Name Date

Handout 1-A

# Old Testament Themes

Reading the Old Testament is not like reading any ordinary book. Yes, we need to read the words and sentences. But more than a literal reading of the text, we need to read it with faith. This means we reflect on the underlying message of the text: the message of truth God is wishing to communicate to us. Here are some main themes found in the Bible. Keep these in mind as you study particular stories or events in the Old Testament.

- God created a good world.
- God has blessed human life.
- Humanity has a tendency to sin.
- God is a God of mercy.
- God keeps promises.
- The covenant binds God to Israel.
- The Law expresses Israel's bond to God.
- Worship is praise and thanksgiving.
- Religious life is life in community.
- God directs all of human history.

As the introduction to the *New American Bible, revised edition,* explains, these themes can be applied to our own lives today in the following ways:

- All things in our lives must flow from faith.
- Prayer and our daily life must be one.
- We must respect God's holiness.
- We must imitate God's holiness.
- Holiness must be translated into compassion.
- Life is a journey that requires trust in God.
- We are people of the land. (We must take the environment seriously.)
- Faith is a family affair.
- Prayer must fill our lives.