

The Catholic Youth Bible®

Activity Book

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and contributing authors



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The acknowledgments continue on page 348.

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“Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him.”

-Deuteronomy 30:19-20

About the Author

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INTRODUCTION

We have designed this activity book with you in mind. You may have used conventional materials to teach the Scriptures, such as textbooks about the Bible, the Old Testament, or the New Testament, but you are looking for something more—an approach that will take the Bible to a more personal level with youth. You want young people to be more actively engaged in seeing how the Bible relates to their lives. You want them to be as excited as you are about discovering what God is saying to you and them through the Scriptures. And most of all, you want them to *read* the Bible, not just read *about* the Bible.

Chances are you may already be familiar with *The Catholic Youth Bible*®, or the *CYB*, as it is called in shorthand. But in case you have not seen it or are not familiar with all the new additions to the *CYB*, here are some of its features:

- ✱ **Section Introductions** are located at the beginning of each major section of the Bible and provide background on the books in that section.
- ✱ **Book Introductions** at the beginning of most books (sometimes two or three books share a single introduction) give insight into each book's central message and an overview of its contents.
- ✱ **Growing in Faith** articles apply the Bible's messages to relevant questions and situations young people may be facing now or will face in the future.
- ✱ **Searching for God** articles help youth learn more about who God is, what God's message is for them, and what their relationship with God can be.
- ✱ **Who Is My Neighbor?** articles help youth explore their connection with and responsibility to others.
- ✱ **Did You Know?** articles provide background from biblical scholars to help young people understand the culture and traditions of biblical times or the Church's interpretation of certain passages.
- ✱ **Catholic Connection** articles illustrate the relationship between the Bible and many Catholic Christian beliefs and practices, including the seven principles of Catholic social teaching.
- ✱ **Challenge** features are designed to help youth incorporate core themes of the Bible into their daily life. Each challenge invites young people to step out of their comfort zone and put faith into action.
- ✱ **Scripture Highlight** features throughout the Bible beautifully illustrate some key passages to reflect on. Youth might even consider adding some color to make it their own.
- ✱ The **Explore the Bible** section provides reading plans to help young people get started reading the Bible, or to identify verses for certain moments in their life, such as when they're feeling anxious, overwhelmed, or grateful. These can be found just inside the back cover.

- ✱ The **Being Catholic** section offers insights into how the Catholic faith shapes how Catholics read the Bible, practice faith, and understand the world.
- ✱ The **When I'm Feeling . . .** section provides Scripture verses that correspond to specific feelings and experiences youth may face in their daily life.

Other Features

- ✱ **Praying with the Psalms** located at the beginning of the Book of Psalms
- ✱ **Color maps** located at the beginning of the Book of Exodus, the Historical Books, the Gospels, and Acts of the Apostles
- ✱ **Gospel Comparison** located at the beginning of the Gospels
- ✱ **Glossary** of Scripture-related terms located in the back of the Bible
- ✱ **Time line** located in the back of the Bible

This activity book serves the teacher, catechist, or youth minister who wants to use *The Catholic Youth Bible*® as the primary text for Scripture study. It contains the following items:

- ✱ learning activities for every book of the Bible, some applying to several books and many incorporating and extending the articles and features in the *CYB*
- ✱ twenty puzzle activities that help students review the content of specific books of the Bible
- ✱ twenty-two student handouts
- ✱ an index of activities listed by topic

For those who want to go beyond the conventional textbook approach to teaching the Scriptures, the *CYB*, together with this activity book, can provide just what you need.

The Value of Active Learning in Teaching the Scriptures

Traditionally, the Scriptures have been taught in the linguistic style that has characterized instruction in most disciplines. Reading the Bible, hearing lectures about its meaning, discussing questions related to the material, and writing reflections about its significance have been important ways that young people have learned about the word of God. This book's goal is to complement that style with an active learning approach to exploring the Scriptures. The activities share some of the following characteristics:

- ✱ **Each person must engage in the learning process.** The activities in this book invite every young person to interact with the scriptural text personally. In addition, the variety of learning styles addressed by the activities can appeal to all learners to varying degrees. Dramatic, artistic, and musical youth can shine, as well as those whose skills are verbal. The extrovert and the introvert can find activities that interest them. And the process of active learning invites all young people to expand their gifts in those different areas and their understanding of how various media can enhance learning in all of life.
- ✱ **The activities in this book approach the Scriptures from the context of the lives of youth.** The activities attempt to answer the young person's silent question, "Why should I bother reading the Bible or paying attention today?" The use of contemporary music, television, and other media as sources for reflection on the Bible helps the Scriptures' "credibility" with teens. The connection of the Scriptures to issues of emotional development, friendship, family, society and world, and personal future helps youth relate a piece of writing from two thousand years ago with things that happen in their daily lives. You can help by narrowing and adapting the context of the activities as much as necessary to address the specific questions of youth where you are.

- ✱ **An active learning approach invites young people to examine the Scriptures and be open to their message at a deeper level.** For instance, youth can explore biblical passages through art projects, role-plays, ethical scenarios, journal entries, musical themes, and other forms of expression. This invites them to see both familiar and unfamiliar passages in a new light and to explore concepts in a new way. We cannot simply look at a passage or issue from a one-dimensional perspective, but must delve more deeply into it and make new connections. An active learning approach encourages youth to explore the complexity and mystery of God's revelation in our world now.

A Sprint through Salvation History

Young people can greatly benefit from an overview of salvation history, or at least a rough chronology of biblical events, learning to appreciate certain passages or books of the Bible in the context of "the big story." You might consider leading an activity that will give them this crucial chronological, contextual background before addressing specific books or passages. The following "sprint" through salvation history can help youth see the whole picture before examining the details.

A Sample Sprint



Handout

1. Give the youth a copy of the handout "A Sprint through Salvation History" (p. 11). It divides the story of salvation into eight sections or stages:

1. The Founders and the Promise
2. The Exodus of the Israelites and the Covenant
3. Taking Over the Promised Land
4. The Nation and the Temple
5. The Kings and Prophets
6. The Babylonian Exile and the Jewish Dispersion
7. More Oppressors
8. Jesus, the Savior

Direct the young people all to read the *entire* handout as homework or in class. As they read, they should follow along with the time line of biblical history in the study aids near the back of the *CYB*. They should also consult the maps in the study aids.

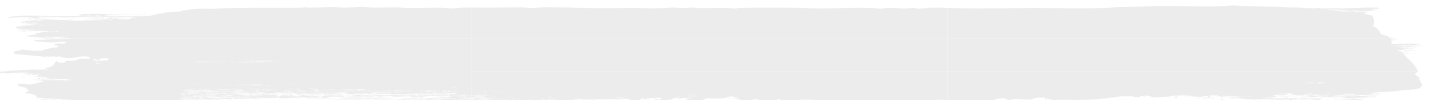
2. Divide the class into eight groups, and assign each group one of the stages of the journey. Instruct the groups each to develop an artistic expression or symbol of their assigned stage, which they will present to the rest of the class at the next class period. Encourage the youth to use their creativity. They may come up with a popular song that reminds them of what went on in that stage of salvation history, or they may do a pantomime of, for instance, the escape from Egypt during the Exodus. They may create a visual—such as a painting, a drawing, or a collage. They may form a "human sculpture" to express a feeling or a theme from their assigned stage.
3. For the class period in which the journey takes place, if possible, set up eight stations in a large space such as a gym so that the young people can actually move from place to place to get the feel of journeying. You might be able to use parts of the whole building, making for a pilgrimage-type procession from one place to another.

Gather the youth and then lead them through the space you have arranged, stopping at each station in the journey to read the section of the handout about that stage of salvation history. At each station, tie the material from the handout in with the time line and maps in the *CYB* to reinforce the chronology. Then invite the assigned group to present its work.

4. When you have completed the journey, regroup in your original gathering space. Go over the experience, clarify any questions about the sequence and events (referring again to the time line), and discuss which symbols or artistic expressions were particularly helpful in getting across what was happening during the stages of salvation history.

Ready to Go!

Once you have taken the young people through the basic events of salvation history, they will be ready to study the Bible with at least some sense of context. As you explore different books and passages of the Bible throughout, refer back to the basic narrative, with the accompanying time line from the *CYB*, to situate the scriptural stories, prayers, prophecies, and so on, in their historical contexts.



A Sprint through Salvation History

The God revealed in the Old Testament is not aloof or distant from human affairs; this God acts within human history. The story of God's actions and the people's responses over many centuries is called salvation history.

It will help to keep the big picture of that history in mind as we set out to discover the meaning of the Old Testament because the history and the Scriptures of ancient Israel were intertwined. . . . Do not be concerned about memorizing names and events at this point; they will come up again many times in this course. Instead, simply try to recognize the broad pattern of history.

First, refer to the biblical time line in the study aids near the back of the *CYB*, and note the time period in which the biblical events happened. As you can see, humankind existed for many thousands of years before the biblical era; most of that time is called prehistory because no historical records of those ancient peoples exist. (The time period of the creation and the earliest stories of humankind appearing in the Old Testament fall into the category of prehistory.) About 3000 BC, history as we know it began, with the development of early forms of writing. The biblical period—from the beginnings of Israel as a people through the time of Jesus and the earliest years of the Church—lasted from about 1850 BC to AD 100, almost two thousand years. And that is about the same amount of time as has elapsed from the time of Jesus until today.

What follows is a brief overview of the events of the biblical period. You may also refer to the maps in the study aids.

The Founders and the Promise

The history and the religion of the Israelites began with Abraham. Abraham was a wandering herdsman, or nomad, who lived in the region now called Iraq, around 1850 BC. According to the Book of Genesis, God made an agreement with Abraham. God promised to make Abraham's descendants a blessing to the world and to give them the land of Canaan, later known as Palestine. The Promise, as this is called, was that Abraham's descendants would reveal the one God to the world. Christians believe that this Promise reached its fulfillment in the coming of Christ.

Abraham's descendants and their families inherited the Promise. Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob would be called the patriarchs, or founders, of the Jewish faith. Their wives—Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel—would be called the matriarchs.



A Sprint through Salvation History, page 2

The Exodus of the Israelites and the Covenant

At the close of the Book of Genesis, the descendants of Abraham are living in Egypt, having traveled there from Canaan in order to survive a famine. Yet as the Book of Exodus opens, we find them enslaved by the Egyptians. Practically nothing is known about the Israelites in Egypt from about 1700 to 1290 BC.

Moses, the main character in the story of the Exodus, was one of the greatest religious leaders in history. About 1290 BC, the understanding that one God was above all other gods came to Moses when God revealed God's name—Yahweh, meaning "I am the One who is always present." With God's power, the Israelites, led by Moses, made a daring escape from Pharaoh's army through the sea—the Exodus—and were thus freed from slavery.

After a dramatic encounter between Moses and God on Mount Sinai, a covenant, or agreement, between Yahweh and the Israelites was confirmed. The Israelites' part of the covenant was to keep the Ten Commandments, which God had presented to Moses. God's part was to make the Israelites "the people of God" and to be with them as long as they kept the covenant. Once again God promised that they would be given the land of Canaan. But before they entered Canaan, they wandered for forty years in the desert as they learned to trust God's care for them.

Taking Over the Promised Land

After Moses' time, the Israelites, led by Joshua, entered Canaan. Over the next centuries—from about 1250 to 1000 BC—they fought against the people who lived in that region. In these battles, the Israelites were led by military leaders called judges. During this time, the Israelites abandoned their nomadic ways for the more settled agricultural life that was native to the region.

The Nation and the Temple

Around 1000 BC, Israel became recognized as a nation, with David as its anointed king and Jerusalem as its capital city. God made a promise to David that his royal line would endure forever. (Later Jews put their hopes in a descendant of David to save them from oppression.)

David's son Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, and it became the principal place of worship for the nation. As both a political and a religious capital, Jerusalem became a great and holy city.

The Kings and the Prophets

After Solomon's death in 922 BC, the nation divided, with the kingdom of Israel in the north and the kingdom of Judah in the south. Heavy taxes and forced service in both kingdoms created hardships for the people. In addition, the kings often practiced idolatry—the worship of idols (images of other gods).

Prophets spoke out against both kingdoms' injustices to the people and infidelity to God. They questioned the behavior of the kings and called them and their people back to the covenant. Yet the kingdoms continued to oppress the poor and worship pagan gods until eventually both kingdoms were crushed by powerful conquerors. The Assyrians obliterated the northern



A Sprint through Salvation History, page 3

kingdom of Israel in 721 BC and took its people into exile. In 587 BC, the Babylonians destroyed Judah, including the city of Jerusalem, and took its people to Babylon as captives.

The Babylonian Exile and the Jewish Dispersion

While the people were exiled in Babylon, still other prophets encouraged them to repent of their sins and turn back to God. During this time, the prophet known as Second Isaiah proclaimed that God was the one and only God. Monotheism, the belief in one God, was now the revelation of this people to the world, their blessing to the nations.

After fifty years in Babylon, the exiles were released from captivity by the conquering Persians and allowed to return home. Judah, no longer a politically independent kingdom, had become a district within the Persian Empire, and the returned exiles became known as Jews, from the word *Judah*. They rebuilt the Temple, and under Ezra and Nehemiah, they re-established the Law and restored Jerusalem. That city became the religious capital for the Jews who had resettled all over the world—that is, the Jews of the Dispersion.

During the exile, the Jewish leaders had begun collecting and reflecting on their ancestral writings, forming the core of what would later become their Bible, known to Christians as the Old Testament.

More Oppressors

The Persian Empire was conquered in 330 BC by the armies of Alexander the Great, leader of the Greek Empire. This made the Greeks overlords of the Jews for nearly three hundred years, with the exception of a brief period of independence after a revolt led by the Maccabees family. The Greeks were followed by the Romans, who captured Jerusalem in 63 BC. Although tolerant of other cultures and religions, the Roman Empire severely punished its subjects for revolts.

It was a dark time for the people of the promise, who longed for release from oppression and for the day when all their hopes for a good and peaceful life would be fulfilled. Many Jews looked toward the coming of a messiah, one sent by God to save them; some expected this messiah to be from the family line of David.


It is at this point in the history of Israel that the Old Testament accounts end. . . .

Jesus, the Savior

Into a situation of defeat and darkness for the people of Israel, Jesus was born, one of the house, or family line, of David. Christians see Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah—the fulfillment of all God’s promises to Israel and the Savior of the world. With his death and Resurrection, Jesus’ followers recognized that he was the Son of God. The community of believers began to grow, first among Jews but later among Gentiles, or non-Jews. The story of Jesus and the growth of the early Church is told in the New Testament.

(The material in this handout is quoted from *Written on Our Hearts: The Old Testament Story of God’s Love, Third Edition*, by Mary Reed Newland, [Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2009], pages 18–24. Copyright © 2009 by Saint Mary’s Press. All rights reserved.)





Pentateuch

GENESIS

Genesis, chapters 1-2

Creative Presentations of the Creation Story

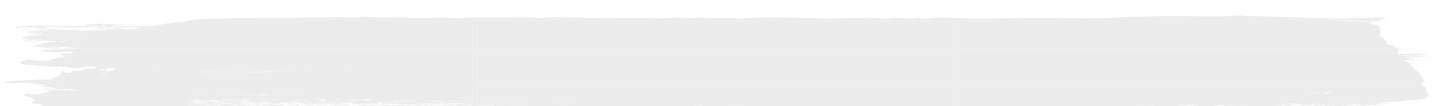
Objective: This activity encourages students to make the first Genesis story come alive with their own creativity.

1. Call several students to read Genesis 1:1–2:3 aloud.
 2. Divide the class into seven groups. Assign a different day of creation to each group and say something like this to the students:
 - ▶ Today each group is responsible for reading from Genesis the Bible passage associated with its assigned day of creation and preparing a creative, non-verbal way to present that day to the other groups in our next class. You may use artwork, music, video, drama, props, the environment of the gathering space, costumes, and so on. Each presentation should run no longer than 4 minutes. The presentation should be respectful of the Scriptures, and may also be fun. Before the end of this class, each group will need to pass its ideas by me for approval and suggestions.
 3. After the presentations are given at the next class, invite the students to discuss any insights or reflections that resulted from preparing or watching them.
-

Genesis, chapter 1

Care for the Earth: Genesis

Adapt the activity “Care for the Earth: Psalms,” on pages 116–117 of this book, for use with Genesis, chapter 1.



Genesis, chapter 1

Dominion over the Earth: Genesis

Objective: This activity uses modern parallels to challenge students to think more carefully about the meaning of *dominion* in Genesis 1:28–30.

Materials Needed:

✿ a set of keys

1. Give one student a set of keys. Say something like this to the student:
 - I am going away for a month. I want you to take care of my house, my car, and my classroom while I am away. Use these keys as if they were your own. When I come back, I want to see my house, my car, and my classroom in the same condition in which I gave them to you.

Lead the students in a discussion about the various ways this request can be honored or dishonored.

2. Read Genesis 1:28–30 aloud. Write two column headings on the board, “Stewardship” and “Ownership,” and help the students brainstorm the differences between those concepts. Ask the students, “Which is more like the dominion given to the human beings in Genesis?” Remind them that only God owns the universe, and help them realize that the human dominion over the earth called for in the Scripture passage is one of stewardship, not ownership.
3. Divide the class into small groups. Instruct the groups each to brainstorm ways in which human beings are responsible and irresponsible stewards of creation today. Ask the groups to report their insights and resolutions back to the class.
4. Tell the students each to identify one way they are an irresponsible steward of creation and to write a reflection paper about that, including ideas for how they will commit to growing in responsibility for the gift of creation in that area.

Genesis, chapter 3

The Effect of Sin: Distance

Objective: This activity invites the students to reflect on the effects of sin described in Genesis, chapter 3, and then to consider how sin in their own lives can distance them from God, themselves, others, and nature.

1. Ask five students to stand before the class and read aloud the parts for the characters in Genesis, chapter 3: narrator, serpent, woman, man, and God. Direct the students playing the man and the woman to quietly move farther from each other and from God as they read their lines.
2. After the reading, ask all the students what they observed about the characters. Then make the following comments in your own words:
 - This story of disobedience to God shows how sin can affect our lives. Sin separates us from God and others, and from ourselves and nature. *[Ask the students to explain this concept from the story.]*
 - Before they sin, the man and the woman in the story are in a harmonious relationship with all that is around them. After they sin, they think about themselves only, and they stop looking at God, each other, the world, and even their innermost selves.

3. Divide the class into four groups, labeling them “God,” “Myself,” “Other people,” and “The natural world.” Ask each group to come up with at least three things someone can do to create a distance between themselves and the entity identified by the group’s label. Then tell the groups each to plan a brief pantomime that presents one of those actions and shows the separation that can occur. The groups should be creative and include all members in their presentation.
4. Invite each group in turn to present its pantomime, and ask the rest of the class to guess what each group is portraying. Discuss the points that the groups bring out in the presentations. Conclude by saying this in your own words:
 - ▶ God knew what the man and woman needed in order to be in harmony with the world around them. God knows what we need today as well. In the Scripture passage, sin is portrayed as the temptation to presume that we know better what we need than God does. Observing what brings us closer to or distances us from others, ourselves, God, and the world is a step toward learning what God wants for us.

Genesis, chapter 3

Genesis in Hollywood

Objective: This activity casts four biblical characters to help the students explore their own understanding of human nature, especially in light of temptation and weakness.

1. Divide the class into groups of four or five and ask them to read Genesis, chapter 3, with each person in the group assuming a different role: narrator, serpent, woman, man, and God.
2. Invite the students to imagine that they have been asked to cast the four main characters in the story (serpent, woman, man, and God) for a movie. Tell the groups to brainstorm about what actors they would cast to play each character and then to discuss their selections.
3. With the entire class, take suggestions for each character, and write the suggestions on the board. Lead the students in a discussion of the following questions:
 - ▶ What kind of personalities did you choose to represent each biblical figure and why?
 - ▶ How does the selection of actors relate to temptation and sin?
 - ▶ How was the serpent able to tempt the man and woman? Are some people better at tempting than others? Are some people more vulnerable to temptation? Are people more susceptible to temptation at some times than at others?
 - ▶ What message does the story give about the nature of temptation and sin?

Genesis, chapter 4

God Wants Our Best: Comfort and Challenge

Objective: This activity uses the Cain and Abel story as an opportunity to think about the damage of comparing ourselves with others.

1. Assign several students to the characters in Genesis 4:1–16 (narrator, Eve, the Lord, and Cain) and ask them to read the passage aloud. Then invite those who read the parts of Cain and God to explain to the class (in character) how they felt in the story and why they did the things they did. Allow the class to ask the readers questions, and the readers to answer as their character might. For instance, the class might ask Cain how he felt about the choice God presented to him in Genesis 4:6–7.
2. Continue the discussion with the class by raising these questions and observations in your own words:
 - ▶ Because God suggests that Cain's best will be accepted, what temptation lurks for Cain if he does not do his best? Does that exist for us, as well?
 - ▶ This story addresses our everyday lives. There are always people who appear more successful than us in some areas, and others who appear less successful. As in this biblical story, it is important that we focus on our own performance only and not evaluate ourselves based on other people's success. God simply wants us to try our best, to resist the temptation to compare ourselves with others and to take out our frustration on others when we are feeling that we have not done our best or that our best isn't good enough.
3. Direct the students to work in pairs to come up with realistic, modern Cain and Abel scenarios, asking some pairs to prepare feminine versions. Mention that the students may use sports, academics, parental approval, popularity, social life, and so on, in their examples. Invite them to share some of their stories with the class. Discuss the insights that arise.

Genesis, chapters 6–9, 12

Evan Almighty: Outrageous Requests

Objective: This activity utilizes the movie *Evan Almighty* to invite the students to reflect on God's outrageous requests and human beings' courageous responses.

Materials Needed:

- the movie *Evan Almighty* (2007, 96 minutes, rated PG and A-II) and the appropriate equipment for showing it

1. Begin class by having the students read Genesis 6:11–9:17 (the call of Noah) or Genesis, chapter 12 (the call of Abraham). Address any questions the students have about the content and biblical meaning of the story.
2. Show the students at least the first 40 minutes of the movie *Evan Almighty*, which gives a modern interpretation of Noah and Abraham's courage to follow an unusual call. Consider playing the entire movie if you have time.
3. Ask the students to think of real modern people who, like the main character in the movie, have responded to God's outrageous requests. Offer a few examples of your own. Engage the students in a discussion on the following questions:

- ▶ What do their examples, the example from the movie, and the story from the Bible teach about trusting God?
 - ▶ What do they teach about what God wants for us?
4. Arrange the students into small groups and ask each group to come up with an outrageous request that God might make to a group of four or five teens today. Explain that after writing that request down, each group should pass it on to another group, which will act out the teens' response to it, for the class. When all the groups have written a request and acted out a response, lead the class in a discussion about the following questions:
- ▶ How does God call young people?
 - ▶ What are the risks and challenges of God's call?
 - ▶ How does one learn to trust God?
 - ▶ What are some ways that young people can make a difference in the world?

Variation: In step 3, instruct the students to find and share newspaper, magazine, or Internet stories about people who have responded to God's outrageous calls.

Genesis, chapter 12

Sarai's Journal

Objective: This activity uses creative writing to draw the students into the story of Abram and Sarai, and allows them to experience the story from different perspectives.

1. Ask the students to read Genesis 12:10–20 to themselves. Invite them to share their thoughts about the personal dynamics in the story and to explore why the major characters behave as they do.
2. Depending on the time available, either direct the students to write all three of the following reflections, or divide the class in thirds and assign a different perspective to each third:
 - ✿ *Sarai's journal entry.* What does Sarai experience in Egypt? How does she feel about Abram?
 - ✿ *God's journal entry.* How does God feel about Sarai, Abram, and Pharaoh throughout this story?
 - ✿ *Abram's apology letter.* What might Abram say to Sarai to help her heal from her ordeal in Pharaoh's house?
3. When the students are done writing, gather them in small groups to compare their reflections. Then invite them to share the different perspectives of the story with the class.
4. As a personal reflection, have the students write in their journals, or on a piece of paper, about a time in their own life that resembled any aspect of this Genesis story. Ask them to write a prayer for God's healing from that situation.

Genesis

Oral Tradition

Objective: This activity employs a modified game of telephone to show the students that using oral tradition was a reliable way for the people of Israel to preserve the essence of their history.

1. Ask the students to note the detail in the Genesis accounts they have read, and explain that those stories were passed down by oral tradition before they were ever written down. Explain oral tradition and ask the following questions:
 - ▶ What were the benefits and risks of oral tradition for the Jewish people?
 - ▶ Would oral tradition be a successful way for us to keep track of information today? Why or why not?
2. Suggest that the class play a round of the telephone game to illustrate some of the risks of oral tradition. Whisper to one student a moderately complex sentence that has no particular meaning for the students, and ask that student to whisper it to the next, and so on, until the sentence has gone around the room. Do not allow the sentence to be repeated to any receiver.

When the sentence has made its round of the class, discuss its final form, which most likely will be quite different from the original. Note that often the message in the telephone game becomes garbled as it is passed on.

3. Play another round of telephone, this time beginning with a statement that will be valuable to the students, such as, "If we get this message right, there will be no homework tonight." If this too gets garbled, give a similar meaningful sentence and change the rules, allowing the sentence to be repeated to any receiver as often as necessary.

The students should be able to transmit the sentence successfully with this change. Point out that this sequence shows that oral tradition, in which meaningful stories are often repeated, was a successful means of preserving history for the people of Israel.

Genesis, chapter 22

The Sacrifice of Children

Objective: This activity encourages the students to examine Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac as an act of faith and to compare it with the unthinkable sacrifice of children that many adults participate in today.

Materials Needed:

- ✿ articles regarding children under age eighteen being "sacrificed" by adults in warfare, inhumane labor, or prostitution
- ✿ several sheets of newsprint
- ✿ several markers
- ✿ a bulletin board and pins or a sheet of poster board and glue

1. Begin by reading aloud Genesis, chapter 22 (the testing of Abraham). Emphasize that God is making it clear that God wants not Isaac's life—or any human life—but Abraham's faith.
2. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Give each group one of the articles you have gathered and a sheet of newsprint. Direct the students to read, discuss, and summarize

the article assigned to their group. Tell them to transfer to the newsprint the major pieces of information from the article (such as the country, the conditions under which the children live, the abuse, and the number of children involved.) Then ask each group to report its findings to the rest of the class.

3. Invite the students to share their thoughts and feelings on the situations they read and heard about. Ask if those situations help them imagine the pain of Abraham, who almost lost his child, and of countless parents who actually do lose children today. Also ask what they think they, as Christians, could do about the situations.
4. Tell the students about some human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International. Ask for volunteers to write letters on behalf of children in the situations they have discussed, or make writing such letters a class project. (Most likely, all will want to write a letter.) The organizations may provide you with sample letters, addresses, and other information you need. Mail or e-mail the letters.
5. Take pictures, headlines, or key phrases or words from the articles the students read and create a collage with them, either on a bulletin board in the classroom or on poster board. Have each small group write a short prayer about the plight of the children, and read one prayer aloud each time the class meets—as a reminder for the students to keep those children’s needs in their hearts and prayers.

Variation: In step 5, instead of having the students write letters, arrange for the class to sponsor a child through a relief organization.

Genesis, chapters 12, 15–18, 22

Abraham and Trust

This activity helps the students to see that even the spiritual journey of a pioneer of faith in God shares some of the characteristics of their own spiritual journeys.

Materials Needed:

- ✱ three sheets of paper, one labeled “High,” one “Average,” and one “Low”
- ✱ a roll of tape
- ✱ copies of the handout “The Ups and Downs of Trust” (p. 27), one for each student



Handout

1. Distribute the handout to the students and review its directions with them. They might complete the handout during class or as a homework assignment.
2. After the students have completed the handout, set up a continuum along one wall of the classroom, posting the “High” sign at one end, the “Average” sign in the middle, and the “Low” sign at the other end. For each Scripture reading about Abraham’s life on the handout, call on a student to summarize it, and then ask all the students to move to the spot on the continuum that matches what they graphed for it. Invite discussion after each reading, if you wish.
3. When all the readings about Abraham’s life have been covered, lead a class discussion about the students’ graphing of their own faith journeys. Talk about issues such as the following:
 - In what ways does your own faith journey resemble Abraham’s? In what ways does it differ?
 - What made trusting easier or more challenging for Abraham? What makes trusting easier for you? When do you find it more difficult to trust?

Conclude the discussion with comments like these:

- ▶ All spiritual people, even biblical models of faith and saints, find it difficult to trust at times. But faith-filled people keep trying again, with God's help, even when their trust has been challenged. Knowing that there are similarities between ourselves and those people can reassure us that we can grow spiritually despite our doubts. It can also remind us that God has a call for us, like God did for Abraham.

Genesis, chapter 32

Our Personal Wrestling with God

Objective: This activity encourages the students to reflect on the importance of turning to God with life's hard questions, to "wrestle with God" as Jacob wrestled with the angel.

CYB Article: "Facing Challenges" near Genesis 32:23–33, *NABRE*; Genesis 32:23–32, *NRSV*

Materials Needed:

- ✱ five articles from the Internet or other sources that describe a devastating news event (a natural disaster, an act of violence, poverty, and so on) and that will allow the students to analyze how God is or seemingly is not present
1. Divide the class into five small groups and distribute a different article to each group. Invite the students to carefully read the article and write down why it is difficult to witness God's presence in the specific situation. Ask the students to write down three questions that they would like to ask God about the situation.
 2. Invite the students in each small group to briefly describe the content of their article and to share the questions they have for God. Then ask them to point out ways they see God present despite the tragedy. If students do not provide any examples, be prepared to share your own observations of how you see God present.
 3. Have the students read aloud Genesis 32:23–33 (32:23–32, *NRSV*) and the accompanying article, "Facing Challenges," from the *CYB*. Offer the following observation in your own words:
 - ▶ Sometimes our faith is challenged by life's difficulties, and yet it is from these very experiences that we can ultimately deepen our faith in God. In this story, Jacob wrestles with God and sustains an injury in the struggle, but finally receives a blessing and finds his faith strengthened by this difficult experience.
 4. Invite the students to reflect on the following questions:
 - ▶ What event or difficulty in your own life has caused or is currently causing you to wrestle with God?
 - ▶ What is preventing you from recognizing God's presence?
 - ▶ What hard questions do you have for God?
 5. Ask each of the students to compose a letter to God that outlines their concerns and questions. Let the students know that it is okay to be angry with God, to truly "wrestle" with God. Tell them that the letter is for their own personal reflection and will not be shared with anyone. In the conclusion to their letter, have the students answer the following question: "How is God present in my situation, despite the challenges I face?"

Genesis, chapters 4, 25, 27, 29–30, 33, 37, 45

Sibling Rivalry

Objective: This activity begins with a discussion of various relationships in the Bible to help students recognize the reality of tension and models of forgiveness.

CYB Article: “Sibling Rivalry,” near Genesis 25:19–34

1. Break the class into four groups. Ask each group to read one of the following accounts of sibling rivalry:
 - ✿ Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1–16)
 - ✿ Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:19–34; Genesis, chapter 27)
 - ✿ Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29:1–30:24)
 - ✿ Joseph and his brothers (Genesis, chapter 37)

Encourage the students to discuss in their groups reasons for sibling rivalry and discord. Have each group prepare to act out for the class an example of sibling rivalry that someone in the group has experienced.
2. Allow the groups to present their examples of sibling rivalry. Then lead a class discussion of the particular challenges to forgiving hurts between family members.
3. For homework, instruct the students to read Genesis, chapter 33, in which Esau and Jacob reconcile, and Genesis, chapter 45, in which Joseph forgives his brothers. Have the students reflect on the questions in the article “Sibling Rivalry” from the *CYB* and then assign a reflection paper in which the students describe a time they either forgave or were forgiven by a sibling, another relative, or a friend.

Genesis, chapters 37–50

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Objective: This activity employs the lyrics and melodies of the Broadway musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* to help the story of Joseph come alive for the students.

Materials Needed:

- ✿ recording of the soundtrack for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Weber (1993), and the appropriate equipment for playing it

Each day that you examine the story of Joseph in class, play a song from the soundtrack that correlates with the part of the story you cover. The song “Close Every Door” is especially nice for prayer, as it is reflective and speaks to Joseph’s experience in jail and his need to rely on God.

Genesis, chapters 37, 39–45

Newsworthy Joseph

Objective: The students use the familiar format of news briefs to give one another a quick and entertaining overview of the Joseph stories.

1. Divide the class into five groups. Assign each group one of the following passages, and ask the groups to read their assigned passage as well as the chapter before and the chapter after it:
 - ✿ Genesis, chapter 37 (Joseph's brothers become jealous, and Joseph mysteriously disappears.)
 - ✿ Genesis, chapter 39 (Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of assault, and Joseph goes to jail.)
 - ✿ Genesis, chapters 40–41 (Joseph's dream interpretation gains him release from prison.)
 - ✿ Genesis, chapter 42 (Joseph's brothers make their first journey to Egypt.)
 - ✿ Genesis, chapters 43–45 (Joseph's brothers make a second trip to Egypt, and Joseph has a startling revelation.)
2. Ask the groups to present those sensational stories as brief newscasts, highlighting the important events, interviewing characters who were present, consulting authorities, and speculating about future developments. Mention that the use of humor, within reason, is fine. The groups could plan and rehearse their news briefs in one class period, gather props at home, then present their skits in the following class period.
3. After the news briefs are shared, discuss the stories and characters with the class, noting any insights that came from the reading, preparation, or presentation. Help the students understand the purpose and meaning of the story of Joseph and his brothers.

Genesis, chapters 12, 34, 38–39

Sex and Power in Genesis

Objective: This activity encourages the students to examine and discuss examples of the abuse of sex and power in Genesis in order to gain insight into similar situations today.

1. Read Genesis, chapter 34, with the class. Ask the students to identify which characters have more power, which have less, and why that is so (e.g., they might determine that Shechem is powerful because he is male and a prince). Then ask the students, "In the story, is power used for sex, or is sex used for power?"
2. Divide the class into three groups. As an in-class or homework assignment, tell each group to read a different one of the stories listed below. Individually, in writing, the students should assess which biblical figures in their assigned story are more powerful and less powerful, and decide how sex and power are linked in the story. They should also reflect on the way they see sex and power in our modern society (have them provide specific examples), and share any insights about why those two human experiences are often seen together.
 - ✿ Genesis 12:10–20 (Sarai and Abram in Egypt)
 - ✿ Genesis, chapter 38 (Judah and Tamar)
 - ✿ Genesis, chapter 39 (Potiphar's wife and Joseph)

3. After the students have completed their reflections on the stories, on modern parallels, and on the relation between sex and power, invite them to share those reflections with the class. Then make the following points in your own words:
 - ▶ Sex and power are complicated issues, as can be seen in the various ways that they appear in the biblical stories. There are many loving ways to use power and sexuality *[talk about those]*. Both are gifts from God and are strong aspects of the human personality. Although it is tempting to use such forceful drives for selfishness, the message of the gospels is to use all our gifts with respect for the dignity of other persons, in service, and in love.

Genesis, chapter 45

Good Out of Evil

Objective: This activity offers a reflection on the story of Joseph and other stories in Genesis in order to invite the students to see the ways that God works in our lives, using even our human failings.

CYB Article: “Good from Bad” near Genesis 45:5–8

1. Read Genesis 45:1–15 and discuss the way that good comes out of Joseph’s mistreatment by his brothers. Ask the students, “How does Joseph see God’s action in this event?”
2. Invite the students to identify in their own lives, or in the lives of people they know, similar situations in which human sin or selfishness caused difficulty, yet the end result was better than the original situation (e.g., a person was unjustly fired from a good job only to get a better one). Ask them each to write a short essay about one such event, answering these questions: “Do you see God’s hand in this? Why or why not?” When the students have finished, invite them to share their reflections in a class discussion.

Genesis

A Family Tree and a Review

Objective: This activity asks the students to design a family tree, beginning with Abraham, as a way to help them review stories at the end of Genesis.

CYB Article: “Israel’s Ancestry” near Genesis, chapter 49

Materials Needed:

- ✱ sheets of poster board, one for each student
- ✱ several sets of colored markers

1. Distribute the poster board and markers, and ask the students to create the family tree of Abraham, leaving space around each name for further writing or design. You may need to review with them how to lay out a family tree.
2. Tell the students to find and skim the stories in Genesis associated with each figure on the tree. Instruct them to add to the chart symbols, words, or small illustrations that will help them remember the stories.

The Ups and Downs of Trust

Read or review the Bible stories about Abraham listed below. Then assess Abraham's level of trust in God in each account (high, medium, or low) and mark a dot at that level on the scale below the Bible cite. When you have assessed the trust level in all the accounts, connect the dots and make a graph. Below the graph, in a different color ink, write some important events in your own life and graph your own level of trust in God during those events. Compare the two graphs.

Abraham's life	Genesis 12:1–9	Genesis 12:10–20	Genesis 15:1–6	Genesis 16:1–6	Genesis, chapter 17	Genesis 18:16–33	Genesis 22:1–19
High _____							
Medium _____							
Low _____							

My own life							
High _____							
Medium _____							
Low _____							

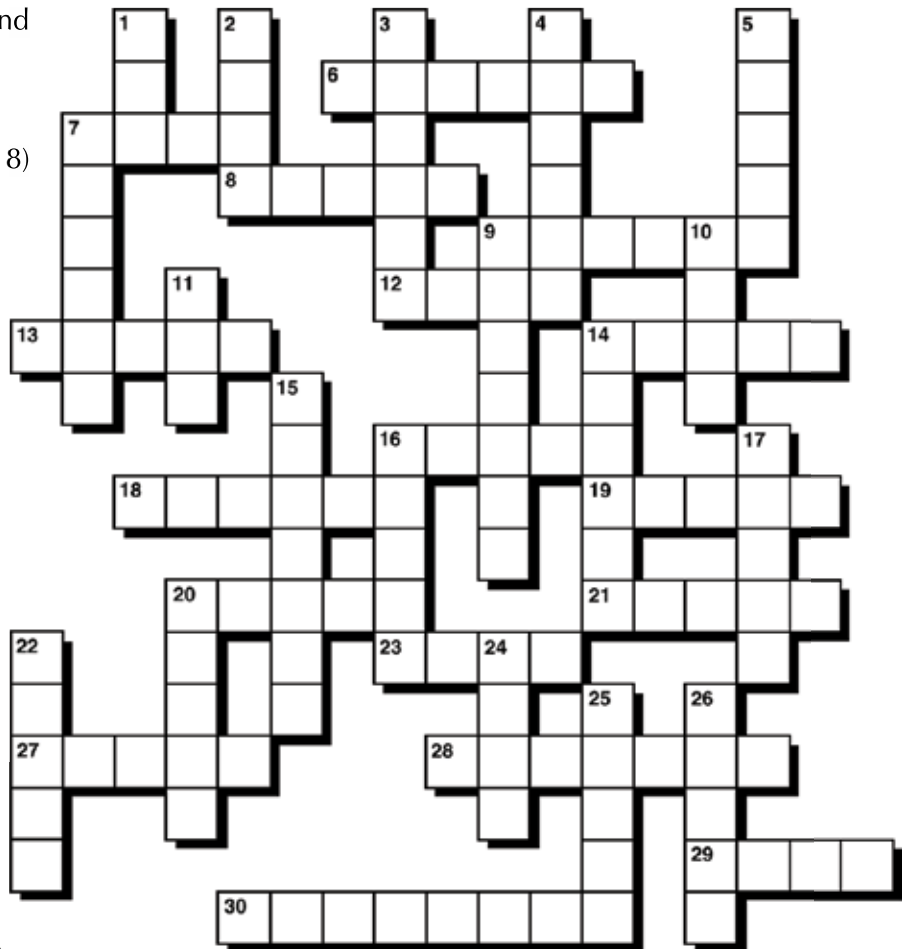


Review Puzzle: THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The story of the patriarchs and matriarchs of the Old Testament is found in chapters 12 through 50 of the Book of Genesis. Test your knowledge of the patriarchs and matriarchs by completing the crossword below. If you get stumped, refer to the Bible references after each clue.

ACROSS

6. Area in Egypt to which Jacob and his sons moved. (47:1)
7. Esau sold Jacob his birthright for this. (25:29–34)
8. Kingdom of Melchizedek. (14:18)
9. He wanted to spare Joseph. (37:21)
12. Jacob was born holding Esau's _____. (25:26)
13. Abraham pleaded for this city. (18:20–33)
14. His father nearly sacrificed him. (22:1–14)
16. Jail mate of Joseph. (40:1–3)
18. Favorite wife of Jacob. (29:30)
19. Abraham's original name. (17:5)
20. God told Abraham his descendants would be as numerous as these. (15:5)
21. Father-in-law of Jacob. (29:16–28)
23. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of this. (19:26)
27. Daughter of Jacob and Leah. (30:19–21)
28. Sarah did this when she heard she would be a mother. (18:12)
29. Leah's ____ are mentioned in the Bible. (29:17)
30. God and Abraham's agreement. (15:18–21)



DOWN

1. Nephew who traveled with Abram. (12:4–5)
2. Animals in Pharaoh's dream. (41:1–2)
3. Favorite son of Israel (Jacob). (37:3)
4. Jacob spent the night here. (28:10–22)
5. Jacob's sons went to Egypt to get this. (42:1–3)
7. Joseph took him into custody. (42:24)
9. She plotted to trick Isaac. (27:5–17)
10. Jacob's twin. (25:24–26)
11. Benjamin, to Rachel. (35:24)
14. Jacob's name was changed to this. (32:28–29)
15. Firstborn son of Abram. (16:15)
16. "I will ____ those who bless you." (12:3)
17. Starting place for Abram's journey to the promised land. (12:4)
20. Wife of Abraham. (17:15)
22. Son of Jacob. (35:23)
24. Mother of Reuben. (35:23)
25. Sarai and Abram traveled here. (12:10–13)
26. Number of years Jacob offered to work to marry Rachel. (29:18)



APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

Review Puzzle Solutions

GENESIS (p. 28)

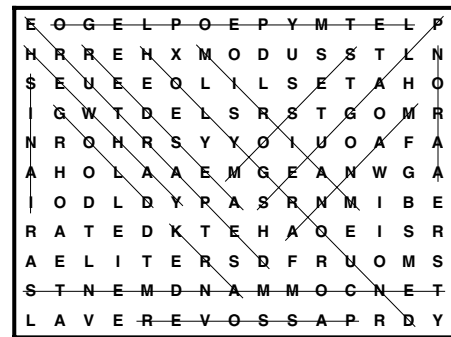


EXODUS (p. 38)

WORDS HIDDEN IN WORD SEARCH:

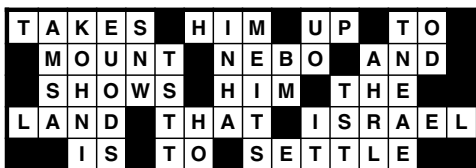
1. DEPARTURE
2. MOSES
3. HOLY GROUND
4. YAHWEH
5. AARON
6. LET MY PEOPLE GO
7. PLAGUES

8. PASSOVER
9. RED SEA
10. MIRIAM
11. MANNA
12. SINAI
13. TEN
COMMANDMENTS
14. ARK
15. GOLD



FILL-IN ANSWER: EXODUS TELLS THE STORY OF HOW GOD LIBERATED THE ISRAELITES FROM SLAVERY.

DEUTERONOMY (p. 50)



1 SAMUEL (p. 71)



2 SAMUEL (p. 76)

FILL-IN ANSWER:

DAVID WAS THE . . .

GREATEST KING
OF
ISRAELEVENT ORDER, WITH LETTERS TO BE INSERTED
IN BLANK SPACES AT THE BOTTOM:

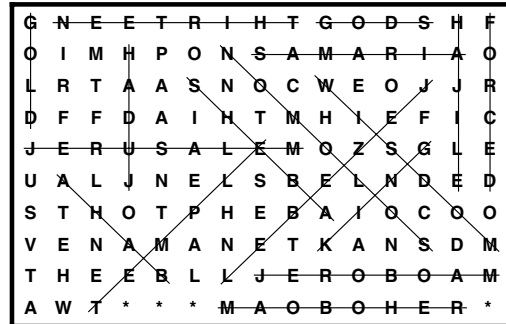
(1) 15	A	(10) 2	R
(2) 14	R	(11) 4	A
(3) 13	S	(12) 1	G
(4) 12	I	(13) 7	K
(5) 8	I	(14) 3	E
(6) 6	ST	(15) 10	G
(7) 9	N	(16) 11	OF
(8) 5	TE	(17) 17	L
(9) 16	E		

1 KINGS (p. 88)

WORDS HIDDEN IN
WORD SEARCH:

1. SOLOMON
2. WISDOM
3. SHEBA
4. TEMPLE
5. THIRTEEN
6. FORCED
7. GOLD
8. GODS

9. JEROBOAM
10. REHOBOAM
11. JUDAH
12. KING
13. JERUSALEM
14. SAMARIA
15. AHAB
16. ELIJAH
17. JEZEBEL



FILL-IN ANSWER: IMPORTANCE OF
FAITHFULNESS TO THE
COVENANT AND THE LAW

JOB (p. 112)

SCRAMBLED WORDS UNSCRAMBLLED
(KEY LETTERS IN BOLD)

TANSA	=	SATAN
VYIRETGNHE	=	EVERYTHING
SUCRE DGO	=	CURSE GOD
HIATF	=	FAITH
TOCOFMR	=	COMFORT
EEBDTA	=	DEBATE
SUPIGHNIN	=	PUNISHING
CENNIECON	=	INNOCENCE
LUWOPFER	=	POWERFUL

FILL-IN ANSWER:

The theme of the Book of Job is . . .

WHY DO GOOD PEOPLE SUFFER?

PSALMS (p. 123)

1. They declare the glory of God.

THE Y D ECL ARE TH E G LOR Y O F G OD

2. God is a shepherd and a gracious host.

GOD IS A SHE PHE RD AND A GRA CIO US HOS T

3. God is our light and salvation.

GOD IS OU R L IGH T A ND SAL VAT ION

4. They were made by the word of God.

THE Y W ERE MA DE BY THE WO RD OF GOD

5. May God be gracious to us and bless us.

MAY GO D B E G RAC IOU S T O U S A ND BLE SS US

6. Sing a new song to the Lord.

SIN G A NE W S ONG TO TH E L ORD

7. He is good and his love endures forever.

HE IS GOO D A ND HIS LO VE END URE S F ORE VER

8. We should rejoice and be glad.

WE SHO UL D RE JOI CE AND BE GL AD

9. His word is a lamp to my feet.

HIS WO RD IS A L AMP TO MY FE ET

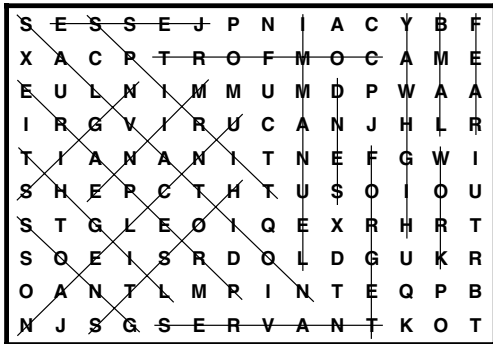
10. He is gracious and merciful.

HE IS GRA CIO US AND ME RCI FUL

ISAIAH (p. 150)

WORDS HIDDEN IN WORD SEARCH:

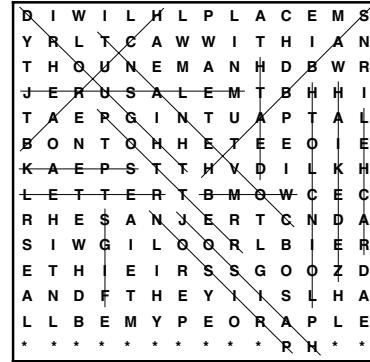
1. HOSTS
2. UNCLEAN
3. SEND
4. SIGN; IMMANUEL
5. JESSE; SPIRIT
6. COMFORT
7. PREPARE; HIGHWAY
8. SERVANT
9. SONG
10. FEAR; MINE
11. LIGHT; SALVATION
12. FORGET
13. LAMB
14. WORK



JEREMIAH (p. 157)

WORDS HIDDEN IN WORD SEARCH:

1. WOMB
2. SPEAK
3. JERUSALEM
4. LOINCLOTH
5. DROUGHT
6. SABBATH
7. POTTER
8. FIGS
9. DEATH
10. LETTER
11. COVENANT
12. BARUCH
13. PRISON
14. RACHEL
15. JOSIAH
16. ZEDEKIAH



FILL-IN ANSWER: "I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

—Jeremiah 31:33 (NABRE)

HOSEA (p. 170)

ANSWER TO CLUES (KEY LETTERS IN BOLD)

1. GOMER
2. LOVE
3. EGYPT
4. UNFAITHFUL
5. ASSYRIA
6. KING
7. PARENT
8. SAVIOR
9. NORTHERN
10. WHIRLWIND
11. FREELY
12. KNOWLEDGE
13. LORD
14. MARRIAGE
15. IDOLS

HIDDEN PHRASE: RETURN TO THE LORD

MATTHEW (p. 205)

KEY LETTERS ARE IN BOLD (NUMBERS, LEFT TO RIGHT, CORRESPOND TO NUMBERS IN FILL-IN ANSWER)

1. EMMANUEL (33, 4, 23)
2. FRANKINCENSE (19, 28, 20, 42, 5)
3. BAPTISM (18, 36, 47, 43, 6, 7)
4. TEMPTATION (46, 11, 39, 24, 17)
5. THE BEATITUDES (9, 2, 25, 48, 44, 30, 35, 13)
6. JUDGE (1, 22)
7. TWELVE (8, 16, 37, 38)
8. COVENANT (31, 12, 32, 15, 34)
9. PETER (45, 29, 10)
10. RESURRECTION (26, 3, 27, 40, 14, 41, 21)

FILL-IN ANSWER:

JESUS IS THE MESSIAH
WHO BRINGS LIBERATION
AND SALVATION
TO ALL PEOPLE.

MARK (p. 216)

HEMORRHAGES GAROHEHMERS Mark 5:25–34 6	UNCLEAN SPIRIT NEALUNC TIPIRS Mark 1:21–28 1	BLIND LINBD Mark 8:22–26 8
DEAF FAED Mark 7:31–37 7	WITHERED HAND DEITHWER DAHN Mark 3:1–6 5	LEPER PLREE Mark 1:40–45 3
FEVER RFVEE Mark 1:29–31 2	POINT OF DEATH NTIPO FO AEDHT Mark 5:21–24, 35–43 9	PARALYTIC TIAPYACLR Mark 2:1–11 4

ALL NUMBERS ADD TO 15

LUKE (p. 232)

KEY LETTERS ARE IN BOLD
(NUMBERS TO THE LEFT CORRESPOND
TO NUMBERS IN THE FILL-IN ANSWER)

1. ELIZ**AB**ETH (7,10)
2. **S**HE**P**HERDS (6,1)
3. SAM**AR**ITAN (9,13)
4. **L**AZARUS (2)
5. TAX **C**OL**L**E**C**TOR (12,5)
6. ZACCH**AE**US (3)
7. **W**IDOW (11)
8. **C**RIM**IN**AL (4,8)

FILL-IN ANSWER:

Luke's Gospel makes it clear that Mary o
Nazareth has a special place in God's . . .

PLAN OF SALVATION.

JOHN (p. 243)

STATEMENTS:

1. WORD OF GOD
2. LIGHT OF LIFE
3. ONLY SON OF GOD
4. BREAD OF LIFE
5. LIGHT OF THE WORLD
6. GATE FOR THE SHEEP
7. GOOD SHEPHERD
8. RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE
9. WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE
10. VINE AND WE ARE THE BRANCHES

CODE:

A = ☆	J = none	S = ✱
B = ●	K = none	T = ☼
C = ✱	L = ☆	U = ✱
D = ☆	M = none	V = █
E = ☆	N = ▼	W = ▲
F = □	O = ☆	X = none
G = ✧	P = ✱	Y = □
H = ○	Q = none	Z = none
I = ✚	R = ✱	

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (p. 257)



LETTER TO THE ROMANS (p. 271)



FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS (p. 279)

FIRST AND SECOND
LETTERS TO TIMOTHY (p. 301)

Dear Timothy,

Train yourself in devotion to God, since it holds a **PROMISE** of life. Do not let anyone criticize your efforts just because you are young; rather, set an **EXAMPLE**. Do not neglect the **GIFT** you have. Dress with **MODESTY**. **AVOID** profane conversation. Do not engage in foolish and ignorant debates for you know that will lead to **QUARRELS**. Treat all people with respect, as if they were **YOUR FAMILY**. Be **STRONG** through the grace of Jesus; endure your share of **HARDSHIP**. Do your best to present yourself as acceptable to **GOD**. Turn from your **YOUTHFUL** passions and desires, and pursue virtue. Remain **FAITHFUL** to what you have learned and believe. **PROCLAIM** the word; be persistent whether it is **CONVENIENT** or inconvenient. Fight the good fight of faith and secure the **ETERNAL LIFE** to which you were called and for which you were created.

The grace of the Lord be with you,

Paul

REVELATION TO JOHN (p. 327)



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

(continued from copyright page)

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