

Lesson 4 - The Bible: Our Record of Salvation History

Objectives

By the end of this lesson the student should know that:

- Know that the Church believes the Bible is inspired
- Know the main purposes of the Old and New Testaments
- Understand that Old Testament prophecies point to Christ as the center of Salvation History

For the Catechist

The first and most basic presentation of the Scriptures in the God With Us Series, employed in the pre-school and kindergarten programs, is that the Bible is a holy book, to be treated with reverence. Bible stories are told in these years and actual quotations from the sacred text employed in the second and third grades. It is in the fourth grade that your students began hands-on use of the New Testament. They were introduced to how the pages were arranged and the meaning of explanatory maps, notes and pictures. They learned how to find the books, chapters and verses on their own. Supplementary use of *Finding Your Way through the Bible* helped communicate these skills. Some of this basic information is included in this lesson as well.

The actual text of the New Testament employs the traditional Jewish division of the Old Testament books as the Law (Torah), the Prophets and the Writings. It is this terminology that is employed in this lesson. Academics in the modern age divided the same books as the Pentateuch, the historical books, the prophetic books and the wisdom books. This arrangement is used in the table of contents of the edition of the New American Bible used in this program. Most versions of the Bible do not use any division in their tables of contents.

In both lists the first five books of the Old Testament constitute the Torah (Hebrew name) or Pentateuch (Greek name). The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, known as the "former prophets" along with a number of books called "writings" in the older division are called the "historical books" in the modern list. The "latter prophets" of the Hebrew listing are simply known as "the prophetic books" in the table of contents. The "wisdom books" in the table of contents includes many known as "writings" in the Scriptures themselves.

Materials Needed:

Opening Prayer: Icon corner

Introduction: Easel or wall pad, markers

Guided Reading: Student texts and copies of the *New American Bible* for each student.

Activity A: Worksheet A, pencils

Activity B: Worksheet B, pencils

Activity C: *Finding Your Way through the Bible*, pencils

1. Opening Prayer

Remind the students that Salvation History is the story of God's work in the lives of His People and that this passage from Sirach talks about these people, our spiritual ancestors.

Read the passage in the student text, p. 16 antiphonally.

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson using the pages from your wall or easel pad.

Alternate: let student act out or pantomime one of the ancestors discussed at the last lesson. Have the group identify the figures and discuss how they are our ancestors.

3. Introduction

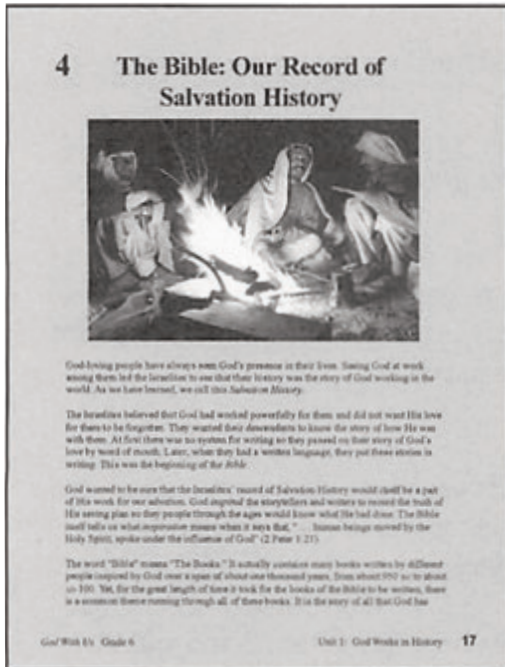
Discuss how different subjects each have their own special terms. Elicit illustrations from various sports or school subjects like English grammar, math and science.

Point out that the Bible has its own special terms too and that today we will be reviewing ones you've heard before and also learn some new ones.

Background Reading (The Bible):

"Eventually, some people skilled in writing began to commit these stories to literature, again under the driving urge of the Holy Spirit. These texts were, in turn, revised and edited to clarify that wonderful initiative taken by God and the benefits humanity derived from it. In short, we believe that the Holy Spirit drew these writers to record the events, and then drew others to collect them and edit them, as part of the on-going creative thrust. Because God in a special way as a special favor (or grace) accomplishes this formation of the Bible, He is the true author. Just as God is the creator of all things, He is also the sustainer of His creation. Sometimes, we must add, God intervenes more strongly or more directly to accomplish a very special development, thus demonstrating - in a striking way - His Creative presence. The Bible is such a demonstration of God's creative work. Without disrupting the natural manner in which such literature is produced, God organized the process with a special vitality to address some of the most important elements in life. Thus the Apostle Paul could advise Saint Timothy: '*All Scripture is inspired and useful for teaching, refuting error, guiding peoples lives and teaching holiness.*' 2 Tim. 3:16)" (SLW 18).

4. Guided Reading, Page 17, 18, 19



Have the students **read the first section** of the text, pages 17 and 18. Divide reading styles (aloud/silent; by one/all together).

Before the reading, direct the students to **note the words in italics** on page 17 and ask what they think these words might mean.

Write the objectives of the lesson on a wall pad or easel pad so that the page can be preserved and used for review next week.

After the reading, **emphasize the Church's understanding of inspiration**. Some people may not believe that the Bible is anything more than the folk tales of nomadic tribes. Others (fundamentalists) may believe that the Holy Spirit whispered every word in the ear of the Biblical writers. The Church believes that the Biblical writers were under the influence of the Holy Spirit, without saying just how that happened. Remind the students that everything connected with God is more than we can explain.

Background Reading (Salvation History and the Bible):

"The mystery of God's plan in revealing Himself to His people is expressed concretely in the Sacred Scriptures, which record numerous milestones in the history of salvation. If our Christian faith is to be rooted deeply in the Gospel message and if we are to fully understand how Christ has fulfilled God's plan by restoring humanity to His likeness, we must turn back to the Old Testament. There we can follow the process of salvation from its announcement on through the centuries. Then it was made ready in the lives of those people specially chosen by God, until at last it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ" (*LLI 18*).

"As we begin to read the Old Testament, we will notice the many different literary genres or methods used by the biblical authors: historical narration, law, oracle, poetry, didactic story, apocalyptic literature and others. Each literary form has a special significance and was chosen by the writer to express certain aspects of the divine reality that had been revealed to him. If we are to draw an adequate understanding of the inspired message from the passages we are reading, it is important to first determine which literary form the author has chosen to use. This attentiveness to literary form is critical for a proper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures" (*LII 19*).



5. The Old Testament Points to Christ (pp. 19-20)



Read the section **"Books of the Old Testament"** (pages 18, 19) and question students on what they have read. Questions you may ask at this time include:

- What is the literal meaning of Bible? (*The Books*)
- How long did it take for the Bible to be written? (*About 1,000 years*)
- What is the main topic of the Old Testament? (*God's dealings with the Israelites*)
- What is the main topic of the New Testament? (*The story of Christ and the early Church*)
- What do BC and AD mean? (*"Before Christ" and "The Year of the Lord"*)
- What are the three main parts of the Old Testament? (*Law, Prophets, Writings*)

Distribute to the students their copies of the New American Bible. Have them **place a slip of paper at the beginning of the New Testament**. Compare the size of the Old and New Testaments and refer back to page 18 in their text to see the time span each Testament covers.

Read the text section, and have the students look up each Scripture passage as it occurs. If necessary, refer to the entry on "Chapters and Verses" in the sidebar for help in finding specific passages.

Emphasize the following in these passages:

- *Luke 4: 16-22* (Isaiah is one of the prophets. Indicate the location of his book in the Old Testament. Focus on Christ's words in v. 21: what was written hundreds of years before had now taken place.)
- *Luke 24:44-48* (In v.44 Christ says that the different parts of the Old Testament all talk about Him.)
- *Matthew 1:22* (Gabriel quotes Isaiah as a reference to Christ)
- *Matthew 2:5* (Here Micah and others from the Old Testament are quoted referring to Bethlehem)

Background Reading (Understanding the Old and New Testament):

"On nearly every page, the New Testament alludes to 'the Scriptures' or quotes them outright. Repeatedly, the apostles and evangelists point to events in Jesus' life which 'fulfill' things written in these older texts. An understanding of these texts is therefore necessary for understanding the New Testament, if only because they are the source of the language, concepts, expectation and institutions by which Jews of the New Testament period understood themselves and their relationship with God, past present and future" (OTB 2).

6. Activity A

Have the students read the Scripture passages on Worksheet A and:

- Identify what kind of book it is from (Law, Prophets or Writings)
- What is it teaching?
- How does this apply to something in my life?

7. Activity B

Distribute Worksheet B. Have the students read the selection from Psalm 124 and check their understanding of its meaning. Discuss the images of rescue from the flood and the snare. How are they good examples of God saving us. Then have them write their own prayer of praise to God using some of the ideas found in this psalm.

8. Activity C

Distribute copies of Finding Your Way through the Bible and have the students complete and self-correct as much as time allows. You can go back to this activity in subsequent lessons or send the book home with the students to be completed on their own time.

9. Time Line

Display the time line poster. Have the students brainstorm the names of people mentioned in this lesson (Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Asaph) and indicate the period in which each lived. Write in the names and dates under each appropriate heading.

10. Summary

End the lesson by summarizing the lesson from the aims on page 102, from the elements in the student text on which you focused and/or any other points raised in the lesson.

11. Closing Prayer

Conclude with the verses from Psalm 78 on page 21 which illustrate the purpose of writing the Bible ("that the generation to come might know ... understand... and put their hope in God.")

What Am I? A Law? A Prophecy? A Saying?

Read the following Old Testament passages and answer the following questions for each:

- a) *Is this a law, a prophecy or a saying?*
- b) *What is it teaching?*
- c) *How does this apply to something in my life?*

For six days you may do your work, but on the seventh day you must rest, that your ox and your ass may also have rest, and that the son of your maidservant and the alien may be refreshed. (Exodus 23:12)

He who honors his father is gladdened by children, and when he prays he is heard. He who reveres his father will live a long life; he obeys the LORD who brings comfort to his mother. (Sirach 3:5-6)

Lo, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; The things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create; For I create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight; I will rejoice in Jerusalem and exult in my people. (Isaiah 65:17-19)

When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God. (Leviticus

Store up almsgiving in your treasure house, and it will save you from every evil. Better than a stout shield and a sturdy spear it will fight for you against the foe. (Sirach 29:12-13)

Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, Meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass. (Zechariah 9:9)

When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay in fulfilling it; otherwise you will be held guilty, for the LORD, your God, is strict in requiring it of you. Should you refrain from making a vow, you will not be held guilty. But you must keep your solemn word and fulfill the votive offering you have freely promised to the LORD. (Deuteronomy 23:22-24)

Deliver the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor; let not justice be repugnant to you. To the fatherless be as a father, and help their mother as a husband would; Thus will you be like a son to the Most High, and he will be more tender to you than a mother. (Sirach 4:9-10)

The quick-tempered man makes a fool of himself, but the prudent man is at peace. (Proverbs 14:17)

Write your own "proverb" below:

What Am I? A Law? A Prophecy? A Saying?

Exodus 23:12 - *Law*

Sirach 3:5-6 - *Saying*

Isaiah 65:17-19 - *Prophecy*

Leviticus 19:33-34 - *Law*

Sirach 29:12-13 - *Saying*

Zechariah 9:9 - *Prophecy*

Deuteronomy 23:22-24 - *Law*

Sirach 4:9-10 *Saying*

Proverbs 14:17 - *Saying*

Praise God with Your Own Psalm

Think about what the following psalm is saying. Then write your own prayer of praise to God using some of the ideas in this psalm.

Psalm 124

Had not the Lord been with us
 Let Israel now say,
Had not the Lord been with us when men rose up against us
 Then would they have swallowed us alive.
When their fury was inflamed against us,
 Then would the waters have overwhelmed us.
The torrent would have swept over us;
 Over us then would have swept the raging waters.
Blessed be the Lord
 Who did not leave us a pray to their teeth.
We were rescued like a bird from the fowler's snare.
 Broken was the snare and we were freed.
Our help is in the name of the Lord,
 Who made heaven and earth.
