

GOD'S MERCIFUL LOVE

Sixth Grade Student Textbook

GOD'S MERCIFUL LOVE

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Sixth Grade Student Textbook

Updated Second Edition

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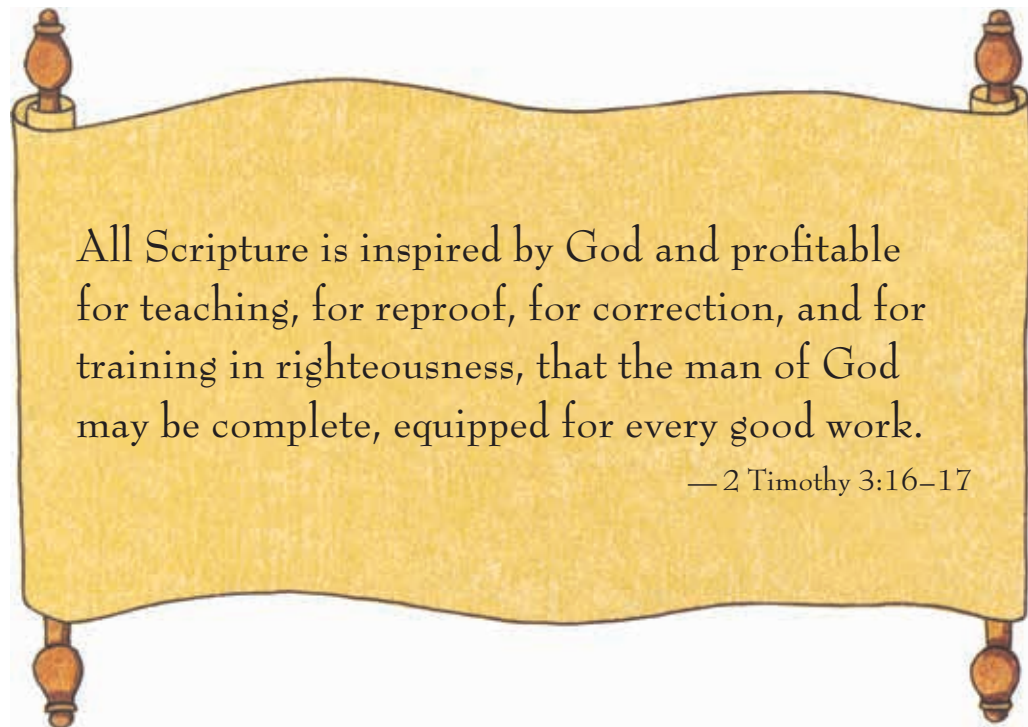
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LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE



Vocabulary

reveal: to make known something that was not previously known

divine revelation: the hidden truths God chose to reveal about himself

Incarnation: God the Son, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, assumed human nature and is both true God and true man.

The Church: all the baptized united together with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit

Mystical Body of Christ: all Christians are members of Christ, so that with him, they form one Mystical Body. Christ is the head of the body, the Church; Christ and his Church together make up the “whole Christ”.

Old Testament: the first division of the Bible; includes forty-six books written before the time of Christ

B.C.: abbreviation of “before Christ”

New Testament: the second division of the Bible; includes twenty-seven books written after Christ was born

A.D.: abbreviation of the Latin *anno Domini*, which means “in the year of our Lord”

Sacred Scripture: the books of the Old and New Testaments; the Bible. Scripture is the inspired Word of God—that is, it is God who is the author of the Bible.

Magisterium: the teaching authority given by Christ to the Church; the pope and the bishops united with him

translations: different versions of the Bible

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

Vocabulary (continued)

manuscript: handwritten text

scribes: people who, throughout the ages, copied books

Vulgate: the most famous Latin translation of the Bible, made by Saint Jerome

literary forms: different types of writing

prophet: a messenger; a person chosen by God to speak to his people

epistle: a letter

Concepts of Faith

What did God the Father send his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to reveal?

The truth.

What do we call the event in which God the Son, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, assumed human nature and is both true God and true man?

The Incarnation.

What is divine revelation?

The hidden truths that God chose to reveal about himself.

What are the two ways divine revelation is transmitted?

Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

What image can be used to describe the intimate union of Christ and his Church?

The Mystical Body of Christ.

What is Sacred Tradition?

The handing down from generation to generation of all that Christ has revealed. Tradition is preserved under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

What are the names of the two major divisions of the Bible?

The Old Testament and the New Testament.

What role did the human authors play in the writing of Sacred Scripture?

They were divinely guided by God to write down, through their own thoughts and choices, what God wished them to write.

What is the Magisterium of the Church?

It is the teaching authority of the Church—the pope and the bishops of the Church in union with the pope.

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Dig deeper with YOUCAT and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- To learn more about the relationship of Scripture and Tradition read YOUCAT 12.
- To learn more about divine inspiration read YOUCAT 14.
- To learn more about Jesus as true God and true man read CCC 469.
- To learn more about the Magisterium and the teaching authority of the Church read YOUCAT 13.
- To learn more about the Creeds read YOUCAT 26–29.

Divine Revelation

God the Father, in his infinite mercy and love, sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to the world to reveal himself to us and to give himself to mankind. “Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men. God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit” (CCC 50).

From Adam and Eve onward throughout the ages, God revealed himself gradually. “God has revealed himself to man by gradually communicating his own mystery in deeds and in words” (CCC 69). However, in the fullness of time, God revealed himself fully in Jesus Christ. “God has revealed himself fully by sending his own Son, in whom he has established his covenant for ever. The Son is his Father’s definitive Word; so there will be no further Revelation after him” (CCC 73).

God the Son, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, assumed human nature and is both true God and true man. The Church calls this event the Incarnation. To reveal means to make something known that was not known before. Christ revealed God to us. By our natural reason, we could never have known him in the way Christ revealed him to us. Divine revelation is the revelation of God himself to us through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is the hidden mystery of God revealed to us in Christ.

The Role of the Church

While on earth, Jesus knew that, following his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, he would return in glory to the right hand of his Father in heaven (the Paschal Mystery). But not wishing to leave us as orphans, he established the Church on earth. Saint Paul tells us that “he is the head of the body, the Church” (Colossians 1:18). The *Catechism* says the Church can be described using a number of different, yet complementary images. One dominant image is the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. “The comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. Not only is she gathered *around him*; she is united *in him*, in his body” (CCC 789; emphasis in original). Stressing the intimacy of the union between Christ and the Church, the *Catechism* also states: “Christ and his Church thus together make up the ‘whole Christ’ (*Christus totus*). The Church is one with Christ” (CCC 795).

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

Pope Pius XII explains the teaching in this way: “The unbroken tradition . . . from the earliest times teaches that the Divine Redeemer [Christ] and the Society which is His Body [the Church] form but one mystical person.”¹ The *Catechism* quotes Saint Thomas Aquinas when she teaches that Christ and the Church are “one and the same mystical person” (CCC 795).² “Because Christ, the only mediator and redeemer of men, is head of the Church, Christ and the Church are one single mystical person, the total Christ. He [Augustine] writes with force: ‘We have become Christ. Just as He is the head, we are the members; the whole man is He and ourselves.’ This doctrine of the total Christ is one of the teachings that mattered most to the Bishop of Hippo, and one of the most fruitful themes of his ecclesiology.”³

The Mystical Body of Christ formed by the intimate personal union of Christ and his Church, head and members, continues Christ’s work to reveal the truth. Since her foundation, more than two thousand years ago, and today, and for all earthly time to come, the Church continues to reflect on divine revelation and to restate it for each generation to understand. Still, it is important to note that Jesus completed his work of revealing the Father to us while he was with us on earth.

Saint John the Evangelist was most likely the last eyewitness to record the events of Jesus’ life. Therefore, divine revelation ended with the death of Saint John (ca. A.D. 100). But the Church continues to reflect on and interpret the entire Word of God for each new age.

Review Questions

1. What did God the Father send his Son, Jesus Christ, to the world to reveal?

2. What do we call the event in which God the Son, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, assumed human nature and is both true God and true man?

3. What is divine revelation?

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

Review Questions (continued)

4. What does divine revelation teach us?

5. What do we call the Mystical Body of Christ, Christ as the head united to his body?

6. Why did Christ establish the Church?

7. How does the Church continue Christ's work to reveal the truth?

8. Who was most likely the last eyewitness to record the work of Jesus?

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

Sacred Tradition

The Catholic Church teaches that Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are the two ways that divine revelation is transmitted. “Both the living Tradition and the written Scriptures have their common source in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ” (CCC, Glossary, s.v. “Tradition”). Sacred Tradition is the handing down from generation to generation of all that Christ has revealed. Tradition is preserved under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The word “tradition” comes from the Latin word *tradere*, “to hand over”. The first recorded statement of Sacred Tradition is the Bible. Our word “Bible” comes from the Greek word *biblion*, which means “book”. The Bible is our most important book. It is, in a way, a history of what God has done in our world. It is God’s proclamation. It is a book that tells us who God is and who we are as persons created in the image of God.

Sacred Tradition, however, also includes such things as the Apostles’ Creed, the writings of the Fathers of the Church (such as Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, Saint Gregory the Great, and Saint Ambrose), the Church’s divine liturgy, and the decrees of the Church.

Sacred Scripture

The Bible is not a single book but rather a collection of seventy-three books separated into two major divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains forty-six books all written before Christ was born (B.C.). The New Testament contains twenty-seven books written after Christ was born (A.D., an abbreviation of the Latin *anno Domini*, “in the year of our Lord”). Together, the books of the Old and New Testaments, the Bible, are known as Sacred Scripture.

The Bible was not sent to us through the mail; it did not arrive on a fax; it did not just drop down from the sky. So, just where did the Bible come from? The Catholic Church first made a written list of the literary manuscripts that were in use at the time. This happened at the councils of Rome and Hippo in A.D. 382 and 393, respectively. The councils decided that seventy-three books were divinely inspired. Later, many other local councils agreed on the same seventy-three books.

This was accepted throughout the entire Christian world until the time of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. Following the Reformation, the Catholic Church at the ecumenical Council of Trent declared that these seventy-three books form the canon of Sacred Scripture. “It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books. This complete list is called the canon of Scripture. It includes 46 books for the Old Testament (45 if we count Jeremiah and Lamentations as one) and 27 for the New” (CCC 120).⁴

Divine Inspiration

The books of the Bible were written by many different people. All of them, however, were guided by God, who is the Author of all Sacred Scripture. They wrote down, through their own thoughts and

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choices, what he wished them to write. This guidance by God is called divine inspiration. God the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of Sacred Scripture to write God’s message to his people.

Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known.

Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei verbum*
(November 18, 1965), II, 9

The Magisterium of the Church

Remember that Jesus Christ revealed the truth and is the full revelation of God the Father. Since the Church is one with Christ, the Church alone can guarantee that the revelation of Christ contained in Sacred Scripture and in Sacred Tradition is taught to each successive age. “The one mediator, Christ, established and ever sustains here on earth his holy Church, the community of faith, hope, and charity, as a visible organization through which he communicates truth and grace to all men” (CCC 771).⁵

This teaching authority of the Church, given by Christ to the successors of the Apostles (the bishops in union with the pope), is called the Magisterium (from the Latin *magister*, meaning “teacher”). The Magisterium is responsible for teaching divine revelation to the People of God.

Once we understand this mystical bond between Christ and his Church, we can easily understand why all Sacred Scripture must be interpreted in light of the Church’s teaching authority.



Throughout the Church’s history there have been many councils and synods. At these meetings, the bishops of the world, together with the pope, share the responsibility of teaching and guiding the Church. There have been numerous synods, such as the 1990 World Synod of Bishops pictured here. There have been twenty-one ecumenical or general councils of the Church. The first council was Nicaea I, held in the year 325. The most recent ecumenical council was Vatican II, which met from 1962 to 1965.

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

Review Questions

1. What are the two ways divine revelation is transmitted?

2. What is Sacred Tradition?

3. Where can the most important recorded statement of Sacred Tradition be found?

4. Why is the Bible the most important book ever written?

5. What are the names of the two major divisions of the Bible?

6. What is another name for the Bible?

7. What important event marks the beginning of the Old Testament?

8. What important event marks the beginning of the New Testament?

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

Review Questions (continued)

9. How do we know that the message in the Bible is God's message to his people?

10. What role did the human authors play in the writing of Sacred Scripture?

11. Who is the author of the Bible?

12. In addition to the writings of Sacred Scripture, what are some examples of other things included in Sacred Tradition?

13. Who guarantees that divine revelation, found in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, is taught to each generation?

14. What is the Magisterium of the Church?

15. When and where was it first decided which books were inspired and would be included in the Bible?

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE



Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in caves.

How Was the Bible Written?

The Old Testament was originally written mostly in Hebrew, with seven books written in Greek. The New Testament was written in Greek. Since then there have been many translations, or versions, of the Bible. The original manuscripts, handwritten texts, of the books of the Bible have not survived. The earliest surviving manuscripts are known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were found in 1947, buried in a cave near the Dead Sea. Many of them date from as early as the second century B.C. That means they were written about two hundred years before Christ was born. Their discovery was important because biblical scholars could then compare the texts they had known with these newly discovered texts. Do you know what they learned? In over a thousand years of copying texts, there were almost no differences! The scribes, the people who had copied these books of the Old Testament, had been very careful not to make mistakes. In this effort God had helped them. And so God's message was passed on and continues to be passed on to each generation. Today the Bible can be read in more than two thousand different languages!

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Languages of the Bible

The first book of the Bible is Genesis, and the first sentence in Genesis is, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Here we see that sentence written in Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of the Bible texts, and in Latin, according to the translation by Saint Jerome. There are many versions of the Bible in English. In this book we are using the Ignatius Bible, Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition, © 2006.

Hebrew. The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew. Hebrew is read from right to left.

בראשית א
פראשית פרא אלהים
את השמים ואת והארע

Greek. The New Testament was originally written in Greek. Here is the first sentence of Genesis, chapter one, written in Greek.

ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ, ΚΕΦ. α.
Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν.

Latin. Latin uses the same alphabet as English. The most famous Latin version of the Bible is called the Vulgate. The Vulgate was translated by Saint Jerome from Hebrew and Greek versions.

GENESIS, CAPUT I.
In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram.

English. This is the same passage from Genesis, from the Ignatius Bible, Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition, © 2006.

GENESIS, CHAPTER 1
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

Literary Forms

When you go to the library you find many different types of books from which to choose. You may wish to read, for example, a biography of a famous person or a history book that tells about the American Revolution. Or you may choose a novel or a collection of poems. Biography, history, novel, and poetry are all literary forms. Literary forms are different types of writing. The books of the Bible are written in many literary forms. In order to understand God's message found in the Scriptures, it is important to know what literary forms were used to tell this message.

The Books of the Bible and Their Literary Forms

Old Testament Literary Forms

The books of the Old Testament include these literary forms: history, law, prophecy, prayer, and wisdom.

History books. The core of these books is historical. It is important to remember that the human author is writing these books not to teach a history lesson, but to teach a religious truth. The history books include Genesis, parts of Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Lamentations, Baruch, and 1 and 2 Maccabees.

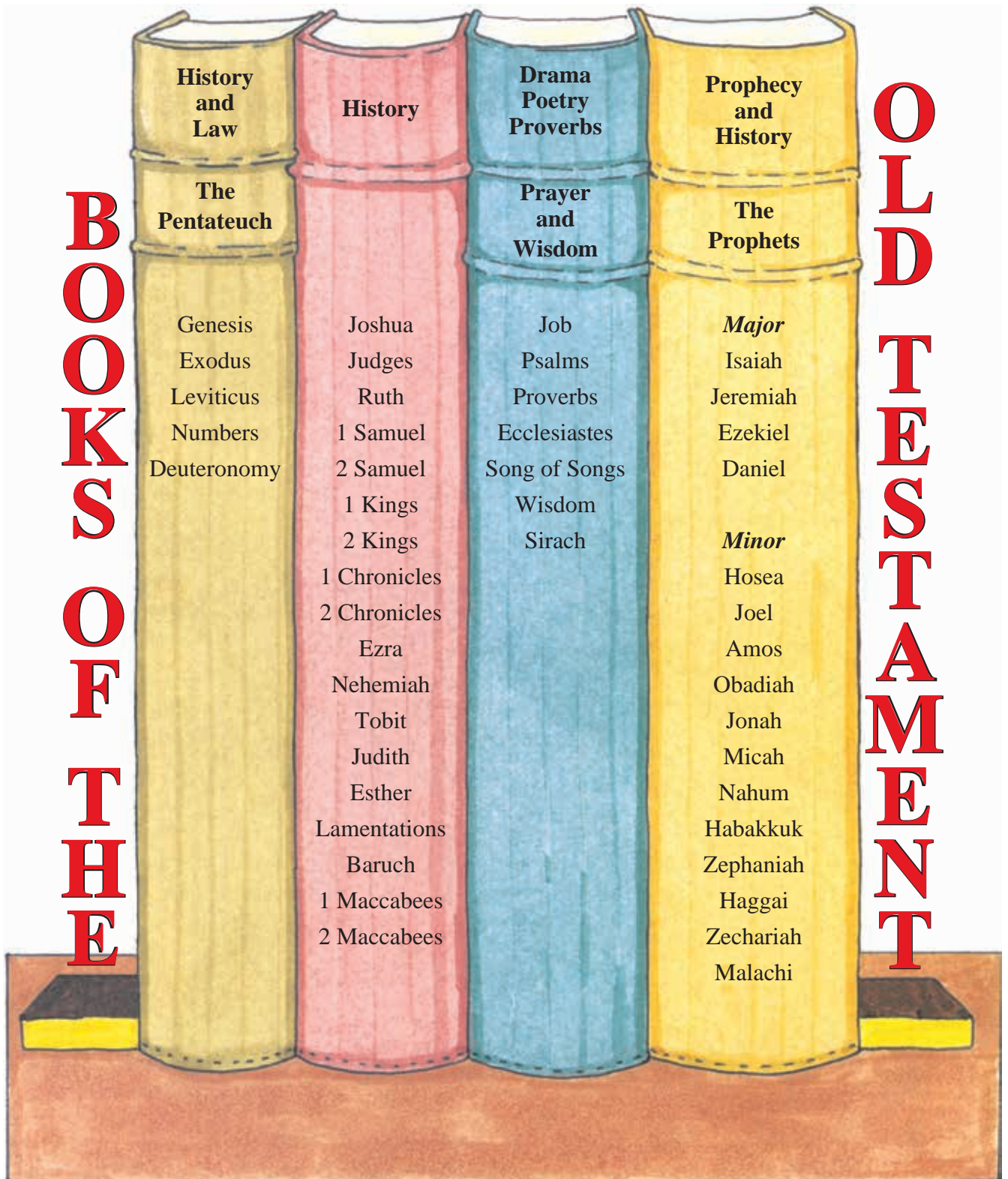
Law books. These books give an account of the various laws and rules that the Jewish people followed. They include Exodus (in part), Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Prophecy books. These books contain the words of the prophets. The word "prophet" comes from the Greek word *prophetes*, which means "one who speaks before others". The prophets, then, were special people or messengers, chosen by God, to speak to his people. The prophets include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, as well as Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Prayer book. The Book of Psalms is a prayer book, a collection of songs and poems that are used to worship and praise God.

Wisdom books. These books give insight or common sense about human life and our actions toward each other and toward God. They include Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, and Sirach.

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New Testament Literary Forms

The books of the New Testament include these literary forms: Gospel, letters, history, and prophecy.

Gospel. The Gospels are factual accounts of the deeds and words of Jesus Christ. They were recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Letters. These books of the New Testament are actual letters, or epistles, that were written by several disciples to various Christian communities and to friends. They include the Letters written by Saint Paul to the Romans, Corinthians (1 and 2), Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Hebrews, and Thessalonians (1 and 2), as well as to Timothy (1 and 2), Titus, and Philemon. They also include the epistles written by Saint James, Saint Peter (1 and 2), Saint John (1, 2, and 3), and Saint Jude.

History book. The Acts of the Apostles is the only history book of the New Testament. It is a historical account of the early Christian Church.

Prophecy book. One New Testament book, Revelation, is a kind of prophecy about the end of the world and the fulfillment of the kingdom of God.

The Gospels

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

Letters (or Epistles)

Romans	Titus
1 Corinthians	Philemon
2 Corinthians	Hebrews
Galatians	James
Ephesians	1 Peter
Philippians	2 Peter
Colossians	1 John
1 Thessalonians	2 John
2 Thessalonians	3 John
1 Timothy	Jude
2 Timothy	

Church History

Acts of the Apostles

Prophecy Book

Revelation

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

Review Questions

1. In what languages was the Bible originally written?

2. What do we mean by literary form?

3. Why is it important to know the literary form of the book in which the human author chose to write God's message?

4. What are several types of literary forms used in the Old Testament?

5. What are several types of literary forms used in the New Testament?

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

LIVING THE LESSON—APPLICATION

Discuss the following questions with your classmates, family, and friends.

1. You have learned that the Bible is our most important book. How can you use the Bible in your daily life with your family?
2. How can the Bible remind us that we are important to God and to each other?

CELEBRATION

You need to know what you believe. You need to know your faith with that same precision with which an IT specialist knows the inner workings of a computer. You need to understand it like a good musician knows the piece he is playing. Yes, you need to be more deeply rooted in the faith than the generation of your parents so that you can engage the challenges and temptations of this time with strength and determination. You need God's help if your faith is not going to dry up like a dewdrop in the sun.

Pope Benedict XVI, Introduction to *YOUCAT 2010*

Prayer

The Apostles' Creed is like a mini-catechism. It is a statement of our beliefs as Christians.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

ACTIVITIES

Worksheet 1: Old and New Testament Relationships

Jesus said that he came to fulfill the law found in the Old Testament, not to destroy it. Therefore, it is important to study the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. We cannot understand Jesus unless we understand what he fulfilled. This worksheet lists some of the prophecies of the Old Testament that Jesus fulfilled in the New Testament.

***Directions:** Find both the Old and New Testament Scripture references in your Bible, and then write a short answer that completes the sentence. If you do not know the abbreviation for the book, look it up in the list of abbreviations in your Bible. The first number that follows the abbreviation of the book is the chapter number; the number or numbers after the colon are the verse numbers. For example, “Is 7:14” means the Book of Isaiah, chapter 7, verse 14.*

1. Is 7:14; Mt 1:23

Jesus would be born of a virgin and would be called _____.

2. Jer 23:5–6; Mk 11:9–10

Jesus would be a descendant from the house of _____.

3. Mic 5:1–2; Mt 2:1, 5–6

Jesus would be born in _____.

4. Mal 3:1; Mt 11:10

God sent a _____ to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus.

5. Zech 11:7; Jn 10:11

Jesus would be the good _____.

6. Is 42:7; Jn 8:32

Jesus will open the _____,
and you will know _____,
and the truth will set you _____.

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7. Ps 118:22; Mt 21:42

Jesus is the _____ which the builders _____.

8. Ps 41:10; Jn 13:18

Jesus would be betrayed by a _____.

9. Ps 22:18; Mt 27:35

What would they do with Jesus' garments?

_____.

10. Ex 12:46; Jn 19:36

Jesus would be killed without his _____ being broken.

LESSON 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE BIBLE

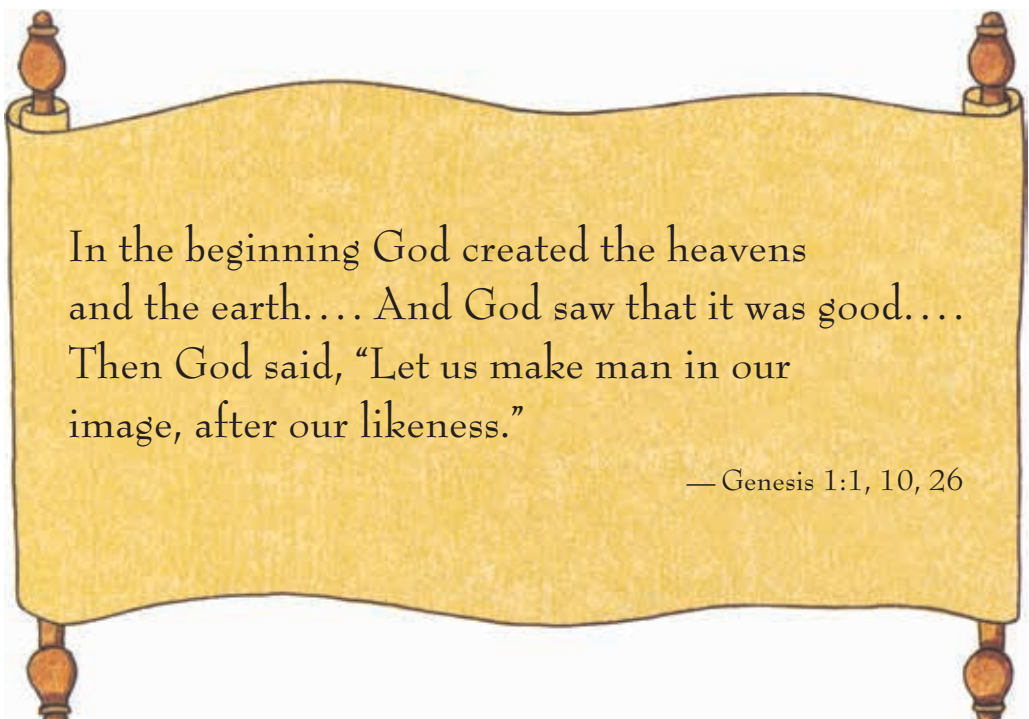
Worksheet 2: Other Names for Jesus

Throughout the Bible, Jesus is given many names.

Directions: Match each name for Jesus with its correct Scripture reference by placing the letter of the name on the line next to the reference.

1. _____ Isaiah 53:7 **A** Redeemer
2. _____ Revelation 19:16 **B** High Priest
3. _____ Isaiah 59:20 **C** Light of the World
4. _____ Isaiah 9:6 **D** Head of the Church
5. _____ Isaiah 11:10 **E** Lamb of God
6. _____ Malachi 4:2 **F** Prince of Peace
7. _____ Hebrews 4:15 **G** King of Kings
8. _____ Hebrews 2:10 **H** Pioneer of our Salvation
9. _____ Ephesians 1:22 **I** Sun of Righteousness
10. _____ John 8:12 **J** Root of Jesse

LESSON 2: GENESIS—THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND OF MAN AND WOMAN



In the beginning God created the heavens
and the earth.... And God saw that it was good....
Then God said, “Let us make man in our
image, after our likeness.”

— Genesis 1:1, 10, 26

Vocabulary

atheist: a person who does not believe in the existence of God

Pentateuch: the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

Genesis: the first book of the Bible

evolution: a scientific theory that claims human beings have developed from a simpler form of life

literary forms: different styles of writing

create: to make something out of nothing

ornament: to decorate

ornamentation: decoration

universe: all of God’s visible creations

eternal: everlasting

image: a reflection; a resemblance

dignity: value; worth

dominion: authority to govern the earth

stewardship: responsibility to care for all of God’s creations

grace: a free and supernatural gift from God in which he shares his divine life and friendship with us; and helps us to live as persons created in the image of God

LESSON 2: GENESIS—THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND OF MAN AND WOMAN

Vocabulary (continued)

sanctifying grace: “heals our human nature wounded by sin by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity ... making us ‘perfect,’ holy, and Christlike” (CCC, Glossary)

actual grace: God’s intervention and help to conform our lives to his will

original holiness: the state of friendship with God shared by Adam and Eve before they sinned. “This grace of original holiness was to ‘share in ... divine life’” (CCC 375).

original justice: before sin, the mastery or governance that Adam and Eve experienced over themselves; freedom from death

Original Sin: the first sin committed by Adam and Eve. We inherit Original Sin from Adam and Eve, which means that we are conceived and born with a wounded human nature and therefore are deprived of original holiness and original justice; we are in need of the grace of salvation won for us by Christ (CCC 1250).

supernatural: “surpassing the power of created beings; a result of God’s gracious initiative. Our vocation to eternal life is supernatural” (CCC, Glossary).

faith: the theological virtue that enables us to believe and accept all that God has revealed. Faith is necessary for us to live someday with God in heaven.

Concepts of Faith

What is the name given to the first five books of the Bible?

The Pentateuch.

What is the name of the first book of the Bible?

Genesis.

What do we mean by the term “divine inspiration”?

The gift of the Holy Spirit that assisted the human authors in writing the Bible. Because of this inspiration, God is the author of Scripture, and it teaches without error all he wanted to reveal.

What is a personal soul?

The personal soul is the invisible, spiritual, and immortal gift from God that gives each human being life.

What are the two main powers of the soul?

The mind and the will.

What do we do with the intellect or mind?

We reason or think with the intellect or mind.

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Concepts of Faith (continued)

What do we do with the will?

We choose with the will.

What did God ask Adam and Eve to do after he created them?

To be fruitful and multiply and to have dominion over the earth.

What did God do so that Adam and Eve could love him and be his friends?

He created them in original holiness.

Dig deeper with YOUCAT

- To learn more about what the Church teaches about evolution read YOUCAT 42.
- To learn more about the relationship between faith and science read YOUCAT 23.
- To learn more about using reason to conclude that the world could not have come into existence simply by chance read YOUCAT 43.

An Introduction to the Book of Genesis

The Pentateuch

The Pentateuch is the name given to the first five books of the Bible. These five books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The word “pentateuch” comes from two Greek words: *penta*, which means “five”, and *teuchos*, a container for scrolls. In ancient times, messages were written on rolled pieces of paper called scrolls. A scroll is similar to a book. These five books are very important to the Jewish people because together they form “The Torah”, or “The Law”, the most important part of the Jewish Bible. It contains the account of the formation of the People of God, known as the Hebrews or Israelites. It includes creation, the stories of Abraham and Moses, and the beginnings of this Israelite nation.

The Book of Genesis

Genesis is the name of the first book of the Bible. The word “genesis” comes from the Greek word for “origin” or “birth”. This book narrates the origin, or beginning, of the world, the birth of the human race, and the early history of the Hebrew people.

As you look over the first few pages of the Book of Genesis in your Bible, you will notice that there is more than one account of creation. Are you surprised? In fact, there are many stories of creation; most

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of the ancient peoples from all parts of the world have a story of creation that is part of their culture and tradition. In our present culture, science has its own story to tell about the origin, or beginning, of the world. In science class you may have studied the big bang theory, which claims that the earth came into existence as the result of an enormous explosion. You may have studied about evolution, a scientific theory that claims human beings have developed gradually from a simpler form of life.



So what are we to believe? How are we to know the truth about our beginning? From your reading of the first chapter in this text, you may remember several important facts. The writers of the Bible were inspired by God. Do you remember what that means? Divine inspiration means that God sent the gift of the Holy Spirit to assist a human author to write a biblical book in such a way that it has God as its author; and it teaches faithfully and without error all the saving truths that God wished to reveal. Although God guided them to write his message, he did not dictate each word to them. He allowed them to do his work through the use of their own thoughts and their own words. The Church holds that all of Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore “it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings.”¹ This cannot be said of the other stories of creation that are part of folklore or mythology.

Another important fact to remember is that the books of the Bible were written in several different literary forms. History, law, and prophecy are just a few examples. Although the Book of Genesis is classified as a history book, it is not primarily concerned with *when* God created the world and man and woman. Nor is it primarily concerned with *how long* creation took. The Bible tells us that God made everything from nothing. The miracle of creation is the same whether it took six days or six years or six million years! We must always remember that the number of days is not important. Saint Peter tells us, “With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8).

Science and our belief in God need not be in competition with each other. For example, we can learn about the big bang theory. We can believe, as some scientists do, that the universe began from a huge explosion of gases and matter. But what caused the explosion? And who created the gases and matter? Science does not know the answer. For the big bang theory to be correct there had to be something to explode, and if nothing existed, there was nothing to explode. Our faith tells us that God created everything from nothing. He is the ultimate source of all knowledge, including all of what science teaches us. Thus, science can help us to understand the development of God’s creations. If we remember the important truth that God is the Creator of all things and the source of all knowledge, the teachings of science and the teachings of our faith will never be in conflict.

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Review Questions

1. What is the name given to the first five books of the Bible?

2. What are the first five books of the Bible, in order?

3. What does the Pentateuch teach us?

4. What are the first three words of the first book of the Bible?

5. In general, what does Genesis talk about?

6. What do we mean by the term “divine inspiration”?

7. How can the study of science lead us to a better knowledge of God, our Creator?

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Scripture Summary

Read the first account of creation found in your Bible, Genesis 1:1–31 and 2:1–4, or read the following summary.

The First Account of Creation

Based on Genesis 1:1–31; 2:1–4

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing.

On the first day, “God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good” (Genesis 1:3–4). “God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (Genesis 1:5).

On the second day, “God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters’” (Genesis 1:6). “And God called the firmament Heaven” (Genesis 1:8). And he saw that it was good.

Then on the third day, “God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.’ . . . God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas” (Genesis 1:9–10). God saw how good it was. Then “God said, ‘Let the earth put forth vegetation’” (Genesis 1:11). And so it happened. God saw how good it was.

Then “God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years . . . to give light upon the earth’” (Genesis 1:14–15). And so God made the sun and the moon and the stars. And God saw how good it was on the fourth day.

On the fifth day, “God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens’” (Genesis 1:20). And so it happened. God saw how good it was, “and God blessed them” (Genesis 1:22).

Then “God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds’” (Genesis 1:24). And so it happened on the sixth day. And God saw how good it was.

“Then God said: ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth’” (Genesis 1:26). God created man in his image; male and female he created them; in the divine image he created them (see Genesis 1:27). “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’” (Genesis 1:28). And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day (see Genesis 1:30–31).

Because God was finished with his work on the seventh day, he rested. He blessed the seventh day and made it holy.