

Wisdom: Let Us Be Attentive

Objective: Students will be able to identify the books of the New Testament: the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation.

For the Catechist

Children in Grade 4 have listened to the Gospel readings during the Divine Liturgy for many years. This lesson asks them to learn how to listen and pay attention more often. Even the title of this lesson is taken from the Liturgy to remind us we must be attentive to God's Word whenever we hear it. Now that the children have their own New Testaments, they must learn to prepare themselves to read Scripture.

Previewing a book before it is read is a good way to become familiar with the organization. This lesson asks the children to preview the New Testament. The children learn about the books of the New Testament before they are asked to read from it. Lesson 5 teaches them how to find passages. With their knowledge from this lesson, they will be able to find the passages more quickly.

The map at the end of this lesson can be used as a visual aid for any future lessons. If possible, have a map of the whole world in your classroom. Point out the Holy Land area on the larger map to let the children see the task given to the apostles: "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

Every time the Bible is used, it should be introduced in a very reverent manner in both verbal and non-verbal ways. These lessons on the Scriptures are very important for two reasons: they teach the children how to read the New Testament and they help develop a respect and love for God's Word.

Psalms. For the first time in this *God With Us* series, psalms are introduced as opening and closing prayers. Psalms can be identified by two numbers:

1) according to the Greek and Latin numbering that our Church uses liturgically and 2) according to the Hebrew numbering used in the New American Bible. Both numbers are listed for all psalms in this book: the liturgical number is followed by the Hebrew number.

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: The Nicene Creed

Introduction: Practicing Silence

Need: Catechist's Bible from home

Read Text Aloud: Have the students volunteer to read the text aloud or have the students read sections silently.

Activity Tracks: Choose a basic, group, or craft activity(detailed on the pages that follow) to reinforce the lesson.

- *Basic:* The New Testament
- *Group:* Books of the New Testament
- *Craft:* New Testament Book Covers (continued from last week)
- *Alternate:* *Finding Your Way through the Bible*

Closing: Psalm 118/119:89-96
 "Your word, Lord, stands forever"
 "O Heavenly King"

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:
 The Four Evangelists
 Packet II: Great Commissioning

Teaching Pics

Pentecost

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

Good News

"Our modern English word Gospel comes from the Old English Term for "Good News" which was "Godspell" (cf. to *good spiel*). Godspell was a literal translation of the Greek term used in the New Testament *eu-angellion* or good news. We have remnants of the Greek source of the word "gospel" in our English terms *evangelical* (based on the Gospels) or evangelist (one who brings the good news)" (SLW 35-36).

The History of the Scriptures

"The Church understands the Scriptures to have been written by a number of individuals, known and unknown, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and to have been accepted by the Church over a sometimes lengthy period, also through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus, most of the New Testament books were written between the years 50 and 100 A.D., but it would be over 300 years before there was a universally accepted "canon," or list of Scriptures recognized by all the Churches as being truly inspired by God. Once acknowledged as such, the canon of Scripture became normative for the Church.

"These holy writings, called the New Testament, have a special place in the life of the Church. They are recommended to all the faithful as the first source of our knowledge about Christ and His teachings. They stand before the Church as a constant call to be faithful to the kingdom and vision proclaimed by our Lord" (LLI 77).

Saint Paul and the New Testament

"The Apostle' as he is often called in the Eastern Traditions, Paul of Tarsus, was undoubtedly the single most influential person in the development of Christian thought. His missionary activities are recounted for us in the Acts of the Apostles, and they are impressive indeed. His letters to the communities he had worked with (or hoped to work with, as in the case of the Romans) provide a tremendous wealth of information into the early life of the Christian Church. The inclusion of 13* letters attributed to this great thinker into the canon of the New Testament, along with the liturgical reading of these texts as a regular part of Christian worship from the first century to the present, has assured that the influence of this great body of writings would continue throughout history.

"To call the epistles 'letters' in the ordinary sense might be misleading. Some of them are, indeed, such as the letters to the Corinthians. Yet others seem to be well thought-out tracts and expositions, such as the letter to the Ephesians. Scripture scholars think that a major portion of the first letter of Peter was a baptismal homily preached for Pascha. In any event, these writings all reflect other people's reaction to the new situation of grace.

"No sooner had these letters (or at least some of them) begun to circulate, than those works we might call biographies of Jesus began to appear. We know these today as the Four Gospels and credit them to Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Luke's Gospel has a companion volume, known as the *Acts of the Apostles*" (SLW 35).

*Ed. Note: The Epistle to the Hebrews is often not attributed to St. Paul. Some early writers ascribed it to his companion, St. Barnabas, reputedly a Levite.

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Let's gather around the icon table and pray The Creed.

Introduction

Today I brought in my Bible from home. If you have a Bible in your house, where do you keep it? If you don't know, ask your parents to show you where they keep the Bible.

[Share anything else you have in your Bible: Your family tree, an inscription.]

The Bible is the most precious book written. The Bible contains God's Word. We read God's Word so we can learn about His message of love that is shared with everyone throughout the whole world. The Sacred Scripture has been read by many people in many languages for thousands of years. How does that make you feel knowing so many people have read the Bible? [Let the children share.]

All of these people had to learn to keep quiet and still as they read from the Bible. Today we are going to continue practicing being still and quiet. Right now let's close our eyes and just listen for 10 seconds. Okay, open your eyes. Let's list all the sounds we heard during that time. Now I am going to ask you to listen for a sound I will make. While you have your eyes closed, I will say a name. If it is yours, open your eyes and walk to where I am standing. Walk very quietly.

[Continue saying the names until everyone is called.]

Okay, let's sit down again. How did you feel being called? (Special, important, chosen) Jesus calls to us in many ways, and one way is through the Bible. When we read the Bible, we are listening to God talk to us through His Word.

Let's turn to our lesson to learn about the different parts of the New Testament that you received last week.

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Wisdom: Let Us Be Attentive

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent to the apostles. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles were no longer afraid to do as Jesus told them: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). They traveled in many different directions to tell people throughout the world about Jesus' life, about His death, and about His rising from the dead. They wanted everyone to know the Good News that Jesus saved us from eternal death and granted us eternal life.

The apostles began to realize they could not travel everywhere to tell the Good News. Also, the apostles were getting older, and they wanted to make sure even after they died the stories of Jesus could be heard. They started to write as the Holy Spirit inspired them. These writings about the Good News make up the books of the New Testament.



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Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

Wisdom: Let us be attentive.

Let's begin with the title of this lesson. When do we hear these words? (The priest or deacon says them before the Gospel is read.) Why do you think the priest or deacon says them? (To remind us to pay attention)

These writings about the Good News make up the books of the New Testament.

What did the apostles do after the ascension of Jesus? (They traveled to tell the Good News.) Why did they start writing about the Good News? (They couldn't travel everywhere, and they were getting old. They wanted to write the stories before they died.) Who inspired them? (The Holy Spirit)

They were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write about the life of Jesus.

Who are the Gospel writers? (Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) What does the word Gospel mean? (Good News)

This book tells us about the words and works of the apostles who are guided by the Holy Spirit.

What does the Acts of the Apostles tell us? (About the words and works of the apostles who are guided by the Holy Spirit.)

We hear good advice about how we should live as followers of Jesus.

What are the Epistles? (Letters written to the followers of Jesus.) How many are in the New Testament? (21) How would you feel if you received a letter from an apostle?

The first four books of the New Testament are called Gospels. The Gospels tell us the Good News. The Good News is that God our Father sent His Son Jesus into the world. Jesus' death and resurrection saved us from eternal death and granted us eternal life. The word Gospel means Good News. Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John are the Gospel writers; each one wrote one of the four Gospels. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write about the life of Jesus.

The next book in the New Testament describes the work of the apostles as they spread the Good News. This book is called the Acts of the Apostles. When we read the Acts of the Apostles, we hear about the early days of the Church. This book tells us about the words and works of the apostles who were guided by the Holy Spirit.

As the apostles moved from place to place, they wrote letters to the new Christians among whom they had worked. These letters reminded the people how they should follow Jesus and how they should live. These letters are called Epistles. There are 21 Epistles in the New Testament.

We hear the cantor or reader reading from the Epistles and the Acts during the Divine Liturgy. We listen to the words written for people hundreds of years ago; these words speak to us as well. We hear good advice about how we should live today as followers of Jesus.

The last book in the New Testament is called the Book of Revelation. This Book was written by Saint John. Some early Church Fathers say he is the same Saint John who wrote the Gospel. In this Book of Revelation, Saint John tells what Jesus revealed to him about the Kingdom of God. Saint John shows in the Book of Revelation that we can trust God's promise to be with us always even during terrible times: "Blessed is the one who reads aloud and blessed are those who listen to this prophetic message and heed what is written in it, for the appointed time is near" (Revelation 1:3).

The New Testament lets us learn about Jesus and His promise to be with us always. We must remember to listen closely to the words we read



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Good News for Everyone

Unit 1: I Am With You Always

... for the appointed time is near"

What is the last book called? (The Book of Revelation) Who wrote it? (Saint John)

One prayer we can say is "O Heavenly King"

How can we prepare to read the Bible? (Get quiet and ready to listen; say a prayer before we read.) What is one prayer we can say? (O Heavenly King) In that prayer we are praying to the Holy Spirit to come to us and help us listen and understand God's Word.

... during the Divine Liturgy and other church services.

What is a psalm? (A prayer or hymn from the Old Testament) We are going to pray this psalm as our closing prayer today.

Words to Remember: [Read the words together, and use them to introduce, summarize, and/or review the lesson.]

[Psalms let the children pray using the words from the Old Testament and help the children understand God has been praised throughout the ages. Some of the words are familiar because psalms are often used in our Church services.]

and hair from the New Testament. During the Divine Liturgy, the Gospel is sung to show that it is an ordinary book. When the Bible is read in church, we are reminded to listen closely. The priest or deacon says before the reading, "Wisdom! Let us be attentive!" He reminds us that we must pay attention and think only about God's Word when we listen to the reading.

When we read the New Testament ourselves, we should remind ourselves to listen closely to the words. One way to help us to pay attention is by saying a prayer before we read. We pray to ask the Holy Spirit to help us think about, understand, and learn from the reading from the New Testament. One prayer we can say is "O Heavenly King..."

Psalm 118:118-89-96
A psalm is a prayer or hymn from the Old Testament. God's people have prayed the psalms for thousands of years. Jesus and His apostles prayed them often. We pray from the psalms during the Divine Liturgy and other church services.

Your word, Lord, stands forever,
It is firm as the heavens.
Through all generations your truth endures:
Firm to stand firm like the earth.
By your edicts they stand firm to this day,
for all things are your servants.
Had your teaching not been my delight,
I would have perished in my affliction.
I will never forget your precepts,
through them you give me life.
I am yours, save me,
for I cherish your precepts.
The wicked hope to destroy me,
but I pay heed to your decrees.
I have seen the limits of all perfection,
but your command is without bounds.

Words to Remember:
Apostles: A disciple sent by Jesus to teach people in all nations.
Gospels: Good News. The four Gospels are the first part of the New Testament.
Acts of the Apostles: Part of the New Testament that tells us about the words and works of the apostles who are guided by the Holy Spirit.
Epistles: Letters to the new Christians to tell them how they should live as followers of Jesus.
Book of Revelation: The last book in the New Testament.

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Books of the New Testament

I. Draw a circle around the following groups found in the New Testament books listed below:

1. All the Gospels. 2. The letters to the Corinthians. 3. Peter's letters
4. The letters to Timothy. 5. The letters to the Thessalonians. 6. John's letters

The Gospel according to Matthew
The Gospel according to Mark
The Gospel according to Luke
The Gospel according to John

The Acts of the Apostles

The Letter to the Romans
The First Letter to the Corinthians
The Second Letter to the Corinthians

The Letter to the Galatians
The Letter to the Ephesians
The Letter to the Philippians
The Letter to the Colossians

The First Letter to the Thessalonians
The Second Letter to the Thessalonians

The First Letter to Timothy
The Second Letter to Timothy

The Letter to Titus
The Letter to Philemon
The Letter to the Hebrews

The Letter of James
The First Letter of Peter
The Second Letter of Peter

The First Letter of John
The Second Letter of John
The Third Letter of John
The Letter of Jude
The Book of Revelation

II. Draw a circle on the map on the following page around the name of the cities to which the letters were sent (Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica). Draw a line from the circled name on this page to the same name on the map. Circle the name Jerusalem. What happened in that city?

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Activity Tracks

Basic: The New Testament

[This worksheet is in the student text. Students need to work on pages 18 and 19 to complete the activity.]

Today we learned about the many books in the New Testament. Now we are going to open our New Testament to the table of contents. Where is that in a book? (In the beginning) Look at the activity page and match it to your page in the New Testament. The list is similar. We are going to write on the one in your textbook because we do not want to put any marks on our New Testaments. Let's follow the directions. [You may work with the children or you can have them complete the activity on their own.] Jerusalem is the city in which the apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Look at how far the apostles traveled to spread the Good News. How do you think they traveled? (Walking, possibly riding mules and horses)

Psalm 118/119:89-96

Your word, Lord, stands forever;
it is firm as the heavens.
Through all generations your truth endures;
fixed to stand firm like the earth.
By your edicts they stand firm to this day,
for all things are your servants.
Had your teaching not been my delight,
I would have perished in my affliction.
I will never forget your precepts;
through them you give me life.
I am yours; save me,
for I cherish your precepts.
The wicked hope to destroy me,
but I pay heed to your decrees.
I have seen the limits of all perfections,
but your command is without bounds.

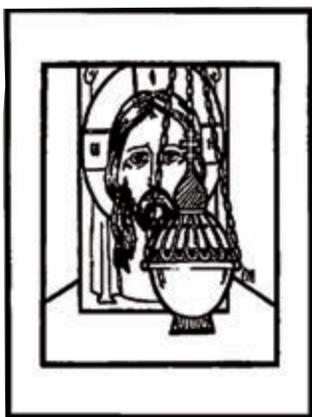
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but your command is without bounds.

Group: Books in the New Testament

Materials: New Testament worksheets from lesson 3, masking tape

Today we learned more about the books in the New Testament. [Duplicate the worksheet from lesson 3 on a heavier paper and have each of the books cut out in advance.] We are going to use the names of the books of the New Testament to play a memory game. I have the names turned over on this pile. On my desk I have a long sheet of paper. Place your card in the order you think it belongs according to the way the books are in the New Testament. [Getting the epistles in order will be difficult, but at least the students will recognize the names as epistles.] Now let's check our New Testaments to see how well we did. With our books open, let's tape the names in a line in order and hang them in our room. This will remind us that we always have something to do—we can read from one of the books in the Bible.



Craft: New Testament" Book Covers

Materials: Felt or other material cut to the New Testament book size, glue, gold braid or gold ribbon, the icon print worksheet or use another icon from a bulletin cover

Today we are going to complete our book covers.

Alternate: *Finding Your Way through the Bible*

[This book can be purchased from
God With Us Publications, TBS,
P.O. Box 509
Barnhart, MO 63012
Phone: 877-484-1600]

Distribute copies of this book and, if necessary, review the procedure for reading and self-correcting given in the book. Allow each student to continue from where they left off last week, with each proceeding at his or her own pace through the book during the time allotted.

Closing:

Today we are going to pray the psalm that is in your book. [For those of you completing the "Psalms and Church Songs" booklet, the prayer page precedes this page.]

Apostle

Gospel

*Act of the
Apostles*

Epistles

*Book of
Revelation*

Psalm

Good News. The four Gospels are the first part of the New Testament.

A disciple sent by Jesus to teach people in all nations.

Letters to the new Christians to tell them how they should live as followers of Jesus.

Part of the New Testament that tells us about the words and works of the apostles who are guided by the Holy Spirit.

A prayer or hymn from the Old Testament.

The last book in the New Testament.