

CONTENTS

Introduction	7	16 SCRIPTURE IN THE MASS	40
1 THE BIBLE, GOD'S BOOK	10	17 THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS: THE DIVINE OFFICE	42
2 HONORING THE HOLY BIBLE	12	18 HOW TO READ SCRIPTURE	44
3 EXPLORING THE BIBLE	14	19 PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE	46
4 A LIBRARY OF BOOKS	16	20 MEDITATING USING OUR SENSES	48
5 INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE CITATIONS	18	21 <i>LECTIO DIVINA</i> , SACRED READING	50
6 GOD REVEALS HIMSELF	20	22 MEMORIZING VERSES	52
7 SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION	22	23 BIBLE REFERENCE BOOKS	54
8 THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	24	24 GOSPELS: THE HEART OF THE BIBLE	56
9 THE STORY OF SALVATION HISTORY	26	25 HEBREW POETRY	58
10 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS	28	26 KNOWING THE CULTURE	60
11 THE BIBLE AS LOVE LETTER	30	27 BIBLE LANDS	62
12 TYPES OF WRITING	32	28 THE BIBLE'S INFLUENCE ON CULTURE	64
13 HOW THE BIBLE WAS COMPILED	34	29 VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE	66
14 WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ITSELF	36	30 TIMES THE BIBLE SPEAKS TO US	68
15 THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH	38		

A LIBRARY OF BOOKS

Objective

The children will view the Bible as a collection of books and become acquainted with the names of these books.

Catechist Notes

God chose to convey his message by means of a variety of books gathered into one collection, the Bible. The Jewish people categorized the Old Testament books as belonging to the Law (Torah), the Writings, and the Prophets. The New Testament contains the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, the Letters, and Revelation. The oldest known biblical manuscripts in existence are among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were discovered in Qumran by a shepherd in 1947.

You might challenge your children to memorize the biblical books. Here, at least, is a jingle for remembering the first fourteen letters in the New Testament in order to help locate them:

*Ro-Co-Co, Gal-Eph-Phi
Col-Thess-Thess, Tim-Tim-Ti
Phil-Heb*

Materials

- ☐ BIBLES
- ☐ PAPER
- ☐ PENS OR PENCILS
- ☐ COPIES OF ACTIVITY SHEET 4

Activity

- 1 Form the children into teams. Hold a contest to see which team can list the most kinds of books in a library. Offer biography as an example. After two minutes, ask the team with the longest list to read it. Invite other teams to add to the list.
- 2 Show a Bible and compare it to a library.
 - The Bible is like a library because it is composed of many kinds of books. In fact, the word *bible* comes from the

Greek for "the books," which is plural.

- The books in the Bible belong either to the first part, called the Old Testament, or to the second part, called the New Testament.
- To find your way around a library, you need to know how the books are grouped. In the Bible, similar books, like the historical books or the Christian letters, are grouped together. In addition, the books are more or less in chronological order.
- The first five books are called the Pentateuch, which is Greek for five scrolls. Jewish people call them the Torah. They are about the first dealings of God with his people and contain God's law.

- 3 Direct the children to turn to their Bible's table of contents. Tell half of the children to count the Old Testament books (46) and the other half to count the New Testament books (27). Then ask how many books there are all together (73).

- 4 Distribute copies of Activity Sheet 4. Read the directions and have the children work the sheet.

- 5 When the children are finished, check the answers. **ANSWERS:** 1) *Genesis*; 2) *Revelation*; 3) *Ruth, Esther, Judith*; 4) *Psalms, Song of Solomon*; 5) *1&2 Kings; 1&2 Chronicles*; 6) *Leviticus*; 7) *Exodus*; 8) *Acts of the Apostles*; 9) *John*; 10) *Romans; 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians*; 11) *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, Sirach*; 12) *Job*; 13) *Numbers*; 14) *Matthew, John*; 15) *Hebrews*; 16) *18*; 17) *Psalms*; 18) *3 John*; *Bonus: Answers will vary.*

Prayer

O God, how creative you are in packaging your word in many forms. May I present your word to others by my words and actions.

Bible Book ID

Use your Bible's table of contents to answer the following questions.

- 1 What is the first book in the Bible? _____
 - 2 What is the last book? _____
 - 3 Which books are named for women? _____
 - 4 Which books are poetry? _____
 - 5 Which books seem to be historical? _____
 - 6 Which book is about worship and priests from the tribe of Levi? _____
 - 7 In which book does Moses first appear? _____
 - 8 Which book tells the story of Pentecost? _____
 - 9 What is the last gospel? _____
 - 10 Which books are named for people in a city? _____
 - 11 Which books contain adages, sayings for living well? _____
 - 12 Which book is about the mystery of suffering? _____
 - 13 Which book contains a census of the tribes of Israel? _____
 - 14 Which books are named for apostles? _____
 - 15 Which book is named for Jewish Christians? _____
 - 16 How many books by Old Testament prophets are there? _____
 - 17 What is the longest book? _____
 - 18 What is the shortest book? _____
- BONUS** What book would you be most interested in reading? _____

INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE CITATIONS

Objective

Given a Scripture citation, the children will be able to locate the passage it represents.

Catechist Notes

The Bible's chapter divisions were developed about 1227. The Old Testament was divided into verses in 1448. A French printer divided the New Testament into verses in 1551.

When locating a chapter, some children make the mistake of looking for the verse before the chapter number rather than after it. Make sure your children do not do this.

Materials

- ☐ BIBLES
- ☐ A GPS OR A MAP
- ☐ A BOARD OR LARGE SHEET OF POSTER PAPER
- ☐ A SLIP OF PAPER for each child
- ☐ PENS OR PENCILS
- ☐ A PRIZE (optional)
- ☐ COPIES OF ACTIVITY SHEET 5

Activity

- 1 Show a GPS or a map and ask why we use it. (to get to a place) Explain:

- The Bible is a very large book. A system was invented to help us locate any passage in it. It is like a GPS or map. Each Bible book was divided into numbered chapters. These chapters were divided into portions about a sentence long called verses. They too are numbered.
- The breaks between chapters and between verses are not always logical.

- 2 Distribute copies of Activity Sheet 5. State that a Scripture citation that directs us to a passage has parts like a house address. Use the diagram on the sheet to explain the meaning of John 3:16. Read

the citation for the children: John, chapter 3, verse 16.

- 3 Tell the children to locate John 3:16 in their Bibles and read it together.

- 4 Give further information about citations and write the examples on the board as you mention them.

- Books with the same name are numbered, for example, 1 Kings and 2 Kings. In a citation this number comes before the name of the book.
- Often only an abbreviation for a book appears in a citation—for example, Gen for Genesis and Jn for John.
- Consecutive verses are connected with a hyphen, as in John 3:16–17. Verses that are separated have a comma between them, as in John 3:16, 21.
- Sometimes after a chapter, a period is used instead of a colon. (John 3:16)
- If the first part of a verse is referred to, it is labeled a. If the second part is referred to, it is labeled b, for example, John 3:16b.

- 5 Direct the children to choose a verse at random from the Bible and write its citation on a slip of paper. Tell them to trade papers and locate each other's verses.

- 6 Send the children on a hunt through the Bible to discover the answers to the questions on Activity Sheet 5. You might award a prize to the first one to have all correct answers. **ANSWERS:** 1) God; 2) Frogs; 3) Deborah; 4) Donkeys; 5) Cows; 6) Mountains; 7) Salt; 8) Eutychus; 9) 195 or 5 times 39; 10) Lion.

Prayer

O God, may my searching through the Bible lead me to you.

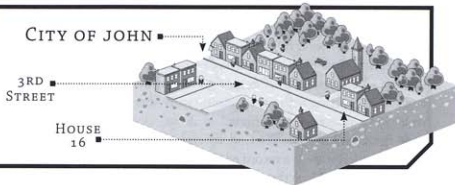
Finding Your Way Around

JOHN 3:16

Book [*John*] = city

Chapter [3] = street

Verse [16] = house number



Can you answer the following questions?

You can if you locate the verses that the Scripture citations lead you to.

- 1 Who made clothes for Adam and Eve? (Genesis 3:21) _____
- 2 What was the second plague God sent to persuade Pharaoh to let the Israelites go? (Exodus 8:5-6) _____
- 3 What woman was a judge? (Judges 4:4) _____
- 4 What was Saul looking for when Samuel anointed him king of Israel? (1 Samuel 10:2) _____
- 5 What did Amos call the wealthy women of Israel? (Amos 4:1) _____
- 6 What does God surround his people like? (Psalm 125:2) _____
- 7 What did Jesus call his followers? (Matthew 5:13) _____
- 8 Who fell asleep during Paul's sermon? (Acts 20:9) _____
- 9 How many times was Paul whipped for being a Christian? (2 Corinthians 11:24) _____
- 10 What animal is the devil like? (1 Peter 5:8) _____

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

Objective

The children will identify Scripture as a primary way that God reveals himself to us.

Catechist Notes

God is transcendent, utterly other, nameless, and mystery. We will never fully comprehend God. Creation reflects God. But God took our knowledge of him to a whole new level by entering into our history and interacting with us, beginning with Abraham. God's revelation culminated in Jesus, God made flesh. In Jesus, we see God act and we hear God speak. Scripture is a record of God's actions in BC and AD times. More than that, it is God's words about himself, how God wants us to know him.

Materials

- ☐ BIBLES
- ☐ PENCILS OR PENS
- ☐ COPIES OF ACTIVITY SHEET 6

Activity

- 1 Draw a stick figure on the board with four writing lines radiating from it. Tell the children that it is a new classmate. They know nothing about him, not even his name. Ask how they will learn about him and what he is like. Record children's answers on the lines. (People will tell them about him. He will tell about himself. They might read about him somewhere. His actions will reveal what he is like.)
- 2 Point out the difficulty of knowing God.
 - God is a pure spirit and invisible. He is so superior to us and so different from us that we can never fully know what God is like.
 - We can draw some conclusions from creation. What can we learn about God from creation? (God must be very intelligent and powerful to make such marvelous things. God must be beautiful and loving.)

- In general, on our own we don't know much about God.

3 Explain revelation.

- Fortunately for us, God has revealed himself. God has interacted with us. God spoke to our ancestors in the faith—for example, to Abraham and Moses. Then God came as a human being, as Jesus, who is the best revelation of God. We know what God is like because we know what Jesus is like.
- In Scripture we can read about God's saving acts from the beginning of time and learn what he is like. We can read God's very words that reveal him to us.

- 4 Distribute copies of Activity Sheet 6. Form small groups and assign each group a passage in a puzzle piece on the sheet. They are to read their passage and write what it reveals about God.

- 5 When all are finished, have each group report on its passage and the qualities of God it revealed. Allow children to add qualities. **POSSIBLE ANSWERS:** *Genesis 1:1–3: powerful, good; Exodus 3:7–8: saving; Exodus 34:6: merciful, kind, faithful; Isaiah 6:1–3: holy; Psalm 71:15–16: just, mighty; Psalm 139:1–4: wise, all-knowing; Wisdom 11:21–22: strong, great; John 3:16: loving.*

- 6 Explain that the black puzzle piece stands for things about God that we will never understand. They will always be a mystery.

Prayer

God, people can tell who I am and what I'm like by what I say. Your words in Scripture let me know about you. Help me to understand more and more what you are like through them.

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

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Prayer

God, people can tell who I am and what I'm like by what I say. Your words in Scripture let me know about you. Help me to understand more and more what you are like through them.

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

Objective

The children will understand that Scripture and Tradition form a single deposit of faith.

Catechist Notes

God's self-communication, or revelation, is found in Scripture (both the Old and New Testaments) and Tradition. It is also present preeminently in Jesus, who is the full revelation of God. Jesus entrusted the gospel, the good news of salvation, through the Holy Spirit to the apostles. They spoke about what they learned from Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The apostles' teaching was handed down to bishops and through them from age to age. This living transmission in the church is Tradition. The apostles' message was also recorded in Scripture. The beliefs of the church are enshrined in both Scripture and Tradition.

Materials

- ☐ A PICTURE OR A MODEL OF A BIRD THAT FLIES
- ☐ COPIES OF ACTIVITY SHEET 7

Activity

1 Show the bird and ask how far it could fly if it had just one wing. (It couldn't fly.) Comment that just as a bird has two wings, we have two sources to know about God. We need both of them.

2 Ask how we Catholics came to know truths of faith that are not in the Bible. (Some truths have been handed down orally. The church has taught them through her popes and other bishops, the successors of the apostles.)

3 Explain Tradition:

- Tradition is the living transmission of the gospel entrusted to the apostles through the Holy Spirit.
- Scripture and Tradition together form one deposit of faith. They are the source of all that we believe about God and ourselves. They are like two wings that take us to what God has revealed.

4 Name some of our beliefs that are not directly contained in the Bible but have come to us through Tradition.

- Mary was free from sin from the first moment of her existence.
- Jesus had no brothers or sisters. Mary was always a virgin.
- Those who die and are not ready for heaven are purified in Purgatory.
- The pope, the bishop of Rome, is the head of the Catholic Church.
- We can pray to saints for help.

5 Distribute Activity Sheet 7 and use it to lead the children through the development of revelation. Point out how either Scripture or Tradition comes into play in each stage.

Prayer

Jesus, you praised people for their faith. May my faith deepen through my study of both Scripture and Tradition.

The Path of Revelation

God reveals himself as the one God to Abraham.



The stories of God's dealings with his people are passed on orally. (Tradition)



The Jews record in the Old Testament what God revealed to them. (Scripture)



Jesus comes to earth as the full revelation of God.



The apostles teach others about Jesus. (Tradition)



The apostles' teachings are written down. (Scripture)



The church compiles the Old Testament and New Testament books to form the official Bible. (Tradition)



The apostles' teachings continue to be transmitted through their successors, the pope and other bishops. (Tradition)



Today Catholics draw the truths of our faith from both Scripture and Tradition.

Tradition



Scripture