequences of delivering messages to powerful people that those people really won’t want to hear. (20 min)
5. Work with the class on the passage to be memorized. Be sure they understand that the sentence “we wait for You” means that we are willing to do things according to God’s plan, not our own. “Be our arm” of course, means that we ask God to give us strength, to guide us, and to protect us. If you prefer, discuss the ‘Looking In’ question instead. Close with a prayer. (5 min)



QUIK QUIZ #10 answers: 1-d, 2-a, 3-b, 4-b, 5-a, 6-c, 7-a prophet is a person who speaks for God, a person who speaks by divine inspiration, who expresses the will of God, a person of profound moral insight (accept all reasonable answers), 8-the spiritual kernel of the nation that would survive God's judgment and become the germ of the new people of God, 9-T, 10-F



Session Eleven

The Prophets: God's Human Messengers (Part 2)

Key Concepts

1. The prophets' vision of a universal Kingdom of God is a strong emphasis in their preaching.
2. The prophets see salvation as a universal gift, not just for one group of people.
3. Some prophecies (namely Ezekiel's) reflect a belief in resurrection from death.

Objectives

Students will

1. Prepare a review game.
2. Complete a Bible Study on Ezekiel.
3. Read a brief survey of select books of prophecy.
4. Explore a question related to the book of Jonah.

Materials: For a review game, have twenty 3 x 5 cards—10 cards each for 2 teams of students (or adapt as appropriate to your class size).

Background: In this session (our last on the Old Testament) we see that the prophets continued to develop their thinking about the Kingdom of God. They were seeing it not as an earthly place but as a state of being in communion with Him—a communion that people can reach if they will be faithful to Him and loving to each other.

Because several of these prophets were writing after the exile, they were dealing with that “remnant” that kept the faith and returned to the homeland. These people still got discouraged, became impatient with God, and all too readily gave in to sin. But the prophets encouraged them to be hopeful and to believe God would keep His promises in His time. This is an attitude that we need to develop just as much as they did.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer. (5 min)
2. Divide the class into two teams (adapt according to your class size). Give each team ten cards, and assign them five previous class sessions (1-5 for one team and 6-10 for the other) for which to write 10 review questions. These should be drawn from Quik Quiz review questions. They will have 10 minutes to work as a team and write their questions, putting the questions on one side of the cards and answers on the other.



Gather the cards, and tell the class you will have a review game next week. (10 min)

Special Note: During the week before the next session, go over students' question cards. Check for accuracy of answers and add any questions you feel are necessary to have a thorough review of the sessions.

3. Begin reading the Student Text. As you read about Obadiah, point out to students that the Edomites must have been quite a sophisticated civilization to have built such a city, yet the prophets confidently and correctly predicted their dissolution. (5 min)
4. Read the section on Ezekiel. Then break into groups of three and assign the Bible study in the text. Allow 15 minutes for the small group Bible study and then have an open discussion for ten. (25 min)

Group Bible Study: Ezekiel 37: 1-14 (Answers)

1. God, the prophet Ezekiel, and (perhaps) the "vast army" brought to life.
2. It takes place in a valley full of bones. Ask students for more details in how they pictured it – African desert? The Grand Canyon?
3.
 - a. God sets Ezekiel in the middle of a valley of bones.
 - b. He leads Ezekiel back and forth amid the bones.
 - c. He asks Ezekiel: "Can these come to life?"
 - d. Ezekiel declares that only God knows this.
 - e. He tells Ezekiel to tell the bones that the Sovereign Lord will breathe life into them, and will attach tendons and flesh and skin.
 - f. And that when He does that, they will know He is the Lord.
 - g. Ezekiel does as he is told and he hears the rattle as the bones come to life and are covered with flesh and skin.
 - h. But there is no breath in them.
 - i. God then asks Ezekiel to prophesy to the "breath" or the wind, so that it may enter into the still lifeless forms.
 - j. Ezekiel does so, and a "vast army" comes to life.
4. The bones are the Israelites, who are cut off and without hope. But it is *God* who will breathe life into them and bring them back to their faith and ancestral lands. This is not about individual resurrection, but about an entire people being revived and brought back to true life.
 Bones are hard and lifeless, the barest part of a person.
 Breath is essential to life, the Holy Spirit is like wind and breath.
 Graves house the dead, not the living. To live, one needs to be liberated from them. A grave can symbolize a "dead" way of living – without God, without faith



5. Christians today can certainly find messages in this episode. This can include: that God's Spirit is necessary for us to live truly fulfilled human lives; that only with God is the impossible (dried bones coming to life) possible; that we need Him to rescue us from what can often be meaningless, "dead" lives; often we are actually living out our lives in "graves" – a place where life-affirming activities, faith-filled living is rare; and that coming to know God's power to imbue us with *real* life, will move us to deeper faith, knowing Him for who He is.
5. Finish reading the text. The "message" in Daniel is that we should keep our faith and our faith practices pure under any circumstances and that God will be with us when we do. This is just as true for us as for the people enslaved in Babylonia in Daniel's time. Spend remaining time on the *Looking In* question. (15 min)

QUIK QUIZ #11 answers: 1-Obadiah, 2-Ezekiel, 3-Zechariah, 4-Jonah, 5-Daniel, 6-bones, 7-dried, 8-life, 9-breathe, 10-Lord



Session Twelve

Introducing...The New Testament

Key Concepts

1. The New Testament (covenant) conveys the good news (gospel) of salvation.
2. This good news is for everyone, of every nation and background, in the world.
3. The 27 books of the New Testament contain the truth about Jesus Christ and His teaching.

Objectives

Students will

1. Play a review game about the Old Testament.
2. Survey the similarities and differences in the three synoptic gospel accounts of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness.
3. Explore the meaning of the terms: canon of Scripture, parable, oral tradition, Synoptic Gospels, New Testament/New Covenant.
4. Read about the four Gospel writers and be able to tell one or two facts about each Gospel.
5. Recognize that the New Testament consists of 27 books.

Materials: Cards with questions and answers for an Old Testament review.

A New Testament timeline and maps showing the areas we will be looking at in the remaining sessions.

Background: We have seen that the Old Covenant between God and His people was broken time and again by the people's willfulness and sinfulness, though God was always faithful. We come now to the time of a New Covenant, a covenant for all people, not just the Hebrews, though they have a primary place in it. The Church is the "new Israel" based not on the Old Testament law but on the teachings of Jesus Christ as they are presented in the New Testament.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer. Divide the class into two teams for a review of previous sessions, using the questions they produced (with any you added) at the last session. Distribute to each team a single piece of paper on which to record answers. Have team members work together and write their answers to the questions as you ask them. (Be sure not to let their answers on one side of the cards show.) They can use whatever sources (Bibles, their Student Texts etc.) to answer the questions. Some of the questions, of course, will probably be the ones they came up with last week. Let's hope they remember the answers without too much need to turn to their sources!

Correct the answers with them and offer congratulations to the winning team. Go over any questions that really stumped a lot of people. (15 min)



2. Tell the class that you are going to begin this week to study the New Testament. Let students find the New Testament in their Bibles, and look with them at the names of the books and the divisions within the New Testament. If the Bibles you are using have maps, look together at the areas in which the Gospel events took place. Help students to find these in their Bibles: The Gospel of Mark, the Book of Revelation, the Letter to the Romans. (5 min)
3. Read the Student Text through **The Four Gospels** or use it as a basis for a lecture. (10 min)
4. Have students divide into pairs or threes to do the **Synoptic Study**. Review differences and similarities. (See guidelines to answers below.) Point out that although He prevailed over Satan, Jesus was also tempted to doubt His Father. We, too, may be tempted to doubt God's love for us, or His very existence, by the bad things that happen in our lives or in the world.. Jesus has "been there" and can help us get through and resist these temptations if we ask Him for His help. (20 min)

Differences

1. Mark gives a two-verse summary of the story.
2. Only in Mark do we read that there were wild animals in this desert.
3. Matthew and Luke reverse the order of the last two temptations (perhaps to stress Jesus' movement towards Jerusalem, where His life will end).
4. Luke does not mention angels attending to him; Mark and Matthew do.
5. Only in Matthew does Jesus say "Away from me Satan!" (v 10)
6. Only in Luke does it suggest that the devil would return at another time (v.13)

Similarities

1. The Spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness. (all three accounts)
2. He did not eat for 40 days and was hungry. (Matthew and Luke)
3. They quote Psalm 91:11-12 about angels keeping Him from harm. (Matthew and Luke)
4. Jesus answers each temptation with a quote from Scripture. (Matthew and Luke)
5. Continue reading. When you get to the part about the Sermon on the Mount in the section **The Gospel of Matthew**, have students read in their Bibles *Matthew 5:3-11*. Ask them which of these verses they think is the most difficult to carry out. Which is the most important? Which is one they would like to work on in their own lives? (There are no right or wrong answers here, of course. Students will have different opinions based on their personal circumstances.) (10 min)

Close the session with a prayer.

QUIK QUIZ #12 answers: 1-epistles, 2-oral tradition, 3-the silent years, 4-synoptic gospels, 5-7: the gospel writer had to have been an apostle or a follower of a disciple, the writings had to have been recognized by at least one Christian community and the doctrine contained in the writings had to be consistent with that taught by the apostles, 8-Romans, 9-Jewish Christians, 10-Gentile converts



Session Thirteen

More on the Gospels

Key Concepts

1. The Synoptic Gospels all witness to the truth of Jesus Christ's message, and tell us how He delivered it.
2. These three gospels have basic similarities and as a group they are different from John's Gospel.
3. The Gospel of John has a theological emphasis, showing how the man Jesus is the divine Son of God.

Objectives

Students will

1. Discuss the account of Jesus in the temple as a boy (Luke 2:41-52).
2. Compare and contrast various passages from the Synoptic Gospels.
3. Examine several passages unique to John.

Materials: A decorative object (perhaps a painted box, a small figurine, an ornament of some kind) that might be described in different ways, for example “red and shiny” or “smooth and breakable.”

Background: This session will give students an idea of the events covered in all three of the Synoptic Gospels—a short version of the life and work of Jesus Christ. Then they will see some of the contrasts between the Synoptics and John's Gospel. This is important because the variations in the Gospel support their authenticity. If two people are describing the same thing, their accounts will differ at least in some minimal ways. On the other hand, if the Gospels were not authentic eyewitness accounts, they might be identical—it's only when we're telling a lie that we want to make sure each person involved in the lie tells the story exactly the same way.

The differences in the Gospels are also important for our students to see because they show how many people were affected deeply by Jesus Christ. The four Gospel writers were very different from each other, yet each of their lives was changed so significantly by Him that they wanted to share their stories with the world. By making this clear to our students, we can encourage them to see how He can change their lives, too.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer. Review previous sessions. (5 min)
2. Read **The Message of the Synoptic Gospels** in the Student Text up to **John the Baptist**. During the discussion of Luke 2:41-52, bring out the following points:



- a. Obviously, Mary and Joseph were faithful worshipers. We are told they went “every year” to Jerusalem and that they went “according to the custom.” What’s important here is that Jesus kept the habit of faithful worship throughout His earthly life, as the Gospels tell us in many places.
 - b. Since even the most learned of the Temple teachers are “amazed” at Jesus’ wisdom and knowledge, it is obvious that He has something far beyond what they could have taught Him. His parents’ “astonishment” confirms this. Jesus, in some way beyond any human understanding, was in communion with His Father and the Holy Spirit, preparing for His adult ministry. The episode in the Temple was another way God was getting His people ready to accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah.
 - c. In addition to their astonishment, Mary and Joseph show irritation with Jesus for giving them such a bad scare—it’s a typical reaction of parents whose anxiety has been relieved by finding a lost child. But if Mary and Joseph had understood what He was doing, they would not have reacted that way—it would have been no surprise to them. His being in the Temple, and showing such wisdom, is more than they can fathom.
 - d. We might imagine a mother in Mary’s situation demanding to know what’s going on with her son, or wanting to be let in on the “secret” of her boy’s very special abilities. But Mary, in humility and submission to God, instead “ponders in her heart” what she has witnessed. She doesn’t simply dismiss it from her mind. But she leaves it up to God to know what is going on, and to do what is best.
3. Read **John the Baptist**. The prophet mentioned in 2 Kings 1:8 is Elijah. Then continue reading in the Student Text or summarizing for the class, stopping before **The Gospel of John**. (20 min)
 4. As a way of introducing **How Are They the Same? How Are They Different?** to students and have them see how something can be similar and yet different from something else, show them the decorative object you have brought. Distribute note paper and ask them (on their own) to write down three words that describe it. Tell them there are no right or wrong answers. Collect the words. There will be some that are identical, and some that differ from each other. Point this out by putting some of the words on the chalkboard. Say, “We can all look at the same thing and yet see something slightly different in it. This is what we see in the Synoptic Gospels—three writers tell us many of the same things, but in different ways and emphasizing different things. Remember how we saw this In the three different accounts of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness last session?”



5. Divide students into three groups. for the exercise. Discuss the results together as a class. Point out that even with the differences, the stories told by the Gospel writers still give a witness to the same things. Point out, too, that it is obvious the stories are truly what they actually saw, because they made no effort to “co-ordinate” the details of their stories as people might do if they were inventing a story and wanted it to be convincing. (15 min)

Possible answers:

In Common

First day of the week

Women went to the tomb

Stone Is rolled away

Angelic figure(s) announce Jesus

has risen

Different

earthquake (Matthew)

an angel appears (Matthew)

the risen Jesus encounters the women

women do not share good news as they are afraid (Mark)

Peter returns to the empty tomb (Luke)

6. Finish reading the Student Text. Ask students to work in the same three groups as earlier. Assign each group one of the three passages on page 85. These are about events that appear only in John’s Gospel. Groups should be prepared to tell the rest of the class what the passage is about and the answers they came up with. (20 min)

Guidelines for answers

Group One

- 1) As a Pharisee, Nicodemus is a member of a group that is hostile to Jesus. He doesn’t want to be seen visiting with Him.
- 2) Jesus is speaking about baptism.
- 3) Jesus is telling Nicodemus that the effects of baptism are not visible or explainable, just as the force that pushes the wind is not visible or explainable.

Group Two

- 1) He shows respect in that He does what she asks. Though some Bible commentators say that Jesus rebukes His mother in verse 4, that’s really not so. “Woman” is a respectful way of addressing her. And His question to her should be translated, “What has that to do with you and me?”
- 2) He shows love and concern by providing wine and saving them from social embarrassment.
- 3) The Church chose this passage to show Jesus’ high regard for marriage. It also shows us that He could enjoy celebrating with other people.

Group Three

- 1) The miracle He is about to perform, raising Lazarus, will strengthen His followers’ faith.
- 2) The verse is 35: “Jesus began to weep.” Some translations simply say “Jesus wept.”
- 3) Jesus does something here that we often see in the Gospel of John—He speaks directly



to His Father. He shows that the miracle is done so that everyone will know the Father sent Him. He focuses all the glory and power on His Father, not on Himself.

QUIK QUIZ #13 answers: 1-The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the son of God (Annunciation). 2-Herod the Great was the father of Herod Antipas. 3-The prophet Malachi made a prophecy about sending a messenger to prepare the way. 4-They are the same thing. 5-The Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove at the River Jordan when Jesus was baptized. 6-Both these events are celebrated together in the Armenian Church (January 6). 7-Both these Jewish sects hated and distrusted Jesus. 8-At the Transfiguration, Jesus took these three disciples up to Mt. Tabor. 9-Jesus established communion at the Last Supper. 10-Both these events are recorded only in John's Gospel.



Session Fourteen

The Book of Acts

Key Concepts

1. The Early Church was first composed of Jews and then of Gentiles who joined the faith through the preaching of the apostles.
2. The Early Church faced conflicts and disagreements, and formed the lasting principle of meeting in council to arrive at decisions under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
3. Paul's work as an apostle took him to many lands and exposed him to many dangers, despite which he converted thousands to the Christian faith.

Objectives

Students will

1. Examine passages from the Book of Acts relating to Pentecost, life in the early church and the missionary journeys of St. Paul.

Background: Saint Paul is saint, action hero, champion, humble missionary and world-class leader all rolled into one formidable man. Besides facing threats of physical violence and actually suffering violence for the sake of the Gospel, Paul did something else. He had intellectual courage, too. He loved the Gospel enough to learn it and know it very well. Then he defended it against all kinds of learned people—the self-satisfied Athenians, the well-schooled Pharisees and Sadducees, and the Roman rulers who had much of the known world in their control.

His character and accomplishments are not only about a specific time in world history but for all time.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer. Review previous session(s). (5 min)
2. (Note: Vary the extensive readings in this chapter with your own lecture summaries.) Start reading **The Church Begins**. Divide class in two and assign each group one of the two post-resurrection readings. After they have read the verses silently, have students reconstruct the story by each adding a sentence (in their own words) to build the entire story. When one group finishes, have the other tell its story. The answer to the question about the two appearances of Jesus is that in both he gives his apostles something to eat. What better way to prove that he's not a ghost, and that he really loves them! (15 min)
3. Continue reading. In answer to the questions about Jesus' instructions in Acts 1:1-14 to the apostles as he ascends:
 - 1) He tells them to stay in Jerusalem.
 - 2) They are to "wait for the promise of the Father" (that He would send His Holy Spirit to be with them).
 - 3) They spent their time in prayer.



As you go through this Bible passage, note with students the same old question being asked of Jesus. The apostles still want to know when He will do what so many expected the Messiah to do: restore the Kingdom of Israel. (5 min)

4. Read on through the end of **A Crisis Develops**. Pause at Bible readings and have a student read aloud. Discuss each one briefly. In Acts 3: 6, Peter gave the man the gift of healing rather than money. The significant words (others can be “decided unanimously,” “we,”) in the letter from the Council of Jerusalem are in *Acts 15:28*: “For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” The apostles did not try or expect to make decisions without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (10 min)

5. Continue to the end in the Student Text. Time will determine if you can read all Scripture references. As you read, find some of Paul’s stopping-places on the map in the text. (10 min)

6. Do the **Looking In** activity together. End with a prayer. (15 min)

QUIK QUIZ #14 answers: 1-2: Ascension and Pentecost, 3-Luke, 4-Paul, 5-Matthias, 6-Barnabas, 7-Peter, 8-Lydia, 9-Aquila, 10-Stephen



Session Fifteen

The Letters of St. Paul and the Early Church

Key Concepts

1. The letters of the New Testament address three main issues: the relationship of Christians to the Mosaic law; the relative importance of material things and spiritual things; the relative importance of what you believe and what you do as a Christian.
2. Some of Saint Paul's 14 letters address problems in church communities; others are written to specific people.
3. All of Paul's letters, while expressing concern and sometimes disapproval, are filled with love and deep faith.

Objectives

Students will

1. Take a comprehensive review quiz and check answers as a group.
2. Read text and Scripture excerpts on the life of the early church and Paul's letters.
3. Analyze Paul's advice to his protégé in I Timothy 4:12.
4. Complete a reflective exercise on I Corinthians 13:1-12.

Materials: One copy per student of the 27 Quiz Questions at the end of this Teacher Text.

Background: This session will give students a small taste of what is in the letters of Saint Paul, both in content and tone. More importantly, it will give them an idea of what motivated Paul to write these letters. Students will see that the early Church did not have perfect harmony and love. What kept the Church going was faith in the power of the Holy Spirit promised by God, and determination to do His will under any circumstances, no matter how difficult or discouraging.

It's also important for students to know what kind of people made up the membership of the early Church. We can only imagine the conflicts that arose between those of Jewish background and Gentiles from pagan backgrounds, for example. It would have been easy for the fledgling Church to be destroyed by factions and argument.

Paul's helper Timothy was young; our students are young. They need not be intimidated because of their youth, as Paul says. Nor should they give up on the Church, no matter how imperfect some of its members are. This would also be Paul's message to them.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer. Give students copies of the Quiz Questions listed at the end of this Teacher Text. The questions come from Sessions 11, 12, 13, and 14. Students should work individually, and may use their Bibles or Student Texts to find answers. Give them 15-20 minutes to finish the quiz. Then have them exchange papers, and correct the quizzes with them. Collect the papers to look over later. You may want to note any questions that several students got wrong, and plan to go over them at the next (and last) session.

Quiz answers: 1. Mars Hill; 2. The Council of Jerusalem; 3. Priscilla; 4. False; she was a seller of purple goods; 5. Athenians; 6. True; 7. Jesus Christ's voice. His name at that time was Saul; 8. False. (He was a young man.); 9. Haggai; 10. Jerusalem; 11. Luke's Gospel (The second part is the Book of Acts); 12. Matthew; 13. False. (He was a Pharisee.); 14. The Gospel of Mark; 15. True; 16. d—a Pharisee who wanted to know more about Jesus' teachings; 17. b—a story with a moral; 18. b—John the Baptist; 19. 27 books; 20. Cana; 21. Greek; 22. True; 23. Matthew, Mark, and Luke; 24. a—looking the same; 25. Matthew—he collected taxes from fellow Jews for their despised Roman governors; 26. The Gospel of Mark; 27. d—Daniel.

Note: Plan 15-20 minutes for the quiz, and 10 minutes to go over the answers with the class after they have exchanged papers. If you see that students will need more time to complete the quiz, you can skip the activity listed as # 4 below. If it turns out later that you do have time, do the activity at the end of the session. (30 min)

3. Read **Themes of the New Testament Letters** in the Student Text. Go over the three major problems facing the early Church so that students will have a better understanding of why Saint Paul wrote what he did.

Continue with **The Letters of Saint Paul** in the Student Text.

4. Read to the end of the section on I Corinthians. Paul's concern in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 is that we do what we know is right *in order to help others, not to feel puffed up by our superiority*. What we eat is not important (v. 8) but if others are upset with the sight of the apostles eating pagan ceremonial food, then perhaps it would be best not to. The familiar woman's name at the end is Prisca, another form of Priscilla. The "some of you" refers to the Gnostics. In rejecting the idea of God becoming man, they also rejected the resurrection. (10 min)
5. Conclude reading in the Student Text. The Philippians helped Paul with a gift (probably much-needed money.) The words to be written are in *Philippians 2:10*—"so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."

For the questions about Timothy, Paul says:

- 1). Timothy should not let anyone refuse to take him seriously just because of his youth. He wants Timothy to look at himself as someone capable of offering a good example even to those older than himself.



- 2). He encourages Timothy to give this good example in all possible ways, and lists several of them.
- 3). The third question is one for students to answer as they see fit, depending on the circumstances of their own lives. (Those circumstances differ, of course. Students who have been to retreats or conferences will have more ideas about what they can do. It might be a chance to encourage those who have not attended such gatherings of Armenian Church youth to consider doing so.)

Discuss these questions briefly, and finish reading the Student Text. Conclude with the **Looking In** exercise. Ask students to repeat it at home (and follow up next week). (20 min)

SESSION FIFTEEN — QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. Name the place where Paul preached to some curious people in Athens. (2 words)
2. The apostles met together to decide whether new gentile converts would be subject to the Mosaic law. Write the name of that meeting.
3. This woman and her husband were both tentmakers and teachers, like Saint Paul. What is her name?
4. True or False? Lydia, a woman converted to the Christian faith by Saint Paul, was a seller of spices and perfumes.
5. Name the one group to which Saint Paul did NOT write a letter: Galatians, Athenians, Corinthians, Thessalonians.
6. True or False? The prophet Ezekiel writes about resurrection.
7. Whose voice did Saint Paul hear on the road to Damascus? What was Paul's name at that time?
8. True or False? Timothy, Paul's assistant, was also his uncle.
9. Which of these prophets emphasized the importance of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem?
10. The feast of Pentecost took place in what city?
11. Which of the four Gospels is really one part of a book that was later divided in two?
12. Which Gospel writer directed his writing to his fellow Jews, showing them that Jesus Christ fulfilled the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament?



13. True or False? Before his conversion, Saint Paul was a Sadducee.
14. Which Gospel is both the earliest-written and the shortest?
15. True or False? The “canon of Scripture” refers to a collection of books.
16. Nicodemus was: a. one of the 12 apostles; b. a blind man healed by Jesus; c. A Roman soldier converted by Saint Paul; d. A Pharisee who wanted to know more about what Jesus was teaching.
17. What is a parable? a. riddle; b. story with a moral; c. wise saying; d. song.
18. Who said, “One is coming after me whose sandal I am not worthy to stoop down and untie”? a. Mary Magdalene; b. John the Baptist; c. Luke; d. Pontius Pilate.
19. How many books are there in the New Testament?
20. In John’s Gospel, Jesus’ first miracle is to change water into wine at a wedding in the town of _____.
21. What was the common spoken language of Palestine in Jesus Christ’s day?
22. True or False? The prophet Jonah tried to escape God’s command because he didn’t want to help the Ninevites, who were enemies of Israel.
23. The three Synoptic Gospels are:
24. Choose the best definition for the word “synoptic”: a. looking the same; b. written in the same language; c. having 3 parts; d. written in classical Armenian.
25. Which Gospel writer had previously had a job that made him very unpopular with his own people?
26. Which Gospel is known for its action, and contains the word “immediately” many times?
27. Which of the following prophets was taken as a captive to luxurious Babylonia, but kept his Hebrew faith and worship pure? a. Isaiah; b. Obadiah; c. Ezra; d. Daniel;

After you finish this quiz, please check your answers. You and your classmates will be exchanging papers and going over the correct answers with your teacher.



Session Sixteen

The Catholic Epistles (James, Peter, John and Jude) The Book of Revelation

Key Concepts

1. In the Catholic Epistles (sometimes called General Epistles) we see attempts by writers other than Saint Paul to deal with the three major problems that faced the early Church.
2. Persecution by government and hostile non-Christians was a big factor in the lives of the early Christians.
3. The writers of these letters and the Book of Revelation wanted to strengthen faith and build hope among these early Christians who faced so much terror and hardship.

Objectives

Students will

1. Explore the importance of our words in readings from James and Psalm 141.
2. Survey the letters of James, Peter, John, and Jude.
3. Read about the basic message of the Book of Revelation.
4. Complete an exercise on Bible verses that have inspired our liturgical practices.

Materials: Have for each student a copy of the Divine Liturgy book.

If you plan to give students some remembrance at the end of this final session, decide what you will need and arrange for it.

Background: These last books of the New Testament show us clearly the difficult conditions under which the first Christians lived. They managed to find joy in the midst of horrible persecutions, dissension among their fellow Christians, and a most confusing array of wrong teachings already being spread in those early days.

It's important to know something about those false teachings, because we have a tendency to think of ourselves in the 21st century as being intellectually sophisticated. We take pride in our scientific achievements and ability to “prove” things true or false. Our students are surrounded by this attitude, and may be tempted to think that these Christian “stories” have long been shown to be naïve tales.

So it's good for them to know that there is nothing new about this attitude—the Gnostics had it centuries ago. The Church survived it, and will continue to survive it.



And when we encounter in these letters the stern warnings against sexual immorality and bad habits of all kinds, we'll know that it isn't that the letter writers were prudes. The divisiveness caused by the false teachers was real, and dangerous, just as it is today.

Procedure

1. Open with prayer.
2. Have students take turns reading **The Catholic Epistles**. In the section on James' letter, students are asked to do a "rewrite" of a few verses. The form this takes will of course be up to them. The reading from Psalms and the reading from James have in common that they warn us to guard our tongues—our words and our speech. Both readings acknowledge that speech can be powerful for good or bad.

In the section on Peter's epistle, the question about God's delay is that He is giving us time to repent.

Going on to John's epistles, he says that we can be sure we know God when we are willing to obey Him. In our own lives we can see that we are willing to follow someone when we trust that person. The Gnostics put more trust in their own intellectual abilities than in God's revelation through Jesus Christ.

John plays on the idea of "being enlightened" by saying that only unenlightened people look down on others, as the Gnostics looked down on their fellow Christians. Though the Gnostics claimed that they were the enlightened ones, John says that anyone who hates or shows contempt for another is still in darkness.

John calls on Christians to test what they hear, not just blindly believe it. The Gnostics may have thought others were less discerning than they were, but here John calls for discernment on the part of all believers.

Continue through the rest of the student text. (30 min)

3. For the matching exercise on "The New Testament Letters in Our Worship" have students complete the exercise individually. Go over the answers with them, making sure that they say something about what the connections are. Answers: a-3, b-4, c-5, d-2, e-1. (10 min)

4. Close with prayers and celebration! (20 min)

Special Note: Most of the information on the Bible in this unit of study was taken from The Message of the Bible by George Cronk (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1982)