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Unit 2 How Can We Know God? Revelation, Inspiration, and Vocation

Overview

This second unit examines Divine Revelation, the Inspiration God gave the authors of the Bible, and the connection between God's Revelation to people and his call to them. Biblical figures provide examples of the relationship between Revelation and call. The unit then leads the students to reflect on this reality in their lives today.

Key Understandings and Questions


Upon completing this unit, the students will have a deeper understanding of the following key concepts:

- Divine Revelation refers to God's self-communication through which he makes known the mystery of his divine plan.
- God revealed himself in many different ways in the Bible and continues to do so today.
- Divine Inspiration is the divine assistance the Holy Spirit gave the authors of the books of the Bible so the authors could write in human words the salvation message God wanted to communicate.
- Revelation, Inspiration, and vocation are closely connected in scriptural accounts, as well as in our lives today.

Upon completing the unit, the students will have answered the following questions:

- How can I know God?
- How has God communicated with humanity in the Scriptures?
- What is the relationship between Revelation, Inspiration, and vocation?
- How does God call us in our everyday lives?

Student Book Articles

This unit draws on articles from *The Bible* student book and incorporates them into the unit instruction. Whenever the teaching steps for the unit require the students to refer to or read an article from the student book, the following symbol appears in the margin: . The articles covered in the unit are from "Section 1: Revelation," and include the following. If you believe the students would do the reading more successfully with additional structure, see the handout "Student Notes for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001165) at smp.org/LivinginChrist.

- "Longing for God" (article 1, pp. 11–13)

- "God's Invitation" (article 2, pp. 13–15)
- "Happiness in God Alone" (article 3, pp. 15–17)
- "Saint Augustine and the Four Objects of Love" (article 4, pp. 17–19)
- "The Sacred Scriptures and Natural Revelation" (article 5, pp. 22–24)
- "Natural Revelation and the Wisdom of the Church Fathers" (article 6, pp. 24–26)
- "Natural Revelation and Scholastic Theology" (article 7, pp. 27–29)
- "Natural Revelation: Vatican Council I to the Present" (article 8, pp. 29–32)
- "The Study of the Sacred Scriptures" (article 71, pp. 211–212)
- "The Centrality of the Scriptures in the Mass and Other Liturgies" (article 72, pp. 212–215)
- "The Liturgy of the Hours: A Window into the Daily Rhythms of Life" (article 73, pp. 215–218)
- "The Lord's Prayer: Rooted in the Scriptures" (article 74, pp. 218–220)
- "The Scriptures and the Rules of the Saints" (article 75, pp. 221–222)

How Will You Know the Students Understand?

The following resources will help you assess the students' understanding of the key concepts covered in this unit:

- handout "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001093)
- handout "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001094)
- handout "Unit 2 Test" (Document #: TX001296)

The Suggested Path to Understanding

This unit in the teacher guide provides you with one learning path to take with the students, to enable them to begin their study of God by deepening their understanding of Divine Revelation, Inspiration, and vocation. It is not necessary to use all the learning experiences provided in the unit; however, if you substitute other material from this course or your own material for some of the material offered here, be sure that you have covered all relevant facets of understanding and that you have not missed any skills or knowledge required for later units.

Perceive

Optional Learning Experience: Hook the students' interest with questions from society today.

Reflect

Step 1: Preassess what the students already know about Revelation, Inspiration, and vocation.

Understand **Step 2:** Follow this assessment by presenting to the students the handouts "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001093) and "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001094).

Explain **Step 3:** Introduce the human need for God and ways God reveals himself outside the Scriptures.

Empathize **Step 4:** Invite the students to recognize God's Revelation in one another.

Perceive **Step 5:** Read the Scriptures and discuss God's Revelation to biblical figures.

Reflect **Step 6:** Have the students reflect on how they come to know God.

Apply **Step 7:** Use a movie to lead the students to uncover how God can reveal, inspire, and call his People through ordinary means.

Perceive **Step 8:** Explore the call of Samuel.

Apply **Step 9:** Reinforce the students' thinking about Revelation and Inspiration through a Socratic seminar.

Empathize **Step 10:** Give a quiz to assess student understanding.

Apply **Step 11:** Apply Revelation, Inspiration, and vocation to today.

Apply **Step 12:** Guide the students in reflecting on the role Sacred Scripture plays in the life of the Church.

Understand **Step 13:** Now that the students are closer to the end of the unit, make sure they are all on track with their final performance tasks, if you have assigned them.

Reflect **Step 14:** Provide the students with a tool to use for reflecting about what they learned in the unit and how they learned.

Background for Teaching This Unit

Visit smp.org/LivingInChrist for additional information about these and other theological concepts taught in this unit:

- "Finding God and Being Found by God" (Document #: TX001016)
- "Introduction to Revelation, Inspiration, and Vocation" (Document #: TX001017)

The Web site also includes information on these and other teaching methods used in the unit:

- “How to Lead a Socratic Seminar” (Document #: TX001006)
- “Using the Think-Pair-Share Method” (Document #: TX001019)
- “Using the Barometer Method” (Document #: TX001021)

Scripture Passages

Scripture is an important part of the Living in Christ series and is frequently used in the learning experiences for each unit. The Scripture passages featured in this unit are as follows:

- Genesis, chapter 12 (the call of Abram)
- Genesis, chapter 15 (God’s Covenant with Abraham)
- Genesis, chapter 32 (Jacob wrestles with an angel)
- Exodus, chapter 3 (Moses and the burning bush)
- 1 Samuel 1:1–2:10 (Hannah’s prayer for a son)
- 1 Samuel 3:1–21 (God calls Samuel)
- Job, chapters 40–42 (God’s response to Job and Job’s insight)
- 2 Samuel 7:1–17 (God’s promise to David)
- 2 Samuel 7:18–29 (David’s response)
- Luke, chapters 1–2 (Elizabeth and Zechariah)
- Luke, chapter 2 (Mary and Elizabeth)
- Acts 9:1–9 (Saul’s conversion)

Vocabulary

The student book and the teacher guide include the following key terms for this unit. To provide the students with a list of these terms and their definitions, download and print the handout “Vocabulary for Unit 2” (Document #: TX001095), one for each student.

desire	Middle Ages
Divine Inspiration	natural revelation
Divine Revelation	papal infallibility
Ecumenical Council	salvation
Fathers of the Church (Church Fathers)	scholastic theology
Incarnation	Vatican Council II
Magisterium	vocation

Learning Experiences

Perceive

Optional Learning Experience

Hook the students' interest with questions from society today.

During this unit the students will learn about Divine Revelation and Inspiration, as well as about their own vocations or calls. Connect the Scriptures with the students' lives to tease out some reflections about the concepts to be covered.

1. Place the students into three roughly equal groups. Ask the groups to answer the following questions:

- **Revelation** (in the sense of revealing oneself to another person):
 - What should teens safely reveal about themselves on the Internet and especially on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace?
- **Inspiration** (in the sense of feeling an energy to create that seems to come from outside oneself):
 - What people, events, truths, or beliefs inspire you? What do they inspire you to do?
- **Vocation** (in the sense of involvement in a particular line of work):
 - From your knowledge of vocational or technical training, how do these options prepare a person for a career compared with how a liberal arts education prepares a person?

2. Ask the students to share with the large group the answers their small groups came up with. Comment that these terms are used here in the way today's society commonly uses them. This conversation should get the students thinking about the meaning of these terms and prepare them to discuss the terms in a religious context.

Reflect

Step 1

Preassess what the students already know about Revelation, Inspiration, and vocation.

The learning experiences later in the unit will help the students to unpack and explore these concepts with increasing depth. Several options exist for assessing what the students know and understand before beginning this unit. Note that each option requires preparing different materials.

Option 1: Journaling

Give the students the opportunity to reflect on what they know and understand about their relationship with God. The focus questions below invite the students to think critically about how they have developed, or would like to develop, this relationship. This learning experience will also help you to determine how much to present about God's ability and decision to communicate with humanity.

1. Write the following focus questions on the board:

- How have I come to know God?
- If I wanted to know God, how could I do that?

2. Have the students reflect on these questions for about 5 minutes by writing their thoughts in their notebooks. Distribute pens or pencils for this.
3. When time is up, invite the students to share their thoughts with the large group.
4. List the students' answers underneath the questions on the board.
5. After this list is created, ask the students to identify what the suggestions have in common. The definitions for Revelation and Inspiration should naturally surface through their suggestions. If not, lead the students toward the definitions used in this course.
6. Next, use a colored marker to circle those words related to Revelation. Use a different-colored marker to circle those that pertain to Inspiration.
7. Finally, discuss what *Revelation* and *Inspiration* mean as applied to the Bible.

Option 2: Think-Pair-Share

Give the students the opportunity to reflect on what they know and understand about the communication of ideas. The focus questions invite the students to think critically about how they know, or would like to know, certain things. This learning experience will also help you to determine how much material to present about God's ability and decision to communicate with humanity.

1. Write the following question on the board. Ask the students to write their answers in their notebooks. Allow 5 minutes for writing. Distribute pens or pencils for this.
 - Can you think of a time when something was revealed to you or you were inspired to do something?
2. When time is up, place the students in pairs. Invite the students to discuss their experiences of Revelation and Inspiration. Allow 5 minutes for discussion.

Teacher Note

See smp.org/LivingInChrist for the background article "Using the Think-Pair-Share Method" (Document #: TX001019).

3. When time is up, ask the students to share with the large group the experiences that illustrate their understanding of Revelation and Inspiration. If the students do not seem to understand the concepts, tell the students you will address them later in the unit.

Option 3: Big Paper

Teacher Note

As background see "Using the Big Paper Exercise" (Document #: TX001018) at smp.org/LivingInChrist.

This learning experience will give the students the opportunity to reflect on what they know and understand about the concepts of revelation, inspiration, and vocation. The focus story invites the students to think critically about how they understand these concepts. This will also help you to determine how much to present about these concepts.

1. Prepare by collecting the following items:
 - easel-sized paper (one sheet for each group of three)
 - a story containing an example of personal revelation, inspiration, or vocation (Use the same story for all groups. You will write this story in the center of each sheet of easel paper.)
 - markers, enough for each group
 - a roll of masking tape
2. Place the students in small groups of no more than three. Distribute the easel-sized papers with the story in the center, one to each group.
3. Explain that the groups are to silently read the story.
4. Say that once the students have read the story, the group members will hold a silent "conversation" by writing down their thoughts and comments on the paper around the story. No speaking is allowed during this learning experience. Allow about 10 minutes to complete the learning experience.
5. When time is up, post the groups' papers around the classroom. Ask the students to walk around and read each group's comments.
6. After the students have read the comments, call the students back into the large group. Discuss how a person may be inspired or receive revelation.
7. Finally, collect the big papers when the class is over so you can review them to see whether the students understand the concepts of Revelation and Inspiration.

Understand**Step 2**

Follow this assessment by presenting to the students the handouts "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001093) and "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001094).

This unit provides you with two ways to assess that the students have a deep understanding of the most important concepts in the unit: creating a biblical exegesis about God's Revelation and call or creating a visual representation of Revelation, Inspiration, or vocation. Refer to "Using Final Performance Tasks to Assess Understanding" (Document #: TX001011) and "Using Rubrics to Assess Work" (Document #: TX001012) at smp.org/LivingInChrist.

1. Prepare by downloading and printing the handouts "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001093), "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 2" (Document #: TX001094), and "Biblical Exegesis Worksheet" (Document #: TX001096).
2. Distribute the handouts. Give the students a choice as to which performance task they choose and add more options if you so choose. Review the directions, expectations, and rubric in class, allowing the students to ask questions.
3. Explain the types of tools and knowledge the students will gain throughout the unit so they can successfully complete the final performance task.
4. Answer questions to clarify the end point toward which the unit is headed. Remind the students as the unit progresses that each learning experience builds the knowledge and skills they will need to show you that they understand how God reveals himself and how Jesus is God's Perfect Revelation.

Teacher Note

You will want to assign due dates for the performance tasks.

If you have done these performance tasks, or very similar ones, with students before, place examples of this work in the classroom. During this introduction explain how each is a good example of what you are looking for, for different reasons. This allows the students to concretely understand what you are looking for and to understand that there is not only one way to succeed.



Articles
1, 2, 3,
4, 5, 6,
7, 8

Explain

Step 3

Introduce the human need for God and ways God reveals himself outside the Scriptures.

Invite the students to consider their own need for God, using water as an analogy.

- The following articles are important for this step as well as for steps 4–9. Consider assigning the students to read these articles before beginning this step:
 - “Longing for God” (article 1)
 - “God’s Invitation” (article 2)
 - “Happiness in God Alone” (article 3)
 - “Saint Augustine and the Four Objects of Love” (article 4)
 - “The Sacred Scriptures and Natural Revelation” (article 5)
 - “Natural Revelation and the Wisdom of the Church Fathers” (article 6)
 - “Natural Revelation and Scholastic Theology” (article 7)
 - “Natural Revelation: Vatican Council I to the Present” (article 8)
- 1. Prepare by bringing in at least one paper cup for each student. Hide some jugs with enough water or the students’ favorite beverage for each student to have a small drink.
- 2. Show one cup and one gallon jug and pour yourself a drink. Drink it with gusto, commenting on how refreshing it is. Make the following points:
 - Water accounts for about 60 to 65 percent of our body weight. Every muscle or tissue cell needs it.
 - Drinking too little water causes thirst and can cause dehydration. Have you ever felt dehydrated? It is miserable.
 - By the time you feel thirsty, you are already on the way to dehydration. Is there a spiritual parallel?
- 3. Ask the students to read student book article 1, “Longing for God,” either as classwork or homework. Note that a big difference between our thirst for God and our thirst for water is that God comes to us and water does not. Make the following additional points:
 - Each one of us is a religious being. Whether we realize it or not, our **vocation** (from the Latin, meaning “to call”) as religious beings is to live fully human lives—lives in which we know, love, and freely choose God.

- Within the human heart is a place—a God-shaped hole—desiring to be filled with God's infinite love. We have a **desire** for truth and happiness that only God can satisfy.
4. Share the following information about our religious natures and our desire for God. You may want to use the PowerPoint "Finding God and Being Found by God" (Document #: TX001070) at smp.org/LivingInChrist.

How Do People Come to Know God or to Search Him Out?

Present the following material about God's invitation to relationship and ways we encounter God:

- **God invites us into a relationship.** (See student book article 2, "God's Invitation.")
- God constantly calls us to relationship with him.
 - In other words, we are invited into communion with God and to experience the grace of his saving love.
 - God wants to know, love, and hold us.
- **A. Some people find God in their pursuit of happiness or in the emptiness they feel without something ultimate in their lives.** (See student book article 3, "Happiness in God Alone.")
- The *Catechism* tells us that happiness and truth can be found only when we live "in communion with God" (45).
 - God is "our first origin and our ultimate goal" (CCC, 229). He is our beginning and our destiny. Thus happiness is found only in a life fully committed to him.
 - Jesus provides a framework for happiness through his life, teachings, death, and Resurrection.
- **B. The Bible can lead us to know God.**
- *Revelation* comes from a Latin word meaning "to unveil or disclose."
 - Divine Inspiration is the divine assistance the Holy Spirit gave the authors of the books of the Bible so the authors could write in human words the salvation message God wanted to communicate.
 - The Bible is the Revelation of God, and each of the many writers was inspired.
 - Each writer or character in the account heard or understood God's will and message differently.
 - God's Covenant is the reason God reveals himself to each of the characters and calls them, and it is the reason they choose to follow God's will.



Articles
1, 2, 3,
4, 5, 6,
7, 8

➤ **C. Other people encounter God through love.** (See student book article 4, "Saint Augustine and the Four Objects of Love.")

- Human beings share a universal capacity and desire for love. Because God is love, true love will ultimately be from him.
- Saint Augustine of Hippo, an early Father and Doctor of the Church, proclaimed that there are four objects we should love: God, our neighbors, ourselves, and our bodies.
 - God deserves love above all created things.
 - Love of God and neighbor are inseparable.
 - Self-love is the realization that God is imprinted on our hearts waiting, wanting to be displayed to the world in a beautiful and magnificent way.
 - Our bodies are one of God's great artistic masterpieces.

➤ **D. Other people come to God through the beauty of creation.** (See student book article 5, "The Sacred Scriptures and Natural Revelation," and article 6, "Natural Revelation and the Wisdom of the Church Fathers.")

- Through creation and reason, we can come to know God. This is called natural revelation, meaning that we can logically and reasonably deduce the existence of God through the natural order.
- God shaped all living things as a sign and symbol of his desire to be known through his magnificent universe.
- Experiences of the natural world or within the world can often bring us a feeling that something is beyond it, or they can cause us to think, "How can someone not believe in God when they see this or hear that or look here?"
- The Scriptures say that God's self-communication and disclosure to humankind are in creation.
- The **Fathers of the Church** further say that the universe provides visible evidence of God's existence.
- Many Church Fathers, especially Saint Athanasius (296–373), Saint Gregory of Nazianzen (325–389), Saint Gregory of Nyssa (395–394), and Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430), coupled the idea that God can be known through natural revelation with the belief that humanity is the summit of creation. In other words, the Church Fathers saw human beings as the high point of God's creative action in the world.
- Nothing created by God, "even the tiniest insect," is insignificant, says Saint Augustine.

➤ **E. Some people come to, or at least articulate their belief in, God through thought.** (See student book article 7, "Natural Revelation and Scholastic Theology," and article 8, "Natural Revelation: Vatican Council I to the Present.")

- During the **Middle Ages**, new ways of providing logical arguments to demonstrate the existence of God emerged. The centuries with particular influence were the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries.
- The great thinkers of the Middle Ages maintained that through the use of our minds, we could logically develop “converging and convincing arguments” (CCC, 31) to attain truth and certainty about God and the human experience.
- According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the reality of God can be proved, or logically demonstrated, in five ways:
 - The first proof or argument, known as the First Mover, draws on the idea that the universe constantly moves. Because everything continuously moves and changes, human beings can logically deduce or see a need for a “First Mover” who set everything in motion and guides the actions of humanity. We call that First Mover “God.”
 - The second proof of God’s existence is referred to as Causality, or First Efficient Cause. By reflecting on the cycle of life, we realize that all things are caused by something else. We equally realize that nothing can create itself. Therefore common sense tells us there is an Ultimate Cause or First Efficient Cause, which is uncaused, or not created by something else. This uncaused First Cause is God.
 - The third proof is based on a theory of contingency. This argument states that the universe contains many contingent things—that is, things that came into existence because of something else. But if everything were contingent, there would have to be a time where nothing would exist. This point in time would have been in the past. But things do exist. If they exist, they cannot exist without a Necessary Being. A Necessary Being is one who creates but is not created. That Necessary Being, which gives life to all beings, is God.
 - The fourth proof finds its strength in our understanding of perfection. Most of us can point out the imperfections of the world and humanity. In naming imperfections we acknowledge there are varying degrees of beauty, goodness, and knowledge. The question becomes: “How do we know perfect beauty, goodness, and knowledge?” According to Aquinas, we know perfection because there is one all-perfect being, God, who sets the infinite standard for wisdom and truth.
 - The fifth and final proof asserts that the world is characterized by remarkable order. This proof asserts that it is apparent that there are things in the universe that on their own have no intelligence. Yet regardless of their lack of intelligence, they still act toward and

achieve their end. One can then deduce that if things that lack intelligence still achieve their end, there must be something that does have an intelligence and knowledge of their end and directs all things to their appropriate end. This something can be seen as the intelligent designer behind our complex universe. We name this intelligent designer and magnificent architect God.

- Following is the argument of Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) about God's existence:
 - God is "that than which nothing greater can be thought."
 - It is greater to exist in reality than to exist merely in the mind.
 - Then God must exist in reality, not only in mind and understanding.
- At various points in the Church's history, the reality of natural revelation encountered opposition.
 - Large parts of the population challenged the Church's teaching that God can be known in and through creation informed by human reason. Vatican Council I strongly reasserted in the constitution *Dei Filius* (1870) that when people listen "to the message of creation and to the voice of **conscience**, [they] can arrive at certainty about the existence of God" (CCC, 46).
 - Philosopher and theologian John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801–1890) developed a theory known as the convergence of probabilities. This theory asserted that a number of probable hints, or indicators, point to the existence of God. These indicators range from people's experiences of beauty and goodness to the mystery of our world, from the voice of conscience to the enjoyment of freedom. The theory also asserted that no indicator alone necessarily proves the existence of God. Instead it claimed that when the indicators are combined, they produce a powerful argument.
 - Karl Rahner (1904–1984), a Jesuit theologian, developed the idea of God as Absolute Mystery. Any time human beings experience limitations in knowledge, freedom, or perfection, there is an underlying awareness of God as Absolute Mystery.

➤ **F. Although we can find God, and God can reveal himself in many different ways, Jesus Christ is God's Perfect Revelation.** (See student book article 2, "God's Invitation.")

- Because God so longs for a relationship with us, he reached out in a radical way. In the Incarnation the Word of God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ "God has revealed himself and given himself" (CCC, 68) to human beings in a new way so we may heed and understand the message of **salvation**.

- The Church teaches in the *Catechism* that in and through Jesus Christ, God has “provided the definitive, superabundant answer to the questions that man asks himself about the meaning and purpose of life” (68).
- The Incarnation of the Son of God is about God’s love for humanity. (*Incarnation*: From the Latin, meaning “to become flesh,” referring to the mystery of Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, becoming man. In the Incarnation, Jesus Christ became truly man while remaining truly God.)

Empathize**Step 4**

Invite the students to recognize God’s Revelation in one another.

The song “The Fingerprints of God,” by Steven Curtis Chapman, is a nice way to invite the students to reflect on ways they see God’s Revelation in others and to help them to see God’s Revelation in themselves.

1. Prepare by downloading and printing the handouts “The Fingerprints of God” (Document #: TX001097) and “The Fingerprints of God’ Reflection Questions” (Document #: TX001098), one for each student. Also obtain a recording of this song that can be played for the students. See smp.org/LivingInChrist for a relevant Web link.
2. Distribute copies of the handouts. Introduce the song with the following or similar words:
 - Sometimes it is easy to forget we are part of God’s wonderful creation, because we hear different messages from all sorts of places. This song invites us to consider ourselves as “covered with the fingerprints of God.”

Play the song several times for the students. Ask them to follow the lyrics on the handout as they listen. Allow about 10 minutes for the students to answer the questions on the other handout.

3. When time is up, ask the students to share their insights about God’s Revelation through people.

Perceive**Step 5**

Read the Scriptures and discuss God’s Revelation to biblical figures.

Help the students to uncover what suggested passages say about Revelation and Inspiration. Consider what you know from the preassessment learning experiences to best prepare for the students’ level of need.

1. Prepare by choosing two or three biblical accounts that clearly display God's interaction with humanity. We recommend the following: Genesis, chapters 40 and 41, about Joseph's dreams; Exodus, chapter 3, about Moses and the burning bush; and Luke 1:39–45, about Mary's visit to Elizabeth.
2. Ask several students to read these accounts aloud. Then instruct the students to circle or underline an aspect (a word, phrase, or verse) of each account as it relates most clearly to the concept of Revelation. Encourage the students not to choose an entire paragraph or the complete account itself. If the students are not allowed to write in their Bibles, ask them to write in their notebooks to describe the parts of the account they select.
3. After identifying these aspects, ask the students to share with the large group what they have circled. Repetition of ideas or words is acceptable. Write all these words or phrases on the board and discuss how the figures in the accounts experienced God, how God communicated with the figures, and how the accounts accurately depict the concept of Revelation.

Optional Learning Experience: Explore Revelation and Inspiration Using the Jigsaw Process

In this learning experience, the students will study the content of different biblical passages about Inspiration and Revelation and then work in small groups to apply biblical literary skills to the accounts. (For further explanation of this approach, see the article "Using the Jigsaw Process" [Document #: TX001020] at smp.org/LivingInChrist.)

1. To practice the learning experience, we recommend using Genesis 12:1–9, God's self-introduction to Abraham. Assign each student one of four accounts you have previously chosen. Following are four additional passages the students can use for the learning experience:
 - Genesis, chapter 32 (Jacob's struggle with an angel)
 - 1 Samuel 1:1–2:10 (Hannah's prayer)
 - 2 Samuel 7:1–29 (God's promise to David and David's response)
 - 1 Kings 3:4–15 (Solomon's wisdom dream)

Make copies of the handout "Jigsaw Process" (Document #: TX001161), one for each group of four.

You also may want to read background material about Revelation, Inspiration, and vocation. See the background article "Introduction to Revelation, Inspiration, and Vocation" (Document #: TX001017) at smp.org/LivingInChrist. You may also want to download and use the PowerPoint "Revelation, Inspiration, and Vocation" (Document #: TX001071) to accompany your presentation, either as is or with your own modifications.

2. Demonstrate your expectations for reading comprehension and study of content with the account of God's introducing himself to Abraham, in Genesis 12:1–9.

Model your expectations by asking the students to investigate the account of Abraham with you. Ask:

- What is the land of Abram's kinfolk?

Ur—this is mentioned later in the account.

- Why does the reading contain both regular text and poetic-type text?

The regular text narrates the account, and the poetic text is God's speech. This might be an attempt to set God's speech apart and above human action.

- What were the more specific meanings of blessings and curses?

From Saint Mary's Press® Essential Bible Dictionary:

Blessing: A prayer of intention that calls on the power and compassion of God to bestow a grace or empower a healing, or a plea to affect an event through God's intervention. The Bible is filled with blessing prayers.

Curse: A curse could also be a punishment and condemnation by God (Gen 3:14). It could be a shaming device (Gen 9:25) or a condemnation against injustice and crime (Gen 49:7). The curse could serve as a prophetic warning, a priestly teaching against idolatry (Deut 27:15), or a warning to obey a conqueror's orders (Josh 6:26).

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- Who are "the persons they had acquired in Haran"?

Slaves and others that formed the social group under Abraham.

- Who are the Canaanites?

From Saint Mary's Press® Essential Bible Dictionary:

[People who lived in] the land to which God directed Abraham to make his home, the Promised Land, also called Palestine. It occupied the territory that is modern-day Israel. The people who occupied the land were Canaanites. In the Bible, they were called idolaters because of their worship of Baal and Asherah. Through a series of occupations and wars, the Israelites eventually took over most of Canaan.

(P. 31)

3. Ask the students to read their passages as homework and to come to the next class period with a one-paragraph summary of the account that reflects some greater study of the text.

Teacher Note

By writing out a paragraph about this passage with the students, you will be able to calm the fears of those who struggle with biblical interpretation and simultaneously challenge those who are skilled. Do not repeat this story account in the learning experience itself.

4. Place the students in groups of four that include one representative for each account. Distribute copies of the handout "Jigsaw Process" (Document #: TX001161) and ask the groups to answer the questions on the handout. Explain that the questions require the students to think critically about not only what each group member has read but also the connections and similarities that exist throughout the Bible. Allow about 10 minutes for the students to complete the questions.
5. When time is up, call the students back to the large group to discuss how each account reflects the concepts of Revelation and Inspiration and to discuss similarities and differences among the accounts.

Reflect

Step 6

Have the students reflect on how they come to know God.

The students reflect on questions and acknowledge what they have learned so far. This reflection can be done for the first time here in step 6 or can be done now for the second time if previously done as option 1 in step 1. The learning experience is still valuable if repeated, because it highlights what the students have learned so far.

1. Write the following questions on the board:
 - How can I or have I come to know God?
 - If I wanted to know God, how could I do that?
2. Have the students reflect on these questions in the context of the biblical accounts they have read. Allow about 5 minutes for the students to write their responses to these questions in their notebooks.
3. When time is up, if applicable ask the students to turn to their question responses from step 1 and compare their answers.
4. Finally, invite the students to share their thoughts with the large group, directing them specifically to make connections among their previous responses, their current responses, and the biblical accounts you have read.
5. Conclude with the following points:
 - God calls individuals into relationship with him by using their unique gifts and talents in his service.