Welcome!

This unique Bible is for you.

The Catholic Youth Bible (CYB) is filled with things that will make it easier for you to understand the Bible's message. The authors, editors, designers, and artists involved in creating its special features were focused on you—a young person seeking answers to life's important questions. The CYB can be a true companion, helping you find the answers you seek and perhaps raising new questions along the way. It will help you see yourself in God's image and likeness, a vital part of God's saving work in the world.

What makes this Youth Bible Catholic? For starters, its introductions and articles reflect Catholic interpretation of the Bible and make connections to Catholic beliefs and traditions. In addition, this Bible contains all seventy-three books and letters that form a complete Catholic Bible, seven more than most other Bibles (see “The Case of the Missing Books,” near Tb 1, 16). Does this mean that other Christians cannot use The Catholic Youth Bible? Not at all. When it comes to the Scriptures, Christians from all cultures and denominations have more in common than they have differences.

As you use this Bible, keep in mind two important points. The first is that the Bible is for everyone. Wherever you are in your relationship with God, the Bible can speak to you. The articles in the CYB invite you to consider what the church teaches about God's message in the Bible whether you are a committed Christian or a searcher with lots of questions.

The second point is that all the special features in The Catholic Youth Bible are designed to encourage you to read the Bible itself. It is the Bible's stories, poems, prophecies, and letters that carry this central message: God desires a loving relationship with us. The special features of this Bible can help you understand God's message. But it is God's word in the Bible that can change your life.

Welcome!
SPECIAL FEATURES

The Catholic Youth Bible is loaded with special features to help make it easier for you to read and understand the Bible. Here is a list of some of those features and where to find them.

HOW TO READ AND STUDY THE BIBLE
The chapter that follows this general introduction gives advice for interpreting the Bible and a process for studying the Bible alone or with a group.

SUGGESTED READING PLANS
This chapter offers some great reading plans to get you started in studying the Bible.

SECTION INTRODUCTIONS
Each major section of the Bible (the Pentateuch, the historical books, the wisdom books, the prophetic books, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and the Letters and Revelation) begins with background on the books in that section.

BOOK INTRODUCTIONS
Introductions at the beginning of most books (sometimes two or three books share a single introduction) give insight into each book's central message and an overview of its contents. You can find more extensive book introductions in other editions of the New American Bible.

LIVE IT!
The “Live It!” articles apply the Bible’s messages to situations you may be facing now or will face in the future.

PRAY IT!
The “Pray It!” articles can help you use the Bible for personal prayer. They show the biblical basis for the prayer and sacramental life of the Catholic church.

DID YOU KNOW?
The “Did You Know?” articles provide background from biblical scholars to help you understand the culture and traditions of biblical times, or the church’s interpretation of certain passages.

INTRODUCING . . .
The “Introducing . . .” articles give a quick introduction to the lives of important biblical people.

CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS
The “Catholic Connections” articles show the biblical basis for many Catholic Christian beliefs and practices.

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS
The “Cultural Connections” articles explain how people in different cultures have understood and lived out God’s revelation in the Bible. The articles represent many of the diverse cultures that have found their home in the United States.

WHERE DO I FIND IT?
Several indexes are located at the back of the Bible. The first index helps you locate Bible passages on events, people, and teachings of Jesus. The second index helps you find Bible passages related to each sacrament. The third index helps you find Bible passages related to life and faith issues. The fourth index leads you to articles on specific topics.

STUDY AIDS
A concordance, color maps, a timeline, and pictures are found at the back of the Bible. The timeline and maps will help you locate where and when different biblical events occurred.
The Bible Is **MULTICULTURAL**

The Bible developed in the midst of great cultural diversity. In fact, the Bible was originally written in at least two languages, Hebrew and Greek. The people of the Old Testament were influenced by Arabic, Egyptian, and other Middle Eastern cultures that surrounded them. Later, they and the early Christian church were influenced by the Greek and Roman cultures. In the Bible, God is revealed as the God of all nations and all cultures.

As the Word of God, the Bible’s core message of God’s love for human beings speaks to people of any culture. That is one reason the Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in the world. Christians also believe that God is at work in the lives of people of every culture, whether or not they have been formally introduced to the Christian message. Listening to other cultures’ experience of God can deepen Christian people’s appreciation of God’s message present in the Bible.

We also live in a multicultural world. The Catholic Youth Bible responds to this reality in two main ways. First, all the articles attempt to speak in a way that people of all cultures can appreciate and understand. Second, some articles have been specially written to represent distinct cultural perspectives. Most of these articles represent African American, Asian American, Hispanic and Latino, and Native American perspectives. The revised edition of The Catholic Youth Bible includes additional articles representing cultural perspectives from around the world.

All the articles share cultural experiences and traditions, religious symbols, prayers, and poetry, and they connect all these elements to the Bible. “Cultural Connections,” an entry in the subject index at the back of the Bible, lists the locations of all these articles. If you would like to read articles from one of the four major cultural perspectives mentioned above, the subject index still contains entries for those.

The cultural perspectives represented in The Catholic Youth Bible are a small sampling of the many unique cultures in the world. Because of space restrictions, articles on many cultures could not be included. Despite these limitations, the multicultural articles can deepen your appreciation of the Bible’s message and of the rich ways different cultures live that message.

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**NAME OF BOOK**

**CHAPTER**

**VERSE(S)**

Jn 3, 16–17

Most of the articles end with a citation identifying the Bible passage the article is based on. It is important to read the passage before reading the article.

In addition to the Bible text, you will find footnotes and Scripture cross-references printed along the bottom of each page. Every time you see an obelisk (†) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding footnote labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The footnotes provide you with added information about words and phrases mentioned in the Bible. Every time you see an asterisk (*) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding cross-reference labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The cross-references direct you to similar Scripture passages.
The Bible—which is also called the sacred Scriptures—tells the story of the loving relationship between God and humankind. It brings people to a deeper relationship with God, teaches important truths about Christian faith, and challenges how we live our life and relate with other people. However, studying the Bible raises questions for many people. This section gives some answers to key questions from Catholic Christian teaching. Because these are brief answers to important questions, you may want to talk more about them with someone in your family, church, or school.

About the Bible

What does it mean to say that God inspired the Bible? Did God speak directly to the Bible’s authors?

Christians make a fantastic claim about the Bible: God is the author of the sacred Scriptures. They believe the Bible is God’s word, containing the truths that God wishes to reveal to humankind for our salvation. Through the Holy Spirit, God inspired the human authors of the Bible’s books to reveal these truths in their writings. These two concepts—God’s inspiration of the biblical authors and God’s revelation in their writings of the truths about God and God’s will for us—are two important Christian beliefs about the Bible.

To say that biblical authors were inspired by God does not mean that they took dictation directly from God. They were true authors using creative literary forms to communicate the people’s experience of God. In fact, many of the books had more than one author. Some books went through several decades of development in which the stories were told and retold, written down, combined, and edited. The church believes the Holy Spirit was guiding the many people involved throughout this whole process.

How do I know that what is in the Bible is true? Aren’t there mistakes in the Bible?

Christians believe that the Bible is true and without error when it teaches the things God wishes to reveal for the sake of our salvation. This is called the inerrancy of the Bible. Some Christians also believe that the Bible is without error in every respect, including all references to scientific and historical facts. But Catholic Christians, along with others, are cautious about making this claim. The Catholic church teaches that in order to interpret the Bible correctly, we must understand what the human authors intended to communicate at the time of their writing. To know what God wants to reveal through their words, we must take into account “the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking, and narrating then current” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 110).

In other words, from our modern viewpoint, some statements in the Bible may seem like mistakes. But these “mistakes” may be due to the difference between a biblical author’s cultural perspective and our cultural perspective. Or they may be due to our misunderstanding of a biblical author’s use of literary devices such as metaphors, fiction, and poetry. Or perhaps they are due to a biblical author’s different understanding of science or history. In its introductions and articles, The Catholic Youth Bible will help you understand the biblical authors’ intentions and the church’s teaching about what God is revealing through them.

Why do Catholics believe that the Bible alone isn’t enough to teach all the truths about the Christian faith?

All Christians believe that God’s complete revelation—all that people need to know about God and about their relation to God—is expressed in Jesus Christ. They believe that Jesus is the living Word of God, “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1, 15). All Christians believe that the Bible is a primary way of communicating God’s revelation, which has its ultimate source in Christ.

But Catholic Christians believe that God’s revelation is also communicated through sacred Tradition. Sacred Tradition, which is sometimes simply called Tradition, is all that the first Apostles learned from Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is preserved, taught, and reinterpreted for each new generation by the Apostles’ successors—the pope and bishops. Scripture and Tradition are closely related and support each other, having their common source in Jesus Christ. Some of the articles in The Catholic Youth Bible expand on the Bible’s message with teaching from sacred Tradition.

Why does the Bible have two testaments?

The Bible reveals God’s plan for humanity. It is divided into two parts. The Old Testament records the relationship between God and the descendants of Abraham, particularly the descendants of Abraham’s grandson Jacob. At different times in their history, these descendants are called the Hebrews, the Israelites, and the Jews. The Old Testament contains their religious history, laws, and sacred stories. Because the Old Testament contains the sacred Scriptures of the Jewish people, many Christians also call the Old Testament the Hebrew Scriptures.

The New Testament presents Jesus as the full revelation of God. Jesus was a Jew, and he affirmed the core beliefs of the Jewish faith. He knew and cherished the Hebrew Scriptures. But he also revealed new insights into God’s desired relationship with human beings. After his Resurrection, as his followers lived out the implications of his teachings, they eventually formed a new religious faith that came to be called Christianity. The books and letters in the New Testament record their central teachings and beliefs about Jesus.

The church teaches that there is a profound unity to the Old and New Testaments in relation to God’s revelation. “The Old Testament prepares for the New and the New Testament fulfills the Old; the two shed light on each other; both are true Word of God” (Catechism, no. 140). This is why both the Old and New Testaments are used in Catholic liturgy and catechism.

The Bible was written a long time ago. What does it have to do with my life today?

Christians believe the Bible’s core message of God’s desire to be in a loving relationship with human beings is greater than the difficulties caused by the passing of time and by cultural differences between the biblical era and our time. They believe that the more people read, reflect on, and study the Bible, the more they can discover what God is saying to people today. The Bible’s message does not wear out or become obsolete. However, the Bible was originally written by and for people who lived in different historical circumstances. In order to make the Bible relevant to our time, people need to interpret it in its proper context (see the next chapter, “How to Read and Study the Bible” for help with this). This process of making the Bible’s message current for our time is called actualization.

Each person, community, and culture brings its life experiences to interact with God’s revelation in the Bible. God’s word sheds light on our hopes and struggles and in so doing becomes a source of new life for us. Knowing that God forgives our sins, liberates us from the things that oppress and enslave us, and rejoices in our successes gives us the inner peace we all seek. The Bible tells us that we are entrusted with Jesus’ mission to share God’s peace, justice, and love—a mission that gives true meaning to our life.

Of course, the best way to discover what the Bible has to do with your life is to read and study it yourself. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the original authors will also be your companion as you spend time with the Bible—comforting, exciting, challenging, and encouraging you along your way.
God’s Word came to earth as a person, Jesus Christ. Jesus was fully human so that people could experience God’s love firsthand. He was also fully God so that through his death and new life is breathed into sinful humanity.

The Bible is called God’s word because it is closely linked to Jesus. Like Jesus, it can be said to be both human and divine. It is divine because it reveals to us God and God’s plan. But it is also the work of human authors and reflects their knowledge, culture, and biases. It is through their words that the Bible reveals God’s nature, God’s saving work in the world (often called salvation history), and God’s purpose for humanity—including our lives. It follows that an important part of understanding the Bible is understanding the human authors’ intentions.

However, understanding the authors’ intentions isn’t enough either. We must also look at the message of any individual book or passage within the bigger picture of the entire Bible’s message and the church’s interpretation of it. Here are some suggestions for considering these different contexts when you read the Bible.

**Consider the Book’s Central Themes**

The Bible’s authors usually had a central theme or themes in mind when writing their particular book or letter. So when you are confused about the meaning of a particular verse or passage, it often helps to go back and read the whole chapter or even check out the introduction to the book. For example, you may wonder what Jesus is trying to teach us in the story of the prodigal son, Lk 15, 11–32. You might try reading from the beginning of chapter 15. You’ll find that Jesus told the story in response to people who criticized him for welcoming sinners. This helps us understand that the prodigal son story teaches that we are supposed to welcome sinners too.

**Consider the Historical Situation and the Audience**

Certain Bible passages do not make sense unless we understand the historical situation the author was trying to address. The introductions to each of the books in The Catholic Youth Bible help you with this. For example, in Am 5, 22-23 God tells the people: “I hate, I spurn your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemnities: . . . , Away with your noisy songs!” Doesn’t God like worship? In the introduction to Amos, we learn that God sent Amos to speak against the rich people who exploited the poor and then at elaborate religious festivals to worship God. The hypocrisy was what God hated.

**Consider the Teaching of the Whole Bible**

An old saying tells us: “Use the Bible to interpret the Bible.” Some people focus on a single verse from the Bible and ignore other passages on the same subject. For example, some churches will not allow women in any position of leadership. They base this on 1 Cor 14, 34, which says, “women should keep silent in the churches.” But in this, they disregard other passages, such as those in which Paul pays respect to women who were ministers and leaders in the church.

**Consider the Church’s Interpretation**

Most Christian churches have traditions and teachings for interpreting the Bible and applying its message. For Roman Catholics, bishops ultimately have the responsibility for properly interpreting God’s revelation in the Bible. Many other people (Scripture scholars, priests, parish ministers, and teachers, for example) help us understand the bishops’ interpretation of Scripture and how to apply it to our lives. The Catholic Youth Bible points out the Catholic church’s established teaching for important passages, especially in the “Catholic Connections” articles. When in doubt, ask a priest, minister, parish leader, teacher, or parent for help in looking for the correct interpretation of a confusing passage.

**PRIMA PROCESS**

The PRIMA process, each letter of the word stands for a step in reading and studying the Bible individually or with a group. Using the PRIMA process helps you remember to keep God first in your life! 

**P - Pray.** Begin with a prayer that your time with the Bible will draw you closer to God.

**R - Read attentively, trusting that God will give you what you need to learn or grow.** Imagine what was going on when the passage was first written. What is its cultural and historical context? Try to put yourself into the story. What was the author trying to get across?

**M - Meditate on what you have read.** How does it fit in the context of the rest of the Bible’s teachings? With the help of the Church’s teaching? What do you think God is teaching you?

**A - Apply what you have read to your life.** God may be calling you to address a particular issue or relationship. Or you may find words of comfort and support you need at this particular time. Carry God’s word into the rest of your day, the rest of your life!

**GROUP AND GROUP STUDY**

**Personal Reading and Study**

Faith is personal. Reading the Bible by yourself can help you grow in both your head and heart relationship with God. Choose a time that fits for you and make a commitment to read The Catholic Youth Bible regularly, at least once a week if not every day. The PRIMA process and the Bible reading plans in the next chapter will give you a structure for your personal reading.

**Group Reading and Study**

Your faith is personal, but it is not private. The Bible itself bears that God calls us to be part of a Christian community. Reading and studying the Bible with a group can feed you and teach you in an exciting way. Consider starting a group Bible study by inviting some friends or family members to meet with you. Or check at your parish to see what Bible studies might already be going on.

Again, the PRIMA process and the Bible reading plans in this book can provide a structure for reading the Bible with a group. Check with your parish or school for other resources you can use with a group.

**MAKING A PLAN**

Note: All the reading plans described in this section are found in the next chapter, “Suggested Reading Plans.”

The Catholic church has an excellent plan for reading and studying the Bible, called the lectionary. The lectionary includes a cycle of Scripture passages read at Sunday Eucharist in the liturgy of the word. It is inspiring to know that other Catholics all over the world are hearing and reflecting on the same Scripture passages at the same time. Studying the Sunday lectionary readings can make a big difference in your appreciation of the Eucharist. You can use reading plan 1, “Reading the Bible with the Church,” to help you do this for part of the year. It lists the Sunday lectionary readings for the entire year.

Reading whole books of the Bible is important to fully understanding the Bible in context. But it rarely works to say, “I’m going to read the whole Bible cover to cover.” Most people quit when they hit the detailed laws in the Book of Exodus. So as a start, you can use reading plan 2, “A Walk Through the Bible,” which gives a four-week overview of the important events in the Bible. After that you might read one of the four Gospels—Mark is good because it is short and filled with action. Then try the Acts of the Apostles. Follow this by one of the letters from the New Testament—1 Corinthians is a good one to start with. Eventually, move on to Genesis and Exodus from the Old Testament to see how their themes are connected to the New Testament books you have read.

You could also make a plan to study themes in the Bible. To get started, pick from reading plans 3 to 8, which cover topics such as sin and salvation, suffering, God’s call, and more. Or use the article subject index in the back of The Catholic Youth Bible to create your own reading plan on a topic that interests you.
The Church Year

The feast days and holy days celebrated by Catholics and other Christians follow a yearly pattern. This pattern is called the liturgical year; it is different from the calendar year. Here is a description of the major seasons in the liturgical year. It might help you if you also take a look at the circular diagram of the liturgical year, found on page xvii.

Advent begins the liturgical year four Sundays before Christmas. It is a time of preparation for the coming of Christ. The Advent season can be found on the liturgical year wheel in November and December. It is represented by the small graphic of an Advent wreath.

The Christmas season lasts twelve days, beginning with Christmas Day and concluding with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This season is found at the top part of the liturgical year wheel. The cross reminds us that the wood of the manger becomes the wood of the cross.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and lasts forty days. It is a solemn time of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving in preparation for Easter. The small picture of the palms and cross in the liturgical year wheel symbolizes all of Lent as a journey toward Palm Sunday, when the same crowd that waves palms and yells "Hosanna!" ends up waving angry fists and shouting "Crucify him!"

The Easter Triduum is the celebration of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. At this one, continuous, three-day liturgy, Christians remember the Lord's Supper, Christ's Passion and death, and his Resurrection. These feasts are at the heart of the liturgical year. They are represented by the picture of the Easter candle, which makes its appearance in the darkness of the Easter Vigil. The vestments and altar cloths seen are red on Good Friday and white on the other two days.

The Easter Season lasts fifty days, beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the feast of Pentecost. The symbol of the lamb represents Jesus, the innocent sacrificial lamb of God. The symbol of the Holy Spirit reminds us that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, in the rush of wind and tongues of fire. The altar cloths and vestments are white throughout the Easter season, and then red on Pentecost. Red is the color of the Holy Spirit (as in Confirmation Mass) and of the celebration of feast days associated with martyrs, people killed for their faith (such as the feast of Saints Peter and Paul).

The season of Ordinary Time is made up of the days between Christmas and Lent, and the days between Easter and Advent. The bread and wine show us that the main focus of Ordinary Time is the ministry of Jesus, represented by the grapes and bread of communion. There are some special feast days during Ordinary Time that are not celebrated with green vestments and altar cloths, such as Trinity Sunday and the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, the first two Sundays after Pentecost, and the Feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday before Advent. You'll see white on all three of those days. The particular dates and days these feasts fall upon vary from year to year.

Christmas is always December 25, so counting backwards four Sundays shows the four Sundays of Advent. Sometimes Advent includes Thanksgiving weekend, and sometimes it doesn't, depending on which day of the week Christmas is.

Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon in the spring. Counting backwards six Sundays and then one Wednesday shows when Ash Wednesday and Lent begin. Sometimes Easter is in March, and sometimes it is in April.

On page xviii, you will find a Bible reading plan that corresponds to the readings of the Bible heard on Sundays throughout these seasons. That is an excellent way to get to know the Bible and the liturgical year at the same time.
### ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

**Year A**
- **The First Sunday of Advent**
  - Is 2, 1–5
  - Rom 13, 11–14
  - Mt 24, 37–44

**Year B**
- **The Second Sunday of Advent**
  - Is 40, 1–5; 9–11
  - 2 Pt 3, 8–14
  - Mk 1, 1–8

**Year C**
- **The Third Sunday of Advent**
  - Is 6, 1–6
  - Ti 2, 11–14
  - Lk 2, 1–14

- **The Fourth Sunday of Advent**
  - Is 7, 10–14
  - Rom 1, 1–7
  - Mt 1, 18–24

- **Midnight Mass**
  - Is 6, 1–6
  - Ti 2, 11–14
  - Lk 2, 1–14

- **Feast of the Holy Family**
  - Sr 3, 2–6:12–14
  - Col 3, 12–21
  - Mt 2, 13–15:19–23

- **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**
  - Is 60, 1–6
  - Eph 3, 2–3:5–6
  - Mt 2, 1–12

- **Epiphany**
  - Is 42, 1–4:6–7
  - Acts 10, 34–38
  - Mt 3, 13–17

- **Baptism of the Lord**
  - Gn 2, 7–9; 3:1–7
  - Rom 5, 12–19
  - Mt 4, 1–11

**LENT AND EASTER**

**Year A**
- **The First Sunday of Lent**
  - Gn 12, 1–6
  - Rom 13, 11–14
  - Mt 24, 37–44

**Year B**
- **The Second Sunday of Lent**
  - Gn 12, 1–6
  - Rom 13, 11–14
  - Mt 24, 37–44

**Year C**
- **The Fifth Sunday of Lent**
  - Gn 12, 1–6
  - Rom 13, 11–14
  - Mt 24, 37–44

- **Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)**
  - Is 50, 4–7
  - Phil 2, 6–11
  - Mt 26, 14–27; 66

- **Holy Thursday**
  - Ex 12, 1–8:11–14
  - 1 Cor 11, 23–26
  - Jn 13, 1–15

- **Good Friday**
  - Is 52, 13–53, 12
  - Heb 4, 14–16; 5, 7–9
  - Jn 18, 1–19, 42

- **Easter Sunday**
  - Acts 10, 34:37–43
  - Col 3, 1–4 or 1 Cor 5, 6–8
  - Jn 20, 1–9

**Year A**
- **Second Sunday of Easter**
  - Acts 2, 42–47
  - 1 Pt 3, 8–9
  - Jn 20, 19–21

**Year B**
- **Third Sunday of Easter**
  - Acts 1:12–14
  - Acts 1:15–17:26
  - Acts 7:55–60

**Year C**
- **Fourth Sunday of Easter**
  - Acts 6:1–7
  - Acts 9, 26–31
  - Acts 14, 1–27

- **Fifth Sunday of Easter**
  - Acts 8:5–8:14–17
  - Acts 15:14–21
  - Acts 20, 28–1:1

- **Sixth Sunday of Easter**
  - Acts 21, 1–22:29
  - Acts 22, 10–14:22

- **Seventh Sunday of Easter**
  - Acts 1:12–14
  - Acts 15:17–20:26
  - Acts 21, 14–23:29

- **Pentecost Sunday**
  - Acts 2, 1–11
  - Acts 1:12–13
  - Acts 2:2, 1–11

- **The Second Sunday of Lent**
  - Gn 12, 1–6
  - Rom 13, 11–14
  - Mt 24, 37–44

- **The Third Sunday of Lent**
  - Ex 17, 3–7
  - Rom 5, 12–19
  - Jn 4, 4–5

- **The Fourth Sunday of Lent**
  - 1 Sm 16, 16–7:10–13
  - Eph 5, 8–14
  - Jn 9, 1–41

- **The Fifth Sunday of Lent**
  - Ex 37, 12–14
  - Rom 8, 8–11
  - Jn 11, 1–45

- **Midnight Mass**
  - Is 9, 1–6
  - Ti 2, 11–14
  - Lk 2, 1–14

- **Feast of the Holy Family**
  - Sr 3, 2–6:12–14
  - Col 3, 12–21
  - Mt 2, 13–15:19–23

- **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**
  - Is 60, 1–6
  - Eph 3, 2–3:5–6
  - Mt 2, 1–12

- **Epiphany**
  - Is 42, 1–4:6–7
  - Acts 10, 34–38
  - Mt 3, 13–17

- **Baptism of the Lord**
  - Gn 2, 7–9; 3:1–7
  - Rom 5, 12–19
  - Mt 4, 1–11

- **Ash Wednesday**
  - Jl 2, 12–18
  - 2 Cor 5, 20–6, 2
  - Mt 6, 1–6:16–18

- **The First Sunday of Lent**
  - Gn 9, 8–15
  - 1 Pt 3, 18–22
  - Mk 1, 12–15

- **The Second Sunday of Lent**
  - Is 2, 1–5
  - Rom 13, 11–14
  - Mt 24, 37–44

- **The Third Sunday of Lent**
  - Ex 17, 3–7
  - Rom 5, 12–19
  - Jn 4, 4–5

- **The Fourth Sunday of Lent**
  - 1 Sm 16, 16–7:10–13
  - Eph 5, 8–14
  - Jn 9, 1–41

- **The Fifth Sunday of Lent**
  - Ex 37, 12–14
  - Rom 8, 8–11
  - Jn 11, 1–45

- **Midnight Mass**
  - Is 6, 1–6
  - Ti 2, 11–14
  - Lk 2, 1–14

- **Feast of the Holy Family**
  - Sr 3, 2–6:12–14
  - Col 3, 12–21
  - Mt 2, 13–15:19–23

- **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**
  - Is 60, 1–6
  - Eph 3, 2–3:5–6
  - Mt 2, 1–12

- **Epiphany**
  - Is 42, 1–4:6–7
  - Acts 10, 34–38
  - Mt 3, 13–17

- **Baptism of the Lord**
  - Gn 2, 7–9; 3:1–7
  - Rom 5, 12–19
  - Mt 4, 1–11

**Year B**
- **The Second Sunday of Lent**
  - Is 2, 1–5
  - Rom 13, 11–14
  - Mt 24, 37–44

- **The Third Sunday of Lent**
  - Ex 17, 3–7
  - Rom 5, 12–19
  - Jn 4, 4–5

- **The Fourth Sunday of Lent**
  - 1 Sm 16, 16–7:10–13
  - Eph 5, 8–14
  - Jn 9, 1–41

- **The Fifth Sunday of Lent**
  - Ex 37, 12–14
  - Rom 8, 8–11
  - Jn 11, 1–45

- **Midnight Mass**
  - Is 6, 1–6
  - Ti 2, 11–14
  - Lk 2, 1–14

- **Feast of the Holy Family**
  - Sr 3, 2–6:12–14
  - Col 3, 12–21
  - Mt 2, 13–15:19–23

- **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**
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  - Rom 5, 12–19
  - Mt 4, 1–11
Did you ever get to a movie late? Did you end up bothering your friends who got there on time by asking: “What’s happening? Why did he do that? What did she mean by that?” Like the first crucial minutes of a movie, the five books of the Pentateuch set the stage for much of what happens in the rest of the Bible. If you are not familiar with their wonderful stories, you might find yourself asking: “What’s happening? Why is he doing that? Why did she say that?” when reading later books.

In-depth

THE NAME PENTATEUCH LITERALLY MEANS A “five-part writing.” Thus, the Pentateuch is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books are special to Jewish and Christian believers because they tell of the origins of God’s people and their unique relationship with God—sometimes called salvation history. They are the blueprint needed for properly understanding the rest of the Bible. The Pentateuch introduces the idea of a single God who is responsible for all creation. It also tells that this God is active in the world and in the lives of its people and that the Israelites have been called into a special relationship with this God.

One of the central elements of the special relationship between God and the Israelites described in the Pentateuch is the Sinai Covenant. A covenant is a solemn promise between two parties, where both parties agree to fulfill certain obligations. The Sinai Covenant is the most famous one between God and Israel, with Moses as the mediator, which you will read about in Exodus. In Genesis you will read about the covenants God makes with Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, which lead to the Sinai Covenant.

Reading the Pentateuch is like appreciating a fine tapestry. When you view a tapestry from the front, all the threads combine to make a beautiful, coherent image. In the same way, an overall look at the covenants, stories, and laws in the Pentateuch forms a picture of the love relationship between God and the people of Israel. A close look at the back of a tapestry shows a chaotic mix of colors and yarn. So too a closer look at the writings in the Pentateuch reveals not one story but many.

Biblical scholars speak of four primary sources for the stories and traditions in the Pentateuch. The sources reflect four different schools of thought about Israel’s relationship with God. For convenience, each source is referred to as an individual author:

- The Yahwist used Yahweh as God’s name. This writer focused on the southern kingdom of Judah, used lots of stories, emphasized God’s closeness to humanity, and portrayed God acting as a human person.
- The Elohist referred to God as Elohim or Lord. The Elohist wrote about the northern kingdom of Israel and was concerned about idolatry and morality. The writings of the Elohist presented God speaking through symbols such as a burning bush.
- The Deuteronomist emphasized the Law as the foundation of the kingdom of Judah. The Deuteronomist emerged toward the end of the monarchy (the time of the Israelite kings), when the Covenant Law seemed to have been forgotten.
- Finally, the Priestly writer emphasized religious rituals and the role of the priesthood. This writer portrayed God as more distant and used a more formal style. This source was written after the Babylonian Exile.

Knowing that these four sources contributed to the final form of the Pentateuch can help us understand that the Pentateuch books are not simply records of events as they occurred but rather faith accounts about the Israelites’ growing relationship with God, inspired by God and told from different perspectives.

In the Pentateuch, God reveals how much God loves the human race collectively and how much God loves us personally. God wishes to be in a relationship with us today just as much as God did back then. The Pentateuch reminds us that we are all children of God.

Other Background

- Some of the most familiar stories and people of the Old Testament are found in Genesis and Exodus. Genesis includes the stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and his brothers. Exodus contains the stories of Moses and the burning bush, Pharaoh and the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and the Ten Commandments.
- The Jews also refer to the five books of the Pentateuch as the Torah, meaning “teaching” or “instruction.”
- An ancient tradition named Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. This was no doubt due to Moses’ importance in the Pentateuch itself. But evidence suggests that most of the Pentateuch was written hundreds of years after Moses’ death.
- The two types of writing in the Pentateuch are stories and laws. Genesis is all stories, Leviticus and Deuteronomy are mostly laws, and Exodus and Numbers are about half stories and half laws.
displays of awesome cosmic power, tender love stories, tearful family reunions, and tales of deceit, rape, murder, and worldwide destruction. Does this sound like the script for next summer’s blockbuster movie? No, it’s the Book of Genesis! It is the story of how a world created for love and harmony goes astray because of human sin. Through it all, God is at work, forming a people to restore what was lost.

At a Glance

I. The Primeval History (1, 1—11, 26).
II. The Patriarchal Abraham (11, 27—25, 18).
III. The Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob (25, 19—36, 43).
IV. Joseph and His Brothers (37, 1—50, 26).

Quick Facts

Period Covered

The stories in the first eleven chapters are primeval history. Genesis 11, 27—50, 26 covers the period of the ancestors, the patriarchs and matriarchs (from 2000 to 1500 B.C.).

Author

An unknown author gathered oral traditions and stories from tribal peoples sometime from 1225 to 1000 B.C. (see Introduction to the Pentateuch).

Themes

the goodness of Creation, human responsibility, the effects of sin, covenant, God’s bring good out of evil.

Quick Facts

First Story of Creation

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In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, 2 the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the earth, and a mighty wind swept over the waters. 3 Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 God saw how good it was. 5 Then God said, “Let the dry land be called “the earth,” and the water under the earth be called “the sea.” And so it happened: the earth was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. 6 God called the dry land “the earth,” and the basin of the sea he called “the sea.” God saw how good it was. 7 Then God said, “Let there be a dome in the sky.” And so it happened: the dome was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. 8 God called the dome “the sky.” When evening came, and morning followed—the first day.

... and so on. The sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. 10 God called the dry land “the earth,” and the basin of the sea he called “the sea.” God saw how good it was. 11 Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it.” And so it happened: 12 the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw how good it was. 13 Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

Genesis gathers together inspired stories and traditions that reveal God’s nature and purpose and the beginning of the Israelites’ special relationship with God. Genesis has four main sections. The first section (1, 1—11, 26) contains some of the Bible’s most memorable stories about Creation and the effects of sin. Chapters 1-2 tell two stories of Creation that portray the beauty and wonder of the natural world and emphasize the goodness and harmony that God intended in Creation. Creation culminates in human beings, made in God’s own image. Those first human beings, Adam and Eve, live in a wonderful garden in harmony with God, Creation, and each other. But in chapter 3, sin enters the world, and as a result, Adam and Eve will experience separation, suffering, and ultimately death.

And sin spreads, first to the family (Cain and Abel in chapter 4), then to all society (Noah and the Flood in chapters 6–9). Even after the Flood and God’s covenant with Noah, the story of the tower of Babel demonstrates that sin pits nation against nation. As you read these chapters, remember that they were written not as historical accounts or scientific explanations but as symbolic stories that shared faith experiences and taught important religious truths.

Sections two through four of Genesis (11, 27—50, 26) tell the story of the origins of the Israelite people. The story begins with Abraham and Sarah (originally called Abram and Sarai) and continues with Ishmael and Isaac and with Isaac and Rebekah’s children, Esau and Jacob. Genesis ends with Joseph, one of Jacob’s twelve sons, devoutly saving Egypt and Israel from famine. These sections introduce the covenant God makes with Abraham and remind the reader that God’s plans will overcome human sin and weakness.

I: The Primeval History

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In ancient Israel a day was considered to begin at sunset. According to the highly artificial literary structure of Gen 1, 1—2, 4a, God’s creative activity is divided into six days to teach the sacredness of the sabbath rest on the seventh day in the Israelite religion (Gen 2, 2f).
Genesis 1, 19

19 Evening came and morning followed—the fourth day.

20 Then God said, “Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky.” And so it happened: 21 God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw how good it was, 22 and God blessed them, saying, “Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth.” 23 Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

3 Literary Genres

Some Christians believe that God actually created the world in seven twenty-four-hour days. Such a belief comes from a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis, as though it were a scientific textbook. However, Genesis was written not as a science article but as symbolic stories, sometimes called mythic stories, that convey great moral and spiritual truths. We should not try to come to any scientific conclusions about the creation of the world from reading these stories. Mythic stories are one literary type, or genre. You just have to look in a newspaper to see examples of different literary genres: news stories, advice columns, editorials, and comics. Each genre has different rules for interpreting its meaning. The Bible also contains many types of literary genres, including hero stories, poetry, laws, legends, fictional satire, debates, and letters. To properly understand the Bible, pay attention to the literary genre—otherwise, you might believe the Bible is saying something God doesn’t intend.

Pray it in God’s Image

God does not make mistakes people do. Some people might be tempted to deny their racial heritage, to even change their physical appearance in order to fit into the latest fad or the dominant cultural image of beauty. We must remember that physical features are not accidents. God planned for them—all we are made in God’s Image.

If we are to authentically love ourselves, we must love our whole selves. This includes a love for dark skin or light skin; straight hair or tight curly hair; wide nose or pug nose; and all the variation in between. Whatever our appearance, we are all blessed of God.

Dear God, I praise you for who I am on the inside and on the outside. Amen.

Gn 1, 26–27

The Sabbath

Even God needed to take a rest. The writer of Genesis makes this point to remind readers to set aside a day for rest and prayer, which Jewish people call the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath is an act of trust in God. It means we believe that the world will not fall apart if we stop our activity. The world is in God’s hands. We can hear this truth echoed in Jesus’ words:

Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God clothes the grass of the field which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? (Lk 12, 27–28)

Traditionally, Christians rest and pray on Sunday because it is the day Jesus was resurrected. In our culture today, it seems that many people are losing this practice. What could we gain if we recommitted ourselves to a day of rest, celebration, and prayer? What can you do personally to more fully honor the concept of “Sabbath” rest?

Gn 2, 1–3

24† Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth all kinds of livestock and creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds.” And so it happened: 25 God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. God saw how good it was. 26† Then God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.”

27 God created man in his image:
in the divine image he created him: male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them, saying to them: “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.” 29 God also said: “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; 30 and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food.” And so it happened. 31 God looked at everything that he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.

2† Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. 24 Since the seventh day God was finished with the work he had been doing, he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. 3† So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.

Second Story of Creation

† At the time when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens—† while as yet there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the Lord God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, † but a stream was welling up out of the earth and was...
A river rises in Eden to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches. 12 The name of the first is the Pishon; it is the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 13 The gold of that land is excellent; bdellium and the lapis lazuli are also there. 14 The name of the second river is the Gihon; it is the one that winds all through the land of Cush. 15 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it is the one that flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates. 16 The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and take care of it. 17 The LORD God made man and gave him this order: “You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and bad. From that tree you must not eat. If you eat from it you will be surely doomed to die.” 18 The LORD God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.” 19 So the LORD God formed out of the ground various wild animals and birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. 20 The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man. 21 So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, 23 the man said: “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called ‘woman,’ for out of ‘her man’ this one has been taken.” 24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body. 25 The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.

The Fall of Man

1 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made. The serpent asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?” 2 The woman answered the serpent: “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die!’ 4 But the serpent said to the woman: ‘You certainly will not die! 5 No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad.’ 6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. 8 After they had heard the sound of the LORD God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 The LORD God then called to the man and asked him, “Where are you?” 10 The man answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; so I hid myself.” 11 Then the LORD God said: “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat the fruit of the tree about which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said: “The woman gave it to me.” 13 Then the LORD God asked the woman: “What did you do?” 14 The woman answered the LORD God: “The serpent deceived me, and I ate it.” 15 Then the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, you will have pain forever in your eating and in your breathing; you will eat dust all your life. 16 You will be driven from this garden; you will eat the fruit of thorns all the rest of your life. 17 You will work hard all your life to eat the bread of thorns. 18 You will never again come into this garden of Eden.” 19 Then the LORD God said to Adam: “Because you have given in to the woman, and ate of the fruit of the tree about which I commanded you not to eat, you have done this. 20 I will require an accounting for the woman, for she was with the man from the beginning. 21 I will require an accounting from the man also for what you have done; because you gave in to the woman, the woman has put you to work hard all your life. 22 I will demand your life. 23 When you work the soil, the soil will not feed you; you will have to work hard to make your bread.” 24 So the man gave the name “Eve” to his wife, because she was the mother of all the human beings. 25 The name of the man’s wife then became Eve because she was the mother of all human beings. 26 Adam knew Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and said: “This one, at last, is a comfort to me in the work that I do; this is my strength and my comfort.” 27 Then she gave birth to another son and said: “This one is a comfort to me, and a shelter from the harm of my life.” 28 Adam and Eve gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals. 29 The LORD God said to Adam: “None of these can be your helper; this will be the helper whom I will provide for you.” 30 The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.
the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself." 11 Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? You have eaten, then, from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!" 12 The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it." 13 The LORD God then asked the woman, "Why did you do such a thing?" The woman answered, "The serpent tricked me into it, so I ate it." 14 Then the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you shall be cursed more than all wild animals; you shall bear your young in pain and your food shall be in your own veins the rest of your life. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel."

"I will intensify the pangs of your childbearing in pain shall you bring forth children. Yet your ursel shall be for your husband, and he shall be your master."

"Cursed be the ground because of you! In toil shall you eat your food all the days of your life.

Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you, as you eat of the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face shall you get bread to eat, until you return to the ground, from which you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The man called his wife Eve, because she became the mother of all the living. For the man had said to the woman, the LORD God made leather garments, with which he clothed them. Then the LORD God said: "See! The man has become like one of us, knowing what is good and what is bad! Therefore, he must not be allowed to put out his hand to take fruit from the tree of life also, and thus eat of it and live forever." 23 The LORD God therefore banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he had been taken. 24 When he expelled the man, he settled him east of the garden of Eden; and he stationed the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

† The man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD." 2 Next to his brother Abel, Abel became a keeper of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the soil. In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the soil, 3 while Abel, for his part, brought one of the best firstlings of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 4 but on Cain and his offering he did not. 5 Cain greatly resented this and was crestfallen. 6 So the LORD said to Cain: "Why are you so resentful and crestfallen? 7 If you do well, you can hold up your head; but if not, sin is a demon lurking at the door: his urge is toward you, yet you can be his master." 8*† Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out into the field." 9 When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 10 Then the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Lord then said: "What have you done! Listen: Your brother's blood cries out to me from the soil! 11* Therefore you shall be banned from the soil that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 If you till the soil, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a restless wanderer on the earth.

13 Cain said to the LORD: "My punishment is too great to bear. 14 Since you have now banished me from the face of the earth, and I must avoid your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, anyone may kill me at sight." 15* Not so!" the LORD said to him. "If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged sevenfold." So the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest anyone should kill him at sight. 16 Then left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Descendants of Cain and Seth

††† Cain had relations with his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD." 2 Then Cain called his brother Abel, and Abel became a keeper of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the soil, 4 while Abel, for his part, brought one of the best firstlings of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not. 6 Cain greatly resented this and was crestfallen. 7 So the LORD said to Cain: "Why are you so resentful and crestfallen? 8 If you do well, you can hold up your head; but if not, sin is a demon lurking at the door: his urge is toward you, yet you can be his master." 9*† Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out into the field." 10 When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

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Genesis 4, 25

† Adam again had relations with his wife, and she gave birth to a son whom she called Seth. "God granted me what theoffspring in place of Adam said, 'because Cain slew him.' † To

At that time men began to invoke the Lord by name.

Generations: Adam to Noah

† This is the record of the descendants of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God; † he created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and named them men. † Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when he begot a son in his likeness, after his image, and he named him Seth. † Adam lived eight hundred years after the birth of Seth, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Adam was nine hundred and thirty years; then he died.

When Seth was one hundred and five years old, he became the father of Enosh. † Seth lived eight hundred and fifteen years after the birth of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Seth was nine hundred and twenty years; then he died.

When Enosh was ninety years old, he became the father of Kenan. † Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years after the birth of Kenan, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Enosh was nine hundred and five years; then he died.

When Kenan was seventy years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. † Kenan lived eight hundred and forty years after the birth of Mahalalel, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Kenan was nine hundred and ten years; then he died.

When Mahalalel was sixty-five years old, he became the father of Jared. † Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years after the birth of Jared, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Mahalalel was eight hundred and ninety-five years; then he died.

When Jared was one hundred and sixty-two years old, he became the father of Enoch. † Jared lived eight hundred years after the birth of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Jared was nine hundred and sixty-two years; then he died.

When Enoch was sixty years old, he became the father of Methuselah. † Enoch lived three hundred years after the birth of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Enoch was three hundred and sixty-five years. † Then Enoch walked with God, and he was no longer here, for God took him.

When Methuselah was one hundred and eighty years old, he became the father of Lamech. † Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty years after the birth of Lamech, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Methuselah was nine hundred and sixty-nine years; then he died.

When Lamech was one hundred and eighty-two years old, he begot a son and named him Noah, saying, "Out of the very ground that the Lord has put under a curse, this one shall bring us relief from our work and the toil of our hands." † Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after the birth of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters. † The whole lifetime of Lamech was seven hundred and seventy-seven years; then he died.

When Noah was five hundred years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Origin of the Nephilim

† When men began to multiply on earth and daughters were born to them, † the sons of heaven saw how beautiful the daughters of men were, and they took as their wives whom they chose. † Then the Lord said: "My spirit shall not remain in man forever, since he is but flesh. His days shall comprise one hundred and twenty years."

† In the eyes of the God he saw that corruption was rusted and full of lawlessness. † When God saw how corrupt the earth had become, since all mortals had deprived lives on earth, † he said to Noah: "I have decided to put an end to all mortals on earth; the earth is full of lawlessness because of them. So I will destroy them and all life on earth.

Preparation for the Flood

† Make yourself an ark of gopherwood, put various compartments in it, cover it inside and out with pitch. † This is how you shall build it: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.
THE New Testament
If you have ever written a research paper for a class project, you know how important it is to have good sources. You want sources that have the most insight into your chosen topic, sources that provide inspiration. The books of the New Testament are those sources for the Christian faith. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John lay the foundation for understanding the message and the mission of Jesus, the center of the Christian faith. The Acts of the Apostles continues with an inspiring account of how the earliest Christians continued Jesus’ mission despite conflicts and persecution. The Good News in these books invites a response from us: to accept Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the savior of the world.

In-depth

THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CONTINUE the Old Testament’s revelation of God’s saving work in the world. Their focus is on Jesus Christ—the hoped-for Messiah, the savior. Jesus Christ is revealed as God’s Son, being both fully human and fully divine. In Jesus, God’s promises to Abraham, Moses, and David were fulfilled. In Jesus, a New Covenant is available to all people, not just the Jews. In Jesus lie the forgiveness of sins and a new life of love and freedom for anyone who believes.

The New Testament tells of this Good News through four different types of books: (1) four similar but unique views of Jesus’ life and teaching in books called the Gospels, (2) stories on how the Apostles spread the Good News of Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles, (3) letters from early Christian leaders to the first Christians and Christian communities, and (4) apocalyptic writings in the Book of Revelation. This introduction is on the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; another introduction will give further background on the letters and Revelation.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of Jesus from four different perspectives. They are not historical biographies or documentaries like you might read today. They grew out of the teaching and preaching about Jesus in different early Christian communities. They reflect these early Christian communities’ beliefs about Jesus, but they do not tell us exactly what Jesus said and did in his life on earth. Inspired by God, the authors of the Gospels arranged the stories to bring out a particular understanding of Jesus that had great importance in their Christian communities. Because of God’s inspiration, the Gospels are without error in teaching us the truth about Christ’s message, mission, and identity.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are similar in their style and share much of the same content. They are called synoptic (from a Greek word that means “seeing the whole together”) Gospels. It is likely that Mark was written first and the authors of Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source in creating their own Gospels (Lk 1, 1 mentions other accounts of Jesus). The Gospel of John is quite different from the synoptic Gospels. It was written later than them and is more symbolic in its expression of who Jesus is.

The Acts of the Apostles is a continuation of Luke’s Gospel (see Acts 1, 1). However, it is not itself a Gospel. It picks up where the Gospel of Luke ends, telling the story of the origins of Christianity after the death and Resurrection of Jesus, covering the period from about A.D. 30 to 64. Although Acts gives us a good deal of information about early church leaders like Peter and Paul, its purpose is not to tell us their biographies. Rather, it gives us an interpretation of the events of the beginnings of Christianity that emphasizes God’s saving purpose. The Book of Acts explains how Christianity, which began as an offshoot of the Jewish faith, gradually spread beyond Judaism into the Gentile, or non-Jewish, world.

The original Greek word for gospel is euangelion, which means “big or important news” (sometimes translated as “good news”). The authors of the Gospels wanted to share with others the important news of Jesus Christ. When you read these powerful stories of faith, let God use them to inspire and strengthen your faith in Jesus.

The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes Jesus as the promised Messiah of the Jewish people. Jesus is portrayed as the greatest prophet, teaching the New Law and calling people to be faithful to God.

The Gospel of Mark was probably the first of the four Gospels to be written. It portrays Jesus as an active healer and miracle worker who accepts loneliness and suffering as the cost of obedience to God’s will.

The Gospel of Luke is a clear, orderly presentation of Jesus’ mission to all people, Jews and Gentiles. This Gospel emphasizes Jesus’ mercy, compassion, and concern for poor people.

The Gospel of John was the last Gospel written and seeks to show Jesus as the fully divine Son of God. This Gospel portrays Jesus as noble and powerful, fully in control of his own destiny.

The Acts of the Apostles was written by the author of the Gospel of Luke. It shows God at work in the growth of the early Christian communities, particularly through the efforts of Peter and Paul.
does your family have a traditional way of celebrating a holiday? Family traditions are usually handed down from one generation to the next. They give meaning to our special celebrations and help us know where we came from. The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the promised Messiah and highlights Jesus’ Jewish origins. The author wanted Jewish-Christian readers to know that believing in Jesus as the Son of God was not a break with their tradition but the fulfillment of it.

The author of Matthew was probably a Christian convert from Judaism in a community of Jewish Christians. This community was feeling the sting of being rejected by other Jews. In defense of the community’s belief in Jesus, the Gospel of Matthew links Jesus to important Jewish traditions and gives them new meanings. The Gospel begins with a list of Jesus’ Jewish ancestors, connecting Jesus to Abraham, the father of Judaism, and David, Israel’s greatest king. Then it makes frequent references to Old Testament laws, prophecies, and events that Jesus fulfills or completes.

The author of Matthew also wanted to show how Jesus broke with certain Jewish beliefs — no doubt to help explain why his community of Jewish Christians was rejected by other Jews. So in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7), the Gospel has Jesus giving new interpretation to Jewish laws. And Jesus is frequently in conflict with the scribes and Pharisees over things like healing on the Sabbath (12, 9–14). Such incidents probably reflect the experience of the author’s community with Jewish leaders as much as Jesus’ own conflicts.

Gradually, the Gospel of Matthew paints a picture of Jesus as the promised son of David who would reign as king forever. He is the Messiah, the fulfillment of all that the Jewish people have been waiting for, the one who will bring their liberation and salvation. This good news should be proclaimed to Jews and non-Jews alike. And so the Gospel ends with the risen Jesus telling his disciples, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (28, 19).
Matthew 1, 11

Jesus’ Family Tree

The Birth of Jesus

18 Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. 19 Joseph his husband, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. 20 Such was his intention when he heard about this, and he was about to divorce her privately. 21 But when Joseph thought about离婚她 privately. 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

Mt 1, 23

23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.”

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. 24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. 25*† He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

Matthew 2, 7

The Visit of the Magi

1 When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, during the rule of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, 2 asking, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have seen his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” 3 When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled and all Jerusalem with him. 4 Assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 So they told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

7 Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.

The Wise Men from another culture, who came to offer Jesus gifts for a royal messiah, symbolize that Jesus came as the savior of all races and cultures. Matthew 2, 1–12 is the biblical basis for the religious feast day of Epiphany, which officially is 6 January but is celebrated on the first Sunday after the New Year. In some Latin American traditions, children receive gifts on Epiphany, in remembrance of the gifts the Wise Men offered to Jesus. The evening before, at parties celebrated in homes and offices, a special bread is shared that has a figure of the baby Jesus baked inside of it. Whoever finds the figure of the baby Jesus in a piece of bread has to sponsor a party to celebrate Jesus’ presentation in the Temple (Lk 2, 22–24). The church celebrates this feast on 2 February.

JESUS BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION TO PEOPLE OF ALL RACES!

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How do you accept and celebrate people of different cultures?

Think of spiritual gifts that you have received from other people. Express your gratitude to God for those gifts.
Matthew 2, 8

He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” 9 After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. 10 They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

The Flight to Egypt

13† When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,† and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.” 14 Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. 15† He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

The Massacre of the Infants

16 When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. 17 Then was fulfilled what had been said by Jeremiah the prophet:

† A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more.”

The Return from Egypt

18† When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20† and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” 21† He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 22† But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. 23† He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazorean.”

Jesus’ Family Lives as Immigrants!

Following an angel’s order and facing the massacre of all boys under two years old, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt to protect them from Herod’s threats. They become immigrants to avoid persecution.

Every year, millions of people in the world become immigrants, fleeing their countries because of hunger, poverty, or persecution. Often, they find themselves unwelcomed strangers, not able to communicate in the language of their new land and even persecuted by its inhabitants. But Christians should have a special compassion for immigrants because Jesus told us to love everyone, especially those who suffer.

Imagine Jesus, Mary, and Joseph exiled in this country. How would you treat them?

• What is your attitude toward refugees and immigrants in our country?
• Ask God to bless legislators with the love and wisdom to welcome immigrants, and to give your generation a courageous heart to seek justice and peace in the world.

Mt 2, 13

The Slaughter of the Innocents

The event described in Mt 2, 16-18 is often called the Slaughter of the Innocents. In many circumstances in history, innocent people, including infants and young children, have been massacred in the name of war or convenience (see “Rachel Weeps,” Jer 31, 15–17).

Today, abortion is one of those circumstances. To many people, it seems to be a simple solution to the inconvenience of an unwanted pregnancy. But what of the innocent children that are destroyed? Were they not orphans? “They were not orphans; they were no more.” (Mt 2, 18). Our church teaching is clear: All human life is sacred, and abortion is wrong. How might we as individuals or communities support pregnant women to ensure they do not choose abortion?

Mt 2, 16-18

The Preaching of John the Baptist

3† In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea, 4† saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”† 5† It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said:

“A voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’ ”

4† John wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan serif="serif">baren region went east of the Dead Sea extending up the Jordan valley.

3† Repent: The Baptist calls for a change of heart and conduct, a turning of one’s life from rebellion to obedience toward God. The kingdom of heaven is at hand: “heaven” (literally, “the heavens”) is a substitute for the name “God” that was avoided by devout Jews of the time out of reverence.

2, 20† For those who sought the child’s life are dead: Moses, who had fled from Egypt because the Pharaoh sought to kill him (see Ex 2, 15), was told to return there, “for all the men who sought your life are dead” (Ex 4, 19).

2, 22† With the agreement of the emperor Augustus, Archelaus ceased half of his father’s kingdom, including Judea, after Herod’s death. He had the title “archon” (a ruler of a nation) and reigned from 4 B.C. to A.D. 6.

2, 23† Nazareth. . . He shall be called a Nazorean: the tradition of Jesus’ residence in Nazareth was firmly established, and Matthew sees it as being in accordance with the foreannounced plan of God. The town of Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but this prophecy can be found there. The vague expression “through the prophets” may be due to Matthew’s seeing a connection between Nazareth and certain texts in which there are words with a remote similarity to the name of that town. Some such Old Testament texts are 11, 1 where the Davidic king of the future is called “a shoot” (Hebrew) that shall blossom from the roots of Jesse, and Jas 1, 5, 7 where Samuel, the future deliverer of Israel from the Philistines, is called one who shall be consecrated (a nazarite) to God.

3, 1†-12† Here Matthew takes up the order of Jesus’ ministry found in the gospel of Mark, beginning with the preparatory preaching of John the Baptist.

3, 3† See the note on Jn 1, 23.

3, 4† The clothing of John recalls the austere dress of the prophet Elijah (2 Kgs 1, 8). The expectation of the return of Elijah from heaven to prepare Israel for the final manifestation of God’s kingdom was widespread, and according to Matthew this expectation was fulfilled in the Baptist’s ministry (11, 14-17, 11-13).

3, 6†-10† The event described in Mt 2, 16-18 is often called the Slaughter of the Innocents. In many circumstances in history, innocent people, including infants and young children, have been massacred in the name of war or convenience (see “Rachel Weeps,” Jer 31, 15–17).

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3, 20†-24† The event described in Mt 2, 16-18 is often called the Slaughter of the Innocents. In many circumstances in history, innocent people, including infants and young children, have been massacred in the name of war or convenience (see “Rachel Weeps,” Jer 31, 15–17).

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3, 25†-30† The event described in Mt 2, 16-18 is often called the Slaughter of the Innocents. In many circumstances in history, innocent people, including infants and young children, have been massacred in the name of war or convenience (see “Rachel Weeps,” Jer 31, 15–17).

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The Temptation of Jesus

The baptism of Jesus is the occasion on which he is equipped for his ministry by the holy Spirit and proclaimed to be the Son of God. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

The Baptism of Jesus

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 4 John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” 5 Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed it. 6 After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. 7 And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

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The Sacrifice of Fire

The agnus Dei, which is used in the Eucharist, is a symbol of the sacrifice of Jesus. It is made of gold and is kept in the tabernacle. Before the sacrifice is made, the priest prays for the grace to offer it to God. Then, the priest takes the agnus Dei and places it on the altar. The priest then says a prayer of consecration, which includes the words “Sanctify this host.”

The Anointing of Jesus

The anointing of Jesus is a rite of consecration and blessing. It is performed by the bishop or the priest who will ordain the person. The anointing is given with oil of chrism, which is a mixture of olive oil and myrrh. The anointing is a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence and is a symbol of the person's commitment to serve the Lord.

The Washing of Jesus

The washing of Jesus is a rite of purification. It is performed by the priest who will ordain the person. The priest washes the person's hands and feet with water. The washing is a sign of the person's commitment to serve the Lord and to follow his commandments.

The Blessing of the Cross

The blessing of the cross is a rite of blessing and protection. It is performed by the bishop or the priest who will ordain the person. The priest blesses the cross with holy water and then places it on the person's forehead. The blessing is a sign of the person's commitment to serve the Lord and to follow his commandments.
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These are some passages that can help us understand God’s action in the sacraments. It is not meant to be a complete list of all the biblical connections for all seven sacraments.

BAPTISM

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These parables are listed in alphabetical order.

SACRAMENT

These teachings are listed in alphabetical order.
### LIFE AND FAITH ISSUES

Here are some passages that can give you comfort or direction. There are many other passages in the Bible that also address these and other topics.

#### ANGER
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- Jn 2, 13-17
- Eph 4, 25-27, 31-32
- Jas 1, 19-21

#### CALL
- Gn 12, 1-9
- 1 Sm, chs 1-3
- Is 6, 1-8
- Jer 1, 4-10
- Mt 4, 18-22; 28, 16-20
- Mk 1, 16-20
- Lk 5, 1-11

#### COMMITMENT
- Nm 30, 2-3
- Dt 6, 1-9; 11, 8-9
- Jos 24, 14-15
- Mk 8, 34-38

#### COURAGE
- Gn 4, 9; 12, 10-20
- Sir 3, 1-16
- Eph 5, 21-6, 4

#### FAMILY
- Gn 4, 9; 12, 10-20
- Sir 3, 1-16
- Eph 5, 21-6, 4

#### FEAR
- Ps 27, 91
- Zep 3, 14-20
- Mt 14, 22-33
- Mk 4, 35-41
- Lk 22, 54-62

#### FORGIVENESS
- Gn 33, 1-17
- Ps 51
- Mt 18, 21-35
- Lk 6, 27-36; 23, 34
- Jn 8, 2-11

#### FRIENDSHIP
- Ru 1, 1-19
- 1 Sm, ch 20
- Sir 6, 5-17
- Jn 15, 12-17

#### FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD
- Gn 28, 10-22
- Mt 6, 8
- Jn 15, 12-17

#### GIVING
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- Ezr 1, 6-11
- Mk 12, 41-44
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#### HAPPINESS
- Sir 25, 1-11
- Lk 12, 22-34
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#### HONESTY WITH GOD
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