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Great People of the **BIBLE**

Catechist Guide

**25 Easy-to-Use
Sessions for Teaching
Salvation History**

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Introduction

Great People of the Bible

Welcome to *Great People of the Bible Catechist Guide: Twenty-five Easy-to-Use Sessions for Teaching Salvation History*. These interactive sessions will help your young people grow in awareness of salvation history, as well as develop biblical literacy. The sessions introduce the participants to important Bible people and topics, showing how they fit into God's loving plan for our salvation. The catechist guide's easy-to-follow instructions enable volunteer catechists to connect Bible stories to Church teachings and to help the students connect those teachings with their daily lives.

Tips for Leading Sessions

Great People of the Bible Catechist Guide has been designed to make the catechist's preparation for leading sessions straightforward and as simple as possible. This section will walk you through planning a typical session, providing you with important background and tips for using the sessions effectively.

Session Time Frame

This catechist's guide has been created for 60-minute sessions. To use all the session components included here, the participants should complete the appropriate student textbook background sheet and activity page at home before each session. (If your class sessions are 75 minutes long, the participants could begin work on the background sheets and activity pages at the end of each session to prepare for the next session.) This approach has several benefits, as follows:

- The participants will begin sessions with a base of knowledge.
- They will carry into the home the lessons and information they learn about the Bible.
- They won't miss out on any of the session activities included in this guide.

Consider informing parents of your expectation that the participants come to sessions having completed the assigned student textbook pages. You can hold an introductory parent meeting, use e-mail, or send an announcement home with the participants.

Alternative Option

If requiring at-home work is not possible, you may skip the Bible Story Sharing in each session and allow the participants to read the background sheets in class. You can then encourage them to complete each session's activity page—a puzzle—at home after the session. If you take this approach, look for the Note Alternative Option reminders throughout the sessions. Suggestions for completing the reading in class may be found in *Suggestions for Reading Together*, found later in this introduction.

Materials and Preparation

Besides becoming familiar with the session steps and activities, you will need minimal advance preparation for the sessions. For example, you may need to gather supplies, make photocopies of handouts, and do some background reading. This preparation is outlined at the beginning of each session under the heading Materials and Preparation.

Quick-Start Activity

The first thing under Session Steps in each session is the Quick-Start Activity. These simple activities engage the participants with something fun and intriguing while they wait for the session to begin. You may write the directions on the board before the participants arrive, leaving you free to greet the participants as they arrive and to recruit volunteers. In each session the Quick-Start Activity is referred to again later in the Integration Activity.

Prayer Times

Each session begins and ends with a short prayer time. Young adolescents respond well to ritual, so the opening prayer always begins with a candle bearer and Bible bearer processing in and proclaiming the words, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.”

Another ritual element is a special prayer space in your meeting area where the participants can gather for the opening and closing prayers. Your prayer space could consist of a table with a nice tablecloth or other covering and a Bible stand. If possible, create a space where the Bible may be displayed during the sessions, along with a portrait of the Bible person the class is studying, created by students during the first session. (See session 1, “Salvation History,” for instructions for completing this activity.)

The participants should be involved in the prayer times as much as possible. If they are willing and able, they can read the Scripture passages and prayers, even if the directions do not call for volunteer readers.

Bible Story Sharing

The Bible Story Sharing part of each session helps the participants become familiar with using the Bible and connecting the lives of the Bible people with their own lives. This sharing begins with a reading from the Sacred Scriptures about the Bible person or topic. (See Suggestions for Reading Together, on the following page, for ways to have the participants read the Sacred Scriptures aloud.)

After the reading you will lead a discussion using three questions as a guide. The first question checks whether the participants have understood the passage. The second question helps the participants place themselves in the story in some way. The third question helps the participants see a connection between the Bible person’s life and their own lives. Bible Story Sharing ends with a brief statement that summarizes the central teaching or connection that emerges from the passage.

Note Alternative Option: Omit Bible Story Sharing if you choose to have the participants read the background sheets in their student textbooks during the session. Instead of sharing, the participants would use this time to complete the reading. You may wish to use the techniques outlined in Suggestions for Reading Together.

Review Student Textbook Activity Page

During this part of the session, you will review the materials in the student textbook that the participants completed at home before the session. This material includes a background sheet with information about the Bible person or topic and an activity page. An answer key for the puzzles on the activity pages is included in the appendix at the back of this catechist's guide. You may check the activity pages in a number of ways:

- Simply read the answers to the participants.
- Call on participants to provide their answers.
- Choose a different participant to lead the review for each session.
- Invite the participants to swap books and check each other's work.
- Let the participants share and correct their work in small groups of three or four.

Note Alternative Option: Omit this part of the session if you choose to have the participants complete the activity pages at home after the session.

After checking the activity pages, you will briefly summarize the main points about the Bible person or topic. These points, highlighting key ideas from the background sheets, are listed for you in this catechist guide.

Integration Activity

The Integration Activity helps the participants gain a deeper understanding of salvation history and incorporate the lessons of the Bible into their daily lives. The Integration Activity generally begins with a discussion about the Quick-Start Activity. That discussion leads into an activity about a specific teaching based on the session's topic. Recognizing that every young adolescent learns differently, these activities use one or more of the following teaching techniques: drama, hands-on activities, physical movement, mental challenges, and creativity.

The Integration Activity generally ends by further helping the participants connect what they have just learned to their daily lives.

Announcements and Closing Prayer

The Announcements and Closing Prayer provide you with time to make announcements, as well as to assign the background sheets and activity pages as homework for the next session. A suggested simple closing prayer is also included.

Suggestions for Reading Together

Each session includes the reading of passages from the Sacred Scriptures. Remind the participants of the reverence and respect needed when the Scriptures are read. You may also ask the participants to read the student textbook background sheets during the session. Encourage the participants to read slowly and loudly and assure them that you will help with pronunciation as needed. The participants may read together in a variety of ways:

- Ask for a different volunteer to read aloud each session.
- Have each participant read a verse or sentence in turn.
- Ask several volunteers to read paragraphs in turn.
- If the passage is a narrative with several characters speaking, ask one participant to be the narrator and others to be the characters.
- Read the passage in echo fashion. To do this, you read a line, and the participants repeat it after you.

Resources

Essential Resources

The following two resources are used in the sessions and should be available during class:

- *Great People of the Bible*. This is the student textbook, containing background sheets and activity pages.
- *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Catholic Bible. Some sessions include suggestions for using the articles found in the *Breakthrough!* Bible. If you use another Bible, consider using the Good News Translation (GNT), which is age-appropriate, or the New American Bible (NAB), which is the basis for the *Lectionary*.

Recommended Resources

Saint Mary's Press offers other resources to supplement the sessions:

- *Breakthrough! The Bible Board Game*. Travel through various biblical eras (primeval history to early Christianity), answering questions about people of the Bible that address the who, where, when, what, how, and why of their places in salvation history. Players determine the length of time and game play by choosing from any of the designated starting and stopping points on the board—for example, the Garden of Eden, Egypt, the Promised Land, and the Temple—with New Jerusalem as the final destination. The team or individual who collects the most character cards wins the game.
- *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics Bible People Flash Cards*
These flash cards are trading-sized cards that will help young adolescents learn about Bible people and events.
- *Bible Literacy Made Easy*
This practical guide provides catechists, teachers, and youth ministers with the background necessary to form biblically literate young adolescents. In just a few hours, leaders will learn to teach the ABCs of biblical literacy to young people as follows:

- **Access:** Help young people become knowledgeable and comfortable in using the Bible.
- **Big picture:** Help young people know and understand the biblical story of salvation history.
- **Context:** Help young people understand how to interpret Bible books and passages in their proper contexts.
- *Saint Mary's Press Essential Quick Chart: Bible People*
This chart provides an overview of thirty-three key people in the Bible. From Adam and Eve in the Old Testament to Priscilla and Aquila of the New Testament, this chart of Bible people shows how their lives point to or radiate from Jesus, the epicenter of salvation history.

Appendix: Answer Key

The appendix, found at the end of this catechist guide, contains the answer key for the puzzles that appear on the activity pages of *Great People of the Bible*.

Final Thoughts

Before you begin this exciting journey through salvation history with your young people, allow us to thank you for your willingness to hand on the faith tradition and help make it relevant to the lives of your young adolescents. Through your efforts these young people can grow in their love for the Sacred Scriptures and discover their own place in God's loving plan for our salvation. By helping them find their own story in the stories of the Bible people, you are giving them a gift that will last them a lifetime.

Chapter 1

Salvation History

Session Focus

- The participants will learn key facts about salvation history:
 - It is the story of how God saves us from sin and death and brings us to eternal life because of God's great love for us.
 - It spans both the Old and New Testaments.
 - It culminates in the life, Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - Through our faith the story of salvation history becomes part of our own story, because God's plan is for us to have eternal life.
- The participants will briefly study the stories of each of the Bible people and reflect on key questions:
 - What unique qualities does each Bible person display?
 - Which Bible people are already familiar, and which do you look forward to learning more about?

At a Glance

- A. Quick-Start Activity: Favorite Family Vacation (5 minutes)
- B. Opening Prayer Ritual (5 minutes)
- C. Bible Story Sharing: Jesus, the Way to the Father (10 minutes)
- D. Review Student Textbook Activity Page (10 minutes)
- E. Integration Activity: The People of Salvation History (25 minutes)
- F. Announcements and Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

For each participant:

- Bible and student textbook
- pencil

- ❑ handout 1–A, “Bible Person’s Picture Frame”
- ❑ colored pencils or crayons

Additional materials:

- ❑ tape

Other Preparation Steps

- ❑ Mark Luke 1:1–4 in the Bible that will be used in the opening prayer ritual.
- ❑ Choose two participants to process in with the Bible and a candle for the opening prayer ritual, providing directions as needed.
- ❑ Make a copy of resource 1–A, “Bible People,” and cut it into strips.

Background Reading

- Read the background page about salvation history on page 6 of the student textbook, including the suggested Bible passages.

Session Steps

A. Quick-Start Activity: Favorite Family Vacation (5 minutes)

1. **Write** the following on the board:
 - Pair up with someone in the class and share a story about your favorite family vacation or trip. Once you have both shared your stories, find a new person to pair up with and share your stories. Keep switching partners until you have talked with everybody in the class or until I say time is up.
2. As the participants arrive, **instruct** them to follow the directions on the board.

B. Opening Prayer Ritual (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the Bible bearer and candle bearer to take their places just outside the room or in the back of the room. **Gather** everyone else to stand around your prayer table. **Make** the Sign of the Cross and lead everyone in saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.”
2. **Invite** the Bible bearer and candle bearer to silently process up to the prayer table and turn to face the group. The Bible bearer then **reads** the Scripture verse you have marked, Luke 1:1–4. When finished, the reader says, “The Word of the Lord.” Everyone responds, “Thanks be to God.” The Bible bearer and candle bearer then place the Bible and candle on the prayer table and go to their places.

3. Invite everyone to sit down. **Introduce** salvation history with these or similar words:

- ▶ During this course we will explore many different and amazing people found in the Bible. These people have laid the foundation for the faith we profess today. We will hear stories of great faith and great weakness, but all the stories tell how God worked through these people's lives to fulfill God's plan for humanity. Together all these stories find their meaning in one person, Jesus Christ, who brought salvation to the world. The individual stories are part of a bigger story, the story of salvation history. We will explore that big picture today.

C. Bible Story Sharing: Jesus, the Way to the Father (10 minutes)

Note Alternative Option: Omit step C if you choose to have the participants read the background sheet in the student textbook during class. Instead, the participants would use the time to complete the reading. You may wish to use the methods outlined in Suggestions for Reading Together, in the introduction to this catechist guide.

1. **Direct** the participants to open their Bibles to John 14:1–7. Provide help as needed but encourage the participants to find the passage on their own. **Read** the passage together. See the introduction in this catechist guide for different ways to do this.

2. **Lead** the group in a short reflection on the Bible passage. Encourage all the participants to share their thoughts.

- ▶ Where is Jesus going to prepare a place for the disciples? Why? (*Answer: Jesus says he is going to his Father's house to prepare a place for them so Jesus, the Father, and all of them may be together.*)

- ▶ When you think of Jesus preparing a place for you in Heaven, what do you imagine?

- ▶ How should a person live in order to enter Heaven?

3. **Summarize** the meaning of this Bible passage in these or similar words:

- ▶ It can be fun to think about Heaven. Jesus' description of the Father's house gives us a wonderful image of what Heaven will be like: a welcoming place where God the Father lives with the people and the people live in unity and peace forever with Jesus. Living in perfect peace with God and one another is a wonderful goal to strive for throughout our lives. We are fortunate to have a Bible full of stories of men and women who played a role in God's plan for salvation. By studying their stories, we can better understand our own journey of faith and the path to Heaven.

D. Review Student Textbook Activity Page (10 minutes)

Note Alternative Option: Omit step D–1 if you choose to have the participants complete the activity page at home after the session.

1. Ask the participants to **turn to the activity** on page 7 in the student textbook. Ask them to **check** their completed work as you review the answers. See the introduction in this catechist’s guide for suggestions on how to do this.
2. After checking the answers, **summarize** key aspects of salvation history by **presenting the following points:**
 - ▶ The Bible shows God’s plan to free us from sin and bring us to eternal life. Together, the events in the Bible that make up that plan are called salvation history.
 - ▶ Salvation history can be broken down into eight different parts. In the Old Testament we have the first six: primeval history; patriarchs; Egypt and the Exodus; settling the Promised Land; kingdoms of Judah and Israel; and the Exile and return. The New Testament contains the final two parts: the life of Jesus Christ and the early Christian Church.
 - ▶ The stories that reveal salvation history include men and women who showed great faith and sometimes great weakness. Yet all their stories witness to the un-failing love and mercy of God, who works through ordinary people to establish an everlasting relationship with each of us.

E. Integration Activity: The People of Salvation History (25 minutes)

In this activity the participants will explore the many individuals they will study during this course. The participants will only scratch the surface of one of the Bible people and then share what they have learned. By doing so, all the participants will get a taste of sessions to come.

1. **Ask** volunteers to share some of the interesting stories they heard from other participants during the Quick-Start Activity about favorite family trips or vacations. Then ask them to think about their own stories they shared. **Lead** a brief discussion, using the following questions as a guide:
 - ▶ Why did you pick the story you did?
 - ▶ Does your story reveal something about you or your family?

Then **continue** with these or similar words:

- ▶ Our family stories often reveal something about who we are and what we think is important. The same is true for the stories in the Bible. They say something about who

we are as Christians and what we think is important. During our sessions together, we will explore the stories of many different people in our faith, so today we will take a quick look at each of the people we will study.

2. Give each participant a slip of paper cut from resource 1–A, “Bible People,” with the names of their person and a Bible passage. Also give each participant a copy of handout 1–A, “Bible Person’s Picture Frame.” **Explain** that the participants will read the assigned Bible passage for their person. Then they will write the name of their person in the oval on the picture frame. On the three lines across the top of the picture, they will write three words that describe their person. In the middle of the picture frame, they will draw a picture of the scene described in their Bible passage.
3. After sufficient time **invite** the participants to share their work. Have them present the Bible people in the order they appear in the course. After each presentation ask the participants to tape their frames to a wall. By the end you will have a row of portraits that can be referred to frequently over the course of your sessions.

Then **ask** the following questions:

- ▶ Whose story sounds the most interesting to you?
- ▶ Whose story do you know little about but are interested in learning more?

Then refer to the wall of pictures and **conclude** with these or similar words:

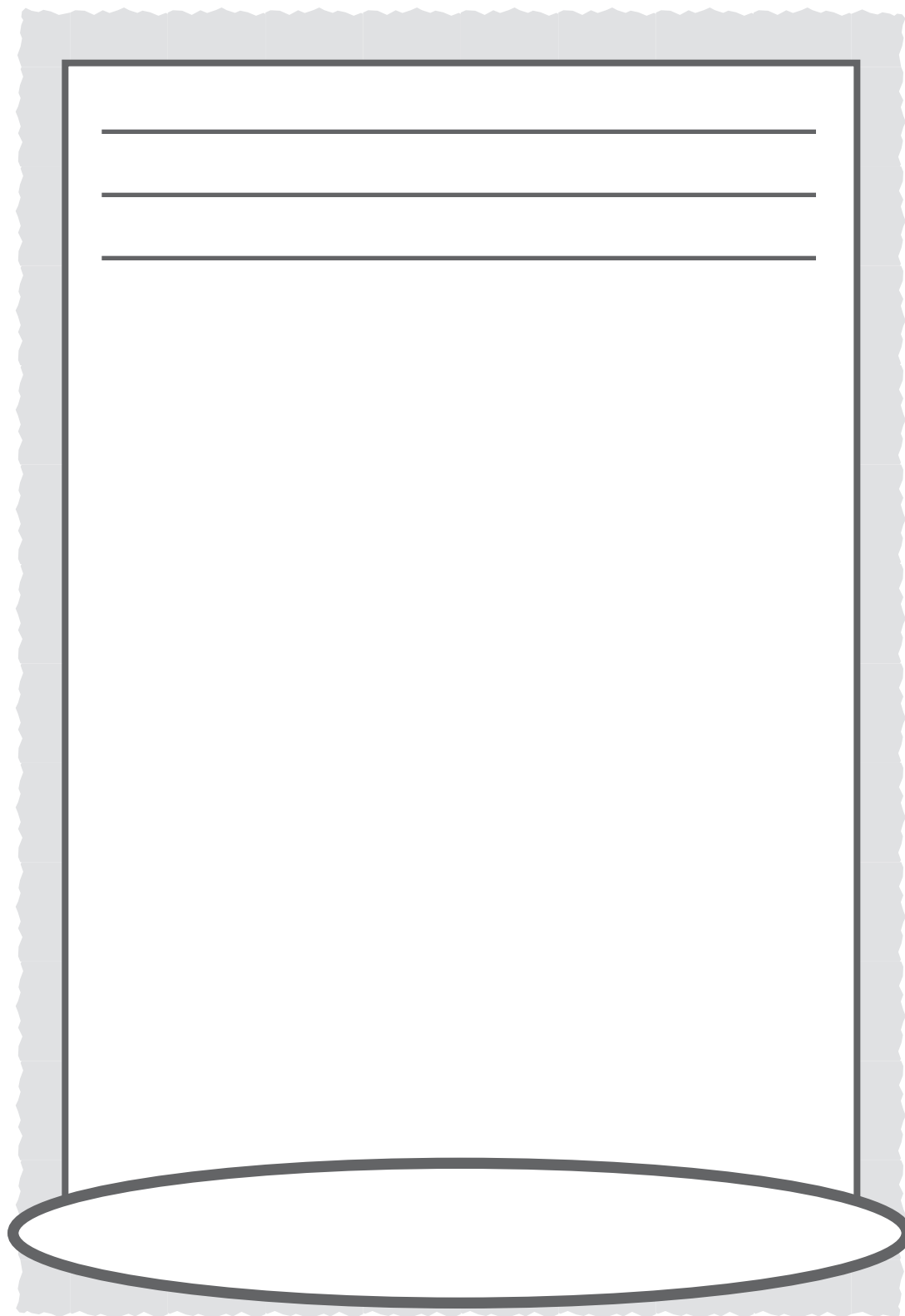
- ▶ As our course progresses, we will learn a lot about each of these amazing people—their triumphs and their failures and how their stories help make up salvation history. Most important, we will learn of the amazing love God has for each of us and the lengths to which God will go to have a loving relationship with us.

(*Note:* Leave the portraits up for the rest of the course if possible. If not, you may wish to set the appropriate picture on the prayer table for each lesson. You will need all the portraits during the final session.)

F. Announcements and Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. Make any needed **announcements**. **Assign** the background page to read and the activity to fill out for the next session if you will have the participants work on this at home.
2. Close by **leading** the participants in a short prayer, perhaps like the following:
 - ▶ God, the story of your loving plan for us is amazing. Guide us as we learn about many of the wonderful people you chose to help you accomplish your plan of salvation for the world. May we learn from their stories so the story of salvation may become our own story. Amen.

Bible Person's Picture Frame



Bible People

Cut this resource into strips along the dotted lines. You will give each participant a Bible person to read about during step E, “Integration Activity: The People of Salvation History.”

Adam and Eve	Genesis 3:21–23	Ezekiel	Ezekiel 37:1–14
Noah	Genesis 7:1–24	Ezra and Nehemiah	Ezra 7:6–10
Abraham and Sarah	Genesis 12:1–9	The Maccabees	1 Maccabees 2:15–26
Moses	Exodus 3:1–22	Mary of Nazareth	Luke 1:26–38
Joshua	Joshua 3:1–17	John the Baptist	Matthew 3:1–6
Samson	Judges 16:23–30	Jesus, the Christ	John 13:1–6
Ruth	Ruth 1:1–18	Peter	Matthew 16:13–19
King David	1 Samuel 17:41–50	Mary Magdalene	Matthew 28:1–10
King Solomon	1 Kings 3:1–12	Paul	Acts 16:16–30
Isaiah	Isaiah 6:1–8	Priscilla and Aquila	Acts 18:24–26

Chapter 2

Introduction to the Old Testament

Session Focus

- The participants will learn key facts about the Old Testament:
 - It is also called the Hebrew Bible, and it tells the history of God’s Covenant with the Chosen People.
 - It contains different types of writings, including history and poetry.
 - It can be broken down into four distinct sections.
 - Understanding the Old Testament is necessary if we wish to understand the New Testament.
- The participants will learn about the sections of the Old Testament:
 - They will find passages in the Old Testament.
 - They will note how the sections provide different types of information about God and our relationship with him.

At a Glance

- A. Quick-Start Activity: Old Testament Images (5 minutes)
- B. Opening Prayer Ritual (5 minutes)
- C. Bible Story Sharing: The Lord’s People (10 minutes)
- D. Review Student Textbook Activity Page (10 minutes)
- E. Integration Activity: Scripture Races (25 minutes)
- F. Announcements and Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

For each participant:

- Bible and student textbook
- pencil
- handout 2–A, “Books of the Old Testament”

Additional materials:

- ❑ four sheets of easel-sized paper
- ❑ markers
- ❑ tape
- ❑ a simple prize for the winning teams during one of the activities

Other Preparation Steps

- ❑ Mark Sirach 2:10–11 in the Bible that will be used in the opening prayer ritual.
- ❑ Choose two students to process in with the Bible and a candle for the opening prayer ritual, providing directions as needed.
- ❑ Gather four sheets of easel-sized paper. Label them as follows:
 - Across the top of the first sheet: “The Pentateuch.” Then list: Adam and Eve leave the garden; Noah builds an Ark; Moses delivers the Ten Commandments.
 - Across the top of the second sheet: “The Historical Books.” Then list: Walls of Jericho fall; David defeats Goliath; King Solomon builds the Temple.
 - Across the top of the third sheet: “The Wisdom Books.” Then list: Job’s house collapses in a storm; People sing a psalm; Lady Wisdom calls out in the streets.
 - Across the top of the fourth sheet: “The Books of the Prophets.” Then list: Isaiah advises kings; Ezekiel eats a scroll; Nehemiah helps rebuild the Temple.
- ❑ Make enough copies of handout 2–B, “Sections of the Old Testament.” Cut the handout into strips so each participant can have four slips of paper with the four different sections of the Old Testament.

Background Reading

- Read the background page about the Old Testament on page 8 of the student textbook, including the suggested Bible passages.

Session Steps

A. Quick-Start Activity: Old Testament Images (5 minutes)

1. On the floor, place the markers, tape, and four sheets of easel-sized paper you prepared. Then **write** the following directions on the board:
 - Use markers to draw pictures on the easel-sized sheets of paper. Select the subject of the pictures from the list of Old Testament events on the sheet of paper you use.
2. As the students arrive, **instruct** them to follow the directions on the board.

B. Opening Prayer Ritual (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the Bible bearer and candle bearer to take their places just outside the room or in the back of the room. **Gather** everyone else to stand around your prayer table. **Make** the Sign of the Cross and lead everyone in saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.”
2. **Invite** the Bible bearer and candle bearer to silently process up to the prayer table and turn to face the group. The Bible bearer then **reads** the Scripture verse you have marked, Sirach 2:10–11. When finished, the reader says, “The Word of the Lord.” Everyone responds, “Thanks be to God.” The Bible bearer and candle bearer then place the Bible and candle on the prayer table and go to their places.
3. Invite everyone to sit down. **Introduce** the Old Testament in these or similar words:

► Today we will take a brief look at the Old Testament. The Old Testament is not “old” because it is out of date. Rather, it is called “old” because it tells about how God first began to plan for our salvation. The Old Testament tells how God called all people to obedience through God’s Law and pointed toward the coming of Jesus Christ through the prophets. The Old Testament shows us God’s amazing love and the roles different people have played in fulfilling his plan for salvation. That plan involved God’s love and the people’s response to that love through their own love and obedience, as we shall see in this passage.

C. Bible Story Sharing: The Lord’s People (10 minutes)

Note Alternative Option: Omit step C if you choose to have the participants read the background sheet in the student textbook during class. Instead, the participants would use the time to complete the reading. You may wish to use the methods outlined in Suggestions for Reading Together, in the introduction to this catechist guide.

1. **Direct** the participants to open their Bibles to Deuteronomy 7:7–11. Provide help as needed but encourage the participants to find the passage on their own. **Read** the passage together. See the introduction in this catechist guide for different ways to do this.
2. **Lead** the group in a short reflection on the Bible passage. The following questions can help prompt discussion. Encourage all the participants to share their thoughts.
 - Why does God choose to help God’s own people? (*Answer: Not because they are numerous or powerful but because God loves them and wants to keep the promise made to their ancestors long ago.*)
 - If you were one of the Israelites listening to Moses saying all this about God, how would you feel about your relationship with God?

- ▶ In what areas of life do most young people love and obey God? What areas do they most often need to work on?

3. **Summarize** the meaning of the Bible passage in these or similar words:

- ▶ Throughout the Old Testament, we read stories that show God's desire and unfolding plan for a loving relationship with God's own people. Sometimes the Israelites succeed in loving and obeying God, and sometimes they fail. But God's love and God's plan for our salvation never fails. As followers of Jesus, we too are called to love and obey God. We also have a mixture of success and failure, but we too can count on God's faithfulness no matter what.

D. Review Student Textbook Activity Page (10 minutes)

Note Alternative Option: Omit step D-1 if you choose to have the participants complete the activity page at home after the session.

1. Ask the participants to **turn to the activity** on page 9 in the student textbook. Ask them to **check** their completed work as you review the answers. See the introduction in this catechist guide for suggestions on how to do this.
2. After checking the answers, **summarize** key aspects of the Old Testament by **presenting the following points**:
 - ▶ The Old Testament is also called the Hebrew Bible because it describes how God established a Covenant with the Chosen People.
 - ▶ The Old Testament contains many different kinds of writings, like history, poetry, stories, sayings, and prophecies.
 - ▶ There are four major sections within the Old Testament: the Pentateuch, the historical books, the wisdom books, and the books of the prophets.
 - ▶ We need both the Old and the New Testaments to fully understand God's plan for us and how Jesus Christ fulfills that plan.

E. Integration Activity: Scripture Races (25 minutes)

In this activity the participants will consider their pictures of Old Testament stories and how they reflect the different sections found in the Old Testament.

Then they will participate in a group contest that will build their Bible skills and familiarity with the books and structure of the Old Testament.

1. Hang the four easel-sized sheets of paper on the wall. **Invite** volunteers to share what they drew on them during the Quick-Start Activity. Mention how each section gives us unique information about our faith.

Place the participants into groups of three or four. Tell them they will do Scripture races as teams. Distribute copies of handout 2–A, “Books of the Old Testament,” and four slips of paper from handout 2–B, “Sections of the Old Testament.” **Explain** that you will call out Old Testament Scripture passages, and the participants will look up the passages in their own Bibles. Once they find the passages, they will use handout 1–A to determine which section of the Bible the passage comes from. They will hold up the slip of paper with the name of that section on it. The team whose members all have their Bibles open to the correct passage and hold up the correct slip wins that round. **Encourage** team members to help one another. Then **ask**:

► Before we begin, can anyone explain how we look up passages in the Bible?

Help the participants understand how to use the book’s name, chapter, and verse, and the Bible’s table of contents, if need be, to look up a Scripture passage. Give one or two examples for practice. Encourage the team members to help one another when needed.

2. Then **begin** the team Scripture race. Call out any Old Testament passage by the name of the book, chapter, and verse (for example, Joshua 3:2). Determine which team wins based on the directions given above. After each round, ask the winning team to briefly explain what type of information it would expect to find in that particular section of the Old Testament. Keep score as you go and award the winning team a simple prize.
3. **Conclude** in these or similar words, referring again to the four sheets of easel-sized paper from earlier:

► Becoming familiar with the structure of the Old Testament and learning how to look up passages are important first steps in making the stories of the Bible part of your own faith lives. These pictures on the wall are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the amazing stories in the Old Testament. Yet what is truly amazing is how they all point to God’s love and faithfulness.

F. Announcements and Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. Make any needed **announcements**. **Assign** the background page to read and the activity to fill out for the next session if you will have the participants work on this at home.
2. **Close** with prayer by asking all the participants to turn to Psalm 19:7–14. Say:

► The psalms are a form of prayer and often reflect on the Chosen People’s relationship with God. So let us all pray Psalm 19:7–14 aloud together.

Read the psalm aloud together.

Books of the Old Testament

The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible)

(*Note:* Catholics use Bibles with forty-six books in the Old Testament. Protestants usually use Bibles with thirty-nine books in the Old Testament.)

Pentateuch

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

Historical Books

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 and 2 Samuel
- 1 and 2 Kings
- 1 and 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Tobit*
- Judith*
- Esther
- 1 and 2 Maccabees*

Wisdom Books:

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)
- Wisdom*
- Sirach*

Prophets

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Baruch*
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Hosea
- Joel

- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

* This book is considered Deuterocanonical (meaning “second canon”) and is not found in Protestant Bibles.

Sections of the Old Testament

Copy this handout and then cut it out along the dotted lines. Make enough copies so each participant receives four slips of paper, each with one of the four sections of the Old Testament on it.

Pentateuch

Historical Books

Wisdom Books

Prophets

Pentateuch

Historical Books

Wisdom Books

Prophets

Chapter 3

Adam and Eve

Session Focus

- The participants will learn key facts about Adam and Eve:
 - God creates Adam and Eve, the first human beings.
 - Before the Fall they live in perfect peace with God and each another.
 - They commit the first sin, called Original Sin.
 - They are banished from the garden as a result of their sin.
- The participants will study the story of Adam and Eve's covering themselves with fig leaves and reflect on key questions:
 - Why do young people sometimes cover up who they truly are, just as Adam and Eve did?
 - How can you find the strength simply to be the person God created?

At a Glance

- A. Quick-Start Activity: Adam and Eve Picture Charades (5 minutes)
- B. Opening Prayer Ritual (5 minutes)
- C. Bible Story Sharing: Adam and Eve Eat from the Forbidden Fruit Tree (10 minutes)
- D. Review Student Textbook Activity Page (10 minutes)
- E. Integration Activity: Hiding Who We Are (25 minutes)
- F. Announcements and Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

For each participant:

- Bible and student textbook
- pencil
- handout 3–A, “Fig Leaves”
- scissors

- ❑ markers
- ❑ glue

Additional materials:

- ❑ box
- ❑ magazines with pictures of a variety of people

Other Preparation Steps

- ❑ Mark Genesis 2:7 in the Bible that will be used in the opening prayer ritual.
- ❑ Choose two participants to process in with the Bible and a candle for the opening prayer ritual, providing directions as needed.
- ❑ Write the following on separate slips of paper:
 - God makes Adam from soil.
 - God creates Eve from Adam’s rib.
 - Adam names the animals.
 - The snake tempts Eve.
 - Eve gives the apple to Adam.
 - Adam and Eve hide from God.
 - God makes clothes for Adam and Eve.
 - God kicks Adam and Eve out of the garden.

Background Reading

- Read the background page about Adam and Eve on page 10 of the student textbook, including the suggested Bible passages.
- If you are using *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*, read the article “Original Sin,” located near Genesis 3:1–24.

Session Steps

A. Quick-Start Activity: Adam and Eve Picture Charades (5 minutes)

1. **Set up** a game of picture charades for the participants to join as they arrive. Put the slips of paper you prepared in a box near the board. **Write** the following on the board:
 - Play a game of picture charades. One person at a time will pull a slip of paper from the box. Each slip has an event from the Book of Genesis. The person will draw a

picture of the event on the board. Everyone else will guess the name of the event. The person who guesses correctly first will pull out the next slip and be the next person to draw.

2. As the participants arrive, **instruct** them to follow the directions on the board.

B. Opening Prayer Ritual (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the Bible bearer and candle bearer to take their places just outside the room or in the back of the room. **Gather** everyone else to stand around your prayer table. **Make** the Sign of the Cross and lead everyone in saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.”
2. **Invite** the Bible bearer and candle bearer to silently process up to the prayer table and turn to face the group. The Bible bearer then **reads** the Scripture verse you have marked, Genesis 2:7. When finished, the reader says, “The Word of the Lord.” Everyone responds, “Thanks be to God.” The Bible bearer and candle bearer then place the Bible and candle on the prayer table and go to their places.
3. Invite everyone to sit down. **Introduce** Adam and Eve in these or similar words:

- ▶ Today we will study Adam and Eve, the first man and woman God created. These two live in paradise. They can simply walk and talk with God. They can relax in the beautiful garden. Unfortunately, their desire for even more leads to serious consequences for them and all humanity. The problem begins when they make a bad choice, as we shall see in this passage.

C. Bible Story Sharing: Adam and Eve Eat from the Forbidden Fruit Tree (10 minutes)

Note Alternative Option: Omit step C if you choose to have the participants read the background sheet in the student textbook during class. Instead, the participants would use the time to complete the reading. You may wish to use the methods outlined in Suggestions for Reading Together, in the introduction to this catechist guide.

1. **Direct** the participants to open their Bibles to Genesis 3:1–7. Provide help as needed but encourage the participants to try to find the passage on their own. **Read** the passage together. See the introduction in this catechist guide for different ways to do this.
2. **Lead** the group in a short reflection on the Bible passage. Encourage all the participants to share their thoughts.

- ▶ What rule does God give Adam and Eve that the serpent wants them to break?
(*Answer: They cannot eat or even touch the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden.*)

- ▶ If you were Eve, what would you have said to the serpent? Why?

- ▶ Why is it difficult sometimes to do the right thing? What could help you in those situations?

3. **Summarize** the meaning of this Bible passage in these or similar words. (If you are using *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*, consider reading to the group the article “Original Sin,” located near this story):

- ▶ Adam and Eve live peacefully in the garden until the serpent tries to convince them they should have more. The serpent lies about God and causes Adam and Eve to question their trust in God. Unfortunately, by giving in to temptation and disobeying God, Adam and Eve commit the first sin, called Original Sin. We all face temptations. Like Eve, our peers may sometimes encourage us to do the wrong thing. In fact, Adam and Eve represent all of humanity in this story. We can learn from Adam and Eve’s mistake and simply do what we know God is calling us to do.

D. Review Student Textbook Activity Page (10 minutes)

Note Alternative Option: Omit step D–1 if you choose to have the students complete the activity page at home after the session.

1. Ask the participants to **turn to the activity** on page 11 in the student textbook. Ask them to **check** their completed work as you review the answers. See the introduction in this catechist guide for suggestions to do this.
2. After checking the answers, **summarize** key aspects of Adam and Eve’s lives by **presenting the following points:**

- ▶ The story of Adam and Eve reveals that God created the first man and woman in his own image.
- ▶ In the beginning Adam and Eve live in peace with God, nature, and each other in the garden.
- ▶ Adam and Eve commit the first sin, called Original Sin, when they choose to disobey God’s command not to eat fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden.
- ▶ God punishes Adam and Eve by forcing them to leave the garden, but not before promising that someday Eve’s offspring will defeat the snake and restore human kind’s relationship with God. The snake represents evil, and the descendant of Eve who will later defeat evil is Jesus Christ. Jesus sacrifices himself to remove the sins of the world.

E. Integration Activity: Hiding Who We Are (25 minutes)

In this activity the participants will reflect on Adam and Eve’s attempt to cover themselves after eating the forbidden fruit. The participants will consider ways young people try to cover up or hide who they are. Finally they will reflect on how we are called to accept ourselves the way God made us and openly accept others as well.

1. **Explain** that the participants have already examined the first part of the story about Adam and Eve’s eating the fruit, so now they will see what happens to them after they eat the fruit. **Read** aloud Genesis 3:6–10. Then make the following points in these or similar words:

- ▶ Adam and Eve’s downfall comes when they decide they are not fully happy with the way God made them and so choose to “become wise.”
- ▶ Many of us are often like Adam and Eve when we think, “I am not pretty enough,” “I am not tall enough,” or “I am not smart enough.”
- ▶ Like Adam and Eve, we are sometimes ashamed of who we truly are and try to hide our true selves. We might try to hang out with the “cool” crowd or participate in activities we do not like. To fit in, we may avoid activities we really like. We are not so different from Adam and Eve, who use fig leaves to cover up.

2. Make magazines available with pictures of different people in them. Distribute handout 3–A, “Fig Leaves.” **Instruct** the participants to cut out the fig leaf and then to look for pictures in the magazines that represent ways people their age try to cover up who they truly are. Tell them to draw, write, or paste pictures onto the leaves that represent ways young people try to hide who they really are.

3. After sufficient time, **invite** volunteers to share what they have put on their fig leaves. Then **lead** a discussion using these or similar questions:

- ▶ Why do people choose “fig leaves” over letting others see who they really are?
- ▶ Can you tell the difference when people are being who they truly are versus trying to cover themselves up? How?
- ▶ What gives people the strength to be the selves that God created them to be?
- ▶ What might the world be like if all people accepted the way God made them?

Then **conclude** with these or similar words:

- ▶ The story tells us that God created Adam and Eve, yet they were ashamed of who they were and tried to cover up. We too are created by God, just as Adam and Eve,

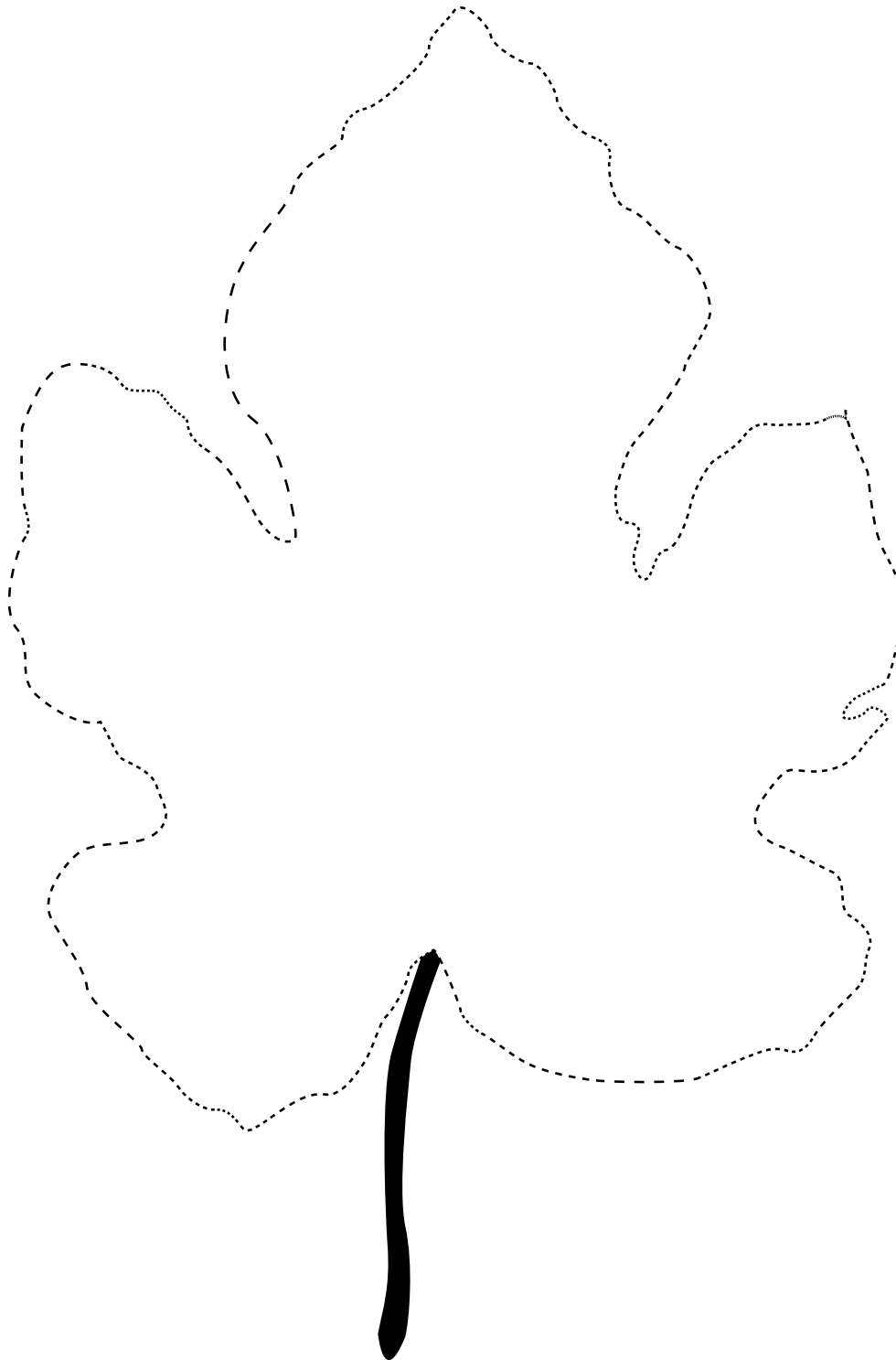
and unfortunately we too sometimes try to cover up who we truly are. By remembering we are created in God's own image, we can find the strength to accept ourselves. We can also accept others when we remember they were created in God's image.

F. Announcements and Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. Make any needed **announcements**. **Assign** the background page to read and the activity to fill out for the next session if you will have the participants work on this at home.
2. Close by **leading** the participants in a short prayer, perhaps like the following one:
 - ▶ God, help us learn from Adam and Eve's mistake. Give us the courage to allow the world to see us as you intended and help us to lovingly accept ourselves and others. Amen.

Fig Leaves

Cut out this fig leaf and then draw, write, or paste magazine pictures onto it that represent ways young people try to hide who they really are.



(This handout is from the *Teaching Activities Manual for "Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics"* [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2007], page 23. © 2007 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)

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Chapter 4

Noah

Session Focus

- The participants will learn key facts about Noah:
 - He is a righteous man during a time when the world is filled with unrighteous people.
 - He builds an ark in response to God's command.
 - He takes his family and two of every animal into the ark, and they all survive the Flood.
 - God establishes a covenant, promising never to flood the earth again.
- The participants will study the story of Noah's building of the ark and reflect on key questions:
 - How can you handle challenges in your own life?
 - How can trusting God and working hard help you handle stress?

At a Glance

- A. Quick-Start Activity: Animals for the Ark (5 minutes)
- B. Opening Prayer Ritual (5 minutes)
- C. Bible Story Sharing: The Coming of the Flood (10 minutes)
- D. Review Student Textbook Activity Page (10 minutes)
- E. Integration Activity: Building an Ark (25 minutes)
- F. Announcements and Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

For each participant:

- Bible and student textbook
- pencil
- clay