

Goals

Genesis is often thought of as the book of the beginning of the world. In these lessons, the students will learn how it is also a book that contains the beginnings of our faith. From learning about ancient civilizations to remembering the lives of our forefathers, they will come to know that everything under the sun was created for a greater purpose of salvation. Some of the questions that will be answered are: How did ancient Egypt play a role in shaping our faith? How does the ark symbolize the true church? How is God revealed throughout the entire book of Genesis? It is hoped that the answers to these questions will spark the students' interest in learning more about the word of God and allow them to realize that history can offer them many lessons in faith and life. More importantly, the students are encouraged to meditate daily on the Bible and receive strength in God's precious word.

unit
1**Teacher Devotional**

We often encourage our students to learn from the examples of the characters in the Bible. Though we may not be famous, there is a lot we can share with our students when it comes to our faith, too. When did we come to know God? Was there a turning point in our faith? Was there any special experience that really demonstrated God's love in our life? These encouragements can greatly bolster the faith of our students because they know for a fact that these are real stories with a real person they can picture. Take a moment and think about a personal story you can share with them the next time you teach your students.

What is Faith?

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
(Hebrew 11:1)*

Lesson 1

Overview
of the PentateuchListed Scriptures

Mt 24:35; Jn 5:39; Mt 22:31-32; Ex 20-23; Lev 17-26; Deut 5:12-26

Lesson Aim

- 1) To understand the importance of studying the OT and to identify the main teachings of the Pentateuch
- 2) To be encouraged to study the Bible and gain insight into how to live their lives

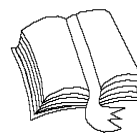
Memory Verse

"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law until all is fulfilled." (Mt 5:18)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Genesis 1-10

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The Bible contains a total of 66 books, 1,189 chapters and 31,173 verses. To many scholars, it is just that—another ancient book, broken down into sections and studied for its historical value and accuracy. However, careful examination of the Bible shows that it is more than just a collection of great writings.

When we look at the Bible in its entirety, we realize that the ultimate author is God Himself. There are no contradictions in any of the words, even though the various books were inspired by God's spirit over a span of a thousand years and written by more than 35 authors. Although many people have attempted to dissect the Bible and offer numerous interpretations of what its passages mean, we know that we can only rely upon the Holy Spirit to unravel the mysteries contained within (Isa 29:11; Eph 3:5; 1 Cor 2:10-15).



What are some things you must do every day in order to live? Make a list of some of those things starting with the most crucial (i.e. eating, brushing your teeth, sleeping etc). What about reading and studying the Bible? Do you feel that it has a place ANYWHERE on your list? If not, why not? Today we will look at the importance of studying and understanding the Bible and briefly go over the first five books of the Old Testament.

B I B L E S T U D Y

Part 1 Overview of the Old Testament



Review the following information with your students. You can go through this quickly since the emphasis of this lesson is the next section on the Pentateuch. But be sure to discuss why it is important to study the Old Testament before continuing to Part 2.

A . Background and Setting

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew. But when some of the exiles returned to Israel, other languages, such as Aramaic, were also brought back. This is evidenced by a small portion of the Bible written in Aramaic (i.e. Ezek 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Dan 2:4-7:28; Jer 12:11). Later on, Hebrew became a language reserved mostly for official ceremonies and Aramaic was adopted as the common spoken word. By the time of Jesus Christ's birth, the entire Old Testament had been translated into Aramaic. The earliest portion of the Bible, written by Moses, dates back to 1420 BC. The last scroll, Malachi, was completed around 400 BC. There were more than 35 authors in the Old Testament and each one differed in their social background and upbringing. They included prophets, priests, scribes, kings, shepherds and farmers. They also brought with them various writing styles and experiences. Despite their differences, there is consistency and structure in the Old Testament because God inspired all of the authors. The 39 scrolls in the Old Testament can be subdivided into the following groups of writings:

- a. Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy)
- b. Historical Books (Joshua to Esther)
- c. Books of Wisdom (Job to Song of Songs)
- d. Books of the Prophets (Isaiah to Malachi)



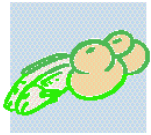
B . Importance of Studying the Old Testament

The Bible is divided into two major sections, the Old and New Testaments. A testament is a covenant set up between God and man. The sole reason for God to establish these covenants is to save mankind, because we have all sinned and fallen short of His glory (Heb 6:13ff). The central theme of the entire Bible can be summarized as the salvation of Jesus Christ. Briefly, the Old Testament records the promise and preparation of salvation, while the New Testament is the fulfillment and completion of salvation. In other words, the Old Testament serves as a foundation for the New Testament. Although many people find New Testament teachings to be more interesting and life-applicable, the Old Testament also contains important truths and practical applications.

- a. The Old Testament is also the word of God and according to the Lord Jesus, "Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will by no means pass away" (Mt 24:35).
- b. The Old Testament is the foundation of our religion and faith because it declares that there is only one true God.
- c. The Old Testament details the origin of sin and the condemnation it brought upon mankind. It is important for us to understand why we need to be reconciled with God through Jesus Christ.
- d. The detailed records of genealogy and history help us understand the lineage Jesus Christ came from. The biographies of many of the biblical heroes we encounter along the way are also inspiring.
- e. Although many of the promises and prophecies (i.e. the birth and death of Jesus Christ) have been fulfilled, many others are yet to come. Therefore, it is important for us to continue to study the Old Testament.
- f. The Old Testament examines moral issues, such as sin and suffering, and shows how they demonstrate God's sovereign rule over morality.
- g. Jesus Christ and His disciples quoted from the Old Testament over 600 times (i.e. Jn 5:39; Mt 22:31-32), thereby emphasizing its importance.
- h. The psalms and poems, as inspired by the Holy Spirit, are timeless works of art.

Teaching Tips

You may wish to present this part of the lesson in the form of a game (i.e. Jeopardy!) since much of this information serves as a review. You can do this by simply creating several categories and rewording some of the information given here (i.e. The Bible was originally written in this language; the Pentateuch refers to these five books, etc). Assign point values to each question/answer and see which team can accumulate the most points. You can also add other information related to the Old Testament not given here.



Part 2

Overview of the Pentateuch

A. The Pentateuch

Most Bible scholars agree that Moses wrote the first five books (the Pentateuch) of the Old Testament. Since these books contain revelations regarding God's laws, they are also known as the Mosaic Laws or the Books of Laws. The table below summarizes the books of the Pentateuch.

Book	Author	Date	Theme	Purpose	Key Concept	Key Verses
Gen	Moses	1420 BC	Beginning of all creation and the beginning of Israel	Points out Israel's place in God's master plan of salvation	Fall from Grace	1:1, 12:1-3
Ex	Moses	1420 BC	Israel receives deliverance	Announces Israel's transformation into God's holy nation	Salvation	19:6
Lev	Moses	1420 BC	Israel must serve in holiness	Declares the standards for a holy nation	Service	11:45
Num	Moses	1400 BC	The failures of the Israelites	Chronicles the Israelites' failures in entering Canaan	Sacred Journey	33:1
Deut	Moses	1400 BC	Decrees to Israel	Pronounces the commands of God that the Israelites must abide by prior to entering Canaan	Hope	10:12

B. Teachings Found in the Pentateuch

The Pentateuch is not just a detailed recording of the history of the Israelites or the commands of God. It also contains many important truths. It is, in fact, a glimpse into the very foundation of our faith. Below is a quick summary of some of the teachings.

a. God's Creation

The Bible begins with the awesome account of God's handiwork and how He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. This message reminds us to reflect constantly on God as the origin and creator of all things.

Teaching Tips

The table found on the previous page is included in the students' worksheets. However, it contains some blanks they need to fill in. You can ask the students to work in pairs and fill in only part of the table (assign which sections they need to fill in, i.e. work only on the Genesis section). After five minutes, ask them to share their information with the rest of the class so that everyone participates in completing the table. Also take time out to look up the key verses given in the table and share their importance with the class.

b. God's Chosen Ones

God hand-picked the descendants of Abraham and Jacob out of all the nations to be His special chosen ones. Through them, all people will be blessed (Gen 12:1-3). By being baptized into Jesus Christ today, we become Abraham's spiritual offspring and become entitled to receive God's promised blessings.

c. God's Covenants with Man

Through the mercy of God, He established covenants with Noah, Abraham and the people of Israel (Gen 9:9, 15:18, 17:4; Ex 24:7). These covenants are important to us because in the New Testament, we also have a covenant with God through Jesus Christ.

d. God's Laws

The Laws make up the core of the Pentateuch. There are the Ten Commandments as well as many other decrees. Although obedience to the Laws cannot save us because we could not possibly obey them to the letter, they do point out that the Lord is God and that He alone is the God of righteousness and holiness and is the source of all blessings (Ex 20-23; Lev 17-26; Deut 5:12-26).

e. God's Deliverance

The exodus marked a very important period in the history of the Israelites. This one great miracle gave the people hope that whenever they encountered strong

oppression, God would always deliver them. More importantly, Jesus Christ's birth fulfilled the prophecy of salvation by the Messiah, the ultimate deliverance for all mankind.

f. The Sin of Man

The Pentateuch recorded, often with great detail, the wicked nature of mankind. In fact, if we were to compare the events that occurred during Old Testament times with what we observe in today's society, we will discover that we have not changed for the better, that we are prone to sinning in the vilest ways. Surrounded by sin, we have no other choice but to turn to God for mercy and salvation. Only God can help us, and only He can wash away all the filth within us.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Why is the Bible divided into two sections called the Old and New Testaments? What is the significance of the word "testament" and why is it important to our faith?

2 List some reasons why it is important to study the Old Testament.

3 How is the Old Testament subdivided? Which books belong to each subdivision?

4 We are saved because Jesus Christ died and resurrected. By doing so, He broke down all the barriers from the past. Why is it important, then, to learn about the history of the Israelites?

5 We know that we cannot be saved through obedience to the Law because we cannot follow it perfectly. Then what is the relevance of all the laws found in the Pentateuch to our lives today?

6 What do you think about when you read about all the sins of our ancestors?

7 Which of the five books are you most familiar with? Explain your reasons.



The Bible and Me

So far, we have briefly touched on the importance of studying the Old Testament and learned some of the teachings found in the Pentateuch. Although we may know a lot about the Bible, that is not enough. Share the following story with the students.

The prince of Grenada, an heir to the Spanish crown, was sentenced to life in solitary confinement in Madrid's ancient prison. Everyone knew that anyone who went in would never come out alive. The prince was given one book to read the entire time – the Bible. Obviously, with only one book to read, he read it over and over hundreds of times. After thirty-three years of imprisonment, he died. When they came in to clean out his cell, they found some notes he had written by using nails to mark on the soft stone of the prison walls. It contained things of this sort: Psalm 118:8 is the middle verse of the Bible; Ezra 7:21 contains all the letters of the alphabet except the letter j; the ninth verse of the eighth chapter of Esther is the longest verse in the Bible; no word or name of more than six syllables can be found in the Bible. Isn't it kind of strange that an individual who spent thirty-three years studying the greatest book of all time could only become an expert at Bible trivia? As far as we know, he never made any religious commitment to Jesus Christ.

After reading this story, we need to ask ourselves what kind of faith we have. Like the prince, we may know a lot about the Bible, but what do we do with the teachings we receive every week from church? What do we do with teachings gained from studying the Bible at home? Do we just become an expert in the teachings? What kind of attitude should we have towards the words of God?

1. We must respect the Bible and its teachings. We shouldn't add to or subtract from it, or misinterpret it in any way.
2. We should believe the Bible in its entirety, without doubting any part of it.
3. We should study the Bible with humility.
4. When we encounter problems we cannot solve on our own, we can turn to the Bible for guidance.
5. We should practice the teachings we have learned and try our best to apply them to our lives.
6. We need to introduce and share the Bible with our friends and family so that they can also rely on God.

Questions to think about:

- 1.** *How important is it to you to study the Bible and understand its teachings? Think of your answer based on the following scenario: Many of you are old enough to drive. None of you would consider driving at night without the use of your headlights because it is too dark outside. If you didn't have the lights on, you would likely get into an accident. But how many of you go out daily without the words of God rooted inside of you? This world is equally dark and there are many temptations around us. The words of God are like the headlights on the car. They can illuminate the path before us and steer us clear of many "accidents." So, is studying the Bible as important to you as turning on the headlights? If not, how can you make it so that it is?*
- 2.** *How can we effectively apply the teachings we have learned from the Bible in our lives? Give a concrete example.*
- 3.** *What is a good method of introducing the Bible to our friends and family? Share your experiences.*
- 4.** *In the section that discusses the teachings found in the first five books, are any of those teachings especially meaningful to you? Explain your answer.*
- 5.** *The Bible is profitable for four things according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17:1.*
 - 1.** Teaching- The Bible is our source of information about God, the human race, heaven, hell, angels, demons and the future.
 - 2.** Rebuking- The Bible teaches us when our behavior is not in accordance to the Bible.
 - 3.** Correcting- The Bible teaches us how to get back on track when our thinking and choices are wrong.
 - 4.** Training in righteousness- The Bible trains us how to be godly and holy in our mind and in our deeds.



- 1.** *What kind of attitude do you have towards the Bible? Do you respect it as God's word? Do you look forward to reading it? Do you study it to understand more of what God wants of you?*
- 2.** *What will you do, starting today, to improve the amount and quality of time you spend studying the word of God?*