

Chapter 10

Parish Religious Education Adaptation

Student Preparation

- Students were assigned to read Chapter 10, “The Journey Leads to the Time of Jesus and Beyond,” pages 226–248 for this last session.
- Students were also asked to complete the Chapter 9 Review and Reflection questions on pages 203, 205, 210, 215, 217, and 220.

Warm-up (about 20 minutes)

- Conduct a “talk with your feet” poll on attitudes toward “home.” (*Prepare the space by placing a line of tape on one side of the room with a sign that reads: “Strongly Agree.” Put another tape—“Strongly Disagree”—on the opposite side of the room. Put two other tapes marked “Somewhat Agree” and “Somewhat Disagree” in between.*) Students will “answer” by moving to the area that best expresses their opinion. Have students react to statements such as: “I feel most at home when only my family is there,” “I could move to another home or city and not look back” “If my home was robbed or damaged on purpose, I could easily forgive and forget” “I could feel at home anywhere—in a motel, apartment, mobile home.” “I really treasure my country as my *homeland*.” Ask a sampling of students to explain their positions.
- Read the first paragraph of the Chapter 10 Introduction about the centuries of foreign rule in the Jewish homeland. Ask students to link the feelings they expressed about “home” to the longings the Jews must have had.
- Extend the focus on homelands, pointing out that because Israel was under foreign domination for so long, many Jews turned to their faith for consolation, strength and hope. Some Jews wanted to free their homeland and believed that violence against their enemies would be justified. Others favored peaceful resistance.
- Have students hand in the assigned Chapter 9 Review and Reflection questions completed as homework.

Part 1: Lesson (about 30 minutes)

Text Reference: Introduction, How God’s People Lived Under Foreign Rule, Tracing Jewish History Prior to the Maccabean Revolt, (226–234)

- Ask students to brainstorm for words and phrases connected with the word “minority.” Record the responses on the board or a flip-chart. Encourage students to critique and prioritize the list, selecting 4 or 5 words or phrases which would best describe someone who belongs to a minority group.
- Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group to prepare short skits based on Daniel, Tobit, Esther or Judith. Urge groups to review the textbook, referenced Scripture passages and the “minority” material. Allow plenty of “creative license” in developing the characters, scenes, props and dialogue. (*This activity will require fifteen to twenty minutes.*)
- Display a large map to refocus attention on the political status of Israel several centuries before the birth of Christ. Point to the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek Empires and the vulnerable location of tiny Palestine.
- In addition to political domination, Israel’s culture was also vulnerable to foreign influences. Ask the students to describe the effects of Zoroastrianism, the Persian religion, and Hellenization on conquered nations. (*Add that there were positive fruits of Hellenization. The Septuagint, the oldest, complete translation of the Old Testament was translated into Greek, a language spoken throughout the Middle Eastern world. Another byproduct of Hellenization was the creation of a Jewish community in Alexandria, Egypt, a great center for learning.*)
- Briefly sketch and summarize the historical chain of events that touched Palestine after its conquest by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C. The rule of Generals Ptolemy and Seleucus, the Ptolemies dynasty (320–200 B.C.), the repressive Seleucid Dynasty, the brief Jewish Hasmonean Dynasty, the cruel rule of Antiochus IV and his attempts to ban traditional Jewish worship and practices.

Break/Writing Exercise (about 15 minutes)

- Join students for a break with refreshments.
- Assign students to do the Journal Assignment on page 229.

Part 2: Lesson (about 30 minutes)

Text Reference: From the Maccabees to Roman Control, Cooperation or Resistance: What Was the Best Course for the Jews?, What Happened to the Jews?, Further Reflections (pages 235–248)

- Read selected portions from the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees to dramatize the religious persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV. Challenge students to imagine what it would be mean—as Catholics—to suffer religious persecution today.
- Ask students to retell the story of Judas Maccabeus and his recapturing of the Temple. How is the Jewish feast of Hanukkah connected with this event? Maccabeus is a hero and an enduring symbol of political and military resistance to foreign domination. Other Jews, including Jesus, promoted spiritual resistance in the face of persecution.
- With broad strokes, summarize the history of the Hasmonean Dynasty which developed from the Maccabeus family. Make sure that students are generally familiar with the terms **Sadducees, synagogue, rabbi, hasidim, Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots, Talmud** and with the major personalities involved in the transition to Roman rule: Aristobulus II, the Roman General Pompey and finally King Herod of Judea.
- Invite students to recall what they know or read about the creation of the synagogue and the development of the state of Israel in 1948.
- Distribute poster boards and art supplies for small groups. Provide Bibles, reference books and photo magazines (*i.e. issues of "National Geographic" with articles on the Middle East*) Challenge the groups to create a collage-style poster illustrating their study of the Old Testament—from Genesis up to the birth of Jesus. Provide some printed downloadable photos or illustrations, magazines and newspapers and perhaps a computer printer to generate headlines or titles. Other possible supplies: fabrics, dried flowers, photos of Jewish feasts, etc.

Prayer Experience (about 20 minutes):

- Light the candles of a menorah for the last prayer session during this study of the Old Testament.
- Play "Shelter Me, O God," by Bob Hurd from *"In the Breaking of the Bread"* or *"Breaking Bread"* (OCP); *Gather* (GIA).
- Allow a few minutes for silent reflection. Then, quietly remind students that God does shelter each of us in many ways. Long ago, God created the first human beings out of love. Though they sinned, He made a covenant with them. God led his Chosen People to a new land, gave them the Ten Commandments and the promise of a Savior. God promised to guide and protect the Jews and all of his people forever.
- Join hands and pray together Psalm 27, "Trust in God" through verse 3.
- Conclude by singing together "Shelter Me, O God" followed by greetings of "Shalom," handshakes and hugs.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

- Distribute materials that students will keep from their Old Testament study and collect textbooks and assignments.
- Display the Old Testament collages.