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Chapter 2: Introduction to Sacred Scripture

Introduction

Chapter 1 helped the students understand that God's love for us is so great that he continually acts on our behalf, establishes and consistently deepens his relationship with us, and openly reveals himself to us in the Words of the Scripture and the coming of Jesus, the Word made flesh. The *Constitution on Divine Revelation* (n. 21) puts it this way: "In the sacred books (Scripture) the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them." This chapter invites the students to join wholeheartedly in that divinely initiated conversation.

After learning how to navigate their way through the Scripture, the students spend some time learning that the words of Scripture have God as their author. However, they also have human authors. Thus, the Scriptures are writings of faith. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the human authors passed on God's self-revelation. To do so, they employed normal human modes of communication. Thus, as with any form of written word, the students discover that we must learn to interpret the Scriptures properly in order to understand them fully.

The students begin by investigating the criteria for interpreting what God wanted to communicate in the Scripture: examining the content and unity of Scripture (God's overall purpose in communicating with us); reading Scripture *within* Church Tradition (that is, with the guidance of the Church); and paying attention to the "analogy of faith," which means understanding that the Scriptures do not contradict themselves. The students learn about inerrancy of the Scripture and then distinguish between a "literalist" and a "literal" reading of the Scripture. They discover that the latter recognizes that the Bible might contain errors when it comes to historical or scientific data, but not when it comes to matters of faith or spiritual teaching.



Chapter Objectives

To help the students:

- practice locating and reading Bible references.
- recognize that Scripture is the Word of God given through the Spirit-guided words of human authors.
- understand what is meant by the inerrancy of the Bible.
- discover how we are to interpret the Scripture in the light of the Holy Spirit.
- understand that recognizing literary genres can help in our understanding of the Scripture.
- investigate the spiritual senses of Scripture.
- learn how to read the Bible prayerfully.
- begin to understand the function of historical, form, and redaction criticism in interpreting biblical sources.

The chapter then directs attention to the human authors. The students recognize that the various biblical writers employed a variety of writing styles to get God's message across: poetry, allegory, history, exhortation, stories, love songs, genealogies, and so forth, and then begin to appreciate these various forms and to learn to distinguish among them. The students then discover the languages in which the Bible was originally written and later translated. They even sample different translations of the Bible. The students go on to spend time studying the roles of historical, source, form, and redaction criticism in helping them understand the different books of the Bible. Throughout the chapter, the students learn and practice ways of praying with the Scripture.

As teacher and catechist, your task here is not that of Scripture scholar or exegete. You need not be an expert to lead the students down Scripture's path. You do, however, need to be a person who reads the Scripture, a person who seeks to find God's Word speaking to you right here, right now. You need to be able to answer—at least for yourself—the question, "Why study Scripture at all?" Perhaps there has never been a better answer than that offered by John Henry Newton, Jr., the Anglican clergyman, former slave ship captain, and author of the hymn "Amazing Grace." Newton wrote:

Though troubles assail us and dangers affright,
Though friends should all fail, And foes unite;
Yet one thing assures, Whatever betide,
The Scripture assures us, The Lord will provide.

That is quite an assurance. It's worth holding on to. Worth passing on. Do both.

Advance Preparations For Lesson 1

- Bibles
- Have a number of maps, travel books, or guidebooks available for the students to peruse.
- Drawing paper and markers

- Make copies of Chapter 2 Handout 1, “Salvation History in a Nutshell” and Chapter 2 Handout 2, “Words of God or Words of Men?”
- Copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (optional)

For Lesson 2

- Bibles
- Copy of Chapter 1 Handout 6, “Where Our Story Comes From”
- Make copies of Chapter 2 Handout 3, “Biblical *Bon Mots*” and Chapter 2 Handout 4, “Interpreting Scripture Means . . .”

For Lesson 3

- Bibles
- Make copies of Chapter 2 Handout 5, “Making SENSE of Scripture” and copies of Chapter 2 Handout 6, “History, Science and the Bible.”
- Copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (optional)

For Lesson 4

- Bibles
- Carefully read through the lesson plan and decide if you want to break up the material and present it over two or more class periods.
- Have available copies of different Protestant and Catholic Bible translations as mentioned in the features “Protestant Translations of the Bible” and “Catholic Translations of the Bible” on page 36. (Note: Most of the Bibles mentioned in the text may be found online, for example at www.bibles.net. Therefore, try to provide the students access to Internet-capable computers.)
- A copy of a Breviary (optional)
- Make copies of Chapter 2 Handout 7, “The Liturgy of the Hours” and Chapter 2 Handout 8, “tugh (‘Hurry Up’) and Translate.”
- Arrange for a priest to visit the class, speak about praying the Breviary, and lead the students in an actual prayer experience of the Liturgy of the Hours (optional).
- Consider showing one of the videos mentioned in the lesson’s “For Enrichment” feature on page 56 of this text.

For Lesson 5

- Bibles
- Make copies of Chapter 2 Handout 9, “When It Comes to the Bible, Everyone’s a Critic! or The CSIs of the Bible.”

For the Chapter 2 Review Lesson

- Bibles
- A computer capable of showing a PowerPoint presentation
- Have a candle and matches available.

For the Chapter 2 Test Lesson

- Copies of the Chapter 2 Test (starting on page 291 and also online at www.avemariapress.com)

Chapter 2 Handouts

- Handout 1, Salvation History in a Nutshell—The students review the history of God’s saving acts on our behalf (Salvation History).
- Handout 2, Words of God or Words of Men?—The students read a fable about how the Scriptures are words of God and words of human beings.
- Handout 3, Biblical *Bon Mots*—The students discover and look up the biblical origins of familiar axioms.
- Handout 4, Interpreting Scripture Means . . .—The students discover the “how-tos” of Scripture interpretation and then compose a prayer.
- Handout 5, Making SENSE of Scripture—The students investigate the literal and spiritual senses of Scripture.
- Handout 6, History, Science, and the Bible—The students read historical reports about Jesus and consider the relationship between science and Scripture.
- Handout 7, The Liturgy of the Hours—The students discover the structure of the Liturgy of the Hours and pray together.
- Handout 8, tugh (“Hurry Up”) and Translate—The students try their hand at “translating” a Bible passage.
- Handout 9, When It Comes to the Bible, Everyone’s a Critic! or The CSIs of the Bible—The students discover the meaning and process of historical, source, form, and redaction criticism.

Chapter 2: Introduction to Sacred Scripture—Lesson 1

Bell Ringers

- Review the previous chapter by distributing copies of the corrected Chapter 1 Test. Briefly go through the answers with the class. Then continue the review by asking questions like the following:
 - What term do we use to refer to God's action on our behalf? (*Salvation History*)
 - What do we call God's self-communication to us? (*Divine Revelation*)
 - What do we call the written record of God's self-communication "handed on" to us by the Church? (*Sacred Scripture*)
- Distribute copies of Handout 1, "Salvation History in a Nutshell." Call on volunteers to read aloud this selection from Eucharistic Prayer IV. See if the students can point out how this wonderful thanksgiving prayer stresses the highlights of the history of our Salvation—God's loving: creation; promise of redemption; covenants; sending of the prophets; and the gift of Jesus, the fullness of revelation, God in the flesh.
- Go on to write the words "Sacred Scripture" and "Bible" on the board. Ask what each word means: "sacred" = *holy*; "scripture" = *writing*; "bible" = *books*. Tell the students that in Chapter 2 they will begin taking a much closer look at God's self-revelation in the Bible.

Teaching Approaches

The Game of Life (pages 26-27)

- Introduce this chapter by reminding the students that in Chapter 1 they discovered that, as human beings, we search for a happiness that is satisfied only in and

The Game of Life

Baron de Coubertin, a key founder of the modern Olympic games, borrowed the words for the Olympic motto from Fr. Henri Martin Dideon, the headmaster of Arcueil College in Paris: *Crisus, alius, Fortius*, Latin for "Swifter, Higher, Stronger." Fr. Dideon used the motto to describe the athletic achievements of the students at his school. Coubertin thought these same words would be appropriate to describe the world's greatest athletes. The Olympic creed also reads:

The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.

The Olympic motto and creed are inspirational because they challenge us to be the best people, not just athletes, we can possibly be. Compare these words to the passage from the Book of Isaiah that opens this chapter. The source of our strength is the good God who will never let us down. He will always carry us through the tough times. The goals are similar: We participate in the journey of life, hoping to be all that God intends for us, the best people we can be.



How to Locate and Read Bible References

A typical Bible reference looks like this: In 1:1-18. Follow these steps to locate and read the passage:

- "Jr" is an abbreviated title of the book, in this case the Gospel of John. (Common abbreviations for the books of the Bible can be found in your own Bible or on page 266.)
- The first number listed is the chapter number; the verse number follows the colon (:). In this example, we should look at chapter 1 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-18.
- The hyphen (-) indicates several chapters or verses. Study these two examples:
 - Gn 1-2 (Genesis, chapters 1 through 2, inclusive)
 - Ex 32:1-5 (Exodus, chapter 32, verses 1 through 5, inclusive)
- A semicolon (;) separates two distinct references; a comma (,) separates two verses in the same chapter. Study these two examples:
 - Lk 6:12-16; 7:18-23 (Luke, chapter 6, verses 12 through 16 and Luke, chapter 7, verses 18 through 23)
 - Jr 9:1, 3, 8 (Isaiah, chapter 9, verses 1, 3, and 8)
- Sometimes you'll see something like this: Prv 6:6f. The "f" means the following verse; "ff" means an indeterminate number of subsequent verses. Thus, Prv 6:6f. means Proverbs, chapter 6, verses 6 and 7, while Prv 6:6ff. means Proverbs, chapter 6, verse 6 and several verses that follow.

Write in your journal the full citations for the following biblical passages. Follow the format of the examples given above.

- Ps 8:1-5, 9
- Ps 8:50; 145

Lesson 1 Objectives

The students will:

- review Chapter 1.
- appreciate that the Scriptures are like a roadmap for life's journey.
- recognize that the Scriptures were written by human authors inspired by God.
- realize that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

Lesson 1 Overview

This chapter focuses on the Bible as the written record of God's self-communication to us. It helps the students discover how the Bible, written by human beings under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is both words men wrote and the inerrant Word of God.

Extending the Lesson

In addition to the quotation from *Dei Verbum* and the two quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* found on Handout 2, ask the students to look up and read numbers 107, 113, and 120 in the *Catechism* and then write a paragraph summarizing what they discover.

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- Jt 1:1-2:5f; 2:28-3:17
- Is 40:12-41:4; 65:17f
- 1 Cor 10:1-13; 12:1-13:13

For Reflection

- What one area of your life best fits the Olympic creed? Explain.
- Reread Isaiah 40:28-31. When was a time when the Lord carried you to greater heights?

The Bible Is the Inspired Word of God

The Bible is the written record of God's Revelation. God comes to us through this collection of writings. "Through all the words of Sacred Scripture, God speaks only one single Word, his one Utterance in whom he expresses himself completely" (CCC, 102). The Bible is a great source of strength to help us live "Swifter, Higher, and Stronger."

- Because Sacred Scripture is the Word of God, the Church teaches that:
 - God is the author of the Bible,
 - the Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the sacred books, and
 - the Sacred Scriptures teach the truth.

Furthermore, if the Bible is to mean something for our daily lives, we need the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds to understand and apply his holy word to our lives.

After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem. The Gospel of Luke reports that "he opened their minds to understand the scriptures" (Lk 24:45). The Bible is not a religion textbook that we study from as if we were learning world history, geography, or languages. It is a living

book. For it to remain so, we must call on Christ, through the Holy Spirit, to open our own minds to his Good News.

What Is Inspiration?

We use the words "inspired" and "inspirational" in common speech. For example, you might have read a story about how a teenager overcame cancer. Her faith, courage, and the support of her family and friends inspired her through her battle. Or say a classmate gave a particularly good talk in his bid to run for class officer. You told him his talk was "inspirational," that is, it aroused confidence in you that he would be a great class representative.

When we say that God inspired the sacred writers of the Bible, we are using the term a bit more technically. Used in this sense, it means that God is the author of the Bible; he used the human authors as his instrument to convey Divine Revelation to us. Just as you use a ballpoint pen or a pencil to take class notes, so God used the human authors as instruments to commit to writing those truths that are necessary for our Salvation, and to do so without error.

Take this analogy another step: When you take notes in class, you are the author of the notes that end up in your notebook. The pen or the pencil is the instrument you use to get the notes down on paper. Each instrument has its own characteristics (for example, black ink for your pen or erasable lead for your pencil), but the notes that result from either the pen or the pencil will be the same. You are the author of them, even though the writing will look different depending on the instrument you used.

God used the human authors of the books of the Bible as his instruments to reveal the truths of our Salvation. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the human authors drew on their own background, education, skill and talent as writers, vocabulary, and so forth to write what God intended for people to know. God respected the freedom of the human writers, but in every case, the Holy Spirit guided the author in the truth. The end product is the inerrant Word of God.

by God. Thus, our lives are like a journey home to God.

- Invite the students to recall a family trip or journey they have taken, for example, a vacation or a visit to a relative. Use questions like the following to discuss what preparations they went through to prepare for the journey and to sustain them along the way:
 - What do we need when we begin a journey?
 - How will we know which way to go? What to do? What to see?
 - Who or what might serve as a guide on the way?
 - Who will act as our host at the journey's end?
- Distribute the maps and travel guidebooks you brought to class. Have the students look them over. Ask them why materials like these might be helpful when planning a journey.
- Distribute drawing paper and markers. Have the students create a "turn-by-turn" map (similar to those on MapQuest or Google Maps) leading from their home to a destination to which they have recently traveled. Encourage them to include road marks, places/things of interest, and other stops along the way. Afterward, have the students share journeys with a partner or in small groups or as an entire class.
- Sum up by pointing out how a clear map or a good travelogue helps travelers lay out the stages of a journey, remain true to their bearings, avoid getting turned around or lost, enjoy themselves along the way, and arrive safely at their destination.

Homework

1. Have the students turn to Ongoing Assignments on pages 43–44. Explain that they are to choose any three of the listed assignments to complete prior to the conclusion of this chapter. Tell them that assignments are due on the day they gather to review the chapter. (Note: Consider weighing grading the students' work on each of the assignments based on degree of difficulty. In any case, encourage the students to start work on the assignment ASAP.)
2. Have the students read "How to Read the Bible" (pages 28–32) in preparation for their next lesson.
3. Tell the students to turn ahead in their text to the feature, "Literary Forms," on pages 30–32. Assign at least one of the listed literary forms to each student. Tell the students that, as part of their homework, they are to: (1) find a nonbiblical example of their assigned literary form to bring to their next class; and (2) look up the biblical example given in the text and be prepared to report on it.

For Review Answers (page 28)

1. God, the author of the Bible, used human authors to convey his revelation to us.
2. The Bible teaches *without error* the truth that God wants us to know.
3. The Church (Magisterium) has the final authority to interpret what the Bible means.

- Call attention to the word "Bible" on the board. Explain that the Bible is our "map," our "guidebook." Like any guidebook to a new and wondrous destination, the Bible draws our attention to issues of interest and details of delight. More than that, it welcomes us to a community of faith and makes us curious enough to know more, discover more, and continue faithfully on our journey.
- Finally, have the students turn to the biblical passage from the Book of Isaiah on page 25 of the text. Call on a volunteer to read it aloud. Point out how the passage assures us of God's continued aid and guidance on our life's journey.
- Make sure every student has a copy of the Bible. Go through the steps of the activity "How to Locate and Read Bible References" (page 26) with the class. Allow time for the students to look up and write out the five biblical passages to which the activity refers. Afterward, call on different students to read the passages aloud. Have the class check for correctness. If you wish, give the students more practice by having them find and record other passages of your choosing.

The Bible Is the Inspired Word of God (pages 27-28)

- Have the students turn to For Reflection on page 28. Give the students 10–15 minutes to write their responses to the four questions. Ask the students to find a partner and then share responses. Have partners report to the class on their partner's responses.
- Distribute copies of Handout 2, "Words of God or Words of Men?" Use the material on the handout to help the students begin to comprehend the Church's understanding of biblical inspiration. Call on two volunteers to read aloud the quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Ask the students whether they think the Scriptures are authored by God or by humans. To help answer that question, go on to have the students read the fantasy, "Whose Story Is It?" Discuss the story. Ask:
 - Why did the angel insist the story was God's?
 - Why did the scribe insist that the story belonged to him?
 - Why do you think God agreed with them both? (*While God is, indeed, the author of Scripture, in his desire to communicate with us, God did not impose himself as an author against the free will of the human writer.*)

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The inspired books teach the truth. "Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our Salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures" (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, No. 11; CCC, 107).

For Review

1. How is the Bible the inspired Word of God?
2. How is the Bible inspired?
3. Why should we accept the Bible as Inerrant?

For Reflection

- Write your own definition of *inspirational*.
- What is the most inspirational book you've ever read? Why?
- What kind of music inspires you? Explain.
- Who is the most inspirational person you know? What qualities does this person possess? How would you like to be like this person?

How to Read the Bible

The purpose of interpreting the Bible is to discover what God wanted the biblical authors to reveal for the benefit of our Salvation. Because God speaks to us in a human way, when we read the Bible we must pay attention to what the human authors wished to say and so what God wanted to reveal through their words.

EXPLAINING THE FAITH

Isn't the Bible just a story about the past? Why do people today think it applies to them?

It is true that Sacred Scripture contains stories, history, poetry, and many teachings about events in the past, but these events are part of Salvation History. The message it contains is timeless, just as Jesus Christ and the Salvation he won for us are timeless.

The Bible is the living Word of God. Although the content is rooted in specific historical events, the message of Sacred Scripture will never grow old. God continues to speak to us through his Holy Word. The Church recognizes this in her liturgy, which always contains readings from Sacred Scripture. It is also important to focus our personal prayer on Scripture.

To discover the human authors' intentions requires diligence. It requires learning how the history of their time and culture influenced them. It also means studying their language and how they used it to express themselves. A major factor in getting at the authors' intention is to identify the literary form or genre of their writing. (See below for various types of literary forms.)

In addition, since Sacred Scripture is inspired, it "must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written" (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, 12 §3; CCC, 111). The Second Vatican Council taught three ways for

Lesson 2 Objectives

The students will:

- review how to locate and read Bible references.
- understand that in order to interpret Scripture correctly we need to pay attention to both what the human author wanted to say and what God wanted to convey.
- discover three criteria for interpreting what God wanted to communicate in the Scripture.
- appreciate the danger in using the Bible as a proof text.
- recognize how prayer puts our reading of Scripture in the context of a relationship with God.
- write a prayer together.
- discover the *Lectio Divina*.
- understand the difference between a literal and a literalist interpretation of Scripture.

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interpreting Scripture in accordance with the Holy Spirit who inspired it.

First, note the context and unity of the whole Scripture. Even though the various books may be different, Jesus Christ in the Word of God, the center and heart of Sacred Scripture. The Old Testament prefigures him and illuminates the New Testament. The entire Bible must be read in light of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Similarly, because the Old Testament retains its own value as *Divine Revelation*, the New Testament must be read and understood in light of the Old Testament. As St. Augustine put it, "The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New" (quoted in CCC, 129).

Second, "read the Scripture within 'the living Tradition of the whole Church'" (CCC, 113). Recall that Sacred Scripture is one of two parts of a single Deposit of Faith. The other part is Sacred Tradition. God gave Sacred Scripture to the whole Church. Therefore, to interpret the Bible properly, we should read it within the living Tradition of the

Church. Christ left the authority to interpret Sacred Scripture with the Magisterium, which is the Pope and the bishops united with him. Just as the Holy Spirit enlightened Church leaders to recognize which ancient books were inspired, so he guides the Magisterium to help us understand the meaning of God's Word and how to apply it to our daily lives. Without the help of the Magisterium our personal interpretations of Scripture may be wrong.

Third, pay attention to the "analogy of faith." The analogy of faith is the unity "of the truths of the faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation" (CCC, 114). Simply put, this means that truths revealed in Sacred Scripture cannot contradict each other. God's revealed truths make sense, one with the other. Therefore, in explaining what the Bible means, it should be done in such a way that it is in harmony with all of God's Revelation, including the teaching of the Magisterium.

AN ANALOGY OF FAITH

What is meant by "analogy of faith"? Consider the following example: Psalm 34:16 says, "The Lord has eyes for the just and ears for their cry."

But John 4:24 says, "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth."

At first glance, these passages seem to contradict themselves. How can a spirit have eyes and ears? But the analogy of faith holds that Revelation in the Sacred Scripture is not contradictory. The difference is understood by recognizing how the passage from the book of Psalms uses a figure of speech. The intent was to emphasize how God watches over his people and listens to their prayers for help. It does not mean to communicate that God is a physical being like humans, endowed with eyes and ears.

The context of the passage in John's Gospel concerns Jesus' dialogue with the woman he met at a well in Samaria. She believed that God could only be properly worshiped in a particular place, either in the Jerusalem Temple for the Jews, or in the Temple erected on Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans. But Jesus tells her that the physical place of worship is not important since God is a spirit. He can be worshiped anywhere with the help of the Holy Spirit and in truth.

Afterward, summarize the material in this text section, by having the students respond to the For Review questions on page 28 (answers on page 45).

- Point out the feature, Explaining the Faith, on page 31. Tell the students that because we are interested in our own history—where we've come from, where we are, where we're heading—we naturally want our history to be part of Salvation History. We want our story to be part of the timeless story of God's unbounded love for us.

Chapter 2: Introduction to Sacred Scripture—Lesson 2

Bell Ringers

- Reteach.** Display a copy of Chapter 1 Handout 6, "Where Our Story Comes From." Use the diagram to remind the students that on the one road of God's revelation to us, there are two lanes (Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture) and one guide (Magisterium). Note, however, that it is impossible to simply put these three in a hierarchical structure to determine their order of authority, for they are *intrinsically related*.
- Even so, point out to the students that, in this three-part structure, it is the words of Sacred Scripture that the Church recognizes as truly being *God's* words. Such direct divine inspiration is not the case of Tradition or the Magisterium. Thus, Sacred Scripture holds a certain primacy. However, that primacy must not lead us to adopt a "Scripture Alone" attitude (as do some Fundamentalist Christians). Rather, it should simply foster in us a reverence for Scripture as God's revelation in *God's own words*.
- Go on to review the students' abilities to locate and read Bible references by distributing copies of Handout 3, "Biblical Bon Mots." Read the directions aloud and have the students use their Bibles to complete the matching activity. Afterward, check answers (see page 48). Emphasize that these sayings are but a few of the many familiar axioms that have come down to us from Sacred Scripture.

Teaching Approaches

How to Read the Bible (pages 28-32)

- Distribute copies of Handout 4, "Interpreting Scripture Means . . ." Have the students follow the outline on the handout and take notes as you present the information in this section of text.

Lesson 2 Overview

This lesson introduces the Catholic understanding of Scriptural interpretation. The students learn the dual focus of interpretation as well as the crucial criteria necessary for interpreting God's self-revelation in the Scripture. Since these points are core to understanding biblical interpretation, plan on taking some extra time with this lesson, perhaps extending it over a couple class periods. Be sure to encourage and allow time for the students' questions.

Homework

- Have the students write out their responses to the For Review questions on page 32.
- Read "How to Understand the Bible" (pages 32-34) in preparation for the next lesson.
- Remind the students to continue working on their chosen Ongoing Assignments (pages 43-44).

- *What the human author wanted to say.* Tell the students that just as we pay attention to all the clues we can (tone of voice, facial expression, context, etc.) to interpret day-to-day communication, so we need as much information as we can gather about the biblical text we're interpreting.

- Stress that history, culture, and language all play a part in influencing how a human author communicates. Offer appropriate examples.
- Have the students turn to the feature, "Literary Forms," on pages 30–32 of the text. Take a moment to sum up the importance of reading the Scripture *in context*. Have the students turn to the feature, *For Reflection*, on page 32. Call on volunteers to offer examples of the importance of reading in—or out of—context. Finally, be sure to note the definitions of "literary genre" and "exegesis" (page 30).
- Go on to have the students (one-at-a-time) share the nonbiblical example of the literary form they were assigned for homework and then to read and explain what they believe the biblical example means for them. Encourage the students to list the examples under the heading "Literary Forms" on Handout 4.

- *What God wanted to convey.* Point out and explain the three criteria for interpreting what God wanted to communicate in the Scripture:

- "Looking at the content and unity of Scripture" means seeking to grasp Scripture's ultimate purpose, namely, *to deepen our relationship with God by coming to share in the divine nature of Christ*. If we disregard this core focus, we will not find a proper explanation of the texts.
- "Reading within Church Tradition" means that we cannot interpret Scripture in any way that it contradicts Tradition. Remind the students that Sacred Scripture and Tradition are the *two* forms of the *one* Word which God speaks. Any interpretation that would find one form contradicting

literal sense
(of the biblical text)
"The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation" (CCC, 116).



literary genre
A type of writing that has a particular form, style, or content.

exegesis
The process used by scholars to discover the meaning of the biblical text.

Literary Forms

Part of the task of interpreting Scripture is to identify the kinds of writing or various literary forms so we can understand and interpret God's Word correctly. Imagine reading this headline in your local paper: "Pades Slaughter Tribe!" If this appeared on the front page of the newspaper, you could possibly conclude that some missionary priests went crazy and decided to eliminate some native people. But if you read the same headline on the sports page, you would probably conclude that the San Diego baseball team defeated the Cleveland Indians, and by a wide margin!

The context of the headline is crucial in this example. Additionally, editorial writing differs from news reporting. What appears in a horoscope differs from news analysis. Sending an e-mail to your girlfriend is not the same as writing a letter to your grandmother. Instant messaging a friend about an upcoming party differs from filling out your first job application.

Context is also vitally important in scriptural interpretation. Determining context in the Bible first involves identifying the literary genre being used by the author. A literary genre or form is a type of writing that has a particular style or content. The seventy-three books of the Bible contain many literary genres.

Catholics typically rely on the work of biblical scholars working under the Magisterium to understand the meaning of difficult biblical texts. Exegesis is the process used by

scholars to discover the meaning of the biblical text. Some of the work they do in their studies will be described in the section "Modern Approaches for Studying Sacred Scripture" (pages 39–41). Identifying the literary genre helps anyone who reads the Bible to determine the literal meaning or literal sense of the biblical text. "The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation" (CCC, 116).

There are several types of literary genres in the Bible. In some cases, entire books of the Bible consist of one literary form. For example, the First Book of Samuel is a *historical book*, Amos is *prophesy*, the Psalms are *poetry*, and most of the books attributed to St. Paul are *letters*. Even within these larger works, we find smaller literary forms like *genealogies*, *miracle stories*, *prayers*, and *parables*. Examples of these and other literary genres from the Old Testament and New Testament are listed below:

- *Allegory:* an extended comparison where many elements of a story stand for deeper realities like abstract ideas, moral qualities, or spiritual realities (see Proverbs 9:1–6).
- *Biography:* a written account of a person's life (see Jeremiah 26).
- *Covenant:* a formal statement of religious belief (see Deuteronomy 26:5–10).
- *Etymology:* a story that gives the cause of something (see Genesis 22:2–32).



Chapter 2 Handout 3, "Biblical Bon Mots" Answers

Woe is me! — Isaiah 6:5

A man after his own heart — 1 Samuel 13:14

At my wit's end — Psalm 107:27

A wolf in sheep's clothing — Matthew 7:15

A labor of love — 1 Thessalonians 1:3

No rest for the wicked — Isaiah 48:22 and 57:21

A drop in the bucket — Isaiah 40:15



For Enrichment

Consider viewing or recommending a viewing of the movie *Inherit the Wind* (available on DVD), which is based on the State of Tennessee vs. John Scopes (often referred to as the Scopes "Monkey Trial"). The actual trial resulted in the conviction of John Scopes for teaching the theory of evolution in his high school science class in opposition to a Tennessee state law that forbade the teaching of anything besides creationism. The focus of the movie, therefore, is on a literalist interpretation of the Bible and where that leads. The film offers a good framework for discussing the Catholic (literal) approach to biblical interpretation. (Note: You could show the film over a period of days, since it is germane to material covered both in Lesson 2 and in Lesson 3.)

Introduction to Sacred Scripture

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- **Fable:** a brief story with a moral; often uses animals that act and speak like human beings (see Judges 9:7–15).
- **History:** a chronological narrative or record of events, as in the life or development of a people, country, or institution (see 1 Kings 1–2).
- **Law:** a rule of conduct or standard of behavior established by proper authority, society, or custom (see Ex 20:1–17).
- **Prophecy:** an inspired utterance made by a prophet, which expresses God's will (see Amos 1–2).
- **Genealogy:** a record of one's ancestors (see Matthew 1:1–17).
- **Hyperbole:** a deliberately exaggerated saying to highlight the topic under discussion (see Matthew 18:8).
- **Miracle Story:** for example, a nature miracle is a report of a powerful sign performed by Jesus to show his mastery over the elements (see Luke 8:22–25).
- **Riddle:** a question or statement that teases the mind; it requires thought and application (see Matthew 11:11).

EXPLAINING THE FAITH

Who are fundamentalists? How do they read the Bible? What is the difference between a "literal" reading and a "literalist" reading of the Bible?

Christians known as "fundamentalists" believe in the sole primacy of Scripture. They also allow for private interpretation of biblical texts and a literalist interpretation of Scripture. This view is not correct. Christian faith is not a "religion of the book." Rather it is a religion of the living Word of God. Catholics look to both Scripture and Tradition as having their common source in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Further, only the Church's Magisterium can give an authentic interpretation of Scripture.

Fundamentalists read the Bible in a literalist sense. This means they ignore various literary forms and the cultural and historical factors of the period in which the biblical authors wrote.

There is a major difference between the "literal" sense of Scripture and a "literalist" approach. The literal interpretation takes into account what the author intended to convey. For example, "It's raining cats and dogs" means, in a literal sense, "It's raining hard." In contrast, a literalist interpretation takes the exact meaning of the words without considering any other factors. "It's raining cats and dogs" means cats and dogs are falling from the sky.

Note how a literal reading of the two creation accounts in Genesis (1:1–2:2 and 2:4–22) can explain apparent contradictions. A literalist interpreter would be at a loss to explain how God created humans last in the first creation account but first in the second account. Fundamentalists would conclude that God created the earth in seven twenty-four hour days, the equivalent of one of our weeks. This literalist, fundamentalist way of reading the Bible does not consider changes in language over the centuries, nor does it account for the cultural differences between our age and that of biblical times.

The Church holds that the Bible faithfully teaches the truth that God wishes to convey to us. The primary purpose of the Bible is to present the religious truths that God wishes to reveal through the events of Salvation History. In sum, under the guidance of the Magisterium, biblical scholars and individuals work to find the literal sense of the biblical words: what the author intended. Literalism fails to do this.

the other would be denying the truth of God's Word. Point out that to ensure this union, the Magisterium is the ultimate authority on interpretation.

- "Paying attention to the analogy of faith." Call attention to the feature, "An Analogy of Faith," on page 29. Point out how the passages from Psalm 34 and John 4 seem contradictory. Explain to the students that paying attention to the *analogy of faith* means recognizing that the Scriptures don't contradict themselves. Tell the students that when we interpret Scripture, we have to be careful that our interpretation of this or that particular passage does not run contrary to what the rest of Scripture says. Put simply, the analogy of faith assures us that Scripture helps us interpret Scripture.

- Before moving along, take this opportunity to deal with the problem of *proof texting*. Ask if anyone knows what it means to use the Bible as a "proof text" (citing a passage from the Scripture out of context in order to support an opinion). Then write the following statements on the board, along with their accompanying Scripture references:

- God loves chubby folks. Leviticus 3:16
- Never ever make fun of a bald guy. 2 Kings 2:23–24
- Jesus hated fig trees. Matthew 21:19

Have the students look up and read the Scripture passages. Explain that while these examples are a bit silly, proof texting can be very dangerous when we cherry-pick the Scripture to suit our preconceived ideas or agendas, rather than taking the *content and unity of Scripture* as our guide.

- Call attention to the subhead, "Another Crucial 'How To,'" on Handout 4. Suggest that when it comes to reading Scripture, another important "how to" is *prayer*. Invite the students to write this on the handout. Explain that prayer puts our reading of Scripture in the context of a *relationship* with our God. Our prayer reminds us that we are about to listen to the Word of a *person*, and the point is to know God, not simply to know things about God. Go on to point out that our ultimate purpose in reading Scripture is not to discover answers to questions or even to obtain theological information. It is to put on the mind of Christ so that we will be able to *be* the answers to the questions of our time and world.
- Work with the class to devise a *short* prayer they can pray every time they get ready to read the Bible. Have them write the prayer on the handout. If you wish,

For Review Answers (page 32)

1. Answers may vary a bit, but possible genres for the following passages include: 1 Samuel 17: 1–54, history; Leviticus 23:1–14, law; Acts 19:1–12, history; 1 Corinthians 15:1–8, creed; Luke 12:49, hyperbole.
2. Analogy of faith means that the Scriptures don't contradict themselves. The analogy of faith assures us that Scripture helps us interpret Scripture.
3. The literal sense of the biblical text is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by sound exegesis.
4. Students' responses will vary but should reflect an understanding of any of the literary forms found on pages 30–32 of the text.
5. A literal reading of the Bible takes into account what the author intended to convey, not simply what the words say. A literalist interpretation takes only the exact meaning of the words without considering any other factors.

make a large poster of the prayer to display in the classroom. Use the prayer regularly when you begin class or read Scripture together.

- Draw attention to the quotation at the bottom of the handout and read aloud. Stress to the students that if we don't aim to meet God in the Scripture, we won't. However, if we come expecting to meet God, to learn, and to grow, we won't come away frustrated. Point out that there is a time-tested approach to Scripture reading that helps us expect to hear God speaking to our life situation. It is called the *Lectio Divina* or "sacred reading."
- Have the students turn to the Prayer feature on pages 44–45 of their texts. Go through the steps of the process with the students just to familiarize them with the procedure. Then, choose a relevant Scripture passage and actually pray it with the group. Conclude by encouraging the students to try this method for ten minutes a day over the next couple weeks.
- Before moving on, call attention to the numbered blanks on the bottom of Handout 4. See if the students can figure out the two simple, but crucial things we must do in order to actually take part in the *Lectio Divina* or in any method of regular Scripture reading. Namely:
 1. Find a spot.
 2. Set a time.
- Have the students fill in the blanks. Explain that reading the Scripture means finding a *specific place* where we can be alone and concentrate. Likewise, it also means setting aside a *specific time of the day* for Scripture reading. If we don't, it's just too easy to skip it. Finally, tell the students that no matter what place or time they set to meet with God in Scripture, the most important thing is to *keep the appointment*.
- Direct attention to the feature, Explaining the Faith, on pages 33–34. Ask a student to read the three italicized questions aloud. Call on another student to describe what is meant by a "literalist" reading of the Scripture. (*Interpret the Scripture to mean that the Bible contains no errors whatsoever, whether scientific, historical or spiritual.*) Then have another student explain what is meant by a "literal" reading of the Scripture. (*Recognizing that the Bible might contain errors when it comes to historical or scientific data, but not when it comes to matters of faith or spiritual teaching.*) Make sure the students record these differences in their journals.

- *Parable*: a vivid story told to convey religious truth, usually with a surprise ending (see Matthew 13:33).
- *Pronouncement Story*: a passage whose purpose is to set up an important saying (see Mark 3:1–5).

For Review

1. Read each of the following passages. Identify its likely literary genre: 1 Samuel 17:1–54; Leviticus 23:1–14; Acts 19:1–12; 1 Corinthians 15:1–8; Luke 12:49.
2. What is meant by the "analogy of faith"?
3. What is the *literal sense* of the biblical text?
4. Define and give an example of five literary forms found in Sacred Scripture.
5. What is the difference between a "literal" and a "literalist" reading of the Bible?

For Reflection

Share an example from your experience (other than the Bible) where reading in context was crucial to your understanding of the material.

How to Understand the Bible

The starting point for understanding Sacred Scripture is what the author intended by the words he wrote, the *literal sense*. But the Bible also has a *spiritual sense* that depends on the *literal sense*. The *literal sense* concerns the meaning of the words of Scripture; the *spiritual sense* refers not to the words themselves but by the "realities and events" that can be signified by them. It is the *spiritual sense* that

looks to the deeper meaning of various scriptural passages as part of God's overall plan of Salvation. There are three spiritual senses of Scripture:

1. The *allegorical sense*. An allegory is a metaphor or "sustained comparison." In an allegorical work of literature, for example, the story line conveys more than one level of meaning at the same time. Taken in total, an allegorical reading of Scripture looks at the entire Bible, especially the Old Testament, in light of its fulfillment in Christ. Therefore, when we study the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, we see it prefiguring Christ's victory over sin. We can also understand the waters of the Red Sea as a symbol for Christian Baptism, a sign of our freedom from sin in Jesus Christ. Or, the Paschal Lamb sacrificed for the feast of Passover is a clear foreshadowing of the Lamb of God—Jesus Christ—who gave up his life to win our Salvation.
2. The *moral sense*. God's Word is intended to lead us to live a good life, to act justly on behalf of God and other people. Thus, the words of the prophets telling the Chosen People to obey God's Commandments also apply to us. When reporting the punishments that resulted from the sins of the Chosen People, St. Paul wrote, "These things happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning to us" (1 Cor 10:11).
3. The *anagogical sense*. Still another way to view God's Word is to look at earthly events and other realities in the context of leading us to Heaven. Our final goal is to get to Heaven, and the Bible shows us the way. (The word *anagogical* comes from the Greek word for "leading"). For example, we can see the Church as a symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem. The Church, which is the Body of Christ, leads us to our eternal destiny.

In summary, there are four senses of Scripture:

Lesson 3 Objectives

The students will:

- discover the three spiritual senses of interpreting the Scripture and how they help us discover its meaning.
- recall the difference between a "literal" and a "literalist" reading of the Scripture.
- realize that the Church is not afraid of historical or scientific studies when it comes to revealing religious truths.

Lesson 3 Overview

At first blush, this lesson may seem a bit teachy. It deals with some crucial areas of biblical interpretation and touches on the touchy topic of religion's relationship with the search for the historical Jesus as well as its relationship with scientific studies. Helping the students recognize that biblical interpretation is often a multi-layered process will go a long way in relieving the tension many feel between literal and literalist, liberals and conservatives, scientists and churchmen.

EXPLAINING THE FAITH

Are historical and scientific truths and Biblical truth at odds?

We must always remember that the Bible is not a science book or a history book. Its purpose is not to explain scientific facts from modern biology, chemistry, or astronomy, or historical facts that have to do with exact dates for events like the creation of the world. The Bible is a written record of Divine Revelation. God inspired its authors to reveal religious truths. As noted, the Bible contains many literary forms, including poetry, parables, prayers, and, of course, historical narratives. One of the main responsibilities of the Magisterium is to help identify the truths of the faith revealed in Sacred Scripture and explain how they relate to scientific and historical research. These truths reveal who we are in relation to God and the world he created. They tell us that we are material-spiritual beings made in God's image and likeness. And they reveal our destiny—eternal life of union with a loving, Triune God.

The Catholic Church welcomes the research of historians and scientists because "truth does not contradict truth." For example, consider the work of historians who have examined the events depicted in Sacred Scripture to see if there is any record of them elsewhere. Nothing is more important than the existence of Jesus himself. Was there really such a person? Or was he just the invention of the early Christians? Historians, including non-believers, have looked into this question. And, drawing on records from Roman and Jewish historians, and judging the New Testament to be historically reliable, they have proven the following:

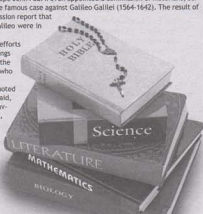
- Jesus of Nazareth did indeed exist.
- The Romans under the prefect Pontius Pilate crucified him.
- He established a Church that persists to this very day.

Believers have nothing to fear from open-minded historical research. This is why popes have opened up the Vatican archives to researchers. Pope John Paul II even appointed a commission of historians, scientists, and theologians to reexamine the famous case against Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). The result of the open search for truth was the commission report that said that the judges who condemned Galileo were in error.

Similarly, the Church appreciates the efforts of scientists who help explain the workings of the universe. Their research reveals the marvelous genius of our Creator God, who brought everything into existence.

Cardinal Bérnini (1538-1607), quoted often by Galileo, put it well when he said, "The Bible teaches us how to go to Heaven, not how the heavens go." Simply put, scientific research and Christian faith do not exclude each other. Consider the theory of evolution and the origins of human life. Nothing in this theory denies or is opposed to the existence of a loving, Divine Creator as depicted in Genesis, who brought everything into existence out of nothingness. Good science does not, and cannot, say that humans resulted from chance in a random universe. Good science cannot exclude the existence of God, who is the first cause of creation.

continued on next page



Chapter 2: Introduction to Sacred Scripture—Lesson 3

Bell Ringers

- Call on different students to offer their responses to the five For Review questions on page 32. (See page 49 for answers.) Take time to answer any questions or concerns the students may have.

Teaching Approaches

How to Understand the Bible (pages 32-35)

- Ask volunteers to name the senses of Scripture (list on the board). Go through each one, highlighting key ideas.
- Begin by explaining to the students that the literal sense refers to the meaning of the words themselves. Note, however, that words can mean more than one thing. Tell the students that St. Thomas Aquinas says that all the other senses rest on this sense.
- Go on to explain the spiritual senses. Start by saying that all three of these senses refer to the *significance* or *meaning* of the persons, places, events, or things the words of Scripture denote.
- Then point out that the first of these senses, the allegorical sense, relates persons, events, and institutions of earlier covenants to those of later covenants, and especially to the New Covenant.
- Before moving on, take a moment to explain that this sense does *not* say that the Old Testament is merely a source of proof texts "proving" that Jesus is Lord. Rather, the allegorical sense speaks to the early Christian awareness that the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) is, in fact, a *testament*—an inspired witness—to the Lordship of the Jesus who had lived among them. In other words, as St. Paul says, prophecies regarding the Messiah were not so much *revealed* by the Old Testament as they were *hidden* there and seen only *after* Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and sending of the Holy Spirit. Have the students look up and read Ephesians 3:5 ("The mystery of Christ . . . was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.").
- Move on to the moral sense. Make sure the students recognize that this sense helps us know how to act justly.

Homework

1. Assign the bookmark described in the feature, "Share God's Word: Make a Bookmark for Christ," on page 34. Tell students who might not have access to a computer that they can work with a student who does, or they can simply use other art materials to create their bookmark.
2. Have the students journal their thoughts and response to the For Reflection feature on page 35.
3. Read "Biblical Translations" (pages 35-38) in preparation for the next lesson. Ask students who may have translations of the Bible at home that differ from the one they're using in class to bring them to their next session.
4. Tell the students to complete the assignment in the feature, "Defender of the Faith: St. Jerome (342-420)," on page 37, and be ready to share findings with the class.
5. Remind the students to continue working on their chosen Ongoing Assignments (pages 43-44).

- Finally, tell the students that the anagogical sense points us to our ultimate destiny, happiness forever with God.
- Distribute copies of Handout 5, "Making SENSE of Scripture." Read aloud the Latin phrase, then repeat, having the students say each line after you. Tell the class that this ancient couplet sums up the teaching of the four biblical senses. Write the following translation on the board, and have the students copy it on the handout:

**The literal teaches what happened;
the allegorical what to believe;
the moral, what to do;
the anagogical, what to look for.**

- Call attention to the outline on the handout. Tell the students it details how the mention of Jerusalem in a biblical passage may—depending on its context—be interpreted according to the four senses. Briefly go through the outline with the students. Sum up by repeating that any of these interpretations may be correct depending on the biblical context. (*Note:* If you wish, you can offer the students another example by drawing on the material in the Background Information section on page 56.)
- Finally, call attention to the mnemonic device across the bottom of the handout. Ask the students how they think these words relate to the senses of Scripture. If necessary, point out that they simply are shortcuts to help us remember the senses:
 - The literal sense tells us the *facts*.
 - The allegorical sense calls us to *faith*.
 - The moral sense demands we act with *charity*.
 - The anagogical sense offers us *hope*.
- Have the students recall the difference between a "literal" and a "literalist" reading of the Scripture.
 - A "literal" reading of the Scripture recognizes that the Bible might contain errors when it comes to historical or scientific data, but not when it comes to matters of faith or spiritual teaching.
 - A "literalist" reading of the Scripture interprets the Scripture to mean that the Bible contains no errors whatsoever, whether scientific, historical, or spiritual.
- Go on to read aloud the question in the feature, Explaining the Faith, on page 33 ("Are historical and scientific truths and biblical truth at odds?"). Then ask, "Which interpretation (literal or literalist) might clash with science or history when it comes to

- The literal sense teaches history, for example, what the words say in a historical context.
- The allegorical sense teaches what you should believe, that is, what the words mean in the larger context of Salvation History.
- The moral sense teaches what you should do regarding how to live your life.
- The anagogical sense teaches where you are going, building up the virtue of hope while leading us to Heaven.

For Review

- What are the three spiritual senses of Scripture? Give an example of each.
- For the passages given below, briefly summarize the *literal* sense of the passage by answering the questions that follow:
 - Compare Genesis 1:1-2 and Matthew 3:16. What is the connection?
 - Read 1 Corinthians 10: 1-14. List three behaviors Christians should avoid by learning from the bad example of the Chosen People in the desert.
 - Read Matthew 7:1-5. Interpret both literally and in an anagogical sense.
- Why does the Church not fear scientific or historical studies?

EXPLAINING THE FAITH *continued*

Again, there is no conflict between the religious truths that Scripture reveals and the truths that science or history discover and report. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (199) says it well:

Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth (Dei Filius 4; DS 3017).

Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God. The humble and persevering investigator of the secrets of nature is being led, as it were, by the hand of God in spite of himself, for it is God, the conservator of all things, who made them what they are (DS 3611).



Share God's Word: Make a Bookmark for Christ

Matthew's Gospel ends with Jesus commanding his disciples to share the Gospel with all people (Mt 28:18-20). Here is an activity to help you to take up that charge:

- Locate your favorite Scripture passage, one you wish to share with others. For ideas for good verses, search the Internet under the topic "famous Bible quotes."
- Then create your own bookmarks. Insert appropriate clip art and the verse(s) you selected.
- Print on card-stock paper, perhaps of different colors. Cut out the bookmarks.
- Distribute to parishioners after the weekend Mass or to grade school students at the local parish school, or pass them out with classmates at a public place like the local mall.



For Review Answers (pages 34-35)

- Allegorical, Moral and Anagogical; answers for each will vary.
- Genesis 1:1-2 and Matthew 3:16; answers may vary but should include a connection to water. 1 Corinthians 1:1-14; answers may vary but should include idolatry, sexual immorality, complaining, and testing God. Matthew 7:1-5; literal meaning is take something out of your eye; Anagogical meaning is Christ leads us through spiritual blindness to spiritual sight.
- History and science both reveal the truth about our Creator God.



For Enrichment

The students might be interested in reading what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has to say about the senses of Scripture. Encourage them to read paragraphs 115-119.

For Reflection

- Name an allegory with a moral message outside of the Bible that has had an influence on your life. Tell why this is so.
- In the past, what approach have you taken to reading the Bible?

Biblical Translations

Most of the Old Testament was composed in Hebrew. The Hebrew language has origins as an ancient Canaanite language adopted by the Israelites when they entered the Promised Land. Hebrew was the living language of the Israelites until the end of the Babylonian Exile. Aramaic, the common language spoken in Babylon and the whole Middle East, then became the spoken language of the Jewish people. Small sections of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic. Jesus spoke Aramaic. By the first century AD, Hebrew disappeared as the ordinary spoken language, but it remained the sacred and literary language. Seven Old Testament books were also written in Greek.

The entire New Testament was written in Greek. *Koine*, or “common” Greek had become the spoken language in the Roman Empire of the first century AD. Later, the common spoken language of the Roman Empire changed from Greek to Latin. In



390, St. Jerome completed the Latin translation of the Old and New Testaments. This translation, known as the Vulgate, became the Church's official translation of the Bible from the original languages.

Today, only scholars and other linguists are able to read and understand the Bible in its original languages.

Vulgate
St. Jerome's fifth-century Latin translation of the Bible into the common language of the people of his day.

reading Scripture?” Then pass out copies of Handout 6, “History, Science, and the Bible.” Call on different students to read aloud the two “history” quotations. Point out that neither historian was Christian—actually, both were anti-Christian—yet their writing attests to the historical reality of Jesus.

- Ask different students to read aloud the “science” quotations. Note how each person—scientist and churchman alike—agrees that science and religion are not mutually exclusive.
- Have the students turn to For Review on page 34. Discuss the second and third questions as a class. Then divide the class into three small groups. Assign each group to one of the “senses” named in the first question. Give the groups time to work together. Afterward, have each group present its findings to the class.

Chapter 2: Introduction to Sacred Scripture—Lesson 4

Bell Ringers

- **Reteach.** Write the following headings on the board: “**Literal**” and “**Literalist**.” Have two students come to the board and beneath each heading write what it means with regard to reading/interpreting Scripture.
- Then ask the students to name the two major senses of Scripture (*literal and spiritual*) and then the three types of spiritual (*allegorical, moral, analogical*).
- Finally, write the following on the board: **facts, faith, hope, charity.** Ask what these words tell us about the senses of Scripture. (*The literal sense tells us the facts; the allegorical sense calls us to faith; the analogical sense offers us hope; the moral sense demands we act with charity.*)

Teaching Approaches

Biblical Translations (pages 35-36)

- Call attention to the poster of the class prayer the students wrote and created in this chapter's second lesson. Lead the class in prayer.

Lesson 4 Objectives

The students will:

- discover in what languages the Scriptures were written.
- compare Bible translations.
- read and listen to the language of Jesus (Aramaic).
- understand how the Scripture is an integral part of the Church's communal prayer.
- appreciate and pray the Liturgy of the Hours.
- report on the life and work of St. Jerome.
- try their hand at “translation.”

Lesson 4 Overview

Each generation has new questions about the Bible and its meaning. Thus, the process of interpreting the Scripture is ongoing and one in which all Catholics can take part. The Church's Pontifical Biblical Commission says that Bible study “. . . is never finished; each age must in its own way newly seek to understand the sacred books.” In this lesson, help your students appreciate how the work of biblical translation has continually striven to make God's Word more accessible, available, and understandable to all who seek to believe.

- Sum up the key points of this text section. Tell the students that except for the **Books of Tobit, Judith, Baruch, Sirach, Wisdom, and First and Second Maccabees** (write on the board), which were written in Greek, the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, and only later translated into Greek. Most copies of the Greek Old Testament intact today were made by Christians in the first three centuries AD.
- Go on to explain that some of the Old Testament was, however, written in Aramaic, a related Semitic dialect, which, after the Babylonian Exile (ca. 586 – 538 BC) gradually replaced Hebrew as the spoken language of most Jews. The sections of the Old Testament written in Aramaic are (write on the board): **Ezra 4:8-6:18, 7:12-26; Jeremiah 10:11; and Daniel 2:4-7:28.**
- Briefly explain that sometime prior to 200 BC, the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek. This translation is called the Septuagint, from *septuaginta*, the Latin word for seventy. The name derives from a tradition that the translation was made by seventy different scholars in Alexandria. Only a few fragments of this version survived intact from the period before Christ. The original versions of the Septuagint include fragments of Deuteronomy as well as other fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947.
- Before concluding, take a moment to explain that because the Dead Sea Scrolls contained Hebrew writings that were far more ancient than other surviving manuscripts, they made a huge impact on biblical studies. Especially as they helped confirm the authenticity of what was written in previous translations of the Scripture.
- Finally, tell the students that the entire New Testament was written in Greek.
- Go on to distribute the copies of the different Protestant and Catholic Bible translations you were able to collect. (Note: See the sections "Protestant Translations of the Bible" and "Catholic Translations of the Bible" on page 36, as well as the feature, For Reflection, on page 38.) (Note: Most of the Bibles mentioned in the text may be found online, for example at www.bibles.net.) Ask the students to whom you give a copy—or who have Web access in class—to come to the board and write out Psalm 23:1-3. Afterward, point out differences and similarities. Ask the students if they prefer one translation over the other. Vote on a favorite.
- Call attention to the different ways of writing the name of Jesus as pictured in the text (page 38). Note that the name means "God saves." Remind the

Dead Sea Scrolls
Discovered in 1947 in caves near the Dead Sea, these manuscripts belonged to the Jewish Essene sect, which lived in a monastery at Qumran. The scrolls contain Essene religious documents, commentaries on certain Hebrew Scriptures, and ancient Old Testament manuscripts. They have proved very valuable to scholars in studying the Old Testament and for learning about some Jewish practices at the time of Jesus.

Church Father
A traditional title given to theologians of the first eight centuries whose teachings made a lasting mark on the Church.

Your Bible is an English translation. If you include translations of individual books of the Bible, there have been almost five hundred new translations or revisions of older English versions of the Bible. None of the translators worked from the original biblical books because none of these exist. What translators use are meticulous copies of copies of the Bible. Some important biblical manuscripts have been discovered in the past two hundred years. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls (discovered in Israel in the late 1940s) produced some Old Testament books that predate the birth of Christ. This was an important discovery because until the Dead Sea Scrolls were unearthed there were few Old Testament manuscripts preserved that were composed from earlier than 950 AD. In contrast, there are manuscript copies of virtually the entire New Testament books that date before 200 AD.

Some of the more important English translations of the Bible under both Protestant sponsorship and Catholic sponsorship are listed below.

Protestant Translations of the Bible

For centuries Protestants have been using the popular King James Version (1611). Other Protestant translations include the following, all of which are available in editions approved for Catholic reading:

- New Revised Standard Version** (1989). Using a good sense of English and sound modern

scholarship, this is the most important modern revision of the King James Bible.

- Revised English Bible** (1992). The British equivalent of the New Revised Standard Version.
- New International Version** (1973-1978). A conservative translation by scholars from thirty-four different denominations. Many excellent study versions of this Bible are available.

Catholic Translations of the Bible

Until the twentieth century, Catholics relied heavily on the *Dozy-Rheims Version* (1582-1609) and its revision done by Bishop Challoner (1749-1763). The *Dozy-Rheims* Bible was a translation of the Latin Vulgate. In 1943, Pope Pius XII encouraged the translation of the Bible from the original languages. Two very popular and important English translations by Catholic scholars include:

- New American Bible** (1952-1970; 1987). The Church uses this translation for the readings at liturgies in the United States. It is solid, faithful to the original text, readable, and scholarly. It is the translation cited in this text.
- New Jerusalem Bible** (1985). The *New Jerusalem Bible* borrowed heavily from the French Bible, *La Sainte Bible*, which in turn is an important and scholarly translation from the original languages. It contains many helpful introductions and notes to guide the reader.

Homework

- Have the students journal their responses to For Review on page 38.
- Tell the students to read "Modern Approaches for Studying Sacred Scripture" (pages 39-41) in preparation for the next lesson.
- Point out For Reflection on page 38. Tell the students that after reading the above assignment, they should reflect on this question before the next session and be ready to share their reflection with the group.
- Remind the students to continue working on their chosen Ongoing Assignments (pages 43-44).

For Review Answers (page 38)

- Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
- New American Bible, New Jerusalem Bible
- St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin.

DEFENDER OF FAITH: ST. JEROME (342–420)

St. Jerome, the translator of the Bible from its original languages into Latin, is also an important Church Father.

Jerome was born in northeast Italy. He went to Rome as a young man to study Latin and Greek literature and had an early devotion to some non-Christian scholars. This education in the classics inspired him to lifelong study. At the age of eighteen, Jerome was baptized. After further travels and study, he entered a strict monastic community near his home at Aquileia. There he mastered the difficult language of Hebrew. Later, in Antioch, Jerome had a vision that criticized him for his devotion to secular learning, for being "a follower of Cicero and not of Christ."

Ordained a priest in Antioch, Jerome then traveled to 380 to Constantinople and studied under the Church Father Gregory of Nazianzus. He eventually made it back to Rome to serve as Pope Damasus' secretary. Jerome had an explosive temper, often using his sharp pen to write fierce letters to his opponents. However, the Pope saw beneath

Jerome's sometimes-irascible personality. He discovered in him a man of unique holiness, learning, and integrity. As a result, the Pope commissioned him to translate the Bible into Latin, a task that eventually took Jerome to Bethlehem. There he founded a monastery for men and several convents for the women who studied Scripture under him.

Laboring relentlessly in a cave, Jerome, with the help of his disciples, completed his translation and commentary of the Bible into Latin, a task that took twenty-three years. Known as the Latin Vulgate translation (382–405), it became the authorized Bible used in the Catholic Church from that time on.

In his later years, Jerome also wrote against various heresies. He corresponded regularly with St. Augustine. As an old man worn down with a number of infirmities, he died peacefully. He is recognized as one of the Church's greatest minds and defenders of the faith. St. Augustine said of him, "What Jerome is ignorant of, no man has ever known."



Read more about the life of St. Jerome. See, for example, www.americanatholic.org/Messenger/Sep1997/feature2.asp. Report on something you learned about Jerome's life or write a commentary on one of his writings.

Faithful Disciple

students that Jesus spoke Aramaic. Show them an example of Jesus speaking Aramaic by having them open their Bibles to Mark 5:41. Call on one of the students to read the passage aloud. ("He [Jesus] took the child by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha kum,' which means, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise!'" In addition, if you have classroom access to the Internet, you can have the students listen to the familiar Lord's Prayer (Our Father) as spoken in Aramaic by logging on to www.v-a.com/bible/prayer.html. Alternatively, you could record the prayer from the Internet and play the recording for the students.

- Call on volunteers to summarize the material in the text section Explaining the Faith (page 38). Afterward, write the title "**Liturgy of the Hours**" on the board. If you were able to secure a copy of a Breviary, pass it around for the students to view. Tell the students that Vatican II's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* encouraged renewing the tradition of all the faithful being included in the Church's daily prayer of praise. The *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, 37, states: [Morning and evening prayer] are the hinges of daily public worship and are to be celebrated as such. In other words, praying the Liturgy of the Hours is a practice to be shared by every Christian.
- Distribute copies of Handout 7, "The Liturgy of the Hours." If you were able to arrange for a priest to visit the class and speak about praying the Liturgy of the Hours, have him make his presentation now, leading the students through an actual prayer experience. If a priest was unable to visit, simply go through the outline of the prayer on the handout. Have the students use their Bibles to pray one or both of the canticles (listed and referenced on the handout) antiphonally. Afterward, ask:
 - Do people in your parish gather daily for morning and/or evening prayer?
 - If not daily, do they gather during specific liturgical season, e.g., Advent or Lent?
 - When do members of your parish gather for forms of communal prayer other than the Eucharist?
 - Have you ever taken part in the Liturgy of the Hours? Where? When?
- Call attention to the feature, "Defender of Faith: St. Jerome (342–420)," on page 37. Briefly summarize the information in the text, highlighting Jerome's translation of the Bible into Latin. Note the name of the translation, *vulgate* (see page 35). Ask the students if the name sounds like or reminds them of another

Extending the Lesson

"Foreign" Language Bibles

If any students speak another language and have a Bible in that language, ask them to share it in class. Have them read Psalm 23 to their classmates and then tell whether it "translates" differently into English.

More on St. Jerome

Have the students read "St. Jerome's Belief in the Inerrancy of Scripture" on page 43 of their text. If you wish, point out that the "manikins" mentioned in the text were a popular and heretical religious sect called the Manicheans, who held that there were two "first principles," one good, the other bad; that each person had a good and a bad soul. They forbade marriage, and they denied human liberty, Original Sin, the authority of the Old Testament, and the necessity of either Baptism or faith. After the reading, discuss St. Jerome's statement on page 43 ("Ignorance of Scripture means ignorance of Christ").

English word (*vulgar*). Tell the students both words come from the same root and mean "common." Just as the Old Testament had passed from Hebrew to the more "common" (*Koine*) Greek, Jerome's translation placed both Old and New Testament into the more "common" language of his day, Latin.

- Allow time for the students to present their reports on St. Jerome.
- After the reports, distribute copies of Handout 8, "tugh ('Hurry Up') and Translate." Read through the directions with the students. Allow time for them to work independently or as partners to complete their translation. Check answers:

joH'a' chut ghaH perfect, restoring the qa'.

joH'a' testimony ghaH sure, making val the nap.

God's law is perfect, restoring the soul.

God's testimony is sure, making wise the simple.

- Invite the students to hazard a guess from which book of the Bible the quotation might have come (*Psalms 19:8*). Have the students look up the passage in their Bibles.

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Jesus Christ: God's Revelation to the World

יהושע
יהושע
ישוע

Figure 1: Three ways of writing Jesus' name in biblical Hebrew

Ἰησοῦς Χριστός

Figure 2: "Jesus Christ" in Greek

For Review

1. In what languages was the Bible written?
2. Name two important English translations of the Bible.
3. Identify St. Jerome.

For Reflection

Note how the following versions of the Bible translate Psalm 23. Then explain which translation you prefer and why.

- New American Bible: www.usccb.org/nab/bible
- New Revised Standard Version: www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm
- Douay-Rheims: www.intratext.com/UK/ENG0011.htm
- King James Version: www.bartleby.com/108

EXPLAINING THE FAITH

How important is the Bible for Catholics?

Sacred Scripture is an integral part of the Catholic Church. The Bible has a central role to play in Catholic prayer life. For example, Scripture readings are integral to every Mass and all the other sacraments. Scripture is also at the heart of the Liturgy of the Hours, or Divine Office, which is the public prayer of the Church that prays God and sanctifies the day. The Psalms are featured in a special way in the Liturgy of the Hours, which consists of Morning and Evening Prayer, Daytime Prayer, and Night Prayer. As official representatives of the Church, priests pray the Divine Office each day, but all Catholics are encouraged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours as a way to join in the daily prayer of the Church.

Especially since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Church encourages us to use the Bible in personal prayer. Today, many parishes foster Scripture study and prayer groups as a way to grow in holiness. St. Jerome knew the importance of the Bible when he said, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." The Church has taken this saying much to heart, teaching in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

"The Church 'forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful . . . to learn 'the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ,' by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures." (CCC, 133)

For Enrichment

Show one of the following videos on the Dead Sea Scrolls:

- *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DVD)*. Discusses the Dead Sea Scrolls, a combination of the oldest written version of the Bible and the rules of the Essene community. Talks about the discovery of the scrolls and about their restoration, and examines evidence that Qumran was the site of the Essene community. (QUESTAR – 1 hour)
- *Enigma of the Dead Sea Scrolls Video (DVD and VHS)*. Explains the discovery and significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and how they contribute to our deeper understanding of the Scriptures. (A&E Production – 1 hour)

Background Information

St. Thomas Aquinas (in *Ad Galatas*) offered the following example, applying all four senses to a specific Scripture passage: "Let there be light" (Gn 1:3). The literal sense pertains to the physical reality called "light." If "Let there be light" is understood as "Allow Christ to be born in the Church," it relates to the allegorical sense. If it is understood as "Let us be illumined in our intellects and inflamed in our affections," it pertains to the moral sense. Finally, if the passage is read "Let us be introduced into glory through Christ," it refers to the anagogical sense.

Modern Approaches for Studying Sacred Scripture

Sacred Scripture contains God's Revelation. When we read it prayerfully, we can grow closer to God and to each other. But how should you read it? Are you to take everything you read as the absolute, literal truth? How are you to understand what you read?

As we have seen, not everyone agrees on answers to these questions. Fundamentalists, for example, take a literalist approach, believing in the exact meaning of the words without taking into consideration other factors. Others treat the Bible as good albeit fictional literature that is meant to inspire us to live good lives.

In contrast to these positions, the Catholic Church teaches us to read Sacred Scripture prayerfully and to interpret it critically. The Bible is the Inspired Word of God. It requires careful reading so that we can understand the literary forms, symbolism, and cultural realities that influenced it. The Magisterium, with the help of biblical scholars, authentically interprets the Word of God. The scholars use techniques of biblical criticism to study the Bible. Don't think of the term *criticism* in a negative way. Rather, it means looking carefully at the biblical texts in their historical and literary contexts. Historical, source, form, and redaction criticism involve scholarly detective work. Their purpose is

simply to help us interpret what God wanted to communicate through the original Bible writers.

Historical Criticism

Historical criticism tries to determine the historical context of the biblical text. Historical criticism uses dating techniques, archaeology, and historical research to accomplish this task.

Consider an example of how archaeology assists historical criticism. Archaeology is the branch of science that studies prehistoric or historic people and their cultures. It does so by looking at artifacts, monuments, inscriptions, and the like. Biblical archaeology was popularized with the now-classic film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. In that movie, the hero, Indiana Jones, uncovers the Ark of the Covenant. The events in the film are fictional, but they raise questions like these: Was there an Ark of the Covenant? And if so, what did it look like? And

Liturgy of the Hours
The prayer of the Church; It is also known as the Divine Office. The Liturgy of the Hours utilizes the Scriptures, particularly the Psalms, for specific times of the day from early morning to later evening.



Chapter 2: Introduction to Sacred Scripture—Lesson 5

Bell Ringers

- Discuss critics and criticism. Ask students to name film critics, theater critics, food critics, music critics, etc., they know about. Discuss the critic's role and purpose. Ask if the opinions/reviews of such critics influence their behavior. For example, ask: "If a film critic gave a movie a thumbs up, might that encourage you to go?" or "Would a negative review of a restaurant make you think twice about eating there?"
- Go on to discuss how people other than "professional" critics play critical roles in our lives. Ask what sort of critical role a sports coach or a music coach might play. Do our parents ever play a critical role? Are critics and criticism necessarily negative? (*Accept all reasonable replies.*)

Teaching Approaches

Modern Approaches for Studying Sacred Scripture (pages 39-41)

- Distribute copies of Handout 9, "When It Comes to the Bible, Everyone's A Critic! or The CSIs of the Bible." Drawing on material in the student text and the outline on the handout, explain historical, source, form, and redaction criticism. Begin by reminding the students that "criticism" here is not used in a negative sense. Rather, we're dealing with critical methods—like those by CSIs (crime scene investigators)—to better understand the Bible.
- *Historical Criticism.* Explain to the students that we may say that any biblical writing actually has a history of its own. That story could include not only the author or authors but also when and where it was written, the purpose for which it was written, how it got written, and the audience(s) for whom it was written. Point out on the handout how archaeology, historical research, and dating methodologies (e.g., carbon-14 dating) are among the techniques used by historical criticism in determining the history of a text.
- Draw attention to the phrase "Answers the Question." Have the students suggest the overall question they feel historical criticism answers. Agree on the question. Then, have the students write it on the line provided on the handout (e.g., "What the heck was going on?").

Lesson 5 Objectives

The students will:

- discuss the influence and meaning of criticism in our lives.
- discover the roles of historical, source, form, and redaction criticism in helping us understand the Bible.

Lesson 5 Overview

Recognizing that many factors influenced the creation of the Scripture helps us appreciate its overall coherence and understand its meaning for us today. This lesson introduces the students to some crucial forms of "biblical criticism," which, in turn, enable them to make better sense of the Scripture.

- **Source Criticism.** Introduce this topic by saying: "After hearing or reading a story or hearing a comment, have you ever heard someone remark on it and say, 'Well, consider the source'?" Ask the students what such an observation—often made snidely—means. Then ask them to offer examples of when it is a good idea to consider the source. For example: "Is that dish in the fridge Mom's taco meat or Bowzer's Alpo?" or "Who was it that started the rumor about a classmate?" or "Who really is on the other end of that chat line?"
- Go on to explain that when it comes to finding meaning in a book or passage of the Bible, it's always a good idea to "consider the *source*." Tell the students that source criticism begins with the premise that biblical writings are a combination of documents. Source criticism tries to decipher as much as possible about these original sources and about those who wrote them, asking, "What did this Scripture passage look like before it ended up in its current form? Were there changes? If so, why?"
- As with historical criticism above, have the students suggest the overall question they feel source criticism answers. Agree on the question. Then, have the students write it on the line provided on the handout (e.g., "Where did that come from?" and "Is it real or not?").
- **Form Criticism.** Ask the students to imagine that they received the following e-mails: a letter from a best friend; a coupon for money off at a music store; an ad for deodorant; an invitation to a party. Ask: "Would you treat them all the same?" Point out that we would recognize the differences in their literary forms, and so interpret them and react to them accordingly.
- Explain that form criticism focuses on what each section of the text does: Does it address people or God? Is it praise, complaint, narrative, parable, or request? Are there typical word groups or structure patterns that recur? Point out that one of the tools of form criticism is comparing biblical to contemporary non-biblical literary forms and genres.

where is it today? Historical criticism helps to answer these types of questions.

For example, historical research reveals that the Ark of the Covenant was a wooden chest, built by the Chosen People after Moses received the Ten Commandments. Exodus 25:10-22 describes its design. Exodus 37:1-9 describes its construction. Its biblical measurements were in cubits (a cubit was the average length of a forearm). It would have measured approximately four feet by two-and-a-half feet. The original tablets of the Ten Commandments—and nothing else—were placed in the Ark. The Ark traveled with the Israelites in the desert. King David brought it to Jerusalem around 1000 BC. Around 930 BC, it was in the Holy of Holies in the Temple built by King Solomon. The High Priest visited it once a year, on the sacred feast of Yom Kippur.

The last time the Ark is mentioned in the Old Testament is when the Babylonians demolished the Jerusalem Temple in 586 BC. When the Temple was rebuilt around seventy years later, there was no mention of the Ark. The scholarly consensus is that the Babylonians destroyed the Ark, melting it down for its gold. There are other theories as to what happened to it, but all these theories are speculative.

Source Criticism

Source criticism is like literary detective work that helps discover where the biblical authors got their material. For example, scholars believe that the history in the Book of Kings came from court records that royal scribes wrote down. Source criticism has also noted that the author of Luke's Gospel used three main sources when he wrote his Gospel. These sources were the Gospel of Mark, a collection of writings also used for Matthew's Gospel, and a list of materials that only Luke had.

Form Criticism

Form criticism involves studying small units of biblical text to attempt to determine how each book

took shape in the period of oral tradition before the actual writing of the biblical books. Second, form criticism identifies the literary genre or form. Form criticism is important for proper interpretation because each type of literature has its own way of presenting the truth.

Consider the parable of the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25-37). Form critics tell us that this was a story that Jesus told. Because the literary form is parable, we know that Jesus was not speaking of an actual, historical person. Rather, Jesus used a story to make the point to be compassionate and loving to all people, including enemies. Jesus' lesson was so important that the early Christian preachers repeated his parable in the early years of the Christian Tradition. Eventually, Luke drew from this Tradition and included it in his version of the Good News.



Redaction Criticism

Think of a redactor as an editor. Redaction criticism zeros in on how the various editors put together their sources and arranged them the way they did. Redaction criticism tries to determine what theological insight a given biblical author had that influenced him in his organization of the material.

Homework

1. Remind the students to be ready to hand in their chosen Ongoing Assignments (pages 43-44) at their next session.
2. Have the students read through the Chapter Quick View section on pages 42-45. If they have any questions, tell them to write them out and bring them to the next session.
3. Call attention to For Review questions and For Reflection on page 41. Have the students journal their thoughts and be ready to share at their next session.

For Review Answers (page 41)

1. Historical: tries to determine the historical context of biblical text. Source: the study of where the authors of the Bible likely got their material. Form: studies how biblical books took shape and identifies the literary genre of the final book. Redaction: studies how and why a given book in the Bible took its final shape.
2. The Ark of the Covenant was a chest that was built by the Chosen People to house the Ten Commandments. The Babylonians likely destroyed the Ark of the Covenant by melting it down for the gold it contained.
3. To be compassionate and loving to all people, including your enemies.

For example, consider the genealogy of Jesus. When the Evangelist Luke recorded Jesus' family tree, he traced it to Adam. Adam is the common ancestor of all people. This helps us to know that Luke's Gospel was written for Gentile Christians. Gentiles were non-Jews. Luke wanted to emphasize that Jesus is the Savior for all people.

The author of Matthew's Gospel, on the other hand, shows how Jesus descended from Abraham, the father of Judaism. Writing for a predominantly Jewish-Christian community, Matthew wanted to show that Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecies made to the Chosen People, starting with the father of the faith, Abraham.

There are other types of biblical criticism, like sociological studies, but the four discussed here are among the most important. Chapter 3 takes a closer look at how the Bible came into existence. We will also study the official list of sacred books (the canon of the Bible) and discuss some of the tools you can use to read God's Word with more appreciation.

For Review

1. List three types of biblical criticism. Explain what each tries to do.
2. Identify the Ark of the Covenant. What is most likely to have happened to it?
3. What is the point of the parable of the Good Samaritan?

For Reflection

What is one book, story, person, or event of the Bible that you would like to investigate to find out more details about it? Which form of biblical criticism would help you most in your search?

- Have the students do their own little bit of form criticism. Direct them to choose three Psalms and describe their "form." Are they praise poems, thanksgivings, laments, demands? Tell the students that they do not have to know the technical term for the form, just simply describe it in their own words. Afterward, share findings.
- Finally, have the students suggest the overall question they feel form criticism answers. Agree on the question. Then, have the students write it on the line provided on the handout (e.g., "What's the literary genre and what prior sources seem to have influenced the text?").
- **Redaction Criticism.** Tell the class that this type of biblical criticism seeks to understand both the motivation and historical background in which the text was edited, and what motivated the redactor to redact in the first place. Redaction criticism analyzes instances where the editor/author may have redacted an earlier text or tradition, assesses the overall significance of such changes, and interprets them in the light of the editor's literary and theological purpose.
- Stress that biblical redactors, *not* editors, change the words of inspiration—that is, change God's self-revelation. (Note: The charge the Manicheans leveled at St. Jerome—see Extending the Lesson in the previous lesson, page 55 of this text.) Rather, the purpose of redactions is to clarify what the redactor saw as the underlying theological message. In other words, the editor saw himself as making plain what he may have considered to be unclear.

Background Information

Carbon-14 Dating

Carbon-14 dating is a way scientists use to determine the age of certain archaeological artifacts of a biological origin up to about 50,000 years old. It is used in dating things such as bone, cloth, wood, and plant fibers (from which paper was made), and animal by-products (e.g., vellum—sheep gut—used for scrolls) that were created in the relatively recent past by human activities. All living things take in carbon—carbon-12 and carbon-14. As soon as a living organism dies, it stops taking in new carbon. The ratio of carbon-12 to carbon-14 at the moment of death is the same as every other living thing, but the carbon-14 decays and is not replaced. The carbon-14 decays with a half-life of 5,700 years, while the amount of carbon-12 remains constant in the sample. By looking at the ratio of carbon-12 to carbon-14 in the sample and comparing it to the ratio in a living organism, it is possible to determine fairly precisely the age of a formerly living thing.

The Father of Biblical Archaeology

When it comes to biblical archaeology, three names stand out—George Ernest Wright, John Bright, and William Foxwell Albright. Probably the most prestigious among these three archaeological giants is William Foxwell Albright. A well-known axiom says it best: "Wright may be bright, and bright may be right, but neither is Albright." William Foxwell Albright (1891–1971) was clearly the leading biblical archaeologist of his time, heading numerous expeditions in Palestine, southern Arabia, and adjacent regions. An expert in reconstructing past civilizations from their artifacts, he gained a wide reputation for his identification of "lost" biblical towns and his use of pottery to date archaeological finds. His more than 800 publications include *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1940) and *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (1961). He is best known, perhaps, for authenticating and dating the Dead Sea Scrolls.

- Point out that redaction criticism relies on examining the collecting and the editing of a particular section or book of the Bible. Have the students check out an example of biblical redaction by opening their Bibles to Mark 16. Tell the students that the oldest manuscripts of this Gospel do not contain Mark 16:9–20, the so-called “longer ending.” Explain that these verses—long considered as inspired—were added by a later editor (not the author of Mark) to harmonize the Gospel’s ending with the endings of Matthew and Luke, which were written *after* Mark. We know this because the vocabulary and style of writing are different from Mark’s. In this case, the redactor wanted to make sure that Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances and his commission to his disciples go into the world and proclaim the Gospel were included in Mark. The redactor saw their absence as a possible source of confusion, so he clarified by adding them.
- As above, direct the students to suggest the overall question they feel redaction criticism answers. Agree on the question. Then, have the students write it on the line provided on the handout (e.g., “What were they thinking?”).

Chapter 2: Introduction to Sacred Scripture—Review

Bell Ringers

- Have the students turn in their Ongoing Assignments.
- Review the last lesson by inviting the students to recall the types of biblical criticism outlined on Handout 9 and by sharing their journal thoughts on the For Reflection feature (page 41).

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Main Ideas

- Sacred Scripture is the written record of God's Revelation (pp. 27–28).
- The Holy Spirit guided human authors to write the truths of Salvation (pp. 27–28).
- The Bible is *inerrant* (pp. 27–28).
- Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in light of the Holy Spirit (pp. 28–29).
- There are three ways for interpreting the Sacred Scripture in accordance with the Holy Spirit. They involve (1) noting the content and unity of the whole Scripture; (2) reading the Scripture within the context of the living Tradition of the Church; (3) paying attention to the analogy of faith (pp. 28–29).
- Identifying the literary genres of Scripture helps in interpreting God's Word (p. 30).
- There are several literary genres in the Bible, including history, prophecy, letters, and many others (pp. 30–32).
- There are three spiritual senses of Scripture that help us to understand its meaning: the allegorical sense, the moral sense, and the anagogical sense (pp. 32–34).
- There are several translations of the Bible, only some of which are approved for Catholics (pp. 35–36).
- St. Jerome translated the Bible from its original languages to Latin (the Vulgate) (p. 37).
- The Church teaches Catholics to read the Scripture prayerfully and to interpret it critically under the wisdom of the Magisterium (p. 39).
- Historical criticism, source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism are four ways to interpret the original biblical source (pp. 39–41).

Terms, People, Places

Write your answers to the following questions.

- Name and define one literary genre from the Old Testament and one from the New

Testament. Give an example of each that is not named in this chapter.

- How are source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism examples of Scripture exegesis?
- How does St. Jerome meet the definition of Church Father?
- What is the English translation of *Lettera Divina*?
- What is meant by a literal sense of the biblical text? What is the difference between a *literal* reading of Scripture and a *literalist* reading of Scripture?
- How did the discovery of the *Dead Sea Scrolls* aid biblical scholarship?
- What is another term for the *Litany of the Hours*?
- Where did St. Jerome undertake the task of translating the Latin Vulgate?

Primary Source Quotations

God Can Utter Nothing That Is Untrue.

It is a lamentable fact that there are many . . . whose chief purpose in all this is too often to find mistakes in the sacred writings and so to shake and weaken their authority. Some of these writers display not only extreme hostility, but the greatest unfairness: in their eyes a profane book or ancient document is accepted without hesitation, whilst the Scripture, if they only find in it a suspicion of error, is set down with the slightest possible discussion as quite unworthy. It is true, no doubt, that copyists have made mistakes in the text of the Bible; this question, when it arises, should be carefully considered on its merits, and the fact not too easily admitted, but only in those passages where the proof is clear. It may also happen that the sense of a passage remains ambiguous, and in this case good hermeneutical methods will greatly

Review Objectives

The students will:

- review Chapter 2.

Homework

- Study for the Chapter 2 Test.
- Complete any unfinished Ongoing Assignments.

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assist in clearing up the obscurity. But it is absolutely wrong and forbidden, either to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred. For the system of those who, in order to rid themselves of these difficulties, do not hesitate to concede that divine inspiration regards the things of faith and morals, and nothing beyond, because (as they wrongly think) in a question of the truth or falsehood of a passage, we should consider not so much what God has said as the reason and purpose which He had in mind in saying it—this system cannot be tolerated. For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical, are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost, and so far is it from being possible that any error can co-exist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God Himself, the supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true.

—Pope Leo XIII
(*Providentissimus Deus*)

St. Jerome's Belief in the Inerrancy of Scripture

Jerome further shows that the immunity of Scripture from error or deception is necessarily bound up with its Divine inspiration and supreme authority. He says he had learnt this in the most celebrated schools, whether of East or West, and that it was taught him as the doctrine of the Fathers, and generally received. Thus when, at the instance of Pope Damasus, he had begun correcting the Latin text of the New Testament, and certain "manicins" had vehemently attacked him for "making corrections in the Gospels in

face of the authority of the Fathers and of general opinion," Jerome briefly replied that he was not so utterly stupid nor so greedily uneducated as to imagine that the Lord's words needed any correction or were not divinely inspired. Similarly, when explaining Ezechiel's first vision as portraying the *Four Gospels*, he remarks: That the entire body and the back were full of eyes will be plain to anybody who realizes that there is naught in the Gospels which does not shine and illumine the world by its splendor, so that even things that seem trifling and unimportant shine with the majesty of the Holy Spirit.

—Pope Benedict XV
(*Spiritus Paracliticus*)

St. Jerome wrote that "Ignorance of Scripture means ignorance of Christ." How does this statement apply to the entire Bible—Old Testament and New Testament?

Ongoing Assignments

As you cover the material in this chapter, choose and complete at least three of these assignments.

1. Report on the history of the Bible's translation into English. Use this website for reference: www.biblesociety.ca/about_bible/english_bible/index.html.
2. Report on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Here are some websites to start your research:
 - Library of Congress: www.lib.illinois.edu/expo/deadseascrolls/exhibit/tetra.html
 - West Semitic Research Project: www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/educational_site/dead_sea_scroll
 - Old Testament Gateway: www.otgateway.com/deadseascrolls.htm
3. Report on seven names for God found in the Old Testament. Present your findings

Chapter 2 Quick View

Teaching Approaches

Chapter Quick View

- This section is provided for the students to review the chapter material. Although it is helpful for the students simply to read and study the list of Main Ideas, more creative use of the list might help the students retain the information. For example, make copies of the list with some of the key words and/or phrases blocked out. Use this as a quiz to help students evaluate areas they need to study more carefully or as a simple study sheet. If the students are able to fill in all the blanks easily, then they are ready to do well on the chapter test.
- Divide the class into three small groups. Assign each group three of the questions in the section Terms, People, Places (page 42). Have each group answer its questions and then share with the other groups. Answers follow.
- If any student(s) created a PowerPoint Presentation on archaeological sites (number 4 of the Ongoing Assignments for Chapter 2) have him or her share with the group. Afterward, spend a few moments reviewing how archaeology helps in biblical criticism and understanding. (Note: See the Background Features for Lesson 5.)

Terms, People, Places Answers (page 42)

1. Answers will vary, but should be drawn from the literary genres covered in Lesson 2 (pages 30–32).
2. Exegesis is the process scholars use to discover the meaning of the biblical text. Each form of criticism aids in that process.
3. A Church Father is someone who was an influential theologian or writer in the early Church. As translator of the Bible into Latin, Jerome fits the bill.
4. The English translation of *Lectio Divina* is "sacred reading," a method of praying the Scripture.
5. The literal sense of the Bible is the "... meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation" (CCC, 116). The difference between a *literal* reading of and a *literalist* reading of Scripture is as follows: A *literal* reading takes into account what the author intended to convey; a *literalist* reading takes only the exact meaning of the words without considering any other factors.
6. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls gave scholars access to much earlier versions of the Scriptures, thus enabling them to authenticate other biblical translations and understandings.
7. Another term for the Liturgy of the Hours is the Divine Office.
8. St. Jerome translated the Bible in a cave in Bethlehem.

- If any student(s) created a model of the Ark of the Covenant (Ongoing Assignment number 8), display it and allow time for the class to view it and the model makers to explain their work. Do the same for students who created a list of the names of God (Ongoing Assignment number 3).
- As time allows, call on various students who handed in written reports to share their information with the group.
- Take some time to go over any material the students may have overlooked in their review or that you feel needs more attention. Allow time for the students to ask any questions they may have.

Prayer Service

- Gather the students in a circle around a copy of the Scripture. Light a candle. Call attention to the poster containing the prayer the class composed in Lesson 2. Pray the prayer as a class.

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- on poster board, duplicating the Hebrew lettering and English translation. Check this website for more information:
- The Names of God: www.Ldolphin.org/Names.html.
- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation on two or more archaeological sites in Israel. The following links can get you started on your research:
 - The Foundation for Biblical Archaeology: www.fba.org/fba.php
 - Archaeology and the Bible: www.christianitynow.net/archaeology
 - The Jewish History Research Center: <http://jewishhistory.bgu.ac.il/links/Archaeology.htm>
 - Old Testament Gateway: www.otgate.org/archaeology.htm
 - Locate some of your favorite Scripture passages. Create a parchment-like, elegant, illustrated manuscript of your biblical passage. Do it this way:
 - Use heavy-bond paper.
 - Transcribe the verse in ink in your best handwriting or use an appropriate computer font.
 - Find an appropriate illustration that visually captures the spirit of your passage.
 - Report on the Galilee Affair. See www.catholiceducation.org/articles/history/world/wh0005.html.
 - Copy the Lord's Prayer in a language other than English, perhaps one you are studying. Use Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9-13). You can find various foreign language Bibles at this website:
 - Internet Christian Library: www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/christian-books.html#bibles
 - Individually or with a partner construct a model of the Ark of the Covenant.
 - Read both of these articles. Report on at least three new insights you gained from your reading:
 - Elizabeth McNamer, "The Bible from Square One": www.americanatholic.org/Newsletters/SFS/mt0194.asp
 - Sandra Schneiders, I.H.M., "Interpreting the Bible: The Right and the Responsibility": www.americanatholic.org/Newsletters/SFS/mt0997.asp

Prayer

Yet another time-honored way to pray the Sacred Scriptures, and to meet the living God, is the devotional reading of the Bible. For centuries Catholics have practiced a method of prayer derived from the Benedictine tradition known as *Lectio Divina*, that is, "sacred reading." The purpose of the sacred reading of God's Word is not necessarily to cover a lot of territory or to use study aids or take notes. Its purpose is simply to meet God through his written word and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us into an even deeper union with him. Therefore, it is best to take a short passage, read it slowly and attentively, and let your imagination, emotions, memory, desires, and thoughts engage the written text.

Pray with the Bible using *Lectio Divina*. Select your Scripture readings from the Mass readings for the day (see www.usccb.org/mass/index.shtml). Then follow these steps:

- Reading (lectio).** Select a short Bible passage. Read it slowly. Pay attention to each word. If a word or phrase catches your attention, read it to yourself several times.
- Thinking (meditatio).** Savore the passage. Read it again. Reflect on it. This time feel any emotions that may surface. Picture the images that arise from your imagination.

Background Information

Consecrated Under God's Word

At the ordination of a bishop, the consecrating bishop, with his hands extended over the bishop-elect, offers the following prayer of consecration:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, you dwell in heaven, yet look with compassion on all that is humble. You know all things before they came to be; by your gracious word you have established the plan of your Church.

From the beginning you chose the descendants of Abraham to be your holy nation. You established rulers and priests, and did not leave your sanctuary without ministers to serve you. From the creation of the world you have been pleased to be glorified by those whom you have chosen.

[The following part of the prayer is recited by all the consecrating bishops, with hands joined:]

So now pour out upon this chosen one the power that is from you, the governing Spirit whom you gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by him to his holy apostles, who founded the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name.

[Then the principal consecrator continues alone.]

Father, you know all hearts. You have chosen your servant for the office of bishop. May he be a shepherd to your holy flock, and a high priest blameless in your sight, ministering to you night and day; may he always gain the blessing of your favor and offer the gifts of your holy Church. Through the Spirit who gives the grace of

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Pay attention to any thoughts or memories the passage might call forth from you.

3. *Pray (oratio).* Reflect on what the Lord might be saying to you in this passage. Talk to him as you would to a friend. Ask him to show you how to respond to his Word. How can you connect this passage to your daily life? How does it relate to the people you encounter every day? Might there be a special message in this Scripture selection just for you? Pay attention to any insights the Holy Spirit might send you.
 4. *Contemplation (contemplatio).* Sit in the presence of the Lord. Imagine him looking on you with great love in his heart. Rest quietly in his presence. There is no need to think here, just enjoy your time with him as two friends would who quietly sit on a park bench gazing together at a sunset.
 5. *Resolution.* Take an insight that you gained from your “sacred reading” and resolve to apply it to your life. Perhaps it is simply a matter of saying a simple prayer of thanks. Perhaps it is to be more patient with someone in your life. Let the word the Holy Spirit spoke to you come alive in your life.
- *Reflection:* Which passage spoke most deeply to your heart? Why?
 - *Resolution:* Try the form of praying for at least ten minutes for the next two weeks.

Chapter 2 Quick View

- If any student(s) completed Assignment 5 and made a “parchment-like,” illustrated Scripture passage, display it and have the creator read it aloud with reverence. If no one did Assignment 5, be ready with a passage of your choosing (e.g., the passage from Isaiah 40, on page 27 of the Student Text).
- Use the process of *Lectio Divina* (pages 44–45) to lead the students—or have a student lead—in prayer over this passage.
- Join hands, close the circle, and pray the Lord’s Prayer together. (*Note:* If a student completed Ongoing Assignment number 7 and brought a copy of the Lord’s Prayer in a language other than English, invite her or him to offer it as well.)
- Conclude by singing an appropriate hymn.



Background Information continued

high priesthood grant him the power to forgive sins as you have commanded, to assign ministries as you have decreed, and to loose every bond by the authority which you gave to your apostles. May he be pleasing to you by his gentleness and purity of heart, presenting a fragrant offering to you, through Jesus Christ, your Son, through whom glory and power and honor are yours with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, now and for ever Amen.

Ordination of a Bishop, #26

During the above prayer, the Book of the Gospels is held open, with the writing down, over the head of the kneeling bishop-elect. The new bishop begins his ministry “under”—subject to and as the servant of—the Word of God.

Chapter 2 Test

Teaching Approaches

- Allow sufficient time for the students to work on the Chapter 2 Test (starting on page 291 and also online at www.avemariapress.com). Collect tests as the students finish.



Homework

1. Read the following text sections of Chapter 3: "Best Seller" (pages 48–49) and "Formation of the Old Testament" (pages 49–53).
2. Call students' attention to the feature, For Reflection, on page 49. Tell them to be ready to share any history of a Bible that is part of their family and growing up. Encourage them also to recall any oral traditions their family has—stories family members tell and re-tell. Suggest they look back at the "family stories" they wrote in Chapter 1 (see Chapter 1, Lessons 4 and 5).
3. Examine the Chapter 3 Ongoing Assignments on pages 70–71.



Chapter 2 Test Answers

Part 1: Fill-in-the-Blanks (3 points each)

Part 2: True or False (3 points each)

Part 3: Essays (5 points each)

Part 4: Make a List (1 point each)