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BIBLE BASICS^{for} CATHOLICS

A New Picture of Salvation History

Teacher Resource Guide

Bible Basics for Catholics: A New Picture of Salvation History, by John Bergsma (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press) is © 2012, 2015 by John Bergsma.

Teacher Resource Guide Product #: 20089

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Founded in 1865, Ave Maria Press is a ministry of the United States Province of Holy Cross.

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Introduction to the Teacher Resource Guide

Bible Basics for Catholics: A New Picture of Salvation History is a fun, fast survey of salvation history, tracing the major covenants of the Bible from God's first covenant with Adam through the other major Old Testament covenants and culminating in the New or Eucharistic Covenant that transitions our Christian lives into the eternal family celebration or "wedding feast of the Lamb."

The author, John Bergsma, is a professor of theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville and a senior fellow for the St. John Paul Center for Biblical Theology. He is a convert to Catholicism. Bergsma's undergraduate courses are popular among students because of his uncanny ability to make complex ideas understandable and faith inspiring while staying true to both Catholic teaching and biblical scholarship. *Bible Basics for Catholics*, like Bergsma's courses, includes his signature drawings of key biblical characters and memorable illustrations of biblical covenants that will help students easily make clear connections between the drawings and events in salvation history.

Bible Basics for Catholics is a 224-page book with eight chapters. The first six chapters cover six major covenants God makes with his people. A covenant is a legal agreement; however, in a religious sense and for the purposes of this course, it's better to understand covenant as a "legal way to make someone part of your family" (4). Along with covenants, the book also emphasizes mediators, people who represent groups of people involved in covenants. Moses is a clear example of a mediator between God and the Israelites, especially when he receives the Law on Mount Sinai. Also, mountains themselves are important in the discussion. Each of the six Old Testament covenants was made on a mountain. Chapter 7 reports on the culmination of God's covenants, the Eucharistic Covenant or New Covenant. This is the covenant established by Jesus. The book concludes in chapter 8 with a vision of the wedding covenant of the "Bride" (Jesus) and the "Lamb" (the Church) shared in the Book of Revelation and the joy that awaits us all in heaven when we join in the eternal bliss in the family of God.

Scheduling Options

Eight lesson resources are offered in this manual, corresponding with the eight chapters of *Bible Basics for Catholics*. The lesson resources lend themselves well to different scheduling options in combination with a one-semester theology course in a Catholic high school. *Bible Basics for Catholics* works particularly well in combination with an introductory course on salvation history (e.g., Course I, The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture, of the USCCB Framework), with a course on the Bible (e.g., Old Testament, New Testament, or Elective A of the USCCB Framework), or with any other introductory course on the Catholic faith. The book can be taught over eight or four weeks:

- Eight weeks. Assign one chapter for reading per week. Complete some or all of the suggested lesson resource assignments and activities for the assigned chapter. *Suggestion:* Reserve one day per week for focused in-class study of the book.

- Four weeks. Assign two chapters per reading per week. Complete some or all of the suggested lesson resource assignments and activities for the two assigned chapters.
Suggestion: Reserve two days per week for focused in-class study of the book.

Besides use as part of a Catholic high school theology course, *Bible Basics for Catholics* also can be used with a campus ministry scripture study group, with a Confirmation preparation class, or as part of the catechetical component of a parish youth ministry program.

Getting Started

Introduce his “mini-course” or “course within a course” with an explanation based on the book’s introduction (pages 1–7). The introduction begins with the author offering some background on himself and his experience reading and studying the Bible. You may want to ask your students about their experiences reading and studying the Bible. Ask things such as the following:

- Do you have a copy of the Bible at home?
- Do you read or pray with the Bible as a family?
- Have you tried to read all or parts of the Bible on your own?
- Have you taken a class on the Bible?
- If you were to rate your knowledge of the Bible on a scale of 1 to 10, what number would you give yourself and why?

Continue with the introduction of covenant on pages 3 to 5. The book settles on the definition of covenant as “a legal way to make someone part of your family” (4). This definition will apply, as the book continues, to our membership in the family of God. But here connections are made between covenant and the adoption of a child and between covenant and the agreement that man and woman forge with each other in marriage. The importance of commitment to effective covenants is also emphasized.

The introduction also introduces some of the main characters that appear in salvation history and in this book. They are, significantly, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus. Each of them represents a group of people who entered into a covenant with God. This makes them mediators. You may ask the students to offer their own definition and example of a mediator. For example:

- A mediator is a person who makes people involved in a conflict come to an agreement; a go-between.
- Mediators often negotiate disputes between spouses, between a business owner and a customer, and for an employee negotiating a salary.

A common element in at least six major covenants in the Bible is that they were made on mountaintops. The introduction makes two points about the significance of mountains. First, the lonely aspect of a mountaintop helps a person feel closer to God. Second, from a mountaintop you can gaze at the world through a “God’s-eye” lens. For example, things look smaller and you can more easily view things in their rightful context. Ask the students

to share their experience of mountains and whether they found the two points described above to be true.

Finally, before beginning study of chapters 1 to 8, explain the use of drawings in the book. The author uses simple drawings to illustrate the development of each covenant and other key points and characters in each chapter. At the end of the chapters, he finalizes the drawings to offer one drawing to represent the particular covenant. Putting the drawings together chapter by chapter helps readers review covenants that have been covered before and keep track of the progression of salvation history.

There are several written assignments in the book (explained on the next pages of this resource). One strong recommendation is that the students have their own notebooks in which they can not only complete the written assignments and take notes but also replicate the drawings shared in the book.

How to Use the Teacher Resource

The teacher resource has a number of elements (listed below) to help support the reading content in the book. Depending on the scheduling option you have chosen, assign the chapter(s) to be read for the particular week(s). The students should complete the reading outside of class time.

Choose elements in the teacher resource that can be used to enhance the students' reading of the book. Some of the elements work particularly well as classroom activities; others are better as individual assignments that can be completed outside of class.

Background

The background material is intended for the teacher. Read the paragraph to refresh and supplement your understanding of the material in the assigned chapter. You may also paraphrase the background material for the students when you give the students their reading assignment.

Opener

The opener is designed with an implicit reference to the material in the book. It usually involves a student discussion or activity. There are several ways to handle discussions—for example, with a partner, in a triad, or with the entire class. However, in whatever way you choose, it is always wise to allow the students to prerespond to whatever has been asked, usually by writing down their response on a piece of scrap paper. Also, when calling on students to respond to the entire class, always allow for a “pass option,” allowing students to refrain from commenting in public when they choose.

Text Reference

The text reference refers to a presentation, exercise, or activity especially geared to one section of the book. The page numbers for the particular section are listed. This material is more explicitly connected to the referenced pages in the book than is the opener. Some of these suggestions ask the students to work in class, sometimes taking notes or drawing sketches to accompany the presentation. Others are teacher-led presentations that require less student feedback.

Writing Assignment

The writing assignment—usually not more than four or five paragraphs in length—is drawn from the chapter text, a separate article or link, or a scripture passage, or is directly related to the text reference presentation. Given the sketches that are part of this book, some of the assignments involve drawing similar sketches. Students can work on this assignment in class or as homework. Grade using points, a letter grade, or pass and fail.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension questions should help you determine whether the student has read the chapter. All of the answers are found in the book itself. These can be assigned as an in-class or homework assignment.

Enrichment

This section provides additional material on one or more of the main topics in the chapter. It may be purely for teacher enrichment or lend itself to an extra student assignment.

Reading in Context

You may wish to create a worksheet out of the reading in context assignment and distribute copies to each student. The intention is to make sure the students understand key words used in the chapter.

Video

One video is suggested for each chapter. The videos are ten minutes or less in length. Play the video in class, or assign the video for students to watch as homework. A brief writing prompt is included with each video suggestion.

Assigning a Book Review

As an optional extension to the course and to accompany the reading of *Bible Basics for Catholics*, have the students browse through the biblical resources listed in Suggestions for Further Reading (pages 195–96). Ideally, you need to have copies of these texts in your classroom or school library. Students should write reviews that include the following:

- Title and author of book
- Purpose of the book
- A one- to two-paragraph summary of the book's content
- A one- to two-paragraph explanation of how the book is helpful to biblical study
- A one- to two-paragraph general statement about whether the student would choose this book to help with biblical study

Final Exam Option

Use some or all of the Reading Comprehension questions (in this Teacher Resource Guide) and some or all of the Study Questions (Review Questions and Discussion Questions) from pages 197–204 to create a final exam.

1. Setting the Son in the Garden: The Covenant with Adam

Read pages 9–31.

Suggested Reading: Genesis 1–2

Background

What is the purpose for which God made the world? This is the essential question of the Genesis creation accounts. In seven days God essentially built a temple-universe or a building of creation. The connection between creation and a temple is verified in other scripture passages and other ancient writings from the same time of Genesis. The creation accounts also take on the creation of Adam, the first man, and answer the question about the purpose of his life. In fact, like some of his descendants, Adam was a king, priest, and prophet. When he effectively married Eve, he was also a bridegroom. All of these roles of Adam help us to find meaning and purpose in our own life.

Opener

List the following statements on the board. Have the students indicate their degree of belief in each statement by holding up a number with their fingers for each statement as you read it (one finger equals the weakest belief; five fingers equals the strongest belief).

- I believe there is a God who created the world.
- There is a God who loves and cares about me.
- I am a descendent of the two first people who lived on earth.
- God’s Word is recorded in the Bible.
- Faith in God and faith in science can coexist.

As you read each statement, call on students who hold up different numbers to explain their responses.

Next, allow a few minutes for students to write one paragraph titled “What I Believe about God” on a piece of scrap paper or in their notebooks. When they have finished, call on several volunteers to share what they wrote with the class.

Text Reference (pages 25–29)

What is the meaning of life? What is our purpose here on earth? How does the model of Adam, who had roles as a son of God, king, priest, prophet, and bridegroom, help a person to answer those questions? To delve deeper into the definitions of these roles from the text,

offer some other definitions of the following terms in a class presentation. Write the bold-face words on the board as you share a presentation. As you share the information, have the students re-create each drawing in their notebooks. Ask the discussion question before moving on to the next definition.

- **Son of God.** In the Old Testament, this title is given to angels, to the people of Israel, and to kings. It describes a particular intimacy between any person and God. When Jesus is called “son of God” in the New Testament, it may have meant the exact same thing and not that he was more than human.

Drawing: Draw an image of yourself to represent that you are a son or daughter of God.

Discussion: Do you know someone who has a deep and intimate relationship with God? What are examples from that person's life that made you name him or her?

- **Kingly Office.** “By his obedience to death, Christ communicated to his disciples the gift of royal freedom, so that they might ‘by the self-abnegation of a holy life, overcome the reign of sin in themselves’” (CCC, 908). Living as a king asks Christians to overcome sin in themselves and unite together with other Christians to help fix institutions and conditions in the world that are encumbered by sin. To be able to do this demands that as a Christian masters sin, he or she does so according to the mind of Christ.

Drawing: Draw an image of yourself to represent your kingly nature.

Discussion: What does it mean to put on the mind of Christ?

- **Priestly Office.** Lay Catholics live out their share in Christ's priestly office by lives of “living sacrifice” in union with Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. They offer all of their works, prayers, service, family and married life, jobs, relaxation, hardships, and more to Christ, and present them to God the Father in the celebration of the Eucharist. The common priesthood is lived through the graces received in Baptism. It is “a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit” (CCC, 1547).

Drawing: Draw an image of yourself to represent your priestly nature.

Discussion: What are three practical things you can do in the future to live a life of “living sacrifice” in union with Christ?

- **Prophetic Office.** Sharing the truth of Christ is also called evangelization, or “the proclamation of Christ by word and testimony of life” (CCC, 905, quoting *Lumen Gentium* 35). For lay Catholics, evangelization may take place in day-to-day conversations, including through social media. The witness of good actions is also a form of evangelization as others see the good actions through the lens of a person's Catholic faith.

Drawing: Draw an image of yourself to represent your prophetic nature.

Discussion: Tell about one occasion when you publicly shared your faith with your words and another time when you shared a witness of your faith with your actions. Or share examples of when someone else shared their faith with you in those two ways.

- **Bridegroom.** In a question about fasting, Jesus said, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?” (Mk 2:19). These words describe the relationship between Christ and his people, the Church. Jesus is the bridegroom, and the Church is the bride. It is an intimate relationship. Similarly, our own relationship with Christ reaches the depth of that same intimacy in heaven and is also foreshadowed by the relationship in marriage between a husband and a wife.

Drawing: Draw an image of yourself to represent your intimacy with God as a groom or bride.

Discussion: “You are not meant to live alone.” Explain the meaning and truth of that statement and how it might apply to your future.

Writing Assignment

Direct the students to answer the following questions in two to three well-constructed paragraphs. What is the meaning of life? How does the life of Adam help you to answer that question?

See also Discussion Questions on pages 197–98 for additional writing assignment options.

Reading Comprehension

See also Review Questions on page 197.

1. What does the first verse in Genesis 1 state?
2. What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase *tohu wabohu*?
3. What did God create on the third day of creation? Repeat the drawing to represent the creation on the third day.
4. What is one reason that the building of creation can be depicted as a temple?
5. What is the fancy theological term for being a son (or daughter) of God and made in his own likeness and image?
6. What does it mean to say that Adam is the “universal bridegroom”?
7. Why does St. Paul call Jesus the “last Adam” or “Second Man”?
8. Re-create the image of Eden from the text.

Enrichment

Brainstorm with the students about the word “marriage.” Have the students simply say whatever words come to mind. List as many as you can on the board. Then have them work in small groups of three or four to write terse definitions of marriage using—or based on—the brainstormed words. Allow time for the exercise; then invite sharing. Have the class decide which, if any, of the definitions is best and how the definition connects with the description of the unity of marriage described in the book.

Help the students understand that when we declare that marriage between a man and woman springs from God’s love, we are asserting our faith that

- God lives in a loving relationship (Blessed Trinity);
- since we are made in God’s image, we can’t disown the God-given impulse to connect and commune—to be Godlike; and
- God gave us marriage—a mutual, lasting relationship—to help us become more loving, more like God who is love.

Reading in Context

Have the students answer the following questions, researching from outside references as needed.

1. Explain the argument between “Creationism” and “Darwinism.”
2. Define “cosmos” as it relates to the creation of the world.
3. What is a “stole”? What does it represent in regard to priesthood?
4. Use the word “dominion” in a sentence.
5. Explain the difference between the *common* priesthood and *ministerial* priesthood.
6. What does it mean to say that Eden was a “sanctuary”?

Video

“Bishop Barron on Misreading Genesis” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVsbVAVSssc>)

Time: 7:40

Bishop Robert Barron explains that the Book of Genesis is not a book of science. Rather, it is a book of theology that offers insights into God and creation. Have the students watch the entire video, focusing especially on the time frame from 6:00 to the end in which Bishop Barron says that Adam is the first scientist, the first philosopher, and the first steward. Ask the students to write two to three paragraphs explaining why they think Adam can be defined in each of these ways.

2. Washing Up and Starting Over: The Covenant with Noah

Read pages 33–41.

Suggested Reading: Genesis 3–9

Background

God's covenant with Noah is part of the next stage of his revelation. The covenant revealed the precepts of the Law and combatted paganism, a combination of idolatry (idol worship), polytheism (worship of many gods), and polygamy (multiple marriages). God's response was to back up and start over. The language of God's covenant with Noah resembles the language of the first covenant with Adam. The covenant with Noah is a "second creation story."

Opener

Check the students' detailed reading of Genesis 3–9, especially Genesis 6:5–9:17. Ask these questions:

- How many animals did Noah take onto the ark? (Most students will answer that Noah took a pair of each species onto the ark. Direct them to Genesis 7:2–3. In that passage, God tells Noah to bring seven pairs of every clean animal, one pair of every unclean animal, and likewise seven pairs of every bird. The point was to keep the progeny of every species alive. Explain that "clean" and "unclean" are from the dietary laws found in the Books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.)
- How long did the flood last? (Most students will answer that the flood lasted forty days and forty nights. Direct them to Genesis 7:24, which says the flood crested after 150 days.)

Explain that a close reading of the Noah story reveals duplications throughout. Tell the students that these differences and duplications are probably the result of editing and compiling material from two different biblical sources.

Next, have the students look up Genesis 9:8–17. Ask the following questions, and have the students answer directly from what the biblical text says.

- What covenant did God make? (*God promised never to send another flood to destroy all the earth.*)
- With whom did God make this covenant? (*God made the covenant with Noah and his descendants, and every living creature on the ark.*)

Point out that the passage tells us of God's eternal care for not just people but also all plants, animals, birds, fish, and more.

Text Reference (pages 36–37)

Explain more about the Old Testament understanding of sin based on the three most common Hebrew words for sin. Write the boldface text on the board.

- **Hattah means “missing the mark.”** Think of it in terms of the sport of archery. The target for Adam and Eve was to follow God's providence. Instead they missed the mark. When people sin, they willfully reject what God has made known to them for their own benefit.
- **Pesha means “rebellion.”** This term is also associated with “stubborn” and “stiff-necked” or “hard-hearted,” terms that are sprinkled throughout the Old Testament in connection with rebellion of the Chosen People. Certainly Adam's sin fits the description of rebellion.
- **Awon means “guilt” or “iniquity.”** It refers to the consequences of sin and how sin causes permanent damage to the sinner. The consequences of sin have also caused damage to all of humanity by alienating us from God (see CCC, 705), alienating us from ourselves (see CCC, 1865), and alienating us from others (see CCC, 817, 845, 953).

Have the students complete the following activity. Read the following examples, and have students match them to each Old Testament definition of sin.

1. “If I don't think I've sinned, then I haven't sinned.” (*pesha*)
2. A classmate makes a vicious slur against another person's ethnicity. (*hattah*)
3. Someone tells a false, embarrassing story about a classmate, causing the classmate to attempt suicide. (*awon*)

You may wish to ask students to share their own examples to match each of the Old Testament definitions of sin.

Writing Assignment

Assign the students to read from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2415–2418, on respect for the integrity of creation. Then have them write two to three paragraphs on what implications the Noah story has on today's environmental issues.

See also Discussion Questions on page 198 for additional writing assignment options.

Reading Comprehension

See also Review Questions on page 198.

1. What is the snake's basic message to Adam and Eve?
2. Why is God's punishment of Adam and Eve—removing them from the Garden of Eden—an appropriate punishment?
3. What is foreshadowed in God's clothing of Adam and Eve in the skins of dead lambs?
4. What are two possible interpretations for the term "sons of God" in Genesis 6:1–5?
5. Where does the chaos described in Genesis 6:5 arise?
6. What is God's response to the "notorious" descendants of Adam and Eve?
7. Why did God only save Noah and not the rest of humanity?
8. What does Noah do when he emerges from the ark?
9. How does God seal the covenant with Noah?
10. What is the significance of the covenant with Noah?

Enrichment

Explain the term "protoevangelium," which means "first gospel." It refers to Genesis 3:15 in which immediately after Adam and Eve offered their excuses for disobedience, God revealed his plan of salvation as he expelled the couple from the garden. God said to the serpent (Satan) who deceived Adam and Eve, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

The Church understands this passage to be the announcement of the new Adam, Jesus Christ. The First Letter of John teaches that "the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8). Jesus Christ did this by becoming "obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). Christ's obedience made up in a superabundant way for Adam's disobedience. Several Church Fathers have identified the woman in this passage as the Blessed Mother, Mary, whom they see as the new Eve. Her offspring, of course, is Jesus Christ.

Assignment: Ask the students to draw their own line drawing (as in the book) representing "enmity between [Satan's] seed and [Mary's] seed" and Mary and Jesus bruising Satan's head, while Satan bruises their heels.

Reading in Context

Make a copy of the following:

Directions: Write a one-word answer for each clue. The box below the clues contains letter groupings for the one-word answers; two or more letter groupings are needed for each

answer. The letter groupings appear just once. The numbers in parenthesis after the clues indicate the number of letters in each answer. All of the answers appear in chapter 2.

1. A guardian angel (6) _____
2. Adam's third son (4) _____
3. Multiple marriages (8) _____
4. Accepting what others do without an active response (7) _____
5. Well known for a bad quality (9) _____
6. A cruel, oppressive ruler (6) _____

TH	PO	LYG	RUB
NOT	TY	OUS	VE
NT	AMY	ORI	SE
CHE	PA	SSI	RA

Answers: (1) cherub; (2) Seth; (3) polygamy; (4) passive; (5) notorious; (6) tyrant

Video

“God’s Covenant with Noah” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOfH6KKBl6o>)

Time: 2:15

This video reviews the Noahic Covenant. Have the students watch the video. Then ask them to write answers to these questions:

- What was God’s part of the covenant? (*God would not destroy the world again. People could eat meat.*)
- What was Noah’s part of the covenant? (*People would not kill each other.*)
- Whom did the Noahic Covenant apply to? (*Jews and non-Jews*)
- What aspect of the Noahic Covenant is still in effect today? (*God never again sent a flood to destroy the world.*)

3. A New Hope:

The Covenant with Abraham

Read pages 43–59.

Suggested Reading: Genesis 10–17, 20–22

Background

The Abrahamic Covenant is interesting because it is made with a previously anonymous man whom God calls to move from his homeland to a promised land in Canaan. Like Adam and Noah before him, Abraham had doubts. He could not be sure how the covenant promises could come true. In Genesis 12, God makes three specific promises to then Abram and seals them in a ceremony in which he calls down a curse upon himself if he does not fulfill it. As with the other covenants, Abraham takes a step back and falls when he fathers a child with Sarah's maid Hagar. It is then that God renews the covenant and changes his name. The final covenant with Abraham is the most important and a foreshadowing of the covenant God will make with the world with his Son, Jesus Christ. Abraham is asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac. God is so moved by his willingness that he swears an oath to him: Abraham's descendants or one descendant, Jesus, will be the greatest blessing the world has ever seen.

Opener

Call on students to briefly re-create in a class discussion the life of Abraham, beginning with his call from God, including his journey to Canaan, and mentioning some details of his covenant(s) with God, including the final covenant when the Lord promised that Abraham would have many descendants and would be father to a chosen people.

Move the discussion to ask about what Abraham sacrificed to follow God's commands. Students might mention leaving his homeland for a strange, new place, circumcision, and being asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* shares that a person's sacrifice must be from the heart, with a reminder that "the only perfect sacrifice is the one that Christ offered on the cross as a total offering to the Father's love and for our salvation" (2100).

Ask the students to think of three times they have sacrificed for another in a manner that would be worthy to offer to God. Pass out strips of paper to each student, and have them write down each example on a separate strip. Prime the students by mentioning examples such as these:

- Sitting with a grandparent for an afternoon and/or doing chores while you are there
- Giving up a place in line for a person with a disability
- Riding in the car with a parent just to keep them company

- Changing schools in the middle of a semester to allow a parent to accept a job promotion
- Giving a meaningful possession to someone who needs it more

After the students have completed the writing, have them sit in circles of three. Tell them to hold the strips with the words facing away from the group. Say, “Take turns drawing one strip from someone else in your group as you would draw a card from a deck. Then go around the circle interviewing each other about what was written on each strip.” In the discussion, have the students emphasize the following question:

How was the example a sacrifice of the heart?

Text Reference (pages 53–59)

Summarize this text section of the “final covenant” between God and Abraham by reviewing the material while having the students create line drawings to represent each of the following points:

- God tells Abraham to “go to the land of Mori’ah,” to “one of the mountains of which I shall tell you,” and to take his “only son” (Gn 22:2).

For example: Line drawing of a long, desolate road with a mountain in the distance; father and son walk side by side; the father is slightly smaller than his son; son carries the heavier wood for the fire; father carries only the flint for the fire and a knife

Discuss: What do you think Abraham was thinking about as they walked? What do you think they talked about? Explain how this scene foreshadows Christ’s passion.

- Once at the mountain, Abraham builds an altar and prepares to kill Isaac.

For example: Line drawing of Abraham building the altar on the mountain; Isaac stands nearby

Discuss: What words do you think Abraham shared with God while he was building the altar?

- Abraham and Isaac discover a ram in the bushes that will be used in the sacrifice.

For example: Line drawing of a thicket with a ram near the altar on the mountain

Discuss: What does the ram symbolize? What did Abraham say on the way that hints at the coming of Jesus as the Lamb of God? What is the connection with John 3:16?

- An angel of the Lord comes to Abraham and tells him that not only will he be blessed but also “by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice” (Gn 22:18).

For example: Line drawing of Abraham surrounded by many descendants

Discuss: What does the final covenant with Abraham mean for the Church today?

Writing Assignment

Have the students take some time after the discussion to write a two to three paragraphs summarizing the final covenant with Abraham as represented by their drawings from the previous lesson.

See also Discussion Questions on page 199 for additional writing assignment options.

Reading Comprehension

See also Review Questions on pages 198–99.

1. Where is present-day Chaldea?
2. What is the “whole reason the Jews are special”?
3. Among his general blessings to Abram, what were three specific things God promised?
4. What did the covenant ceremony in which the animals are split in two mean? How did it involve divine condescension?
5. What are some special promises made to Abram in Genesis 15?
6. What was the “mini-fall” of Abram in Genesis 16?
7. In Genesis 17, how did God add to the promises he made to Abram in Genesis 15?
8. What are two possible meanings of circumcision as part of the covenant?
9. What is the last and best promise of the final covenant between God and Abraham?
10. Why does the Bible call Abraham a prophet?

Enrichment

Listed below is additional information to share with the students about Abraham and the time and culture that he lived.

Abraham Was a Nomad

Abraham’s nomadic lifestyle was likely pastoral; that is, he and his family probably traveled with flocks of sheep and herds of goats. Donkeys were likely the form of transportation. People wandered in search of both food and water. However, Abraham and his clan were not purely nomadic, as they were easily able to settle at Canaan in a more urban as well as agricultural setting. Abraham, like other nomadic people, would have traveled with his extended family. They took their entire flock with them, and any remaining family members would have been left without food and water.

Abraham’s Advanced Age and Sarah’s Barrenness

Genesis 15:1–6 makes a significant point of Abraham and Sarah’s barrenness. Miraculous birth stories are literary devices used frequently in the Bible to indicate that the person being born will be someone important. In the days of Abraham, there were several ways that a man could have heirs. First, he could adopt one of his servants and give his possessions

to that man at death. Second, he could conceive by his wife's servants, who acted as "surrogate wives" but whom he never married. The children of these unions would be his heirs. Finally, he could have children with his wife.

Abraham's Death

Genesis 24 opens like this: "Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things" (Gn 24:1) as his life came to an end. Genesis 23 details that Abraham, a resident alien in Canaan, bargained successfully to buy a burial plot for his wife. By doing so he established a small but valid land right in the Promised Land. Sarah died before Abraham.

Abraham sent a servant to his home country to find a wife for Isaac. Led by God, the servant returned home with Rebekah, whom Isaac married. Thus, when Abraham died at the age of 175 years, the promises made to him by the Lord were being fulfilled. He had a son by Sarah, he had claim to land in Canaan, and his son was ready to begin his own family. "After the death of Abraham God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac dwelt at Beer-la'hai-roi" (Gn 25:11).

The Twelve Tribes of Israel

The twelve tribes of Israel are all descendants of Abraham. They were headed by ten sons and two grandsons of Jacob, the son of Isaac, who was renamed Israel:

- Reuben, by his first wife, Leah (Gn 29:32)
- Simeon, by his first wife, Leah (Gn 29:33)
- Levi, by his first wife, Leah (Gn 29:34)
- Judah, by his first wife, Leah (Gn 29:35)
- Dan, by Bilhah, the maidservant of his second wife, Rachel (Gn 30:3–6)
- Naphtali, by Bilhah, the maidservant of his second wife, Rachel (Gn 30:7–8)
- Gad, by Zilpah, the maidservant of his first wife, Leah (Gn 30:12–13)
- Asher, by Zilpah, the maidservant of his first wife, Leah (Gn 30:12–13)
- Issachar, by his first wife, Leah (Gn 30:16–18)
- Joseph, by his second wife, Rachel (Gn 30:22–24)
- Benjamin, by his second wife, Rachel (Gn 35:16–18)

Enrichment

Have the students research and write a one-page essay detailing how the Christian faith originally came to the nation of their ancestors.

Reading in Context

Have the students explain the relationship between each of the following sets:

1. Noah, Ham

2. Abram, Chaldean
3. Abram, Abraham
4. Abraham, Sarah
5. Sarah, Hagar
6. Abraham, Hagar
7. Abraham, Ishmael
8. Abraham, Isaac
9. Abraham, Moriah
10. Isaac, Jesus
11. Abraham, God

Video

“Bishop Barron on Abraham, Isaac, and Christ” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53nJjwaZMeM>)

Time: 12:02

When God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son, he seems to be at odds with himself. He has given Abraham and Sarah the great blessing of a child after many years of waiting, and now he wants to take him away. Abraham’s reaction is “fear and trembling.” His response is one of obedience. After the students watch the video, have them answer in writing the following questions:

- What are two differences between obedience to God and obedience to a worldly leader (e.g., a president or a ruler)?
- How is the New Testament story of the Transfiguration of Jesus similar to Abraham being asked to sacrifice Isaac?

4. God's Laws, Israel's Flaws: The Covenant through Moses

Read pages 61–83.

Suggested Reading: Exodus 1–20, 24, 32–34, 40

Background

The Mosaic Covenant, like the other covenants discussed thus far, is multifaceted with many starts and stops due mainly to the stubbornness and sinfulness of the Israelites. The chapter begins with coverage of Moses's early life and his fall from grace from the Pharaoh after he murdered a slave owner and buried him in the sand. After he meets God and receives his mission to free Israel from Egyptian slavery, God reveals his power over the false gods of Egypt. In the desert, the people grumble against Moses and the difficulty of the journey immediately. They do celebrate God's gift of the commandments and promise in blood to be one with the Lord, but they soon break this promise. Through Moses, God offers a series of extra laws designed as penance. A simple journey from Egypt to the Promised Land that should have taken weeks actually takes forty years due to several revolts by the people. Eventually, due to Moses's fortitude, Israel arrives at the foot of Canaan.

Opener

The students likely knew information about Moses prior to reading the chapter. Reading of the chapter solidified and added what they know about him. Have the students summarize what they know about Moses by creating a baseball card for him. For students who have never seen or collected baseball cards, show them some images online or find some to bring into class to share as examples.

On one side of the card, have them draw a picture of Moses, highlighting one important event in his life. On the other side of the card, have students write (either in paragraphs or as a bullet list) the most important information about Moses. You might suggest that they include categories such as hometown, birth and death dates, family members, position, key life events, and more.

When completed, have the students meet in groups of four or five and exchange their cards within the group. When everyone has looked at all the cards, ask them to share a biography of Moses, piecing together the information from all of the cards.

Text Reference (pages 74–83)

Share information about the books of “extra laws” that supported the Mosaic Covenant. Student assignments follow each summary.

The Book of Leviticus

The Book of Leviticus is added to the covenant after the episode with the golden calf. The name of the book is derived from the priestly tribe of Moses, the Levites. Many of its 247 laws regulate public worship. Other laws govern the behavior of priests and give directions for the celebration of religious feasts.

The main teaching of Leviticus is that God is holy. The theme of holiness permeates the book; God is the source of all life, the divine being worthy of our utmost attention and adoration. Everything associated with God—especially priests and places and ways of worship—are also holy.

The Book of Leviticus also taught all of the Israelites to be holy by including laws that govern all aspects of human life, including sex, birth, diseases, and death. All of these actions are part of God's creative action in the world. They are part of the mystery of life that is under God's control.

Assignment: (1) Read Leviticus 16. Explain the meaning of the Day of Atonement. (2) Read Leviticus 25:1–22. Explain the meaning of the sabbatical and jubilee years.

Book of Numbers

The Book of Numbers gets its name from the many lists it contains—lists of tribes, leaders, march formations, offerings, and two censuses of the Israelites as they made their way from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab across from Jericho. The Hebrew title for the book is translated as “in the wilderness,” which is a fitting name. Numbers describes the period between the thirteen months after the Exodus from Egypt and the end of the forty years of wandering in the Sinai desert.

The Book of Numbers includes information about the Tabernacle, sacrifice, and regulations for worship. It also includes genealogies, lists, and chronologies.

One of two major themes in Numbers is the Lord's care for the Chosen People. The Lord led them with a cloud by day and fire by night. He listens to Moses's pleas for his people, providing food, water, and military victories. The second theme concerns the constant “murmuring” of the people—complaints and even rebellion against Moses. God remained faithful to the people over these incidents but still made them wander in the desert for forty years.

Assignment: Read Numbers 22–24. These chapters refer to Balaam, a seer, widely known in several ancient Near East cultures. When the Israelites reached the borders of Canaan, they encountered the Moabites (Lot's descendants) and their king Balak, who feared the Israelites. Balak sent for Balaam to curse the Israelites. Balaam ended up blessing the Israelites instead. (1) Cite two references that show Balaam's faith in the Lord. (2) What is the point of the “talking ass” in Numbers 22:23–35? (3) Why can't Balaam curse the Israelites?

Book of Deuteronomy

The Book of Deuteronomy has several features that distinguish it from the other books of the Torah. First, though presented as Moses delivering a long sermon, it was likely written in a much later generation, about the seventh century BC. The final editing of the Book of Deuteronomy took place after the Babylonian exile.

As mentioned in this chapter, Deuteronomy is in the form of sermons preached by Moses to the second-century Israelites before they entered the Promised Land. The title translates to “second law,” but it means a repetition of the Law for the new generation, not a new law. The theology of the Book of Deuteronomy centers on God’s love of Israel and unhappiness with the people for worshipping false gods. The book also exhorts Israel to choose between the way of obedience to God and the Law (life) and the way of disobedience (death).

Assignment: A central theme in Deuteronomy is the system of rewards and punishments for obeying or disobeying God. Read Deuteronomy 8:1–20; 11:8–17, 26–28; and 28:1–69 before answering these questions: (1) What is obedience? (2) What blessings follow obedience? (3) What is disobedience? (4) What curses follow disobedience?

It is your option for how to have the students complete each assignment. You may wish to have them turn in each assignment in writing. Or you may wish to have the students work in small groups to complete each assignment and then have a spokesperson from each group summarize the answers before the entire class.

Drawing and Writing Assignment

Have the students draw the first Sinai, second Sinai, and Deuteronomy covenants (see page 82) in their notebooks and write a one-paragraph explanation of each under each drawing.

See also Discussion Questions on page 200 for additional writing assignment options.

Reading Comprehension

See also Review Questions on page 199–200.

1. How did the people of Israel’s long stay in Egypt help them grow as a nation?
2. How did Moses’s mom’s plan to spare her baby work out incredibly well?
3. What did Moses eventually do to mess up the plan?
4. Why do Catholics generally honor the Jewish practice of not saying God’s special name YHWH?
5. In Hebrew, how can God’s words to Pharaoh—“Let my son go that he may serve me”—also be translated?
6. What happened in the “battle of the gods”?
7. What was God’s purpose in the final Sinai covenant?
8. When God says, “Israel is my first-born son,” what does this imply?
9. What was the purpose of the Ten Commandments?
10. What was the purpose of the “second Sinai” covenant?
11. Why did the Israelites have to stay in the desert for forty years?
12. What does Moses do in the Book of Deuteronomy?

13. Redraw the book's sketches for the Adamic Covenant, the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, and the Mosaic Covenant.

Enrichment

As mentioned on pages 64–65, the meaning of names was very important to the Israelites. They believed that when they named something, they had a certain power over what is named. To reveal our own name is to reveal something very intimate about ourselves. After Jacob wrestled with God (see Gn 32:22–32) and demanded to know God's name, God refused to tell him. God is above and beyond all creatures. God is unknowable. We do not know God's personal name; we have no power over God.

This chapter discusses the name for God used in Genesis and Exodus, spelled YHWH. Biblical scholars are not even sure how to pronounce the name, since out of respect for Almighty God, the Jews never pronounced it. The word appeared as YHWH in the sacred writings of the Jews (called the Tetragrammaton, Greek for "four letters"). Instead of reading or saying the divine name aloud, the Israelites substituted the word "Adonai" (translated "LORD"). The vowels of Adonai, a-o-a, were combined to create the hybrid word *Jehovah*, which we'll sometimes find in older translations of the Bible.

No one knows for sure what YHWH means. It probably comes from the Hebrew word "to be," thus underscoring God's majestic and mysterious presence. The Latin translation (the Vulgate) is "I am who I am," while the Greek translation (the Septuagint) renders the sacred name "He who is."

Assignment: Have the students select one of the following religions or cultures and find its name(s) for God—or choose another culture that has special meaning to them—and then answer in writing what the name(s) means in the context of that culture.

- Islam
- Hindu
- Navajo
- Ancient Greek
- Ancient Norse

Reading in Context

Have the students fill in the blanks with the terms from chapter 4 listed below. They will not use every term.

Jacob	Mount Sinai	Moab	Pharaoh	Jews
Hapi	Sarah	manna	Levites	Mount Moriah
Miriam	Egypt	Mount Pisgah	YHWH	Tabernacle

1. A mysterious substance that the Israelites ate in the desert was called _____.

2. _____ was Moses's sister.
3. _____ was Moses's adopted grandfather.
4. The _____ was a big tent for meeting God that was decorated with reminders of Eden.
5. Moses's own tribe, the _____, were priests of Israel.
6. The Nile god, _____, was slain, and all the water of the river turned to blood.
7. On _____ God gave Moses the Ten Commandments.
8. _____ later changed his name to Israel.
9. Deuteronomy takes place in the land of _____, an area just outside of the land of Israel.
10. Before he died, Moses climbed _____ and was able to view the entire Promised Land.

Video

"Do Catholics Follow All Those Weird Old Testament Laws?" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDQQoU8FHAE>)

Time: 4:14

Fr. Mike Schmitz answers this question by breaking down Old Testament laws into three categories and then explaining which of these categories are to be followed by all people for all times. Ask your students to name in writing the categories that Fr. Schmitz gives, explain the meaning of each, and tell which category definitely applies to Catholics today.

5. Once and Future King: The Covenant of David

Read pages 85–101.

Suggested Reading: 1 Samuel 16–24; 2 Samuel 5–12, 23

Background

The chapter explains that King David, not Moses, is the most important man in the Old Testament. After he is first introduced in the Book of Ruth, his name appears more than one thousand times over the rest of the Old Testament. He is a king, and he is also a priest and a prophet. He was great in what he did for Israel as a historic nation (political) and as a worshipping nation (liturgy), and for what he symbolized for the future of God's people (eschatology). David founded Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and he brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and gave it a permanent home. In the Davidic Covenant, God blessed David and his descendants with the blessings he once intended for Adam and the entire people of Israel before sin got in the way. From David's line, a messiah would come.

Opener

Have the students read the genealogy of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 1:1–16. Matthew's gospel was written for an audience of Jewish converts to Christianity, and thus the author made sure to point out the connection between Jesus and Abraham, the father of the Jewish faith, and between Jesus and David, of whose family tree God promised that the Messiah would be born. Have students note in the genealogy these points:

- The structure of the genealogy is chronological beginning with Abraham and ending with Jesus.
- The genealogy traces the ancestors of David to Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. The fact that Jesus was not related by blood to Joseph would not have discouraged Jews from understanding his legitimate right to be David's heir. Adopted children were viewed equally with natural children among the Jewish people.
- The genealogy is also interesting because it includes five women—an inclusion that violated the usual pattern of Jewish genealogies. Three of the women had questionable characters. Tamar was a harlot. Rahab, from Jericho, was also a prostitute. Bathsheba had an adulterous affair with King David. Ruth, on the other hand, was a foreigner who married a Jew. Why did Matthew include these women in the genealogy? Perhaps he did so to show that outsiders and sinners have a place in the kingdom of God. Jesus himself would associate with people such as these in his ministry.

Assignments: Have the students do one or both of the following assignments. You may assign them as group work.

1. Research and study the genealogies of Jesus in more depth. Make a list of common ancestors in both Matthew's and Luke's (3:23–38) genealogies. Point out the differences in the genealogies and speculate why. Also, answer why you think Jesus' genealogy is placed in Luke's third chapter rather than right at the beginning of the gospel as in Matthew.
2. Read the following scripture passages about three of the women in Jesus' genealogy. Write one or two sentences about each person, telling something interesting about them.
 - Tamar (Genesis 38:6–30)
 - Rahab (Joshua 2:1–24)
 - Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1–27)

Text Reference (pages 88–91)

Exceptional in the areas of politics, liturgy, and eschatology, David's most serious weaknesses affected his personal life and domestic policies. His adulterous affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, who was one of his soldiers, is told in detail in 2 Samuel 11:1–12:25. David eventually plotted to have Uriah killed in battle and, after a period of mourning, married Bathsheba. She gave birth to a son who died soon afterward. Another son born to them, Solomon, eventually succeeded David as king. David admitted to his sins when confronted by the prophet Nathan. He repented, but his sins led to difficult final years of his reign, including several family problems: a son raping his half sister, a revengeful murder by her brother, and a rebellious son, Absalom, who turned against his father. Eventually Absalom was killed by David's forces after becoming entangled in a tree, leading to great mourning by David: "O my son Ab'salom, O Ab'salom, my son, my son!" (2 Sm 19:4).

Writing Assignment

David was not the only king to sin against God. Have the students read and summarize in one sentence how each of the following kings of Israel sinned: Saul (1 Sm 15:1–9), Solomon (1 Kgs 11:1–10), Jeroboam (1 Kgs 14:1–10), Baasha (1 Kgs 16:1–6), Omri (1 Kgs 16:23–26), Joram (2 Kgs 3:1–3), Ahaziah (2 Kgs 8:25–27), Zechariah (2 Kgs 15:8–10), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:1–4), Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:1–16), and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 14:18–25:7).

See also Discussion Questions on page 201 for additional writing assignment options.

Reading Comprehension

See also Review Questions on page 200.

1. Who were the judges?

2. Why did the people of Israel tire of being ruled by judges?
3. Explain the difference between the “Moses Channel” and the “David Channel.”
4. Give one example for each category of David’s greatness: political, liturgical, and eschatological.
5. Why was placing the capital of Israel in Jerusalem a shrewd political move for King David?
6. What was a key addition David added to worship besides moving the Ark to Jerusalem?
7. What does it mean to say that David was a “sign of one to come”?
8. What are three promises God makes to David about a son who will be David’s heir?
9. How was David also a priest?
10. What is meant by the “trickle down” benefits for Israel on behalf of King David?

Enrichment

In Hebrew, Jesus and Joshua have the same name, Y’shua. This is one indication of a connection between the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ and Joshua. Joshua led the people of Israel into the Promised Land (Jos 3), while Jesus leads his people into another Promised Land—eternal life. The Letter to the Hebrews is a source of connecting the two. Hebrews compares the “rest” that the Israelites shared with God in the Promised Land and the “rest” people share with God in heaven: “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later of another day. So then, there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God” (Heb 4:8–9). Also, as Joshua is an intercessor between God and the Israelites (see Jos 7:6–9), Jesus Christ is the “one mediator between God and men” (1 Tm 2:5).

Optional Assignment: Ask the students to research and write a three- to four-paragraph explanation of how Joshua was like Moses. References: Joshua 1–3, 9–10, 24.

Reading in Context

Have the students match each of the terms used in chapter 5 with its definition below.

dominant	stability	eschatological	ultimate	elders
filial	strategic	scarcely	sanctuary	

1. The best achievable or imaginable
2. A holy place or place of refuge
3. Firmness; steadiness
4. Referring to death, judgment, and final destiny
5. Most important, powerful, or influential

6. The generation or generations after the parental generation
7. Hardly; barely
8. Leaders or a senior figure in a group
9. Carefully designed to fulfill a particular purpose

Video

“Melchizedek Priesthood” (<https://catholicproductions.com/blogs/blog/melchizedek-priesthood>)

Time: 4:56

Dr. Brant Pitre explains why King David was a priest and why his priesthood is connected with Melchizedek, the priest-king who ruled over Jerusalem, then known as Salem, during the time of Abraham. Have the students watch the video and then answer in writing the following questions:

1. How is the priesthood of Melchizedek different from the Levite priesthood?
2. Why did David act as priest in the line of Melchizedek?
3. David foreshadows the priesthood of Jesus Christ. What type of priest will Jesus be: of Melchizedek or of Levi?

6. Stormy Today, Sonny Tomorrow: The New Covenant in the Prophets

Read pages 103–21.

Suggested Reading: 1 Kings 3–8

Background

The covenants of the prophets connect backward with the previous Old Testament covenants and also look forward “in expectation of a new and everlasting Covenant for all, to be written on their hearts” (Heb 10:16, quoted in CCC, 64; cf. Is 1:2–4 and Jer 31:31–34). Through the prophets God readied Israel to accept salvation that would come through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and be opened to all of humanity. The prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah—featured in this chapter—present dire warnings for their current day coupled with good news for the long term with the hope of a new King David.

Opener

Review the famous story that propelled the legend of the wisdom of Solomon: Solomon’s request of God for the gift of wisdom and his rendering of a decision in a dispute between two women who each claimed she was the mother of a child. Divide 1 Kings 3:4–28 into five speaker parts: narrator, God, Solomon, first woman, and second woman. Choose students to read the passage aloud.

Next, have a short discussion on the gift of wisdom. Wisdom can be thought of as a reality check. Like the prophets mentioned in this chapter, it can help us to take a long view of things at times; for example, we can see one poor grade on an assignment won’t do fatal damage to our life or our plans. Wisdom can also help us to take a more focused, smaller view when needed. For example, it can help us to put aside all the busyness of our lives to help a small child tie a shoe or make a much-appreciated Sunday night phone call to a lonely grandparent. Ask the students to suggest other ways wisdom is a gift for the long term and the short term.

Text Reference (pages 108–20)

Share some more information on what is known about the lives of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Print the names of each prophet on the board as well as any other relevant material you may wish to have the students jot down in notes.

- **Isaiah:** The prophet is said to have started his ministry in the reign of King Uzziah (Is 1:1). Uzziah died about 740 BC. The problem with the dating occurs with the mention of the Persian emperor Cyrus in Isaiah 45:1. Cyrus defeated Babylon in 539 BC. It

is fairly certain that the same prophet did not begin his career before 740 and then see the rise of Cyrus the Persian two centuries later. This issue points to the understanding that the Book of Isaiah actually contains the work of more than one writer from more than one time. The first thirty-nine chapters are mostly stories of the actual prophet Isaiah of Jerusalem who was a poet and a politician and very comfortable in the king's court.

- **Jeremiah:** Jeremiah's ministry as a prophet began in approximately 626 BC during the reign of King Josiah. He disappeared from the pages of history in 587 BC. Jeremiah, unlike Ezekiel, remained in Jerusalem through the entire siege and exile of the people to Babylon. He walked around Jerusalem with a wooden yoke around his neck preaching that the best course of action was to submit to Babylon so that Jerusalem and the Temple could escape destruction. However, the Temple was destroyed along with the entire city of Jerusalem in response to a revolt by King Zedekiah.
- **Ezekiel:** There is only sparse information about Ezekiel available in scripture. He was born into a priestly family and also practiced as a priest. He would have been involved with Temple sacrifice, hence the long exposition on the Temple in the Book of Ezekiel. He was probably among the aristocratic Jews that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, deported in 597 BC after the siege of Jerusalem. He likely settled at Tel-Abib, a canal town near the Euphrates River southeast of Babylon. His call as a prophet is detailed in Ezekiel 1. In 593 BC he had a fantastic vision of God. He saw a chariot drawn by four winged creatures, each having four faces that represent the attributes of God: courage (lion), strength (ox), swiftness (eagle), and intelligence (man). This vision struck Ezekiel dumb. Eventually, God's voice instructed him to eat a scroll that contained God's Word. It tasted sweet like honey, but the message it held fell on deaf ears of a stubborn people.

Writing and Drawing Assignment

Have the students browse the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and draw a sketch representing each prophet, his actions, or his words. Also have them label the passages they are illustrating and write captions explaining the sketches.

Suggestions

- Isaiah: The Song of the Vineyard (Is 5:1-7); hope for the Son of David (Is 9:1-2, 6-7); "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse" (Is 11:1)
- Jeremiah: The prophet wearing thongs and a yoke on his shoulders (Jer 13:1-4, 27:2); the broken wine flask (Jer 13:12-14); the potter's vessel (Jer 18:1-12)
- Ezekiel: The four winged creatures (Ez 1:10-14); parable of the shepherds (Ez 34); vision of dry bones (Ez 37:1-14)

See also Discussion Questions on page 202 for additional writing assignment options.

Reading Comprehension

See also Review Questions on pages 201–2.

1. List ways that Solomon's Temple symbolized and summed up all of the covenants and all of salvation history to that point.
2. If the completion and dedication of Solomon's Temple was the high point of the Old Testament, how did things decline right away afterward?
3. Explain the reasons for the division of the ten northern tribes and the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin.
4. What is meant by the "stump of Jesse" in the Book of Isaiah?
5. According to Isaiah, how will his covenant with God work and who will be a part of it?
6. What is Jeremiah's theme for most of the Book of Jeremiah?
7. Where is Jeremiah's New Covenant written (in comparison with the Mosaic Covenant)?
8. What does Ezekiel compare Israel to?
9. What does Ezekiel's "covenant of peace" call to mind?
10. What do Jeremiah's covenant and Ezekiel's covenant have in common?

Enrichment

There are four distinct poems in Isaiah 40–55 known as the "Servant Songs" that describe how God will use the servant to usher in a glorious future. Christians see prophetic images of Jesus in these servant passages, because he is the Servant whose sufferings redeemed all people. Jesus' understanding that the Messiah would suffer and serve differed from the traditional view that the Messiah would be surrounded by glory and would dominate others. Here is a brief description of the Servant Songs:

- The first song (Is 42:1–4) speaks of God's chosen one who will bring justice to the world and treat the bruised reed, Israel, tenderly.
- The second song (Is 49:1–6) tells that God chose the servant before his birth. The servant's strength is his prophetic word.
- The third song (Is 50:4–9) describes how God's special messenger meets with resentment. People beat and spit on him and pluck his beard. Yet the servant suffers quietly.
- The final song (Is 52:13–53:12) has remarkable parallels to Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. Without complaint, the servant accepts a painful, humiliating death so that through him the world can be saved.

These magnificent Servant Songs stress God's love for all people and deliver one of the Old Testament's most important messages: God is a saving God, a Lord who forgives and forgets the sins of his people.

Assignment: Have the students read the listed scripture passages and complete each item.

1. Read Isaiah 40–44, 52:13–53:12. Type or write out at least five verses that speak of God’s mercy and tenderness to the Chosen People.
2. Note three ways the Servant Songs apply to Jesus.
3. Read the entire chapter of Isaiah 43:1–28. Pick out verses that express God’s power and majesty. Write a short poem or song verse that describes God’s glory.

Reading in Context

All of the following sentences are false. Have the students replace the italicized word with a word from chapter 6 to make the sentences true. If you want to make the exercise harder, remove the italics.

1. The Temple in Jerusalem was built on *Mount Sinai* where Abraham had tried to sacrifice Isaac years ago.
2. *King David* is the source and inspiration for the Wisdom Literature.
3. The ten tribes of the northern kingdom were completely wiped out by the *Babylonians*, an empire that controlled most of the Middle East.
4. There are four major prophets commonly known in the Bible: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and *Hosea*.
5. The “everlasting berith” refers to the *Adamic* Covenant.
6. The only place in the Old Testament where the term “New Covenant” is known is in the Book of *Isaiah*.
7. Rather than referring to the “New Covenant,” Ezekiel calls it a “covenant of *hope*.”
8. Ezekiel emphasizes that God’s people will get a new *Ark of the Covenant*.

Video

“Solomon’s Temple Explained” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt6lQAe8ues>)

Time: 10:20

The video provides an illustrative overview of the history, placement, design, and purpose of Solomon’s Temple. Chapters 6 to 8 of the First Book of Kings describe in detail the building, furnishing, and dedication of the Temple. After the students view the video, have them review the chapter and summarize in one or two paragraphs the connection of the Temple with the Adamic, Noahic, Mosaic, and Davidic Covenants (see pages 105–6).

7. The Grand Finale: The Eucharistic Covenant

Read pages 123–52.

Suggested Reading: Luke 22–24; Acts 1–2

Background

Chapter 7 teaches about the covenant that fulfills all the Old Testament covenants and is the everlasting covenant for all time, calling it the “Eucharistic Covenant” after its fulfillment. Previously, it was called the “New Covenant” in the book when it was being prophesied, but really the Eucharistic Covenant is the same as the New Covenant. In the Eucharist, the events of salvation become present and actual. Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is re-presented—that is, made present again. The Eucharist is a sacrifice because in it, Christ gives the Church the very Body he gave up on the Cross and the very Blood he “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28). The Eucharist is offered for the sins of the living and the dead. The Eucharist is offered for the sins of the living and the dead “so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ” (CCC, 1371).

Opener

The blood and water flowing from the side of Christ stand for the eucharistic blood and water of Baptism. The physical flow from Christ’s body on the Cross was a symbol of the outpouring of the Spirit. The actual pouring out of the Spirit came at Pentecost.

Jesus tells us that we will know the Spirit because “he dwells with you, and will be in you” (Jn 14:17). It is the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to us. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that places we can know the Holy Spirit are in

- the scriptures he inspired;
- Church tradition;
- the magisterium (the teaching office of the Church), in which he assists;
- the sacramental liturgy;
- prayer, wherein he intercedes for us;
- the gifts and ministries by which the Church is built up;
- the signs of apostolic and missionary life; and
- the witness of saints through whom he has shown his holiness and continues the work of salvation. (668)

Have the students focus on the last example on the list—in the witness of saints and their example of holiness. Ask them to meet in groups of four or five. Each person should share one example of holiness from the life of a saint or any holy person they know. Examples should be specific—for example, of a saint such as St. Maximilian Kolbe who gave up his life for a fellow prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp, of a wife who cares daily for the needs of her ill husband, or of a peer who makes a special effort to be kind and greet others during the course of a school day.

After a suitable amount of discussion time, call on representatives from each group to share with the entire class one or two stories that were mentioned in their group's discussion.

Text Reference (pages 149–50)

The text reminds us that “with the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have come full circle in salvation history.” We have returned to the divine filiation that Adam enjoyed. Different from any other religion, we are “children of God” who are parented by a loving Father. We have been given a unique opportunity to enjoy a close and loving relationship with God and to know him more in his mystery. Part of this grace allows us to know more about God's nature.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), one of the most important theologians in Church history, named nine attributes of God that tell us of his nature. Share these notes on God's attributes with the students. As you do, have the students take notes, listing each attribute (the boldface words) by number and including their own line drawing (suggestions listed below) to help them remember.

1. **God is eternal.** He has no beginning and no end. Or to put it another way, God always was, always is, and always will be.
For example: line drawing symbolizing eternity: arrow with arrows pointing in both directions
2. **God is unique.** God is the fullness of being and perfection. God is the designer of a one and only world. Even the people he creates are one of a kind.
For example: line drawings of young boy and young girl (one wearing glasses with straight hair; the other with no glasses, curly hair, and freckles) with rays of light above them
3. **God is infinite and omnipotent.** There are no limits to God. “Omnipotence” is a word that refers to God's supreme power and authority over all of creation.
For example: line drawing of a cross with rays shooting out from it
4. **God is omnipresent.** This reminds us of a lesson we learned early in life: God sees everything. God has no space limitations. He is everywhere. You can never be away from God.
For example: line drawing of big eyes peering down from clouds to represent the omnipresence of God
5. **God contains all things.** All of creation is under God's care and jurisdiction.
For example: line drawing of God's hands extended over earth (circle) with a person, animal, and tree sitting on top

6. **God is immutable. God does not evolve.** God does not change. God is the same God now as he always has been and always will be.

For example: line drawing of horizontal timeline to represent beginning of creation to present; small crosses placed before the timeline, on the timeline, and beyond the timeline

7. **God is pure spirit.** Though God has been described with human attributes (e.g., a wise old man with a long beard), God is not a material creation. God's image cannot be made. God is a pure spirit who cannot be divided into parts. God is simple but complex.

For example: line drawing of God as wise old man with a beard with an "X" crossed through him

8. **God is alive.** We believe in a living God, a God who acts in the lives of people. Most concretely, he came to this world in the incarnate form of Jesus Christ.

For example: line drawing of traditional image of Jesus Christ (beard, long hair, etc.)

9. **God is holy.** God is pure goodness. God is pure love.

For example: line drawing of large heart with emanating rays

Writing Assignment

God's omnipotence—that he is “almighty”—is the only one of St. Thomas Aquinas's attributes of God that is found in the Catholic creeds. Ask the students to respond to the following question in three to four well-written paragraphs: Do you find the fact that God is almighty more scary or comforting? Explain.

See also Discussion Questions on page 203 for additional writing assignment options.

Reading Comprehension

See also Review Questions on page 202.

1. What was the problem from a Jewish perspective of the Maccabean kings and King Herod ruling the Jews?
2. What is the importance of the articles *the* in the beginning of Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:1: “This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, *the* son of David, *the* Son of Abraham”?
3. How is Jesus the actual Son of God?
4. Cite one gospel example that makes it clear that Jesus is the King, the Son of David.
5. Explain how the tunic Jesus wore at his crucifixion helps to identify him as priest.
6. How does Jesus fulfill the other roles of Adam (prophet and bridegroom)?
7. Explain two connections between Jesus and Moses.
8. The Davidic Covenant had four basic promises. How did Jesus fulfill the promise that the Son of God would build a better temple than Solomon?

9. What are two major connections of the New (Eucharistic) Covenant with the Old Covenant?
10. How is Jesus' unbloody sacrifice of himself at the Last Supper linked to the bloody gift of himself on the Cross as one worship ceremony, one liturgical act?
11. What do the blood and water from the side of Christ on the Cross stand for?
12. When does the actual pouring out of the Spirit take place?
13. What Old Testament event does the wind of fire of Pentecost remind us of?
14. How do Catholics today receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?
15. A unique aspect of Christianity is that Christians are "children of God." How does this differ from other religions?

Enrichment

The Last Supper was held as Jesus was celebrating a Passover meal in the upper room with his disciples (see Mt 26:18; Mk 14:22-23; Lk 22:7-13; and 1 Cor 11:24-25). In Jesus' time, a Passover meal would have included unleavened bread, wine, some herbs, and an unblemished lamb. Their ceremony would have consisted of a blessing (*berakah*) of both the cup and the bread. These elements are described in the New Testament. Yet there is no mention of a lamb. In its place, Jesus is the Lamb of God, the unblemished paschal lamb (Ex 12:4-5) who is led to slaughter (Is 53:7). Jesus gave the Passover a new meaning. The Eucharist fulfills the Jewish Passover through the Paschal Mystery (CCC, 1340). Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension are a passing over from slavery to sin to ultimate freedom in the resurrection of all people.

Present further parallels between the Passover meal and the Eucharist from the following chart, or have the students look up some of the information themselves from the cited scripture passages.

Passover Meal	Eucharist
Bread and wine (Ex 12:15; Nm 9:11-12)	Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples (Lk 22:19-20).
Unblemished lamb (Ex 12:4-5)	Jesus is the Paschal Lamb, the Lamb of God (Jn 19:36; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pt 1:19).
None of the lamb's bones should be broken (Nm 9:12)	The soldiers did not break Jesus' bones on the Cross (Jn 19:33, 36).
<i>Berakah</i> ("blessing")	Jesus took the bread and said a blessing (Mt 16:16; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19-20).

Passover Meal	Eucharist
Celebrates the Hebrews passing from slavery to freedom in the Promised Land (Ex 12)	Celebrates the passing from slavery to sin to freedom in the Resurrection, from death to new life (1 Cor 5:7-8)
Moses poured blood on the people at the establishment of the Mosaic Covenant (Ex 24:8; Zec 9:11)	Jesus poured out his blood at the establishment of the New (Eucharistic) Covenant (Jer 31:31; Lk 22:20).

Reading in Context

Have the students identify the following terms mentioned in chapter 7 based on the descriptions.

Herod Pentecost Pharisees Abba Eucharist Ezra
Babel Joshua Maccabees Passover Pilate

1. A prophet who helped the Jews reconstruct their lives after the Babylonian exile
2. A warrior family who expelled King Antiochus IV
3. A descendant of Esau, hence not able to take the throne of David
4. A word Jesus used for “father”
5. A sect of Jews that challenged Jesus for breaking Sabbath laws
6. He shared the same Hebrew name with Jesus
7. One of the most important Jewish feasts
8. A man mentioned in our creeds who tried Jesus
9. A Greek word that means “fiftieth”
10. A place mentioned in the Old Testament where people were confused because they couldn’t understand each other
11. First known as the “Breaking of the Bread”

Video

“Bishop Barron on the Sacrament of the Eucharist as Sacrifice” (<https://youtu.be/z6ROgZfVu6o>)

Time: 10:45

Before viewing the video, call on students to explain the meaning of Mass and the meaning of receiving Holy Communion. Then play the video.

Bishop Robert Barron explains the Mass as sacrifice and its representation of the Last Supper and sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. In doing so, he traces the history of religious animal sacrifices, especially in the Old Testament, and how people used those sacrifices to affect their reconciliation with God. Jesus is the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sin of the world.

After the students have watched the video, ask them if their understanding of the meanings of Mass and the reception of Holy Communion has changed or not. Call on students to explain their points of view.

8. Covenant Consummation: The Wedding Feast of the Lamb

Read pages 153–66.

Suggested Reading: Revelation 1, 17, 21–22

Background

Chapter 8 is an overview of the Book of Revelation. This chapter does not cover an eighth covenant. The word “covenant” does not occur in this last book of the Bible. Yet Revelation describes a wedding in which the bride (Christ) has come for the bridegroom (his Church). This is the final form of the Eucharistic Covenant. In this last book of the Bible, there is no mention of covenant but rather the language of family. God will care for his people as loving human parents care for their own children. The book uses symbolic and an apocalyptic style of writing to describe events of the past, present, and future. The visions of the Book of Revelation herald our destiny to be wedded to Jesus the Lamb and living in the great eternal city with our families and with God himself.

Opener

Have the students work with a partner or small group to create written notes of the symbolic images, numbers, and colors that appear in the Book of Revelation. Each student will need a Bible. Each entry in the handbook must include the symbol (in a word, phrase, and/or illustration), its meaning, and a sample verse in which it appears. Depending on how much time you wish to allot to these, notes may be simple or more elaborate/creative. Some of the symbols to consider:

Numbers

- 7 means wholeness or perfection.
- 6, one short of 7, means imperfection.
- $3\frac{1}{2}$ is half of seven and thus also represents imperfection.
- 12 signifies Israel or the Twelve Apostles.
- 1,000 symbolizes an incalculable amount of eternity.
- 144,000 is a symbol of the New Israel that embraces every nation, race, people, and language.

Colors

- *Black* represents death, unfaithfulness, and evil.

- *Red* means violence, killing, and the blood of witnesses.
- *White* symbolizes purity and victory.

Names and Figures

- *Babylon*, the ancient city that persecuted Jews, stands for the modern persecutor of Christians, Rome.
- A *dragon* represents evil.
- *Four Horses of the Apocalypse*: The white horse symbolizes conquering power, the red horse signifies bloody war, the black horse means famine, and the green horse represents death.
- A *horn* symbolizes power, while *eyes* symbolize knowledge. Describing Jesus having seven eyes and seven horns is a symbolic way of saying he is all-powerful and all-knowing.

Text Reference (pages 153–58)

Carl E. Olsen in an article for CatholicCulture.org (“Time Is Near: Five Common Misinterpretations of the Book of Revelation,” <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=4738>) points out five of the most common false statements publicized often in the name of the Book of Revelation. A summary follows. Share these points with the students. You may also print copies of the linked article and have the students read it individually or in small groups.

1. “The Book of Revelation Says the World Will End in Our Lifetime!”
As the text mentions, there are passages in Revelation that address our future. But it does not reveal exact and literal dates when the world will end.
2. “Christ Will Reign on Earth during the Millennium!”
Revelation 20 discusses a description of a millennium (one thousand years). Is this a reference to a literal one-thousand-year period on earth when Christ will reign? St. Augustine rejected this idea. In *The City of God* he taught that at the Last Judgment the “City of God” and the “City of Man” will be finally separated, citing Matthew 25:32–46, the separation of the sheep and the goats.
3. “Christ Will Reign from Independence, Missouri—No, from Jerusalem—No, from a Heavenly Holy City!”
Millenarian beliefs have been a part of American religious life for quite some time. Mormons believe that the kingdom will be established in Independence, Missouri. Other evangelical preachers have said Jesus will rule from a newly restored Jerusalem Temple. Seventh-Day Adventists teach that during the millennium, only 144,000 (see Rv 7:4; 14:1–3) will go to heaven, while the rest of the population will remain on earth. The Church disputes these teachings: “The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism, especially the ‘intrinsically perverse’ political form of secular messianism” (CCC, 676). In fact, the false belief described here is a form of the antichrist’s deception.

4. “The Whore of Babylon Is the Catholic Church!”
Martin Luther and other Christian fundamentalists have falsely identified the papacy and the Catholic Church as “the whore of Babylon” as misread from Revelation 17:3–4. Fundamentalists claim since Rome is built on seven hills, the Catholic Church is therefore the woman—who is a city—who sits on seven mountains (Rv 17:9): in other words, Vatican City. But Vatican City does not sit on any of the hills of Rome.
5. “I Am Going to Be Raptured before the Great Tribulation!”
The popular fundamentalist *Left Behind* series of books advocated from Revelation 3:10 that Jesus’ words claimed the faithful on earth would avoid the final hour of suffering. Yet Revelation 3 does not mention a rapture or being taken up to heaven. Rather, Christ’s request from John 17:15 is not that people will be taken out of the world but rather that they will be protected from Satan.

The Book of Revelation is a difficult book to understand. It is full of mysteries. But it reveals Christ as the “Lord of the Cosmos,” the “Alpha and the Omega.” He is the Lord of the past, present, and future.

Writing Assignment

Revelation 21–22 beautifully describes the heavenly city that awaits all Christians who endure suffering in this life. Their constant prayer—“Come, Lord Jesus”—is answered now and will be answered always. Have the students read the two chapters on their own and then answer in complete sentences the following questions:

- Why is there no need for a temple in the new city?
- What is your own image of heaven compared to Revelation’s poetic image?

See also Discussion Questions on pages 203–4 for additional writing assignment options.

Reading Comprehension

See also Review Questions on page 203.

1. Who is the author of the Book of Revelation, and what is its setting?
2. How are the acts of heavenly worship described in Revelation the same as earthly worship?
3. How is Revelation connected with the Mass?
4. What three aspects of human history are present in the Book of Revelation?
5. What city was the “great city” and “harlot” Revelation describes? What city was the “seven-headed beast”? How did the relationship between these two cities end?
6. Name two of the antichrists that have plagued the world and are mentioned in chapter 8.
7. Why was Rome’s destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in AD 70 a symbolic destruction of the universe?

8. What is the significance of describing the bride that comes down from heaven to marry the lamb as a cube?

Enrichment

Note in further detail some names and symbols for Jesus connected with the Book of Revelation. These names and symbols have been handed down through the years and have appeared in religious paintings, in altar carvings in churches, on the walls of catacombs, and in illustrations inside or on the cover of Bibles. Share a presentation on these symbols that includes an image of each. Have the students accompany the presentation by re-creating a drawing of each symbol in their notebooks.

- **Alpha and Omega:** Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet; omega is the last letter. These letters symbolize that Jesus is the beginning and the end of human history. See Revelation 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13.
- **Lamb of God:** Jesus is the Lamb of God, the innocent victim offered so that we can have eternal life. It reminds us of the Old Testament sin offerings using animals. This is the title used by John the Baptist (see Jn 1:29). It appears in several places in the Book of Revelation.
- **Pantokrator:** *Pantokrator* is a Greek word that means “almighty” or “Almighty God.” It is a specific depiction of Christ used in the Eastern Catholic Church. The title is used nine times in the Book of Revelation: 1:8, 4:8, 11:17, 15:3, 16:7, 16:14, 19:6, 19:15, and 21:22.
- **Root of David:** This title—referenced in Revelation 5:5 and 22:16—reminds us that Jesus is a direct descendant of King David.
- **Lion of Judah:** This is a symbol for Jesus used in Revelation 5:5. Often this symbol for Christ is associated with his second coming.

Have the students add their own symbol to their drawings of these symbols to represent their belief in Christ. Allow time for them to share their symbols with a partner or in a small group.

Reading in Context

Have the students match each of the terms used in chapter 8 with its definition below.

Nero	harlot	raptured	cosmos	Holy of Holies
seven-headed beast	Sanctus	Asia Minor	Church militant	
Church triumphant	Patmos			

1. Thought to be a reference to ancient Rome in the Book of Revelation
2. Modern-day Turkey

3. The Church on earth
4. The sum of everything
5. To be transported to heaven at the time of the second coming
6. A word that means “Holy” and describes a part of the Mass
7. An infamous Roman emperor who ordered Peter and Paul to be executed
8. The island where the vision in the Book of Revelation was received
9. The inner room of the Temple where the Ark of the Covenant rested
10. Thought to be a reference to Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation
11. The Church in heaven

Video

“Is There Such a Thing as the Rapture?” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HFGSC6VqbY>)

Time: 8:59 (stop at 8:16)

A Catholic convert addresses the question and also reiterates that one of the key purposes of the Book of Revelation is that it is an instructional guide on the elements of the Mass. After playing the video through the 8:16 mark (there is an inappropriate segment in the last few seconds), have the students work individually or in small groups to locate three passages in Revelation that offer instruction on the Mass.

A Last Word

Read pages 167–70.

Four Responses to the Book

The conclusion to the book offers four appropriate responses to the message of scripture shared in this course. Outline the four responses here. Include some of your own ideas to go along with each response. Re-create the following notes and project them to the class.

Appropriate Responses to the Message of Scripture

1) We Can Receive the Sacraments with Greater Enthusiasm

A. In Baptism

1. We experience creation from the waters as at the dawn of time.
2. We survive turmoil as in the waters of the flood.
3. We pass into freedom as in the crossing of the Red Sea.
4. We experience sinking and rising as Jesus did in his baptism.

B. At Eucharist

1. We receive life as in the Garden of Eden.
2. We are nourished as from the manna in the desert.
3. We celebrate as in the feasts of David and his successors.
4. We pass over from death to new life as at the Last Supper.

2) We Can Live Our Catholic Faith with More Zest

A. As kings we rule over our passions and possessions.

B. As prophets we speak God's word to people around us.

C. As priests we offer our lives to God on a daily basis as a living sacrifice for the salvation of the whole world.

D. We follow the direction of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (e.g., 908, 904–7, 796, 1821) for further instruction.

3) We Can Keep Learning More of God's Word

A. Use a reading plan to read more of the Bible.

1. See suggested readings that open each chapter.

B. Choose a biblical textbook to accompany your reading of the Bible.

1. See "Suggestions for Further Reading" section (pages 195–96).
2. Use an existing school textbook.

3. Work from the biblical study notes (e.g., in the *New American Bible, Revised Edition*).
- 4) We Can Share What We Know
 - A. Use artwork and symbols to communicate the faith.
 1. Make a felt banner or PowerPoint display with all seven covenants.
 2. Design a lesson for a youth group from the chapters in *Bible Basics for Catholics*.