

And You Shall Be My Witnesses

Acts 1:8

**ACTS II:
CONVERSION, PROCLAMATION,
COMMUNITY**

**LEADER'S
EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE**

**SCRIPTURE 1:
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCRIPTURES**



Coordinator's Handbook

**Community of the New Covenant
Private Association of the Christian Faithful**

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Acts 1:8

**ACTS II:
CONVERSION, PROCLAMATION,
COMMUNITY**

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EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE**

**SCRIPTURE 1:
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCRIPTURES**

By

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To all those who have contributed to our growth in the faith,
Our families, friends, theology professors, students, and from
All whom we have learned in so many different ways, this
"work of love" is most gratefully dedicated.

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Foreword

This particular Evangelizer's Handbook is one of an Evangelistic Series for ACTS II: Conversion, Proclamation, Community, a parish-based evangelization process of conversion and training in evangelization.

The ACTS II Process is a comprehensive training that has as its purpose the long-term goal of facilitating the formation of an evangelizing community of the parish. The means to accomplishing this is the Parish Small Group System: the networking of small groups whose primary purpose is evangelistic outreach. The Parish Small Group System is a way of life, a process of conversion, proclamation, community.

ACTS II: Conversion, Proclamation, Community is a total package of parish training in evangelization. It is divided into two parts:

- Part 1: Leadership Training, given by a CETC team, for the laity, those who will take leadership roles within their parish for this evangelization effort.
- Part 2: Evangelization Training of the Parishioners given by those trained in Part 1.

ACTS II is a process. It unfolds according to a specific dynamic which accomplishes far more than the materials alone can do. Throughout the unfolding of this process of life-giving events, the Holy Spirit is able to do what He alone can do: bring about the ever-deepening conversion of the parishioner.

Within the ACTS II Process, the parishioner, the trainee in evangelization, is equipped with the tools and skills to reach out and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the unchurched and the alienated/inactive Catholic, and bring them into the Church through the Parish Small Group System.

If you wish more information about this process, please visit our website: www.sncweb.org

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LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SCRIPTURE 1 -- WEEKEND ONE

SATURDAY

| | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------|
| 9:00 A.M. | Session One | 90 Minutes |
| 10:45 A.M. | Session Two | 120 Minutes |
| 12:30 NOON | Lunch | 70 Minutes |
| 1:40 P.M. | Session Three | 185 Minutes |
| 4:45 P.M. | Dismissal | |

SUNDAY

| | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 11:00 A.M. | Session Four | 190 Minutes |
| 2:10 P.M. | Session Five | 115 Minutes |
| 4:05 P.M. | Dismissal | |

SCRIPTURE 1 -- WEEKEND TWO

SATURDAY

| | | |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| 9:00 A.M. | Session Six | 155 Minutes |
| 11:35 A.M. | Session Seven | 115 Minutes |
| 1:30 A.M. | Lunch | 70 Minutes |
| 2:40 P.M. | Session Seven Continued | 105 Minutes |
| 4:25 P.M. | Dismissal | |

SUNDAY

| | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------|
| 11:00 A.M. | Session Eight | 255 Minutes |
| 3:15 P.M. | Session Nine | 130 Minutes |
| 5:25 P.M. | Dismissal | |

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION ONE

USE OF SCRIPTURE FOR PERSONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH

OBJECTIVES

To come to realize and to appreciate the truth that the Bible gives spiritual nourishment, life, and healing.

To acquire a facility in using Sacred Scripture as a means for prayer.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 2.
3. The instructor needs to determine during preparation time, which key references/ passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a Scripture reference during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.
5. Review with small group leaders:
 - a. small group leaders' responsibilities,
 - b. desired role modeling behaviors,
 - c. training procedures and formats.
6. Pray with training team 30 minutes before session.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 90 Minutes

OPENING PRAYER

10 MINS.

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 125 and stand.
 2. SIGNAL for music and prayer leaders to begin.
 3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
 4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.
-

BEGIN SESSION ONE

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 1.
2. STATE session objectives:

This session is concerned with bringing each one of us to realize and to appreciate the truth that the Bible gives spiritual nourishment, life, and healing. Each person will also be given the means of how to use Sacred Scripture for prayer.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

35 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:
 - I. The Sacred Scriptures have been cherished in the tradition of the Church.
 - II. How to read the Scriptures.
 - III. Sacred Scripture and the Fathers of the Church.
 - IV. What are the fruits of reading the Sacred Scriptures?
 - V. Sacred Scripture as a means of growing in union with Jesus Christ.
 - VI. How to approach the Sacred Scriptures.
 - VII. Sacred Reading (Lectio Divina).
2. TEACH expanded outline of above key points:
 - I. The Sacred Scriptures have been cherished in the tradition of the Church.**
 - A. As we look over the tradition of the Church, it will be readily seen

just how much the Desert Fathers and the great saints of the Church 'cherished' the Scriptures and used the Scriptures for their own spiritual nourishment.

-We, too, must do the same. Scripture is not just something we can use as normative in guiding us. It is that but it is more than that. It is the living Word of God which truly gives spiritual nourishment. It can give us life and healing if we will but let it do so for us.

B. Jesus Himself mastered the Sacred Scriptures. We could look upon Jesus as a visiting and traveling rabbi.

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Lk. 4:16-21;

-Mt. 4:1-11;

-Lk. 24:25-27.

1. One day when He came to Nazareth, He went into the synagogue and was asked to say a few words. He asked for the scroll of Isaiah and opened it at chapter 61.

-Now Jesus opened the scroll deliberately at this chapter for it speaks about the prophecy of the coming Messiah (See: Luke 4:16-21).

2. In Matthew, chapter 4, verses 1-11, we find Jesus using Scripture against Satan. He used the Scriptures as a divine weapon against the enemy of the kingdom.

3. Jesus explained the passages of Scripture. A good example of this is given to us in Luke, chapter 24, verses 25-27 (begin reading from verse 13 to give the context in which this was said).

II. How to read the Scriptures.

A. When reading Scripture, there are two aspects to keep in mind:

-the literal meaning -- which refers to what the sacred author is saying, what he intended when he wrote the Scriptures; and

-the spiritual meaning -- which refers to the deeper level or meaning of Scripture.

B. When we read Scripture, then, it is important to attend to both meanings:

-what the writer intends for us, and

-what the spiritual meaning is, that is, as it applies to us, which is to arrive at the deeper meaning of the passage.

C. St. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy, chapter 3, verses 16f that:

"All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

1. St. Paul tells us two things in this passage:

a) All Scripture is inspired by God--the Jewish Canon (the Old Testament) and the Christian Canon (the New Testament).

b) The Scriptures can be profitably used:

-for teaching: teaching us the basic truths we must know in order to be saved;

-for refuting error: error within ourselves, for that which is wrong will be corrected;

-for correction: for guiding our lives; and

-for training in righteousness: leading us to be holy.

2. We are to read the Sacred Scriptures, then, not out of curiosity, or from a scholarly point of view, but with a hunger for God's Word, that is, with a spiritual desire.

D. Some mistakenly read only the New Testament. That is wrong. For as St. Paul tells us: all Scripture is profitable.

1. We cannot understand Jesus Christ unless we understand what preceded Him: Jesus is the New Moses; He is the New Elijah; He is the Lamb.
2. We can understand this only if we understand the Old Testament. All the images of the New Testament come out of the Old Testament.

-It is important, therefore, to read all of the Books of the Bible.

III. Sacred Scripture and the Fathers of the Church.

A. Quotes from some of the Fathers.

1. St. John Chrysostom says that the Scriptures are "an inexhaustible treasury of heavenly doctrine."
2. St. Athanasius says that the Scriptures are an "overflowing fountain of salvation."
3. St. Augustine warns that "vainly does the preacher utter the Word of God exteriorly unless he listens to it interiorly."
4. St. Gregory the Great instructs us first "to find in Holy Scripture the knowledge of ourselves, and then to carry it to others, lest in reproving others we forget ourselves."

B. St. Jerome, a Doctor of the Church, had a tremendous love for the Bible and he tried to imbue others with this intense love of the Bible.

1. An example of this is to be found in the words he addresses to

the maiden Demetrias:

- "Love the Bible and wisdom will love you; love it and it will preserve you; honor it and it will embrace you; these are the jewels which you should wear on your breast and in your ears."

2. St. Jerome tells us that the attitude that we should have when we approach Scripture is one of prayer and humility of mind.

- Once we have done this, St. Jerome invites us to study the Bible.

3. He insists on daily reading of the Scripture in season and out.

- "We have got to read the Holy Scriptures assiduously; we have got to meditate on the Law of God day and night so that, as expert money-changers, we may be able to detect false coin from true."

4. For matrons and maidens alike he lays down the same rule. Writing to the Roman matron Laeta about her daughter's training, he says:

- "Every day she should give you a definite account of her Bible reading.... For her the Bible must take the place of silks and jewels.... Let her learn the Psalter first, and find her recreation in its songs; let her learn from Solomon's Proverbs the way of life, from Ecclesiastes how to trample on the world. In Job she will find an example of patient virtue.

- "Thence let her pass to the Gospels; they should always be in her hands. She should steep herself in the Acts and the Epistles. And when she has enriched her soul with these treasures she should commit to memory the Prophets, Kings and Chronicles, Esdras and Esther; then she can learn the Canticle of Canticles without any fear."

5. Again, he says,

-Read assiduously and learn as much as you can. Let sleep find you holding your Bible, and when your head nods let it be resting on the sacred page."

6. St Jerome says that "to be ignorant of the Scripture is not to know Christ."

-In its pages His image stands out, living and breathing; diffusing everywhere around: consolation in trouble, encouragement to virtue, and attraction to the love of God.

C. Clement of Alexandria and Cassian.

1. Clement of Alexandria says that the reading of Sacred Scripture is the Way of perfection. Scripture leads us into prayer.
2. Cassian, the great Father of the West, says our minds and hearts should be occupied with Scripture throughout the day.

-We should be invoking the Holy Spirit for protection for Sacred Scripture can be used by Satan.

D. The Fathers of the early Church tell us that we should read the Sacred Scriptures in an attitude of prayer.

1. We are to pray first to the Holy Spirit and ask Him for light, for spiritual desire and for divine teaching.
2. Then we are to read the Scriptures. They become prayer and lead us to the contemplation of divine love.

E. From the early Fathers, we are told that we should read the Scriptures in the manner of eating.

1. This is very important to keep in mind. For it is in following this suggestion that the Scriptures will become prayer and lead us to the contemplation of divine love.

2. So the Fathers tell us that we should read the Scriptures in the manner of eating.
 - a) First, we are to read, that is, bite it.
 - b) Then, we are to reflect upon it, that is, chew it.
 - c) Then, we are to swallow it and our hearts begin to be warmed within.
 - d) Then, we are to ruminate over it, that is, to chew again what has been chewed slightly and swallowed.

-So we are to ruminate over it by bringing it to our mind and consider it again and again, like a cow chewing its cud.
 - e) And finally, we are to digest it.
3. A help to reading the Scriptures every day is to establish a definite habit of place and time each day.

IV. What are the fruits of reading the Sacred Scriptures?

- A. They give us the universal answer.

God speaks to each person in a unique manner in Sacred Scripture.

- B. The Bible is the mirror of the Christian.

We learn about ourselves. As we read about the hardhearted and stiff-necked Jews, about their failure to understand, their spiritual mediocrity, we recognize that all of this applies to us as well. The Bible is the spiritual mirror of what we are, of what I am.

- C. The Bible is divine teaching.

God is teaching us about Himself. Love follows knowledge. The more we know about God, the more we love Him.

D. The Bible is the Song in the Night.

St. John of the Cross explains this phrase most beautifully.

1. He points out that the prayer of simplicity wherein we come to experience Jesus personally is only the beginning and we must move on.
2. As we grow in our relationship with the Lord, we are led deeper into the desert where we are alone with God and we come to passive contemplation, the --

-mystical night, where God instructs us through symbols, deep knowledge beyond words.

-We will think that we are all alone but God is there leading us to deeper union with Him. God leads us through the desert to mystical delights.

E. The Scriptures bring healing.

The Word of God heals us of all that needs healing: mentally, psychologically and spiritually if we but let it.

F. The Scriptures bring encouragement.

1. We become discouraged so easily. If we miss one day of reading the Scriptures, we can fall into discouragement.
2. In Romans, chapter 15, verse 4, we read, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope."

G. The Scriptures are nourishment for our soul.

Matthew, chapter 4, verse 4 says,

-But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

H. The Scriptures give life everlasting.

Through them we come know the Lord Jesus Christ who gives us salvation.

So, we must fill ourselves with the Word of God. Out of the treasury that we have, we can give to others. No one gives what (s)he does not have.

V. Sacred Scripture as a means of growing in union with Jesus Christ.

A. The *Document on the Laity*, n. 4 says:

"Since Christ in His mission from the Father is the fountain and source of the whole apostolate of the Church, the success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity's living union with Christ."

-The mission that Jesus has given to His Church is going to be accomplished by His people, by the laity, insofar as they are living in union with Him.

-In other words, we are only going to do as Jesus did if we are like Him.

B. One of the sources, the means of becoming like Jesus is Sacred Scripture.

1. In the same paragraph 4 of the document mentioned above, we read:

"Only by the light of faith and by meditation on the

word of God can one always and everywhere recognize God in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being' (Acts 17:28), seek His will in every event, see Christ in all men whether they be close to us or strangers, and make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in their relation to man's final goal."

2. That is the focus of this weekend, that our study of the Scriptures might lead us to know Jesus more deeply.
3. Our hope and our goal for this weekend is not so much intellectual knowledge of the living Word of God, but that we come to a deeper personal union with the Word who is Jesus Christ, the Lord.

C. When we approach the Scriptures, we need to come with the attitude of a 'converted heart.'

1. We need to be like Jeremiah, as portrayed for us in Jeremiah, chapter 15, verse 16 (Read). We are to read the Scriptures with our heart, prayerfully in the presence of God.

-The Scriptures pertain to the realm of poetry and experience rather than to the realm of abstraction. To read them from an intellectual point of view is to lose the core of the message.

2. The facts that we are going to be learning about the Bible: its sources, traditions, numbering, composition, are very interesting information.

-However, it will be of value to us only insofar as it leads us to a greater grasp of the Good News who is Jesus Christ among us.

D. In approaching the Scriptures, then, we need to turn to the Spirit of Jesus and ask Him to remove the veil from our face so that we will be able to receive the living Word into our hearts (2 Corinthians 3: 14-17).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-2 Cor. 3:12-17.

-We do not see the glory of God who is Jesus Christ because the veil is still over our faces. Each person must turn to Jesus Christ to have it removed.

VI. How to approach the Sacred Scriptures.

A. The pattern in our approach to the Scriptures becomes evident.

1. Approach the Sacred Scriptures with a converted heart, or rather, with a willingness, an openness to being converted, a readiness for conversion.
2. Come to the Word, Jesus, in faith, believing that He will give you His Spirit of understanding and truth. You have Jesus' promise of this (John 16:13).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Jn. 16:13.

3. Listen! Read very slowly and ask questions.
4. Respond to the Word!

The Word is not static but dynamically creative, as Isaiah 55:11 tells us. If we really grasped this, we would never put the Scriptures down.

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Is. 55:10f.

-We read that when someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other. Our response is: "Lord, I'm not able to do that."

-But there is power in this living Word of God to enable us

to do that. We need to ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to do what Scripture tells us to do.

5. Enter more and more into the Spirit of Jesus through this living Word.
6. Experience the freedom of Jesus.

The Spirit of Jesus brings us into freedom, the freedom of the sons of God, the freedom of seeing everything as nothing because we have discovered the pearl of great price, the Person of Jesus Christ, and we have bought the whole field for joy (Matthew 13:45f).

7. Enter into life.

We experience the fulfillment of Jesus' promise: "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10b).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Jn. 10:10b.

- B. Because the Scriptures do bring us into life, I highly recommend it to you as your primary prayer book, meditation book, spiritual reading book, for growing in the spiritual life, the life of Jesus.

VII. Sacred Reading (Lectio Divina).

- A. Sacred Reading or Lectio Divina is the way of prayer that the early monks, the masters of spirituality, used.
- B. They distinguished four aspects to this sacred reading, not degrees but aspects or elements: reading, reflection, prayer, and contemplation.
 1. Reading: sit quietly in the presence of God and begin to read, asking the Spirit of Jesus to open up His Word to your understanding, that you might receive some nourishment.

2. Reflection: when a passage, or a verse strikes you, pause over it and let the Spirit speak to you. Expect Him to! Think over this passage. What is it saying to your heart, to your reason? What does it mean for your life?

3. Prayer: from this you begin very naturally to speak about this to God, to let Him --

-console you, or admonish you, or exhort you; to ask Him to help you live in the way His Word is calling you to live, and to praise and thank Him for working in this way in your life already.

4. Contemplation: this way of prayer can lead you into wordless prayer where you rest in the deep awareness of God's presence.

-Maybe this time of contemplation does not last very long. You suddenly become aware that your mind is somewhere else. Don't get upset. Contemplation is a free gift of God. Just return to your reading.

C. This way of prayer needs to be done in an atmosphere of wasting time.

1. In the Zen-Buddhist tradition, it is often said that no one can learn to pray unless (s)he knows how to waste time.

2. You are not trying to accomplish anything, like covering so many chapters or so many verses. It is not like saying, "Today I'm going to finish the Gospel of John." That's not the idea.

3. Some days your sacred reading may take in only one aspect of this way of prayer. For example, when reading, you may read 30 minutes and receive no insights. That's fine. Remember, just letting the Word of God pass through you is a healing.

-Another day, you sit down and open the Bible and hardly look at a passage and you are filled with a sense of God's presence --contemplation.

The two days cannot be compared as to which is better. Both

are in the plan of God.

D. It is our hope that this weekend will awaken in all of us a great taste for the Scriptures.

1. St. Bernard, a great lover of the Scriptures, said that we need a sense of taste for God, and that this taste was made available for us when Jesus explained the Scriptures to the disciples on the way to Emmaus.
2. To this end, we pray that Jesus will fill us with His Spirit so that we might come, through the Scriptures, to that knowing and loving of God that brings life, life abundantly.

COMMUNITY BREAK

5 MINS.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

40 MINS.

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 10 and we will go over the Study Guide.

1. Write out the KEY REFERENCES for Sessions One and Two.

-Then, you are to write out your answers to the following reflection questions.

2. In 2 Timothy 3:16f, Paul tells us that the Scriptures are useful for equipping the disciple for mission. To what extent have you made use of the Bible for your personal growth in the Lord and for your evangelizing mission? Explain.
3. Does your daily schedule have to change in order for you to have time to pray the Scriptures? What are you going to do to make time for this?

-I will share with you now some sample responses to these two reflection questions.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You now have 35 minutes to do this Study Guide. Please gauge your time well.

STAND-UP BREAK

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION TWO

THE WORD OF GOD AND OUR RESPONSE

OBJECTIVE

To provide a general understanding of the Bible in terms of definitions, types of authorship, the truth of Scripture, and the difficulties people have in believing what it says.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 18.
3. The instructor needs to determine, during preparation time, which key references/passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a scripture reference, during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.
5. Pray with training team and assist small group leaders with any problems concerning the trainees that may arise.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 190 Minutes (Includes Lunch)

BEGIN SESSION TWO

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 11.
2. STATE session objective:

In this session a general understanding of the Bible will be given in terms of definitions, types of authorship, the truth of Scripture, and the difficulties people have in believing what it says.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

60 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:

- I. The necessity of regular study of the Sacred Scriptures.
- II. Some questions concerning general knowledge about the Bible.
- III. The definition of the Bible.
- IV. Important truths about the Bible.

2. TEACH expanded outline of above key points:

I. The necessity of regular study of the Sacred Scriptures.

A. Our correct listening to and our understanding of the Scriptures requires study.

1. But a study of Scripture should never replace reading of Scripture as a means of prayer and spiritual growth. A balance of both is necessary.
2. It is essential to be faithful to a daily prayerful reflection on the Scriptures and to regular study of the Scriptures.

B. To regularly study the Scriptures with the help of a Commentary provides the background for meditative reading.

1. As we read for understanding, what we should be asking ourselves is, "What is the author trying to convey? What is the point he is trying to make?"
 - a) When we read anything else, the newspaper, a storybook, or whatever, isn't that what we are trying to grasp?
 - b) The same is true of the Bible. The words of Scripture are our starting point in our trying to understand and listen to what God is saying to us through the Scriptures.
 - c) So, we must ask ourselves, "What is the author saying?"

2. As with any other book, we must also pay attention to the context in which the individual verses and passages occur. To quote out of context is to run the risk of distorting or losing the meaning.

a) We must pay attention to the broad context of the entire Bible, that is, we must see each Book within the Bible as it relates to the whole of salvation history, as --

-it relates to the historical work of God which began with Abraham and reached its climax in the early Church.

b) The Bible expresses that work of God and each Book within the Bible shows some aspect of it.

c) We can say, then, that each Book of the Bible finds its ultimate meaning not in itself, but in the context of the entire Bible.

3. Another point to keep in mind is that we should be attentive to the light that other passages and Books throw upon the passage or Book that we are now reading.

-It is good to be attentive to the place that a particular Book of the Bible occupies in the whole of salvation history, asking ourselves --

-"Why was this Book written and for whom was it written?"

C. Again, this just brings out that we need to be faithful to a regular study of the Bible, as well as to a faithful, prayerful meditation of it.

II. Some questions concerning general knowledge about the Bible.

A. Now, all of you have come with a copy of your own Bible. And so to begin, I will ask you a few questions.

1. Do you believe that the world was made in six days?

-If the Bible says it was made in 6 days and science tells you it was billions of years in the making, who do you believe?

2. Are there any other things in the Bible that you find hard to believe?

-(Allow for several responses.)

3. Are there any other things about the Bible that bother you?

-(Allow for whatever comes forth.)

4. What is the Bible?

-A partial record of a religious interpretation of the history of Israel.

5. How is the Bible divided? How many parts are there in each division?

-It is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. There are 46 Books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

6. The Old Testament materials are divided into three categories. Can you name them?

-The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

7. The New Testament is made up of four different kinds of material. Do you know what these are?

-The four Gospels, the Epistles, the Acts, and the Book of Revelation.

8. Who seems to be the outstanding figure of the Old Testament?

-Moses.

9. Who is the central figure in the New Testament?

-Jesus Christ.

10. What role did the prophets play in the history of Israel?

-Their role was to preserve the religion of the Jewish people, and also they were the means God used to continue His self-revelation.

11. Why do we say that the Jewish people are "the Chosen people"?

-They believe, and so do we, that God selected them to make Him better known to humankind in a normal, natural way, through the events of life.

12. Why do we call one part of the Bible the "Old" Testament, and the other part the "New" Testament?

-The "Old" Testament refers to the covenant God made with the Israelites in the desert, and --

-the "New" Testament refers to the covenant Jesus established through His death on the Cross and resurrection from the dead.

13. What is the name of the last Book in the Old Testament and the last Book in the New Testament.

a) In the Old Testament, the name of the last book is Malachi or 2 Maccabees, depending on which translation of the Bible you are using.

- b) In the New Testament, the name of the last book is Revelation. Apocalypse is the Greek title of this book and means revelation.

-The writers of apocalyptic writing are, in a sense, successors of the prophets.

-The distinction that can be made is this: the prophets of the Old Testament received God's Word by 'hearing the Word of God' and passed it on by word of mouth.

-The writer of an apocalypse received his revelation in a vision and passed it on in writing.

B. Let's look, now, at the alphabetical listing of the Books of the Bible. You will find that sheet at the front of your handbook.

1. The names given to some Books in the past are included under the present name of those same Books.
2. Also the old spelling is given as well.
3. We include these in case you come across a Bible that uses those former names rather than the present designation.

C. Some more questions.

1. Can anyone tell me where to find the story of Creation?

-Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.

2. Where will you find the Ten Commandments?

-Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21.

3. Where might we find something about Samson?

-Judges 13-16.

4. Where would we find the Prophets?

-In the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.

5. Where would you look if you saw the following reference:
1 Pt 2:5?

-In 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 5.

6. Where would you look for the Christmas story?

-In Matthew, chapters 1 and 2 and in Luke, chapters 1 and 2.

D. The purpose for these questions was to help each one of us realize that we have much to learn about the Bible.

-The questioning was not to embarrass you but to help you become aware of the fact, that there are many things about the Bible that you do not know yet, and --

-which you ought to become familiar with, so that they will become meaningful to you.

III. The definition of the Bible.

A. The broadest definition that we might give to the Bible is this:

-The Bible is a partial account of the history of the people of Israel interpreted in terms of their relationship to God, which brings out their belief that God was directing their history; that --

-He is a saving God, always faithful to a faithless people.

1. Let's look at the first part of this definition: The Bible is a partial

account of the history of the people of Israel.

- a) We can say this because first of all, the Bible does not contain everything that happened to the people of Israel.

-Why is that?

- b) Because for a certain time in their history, they did not keep written records of their history since they were a nomadic people, a wandering people.

-They preserved their history in stories that they told and retold from one generation to the next. It is these stories that formed what is referred to as 'Oral Tradition.'

-Later on, some records were kept of these stories and came to be known as 'Written Tradition.'

- c) A second reason for the Bible being a partial account of the history of Israel is because much of the material that is in it was included only because it demonstrated so forcefully the fidelity of God.
- d) A third reason for the Bible being a partial account of the history of Israel is because when the Bible was put together in the form that we now have it -

-some of the material that would fit into the history of the time was 'left out' because it did not go along with the purposes of those putting the Bible together.

2. The second part of our definition of the Bible states that it is the history of the people of Israel interpreted in terms of their relationship to God.

- a) In other words, the Bible is a religious interpretation of the history of Israel because it is a God-centered explanation of the religious meaning of their history.

- b) The Bible presents the story of the Jewish People in the light of their belief that since they were God's Chosen People, their history was directed by Him.
3. Let's look for a moment, now, at the fact that the Bible is an interpretation.
- a) All history is slanted to some degree, depending on the purpose of the author. For example, compare the history of World War II as written by the countries involved in that war.
 - b) So, too, with the biblical writers. The biblical writers selected the events of Israelite history which would best show that their God was a saving God.
 - c) It is good to take note that their history isn't slanted to show themselves as being a good and holy people all the time. Rather, the events of their history show them in their good times and in their bad times in their relation to God.

-Sometimes they were faithful and sometimes they were not.

-The events of their history show what happened to them when they were not faithful, and when God had to come in and rescue them when they got into trouble.
 - d) A good example of the Bible being a religious interpretation of history is Judges, chapters 6:1-16 and 7:1-9 (Read).

(Trainer: Point out: verses 7-10 of chapter 6 -- gives the religious reason for the historical event; also look at 6:15f; 7:2-8.)
4. So far, then, we have gotten a better understanding of this definition of the Bible, as a partial account of the history of the people of Israel, interpreted in terms of their relationship to God.

B. An important aspect of the definition of the Bible has to do with the word: testament.

1. The word 'testament' means 'treaty' or 'covenant' or 'agreement.'

a) "Covenant" is the central fact of salvation. This is indicated by the two parts that go to make up the entire Bible: the Old Covenant of Sinai -- the Old Testament -- and the New Covenant of Jesus Christ -- the New Testament.

b) The Old Testament is that part of the Bible that tells about God's covenant with the Israelites in the desert after they had escaped from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 24:1-8), and their history before and after the making of that covenant.

KEY REFERENCE (Write Out):

Ex. 24:1-8.

c) The New Testament is that part of the Bible that tells about the New Covenant made by Jesus in His blood (Luke 22: 20).

KEY REFERENCE (Write Out):

Lk. 22:20.

2. The central theme of the entire Bible is that of covenant.

IV. Important truths about the Bible.

A. The next point that I'd like to look at with you is that of inspiration.

1. The Bible is unique because of its inspired character. The term "inspired" is itself biblical (Read: 2 Tm. 3:16).

a) Although the Bible uses the word, it does not explain it.

- b) Basically, inspiration is a supernatural mystery and will never be fully understood.
2. The history of theology is filled with attempts to bring the problem of inspiration into clearer focus.
 3. Inspiration must not be confused with revelation.
 - a) Inspiration refers to the divine origin of the Bible.
 - b) Revelation refers to the self-manifestation of the divine, God making Himself known to us.
 4. When we say that God inspired the Bible, we mean that because the Bible is God's special revelation of Himself to humankind, then, He is the author of it.

-What is in the Bible is of divine origin.

5. When we speak of inspiration, what we mean is:
 - a) The impulse to write what is in the Bible came from God.
 - b) The Bible contains what God wills humankind to know about Him.
 - c) Somehow, the mind and will of the human authors were influenced by God to write, without taking away their own will or ability to write, or to express things in their own way for their time in history.
- In other words, God, the principle author of the Bible, assisted certain chosen people in this process of authorship and so each became an author with God.
- d) And finally, God guided the Jewish people and the early Christians in their choice of what writings were to be included in the final version of the Bible.

6. Catholic doctrine sees inspiration as covering the entire contents of Scripture.

-Inspiration extends not only to the biblical ideas but also to the words, not that God dictated the words to the writer, but that the writer's selection of words was --

-constantly under the directing and driving force of God's inspiration.

7. It is the original text of the Bible that is inspired. Translations of the Bible can be said to be equivalently inspired insofar as they faithfully represent the original text.

B. This brings us to a consideration of 'canonicity' or the 'Canon of the Bible'.

1. An inspired Book is a book written by God through the instrumentality of a human author. It becomes canonical when it is recognized by the Church as inspired, which --

-means it is the Word of God and a source of revealed doctrine.

2. The Roman Catholic Church accepts 46 Books as the canonical Old Testament.

-Most Protestants accept a canon of 39 Books. The Jews have the same canon as the Protestants but a different listing.

3. The Canon of the Old Testament that the Catholic Church accepts can be divided into:

-Protocanonical, and

-Deuterocanonical Books.

- a) There are 39 Protocanonical Books, those Books about which there was never a question as to their canonicity, that

is, their being accepted by the Church as inspired by God and therefore the Word of God.

-These 39 Books of the Old Testament make up the Protestant Canon.

- b) There are 7 Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament, those Books about which there was a question as to their canonicity, that is --

-their being accepted by the Church as inspired by God and therefore the Word of God.

-We speak of them as being canonical in the second place.

-These 7 Deuterocanonical Books are not in the Protestant Bible. They are:

-Judith,

-Tobit,

-Wisdom,

-Sirach (Ecclesiasticus),

-Baruch, and

-1 and 2 Maccabees.

-One way to remember the 7 Deuterocanonical Books is by remembering the acronym: J.T. Web and the 2 McCabes.

4. The reason for this difference between the Catholic and Protestant Bible is that these 7 Deuterocanonical Books were found in some manuscripts of the Bible and not in others. The Catholic Church accepts these 7 Books as canonical giving, therefore, 46 Books as the canonical Old Testament.

- a) The classic explanation for the difference between the Catholic and Protestant Canons is this: By the end of the 1st century A.D. --

-there was in Judaism two canons or lists of sacred

books -- a shorter Palestinian Canon and a longer Alexandrian Canon.

- b) The early Christian Church adopted the Alexandrian Canon, whereas, the Reformers of the 16th C. decided to adopt the Palestinian Canon.

-This resulted in two different canons of the Old Testament: the Catholic and the Protestant Canons.

- 5. For Catholics, it was at the Council of Trent on April 8, 1546, that the Canon of Scripture received its final definition.

-There the Church assumed a clear and definitive position as to which Books were to be included in the Bible: 46 Books in the Old Testament and 27 Books in the New Testament.

- 6. What is the distinction between Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Books for Catholics and Protestants?

- a) The Apocryphal Books:

-For Catholics, these are the non-canonical books.

-For Protestants, these are referred to as deuterocanonical books.

- b) The Pseudepigraphal Books:

-For Catholics, these are referred to as apocryphal books.

-For Protestants, these are the non-canonical books.

- 7. What is the relationship between canonicity and authenticity?

-Canonicity has to do with inspiration whereas authenticity has to do with authorship, with who wrote the book.

C. There are different types of authorship in the Bible:

1. In the biblical sense, a man is an author:
 - a) if he wrote the book himself;
 - b) if he dictated it to a scribe (a secretary);
 - c) if he put forth the ideas but someone else put it together (a ghost writer);
 - d) if the book was written by his disciples in keeping with his words and spirit (for example, the Pentateuch or Second Isaiah);
 - e) if the book was written in the literary style for which he was renowned (this is the widest sense of biblical authorship).
2. The first and second types of biblical authorship are acceptable modern norms of authorship.
 - a) The third type of biblical authorship would be seen today as a collaborator.
 - b) The last two types of biblical authorship are good examples of pseudonymity.
3. And what is pseudonymity?
 - a) Pseudonymity was the practice of attributing a book to someone else, that is, to a person of renown, in order to give the book greater standing and importance.
 - b) The practice of pseudonymity was acceptable in the ancient world.

D. Though the Books of the Bible are inspired, everything in Scripture

is not revelation, that is, not everything in Scripture necessarily centers on God making Himself known to us. Only a small part of the Bible is revelation.

1. For example, in John's Gospel, Jesus tells His apostles about His relationship to the Father, and how He and the Father will send the Spirit.

a) This is revelation: God is making Himself known to us.

b) The apostles would have had no other way of knowing these realities.

2. Much of the Bible is not revelation but consists of facts, details and experiences of the people being written about.

-Still, these facts, details, and experiences are important because they provide the context in which revelation can be understood.

3. Because God is the author of the Bible, we speak of the Bible as God's special word to humankind: God revealing through His inspired word who He is.

E. We'll look now at the truth of Scripture (Inerrancy).

1. The biblical question is: does the Bible contain error or not?

2. The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation states that --

- "The Books of Scripture, firmly, faithfully, and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Scriptures."

a) The Church has consistently taught that the Bible is free from error.

b) "Inerrancy" is a consequence of the Bible's inspired character

which means then that:

-God is the principal author of the Bible;

-God can neither deceive or be deceived; so

-it is unthinkable that His writings would teach error.

3. But inerrancy needs clarification and explanation.

a) Inerrancy is claimed only for the original texts.

b) Scripture is inerrant only where something is being taught.

-The intent of the sacred writer may be to touch hearts, motivate to right action, encourage or console.

-The ancient sacred writers were not nearly so concerned about, nor conscious of accuracy, as we are today.

4. The term "inerrancy" is unfortunate.

a) It is relatively modern -- a 19th century concept.

b) The Fathers of the Church said, "the Bible excludes deception."

c) It would be better to speak of the "truth content" of the Bible rather than to speak of "inerrancy".

F. This brings us to the question of believing what we read in the Bible.

1. No doubt almost everyone has difficulty at one time or another believing certain things they read in the Bible.

- a) Some find it hard to accept, for example, that just because the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho, they came tumbling down. However, It says something far more important than that.
 - b) Some find it hard to believe that Jonah lived in the stomach of the whale for a couple of days.
2. One of the reasons for this difficulty in believing is that some people read the Bible literally. Their approach to the Bible is that of fundamentalism.

- a) They take every word at face value, not considering that words develop new and sometimes contradictory meaning.

What, for example, is the meaning of "fast" when it is used in front of "runner," or in front of "color?"

-Or, what is the meaning of "heavy" when used in front of "chair" or in front of "conversation?"

- b) Others who read the Bible literally look only at the "facts" of the story and do not consider its purpose or meaning.

-Some take the Jonah story, for example, and wonder about the measurements of the whale's throat.

-By the way, check your Bible and see if it says anything about a "whale." And while you are at it, see if it says that Eve ate an apple.

3. Another reason for this difficulty in believing is that some people read the Bible with what is known as proof-mentality.
- a) They want the Bible to prove the story true. In so doing, they miss the whole point of the story: God's providential care for all people.
 - b) Some of the Israelites thought that God was their God only,

that He did not intend to save other people. They had a kind of snobbish idea about their own importance.

-What the story of Jonah points out is that God is the God of all men and women. He is not the God of the Israelites alone.

4. The Bible is a book about God's concern for humankind. And it must be read in that light.
 - a) It is intended to help faith grow; it presumes that those who read it already believe in God.
 - b) The Lord wants those who read the Bible to grow more in their understanding of the God they already believe in.

5. To ask the question, "Why should I believe what I read in the Bible?" is really part of a larger question which is: "Why should I believe anything?"
 - a) Does belief always mean total acceptance of everything that is said or written exactly as it is said or written?

-For example, if a person comes in wet from head to foot, and says, "It's raining cats and dogs out there. I nearly drowned."

-Do you really believe it is raining cats and dogs and not water? Do you really believe that he almost drowned? Do you take him literally?

-Of course not! You know what he is saying, "It's raining very hard." And so he is consciously exaggerating to let you know that it is really pouring outside.

-Now, the fact that you do not believe that it is raining cats and dogs does not mean that you do not believe it is raining hard.

b) Well, the same thing applies to your reading of the Bible. Just because some things you read in the Bible are unbelievable as facts (for example, creation in six days or the snake talking to Eve) does not make the Bible unbelievable.

c) What the sacred writers are trying to express is their experience of God. They did experience Him as saving them, and this is what they ask us to believe.

-How they expressed this experience ought to be accepted as an honest attempt to describe their extraordinary experiences.

d) They often use conscious exaggeration or hyperbole because this was the best way they could impress upon their readers the reality that God acted in their lives.

-For example, let us look again at Judges, chapter 7, verse 2 and see how the writer is showing how God is acting in their lives.

-The Lord said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, 'My own hand has delivered me.'"

e) There is no question that God acted or that the Israelites believe He acted, for that is the way they experienced God in their history.

f) Consider for a moment the New Testament.

-As you know, the writers of the New Testament did not put down factually and in chronological order everything that Jesus said and did.

-That they experienced Jesus as the hoped-for-Messiah is indisputable. How they expressed their experience is open to serious study.

6. The difficulties raised from the natural sciences show:
 - a) that the language of the Bible is unscientific;
 - b) that its conceptions of physical realities are those of its own times;
 - c) that "scientific truth" and "scientific error" are modern conceptions; neither appears in the Bible because the Bible makes no "scientific" assertions of any kind: true or false.

7. The Israelite experience about God as a saving God is a valid insight into what God can be for those who believe in Him.

-The sacred writers invite each of us to read the Bible in this way and to believe in the God they believe in: the saving God described in the Bible.

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| COMMUNITY BREAK | 15 MINS. |
|-----------------|----------|

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY | 45 MINS. |
|---------------------|----------|

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 20. You are to write out your responses to the following questions and be prepared to share them in your small group.

1. What do we learn from Judges 6:1-16 and 7:1-9 about how God works to save His people?

2. John, whom you are evangelizing, says to you, "I don't see any reason to read the Old Testament. Since Jesus came that's all done away with." What do you say to John?

3. You work with Tammie who has been turned off on Christianity. You are establishing a relationship with her and beginning to proclaim the Good News. She says, "How can you believe that Bible? Who's Bible is right? There's a Catholic Bible and a Protestant Bible. Which one is the true

Bible?" Give her your answer.

-Then you are to do number 4 which states:

4. Write out KEY REFERENCES for Session Three.

-I will share with you now some sample responses to these reflection questions.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You now have 40 minutes to do this Study Guide. Please gauge your time well.

COMMUNITY LUNCH

70 MINS.

1. ASK one of the trainees to pray a blessing over the lunch.
2. GIVE time for all to get their lunch and to be seated.
3. STATE the following:

During this lunchtime we want to give each of you the opportunity to share. The question we will share on is:

-Since taking this evangelization training, how is your life different?

Please keep your sharing on the question and be brief so that everyone has a chance to share. Thank you. We will take our turn as we go around the circle.

4. STATE a positive reinforcement after all have shared: "Thank you very much for your sharing. The Lord is doing a good work in all of our lives."
5. ASK all to help clean up after lunch so that everyone will be ready for Session Three.

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION THREE

THE LANGUAGES OF THE BIBLE AND LITERARY FORM

OBJECTIVE

To come to an understanding of how the Bible was written, the translations used, and the different types of literary forms used in the Bible.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 40.
3. The instructor needs to determine, during preparation time, which key references/ passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a scripture reference, during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.
5. Assist small group leaders with any problems concerning the trainees that may arise.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 185 Minutes

OPENING PRAYER

10 MINS.

1. ASK group to stand.
 2. TRAINER prays opening prayer.
 3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
 4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.
-

SHARING GROUPS

30 MINS.

1. STATE the following:

- a) At this time, I invite you to move into your small groups.
- b) You will be sharing your responses to the reflections given in SH page 20.
- c) Your small group leader will begin and end the small group sharing with prayer.
- d) Your small group leader will begin the sharing on each reflective question in order to model how to share and the length of the sharing.
- e) Each person is to share what (s)he has prepared for the first reflection question for Session Two; then move on to the second reflection question and do the same, etc.
- f) If you have not written anything down, then you may not share. Sharing from what you have written is to help avoid rambling on. Please be brief and to the point and considerate of those who have yet to share.
- g) You have 30 minutes now for this sharing. Please gauge your time well.

2. CALL group back at the end of 30 minutes.

BEGIN SESSION THREE

- 1. ASK group to turn to SH page 21.
- 2. STATE session objective:

This session is concerned with providing an understanding of how the Bible was written, the translations used, and the different types of literary forms used in the Bible.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

65 MINS.

- 1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:
 - I. The name of the Bible.

- II. The languages in which the Bible was written and the material it was written on.
- III. The manuscripts of the Bible.
- IV. The literary forms in the Bible.
- V. The kind of history that we find in the Bible.
- VI. Where the truth of the Bible lies.

2. TEACH expanded outline of the above key points:

I. The name of the Bible.

- A. The title of the Bible comes from the Greek word 'biblos' meaning 'book.'

-Originally 'biblos' meant 'papyrus,' which was the material on which the ancients wrote their letters, important documents, and history. Later on, 'biblos' came to mean 'the book' itself.

- B. Eventually, the sacred writings were referred to as 'ta biblia,' which is the Greek neuter plural for 'the books' meaning the books of divine revelation.

-Our word 'Bible' comes from this Greek word 'biblia' through the Latin and means 'the book.'

-The Greek is actually more precise than our word 'bible' because the Bible is a library of books rather than a single work.

II. The languages in which the Bible was written and the material it was written on.

- A. Sometimes the number of Old Testament Books is listed as 45 rather than 46. There are one of two reasons for this:

- 1. In the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, the Book of Lamentations was attached to the Book of Jeremiah; or

2. Originally, the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah was one book, first divided into two by Origen (254 A.D.), and included in the Latin Vulgate and the Hebrew Bible in the year 1448 as two books.

B. The total number of books in the Bible is 73: 46 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

C. The original languages of the Old and New Testament.

1. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew except for parts of Maccabees, Wisdom, and Daniel which were written in Greek.

-Parts of Jeremiah, Ezra, and Daniel were written in Aramaic.

2. The New Testament was written in Greek, 'Koine' Greek, that is, 'common Greek,' the language of the people.

D. A description of the original languages.

1. Hebrew is the language of the great majority of the Old Testament Books. It is a Western Semitic dialect.

-The Hebrew grammar provided a difficulty in the transmission of the text of Scripture in that there are 22 consonants, no vowels, and hardly any verb tenses, and has a deficiency in abstract nouns.

2. Aramaic is closely related to the Hebrew (like Spanish is to Italian). It provides the same grammar difficulties as the Hebrew.

a) Aramaic was spoken toward the end of 2000 B.C. by semi-nomadic peoples who settled around the Syrian desert and in the regions extending from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea.

b) Aramaic began to displace Hebrew, as the language of the Jewish people, around the time of the Babylonian

Exile after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

- c) From about 400 B.C. on, Aramaic gradually became the common language of Palestine. It was the language in use at the time of Jesus.
 - d) In the last centuries B.C., there developed the practice of putting Hebrew Old Testament texts orally into Aramaic during the course of the public reading of the Law and the Prophets in the synagogue liturgy.
 - e) This practice arose because of the decline of Hebrew as the spoken language of the Jews, not merely in Babylonia, where many of the Jews remained, but in Palestine itself.
3. Some of the deuterocanonical books came down to us only in the Greek.
- a) Greek is an Indo-European tongue with many features more like our modern languages and thought patterns.
 - b) It became the common language of the Mediterranean basin after the time of Alexander the Great. This was so at the time of Jesus.

E. What materials were used in writing the Bible?

1. The writers used ink on papyrus. However, some of the writings may have been written on parchment.

-The materials were very fragile and, as a result, many of the original manuscripts did not survive.
2. The Bible was more than likely written in the 'scroll' form. The 'book' form, as we know it today, did not come into being until much later.
3. In the very early original manuscripts, there was no punctuation. In the Greek, there were not even word separations. Dividing

of the Bible into chapters and verses came much later.

- a) The Hebrew Bible was divided for reading in the synagogue some time before the time of Jesus.
- b) Modern division and numbering of chapters generally is attributed to a Paris professor by the name of Stephen Langton (+1228).
- c) Modern numbering of the verses in the Old Testament was done by a Dominican priest called Sanctes Pagnini.
- d) Modern numbering of verses in the New Testament was done by Robert Etienne when he printed his edition of the Bible in 1555.

-When Etienne printed his edition of the Bible, he adopted Pagnini's Old Testament numbering of the verses.

III. The manuscripts of the Bible.

A. The transmission of the text.

- 1. The autographs (the original texts) have all been lost. The primary reason for their being lost was due to the material being so fragile.
 - a) It was due as well to the Jewish custom of destroying worn out copies of the Scripture out of reverence for it.
 - b) Also, great stress was placed on the oral transmission of the Scriptures.
- 2. Scribes, professional copyists, who were usually educated slaves, copied the Scriptures. They made countless copies by hand, which were usually made from one main source.

- a) They took great care in making these copies but human error often crept in.
- b) Irregularities gradually crept in as well. This was due to a number of reasons:

-glosses: words of explanation or translation inserted between the lines of a text; or a note of comment or explanation accompanying a text in the margin.

-interpolations: altering or enlarging or corrupting a manuscript by putting in new words.

-corruptions: alterations in the text or errors.

- c) The irregularities resulted from the work of the copyists. They were done either unconsciously, resulting in:

-haplography: that is, omitted syllables;

-dittography: that is, repeated syllables;

-confusion; or

-false division.

Or, they were done consciously, that is, copyists changed the text for the purpose of improvement and harmonization to make the text flow better.

B. The history of the text of the Hebrew Old Testament.

1. The early history of the Hebrew text is known only imperfectly.

- a) The Hebrew text tradition of the Old Testament rests upon some hundreds of Manuscripts (MSS), all of which are very similar to one another.

- b) The Bible was formed gradually over a period of some 1000 years or more.
- c) Eventually, the various Books were canonized as the Sacred Scriptures:

- The Books of the Law were canonized as Sacred Scripture around 400 B.C.

- The Books of the Prophets about 200 B.C.

- The last of the Writings not till 90 A.D.

- 2. Before the canonization of the Sacred Scriptures, the Sacred Books were held in veneration as sacred literature.

- But, the scribes and owners felt free to make annotations (explanatory notes) and changes in the text.

- 3. The substantial accuracy of the text of the Scriptures that we now have, can be taken as morally certain (that is, based on strong probability) because of --

- the great reverence shown the Sacred Scriptures; and

- wherever the manuscript tradition can be examined, there is evidence of a substantially accurate transmission.

- 4. The standardization of the text began to occur around the end of the first century A.D.

- a) A standardized text, called the Massoretic Text, was produced by Jewish scholars known as Massoretes (Hebrew for traditionalists) between A.D. 600 and 900.

- b) The Massoretes pointed the text, that is, they added vowel

sounds which showed how the words were to be understood and pronounced.

5. Since the 9th century, the manuscripts (MSS) of the Hebrew Bible manifest practically no variation.

C. The translations of the Bible.

1. We will look first at the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

- a) The Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek at Alexandria from the third to the first centuries B.C. and was called the Septuagint.

- b) The name Septuagint means seventy and comes from the following legend.

-Ptolemy II Philadelphos, King of Egypt (282-246 B.C.) wanted the sacred books of the Jews in the library of Alexandria.

-He requested that the High Priest in Jerusalem send manuscripts and men to translate them into Greek.

-The High Priest sent 72 men, 6 from each tribe who translated the sacred writings in 72 days.

- c) The truth of the legend is that after 130 B.C. there was a Greek translation of the law, the prophets, and the other writings (See: Prologue of Sirach).

- d) The Septuagint (LXX) was used by the Jews of the Diaspora into the 1st century A.D. The Christians used it when they preached the Good News to the Hellenistic (Greek) world.

-Jews of the Diaspora refers to those Jews who settled outside Palestine during the last century B.C. and the 1st

century A.D.

-But the Diaspora actually began with the deportation of Jews by the Assyrian and Babylonian kings in the 8th, 7th, and 6th centuries B.C.

2. The Hebrew Bible: the uniformity of the hundreds of Old Testament manuscripts (MSS) is due to the work of rabbis called Massoretes, as we mentioned before. So, the Hebrew text is called the Massoretic Text or MT.
3. The Latin Version of the Bible: the Vulgate, was done by St. Jerome in the 4th century. The Council of Trent, which took place from 1545-1563, chose the Vulgate as the authentic Latin translation of the Bible.
4. The English Bible: there are a number we will look at.
 - a) The Douay-Rheims Version: the English translation of the Vulgate. Only with the encyclical, Divino Afflante Spiritu of Pope Pius XII, 1943, were vernacular translations from the original languages officially encouraged.
 - b) The Revised Standard Version: is an American work translated from the original languages in the King James tradition. It is the most faithful translation from the original languages.
 - c) The New American Bible: translated from the original languages with critical use of all the ancient sources.
 - d) The Jerusalem Bible: excellent in French because translated from the original languages into French.
 - e) The New Jerusalem Bible: translated from the original languages into English.
 - f) The Good News for Modern Man: contemporary translation of the Bible from the original languages. Attempts to adhere closely to the original languages but words and forms of English not in current use have been avoided.

IV. The literary forms in the Bible.

A. Part of understanding a written message is in seeing the form that it is in and knowing the purpose of that form, because form affects the message, the words, and the meaning of the message.

1. Biblical literary forms have only been studied since about 1900. This study began in Germany and is called: Formgeschichte meaning Form Criticism.
2. Criticism here does not mean 'fault-finding' but rather it is the scientific investigation of the Bible as a literary document in regard to such matters as: origin, text, composition, history, etc.
3. The purpose of Old Testament criticism is to discover the literal sense of the biblical texts. This is done in order --
 - a) To understand the inspired writers as their contemporaries did; and
 - b) To use this historical understanding to clarify the religious ideas that lie at the heart of their writings.
4. It is important to keep in mind that biblical criticism must be based on a firm commitment of faith, and it must be aided by the techniques of modern research, for example --

-archeology, language studies, history, philosophy, geography, geology and the other natural sciences.

B. All literary composition is written in certain forms, for example: the novel, the poem, history, etc.

1. A literary form is a certain general and artistic style of expressing the author's thoughts.

-It reflects the soul of a given period and of a given environment, with all of its language, literary accomplishments, beliefs, trials,

hopes, and institutions.

2. Some of the general biblical literary forms are: the epic, song, legal documents, parables, letters, prophecy, poetry, myths, and fiction.

C. The Epic and the Song.

1. The Epic.

A very clear example of the same event being told in two different literary forms is the event of the Israelites passing through the Red Sea which is given to us in Exodus, chapters 14 and 15.

- a) Chapter 14 definitely has the tone of an epic: a narrative poem recounting the deeds of an historical hero. In this case, the hero is God (Read: Exodus 14:8, 13f, 24f, and 28-30).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Ex. 14:13f;

-Ex. 14:24f;

-Ex. 14:28-30.

- b) The message of the epic is summed up in verse 30. This event was a particular proof of God's special concern for Israel, and, therefore --

-it was recalled throughout the history of Israel, and used as an assurance of God's future action in delivering His people.

- c) Many commentators believe that this account was read during the Passover Liturgy as a glorification of God.

2. The Song.

Chapter 15 is the very earliest song of victory commemorating this stupendous event. It is the Song of Moses, sometimes called the Song of Miriam.

- a) This is one of the oldest Hebrew pieces of poetry in the Bible. Historians set the date in the 13th century B.C.

-The Song of Deborah, Judges 5, is the other oldest hymn that we have.

- b) By their deliverance through the crossing of the Red Sea, God proved His dominion over all gods (Ex. 15:11), and showed Himself the singular Savior of Israel (Ex. 15:2).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Ex. 15:11;

-Ex. 15:2.

- 3. We have looked at two literary forms that are in the Bible: the epic, as given in Exodus 14, and the song, as seen in Exodus 15 and Judges 5.

D. A couple of other epics that we might refer you to are the stories of Samson (Judges 13-16); and a really marvelous one that shows great conscious exaggeration is the Battle of Jericho in Joshua, chapter 5, verse 13 to chapter 6, verse 26.

- 1. The message in these is that the Lord did wonders to establish His people as a nation, and that to do this He worked through these heroes, men like Samson and Joshua.
- 2. It shows the heroic stature of Joshua as he cooperated with God's action that alone saved the chosen people.

E. Other songs or poems.

- 1. The Song of Deborah in Judges 5.

2. The Psalms are basically songs which are meant to be sung.

a) Within them there are other literary types such as psalms:

-of praise;

-of lament or supplication, in which there is the following pattern:

-the address to God;

-the narration of need;

-the plea for help;

-confidence in God; and the

-promise to offer praise.

-There are also psalms:

-of thanksgiving;

-of royalty which commemorate an event in the life of the king;

-of wisdom: characteristics of wisdom literature: good practical advice as found in the Book of Proverbs;

-of liturgy: these reflect choral recitation, a temple service;

-of history, for example: Psalms 78, 105, 106.

b) Psalms 22 and 51 are the most famous psalms of supplication.

c) The greatest of the songs/poems in the Bible is the Song of Solomon.

- d) For a greater understanding of the Psalms, you can read more on them in the Jerome Biblical Commentary or McKenzie's Dictionary of the Bible.

F. Legal Documents.

1. The Law of the Covenant is a good example. You can see that in Exodus, chapters 20-31; the commands of the Law are very detailed and exact.
2. The whole Book of Leviticus is a precise document about the ordinances and statutes of the Law that came out of the Priestly Tradition: the Levites.

G. Politics.

We also find examples of political intrigue in the Bible. A very good example of this is the speech of Jotham in Judges, chapter 9. This political speech has another literary form within it, the parable.

H. Parable.

1. The parables that are best known to us are the parables of Jesus in the Gospels.
2. A parable is like an envelope with a message inside. What is important in reflecting on a parable is to first grasp the story.

-If you first do that then the message is going to come through that envelope much more clearly.

3. A parable is really a story of a human situation used to convey a religious message or truth.

I. Letters.

1. Another literary form that we do not even think of as being in the Scriptures, because we are so familiar with it, is the letter: those

of Paul, John, Peter, James, and Jude.

2. The form of the Hellenistic Letter was as follows:
 - a) the opening: writer and addressee named; greeting;
 - b) the thanksgiving: Paul usually puts in an allusion to the content of the letter;
 - c) the body of the letter: the main business of the letter;
 - d) the parenesis: which is the exhortation or moral homily given within the body of the letter; and finally,
 - e) the closing: a blessing and sign-off.

J. Prophecy.

1. Prophecy is scattered throughout the Bible but it is especially concentrated in the Books of the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.
2. We are going to consider the prophets in greater detail later, so for now, we will look only at the meaning of the word.
 - a) The word "prophet" comes from the Greek "prophetes" meaning "one who speaks in the place of another."
 - b) The Hebrew for the word "prophet" is "nabi". The Hebrew sense of the word is "one who is called".
 - c) We understand a prophet, then, as one who speaks for God and not a "fortune-teller" or "crystal-ball gazer".
3. The tradition of the prophets goes all the way back to Moses. Moses spoke for God.

4. The prophets played a very important role in the history of the Jewish people because what they did was interpret the historical events of their nation religiously.
 - a) That is, if a battle was won or lost, it was always seen from the viewpoint of what God was doing; how He was dealing with them.
 - b) He dealt with them in terms of how well they were keeping the Covenant He had made with them on Mount Sinai:

-"I will be your God only do not have
strange gods before Me."

- c) The role of the prophets was to call the people back to fidelity to the Covenant.

K. Prayer.

Prayer is another literary form that is found throughout the Bible.

1. A powerful example of how to pray is given in 1 Kings, chapter 3, verses 3-9, followed by the response of the Lord to that prayer in verses 10-14 (Read).
2. Another example is that of the prophet Jeremiah in the Book of Jeremiah, chapter 32, verses 17-27.

L. Myths.

1. A myth presents a symbol that gives an insight into a reality that is beyond understanding. A myth, then, is a narrative, a story that is not intended to be historical fact.
 - a) Its purpose is to express a truth that is not within our power to grasp.
 - b) The best examples of this are:

-the Creation accounts found in Genesis, chapters 1 and 2;

-the story of the Fall given in Genesis, chapter 3;

-and the story of the flood, Noah and the Ark given in Genesis, chapters 6 and 9.

2. When we begin to get some grasp of the message of the Scriptures, that God is the only God who saves us, who loves us, who is Lord, then --

-we can see why the inspired writers wrote the Creation accounts the way that they did. I say 'they' because there are a couple of traditions involved here.

-And we will be looking at these traditions later.

-This God, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the same God who made everything, and He made it good. That is the truth expressed in the Creation accounts.

M. Fiction.

1. The classic example here is the Book of Jonah. Does that mean that the Book should not be in the Bible?
 - a) Not at all! What it means is that we do not waste time wondering what kind of fish would have been big enough to swallow Jonah, or how he managed to breathe down there.
 - b) What we look at is the truth of faith that is underneath all those words. It is like a parable. We need to get the story and then the message will come through.
2. Biblical scholars classify the Book of Jonah as didactic fiction, that is, for the purpose of teaching some truth. Some call it a parable.

However, there is much more detail in it than in a parable.

- a) Jonah is didactic fiction, written with a profound theological purpose sometime between 400 and 200 B.C.

-During this time, the Israelites were tempted to hope more for the destruction of their enemies than for their salvation. And so the author is writing for the purpose of showing them that the mercy of the Lord extends to all peoples.

- b) This Book was written after the Exile of the Israelites into Babylon which took place in 587 B.C. Israel is rather narrow minded at this time.

- c) The story is divided into two parts by the prophet's two missions:

-In the first part, Jonah receives God's mercy.

-In the second part, he begrudges that mercy to others.

-Does that remind you of any New Testament parable?
(See: Matthew 18:23-35; or Luke 15:11-32, the Parable of the Prodigal Son)

V. The kind of history that we find in the Bible.

What kind of history do we find in the Old Testament? A number of different forms of history are found here.

A. Pure History.

Pure History is a factual account of actual events in time.

1. One example of pure history is 1 and 2 Chronicles. These two Books cover the history of the 12 tribes of Israel, especially the history of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

2. 1 Chronicles, chapters 1-9 gives us solid genealogy; Chapter 10 begins the reign of David, as King, and takes it all the way to the end of this first Book of Chronicles where we are told that David dies and Solomon, his son, reigns in his stead.
3. 2 Chronicles begins with the reign of David's son, Solomon, covers the reign of each of the kings of Judah and Israel, and ends with the Fall of Judah, and their exile into Babylon, that is, the Babylonian Captivity in 587 B.C.

B. Glorified History.

Glorified History is basically pure history in that it is based upon things that actually happened, but it is written in such a way as to give special honor to, or glorify a person or an event.

-An example of this is 1 Kings, chapter 4, verses 29-31 which speaks of Solomon's wisdom; chapter 5 describes his wealth. Chapter 10 does the same thing with the Queen of Sheba coming to give honor to the great King Solomon.

C. Imaginative History.

Imaginative history is the kind of history we are familiar with in the form of the historical novel.

1. The author imagines the details and the environment that surrounds an historical event. There is no pretence that it is at all true.

-The author simply takes an event or an experience and builds a story to fit that experience, creating the characters, the conversation, and the happenings.

2. Under this category of history, we can put the stories about the origins of the Jewish people that we find in the history of the patriarchs in the Book of Genesis: the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

-All of this is based on oral accounts that were passed down for

centuries by word of mouth.

3. Another example of imaginative history might be the Creation accounts.
 - a) The purpose of the writer here is to show that the God of the Hebrews is the one good Creator of the world, who selected the Hebrews to be the means by which He would reveal Himself to the world.
 - b) When Abraham was living, there were many stories floating around about other gods; greater and lesser gods; about humankind originating from the evil gods; and --

-about there being a god of evil who caused the existence of evil in the world.

- d) What the Jewish traditions did was to "correct" these other ancient stories and bring the Jewish people --

-to believe in the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob;

-to believe that their God was the true God, strong, powerful, all-wise, all-creative, and above all, a loving, saving God.

-This was something new for the people because the other gods were not that way at all.

-We will say more about this later.

D. Religious History.

Religious history is the best way to describe the kind of history that the Bible is.

1. The purpose of religious history is to show God's presence in

the events taking place in the lives of the people of Israel, to show that God is acting; that He acted then; that He is acting now; and that He will act in the future to save His people.

2. This is the overriding personal application that we receive from the Bible: that God is working in my life to save me; He is working in the Church; He is working in the world. To believe that is to have faith!
3. From this, we can internalize two points about how God acts in history and in our lives:
 - a) God is intent on saving us in the ordinary history of our lives.
 - b) Therefore, God ordinarily lets events take their natural course. He does not usually act in extraordinary ways to save us.
 - c) God told the Israelites, "if you keep my covenant, I will make of you a mighty nation." What happened? They kept going after other gods and they fell as a nation.

-So the point is, that if we do not turn to God, He is not going to jump in and save our necks.

VI. Where the truth of the Bible lies.

- A. In view of everything that we have said about literary forms, about what affects the message that the sacred writers are giving --

-the audience they are writing to,

-the culture out of which the writers and audience come

-and the fact that the Bible is basically religious history,

we realize that we cannot judge the truth of the Bible by using or applying the standards of modern scientific research or modern historical research.

B. But, as we have said before, in order to understand the Bible, we have to go beyond the words to the underlying truth of faith that the sacred writers are trying to bring out.

1. The Bible, like any book, is written in the language of the people of that time.

a) Just one final example of this: today, we are very exact in recording the age of a person. If there are any doubts, we have to produce a birth certificate.

-And the only meaning that we give to a long or short life-span is that the person was very healthy or not so healthy. And we also have an expression that "the good die young".

b) That is not the way it was with the Israelites. Old age was a sign of God's favor and blessing. So to give 969 years to Methuselah (Genesis 5:21-27) is a way of saying symbolically that --

-he was a man pleasing to God, and it tells us of the esteem and the respect that the people had for him.

2. The truth of the Bible, then, does not lie in language or in literary form.

a) Biblical truth lies in the intention of the writer.

b) The sacred writers were inspired by God to write, to bring out in the way that they best knew how, that particular message of faith: of how God deals with humankind.

COMMUNITY BREAK 10 MINS.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY 35 MINS.

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 34 and we will go over the Study Guide.

-You are to write out your responses to the following reflections and be prepared to share them in your small group.

1. You are proclaiming the Good News to Joe and using your Bible to read John 3:16 to him. He interrupts and says, "How come we have different versions of the Bible?" Explain the translations of the Bible to him.
2. Your neighbor stops in and sees your Bible. She says, "You have to be careful reading that. I heard just the other day that a lot of what we believe in the Bible is just myth." Explain to her about literary form and myth in the Bible.

-I will share with you now some sample responses to these reflection questions.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You now have 30 minutes to do this Study Guide. Please gauge your time well.

SHARING GROUPS

30 MINS.

1. STATE the following:

- a) I invite you now to move into your small groups.
- b) You will be sharing your responses to the reflective sharing questions on SH page 34.
- c) Your small group leader will begin and end the small group sharing with prayer.
- d) Your small group leader will begin the sharing on each reflection in order to model how to share and the length of the sharing.
- e) Each person is to share what (s)he has prepared for the first reflection for Session Three; then move on to the second reflection and do the same.

- f) If you have not written anything down, then you may not share. Sharing from what you have written is to help avoid rambling on. Please be brief and to the point and considerate of those who have yet to share.

- g) You have 25 minutes now for this sharing. Please gauge your time well.

2. CALL group back at the end of 25 minutes.

CLOSING PRAYER

5 MINS.

- 1. ASK group to turn to SH page 126 and stand.
- 2. SIGNAL music and prayer leaders forward.
- 3. DISMISS group once prayer time is finished.

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION FOUR

THE GROWTH OF THE BIBLE

OBJECTIVES

To come to an understanding of how the Bible came into being;

To give a brief literary analysis of the Pentateuch.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 64.
3. The instructor needs to determine, during preparation time, which key references/ passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a scripture reference, during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. Make professional copies of "Illustration of the Traditions in Book of Genesis" for each trainee (See: Appendix, p. 187).
5. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 190 Minutes

OPENING PRAYER

10 MINS.

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 127 and stand.
 2. SIGNAL for music and prayer leaders to begin.
 3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
 4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.
-

BEGIN SESSION FOUR

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 35.
2. STATE session objectives:

In this session an understanding of how the Bible came into being will be given and a brief literary analysis of the Pentateuch will be done.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

90 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:

- I. The Bible came into being gradually in three stages.
- II. What materials were finally included in the Bible?
- III. A literary analysis of the Pentateuch.
- IV. The four traditions of the Pentateuch.

2. TEACH expanded outline of above key points:

I. The Bible came into being gradually in three stages.

- A. If you recall, we defined the Bible as: a partial account of the history of the people of Israel, interpreted in terms of their relationship to God, which brings out their belief that --

-God was directing their history, that He is a saving God, always faithful to a faithless people.

1. The Bible did not always exist in the form that we have today.

-It came into being gradually as a result of the religious experiences had by the people of Israel and it manifests their gradual understanding of the relationship they had with this God in whom they believed.

2. We will look more closely at this understanding of the Bible by breaking it down into two developmental parts.

- a) First, the Bible came into being gradually. And we will look at this first developmental part now.
- b) Secondly, as a result of the religious experiences had by the people of Israel, the Bible manifests their gradual understanding of the relationship they had with this God in whom they believed.

-This second developmental part, we will look at in Session

Five: the Religious Experience of God.

B. The Bible came into being gradually.

-As we have it now, the Bible is a compilation of various materials. It is the edited collection of both oral and written sources which describe, in part, the religious experiences of the Jewish people during a particular period of their history.

C. First, there was oral tradition.

1. Long before anything got written down in a systematic way, the Hebrews told their religious experiences in:

-stories;

-sang songs about them;

-recited poetry about these experiences; or

-gave accounts of events in which God acted as they remembered them.

-It is important to remember that they had highly developed memories, and so they handed down faithfully and in detail, innumerable historical facts that would have been lost over the centuries.

2. The more important stories, poems, songs, or accounts were memorized and told as part of special celebrations whenever they gathered for such occasions.

D. Then there was written tradition.

1. Some of these stories, poems, songs, or accounts got written down. There were only a few copies because most people could not read, and most writing was slow and cumbersome.

2. So what is happening side-by-side is people retelling stories, reciting poems, singing songs, giving accounts, and passing on

a few written copies of these same stories, poems, songs, and accounts.

-So what we have are oral accounts and written accounts of the same events going on at the same time.

E. Then there was editing.

1. Several oral and a few written accounts exist in different parts of the country, each differing somewhat in detail.

-This shouldn't surprise us because we ourselves have the same thing happening with our newspapers. In two newspapers, the same event is written up differently, differing in detail.

2. And so it was for this reason that editing had to take place, to bring the various accounts into some kind of unity, so that the Jewish People would have ONE major source for their religious literature.

3. Editing was the process of bringing together all written accounts of their religious experiences that were available, as well as the oral accounts that were in circulation, and --

-then, to determine which would be put together in a final form such as we have it today.

F. We can say, then, that the contents of the Bible developed in three stages:

1. Oral Accounts: Many of these oral accounts go back beyond the time of Moses (about 1285 B.C.), for which we have no source except the stories handed down by word of mouth.
 - a) Almost all of the material in Genesis comes from these Oral Accounts.
 - b) The materials in the Bible which are based on these Oral

Accounts are referred to as "the Oral Traditions," and by that we mean: they are reliable in subject and message but not in wording and detail.

2. Written Accounts: Some materials that we have in the Bible are accounts of an experience or an event, written as accurately as could possibly be done under the circumstances.
 - a) Some were written to fill a specific need of the Jewish community, like the Psalms.
 - b) The Psalms were probably first used in liturgical situations and were composed to fit into the theme of a celebration. Only later were they included in the Bible.
3. Editing: The third stage of development was the inclusion of these materials in a body of special or sacred literature that was finally to be known as the Bible.

-From this last stage has come the contents of the Bible as we now have it.

G. These three stages of development: the oral, written, and editing stages, were not three separate and successive steps, one starting after the others had stopped.

1. It is true that the original oral accounts came first, and the final editing and selecting came last, but for a long time all three stages went on together.
2. A good example of this biblical process is the Gospel of Matthew.
 - a) The version we now have is a translation of the Gospel of Matthew that was probably put together around 85 A.D. This is the edited version.
 - b) Before this final version was put together, there seems to have been several collections of "the Sayings of Jesus," attributed to Matthew, circulating among the Christian

communities in Asia Minor.

-These were the written accounts, some written by Matthew, and some remembered accounts of what Matthew had said about Jesus.

- c) Before any of these written accounts were made, Matthew had preached about Jesus (oral accounts), told what He had said and done, and tried to convince his listeners that Jesus was the Messiah.

-This is the oral tradition on which most of Matthew's Gospel depends.

II. What materials were finally included in the Bible?

- A. It is good to remember, when discussing how the Bible came to be, that none of the books were originally thought of as belonging in the Bible. None of the material was consciously spoken or written for later ages.

- B. The Old Testament centers around the Covenant God made with the Hebrews that formed them into a religious nation.

-The material selected for inclusion in the Old Testament was that which best reflected the character of the Jewish People as a whole, that is, their sacred and promised relationship with the God they worshipped.

- C. The first materials to be included in the Old Testament were the traditions of the origin of the nation: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Genesis.

1. These first five Books of the Old Testament are referred to by different names:

- "the five Books of Moses",

- the Pentateuch from the Greek "pentateuchos" meaning "five scrolls",

-the Torah which, in Hebrew, means "Law" or better still, "way of life".

2. It is around these five Books, the Torah, that Jewish life is built. The Torah is its source, its inspiration, and its explanation. That is why the Torah is so sacred to the Jewish People.

D. The second group of materials that finally came to be included in the Jewish Bible was the Prophets. The Prophetic Writings in the Scriptures are divided into three major groups:

-the Former Prophets,

-the Major Prophets, and

-the Minor Prophets.

1. The Former Prophets: found in material contained in the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

- a) Joshua: was the successor to Moses. And the Book deals with his relationship to Moses and what he did to help the people realize their goal of possessing the land they considered theirs from God.
- b) Judges: presents the adventures of various important leaders of the Israelites (12 of them). The Israelites believed that these Judges were sent by God to save them from their enemies and preserve them as a nation.

-The word "judges" refers to the great military and civic leaders who led the Israelites in times of great national emergency between --

-the death of Joshua and the beginnings of the monarchy under Saul, who was the first Israelite King.

2. The Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

-They are called major because of their length and their importance in the history of Israel and because of the force of their message and their influence upon the development of Israel as a religious people.

3. The Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

-They are called minor because their writings are shorter, and not because they had less influence upon later generations of Jewish People than did the Major Prophets.

E. The third group of materials that found its way into the official version of the Jewish Scriptures is what is referred to as the Writings, that is, all the material not included in the Pentateuch and the Prophets. Let's look at p. 120 in your Handbook (p. 173 in Leader's Handbook).

F. The important thing to remember, with all of these materials, is that they were a part of the oral and written traditions of the Israelites, long before they were finally included in the official version of Jewish sacred literature.

G. The same is true of the New Testament.

1. Like the Old Testament, the New Testament contains only that material which best fulfills its purpose.
2. The New Testament centers around the meaning of Jesus for humankind.
 - a) First, we have the oral traditions, the preaching of the Apostles.
 - b) Then, the writings, the Gospels.
 - c) And thirdly, the material by the Christian Prophets: the Letters or Epistles to the --

-various Christian groups reminding them to be faithful to their acceptance of Jesus as Lord and

Savior and to His vision of life.

- H. Having looked at how the Bible came to be, we should all have a better appreciation of the fact that the Bible was not a planned book, but rather, it developed over many, many centuries.

III. A literary analysis of the Pentateuch.

- A. What we want to do now is look briefly at a literary analysis of the Pentateuch. First, an example to show why literary criticism is needed.
1. In the temptation story of Genesis, the sacred writer states that when Adam and Eve "heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day", they hid themselves among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8).
 - a) We quite naturally ask: Did God really take human form and walk in the garden as a man walks? If He didn't, then what value do we place upon this statement of the inspired writer?
 - b) How, in other words, are we to determine the precise meaning of these words according to the mind of the inspired writer?
 2. To determine the author's judgment when he wrote those words, and to avoid putting a meaning on his words that was not in his mind and intention, is very important if we are to correctly understand the text.
- B. Literary Analysis or Criticism of Biblical Books is the investigation of a Book in order to determine exactly what the author had in mind when he wrote, and what value is to be placed on his statements.
1. Literary Analysis or Higher Criticism, then, is concerned with the meaning of the words. It deals, therefore, with the questions of: date, authorship, literary form, and historical and psychological background.
 - a) When this has been done, the correct interpretation of the

mind of the author and the words used, becomes relatively simple.

- b) A person knows when to understand the words non-figuratively and when to understand them figuratively; and when the writer is speaking as a poet, a teacher, or as an historian.

2. Textual or Lower Criticism attempts to give us the exact words of the original sacred author.

- a) Before the author's meaning can be determined, his exact words must be had.

- b) It is easy to understand how, over the course of time, mistakes were made in the Bible by copyists.

-The scribes were professional copyists who were highly educated men. They made countless copies by hand, often from one chief source, and so human errors crept in.

- c) The fruit of the application of textual criticism is called a recension.

-A recension is the text that emerges when an expert in textual criticism applies his art -- when he comes up with the text he judges to be nearest to the authentic one.

C. Now you can appreciate better what goes into a translation of the Bible. A number of disciplines of study are at work.

D. I'm sure that in reading Genesis, each of you has been puzzled to find in it two different accounts of some stories. You've probably asked yourself whether these events actually took place twice?

-Or, possibly, you've wondered whether we have two different accounts of the same events? The answers to these questions are given us by literary analysis or higher criticism.

1. For example, in Genesis, we find two different accounts of the creation of the world: Genesis, chapter 1, verses 1 to chapter 2, verse 4a and Genesis, chapter 2, verses 4b-25.

- a) To better understand the Creation accounts, we shall compare both accounts: the first was written by the Priestly School and the second by the Yahwist School.

PRIESTLY SCHOOL

(Gn. 1:1-2:4a)

-God's Name: Elohim (God).

-Describes simply the creation of heaven and earth.

-Starts with a wet chaos.

-Man is the last work of creation.

-Male and female He created them.

-Stresses the present goodness of this world.

-Common Semitic cosmology: with the Semitic mentality of their day, the sacred writers present the world as beautiful, without mar, immaculate and orderly; God has created this world in an orderly manner.

-The Priestly account was written in Babylon where the water was always a threat.

YAHWIST SCHOOL

(Gn. 2:4b-25)

-Yahweh Elohim (the Lord God);
New Testament name for God:
Our Father.

-Supposes that Yahweh has already created the heavens and the earth (Gn. 2:4b).

-Starts with a dry chaos.

-Man is the first work before the animals and before Eve.

-Eve created out of man and given her name.

-Stresses the original goodness of the world.

-The Yahwist account was written in Palestine where dryness was the hostile element--the absence of water.

- b) There was no general paradise tradition known in the East. Israel created this form.
 - c) Genesis 2 is not interested in telling how present things came to be but wants to set the stage for Genesis 3, the Fall.
2. You may have noticed in your reading of Genesis that there are two genealogies of Cain (Genesis 4:17-26) and that of Kenan (Genesis 5:12-32).
- a) The explanation for this is that Genesis 4:17-26 comes from one tradition: the "J" or Yahwist Tradition, and
 - b) Genesis 5:12-32 comes from another tradition: the "P" or Priestly Tradition.
 - c) In the "P" Tradition, Cain becomes Kenan (same Hebrew root) and is part of the genealogy of Seth.
 - d) In the "J" Tradition, Cain constitutes a line distinct from Seth.
3. We also find two narratives of the flood with conflicting details concerning its duration and the number of the animals taken into the Ark (Genesis 6-8).

-Again we have two traditions interwoven here: J and P.

4. We have two accounts of Abraham risking Sarah's honor by trying to pass her off as his sister (Genesis 12:10-16 and Genesis 20, the whole chapter, especially verses 2-7).
- a) Genesis 12 is from the "J" Tradition and Genesis 20 from the "E" or Elohist Tradition.
 - b) And in Genesis, chapter 26, verses 1-11, we have Isaac doing the same thing with Rebekah. It is from the "J" Tradition (Read: Genesis 26: 6-11).
 - c) The purpose of Genesis 12 is to commemorate the beauty of Sarah, the ancestress of the Israelites, and how God protected them (Read: Genesis 12:10-16).

-This story shows one stage of moral development when a lie was still considered lawful in certain circumstances, and where the life of the husband was considered more important than the wife's honor.

- d) God was gradually leading them to an appreciation of the moral law.

-In Genesis 20, we see a more mature morality (Read: Genesis 20:2-7). It is the Elohist Tradition.

-The story is softened here by a more mature morality. The King does not have relations with Sarah in this account because it is seen as wrong.

- e) In Genesis, chapter 26, we also see a more developed morality.

5. Moses' father-in-law is sometimes called Reuel (Exodus 2:18) and sometimes Jethro (Exodus 3:1 and 18:1).

-Exodus 2:18 is from the "J" Tradition;

-Exodus 3:1 from the "E" Tradition; and

-Exodus 18:1 is from the "E" tradition.

6. There are two accounts of the vocation of Moses (Exodus 3 and 6).

-Exodus 3 is from an interweave of the "J" and "E" Traditions.

-Exodus 6 is from the "P" Tradition.

7. There are several different accounts of the plagues (Exodus 7-12).

-Again, they are taken from the "J," "E," and "P" Traditions.

8. The story of Israel's rebellion at the waters of Meriba is told in

Exodus, chapter 17, verse 7 and again in Numbers, chapter 20, verse 13.

-Exodus 17:7 is from the "J" Tradition.

-Numbers 20:13 from an interweave of the "E" and "P" traditions.

IV. The four traditions of the Pentateuch.

A. As a result of long and intense study, higher critics of the Pentateuch are able to show us that there are several different sources or traditions, each telling the same basic story, but with differences in detail, emphasis, and style.

-Later, when an editor fused these different traditions, he took from each whatever suited his purpose, even if it meant telling the same story twice, or putting together details from two different traditions, in order to have a fuller account of the event.

B. There is an analogy that may help us understand what went into the making of the Pentateuch, as we now have it, and at the same time, give us a greater appreciation for the value of literary analysis or higher criticism.

1. Around the year 173 A.D., a monk called Tatian decided to make a harmony of the four Gospels.

a) He took the four Gospels and made one story out of all that was known about Christ.

b) He avoided any repetition and took the best story from which ever Gospel so that, in the end, he came up with one unified account of the story of Jesus Christ.

c) He called this work the Diatessaron ('one through four').

2. We might say that a similar thing happened with the Pentateuch.

a) An ancient editor took four different traditions of the Jewish people and fused them into one.

- b) His work was a true diatessaron though it was never given that name.
- 3. Tatian's Diatessaron became popular in Syria only. It never became more popular than the four Gospels. The four Gospels remained and Tatian's Diatessaron disappeared.
- 4. However, with the Pentateuch, just the opposite happened. The four original traditions disappeared and the Pentateuch remained. The original sources were lost.
- 5. The editor left no marginal notes. And over the centuries, all remembrance of an editor disappeared, and the Pentateuch came to be looked upon as one unified book.
 - a) There remained in the Book itself, however, internal evidence of the style, the language, the theological preoccupations of the original authors of the lost traditions.
 - b) The work of restoring these lost sources is the work of literary analysis or higher criticism.
- C. The nucleus of the Pentateuch, that is, its basic historical narrative and legal code, was composed by Moses sometime in the 13th century B.C. Parts may have been put down in writing but by and large, it was preserved orally.
 - 1. The initial narrative or story section developed over a period of time into a national epic.
 - 2. The original legal code, which was kept by the priests, also developed with the addition of new laws, made necessary by the changing circumstances and the social conditions of the people.
- D. The Yahwist or "J" Tradition.
 - 1. The narrative or story section of the Israelite national epic was probably put into writing for the first time about 950 B.C. during the reign of Solomon.
 - 2. Because the writer preferred "Yahweh" as the divine name, his

written account has been called the Yahwist or "J" Tradition. The "J" is taken from the German spelling of Jahweh (German scholars originated the term).

E. The Elohist or "E" Tradition.

1. When the Kingdom of Solomon was divided in 926 B.C., with the northern tribes separating from the rule of Rehoboam, the successor of King Solomon, the --

-Israelite national epic was put into writing in the northern kingdom separately sometime in the 8th century B.C., about 750 B.C.

2. This tradition has been called the "E" tradition because of the sacred writer's preference for "Elohim" as the divine name (See: Numbers 22:8-14 where "Elohim" = God).

F. The "E" and "J" Traditions are fused.

In 722 B.C., the northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians, and sometime after, the "E" Tradition was brought to the South to Judah and was fused with the "J" Tradition.

G. The Legal Codes: the Deuteronomist or "D" Tradition.

The priests of the northern kingdom, who had come to Jerusalem, gathered together their legal traditions about 650 B.C. into what we now call the Book of Deuteronomy. It is referred to as the "D" Tradition or the Deuteronomist Tradition.

H. The Legal Code: the Priestly or "P" Tradition.

1. The "P" or Priestly Tradition was the last of the traditions to be written, sometime in the 6th century.
2. It contains the legal traditions of the Jerusalem priests and is thought to have been composed from very ancient sources.

I. The "JE" and "P" (JEP) Traditions are fused.

At this same time or perhaps as late as the 5th century B.C., an editor fused the "P" or Priestly Tradition with the already fused "JE" Traditions, giving us the "JEP" Tradition.

J. The "D" Tradition is added to the JEP Tradition.

Finally, the "D" or Deuteronomist Tradition was added on to the "JEP" document giving us one unified book -- making a diatessaron of four traditions, that is --

-the two epics of Israelite national history: the "J" and "E" traditions; and

-the two priestly codes: the northern "D" Tradition, and the southern "P" Tradition.

(See: Appendix, Illustration of the Traditions in Book of Genesis; pass out the professionally copied sheets made for the trainees.)

K. Exegetes, scripture scholars, generally agree that the Priestly Editor was the one who fused the four traditions of Israel (the JEDP) to give us our present Pentateuch, and --

-that he did this sometime after the downfall of the monarchy in 587 B.C. -- probably around 450 B.C. (Dates will vary on this depending on which book you read).

1. Israel had returned from Babylonian Captivity and was in a sad state of mind. It was no longer an independent nation, nor was there any hope of it having again an independent monarchy.
 - a) So the people for whom the Priestly Editor is putting these traditions together, is an Israel in dire need of survival, and survival with continuity and with purpose.
 - b) It is an Israel that needs to see its links with the past, to see its present unique nature, dependent on that past and its destiny for the future.
 - c) To be given this is to assure Israel of survival with meaning and purpose.
2. To take care of this need, the Priestly Editor took the traditions of his people and fused them into one continuous narrative.

- a) The genealogical sections of this narrative show the continuity of post-exile Israel -- Israel who has just come out of captivity -- with the Israel of the Sinai Covenant.
- b) The historical and legal sections bring out, not only the saving acts of God that brought Israel into existence in the past, but the law that shows who this present 5th century community is --

-a kingdom of priests, a worshipping community, whose life is essentially a liturgy, a service of God.

- 3. It doesn't take very long to see that the Priestly Author, as the final editor, took the liberty of giving his material the greatest share of space in the work of the Pentateuch.

-Right after the institution of the Sinai Covenant -- the high point of Israel's history -- the Priestly Author places the major part of his own material --

-Exodus, chapter 25 through Leviticus and on into Numbers, chapter 10, with further additions in Numbers, chapters 13; 15; 17-19; 25-31; and 33-36.

- L. Of the total 187 chapters in the Pentateuch, the "D" Tradition is allocated 34 chapters, the Yahwist and the Elohist combined receive 65 chapters, and the Priestly Tradition 87 chapters.
 - 1. However, the parts of the Bible that are read most quickly, and sometimes not read at all by the average person, are the Priestly sections.
 - 2. The "J", "E", and "D" parts have become the favorites down through the centuries.
 - a) And if you were asked which sections of the Bible were your favorite ones, it would be the sections from the "J" or Yahwist Tradition.
 - b) You may not know how to distinguish the Yahwist Tradition from the others, but if you recall to yourself your favorite

stories from the Pentateuch:

- Adam & Eve,
- Cain and Abel,
- the Flood,
- the Tower of Babel,
- the Call of Abraham,
- the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah,

you will unknowingly be putting your finger on some of the episodes of the Yahwist's Tradition.

- M. In conclusion then, briefly stated, the Pentateuch, the first five Books of the Old Testament, is composed of four different sources or traditions -- four traditions put together into one final unified Book. How did this come about?
1. In 950 B.C., when Israel was one united nation, the Israelite national epic was put into writing for the first time and was called the Yahwist or "J" Tradition.
 - In 926 B.C., upon the death of Solomon, the then united nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms: Israel in the North (the northern kingdom) and Judah in the South (the southern kingdom)
 2. At this time, the Israelite national epic was again put into writing in the North about 750 B.C. and was called the Elohist or "E" Tradition.
 3. In 722 B.C., then northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians and the "E" Tradition was brought to the South to Judah and fused with the "J" Tradition.
 4. The priests of the northern kingdom, who had come to Jerusalem, put together their legal traditions about 650 B.C. into what we now call Book of Deuteronomy. It is referred to as the Deuteronomist or "D" Tradition.
 5. The legal traditions of the Jerusalem priests in the South was the last tradition written, sometime in the 6th century B.C., and comes from very ancient sources and is called the Priestly or "P" Tradition.
 6. The result is that there were:

-two Israelite national epics:

-the "J" and "E" Traditions; and

-two priestly codes:

-the northern "D" Tradition and the southern "P" Tradition.

6. After the destruction of Israel in the North by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., these four traditions were eventually fused together at different times.

-The "J" Tradition was fused with the "E" Tradition (the two Israelite national epics), then the "P" or Priestly Tradition was put together with the already fused "JE" to give the "JEP" document and finally --

-the "D" or Deuteronomist Tradition was added on to the "JEP" document giving the "JEPD" which resulted in one unified Book -- four traditions put into one unified whole according to the purpose of the editor.

7. When these four traditions were put together, the editor took from each whatever suited his purpose, even if it meant telling the same story twice but giving different details, for example, when the "JE" Traditions were put together and later when the "JEP" Traditions were fused together.
8. It was the Priestly editor who took the traditions of his people and fused them together into one continuous narrative. And he did this sometime after the downfall of the monarchy in 587 B.C. -- probably around 450 B.C.

3. TELL trainees to review for themselves the characteristics of the four traditions found in SH pages 45-48.

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| COMMUNITY BREAK | 15 MINS. |
|-----------------|----------|

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY | 45 MINS. |
|---------------------|----------|

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 48 and we will go over the Study Guide.

-You are to write out your responses to the following reflections and be prepared to

share them in your small group.

1. Rick is listening as you tell him how God really does have a plan for his life and how His love is revealed in the Scriptures. He says, "You put a lot of stock in that Bible. Where did it come from anyway?" Explain how the Bible came to be.
2. You have encouraged your sister-in-law to read the Bible. She calls you up and says, "Which story is the right one? The Bible contradicts itself. It starts right away in Genesis; the first two chapters don't agree." Explain to her about the four traditions in the Old Testament.

-I will share with you now some sample responses to these reflection questions.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You now have 40 minutes to do this Study Guide. Please gauge your time well.

SHARING GROUPS

30 MINS.

1. STATE the following:

- a) I invite you now to move into your small groups.
- b) You will be sharing your responses to the reflections given in SH page 48.
- c) Your small group leader will begin and end the small group sharing with prayer.
- d) Your small group leader will begin the sharing on each reflection in order to model how to share and the length of the sharing.
- e) Each person is to share what (s)he has prepared for the first reflection for Session Four; then move on to the second reflection and do the same.
- f) If you have not written anything down, then you may not share. Sharing from what you have written is to help avoid rambling on. Please be brief and to the point and considerate of those who have yet to share.
- g) You have 25 minutes now for this sharing. Please gauge your time well.

2. CALL group back at the end of 25 minutes.

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION FIVE

THE ISRAELITES' EXPERIENCE OF GOD

OBJECTIVE

To examine the breakthrough of Israel's understanding of God as a personal God, a covenantal God, a faithful God.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 85.
3. The instructor needs to determine, during preparation time, which key references/ passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a scripture reference, during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.
5. Assist small group leaders with any problems concerning the trainees that may arise.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 115 Minutes

BEGIN SESSION FIVE

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 50.
2. STATE session objective:

This session will examine the breakthrough of Israel's understanding of God as a personal God, a covenantal God, a faithful God.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

55 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:

- I. The Bible grew out of the Israelite experience of God.
- II. The contrast between the God of the Israelites and the experience of God that the other nations had.
- III. The origin of the Israelite people and the various cultures that influenced them as a people.
- IV. Our God is a saving God.

2. TEACH expanded outline of the above key points:

I. The Bible grew out of the Israelite experience of God.

- A. The Israelite experience of God, as it is expressed in the Bible, was very different from the way that the other nations who surrounded them experienced God.

-The Bible demonstrates, in a very dramatic way, a breakthrough in the Israelite's understanding of the relationship of creation to God.

- B. From what we said about how the Bible grew over the centuries, you can see that this new understanding of God, of sin, of human-kind, of all creation, was a gradual breakthrough, not at all dramatic.

-That is how God works in the events of our own lives -- gradually. He revealed Himself slowly to the Israelites and brought them to profound insights by means of small steps. The same is true for us. God reveals Himself slowly by means of small steps.

II. The contrast between the God of the Israelites and the experience of God that the other nations had.

- A. The best way to see this contrast is to read some of the mythology that comes from the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia (Abraham's origin), Egypt, and Canaan.

-Then you would see how different the thinking of the whole ancient Near East was from the thinking of Israel.

- B. The ancient Near East first thought of the power that ran the universe as being, at best, indifferent to humankind, but mostly hostile; the power beyond hated humankind.
1. It was very natural that primitive people should think so because they experienced power that they could not explain in the devastating forces of nature, like: storms, floods, earthquakes, forest fires, strong winds, and the like.
 2. All of these natural catastrophes brought death and damage and so the primitive people came to the healthy belief that the power out there, those gods, hated them and were determined to destroy humankind.
- C. As we look out on the universe from our secure, philosophical, scientific, theological base, none of which the ancient peoples had, what strikes us about the universe is its regularity --
- the perfect sequence of times and seasons;
 - the rising and setting of the sun;
 - the waning of the old moon and the coming of the new moon.
1. On the other hand, what impresses the unsophisticated observer first is the conflict of the natural forces. These forces of nature are unpredictable.
 2. Is there anything else on this earth that is unpredictable besides earthquakes, storms, and floods?
 - a) People! These forces, then, having the qualities of human persons, and being so vast in power and magnitude, must be gods. This is the way primitive people began to think.
 - b) A cosmic order depended on these gods being agreeable with one another and with humankind. And so there was always the danger of nature being reduced to chaos.
- The sun god might become angry and burn up the earth

or not shine.

D. So Abraham's ancestors and the other ancient peoples found themselves in constant fear, appeasing their gods, worshipping them, offering sacrifice, performing liturgical ceremonies to ward off their punishment.

1. And, of course, because of this conflict between the gods, it was important that one not forget any of them because of the tendency to be jealous.

2. And it was to people's advantage to have the most powerful god on their side. The competition was great.

E. Besides being in the forces of nature, the gods also were associated with persons, places, things, nations, rulers, everything.

1. We get some idea of this in the Book of Jonah.

a) If you remember, the terrified sailors woke Jonah up and told him to pray to his god.

b) They had already prayed to all the gods that they knew and nothing had helped.

2. Maybe Jonah had a more powerful god on his side (Read: Jonah 1:4-6).

F. This same distinction between gods comes through in the way that Yahweh is spoken of:

1. In the Books of the Law: Yahweh is spoken of as "the Lord your God". Just turn the pages of the Book of Deuteronomy and count the number of times the phrase, 'Yahweh your God' or 'the Lord your God' is used.

2. Throughout the Old Testament and New Testament: Yahweh is spoken of as "the God of our Fathers," "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob".

- a) This way of naming Yahweh tells us something very important about Him, namely, that He was seen as a personal God.
- b) We see right away that what is involved is a personal relationship between God and the patriarchs, between God and His people. This works --

-against formalism in the practice of religion;

-against servile fear of God;

-it removes the prevailing idea about gods -- that a particular god was found in only one place; and

-sets the basis for the covenantal relationship between God and His people, Israel.

- G. Because the distinction is made between Yahweh and the other gods, we see that the Israelites did not deny the existence of other gods explicitly in the beginning.

-The first clear denial of other gods is found around the 6th century B.C. This is found in the Book of Second Isaiah, chapters 45 and 46.

- 1. The understanding the Israelites had of their God was this: "whether or not there are many gods (elohim), there is only one Lord (Yahweh)."

-No matter what one understood by "elohim", Yahweh is "elohim", God, in a way that no other being is.

- 2. The fact that there is only one Yahweh is clear from His name for it belongs to no one else: "I am Who am..."
- 3. It is clear also from His unique relationship with Israel: their relationship is one of election, of choosing, and covenant that puts demands on Israel that no other god made on his people.

4. The most outstanding demand, that is in absolute contradiction to the religious cult customs of the ancient Semitic world, is the demand that Israel shall worship no other god but Yahweh.
 - a) Among the surrounding nations, there was no god that was thought of as the one and only God, in such a way that other gods could be discounted.
 - b) But for Israel, Yahweh is a jealous God. He will not have other gods before Him.

H. This breakthrough in understanding the relationship of God to His creation is bound up with this increasing recognition of God as One -- Monotheism.

1. In the Sacred Scriptures of the Israelites, we find no story of the origin of Yahweh. Everywhere else in the ancient Near East, there is the myth of the origin of the gods (theogony).
 2. The Israelites do not ask that question because Yahweh reveals Himself.
- I. The breakthrough begins when Yahweh calls Abraham to leave his country, his relatives and friends, and to go to the land that He would show him (Genesis 12:4).

1. The story of God's dealing with Abraham, of His revealing Himself, is covered from this call of Abraham, in Genesis, chapter 12 to the time of his death, recorded in Genesis, chapter 25.
2. The last 25 chapters of Genesis tell the stories of Isaac and Jacob, the other patriarchs, and continue to show how Yahweh deals with His people, to show what kind of a God Yahweh is.

-It would be good for you to reread these chapters of Genesis again sometime, with this thought in mind --

-What kind of a God is Yahweh?

-What kind of a relationship does He have with His people?

-How does He relate to them?

J. There are two main characteristics that come through about this God of Abraham --

-His closeness, His friendliness, His singleness; and

-His covenant, His pact with Abraham and His descendents, and His faithfulness to it.

K. The Israelites experienced God in a different way than the other peoples of their time.

1. He was not an anti-social, far-off, hostile God, but He was with them in everything they did. He was there in every event.
2. They did not have to manufacture gods to fit various occasions. Their one God, Yahweh, was the only god that mattered. There was no other god like Him. He ruled everything because He had made everything.
 - a) So, as nomads, when the Israelites moved to a new grazing ground, they did not have to look for the god of that land. Their God went with them wherever they went: "I will go with you."
 - b) He was with them at all times and they knew it. They experienced Him working in their midst not only on the Sabbath, but constantly.
3. For the Israelites, to be alive was to experience God, Yahweh. It was part of being human.
 - a) We cannot miss that as we read the Old Testament and the New Testament because that is the subject matter of the Bible --

-the relationship between God and His people, the Old Israel and the New Israel: the direct, the constant,

and the intimate relation of God with His people.

b) So the lives of the Israelites and our lives are expressions of that relationship. Another way of saying that is: that life is essentially a religious experience because it is an experience of God.

4. It is this fact of the Israelites seeing their whole life as an expression of their relationship with Yahweh that made them different from the peoples that surrounded them.

-This, I think, is one of the personal messages that we can get from the Bible.

-It is this same thing that makes us different from others, this awareness of having an intimate relationship with God and the consciousness of living life religiously.

L. This is the basic truth of faith that the Bible is teaching: life is a religious experience.

1. This is a fact of revelation. We only know it from the Scriptures. Without this revelation given to the Israelites and to us, we might think that we are to live life on two planes: one religious and the other secular.

2. What God is telling us is that religious experiences encompass the whole of life's experiences, and not just those that are obviously religious like -- devotions, the sacraments, etc. -- but, that all of life is to be a worship of God.

-Everything is related to God in some way, even actions that are sinful for they disrupt our relationship with Him. They make us less the persons that He wills us to be.

III. The origin of the Israelite people and the various cultures that influenced them as a people.

First, a few references:

-The Dictionary of the Bible by McKenzie.

-Look up the words: Abraham, Israel, Babylon, Egypt, Canaan, Mesopotamia, Greek, Roman, etc.

-The Dictionary-Concordance to the New American Bible.

-Look up the same words.

-The Jerome Biblical Commentary.

-Look up chapter 75, A History of Israel.

A. A brief history of the Israelite people.

1. The patriarchal age which we have in Genesis has as its background the Middle Bronze Age (2050-1550 B.C.).

2. Genesis 11 tells us that Abram lived in Ur and then moved to Haran.

a) Both of these places were in Mesopotamia, which were part of the Babylonian Empire at different times.

b) As we mentioned before, Abraham's ancestors were nomads.

c) The important thing to remember about the Israelites is that they did not suddenly drop out of the heavens onto the face of the earth as God's chosen people.

-Rather, they developed like every other nation at that particular time in history.

3. Earlier scholarship thought that much of the patriarchal history in Genesis was fictional.

a) But archaeological discoveries have proven that the biblical description that we have of this time is remarkably accurate. It is too accurate to be thought of as being without any historical foundation.

- b) For example, the move of Abraham from Mesopotamia to Palestine or Canaan can be fit into the invasion of the Amorites into Mesopotamia, Syria, and even into Palestine.

-The Amorites established the first Babylonian Dynasty whose greatest King was Hammurabi.

-The names and places found in the Bible are verified in non-biblical texts, such as the Babylonian and Egyptian texts.

-The Amorites are Abraham's ancestors. The city of Haran that Abraham went to from Ur was an Amorite settlement.

-And so this invasion of the Amorites, that we mentioned, could have been the time when Abraham moved into Palestine or Canaan.

- B. The name of these people that God brought out of Egypt under Moses, in order that He might make a pact -- a covenant -- with them and form them into a People in the desert, are the People of Israel, the Israelites.

1. This name comes from the changing of the name of Jacob to Israel (two accounts: earlier, "J" from Genesis 32:28; later, "P" from Genesis 35:10).
2. So Israel is that ethnic group that was united in their worship of Yahweh through the Covenant He had made with them on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19 and 24).

-And they occupied the territory of Canaan or Palestine, first as a loose tribal organization, later as a single monarchy, known as Israel, and then later --

-with the death of King Solomon, in 922 B.C., Israel was divided into two kingdoms: Israel in the North and Judah in the South.

3. The name "Israel", then, is used in several different ways:

-All the people of Israel who are covenanted to Yahweh;

-The Northern Kingdom only;

-Then, with the fall of the North to the Assyrians in 722 B.C., the Southern Kingdom, the nation that is not dispersed, is Israel.

-When you read the Prophets, you might miss the true meaning of what is being said if you do not realize that sometimes they are speaking about all the people; at other times, they are only referring to the Northern Kingdom.

C. The cultures that influenced Israel.

The area of Palestine where biblical history takes place was a cross-roads. We will briefly look at six different cultures that had great influence on the Israelites.

1. Egyptian:

Their influence was experienced directly while the Hebrews were in slavery; later, indirectly through the influence of Egyptian culture on the Near East in general.

2. Canaanite:

Their influence was felt when the Israelites took over Canaan which was later called Palestine. They caused the Israelites a lot of trouble because the Canaanites worshipped Baal and this posed a terrible temptation for the Israelites.

3. The Mesopotamian Cultures:

Mesopotamia is the land between the river Tigris and the Euphrates. This area cradled the most ancient civilizations of human history.

- a) It was a very fertile and rich area and, in ancient times, there was a continual succession of peoples and cultures which in turn had influence on Israel.
- b) The earliest known inhabitants of the land of Mesopotamia were the Sumerians (c. 2700-2500 B.C.) They were the founders of the Mesopotamian civilization.

-The principle city of the Sumerians was Ur where Abraham came from.

- c) The greatest direct influence on Israel was during the time of the Babylonian Captivity in which the Southern Kingdom fell to Babylon in 587 B.C. (2 Kings 25).

-During this time, most of the Israelites lived in Babylon and adopted their ideas, literary forms, and ways of living.

-Their stay in Babylon lasted until 539 B.C. when Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Babylon and decreed that all exiles return to their homelands.

4. Peoples of the North (today Asia Minor):

Refers to those cultures of Assyria, Babylonia, Syria, Media, Persia, and Elam.

-These peoples frequently invaded Palestine.

5. Greek:

The Greek influence began in 333 B.C. when Alexander the Great conquered Persia. As a result, Greek culture spread over the whole of the eastern Mediterranean region. It lasted until about 200 B.C.

6. Roman:

Rome gained control of the Near East about 100 B.C. And with its military power brought peace during the time that Jesus lived on this earth.

D. The most remarkable thing is the fact that in spite of the influence of these cultures upon her, Israel still managed to preserve her religious faith, her belief in the one God, Yahweh.

1. Everything else changed somewhat:

-her way of living;

-her manner of expression in writing and language.

2. But her relation to Yahweh did not change.

-In fact, Israel's relationship to Yahweh was not only preserved, it grew and developed in spite of the terrible atrocities done to her even to the present day.

3. This can only be explained by God's intervention. Through Israel, humankind has come to know this saving God.

IV. Our God is a saving God.

A. I would like to repeat what we have pointed out from the beginning, namely, that what the Bible does is teach us that our God is a saving God.

1. The epic stories of Moses, Samson, Gideon, etc., are not sounding the praises of men but of God.

-If they had praised men, then the glory of the nation would have passed with the passing of these men, as the glory of the United States has passed with the death of its great men.

2. By constantly referring to the great actions of God and attributing success to Him alone, the Bible developed in the Jewish people a consciousness of the saving actions of God in their

lives.

- a) For them, God became central. It was He who was saving His people.
- b) This is why being the Jewish people means being a religious people, a people with a special relationship with God.

-It means to be so conscious of God's presence that everything in life is related to Him.

-As Paul says in 1 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 31, "whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God."

- c) Everything involved in living is involved with God.

B. The Bible also points out another great truth of faith.

1. While God is faithful, saving, and loving, His people are not always faithful. They do not observe the Law and, in these times, they are no longer identifiable as religious people.
 - a) They suffered the consequences of not being true to what they were called to be.
 - b) We see this so strongly through the Books of the Prophets. The people lost their identity as a religious people through their own actions.
 - c) God sent the prophets to call them back to fidelity to the covenant. The people had to regain their identity by returning to the stipulations of their covenant with Yahweh.

-They did this not on their own strength. God did it by raising up leaders, prophets, who reminded the Israelites of their covenant and showed them how to be faithful to their God in their daily lives.
 - d) Finally, there is the promise of a final savior, a Messiah, who will save them. There is the promise of a new heart, of a new covenant, of a new spirit.

2. The fulfillment of this promise is the new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ revealed to us in the New Testament.

-Paul, in speaking to the citizens of Athens brings out everything that we have said here about the religious experience of the Israelites.

-There is one God, Yahweh, and all of life is lived in Him. Therefore, to be human is to be religious (Read: Acts 17:22-31).

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

45 MINS.

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 57 and we will go over the Study Guide. You are to write out your responses to the following questions and be prepared to share them in your small group.

1. The Bible teaches us that life is a religious experience, that our God is personal to us. Demonstrate this truth from Scripture.
2. Alice has just suffered a tragedy in her family. You are consoling her and you say, "You know, Alice, our God is a saving God. The whole of the Bible tells us that." Go on and show how the Bible does reveal our God as a saving God.

-And then you are to do number 3 of this Study Guide which states:

3. Write out KEY REFERENCES for Session Six.

-I will share with you now some sample responses to the questions.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You now have 40 minutes to do this Study Guide. Please gauge your time well.

-If you have not finished writing out the Scriptures for Session Six, please complete them in time for our next Scripture weekend, and also write out all the Scriptures for Session Seven for our next Scripture weekend.

CLOSING PRAYER

15 MINS.

1. GIVE prayer partners 5 minutes to pray together.
2. ASK group to turn to SH page 128 and stand.
3. SIGNAL music and prayer leaders forward.
4. DISMISS group once prayer time is finished

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION SCRIPTURE GUIDE

SESSION SIX

THE COVENANT OF GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE

OBJECTIVE

To come to an understanding of the central theme of the Bible: God's covenant with His people.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 101.
3. The instructor needs to determine, during preparation time, which key reference/ passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a Scripture reference, during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.
5. Assist small group leaders with any problems concerning the trainees that may arise.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 155 Minutes

OPENING PRAYER

10 MINS.

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 129 and stand.
 2. SIGNAL for music and prayer leaders to begin.
 3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
 4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.
-

BEGIN SESSION SIX

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 58.
2. STATE session objective:

The purpose of this session is to come to an understanding of the central theme of the Bible: God's covenant with His people.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

55 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:

- I. A brief review.
- II. The Old Testament's central thought.
- III. The meaning of covenant.
- IV. The Israelite Covenant is very much like the Suzerainty Treaty.
- V. The unconditional obligations of the Ten Commandments are prefaced by the recounting of the basic Sinai revelation.
- VI. A closer look at the establishment of the Covenant.
- VII. Summary.

2. TEACH expanded outline of above key points:

I. A brief review.

- A. What we've been doing so far is coming to an understanding of what the Bible is so that we can understand what it says.

-The time that we spent on language, literary form, history, how the Bible came to be and the rest, was to help us understand the Bible as a book.

- B. In the last session, we came to some awareness of what the Israelites' experience of God was and the effect that other cultures had upon them.

1. We saw that the Israelites were given special insights (inspiration) which enabled them to understand the religious meaning of their history as it took place.

-The events of their history were seen as manifestations of God's action in their history to save them.

2. This way of interpreting history was vastly different from interpreting history religiously after the fact, which anyone can do by giving it a religious meaning later.

- a) The inspired prophets and writers saw a religious meaning in the event itself and spoke of it as a religious event.
- b) They interpreted their real history religiously and brought into being a whole new way of looking at humankind and their relationship to God.

II. The Old Testament's central thought.

- A. What all this religious interpretation says and means is that the Israelites became a real nation, a religious people, when they pledged themselves in covenant to the "God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob". Yahweh initiated this covenant.
- B. If any passage in the Old Testament can be called central or essential to its meaning, it is this passage of Exodus which speaks about the Covenant -- Exodus 19:3-6.
 - 1. It is because of this Covenant, this agreement made with God, that the people of Israel and their descendants, the Jewish people, have their special identity.
 - 2. It is what makes them who they are and what they are. It is not "just a covenant." It was a special agreement. Through it, the Israelites become God's special possession, a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, that is, a people dedicated to God (Read: Exodus 19:3-6).
- C. Just as the Declaration of Independence, and what it attempts to say about America's own view of itself, is central to understanding what America is and means --

-so does the Covenant made in the desert, constitute the uniqueness of the Jewish people in their own eyes, and in the eyes of all who accept them for who they are.

-This is what the whole of the Old Testament is all about: Covenant.

- D. Before continuing, it might be good for us to look at the meaning of the names Hebrew, Israelite, and Jewish People which indicate

three steps in the unfolding of God's revelation.

1. **Hebrew** refers to the people **before** the covenant made in the desert, about 1250 B.C. Abraham, the other patriarchs and the people who lived **before** the escape from Egypt are Hebrews.
2. **Israelite** refers to those who made the covenant with God in the desert and established a religious nation. It includes those who tried to live out the covenant in the long history of the people until their return from exile in Babylon about 539 B.C.
3. **Jewish People** refers to the people who lived **after** the return from Babylon and includes those living today.

III. The meaning of covenant.

A. To understand the importance of the Covenant, we will look at it more closely.

1. The covenant that God made with His people dominates the last four Books of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) and we find this theme recurring in the historical books as well.

-There is a certain obscurity and complexity surrounding the traditions concerning the covenant.

2. One thing that we know for sure is that Moses' connection with the establishment of the covenant is so deeply rooted in the various traditions that we cannot remove him from them.
3. The Mosaic Covenant, the covenant made on Mount Sinai, is so heavily laden with later material that to reconstruct the course of events as they happened is presently impossible.

-The basic account of the covenant that God made with Israel, found in Exodus, chapter 24, has been put together from several sources that cannot be analyzed clearly.

4. What I'm saying is that the Sinai Covenant, as found in Exodus, chapters 19 to 24, is an account that was written and edited many, many years after it had actually happened.

a) When it was written and then later edited, all the developments of its liturgical worship are projected back into that original event.

b) It should not surprise us then, that all of Israel's Covenant Law, as it developed over a period of 700 years, is pictured as having been given to Israel at Mount Sinai through Moses.

-This Covenant Law is given in Exodus, chapter 20 through Numbers, chapter 10.

5. Scholars agree that probably the only Covenant Law that was given to Israel at the time of Moses was the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).

B. The Book of the Covenant (also referred to as the Covenant Code), given to us in Exodus, chapter 20, verse 22 to chapter 23, verse 19, is the oldest of Israel's legal codes known to us.

1. It probably came into existence some time after the Israelites had settled in Canaan, which would have been some time after the Sinai Covenant had been made.

2. This collection of Law probably dates from the time of the Judges, about 1200 to about 1040 B.C.

C. The Laws which follow, those found in Exodus, chapter 25 through Numbers, chapter 10, which come from the "P" or Priestly Tradition, date from --

-the period of the Kingdom down to the Exile which took place in 587 B.C.

1. Israel became a kingdom with a monarchy when she got her first King, Saul, about 1040 B.C.

2. So, then, those Laws found in Exodus, chapter 25 through Numbers, chapter 10 date from 1040 B.C. to 587 B.C.

D. What we have, then, in Exodus, chapter 20 through Numbers, chapter 10 is a collection of Israelite Law as it developed through a period of 700 years.

1. And yet, when we look at how it is written, we find that it all begins with the words: "And the Lord said to Moses...." This phrase embodies the whole body of Law found in Exodus chapters 20 to 23.

-It embraces the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), and the Covenant Code (Exodus 20:22-23:19).

2. The words: "And the Lord said to Moses...." includes then the laws of later ages that were added to the original covenant ceremony.

E. The Pentateuch, in its present form, with its great diversity, shows how successive generations continued to respond to Yahweh's covenant demand in the changing circumstances of their history.

1. For the Israelites, the Sinai Event was a reality that was always present, whether the Covenant Liturgy took place on Mount Sinai or at Shechem or at the temple on Mount Zion.

- a) It remained the same event no matter where it was celebrated.
- b) It was truly Yahweh who spoke to His people at each renewal of the covenant, calling His people to a response.

-This is clearly seen in Deuteronomy, chapter 5, verse 2f:

-"The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive this day."

- c) The understanding that the Israelites had of their Covenant Liturgy gave us our understanding of the Eucharist.

2. The Priestly Legal Code found in Exodus, chapters 25 to 31, as we mentioned earlier, bears the stamp of later times.
 3. The Covenant Code, found in Exodus, chapters 20 to 23, for the most part, manifests the interests of an agricultural rather than a wilderness environment.
 4. And the ritual laws found in Exodus, chapter 34, verses 10 to 28 reflect a Canaanite background.
- F. By a process of reduction, we can see that there is not much left that may have come from the time of Moses except the Ten Commandments that are the kernel of the Covenant Law.

IV. The Israelite Covenant is very much like the Suzerainty Treaty.

- A. It has been shown that the Israelite Covenant is very much like the Suzerainty Treaty that was in use in the period 2000 to 1000 B.C.
1. This particular treaty formula became known chiefly through Hittite Treaties. The Hittites were an Indo-European people who settled in Asia Minor before 2000 B.C.
 2. This formula was generally used in international relations of that period.
 3. Because the formula of the Suzerainty Treaty was common in the second millennium B.C., the Sinai Covenant is dated before the Israelite monarchy, so sometime before 1040 B.C. (about 1250 B.C.).
- B. The Suzerainty Treaty or Covenant was made between a king and his vassal, a servant or an inferior.
1. To the vassal, the suzerain or king gives a covenant. Because of this covenant, the vassal finds protection and security.
 2. As the inferior party, the vassal is obliged to obey the commands of the king.

3. In making this covenant, the sovereignty of the king is in no way limited.
 4. This covenant, given by the king does not assert power over the inferior in such a way that the vassal is forced into obedience.
 - a) Rather, what is most outstanding about the treaty is that the emphasis is placed on the king's great deeds of kindness on behalf of the vassal.
 - b) The motive behind obeying the king's commands then is one of gratitude for all that the king has done for the vassal.
- C. The treaty begins with a preamble in which the king who is initiating the treaty or covenant identifies himself:

-"thus saith the great king so-and-so...."

-Then there follows an historical recounting of all that the king has graciously done on behalf of the vassal.

- D. The Sinai Covenant, to a large extent, was modeled on this Suzerainty Treaty form. But this does not, in any way, take away from the radical originality of the Sinai or Mosaic Covenant.
1. Moses saw that such a treaty would, with some adaptation, serve well the liturgical expression of Israel's new faith.
 2. The Sinai Covenant was a relationship between unequals: it was made between God and the people.
 - a) The covenant was established by God and conferred upon Israel. God was not legally bound to Israel. His sovereignty was in no way limited by this covenant.
 - b) He had freely initiated it and, as later prophets said, He was free to terminate it (Amos 9:7f; Hosea 2:2f; 8:13).

- c) The Exodus story puts the emphasis on all that Yahweh had done for Israel.
- 3. Israel's obedience is based on her gratitude for God's marvelous goodness towards her. Her obedience is based on the realization that her whole existence was dependent on God's sovereign grace and promise.
- 4. Such was the character of the relationship between Lord and servant in the Sinai Covenant.

V. The unconditional obligations of the Ten Commandments are prefaced by the recounting of the basic Sinai revelation.

A. In view of what has been said so far, it is significant to note that the unconditional obligations of the Ten Commandments are prefaced by a recounting of the basic Sinai revelation.

1. It is found in Exodus, chapter 20, verse 2:

-"I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

-The same thing is said in Deuteronomy, chapter 5, verse 6.

2. In other words, "You have seen what I have done!"

B. The people had undergone some very basic human experiences and had now begun to understand themselves in a new light.

1. Yahweh is with them. Now they knew their former trials did not happen haphazardly.

2. The past was now seen in the light of revelation. The future also would have to be lived in the light of the revelation they had received.

C. It is very important to keep in mind the close connection between

commandments and covenant.

1. Israel did not see the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, as a burdensome law being placed upon her.
2. Rather, she saw that through them, she was being offered the saving gift of life. With the Commandments, God offered His people life.
3. With the hearing of the Commandments, Israel was placed in the stance of a decision for life or for death (Read: Deuteronomy 30:15-20).
 - a) God looked for this decision from Israel.

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Dt. 30:19-20.

- b) But, in no way were these commandments prefixed to the Covenant in a conditional sense, as if the Covenant would only become effective once obedience was given.

-Rather, the reverse is true. The Covenant is made and with it Israel receives the revelation of the Commandments.

D. In the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments are never spoken of as Law. Rather, they are called only "the Ten Words" (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4).

1. For these "Ten Words," Israel sang the praises of Yahweh for having given His people a way of life.
2. Israel only encountered the Law in its function as judge and destroyer at the time of the preaching of the prophets who spoke of the punishment that would come their way because of their disobedience.

VI. A closer look at the establishment of the Covenant.

We will look again now at this idea of Covenant more closely. As was mentioned before, the making of the Covenant between God and Israel is found in Exodus, chapter 19.

-Then after a long pause, to allow for the Covenant Law (also referred to as the Covenant Code) to be inserted (Exodus 20:22 - 23:10), the making of the Covenant is concluded in Exodus, chapter 24, verses 1-11.

-This narrative of the establishment of the Covenant by Yahweh with His people, comes primarily from the "E" or Elohist Tradition. It can be broken up into four sections --

-the covenant sermon, Exodus 19:3-6;

-Israel's response, Exodus 19:7-8; 24:3;

-the covenant sacrifice, Exodus 24:4-8;

-the covenant meal, Exodus 24:9-11.

A. The Covenant Sermon, Exodus 19:3-6 (Read).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Ex. 19:3-6.

1. This sermon of Moses, as presented in Exodus, chapter 19, verses 3 to 6, gives us in a nutshell the basic framework and theology of Israel's covenant.

2. There is the recounting of God's saving deeds of the past in verse 4, followed by the call for a response in verse 5a, and then the promise of blessings in verses 5b and 6.

-The basic Sinai revelation in verse 4 recalls both God's power as revealed in His victory over the Egyptians, and His gracious care for His people.

3. You will notice that the covenant blessings are given in terms of basically one essential covenant blessing, namely, community with God, and the sense of belonging to Him –

-"You shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine."

- a) From now on, all of Israel is dedicated to the service of God as His special possession.
 - b) Israel, in responding affirmatively to God's word, now enters into a new realm of existence.
 - c) Israel was to be essentially a worshipping community. Every aspect of life was to witness to the revelation of God to her.
4. In the making of the Covenant at Sinai, God does not bind Himself to Israel. Rather, it is Israel who binds herself to serve God in response to all that He has freely done for her already. These two aspects of the Covenant relationship are kept distinct --
- a) God freely bestows the promises upon Israel and has begun to fulfill these promises; and
 - b) Israel responds freely and pledges to serve God.

B. Israel's response to God's call, Exodus 19:7-8; 24:3 (Read).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Ex. 19:7-8;

-Ex. 24:3.

1. God's demand of Israel was a demand of openness to His will. The dimensions of Israel's commitment could not be defined by a set of rules or regulations.
 - a) The "Ten Words" given Israel at Sinai summarized God's will for His people.
 - b) The Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20:22-23:19) that would

come at a later date would do the same.

c) Yet none of these could state fully what God asked of His people.

2. Israel could not have known the full implication of what she was saying when she said --

- "All that the Lord has spoken we will do",

because the full extent of her vocation would be revealed only gradually.

a) This is true of all of us who follow the call of the Lord to come follow Him.

b) Israel's Covenant Law would unfold and develop over hundreds of years, and only in Jesus would the final and definitive demand of God's call be fully revealed to Israel.

3. In Jesus, all of Israel's Law would be incorporated and perfected in the new commandment: "that you love one another as I have loved you" (Read: John 13:34; 15:12, 17; 1 John 3:23).

C. The Covenant Sacrifice, Exodus 24:4-8 (Read).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Ex. 24:4-8.

1. The covenant sacrifice was a way of expressing in a symbolic manner what had been expressed by the spoken word.

-In primitive Hebrew society, and certainly until they were established in their own country, written documents were used very little, if at all.

2. In place of written agreements, what we would call legal docu-

ments or contracts, the spoken word or promise was given great solemnity and deep purpose with a ritual ceremony intended to make the agreement seriously binding

3. There were many ways to make a covenant a serious affair. Among these were:

a) The slaying of an animal from the herd of one of the parties, separating the animal into two parts, and the two parties to the covenant walking between the two parts calling on --

- "the gods" to visit the fate of the slain animal on the party breaking the agreement (Jeremiah 34:18; Genesis 15:9-18).

b) The sprinkling of blood: primitive people thought that life resided in the blood of an animal or person.

- So another way of making a covenant was through the sprinkling of blood from an animal on an altar, symbolizing a god, and then on the persons making the agreement.

c) A ritual banquet in which the parties shared the meat of an animal slain in sacrifice to some god.

- The power of the god was invoked against the party violating the agreement (Genesis 31:46, 54; 2 Samuel 3:20).

d) Another method was that the covenanting parties could mingle their blood together by cutting each other on the arm.

e) In some countries, human sacrifice was offered to solemnize spoken agreements.

- This practice was absolutely forbidden among the Israelites (Judges 11:30f).

- In all of this, we can see that they did not take such solemn

agreements lightly. Nor did they look upon them lightly.

4. Those entering in to a covenant almost always concluded the covenant, the agreement, with a common meal.
5. The essential covenant rite at Sinai has to do with the sprinkling of blood from an animal on the altar and on the people.

- a) It is important to understand the significance of this blood-rite because it gives us the background for understanding the Eucharist.

-Half the blood Moses splashed on the altar, representing God, and the other half he sprinkled on the people themselves.

- b) This was a visible sign that Yahweh and the people were now united in the sacred bond of blood, the deepest bond known in the world of this time.
- c) Blood, a sign of life, was now a sign that Yahweh and His people were one, united in one life as kinsmen.
- d) The people became a community with a common life, God and His People.

D. The Covenant Meal, Exodus 24:9-11 (Read).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Ex. 24:9-11.

1. The 70 elders, representing the tribes of Israel united in covenant, ate a ritual banquet in the presence of God on the top of the mountain.
 - a) The common meal is a natural sign of community among humankind.

- b) The description of this ritual banquet is essentially of the mystical order transcending the physical setting.
 - c) God made His presence known to the elders in such a way that later generations of Israel could hardly believe that they had been able to live through it since, as Exodus, chapter 33, verse 20 says, "No man can see God and live."
 - d) Israel came to understand that this unique experience of the ritual banquet was in some way a sign of the fulfillment that would take place at the end-time (Isaiah 25:6-8; Isaiah 2:2f).
2. Now, this event, the Covenant, established here at Sinai would dominate all of Israel's worship.

-When Israel takes possession of the Promised Land, we will see the tribes go to the sanctuary at Shechem to renew the Covenant made at Sinai through Moses (Deuteronomy 27; Joshua 24).

3. In renewing the Covenant, the details may differ but the essentials remain the same:

- a) First comes the recounting of Yahweh's saving deeds. Only now there is much more to recount because much more has happened since the Sinai Covenant was made.

-We see Joshua announcing to the people the saving deeds of Yahweh in fuller form (Read: Joshua 24:6-13).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Jos. 24:6-13.

- b) After the saving deeds of Yahweh have been recited, then came the call for Israel to respond:

- "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord..." (Joshua 24:14).

-Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods...we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God" (Joshua 24:16, 18).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Jos. 24:14;

-Jos. 24:16;

-Jos. 24:18.

- E. When we look at this Sinai tradition, we see that its present position in the Old Testament is after the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt and, before their entrance into the Promised Land, which is where it should be.
1. This was done only when the editors decided to bring all of the ancient traditions of Israel into a unified written record of salvation history.
 2. The fortunes of the Israelites were directly related to how they observed their part of the Covenant.
 - a) When they observed it, they developed and prospered.
 - b) When they failed to be a religious people, they brought punishment on themselves.

VII. Summary.

- A. What we've been trying to bring out in all of these sessions together is that: to understand the nature and importance of covenant is to understand the thrust of the entire Old Testament.
1. The Law presents the covenant, spelling out Israel's obligations in gratitude to God.
 2. The Prophets, whose point of departure is the Covenant, speak in God's name.

-They demand loyalty from the Israelites and remind them that if they are not faithful to their promises, God will withdraw not only His affection and His loyalty, but He will likewise take His presence from among them.
 3. The Writings elaborate in one way or another on all that the Covenant is and means.
- B. The Exodus is the most important historical event in the history of the

Jewish people. We need to see in the Exodus experience three key points:

1. The departure of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery;
2. Their wandering through the desert toward the Promised Land;
3. Their reaching the Promised Land.

These three elements make up the Exodus experience.

C. It was not simply the Exodus that made them a religious people. It was the Covenant. The Exodus showed them God's power and affection for them; the Covenant made them God's people.

1. The Exodus and the Covenant were the first steps in a series of acts by which God revealed Himself to man as Savior.

-He continued to do so in the ongoing history of the Israelites through different persons that He raised up to lead His people.

2. The history then of the Jewish people, as recorded in the Old Testament, is not a history that we are accustomed to. It does not give us the major events which mark the progress of a nation from one century to the next.

a) Rather, the Old Testament gives us a theology of the history of Israel in relation to Israel's fidelity or lack of fidelity to her side of the Covenant.

b) The Old Testament shows, through various literary forms, how the Covenant was observed.

c) The history of the Covenant, then, is the substance of the Bible.

SHARING GROUPS

30 MINS.

1. STATE the following:

a) I invite you now to move into your small groups.

b) You will be sharing your responses to the reflections given in SH page 57.

- c) Your small group leader will begin and end the small group sharing with prayer.
- d) Your small group leader will begin the sharing on each reflection in order to model how to share and the length of the sharing.
- e) Each person is to share what (s)he has prepared for the first reflection for Session Five; then move on to the second reflection and do the same.
- f) If you have not written anything down, then you may not share.

2. You have 25 minutes now for this sharing. Please gauge your time well.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

45 MINS.

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 72 and we will go over the Study Guide. You are to write out your responses to the following questions and be prepared to share them in your small group.

1. The Bible is a religious interpretation of history. Write a brief religious interpretation of your own personal history.
2. The history of the Covenant is the substance of the Bible. Explain how this is.

-You were to write out the Scriptures for Session Seven prior to this weekend so number 3 of this study guide is done.

-I will share with you now some sample responses to the questions.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You have 40 minutes to do numbers 1 and 2. Please gauge your time well.

COMMUNITY BREAK

15 MINS.

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION SEVEN

THE NEW COVENANT IS ESTABLISHED

OBJECTIVE

To come to an appreciation of Yahweh's gracious fidelity to His people in establishing the New Covenant.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 121.
3. The instructor needs to determine, during preparation time, which key reference/ passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a Scripture reference, during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.
5. Assist small group leaders with any problems concerning the trainees that may arise.
6. Pray with training team 30 minutes before session.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 290 Minutes (Includes Lunch)

SHARING GROUPS

30 MINS.

1. STATE the following:
 - a) I invite you now to move into your small groups.

- b) You will be sharing your responses to the reflections given in SH page 72.
- c) Your small group leader will begin and end the small group sharing with prayer.
- d) Your small group leader will begin the sharing on each reflection in order to model how to share and the length of the sharing.
- e) Each person is to share what (s)he has prepared for the first reflection for Session Four; then move on to the second reflection and do the same.
- f) If you have not written anything down, then you may not share. Sharing from what you have written is to help avoid rambling on.

-Please be brief and to the point and considerate of those who have yet to share.

2. You have 25 minutes now for this sharing. Please gauge your time well.

LARGE GROUP SHARING

10 MINS.

STATE the following:

1. Now I would like to call on some of your to share with the large group your response to number 1 of the Study Guide for Session 6 which states:

-The Bible is a religious interpretation of history. Write a brief religious interpretation of your own personal history.

2. Who would like to share your response to number 2 of the Study Guide for Session 6 which states:

-The history of the Covenant is the substance of the Bible. Explain how this is.

BEGIN SESSION SEVEN

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 73.

2. STATE session objective:

This session will bring us to an appreciation of Yahweh's gracious fidelity to His people in establishing the New Covenant.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

75 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:

- I. History of the Israelites: a story of falling away and coming back to the Covenant with Yahweh.
- II. The Scriptures use four very beautiful images to describe the relationship of Yahweh with His people.
- III. The Israelites were looking for a new relationship with Yahweh.
- IV. The prophet Jeremiah and the new covenant.
- V. The prophet Ezekiel and the new covenant.
- VI. Deutero-Isaiah and the new covenant.
- VII. The prophet Joel and the new covenant.
- VIII. The Gospels.
- IX. A review of the Passover-Exodus event and the making of the New Covenant.
- X. Conclusion.

2. TEACH expanded outline of the above key points:

I. History of the Israelites: a story of falling away and coming back to the Covenant with Yahweh.

- A. As we reflect on the history of the Israelites, from the time of the establishment of the Sinai Covenant --

-down to the time of Jesus' coming into history, we see, especially, from --

-the Historical Books and the Books of the Prophets, that this story is one of falling away and coming back to the Covenant with Yahweh.

1. The Covenant was not just a once-for-all contract but rather it required constant renewal and ever watchful fidelity.
2. Not to keep the Law, the precepts of the Covenant, was to sin.

B. We could spend hours just speaking of the concept of sin in the Scriptures. But since we do not have that kind of time, we will look briefly at the concept of sin in the Old Testament.

-There are three Hebrew words that describe sin in the Old Testament:

1. Hata = connotes the inability of the sinner to help himself/herself.
2. Pasa = is the situation of rebellion against Yahweh (Exodus 23:21).
3. Awon = is the inner rebellion of the man/woman who sins. It emphasizes the iniquity of the person, the weight of sinfulness, the person's inner injustice and personal guilt (Ezekiel 4:4).

C. The failure of the Israelites to abide by the Covenant was not just a matter of breaking a law here or there, isolated acts, but, it was the whole situation of rebellion that brought with it a terrible weight, a heavy burden of injustice, of unrighteousness.

1. Normally, such a betrayal of a treaty, a covenant, would lead to the absolute rupture between the two parties. But this Covenant was the act of Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who said of Himself:

-"The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...." (Ex.

34:6-7).

-And Moses responded very humbly to this encounter with God:

-And Moses made haste to bow his head toward the earth, and worshipped. And he said, "If now I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray thee, go in the midst of us, although it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thy inheritance" (Exodus 34: 8f).

2. This experience of Yahweh as a saving God, faithful, and merciful, gave the Israelites a clearer understanding of the nature of Covenant.

-The relationship between Yahweh and His people is not so much that of a master to his slave, or a king to his subject, but it is a personal relationship, a relationship that leads to communion.

II. The Scriptures use four very beautiful images to describe the relationship of Yahweh with His people.

- A. Yahweh is like a Father who trains His children (Read: Hosea 11: 1-4).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Hos. 11:1-4.

- B. Yahweh compares His love to a mother's love (Read: Isaiah 49: 14-16).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Is. 49:14-16.

- C. Yahweh is like a Good Shepherd who cares for His sheep (Read:

Ezekiel 34:11-16).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Ez. 34:11-16.

- D. And finally, the most powerful image used to convey this relationship is the relationship between a husband and his wife, that of marriage (Hosea 2:14-23).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Hos. 2:14-23.

1. The whole Book of Hosea carries this image. Yahweh is compared to a husband who has a faithless wife, a harlot whom he never throws out. He always brings her back.

-Now that is something to consider when you realize that stoning was the penalty for a woman caught in adultery.

2. Israel deserved destruction because of her infidelity, but Yahweh loved His people and took them back to Himself (Hosea 2:14-23).
3. This image of Yahweh in marriage to His people is also brought out in the major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

III. The Israelites were looking for a new relationship with Yahweh.

- A. The prophets praised the tremendous love of Yahweh for His people, His faithfulness, His steadfast love. And they dreamed of the day when --

-Israel would somehow be able to have that same faithfulness toward Yahweh.

- B. With the prophets, the promise of a new covenant is spoken of, an eternal covenant, an everlasting covenant of Yahweh with His

people.

IV. The prophet Jeremiah and the new covenant.

A. Jeremiah is the only prophet who calls it a "new" Covenant.

1. Jeremiah had 40 years of serving Yahweh as a prophet. It was he who called the people to fidelity before and during the destruction of Jerusalem, the final fall of Israel as a nation (627 B.C. to 587 B.C.).
2. Jeremiah foretells the coming of a new covenant in chapter 31, verses 31-34 of the Book of Jeremiah, a new economy of salvation that would surpass the one established on Mount Sinai (Read: Jeremiah 31:31-34).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Jer. 31:31-34.

3. The two covenants, the old and the new, are fundamentally the same: Yahweh established both of them. He took the initiative. Both of them are centered in God.
 - a) The people are the same, His chosen people. The Jews are first by birth and we are grafted on, as Paul brings out in Romans 11.
 - b) The response to the Covenant is expressed in the same obedience to the Law. The Law remains but it is fulfilled in the new law of love (See: Mt. 5:17).

B. What does the newness of the Covenant consist in if all the essentials of these covenants are the same?

1. The newness is in regard to its living reality in the people. It is going to be different in that the means to its being kept is different.
 - a) In Jeremiah 31:33, we are told, "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts."

b) Where was the Old Covenant written -- on stone tablets (Exodus 31:18; 34:28f; Deuteronomy 4:13; 5:22) or in a book (Exodus 24:7)?

2. The New Covenant is going to be written on their hearts. The New Covenant cannot be broken because this covenant has been made in the --

-blood of Jesus who is forever faithful. And it is His Spirit that is put into our hearts.

-We are unfaithful to the covenant insofar as we do not allow the Spirit of Jesus to form us into the image of Jesus.

3. The newness of the covenant is the new means given to Yahweh's people: the Holy Spirit -- who makes it possible for us to be faithful to the covenant. It is the interiorization of this commitment in Jesus.

-In view of this interiorization, the writing of the Law on the heart, the covenantal clause, "I will be their God, and they will be my people," brings out in a deeper way the close relationship that Yahweh has with His people.

C. Because we can speak of covenant as being the central theme of the Bible, this covenantal phrase, "I will be their God, and they will be my people," is --

-frequently repeated in the Old Testament and quoted in the New Testament (Read all: Jeremiah 7:23; 11:4b; 24:7; 30:22; 32:38; Ezekiel 11:20; 36:28; Zechariah 8:8; 13:9; and Leviticus 26:12.

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Jer. 7:23;

-Jer. 11:4b;

-Jer. 24:7;

-Jer. 30:22;

-Jer. 32:38;

-Ez. 11:20;

-Ez. 36:28;

-Zech. 8:8;

-Zech. 13:9;

-Lev. 26:12.

D. Another phrase that I would like to point out to you in Jeremiah 31: 34 is the phrase "for they shall all know me".

1. This "knowing" of God is that knowledge of God that makes it possible for me to recognize Him in my every day life, in every action and situation, and to do His will.

-In other words, it is that knowledge of God that makes it possible for me to have that attitude of life that sees all of living as religious.

2. To be one of the people of God is to be a religious person.

E. The concept of the "heart" is particularly the specialty of Jeremiah.

1. If you are reading another Book of the Old Testament and notice the phrase that speaks of God as searching the heart, you will immediately recognize it as Jeremian.
2. The editors, in putting the Bible together, would have inserted some of his phrases in other Books.
3. Jeremiah speaks of God as the searcher of the mind and the heart (Read: Jeremiah 11:20; 12:3a; 17:10; 20:12).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Jer. 11:20;

-Jer. 12:3a;

-Jer. 17:10;

-Jer. 20:12.

a) He knows that the heart is lacking, that it is hard, and so he asks that it might be purified, circumcised (Read: Jeremiah 4:4).

b) It is not difficult to see how the Lord could lead Jeremiah to understand and to speak of a "new heart."

4. In relation to the heart, it is easy to see how Jeremiah saw the Covenant as symbolized by marriage.

a) It is that kind of reality of love and mercy that asks for such an interior, sincere, and faithful relationship.

b) That is why it was so natural a thing for Paul to use the analogy of marriage, in Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 21-33, to bring out the relation between the Lord Jesus and His Church.

c) It is a matter of the heart, of fidelity to the Covenant. It is a relationship of knowledge, love, and obedience.

F. The old covenant was still too exterior. The new covenant would allow for an inner, unreserved fidelity.

V. The prophet Ezekiel and the new covenant.

A. Ezekiel was a contemporary of Jeremiah. They were preaching about the same time, with Ezekiel continuing to preach after Jeremiah's death, and his going into Exile with the Israelites.

-The Book of Ezekiel may have been written as late as 571 B.C.

B. In the Book of Ezekiel, we find that the people had betrayed and profaned the name of Yahweh in the sight of all the nations.

-Still Yahweh would bring about a mighty work of pardon and mercy (Ezekiel 34:23-25, 30; Read: Ezekiel 36:23-31).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Ez. 36:25-27.

1. The Spirit of God is going to be given and the activity of His Spirit will not produce just a passing change, but it will give an inner abiding power which will enable the people to live by Yahweh's statutes. And so, a new level of life will begin.
2. It is clear from Ezekiel 34 that this new life is connected with the mission of the Messiah promised to David.

-The promise of the New Covenant is connected with the appearance of a person, the Messiah, and through Him and in Him, this covenant would be made.

3. Another passage that brings out this new life to be given by the Spirit of God is found in Ezekiel, chapter 37, verses 1 to 5 (Read).

VI. Deutero-Isaiah and the new covenant.

The second part of the Book of Isaiah, chapters 40 to 55, are referred to as Deutero-Isaiah, because Catholic interpreters believe that these chapters are a later addition, written by an unknown author at the end of the exilic period.

-The historical setting is about two centuries after Isaiah's time (born about 765 B.C.). It is highly probable that he was a disciple of Isaiah and a prophet.

- A. Isaiah, chapters 40 to 55, also called the Book of Consolation or the Message of Consolation, expands this notion of new life.

-These chapters bring out that this new life will be lived through the inner abiding power of the Spirit of God given to the people.

- a) The Messianic Servant will be the center of a new covenant. All nations, not just Israel, but all nations will come flocking into this

new life (Read: Isaiah 54:1,10; 55:3-5).

b) The new covenant is spoken of beautifully in Isaiah, chapter 42, verses 1 to 9 (Read).

B. The Spirit of God is promised in various passages throughout the Books of Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel.

VII. The prophet Joel and the new covenant.

A. This same promise of the Spirit of God to be given to the people is taken up by Joel (Read: Revised Standard Version: Joel 2:28-32a; New American Bible: Joel 3:1-5a).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

Jl. 2:28-32a (3:1-5a).

1. Joel dates somewhere between 400 and 350 B.C. Like Deutero-Isaiah, Joel is Post-Exilic.
 2. In Joel, we have the promise of the Spirit of God to be given to the people of God, so that they can live out this new life in Jesus Christ, who alone is faithful to the keeping of the Covenant.
 3. The early Church saw the fulfillment of this promise at Pentecost. In the Book of Acts, chapter 2, verses 16-21, we have Peter quoting this passage from Joel (Read).
- B. What we've seen, then, is the foretelling of the new covenant by the Prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah and others.
- C. This new covenant is accomplished in the death-resurrection of Jesus and the giving of the Spirit, as recorded in the Gospels and the Book of Acts of the Apostles.

VIII. The Gospels.

A. It is from the Gospels that we learn who the Messiah is. It is Jesus. Jesus is the Person in whom and by whom the New Covenant is made.

-We learn how it is that Yahweh fulfills the promise that He made to His people through the prophets: that He would pour out His very own Spirit on all the people.

B. Before the fulfillment of this promise takes place, that is, before the establishment of the new covenant -- the Messiah Himself, Jesus of Nazareth -- promises to send His Spirit.

1. John, in his Gospel, gives the powerful discourse of Jesus at the Last Supper. And five times within this discourse, Jesus promises to send His Spirit (Read: John 14:16f, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 12-15).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Jn. 14:16f;

-Jn. 14:26;

-Jn. 15:26;

-Jn. 16:7.

2. In the Gospel of Luke, we have Jesus telling the disciples that He is going to send the promise of His Father upon them (Read: Luke 24:49).

C. With the New Covenant established and the Spirit of Jesus given, a new salvation, a new deliverance is given to God's people.

-Just as there was a first salvation, that is --

-a deliverance of the people from slavery to the Egyptians through the passover of the angel of the Lord; and

-the leading out of the Israelites from slavery to the Promised Land by Yahweh through His servant Moses; and

-the establishment of the Sinai Covenant with its ratification --

-so now, there is given a new salvation, a new deliverance of God's people -- the New Covenant -- ratified in the

blood of Jesus.

IX. A review of the Passover-Exodus Event and the making of the New Covenant.

A. The Passover-Exodus Event -- the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of the Egyptians and the making of the Sinai Covenant -- was the greatest happening in the history of the Jews.

1. It freed them from slavery and gave them a special relationship to Yahweh.

2. That relationship was sealed by a covenant ceremony on Mount Sinai with the sacrifice of an unblemished male animal.

a) The ritual of sprinkling of the blood of the oxen on the altar and on the people represented the sealing of the Covenant; the blood signifying the sharing of life between Yahweh and His people.

b) The animal then was burned and the choicest part was offered to Yahweh; the rest was eaten by the people. This eating of the sacrifice showed the communion that was had between Yahweh and His people.

B. In order to accomplish the New Covenant that was promised and to bring the Old Covenant to fulfillment and completion, Yahweh sent His only Son, who was the promised Messiah, to save His people.

1. It is at the Last Supper, set in the context of the Passover Meal, that Jesus presents the coming sacrifice of Himself as the sacrifice instituting the New Covenant promised by the prophets (Read: Luke 22:14-20).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Lk. 22:14-20.

2. We have in the Last Supper, the last celebration of the old rite

of the Passover-Exodus Event because now the hour for Jesus had come. The liturgical celebration of the Old Covenant was soon going to be only an image or type of the new.

3. Jesus is the New Passover, the New Exodus. He is Himself the New Covenant. Jesus is going to give Himself to the Father for us.

4. The sealing of the Covenant of Sinai was accomplished by the pouring of the blood of the animal on the altar (symbolizing God) and on the people. In the same way, the New Covenant was sealed by the blood of Jesus being poured out.
 - a) The New Covenant was accomplished on Calvary by the sacrifice of the unspotted Lamb, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, sealed by His blood being poured out.

 - b) Communion is established between God and the new people of God by their eating of the sacrifice of Jesus, that is, their eating of His body and drinking of His blood in the Eucharist.

5. We have a new revelation in the New Covenant: Jesus who is Lord, who is the Lamb of God, who is the Son of God, is Himself in His risen life, the New Covenant.

-Jesus Himself is the new relationship between God and man, and we are the New Israel, the Church.

6. Through His blood, peace is sealed. The sacrifice of Jesus is so perfect that it inaugurates an eternal, an everlasting, an ever faithful Covenant.
 - a) The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is overwhelmed with the New Covenant. I would recommend that you reflect on Hebrews, chapters 8 to 10.

 - b) The effect of the New Covenant is that:

-we are made sons of the Father; and we are

reconciled to the Father.

-This is a great Pauline theme (2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Romans 5:6-11).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Rom. 5:6-11.

-Reconciliation is first of all a gift, a gift that gives us the peace of Jesus and it is a vocation, a ministry.

7. It is through Jesus, then, that all humankind, that we, come in contact with God and share in the New Covenant.

-It is through baptism into Jesus that we receive His Spirit poured out upon us, as the prophet Ezekiel foretold (Read: Ezekiel 36:22-31).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Ez. 36:25-27.

- a) It is through the indwelling Spirit of Jesus that we are able to keep the new commandment of love that Jesus gave us, which is the culmination, the perfection of the Old Law (Read: John 15:12).
- b) There is a strong identification here of the law of love with the Covenant sacrifice. We are to love as Jesus loves, lay down our lives in union with Him, for one another (Read: John 13:34f).

X. Conclusion.

- A. In summary, then, what we have talked about is the fundamental connecting link between the Old Testament and the New Testament and that is: Covenant.

1. The Old Covenant prepares the way for the establishment of

the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus.

2. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, who by His death and resurrection unites us to the Father, gives us life, new life, abundant life, and empowers us in His Spirit, the New Covenant, that we might live, not for ourselves, but for Him.

- B. I would recommend that you reflect on the Gospel of John. He has much to say about Jesus giving life eternal to those who believe in Him.

-Jesus is the source of the Spirit who is going to be a living spring within each believer (Read: John 7:37-39).

COMMUNITY LUNCH**70 MINS.**

1. ASK one of the trainees to pray a blessing over the lunch.
2. GIVE time for all to get their lunch and to be seated.
3. STATE the following:

During this lunchtime we want to give each of you the opportunity to share. The question we will share on is:

-How have the scripture sessions we've covered so far helped you?

Please keep your sharing on the question and be brief so that everyone has a chance to share. Thank you. We will take our turn as we go around the circle.

4. STATE a positive reinforcement after all have shared: "Thank you very much for your sharing. The Lord is doing a good work in all of our lives."
5. ASK all to help clean up after lunch so that everyone will be ready for Session Four.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY**90 MINS.**

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 88 and we will go over the Study Guide. You are to write out your responses to the following questions and be prepared to share them in your small group.

1. You are proclaiming the Good News to Ted, telling him that God is a God of love. He says, "That shows you haven't read the Bible. In the Old Testament, God is a God of war, nothing but destruction and slaughter." Show him the images of love relationship that are used for God in the Old Testament.
2. What is the newness of the New Covenant? What is your personal experience of the effect of the New Covenant in your life?

-I will share with you now some sample responses to these reflection questions.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You have 20 minutes now to do numbers one and two of this Study Guide. Please gauge your time.

-Now you are to do number 3 of the Study Guide which states:

3. Write out KEY REFERENCES for Session Eight.

-You have 65 minutes to do number 3 of the Study Guide. Please watch your time.

CLOSING PRAYER

15 MINS.

1. GIVE ten minutes for prayer partners to pray together.
2. ASK group to turn to SH page 130 and stand.
3. SIGNAL music and prayer leaders forward.
4. DISMISS group once prayer time is finished.

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION EIGHT

AN OVERVIEW OF THE THEME OF COVENANT

OBJECTIVE

To give an overview of the history of Yahweh's covenantal love for His people.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 137.
3. The instructor needs to determine, during preparation time, which key reference/ passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a Scripture reference, during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.
5. Assist small group leaders with any problems concerning the trainees that may arise.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 255 Minutes

OPENING PRAYER

10 MINS.

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 131 and stand.
 2. SIGNAL for music and prayer leaders to begin.
 3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
 4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.
-

BEGIN SESSION EIGHT

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 89.
2. STATE session objective:

This session will provide an overview of the history of Yahweh's covenantal love for His people.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

120 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:
 - I. Covenants were the usual way of dealing with one another in the ancient world.
 - II. The Sinai Covenant.
 - III. The prophetic view of the Covenant.
 - IV. The reflection of the sacred writers on Israel's history has for its beginning the doctrine of the Covenant.
 - V. A new covenant.
 - VI. The making of the new covenant by Jesus.
 - VII. The fundamental intuition of the New Testament.

2. TEACH expanded outline of the above key points:

- I. Covenants were the usual way of dealing with one another in the ancient world.***

- A. Covenants were used to express many kinds of relationships such as:

- covenants of peace (Genesis 21:22ff; 26:28; 31:43ff; 15:19);
 - covenants of brothers (Amos 1:9);
 - covenants of friendship (1 Samuel 23:18);
 - covenants of marriage (Malachi 2:14).

- B. This was the fundamental experience of Israel. So it is natural to find Israel presenting her experience of God in similar terms.

- II. The Sinai Covenant.****

- A. At Sinai, the Israelites enter into a Covenant, an agreement with Yahweh, and are made into the people of God, a religious nation.

1. God chose Israel without merit on her part (Deuteronomy 9:4ff) because He loved her and wanted to keep the promise He had made to her fathers (Deuteronomy 7:6ff).

- He separated Israel from pagan nations in order to reserve her

for Himself exclusively; Israel was to be His own people. She would serve Him with her worship. She would become a kingdom, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

2. The Sinai Covenant, therefore, sets in motion the total future development of Israel.

B. How was the Covenant sealed? The Covenant was ratified in a liturgical ceremony: the sprinkling of blood on the altar and on the people, symbolizing that now the people and Yahweh are one.

C. Once the Covenant was concluded, certain objects would perpetuate the initial Covenant of Israel. These important objects were: the Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting (the Tabernacle).

1. The Ark of the Covenant. It was a small container, the shape of a small trunk or chest, about 4 feet in length and 2-1/2 feet in width and depth, in which were placed the "tablets of the Law."

a) It was a memorial (a remembrance) of the Covenant and the sign of the presence of God in Israel (the P tradition in Exodus 25:10-22 and Exodus 37:1-9 discuss the Ark's construction (Read these passages; also Numbers 10:33-36).

-(Cubit: tip of a man's elbow to the tip of the index finger -- approximately 18.)"

b) Originally, the Ark apparently was a portal throne upon which, it was firmly believed, Yahweh was invisibly enthroned.

-Israel was not allowed to worship Yahweh in any visible form. In this, she differed from the other religions around her who had their deity's image set up in their temples.

c) During their desert wandering and in times of battle, Yahweh went before them as their leader enthroned upon the Ark. The "Song of the Ark" found in the Pentateuch is one of the oldest fragments in the Pentateuch (Read: Numbers 10:35f).

2. The Tent (or Tabernacle) of Meeting. It was a tent in which the Ark of the Covenant was placed. Externally, it probably looked similar to the common nomadic tents of the Israelites.

a) The P tradition describes elaborately for us this tent or tabernacle in Exodus 26-27 and 35-38. Not all of what is given here fits the ancient situation; a large portion of this section reflects later development.

-Of course, the P tradition, without question, preserves authentic remembrances of this ancient desert tent of meeting.

- b) We are told that Moses pitched the Tent outside the camp. There he would go to encounter Yahweh who descended in a pillar of cloud to the door of the tent and --

-would speak with him, as Exodus 33, verse 11 tells us: "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend."

- c) Here was the place of meeting with Yahweh where the word of Yahweh was proclaimed to Israel. Those having difficult problems brought them to the Tent and Moses took their petitions to Yahweh.
- d) The tent, a figure of the future temple that will be built in Jerusalem, was the place of meeting between Yahweh and His people (Read: Exodus 33:7-11).

3. The Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting.

- a) Other ancient peoples had objects like the Ark and the Tent. Through Moses' interpretation, these objects were expressions of Israel's distinctive faith.
- b) What the Ark seems to represent is a theology of presence -- Yahweh present with His people.
- c) What the Tent seems to represent is a theology of manifestation -- God manifesting Himself to Israel.
- d) As a rule, the Ark remained in the Tent (the Tabernacle) but in times of battle it was taken out.

-Around 1050 B.C., the Philistines captured the Ark (cf. 1 Samuel 4). When returned, it was brought to Kiriath-jearim (cf. 1 Samuel 7).

-David later took it to the house of Obed-edom and later to Jerusalem (cf. 2 Samuel 6).

- e) With the completion of the Temple by Solomon, David's son, about 960 B.C., the Ark was put in the Holy of Holies and remained there until 587 B.C. when it disappeared with the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians.

-A legend has it that Jeremiah saved the Ark from destruction by hiding it (Read: 2 Maccabees 2:4-8; See also: Hebrews 8-10 -- gives comments on worship centered on God enthroned on the Ark of the Covenant).

4. Both of these objects: the Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting mark the perpetual bond of Israelite worship with

the Covenant of Sinai. It is this bond which gave Israelite worship its specific significance.

5. The entire Law makes sense only because of the Covenant.

D. The Book of Leviticus is concerned with laws and rites that have to do with how divine worship is to be organized and carried out.

1. It emphasizes the 'holy' nature of Israel, this newly established kingdom. The nature of this new kingdom is clearly stated in the words of Yahweh on Mount Sinai, when He says at the time of establishing His Covenant on Sinai --

-". . . you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a *holy nation*" (Exodus 19:6a).

a) These words from Yahweh on Mount Sinai resonate throughout the whole book of Leviticus and become explicit in these words from Leviticus --

-"For I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. . . For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy (Leviticus 11:44-45).

-"Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy" (Leviticus 19:2; 20:7; 20:26; 22:31-33).

b) What moral laws are to dictate the behavior of Israel who has been called to such familiarity with God? The Code of Legal Holiness, found in chapters 17-26, answers that question.

-Their conduct is to be governed by the basic law given in this section in Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Jesus teaches this also in: Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27b).

2. Leviticus can be summed up in the words of Jesus in John 15:19, ". . . you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world."

a) Both Jew and Christian are to be separated from the world, a separation which brings both close to God. The closer to God one comes, the holier he or she must be.

b) The word "holy" in the primitive understanding means to be separated from what is profane and set aside for the service of God -- a movement away from the world and a movement toward God.

E. What Leviticus shows us about the organization of worship, Numbers demonstrates in the organization of Israel as a community -- both being centered around the Ark and the Tent of Meeting -- the dwelling of God in the midst of His people.

-The message of Numbers -- the organization of the community -- does not capture the interest of most people. However, Numbers offers a timeless message --

-we are to serve God unreservedly like Caleb with total trust -- a call given to each of us (Read: Numbers 14:24).

F. The Book of Deuteronomy brings out that Israel was brought into existence as a nation through the great love of God. She was meant to grow and develop by returning that love through loyalty and obedience. This is clearly brought out in Exodus 19:5-6a and 8 (Read).

G. What the Pentateuch gives us then is:

-the origin of the nation in Genesis;
-the birth of the nation in Exodus;
-the holy nature of this new kingdom in Leviticus;
-the organization of the nation as a community in Numbers;
-and what the spirit of Israel is to be in Deuteronomy -- a spirit of love expressed in the words of Deuteronomy 6:5-9 (Read).

1. Deuteronomy's purpose is to drive these words into Israel's consciousness and make each one of them realize how much God loves them and how much He desires them to love Him in return.
2. The words of Deuteronomy 6:5 reflect the words of Yahweh on Mount Sinai (Read: Exodus 19:5-6a and 8).

H. Because of its vital importance, the Covenant was solemnly renewed by the people.*

1. Joshua renewed it at Shechem and the people recommitted themselves to Yahweh (Joshua 8:30-35; 24:1-28).
2. The Covenant of David with the elders of Israel (2 Samuel 5:3) was followed by a divine promise: Yahweh granted His covenant to David and to his dynasty (2 Samuel 7:8-16; 23:5; Psalm 89:4f; Psalm 89:20-38) only on the condition that the Covenant of Sinai be faithfully observed (Psalms 89:31-34; 132:12).
3. The prayer and the blessing of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, were bound at the same time to this Davidic Covenant and to that of Sinai, of which the temple was a memorial (1 Kings

8:14-29, 52-61).

4. King Josiah initiated an important renewal (2 Kings 23:1ff; cf. Exodus 24:3-8).
 5. The solemn reading of the Law by Ezra presents a similar context of Covenant renewal (Nehemiah 8).
- I. In all of this, we see that the Covenant is the directing force for all religious reforms.

III. The prophetic view of the Covenant.*

- A. The message of the prophets refers constantly to the Covenant. They unanimously denounced the infidelity of Israel toward her God.
- They preached about the catastrophes which threaten a sinful people. They did this in view of the Covenant of Sinai because of its demands and its punishments to which Israel had agreed.
- B. To keep alive the doctrine of the Sinai Covenant, the prophets brought out new aspects which the ancient tradition contained implicitly.
1. They enlivened the understanding of the mutual relationships of God and His people with emotional overtones by searching human experience for other analogies to explain it.
 2. They tried to bring out this love relationship of God for His people using analogies the people could understand.
 3. Such analogies are:
 - a) Israel is the flock and Yahweh the Shepherd (Ezekiel 34; John 10).
 - b) Israel is the vine and Yahweh the Vinedresser (Isaiah 5:1-7; John 15).
 - c) Israel is the son and Yahweh the Father (Hosea 11:1-7; Matthew 6:6-18).
 - d) Israel is the spouse and Yahweh the Bridegroom (Ezekiel

**Taken from Ellis, Peter F., *The Men and Message of the Old Testament*, College-ville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1976, pp. 34, 36, 41, 46-47.

16:6-14; Book of Hosea; Revelation 21:9-14).

4. These images, especially, the last one, that of spouse and bridegroom, show the Sinai Covenant as an encounter of love (cf. Ezekiel 16:6-14) -- Israel as spouse and Yahweh as bridegroom.

-The Covenant is the gift of God's love calling for a return of love which will manifest itself in obedience.

5. The spirituality of the Book of Deuteronomy demonstrates the fruit of this deepening experience.

-Though the Book of Deuteronomy continually recalls the demands, the promises, and the threats of the Covenant, it emphasizes the love of God (Read: Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:8; 10:15) that waits for the love of Israel in return (Read: Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12f; 11:1).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Deuteronomy 4:37;

-Deuteronomy 7:8;

-Deuteronomy 10:15;

-Deuteronomy 6:5;

-Deuteronomy 10:12f;

-Deuteronomy 11:1.

6. All of this simply heightens the fundamental expression of the Sinai Covenant: "You are My people and I am your God."

-Israel's love for God should naturally show itself in obedience.

IV. The reflection of the sacred writers on Israel's history has for its beginning the doctrine of the Covenant.*

When the sacred writers reflect on Israel's history, their point of departure is the central theme of the Covenant.

- A. The Yahwist linked the Covenant of Sinai with the more ancient covenant concluded by Abraham, the framework of the first promises (Genesis 15).

B. The Deuteronomic writers, retracing the history of the Israelites which had taken place from the time of Moses to the destruction of Jerusalem (Book of Joshua through 2 Kings), want us to grasp in the events, the application of the Sinai Covenant.

-They have no other purpose in view but to make the reader grasp, in these events, the application of the Sinai Covenant. In other words, whatever happens to the Israelites is directly related to how well they keep the covenant.

1. Yahweh has fulfilled His promise, but the infidelity of His people has also forced Him to punish them as He said He would.
2. This is the meaning of the twofold destruction of Samaria in the North by Assyria in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17:7-23) and of Jerusalem in the South in 587 B.C. when the people were carried off into exile to Babylon (2 Kings 23:26f).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-2 Kgs. 23:26f.

C. During the Captivity in Babylon (587 B.C. - 539 B.C.), the Priestly Historian retraces the plan of God from creation to the Mosaic era. The Covenant of Sinai serves as a guide for him.

1. After the fall of man and the growing evil of mankind, which blocks the creative plan of God, there is the catastrophe of the flood.
2. Then a covenant is made with Noah and all of creation (Genesis 9:1-17).
3. After the second failure of man to cooperate with the creative plan of God and the dispersion of Babel, the covenant with Abraham restricts the plan exclusively to the offspring of Abraham (Genesis 17:1-14).
4. After the slavery of the Hebrews in Egypt, the Sinai Covenant prepared the future by bringing into existence the people of God.

D. And so Israel grasps the meaning of her history by referring herself back to the Covenant of Sinai.

COMMUNITY BREAK

15 MINS.

V. A new covenant.*

A. The Break-Up of the Old Covenant.

The prophets, turning their eyes to the future, presented the drama of the Israelites and their relationship to a God who bound Himself to them.

1. Because of the infidelity of Israel (Jeremiah 22:9), the Sinai Covenant was found broken (Jeremiah 31:32), just like a marriage which fails because of the adulteries of the wife (Hosea 2:4; Ezekiel 16:15-43).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Jeremiah 31:32.

2. God did not take the initiative in this breach, but He drew from it the consequence that Israel will suffer for her infidelity. The breaking of the Covenant by Israel will be the meaning of her national trials -- the destruction of Jerusalem, the exile, and the dispersion.
 - a) The dispersion or the Diaspora referred to those Jews scattered in other countries -- those who lived outside of the Holy Land.
 - b) Not all exiles returned from Babylon. Many preferred to remain, and they made up the largest portion of the Jews of the Diaspora or Dispersion.
 - c) Other groups gathered in the course of time in Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome.
 - d) What separated them from those with whom they lived was their religious separation and as a result were more and more persecuted.

B. The Promise of the New Covenant.

Despite all of this, the plan of the covenant revealed by God remains unchanged (Jeremiah 31:35ff; 33:20f).

1. There will be a new covenant that will reestablish peace between humankind and the rest of creation (Hosea 2:20-24 -- New American Bible; Hosea 2:18-22 -- Revised Standard Version).
2. Jeremiah states precisely that the human heart will be changed

for the Law of God will be inscribed in it (Jeremiah 31:33f; 32:37-41).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Jeremiah 31:33f;

-Jeremiah 32:39-40.

3. Ezekiel announces the conclusion of an eternal covenant, of a covenant of peace (Ezekiel 36:26), which will renew that of Sinai (Ezekiel 16:60) and that of David (34:23f), and will bring about a change of heart and the gift of the Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26ff).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Ezekiel 36:26-28.

C. And so the plan of God will be achieved: "You will be My people and I will be your God" (Jeremiah 31:33; 32:38; Ezekiel 36:28; 37:27).

1. The plan of the Covenant that dominates all of human history will find its culmination at the end of time.
2. Revealed in an imperfect way in the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Davidic Covenants, the Covenant will finally materialize in perfect form, at once interior and universal, by the mediation of the Servant of Yahweh.
 - a) This Covenant will be as firm as that which was sworn to Noah (Isaiah 54:9f).
 - b) It will be a Covenant that is made of the graces promised to David (Isaiah 55:3).
 - c) And the one who will make the Covenant is the mysterious Servant whom Yahweh set up as the "Covenant of the People" and the "Light to the Nations" (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6-8).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Isaiah 42:6;

-Isaiah 49:6-8.

D. The history of Israel will be turned toward the future, toward the new covenant.

VI. The making of the new covenant by Jesus.*

- A. After having taken bread and distributed it saying, "Take and eat, this is my body," Jesus took the cup of wine, blessed it, and passed it around.
1. We will look at the different formulas given for this in the Gospels.
 - a) The shortest formula is preserved by Mark:

-"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (Mark 14:24).
 - b) Matthew adds "for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28).
 - c) Luke and Paul say, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25).
 - d) Luke alone says, "which is going to be shed for you" (Luke 22:20).
 2. The passing of the cup is a ritual gesture. The words pronounced bind it to that act which Jesus is on the verge of accomplishing: His death -- accepted freely for the redemption of many.
 3. From this gesture, it is evident that Jesus regards Himself as the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53:11f) and understands His death as an atoning sacrifice (cf. Isaiah 53:10).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Isaiah 53:10.

4. In this way, Jesus becomes the mediator of the covenant which the Message of Consolation in Isaiah hints at (Isaiah 42:6).
- B. But the "blood of the covenant" recalls also that the Covenant of Sinai had been concluded in blood (Exodus 24:8).

-Now the sacrifice of animals is substituted by a new sacrifice, the blood of Jesus, which will efficaciously achieve a definitive union between God and humankind which cannot be broken.

- C. And so the promise of the "new covenant" announced by Jeremiah and Ezekiel is fulfilled. Through the blood of Jesus, human hearts will be changed and the Spirit of God will be given.

- D. This act, this death of Christ, at once the sacrifice of Passover, the

sacrifice of Covenant, and atoning sacrifice, will henceforth be rendered present in a ritual gesture -- the Eucharist -- which Jesus commanded us to "do again in memory of Him."

-It is through the Eucharist that the faithful will be united most intimately to the mystery of the New Covenant and will benefit from its graces.

VII. The fundamental intuition of the New Testament.

A. The idea that a new and definitive exodus has been accomplished in Jesus Christ appears as a fundamental intuition in almost all of the New Testament writers.

-It seems clear that Jesus Himself understood His mission in terms of a new exodus.

B. We will look more closely at this in the chart you have in your handbook. ***

The Exodus of Israel

-Just as God had chosen Israel as His "son" in the exodus (Exodus 4:22),

-Just as God had once led His people out of Egypt into the wilderness to test them (Deuteronomy 8:2),

The Exodus of Jesus

-John the Baptist had appeared as the herald of a new exodus event. Out in the wilderness, where the history of Israel had first begun, God would create a new people for Himself (Mark 1:1-3 with Exodus 23:20-21; Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3).

-so at the baptism in the Jordan, God declared that Jesus is His Son (Mark 1:11).

-so, too, Jesus, the new Israel, was led out into the wilderness to be tempted (Mark 1:12; Matthew 4:1-11).

-The three temptations which Jesus faced during the forty days were in reality the very same temptations

*Taken from, Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, New York: Seabury Press, 1973, pp. 93-97.

The Exodus of Israel

- In the transfiguration narrative: just as God had revealed His glory to Moses after six days (Exodus 24:13-16),
- Just as the countenance of Moses had been transformed to shine with glory (Exodus 34:29-31),
- Just as we have the thunder on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19),
- God reveals the Torah stipulations, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).
- The Torah which Moses had given to Israel had contained only the dim outlines of God's will for His people.

The Exodus of Jesus

which Israel had faced during the forty years in the wilderness, and before which Israel had failed.

- the revelation of Jesus' glory takes place "after six days" (Mark 9:2).
- so, too, is Jesus transfigured (Mark 9:2-8).
- so, too, we have God's voice thundering (John 12:27-31).
- God did not reveal to the disciples any list of Torah stipulations, as He had done at Sinai. On the Mount of the Transfiguration, He simply pointed to His Son Jesus and said, "Listen to Him!"
- Jesus will teach the disciples a new commandment which would include all the others, but He would teach it not only with His words, but more importantly, by what He would do: His death and resurrection.
- The evangelist Matthew put particular emphasis on Jesus as the giver of a new Torah who was Himself the living Torah.
- Jesus came to make that revelation complete:
- "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you,

The Exodus of Israel

The Exodus of Jesus

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:43).

-Jesus, however, was not merely the giver of the new Torah, the commandment of love; He was in Himself the revelation of this Torah.

-According to one rabbinic saying:

-Where two sit down together and the Words of the Torah are between them, there abides the Shekina (the divine presence) in the midst of them.

-So Jesus says of Himself:

- "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

-Because the Torah of the New Covenant is not an external word, but the bearer of the very presence of Jesus, He closes with the promise: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

-Wherever the new commandment of love is taught and lived, Jesus Himself will be present, for He is the Torah of love come down to live among men and women.

B. The Fourth Gospel might very well be called the "Paschal" Gospel for it presents the entire ministry, passion, and glorification of Jesus as the Passover mystery.

-He is called the "Lamb of God" by John, the Baptist (John 1: 29). And according to John's Gospel, Jesus is crucified on the

***Taken from, James Plastaras, C.M., *Creation and Covenant*, New York: Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1968, pp. 194-196.

feast of Passover (John 18:28).

There is hardly a page of John's Gospel that does not contain at least one allusion to the Exodus.

1. Now at what point in His public ministry did Jesus most clearly present this paschal interpretation of His mission to the disciples?

-At the institution of the Eucharist.

- a) The Last Supper took place in a paschal setting at the time of the Passover.
- b) When Jesus proclaimed to His disciples the meaning of His impending death in the blessing of the bread and of the wine, He would have necessarily --

-related this final saving deed of God to the history of the liberation of the Hebrews from Egypt and the gift of the promised land.

- c) The whole purpose of the Passover celebration was to recall in thankfulness the saving works of the first exodus, and to stir up hope in an even greater deliverance yet to come.
- d) Jesus told His disciples that the hour had finally come when all the promises inherent in the Passover story were about to be accomplished (Read: Luke 22:14-16).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Luke 22:14-16.

- e) In the blessing over the cup, Jesus proclaimed that the hour had at last come for the establishment of the New Covenant which had been spoken of by the prophets -- "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (I Corinthians 11:25).

2. In the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus linked the central event of the new dispensation: His passion, death, and resurrection with the central event of the Old Testament, the --

-passover from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the promised Land and the Covenant.

3. So the Covenant God made with Abraham (Genesis 12:2f; 22:16-18) is finally fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Genesis 12:2f;

-Genesis 22:16-18.

- a) We have become "a royal priesthood and a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9; cf. Exodus 19:5f).
- b) This privilege of being a royal priesthood and a holy nation is now extended to a community in which men and women "of every race, tongue, people and nation" can become a member (Revelation 5:9f).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Revelation 5:9f.

SHARING GROUPS

30 MINS.

STATE the following:

- a) I invite you now to move into your small groups.
- b) You will be sharing your responses to the reflections given in SH page 88.
- c) Your small group leader will begin and end the small group sharing with prayer.
- d) Your small group leader will begin the sharing on each reflection in order to model how to share and the length of the sharing.
- e) Each person is to share what (s)he has prepared for the first reflection for Session Four; then move on to the second reflection and do the same.
- f) If you have not written anything down, then you may not share. Sharing from what you have written is to help avoid rambling on. Please be brief and to the point and considerate of those who have yet to share.

2. You have 25 minutes now for this sharing. Please gauge your time well.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

60 MINS.

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 104 and we will go over the Study Guide. You are to write out your responses to the following questions and be prepared to share them in your small group.

1. God wills to have an intimate relationship with His people. What analogies are used in the Old and New Testament to show this?
2. The Gospel of John can be called the "Paschal" Gospel. Explain how this is.

-I will share with you now some sample responses to these reflection questions.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You have 15 minutes now to do numbers one and two of this Study Guide. Please gauge your time.

-Now you are to do number 3 of the Study Guide which states:

3. Write out KEY REFERENCES for Session Nine.

-You have 40 minutes now to do number 3 of the Study Guide. Please watch your time.

LARGE GROUP SHARING

10 MINS.

STATE the following:

1. Now I would like some of you to share with the large group your response to number 2 of the Study Guide for Session 7 which states:

-God wills to have an intimate relationship with His people. What analogies are used in the Old and New Testament to show this?

2. Who would like to share on number 3 of the Study Guide which states:

-The Gospel of John can be called the "Paschal" Gospel. Explain how this is.

COMMUNITY BREAK

10 MINS.

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION NINE

SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

OBJECTIVE

To present an overview of the New Testament.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 154.
3. The instructor needs to determine, during preparation time, which key reference/ passages (s)he needs in order to exemplify the content. UPON arriving at a Scripture reference, during instruction of content, OPEN Bible and PROCLAIM that passage.
4. At the end of presentation, ASK if there are any questions about presented material and ANSWER questions by quoting from presented material.
5. Assist small group leaders with any problems concerning the trainees that may arise.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 130 Minutes

BEGIN SESSION NINE

1. ASK group to turn to SH page 105.
2. STATE session objective:

In this session, we will present an overview of the New Testament.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

55 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:
 - I. Four mistaken notions about the New Testament.
 - II. The content of the New Testament.
 - III. Three groups of writings in the New Testament: the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Books of the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation.
 - IV. Jesus as Messiah or Savior.
 - V. As a result of this new understanding of God in Jesus, some new insights were given to the apostles and to us.

2. TEACH expanded outline of the above key points:

- I. Four mistaken notions about the New Testament.**

- A. There are four mistaken notions about the New Testament:

1. The New Testament is not a strict biography of Jesus, even though it does give data about His life on earth.
2. The New Testament is not a moral code, though it does suggest how people ought to live if they want to follow Jesus and have more life.
3. The New Testament is not strictly a history book, even though some parts of it are historical.
4. The New Testament is not a book of prophecy. It is not written to tell us what to expect in the future, though it does contain prophetic writing.

-And one Book attempts to paint an ideal picture of what it will be like when God's kingdom on earth is realized.

- B. Having gotten these misconceptions out of the way, we can give a broad definition of the New Testament as --

-that collection of written materials, which Christians

believe relate the most important event in the history of the world, the appearance of Jesus, who is the Christ, who is God expressing Himself humanly.

II. The content of the New Testament.

A. For the purpose of providing ourselves with a general understanding of the content of the New Testament Books, we will put them in the same categories as we put the Books of the Old Testament, namely: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

1. The Law.

- a) In the Old Testament, the Law established the religious community of the Jewish people.
- b) In the New Testament, the Books which correspond to this concept are the Four Gospels, giving the basis for understanding what the Christian community is.

2. The Prophets.

- a) In the Old Testament, the prophets reminded the Jewish people what it meant to be the chosen people living the Covenant that Yahweh had established with them.
- b) In the New Testament, the Books that call Christians to the New Covenant are the Letters of the Apostles --

-Paul, John, James, Jude, Peter, reminding the Christians, reminding us, of what it means to live as Christians who are alive with the Spirit of the Lord Jesus.

3. The Writings.

- a) In the Old Testament, all the other Books that convey to the people that God is a saving God who has established a Covenant with His chosen people and who is faithful, are referred to as the Writings.
- b) In the New Testament, those Books that deal with the affairs and concerns of the people of the New Covenant are referred to as the Book of the Acts of the Apostles and the Book of Revelation.

-The Book of Acts of the Apostles is about the beginnings of the community.

-The Book of Revelation is about an imagined end, what it will be like when God comes in glory at the end of the world, to --

-bring all men and women to Himself, to establish His kingdom in its fullness.

- 4. That is the first similarity we want to make between the Books of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament.

B. The second similarity is one that was already mentioned briefly in session four concerning the growth of the Bible.

- 1. The Old and the New Testament developed in stages:

- a) Oral Tradition: the preaching of the apostles;

- b) Written Tradition: the Epistles, then the Gospels;

- c) Editing: The New Testament put in its final form as we have it today.

- 2. The most common assumption is that the Gospels were written first. Research has shown that was not the case.

- a) Many of the Epistles of Paul were the first to be written.
 - b) The Christian communities were beginning and, therefore, there were needs to be addressed. Paul and the other authors of the Epistles write to these Christian communities to address their needs.
- C. The third similarity of the New Testament with that of the Old Testament is one that you are all very familiar with and that is that the whole Bible is united in its central theme: Covenant.

-The Old Covenant prepared for the establishment of the New Covenant.

III. Three groups of writings in the New Testament: the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Books of the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation.

We will look now very briefly at these three groups of writings that we have in the New Testament.

A. The Gospels:

1. First, it is important to remember that the Gospels are remembered eyewitness accounts of Jesus' words and actions during His short public ministry of preaching, His passion, and after His resurrection.
2. Much of these written accounts were not recorded until some 30 to 40 years after the death of Jesus. Mark is the first Gospel written, sometime around 65 to 70 A.D.

- a) In some measure, this accounts for some of the same stories being told in a different way, with differing details in the four Gospels. These are referred to as parallel passages.

-For example, compare Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21 (Read each account).

- b) It is the ordinary thing for different witnesses to remember some things, forget others, put items in different order, or not mention them at all if they do not fit the purpose for

which they are writing.

3. The Gospels were very much influenced by the purpose of the author writing and the audience to whom he was writing.
 - a) These influences dictated the shape, form, and the content of the New Testament.
 - b) The central purpose of the Gospel writers, the Evangelists, is to present Jesus as the expected Jewish Messiah, the One in whom God's final, definitive, revelation is made manifest.

B. The Epistles: How They Came To Be.

1. The Epistles are letters that were written by various apostles to the Christian Communities with whom they had been living and working.
 - a) As you well know, these letters are special. They provide rich food for reflection and meditation on the meaning of Jesus for the Christian Community.
 - b) For that reason they were preserved and later became part of the Christian tradition, being included in the Sacred Scriptures.
2. It is important to note that the Letters were written after the Gospel was proclaimed and after the Christian Community had been set up and in existence for awhile.

-So the Epistles presume a Christian Community in action. And that is why they are so meaningful for us, since we are a Christian Community living the new covenant life.
3. The Letters deal with teaching, worship, and with the practice of the Way--the Christians were referred to as those belonging to the Way--that is, the way of Jesus Christ (Read: Acts 9:1f).

- a) These Epistles are like letters of a bishop to his diocese about the universal problems of the Christian Community that is trying to live up to its commitment to the Lord Jesus.
- b) The Epistles point to the fact that even though the Gospel is preached and accepted, we are still very much in the flesh. Not every area of our lives is given over to Jesus Christ (Read: 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-1 Cor. 3:1-3;

-Heb. 5:12-14.

C. The Books of the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation.

1. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles: follows a Greek form of historical literature which was written to glorify famous or important men.

- a) Luke develops the role of Peter as head of the Apostles in the first 12 chapters of the Acts of the Apostles and then devotes the rest of the Book to Paul's activities outside of the Jewish Communities.

-If you have not read the whole Book of the Acts of the Apostles all the way through, I would recommend that you do so.

-You will learn a great deal about the beginnings of the Church, the formation of the first Christian Communities.

- b) The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is a "gospel" of the Holy Spirit because it proclaims the action of the Spirit in the formation of the Church (Acts 1:15-2:4).
- c) Throughout the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, it is made clear that it is the Spirit who works through certain men to accomplish the purpose of God.

- d) The Book of the Acts of the Apostles together with Luke's Gospel form a comprehensive picture of God's plan for His creation.
- e) This two-volume work shows that the Old Testament promises are fulfilled in the person of Jesus and in the "new" people of God.
- f) The scope of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles is laid out in Acts 1:8 --

-"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

- g) The chapters that follow show how the apostles carried out this mission of evangelization, of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- h) The Book of the Acts of the Apostles shows the Christian Church in its formative period and its gradual growth to become the universal Church.

2. The Book of Revelation: is written in visionary, symbolic, picture language unique to its own time and circumstances.

- a) Three literary forms have an influence on this Book:

-The Apocalyptic Form: always concerned with the "end times," the last period of world history, and the final catastrophes of that time, the powers of evil in a last violent struggle with God.

-The Prophetic Form: In the Book of Revelation, the author presents himself as having a mission very similar to the Old Testament prophets (Revelation 10:8-11). He relates receiving his mission in Revelation 1:9-20.

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Rev. 10:8-11.

-The Epistle Form: The Book is framed, beginning and end, with the usual formulas used in the other Epistles of the New Testament (Revelation 1:4-7; 22:21).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Rev. 1:4-7;

-Rev. 22:21.

- b) The probable date of the writing of the Book of Revelation is somewhere between 90 to 96 A.D., which would be toward the end of the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian.
 - c) Because Domitian was very serious about emperor worship and insisted upon receiving divine homage, he was not too fond of Christians who insisted on worshipping Jesus whom they called Lord and God.
 - d) The Book of Revelation, therefore, is written during the time of great persecution. The language that is used is extremely symbolic and the images are extreme.
- Today, we would call such writings underground literature.
- e) I would suggest that when you read the Book of Revelation, you do so in conjunction with a commentary in order to grasp the meaning behind the symbols.
 - f) Most of the symbols are borrowed from the prophetic tradition.
 - g) Examples of some symbols used in the Book of Revelation are the following:

-woman=a people (12:1ff), or a city (17:1ff);

-horns=power (5:6), especially dynastic power (13:1);

- eyes=knowledge (1:14; 2:18; 4:6; 5:6);
- wings=mobility (4:8; 12:14);
- trumpets=in them hear a superhuman, divine voice (1:10; 8:2ff);
- sharp sword=Word of God which judges and punishes (1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21);
- white robes=the world of glory (6:11; 7:9);
- palms=sign of triumph (7:9);
- crowns=dominion and kingship (2:10; 3:11; 4:10);
- sea=an evil element, source of insecurity and death (13:1; 21:1);
- white=joy of victory (1:14; 2:17; 4:4; 19:11);
- purple=luxury, kingship (17:4; 18:12, 16);
- black=death (6:5, 12).

h) Some of the symbolic numbers that are used are the following:

- seven=fullness, perfection;
- twelve=12 tribes of Israel; indicates that the people of God has reached its eschatological perfection;
- four=the universality of the visible world;
- six=imperfection;
- 1000=immensity or infinity.

i) So, when reading the Book of Revelation, it is necessary to have a great sense of symbolism and a good knowledge of both history and the Old Testament.

j) The overall message of the Book of Revelation is one of hope.

-God will triumph over the forces of evil and those who put their trust in Jesus Christ, the Lord, will one day triumph and find an end to their suffering and difficulties.

-It is a message of faith and hope. And like every other Book of the Bible, it tells us that our God is a saving God (Revelation 21).

IV. Jesus as Messiah or Savior.

A. The Jews were looking for God to come and save them as He had saved their fathers. They were expecting God, Yahweh, to lead them to the ideal Israelite kingdom, to form them into a true nation of God's people. Why?

-Because they had His promise, given through the prophets, that a Messiah was coming, a Messiah who would establish a new covenant that would be everlasting, that would bring eternal peace.

B. Periodically, then, the people became very hopeful when an outstanding person, leader, prophet appeared in their history, like the Maccabees, or John the Baptist.

-They looked to them to bring about this temporal kingdom, to bring them independence and national pride.

1. At the time that Jesus began His activities, there were a number of prophets in the area of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea.

-These prophets played a good role; they kept alive the hope of the Jewish people for a savior to come. As prophets, they reminded the people of their call to fidelity to the Covenant.

2. There were also special groups of Jews who were dedicated to the Covenant, to the interpretation of the Law: the great rabbis or teachers, the zealots, and the Pharisees. Their task was to preserve the religious identity of the Jewish people.

3. When Jesus arrived on the scene and began His preaching mission, He was not out of place. He attracted a following. He

was heard and respected.

-It soon became evident, as the New Testament reports, that Jesus was not like the teachers or the scribes. He was unique. He was different. He spoke with personal authority.

4. Gradually the apostles came to believe that Jesus was the expected Messiah and not just another great preacher. He was more.
 - a) His followers believed that He had what it took to establish "the kingdom of God."
 - b) For them that meant, He had what it took to restore Israel to its place of leadership among the nations.

C. We can speak about several steps in this process of the disciples of Jesus coming to believe in Jesus as the Messiah:

1. The Jewish people expected the Messiah. They were looking for a leader to establish the kingdom of God as they understood it.
2. The person of Jesus had a great influence on the apostles. John the Baptist helped this along by playing his role well. John the Baptist was a fiery preacher who called the people to reform their ways (Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-20).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Mk. 1:1-8.

- a) When people started asking John the Baptist if he was the Messiah, he said, "No, he was not the Christ, the messiah, the anointed one, but there He is, 'Behold the Lamb of God'" (John 1:29).
- b) John told them that he was doing the groundwork, but that there was One coming after him who was greater than he was.

- c) So they turned to Jesus whom John the Baptist had pointed out to them.
3. You can imagine how impressed they were by Jesus. A leader attracts people by a certain mystique of their person. Such a person is followed because of the person that he or she is and because of what that person says or does.
- a) As we read the Gospels, we can note this attraction between Jesus and the people. Remember, they did not know at that time that He was the Messiah.
 - And they certainly did not, in any way, conceive of Him as the Son of God, a divine person.
 - Such a thought would have been contrary to all their Jewish beliefs about Yahweh, the One God. It would have been blasphemy.
 - b) What attracted people to Jesus was His personality. He convinced them by His words, His deeds, His person.
4. The apostles continuing relationship with Jesus led them to believe that He might be the Messiah.
5. The resurrection event showed that this Jesus was not an ordinary man. He was really able to give life because He had power over death.
6. The final step that led to the acceptance of Jesus as the promised Messiah was the experience of the apostles at Pentecost.
- a) We do not know exactly what happened at Pentecost. But, we do know that with the giving of the Holy Spirit the apostles are changed men (Acts 2).

KEY REFERENCES (Write out):

-Acts 2:1-4;

-Acts 2:14ff.

-The Holy Spirit gave them clear insights into the meaning of Jesus for them and for the world.

- b) It was with this awareness that the Gospels were later written.

V. As a result of this new understanding of God in Jesus, some new insights were given to the apostles and to us.

A. They were given a new understanding of the meaning of Messiah.

1. The Jews were looking for a political Messiah, one to deliver them from Roman domination.
2. Instead, Jesus comes to save them (and us) from their sins, to lead them into new life with Yahweh, life in abundance, life to the full (John 10:10b).

KEY REFERENCE (Write out):

-Jn. 10:10b.

B. Their understanding of the meaning of kingdom was enlightened.

1. The Jews understood "kingdom of God" to mean their nation as a powerful kingdom ruling over all the other nations.

-Jesus taught that the kingdom is the reign of God in the hearts, in the lives of all men and women.

-The kingdom, then, is universal not nationalistic. All men are equal.

2. They now understand "kingdom of God" in a new way: as the reign of God in the hearts of men and women.

C. They come to a new understanding of what it means to be human.

1. To be human is to be worthy of love and respect.
2. To be human is to share in the divine life of the Trinity.
3. Jesus was fully human, and to be like Jesus is to become more and more fully human. It is to be divine.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

30 MINS.

STATE the following:

-Please turn to SH page 116 and we will go over the Study Guide. You are to write out your responses to the following questions and be prepared to share them in your small group.

1. God reveals Himself to us through the historical events recorded in the Bible. Through what means does God reveal Himself to you personally?
2. John says to you, "You know, I've been looking at the Gospel like you told me to and I've noticed that it contradicts itself. See here in Matthew 14:22-33 and Mark 6:45-52. Can you explain this to me?" Explain to John why there are parallel passages in the four Gospels.

-I will share with you now some sample responses to this Study Guide.

Trainer: See: Appendix: Study Guide Answers to Each of the Sessions.

-You now have 25 minutes to do this Study Guide. Please gauge your time well.

SHARING GROUP

30 MINS.

STATE the following:

- a) I invite you now to move into your small groups.
- b) You will be sharing your responses to the reflections given in SH page 116.
- c) Your small group leader will begin and end the small group sharing with prayer.
- d) Your small group leader will begin the sharing on each reflection in order to model how to share and the length of the sharing.

- e) Each person is to share what he or she has prepared for the first reflection for Session Nine; then you are to move on to the second reflection.
- f) If you have not written anything down, then you may not share. Sharing from what you have written is to help avoid rambling on. Please be brief and to the point and considerate of those who have yet to share.

2. You have 25 minutes now for this sharing. Please gauge your time well.

EVALUATION

5 MINS.

- 1. ASK all to fill out the evaluation form.
- 2. COLLECT evaluation forms.
- 3. STATE the following:
 - a) Please turn in your journals with your responses to the Study Guides.
 - b) You will get them back on: _____.

CLOSING PRAYER

10 MINS.

- 1. GIVE prayer partners 5 minutes to pray together.
- 2. ASK group to turn to SH page 132 and stand.
- 3. SIGNAL music and prayer leaders forward.
- 4. DISMISS group once prayer time is finished.

APPENDIX

HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

| <u>YEAR B.C.</u> | <u>HISTORICAL PERSONS</u> | <u>EVENTS AND BOOKS OF THE O. T.</u> |
|------------------|--|--|
| 2000 ? | Abraham Isaac | Beginning of the Oral Traditions |
| 1700 ? | Jacob (Israel) Joseph | Israel in Egypt |
| 1300 | Moses | Exodus: Sinai Covenant |
| 1250 | Joshua | Invasions of Canaan |
| 1220 | | |
| 1200 | Period of Judges | |
| 1040 | Samuel | Rise of Psalmic Literature |
| 1030 | King Saul | |
| 1010 | King David | |
| 970 | King Solomon | |
| 926 | Division of the Two Kingdoms | The Kingdom of Israel in North The Kingdom of Judah in South |
| 870 | Elijah the Prophet | |
| 850 | Elisha the Prophet | |
| 790 | | The "Elohists" active |
| 770 | Amos the Prophet Hosea the Prophet | |
| 721 | | The Destruction of the Kingdom of Israel; Archives: nucleus of Deuteronomy |
| 690 | | Royal Psalms composed |
| 627 | Jeremiah the Prophet Baruch the Prophet | |
| 622 | | Edition of Samuel & Kings appears |

| YEAR B.C. | HISTORICAL PERSONS | EVENTS AND BOOKS OF THE O. T. |
|------------|---|--|
| 593 | Ezekiel the Prophet | |
| 587 | | <p>Destruction of the Kingdom of Judah; Babylonian Captivity</p> <p>Lamentations "Priestly" Tradition active New Editions: Deuteronomy Joshua-Judges- Samuel-Kings</p> <p>Edition of: Amos, Micah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, I Isaiah and II Isaiah, Some Psalms</p> |
| 538 | | Cyrus the Great ends the Babylonian Exile; Jews begin to return |
| 520 | Haggai the Prophet Zechariah the Prophet | Restoration of the Temple; Psalms written for this |
| 500 | | <p>Book of Job</p> <p>A 5th century editor groups together the four Traditions (JEDP) into the five Books of the Law</p> |
| 450 | Malachi the Prophet Obadiah the Prophet | Books of Ruth, Proverbs, Jonah, Song of Songs |
| 445 427 | Nehemiah Ezra | Books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah |
| 400 | Joel the Prophet | |

YEAR B.C. HISTORICAL PERSONS EVENTS AND BOOKS OF THE O. T.

| | | |
|-----|-----------------|---|
| 350 | | Book of Esther |
| 320 | | Book of Tobit |
| 285 | | Septuagint |
| 275 | | Ecclesiastes |
| 200 | | Psalter in its present form |
| 190 | | Ecclesiasticus |
| 170 | | Book of Daniel |
| 166 | Judas Maccabeus | Maccabean Revolt |
| 155 | | Edition: Baruch |
| 140 | | Book of Judith |
| 124 | | II Maccabees |
| 100 | | I Maccabees Septuagint Version of rest of O.T. |
| 50 | | Book of Wisdom |
| 7-6 | | Birth of Jesus Christ |

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS DIVIDED INTO THE
LAW, THE PROPHETS, THE WRITINGS

| <u>THE LAW</u> | <u>THE PROPHETS</u> | <u>THE WRITINGS</u> |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Pentateuch</u> | <u>Former Prophets</u> | <u>Historical Books</u> |
| Genesis | Joshua | Ruth |
| Exodus | Judges | 1 Chronicles |
| Leviticus | 1 Samuel | 2 Chronicles |
| Numbers | 2 Samuel | Ezra |
| Deuteronomy | 1 Kings | Nehemiah |
| | | Tobit |
| | | Judith |
| | | Esther |
| | <u>Later Prophets</u> | Maccabees |
| | | 2 Maccabees |
| | Isaiah | |
| | Jeremiah | <u>Wisdom Books</u> |
| | Ezekiel | Job |
| | | Psalms |
| | Hosea | Proverbs |
| | Joel | Ecclesiastes |
| | Amos | Song of Solomon |
| | Obadiah | Wisdom of Solomon |
| | Jonah | Sirach |
| | Micah | |
| | | |
| | Nahum | <u>Minor Prophets</u> |
| | Habakkuk | |
| | Zephaniah | |
| | Haggai | |
| | Zechariah | |
| | Malachi | |
| | Daniel | |
| | Lamentations | |
| | Baruch | |

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

STUDY GUIDE ANSWERS TO EACH OF THE SESSIONS

SESSION ONE: USE OF SCRIPTURE FOR PERSONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- 1. In 2 Timothy 3:16f, Paul tells us that the Scriptures are useful for equipping the disciple for mission. To what extent have you made use of the Bible for your personal growth in the Lord and for your evangelizing mission? Explain.**

I have seen that it is imperative to make use of Scripture in order to be equipped for my evangelizing mission. The Scriptures are useful for teaching: that is why the Scriptures are used continually throughout the sessions of this evangelization training. The Scriptures are useful for reproof and for correction: I am learning what God expects from me, what he is like, what kind of covenant he has made with His people. Every day I find that errors in my thinking and acting are corrected by observing the Scriptural points that serve to lead and guide me out of error and into correct thinking and acting, showing me where I need to repent. I have found that my increased knowledge of the Word of God has given me confidence in proclaiming the Four Gospel Truths, and enabled me to share the Good News with others.

- 2. Does your daily schedule have to change in order for you to have time to pray the Scriptures? What are you going to do to make time for this?**

A person might respond with the following answer:

My schedule must change! I need to retire by 10:00 p.m. so that I can move in the morning by 6:00 a.m. and have time then to pray the Scriptures before my daily duties begin.

SESSION TWO: THE WORD OF GOD AND OUR RESPONSE

- 1. What do we learn from Judges 6:1-16 and 7:1-9 about how God works to save His people?**

In these chapters, we see that God delivers His people using the weak and the lowly to make it very clear that it is He who is delivering His people from the hands of the Midianites. It is the humble and the lowly that God chooses to use because the humble and lowly allow Him to use them as He wishes. And the

glory and honor go to God and not to those He uses. God's ways are contrary to the ways of the world that seeks the high and mighty to work through and then gives honor and glory to them.

- 2. John, whom you are evangelizing, says to you, "I don't see any reason to read the Old Testament. Since Jesus came that's all done away with." What do you say to John?**

John, there is a great deal of value in reading the Old Testament. We really cannot understand Jesus unless we understand what preceded Him: Jesus is the New Moses, the new Elijah; He is the Lamb. We can only begin to understand what this means to us if we have some understanding of the Old Testament. The Old Testament by definition, is a partial history of the Israelites in terms of their relationship with God and His dealing with them. All the images of the New Testament come out of the Old Testament. It is important, therefore, to read all the Books of the Bible.

- 3. You work with Tammie who has been turned off on Christianity. You are establishing a relationship with her and beginning to proclaim the Good News. She says, "How can you believe that Bible? Who's Bible is right? There's a Catholic Bible and a Protestant Bible. Which one is the true Bible?" Give her your answer.**

You're right, Tammie. There is a difference between the Catholic and the Protestant Bibles. There are seven more books in the Old Testament of the Catholic Bible: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch and 1 and 2 Maccabees. Otherwise, the Bibles are the same. However, the reason for the difference is that by the end of the 1st century A.D., there were two canons or lists of the sacred books, a shorter Palestinian Canon and a longer Alexandrian Canon. The early Christian Church adopted the longer Alexandrian Canon. At the time of the Reformation, in the 16th century, the Reformers adopted the shorter Palestinian Canon. Then, at the Council of Trent in 1546, the Roman Catholic Church defined the Canon of Scripture as that followed by the early Christian Church, the longer Alexandrian Canon of 46 Books.

SESSION THREE: THE LANGUAGES OF THE BIBLE AND LITERARY FORM

- 1. You are proclaiming the Good News to Joe and using your Bible to read John 3:16 to him. He interrupts and says, "How come we have different versions of the Bible?" Explain the translations of the Bible to him.**

Joe, we have several different translations of the Bible today, all a direct English translation of the original Hebrew and Greek of the Old and the New Testament. The English translation of the Latin Douay-Rheims Version of the Bible was the official translation until 1943, when Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical Divino Afflante Spiritu, encouraged Scripture scholars to go back to the original languages for the vernacular translations of the Bible. You see, the closer we can get to the original languages of the Bible, the closer we will be to the originally inspired word of

revelation. So, Scripture scholars today always go back to the original Hebrew and Greek of the Old and New Testament when translating the Bible into the language of a particular country. Some translations are a very strict translation, such as the English Revised Standard Version, and others are translated in more contemporary language in order to appeal to different people.

- 2. Your neighbor stops in and sees your Bible. She says, "You have to be careful reading that. I heard just the other day that a lot of what we believe in the Bible is just myth." Explain to her about literary form and myth in the Bible.**

Let me share with you what I've learned about myth and the Bible. First of all, a myth is a form of literature; it's a way to write about a reality or a truth that is a mystery, that is beyond our power to understand or to grasp. For example, take the Creation accounts given in Genesis, chapters one and two. The sacred writer is trying to express the reality of what he sees and experiences but cannot understand, namely, that it is God who created the world and He created it good. That is the message of faith that the Holy Spirit is giving us in the story of creation. And the sacred writer told it in the form of a myth, because he really didn't understand how God created everything, or when, or what kind of process creation was. You know, there are many different forms of literature in the Bible, depending on the ability of the sacred writer, his purpose, who he was writing for, etc. Some of the other literary forms are: the epic, song, poetry, prayer, letters, legal documents, fiction, parables, etc. You see, the form the message of faith comes in is important, but only as a help and a means for us to get the message.

SESSION FOUR: THE GROWTH OF THE BIBLE

- 1. Rick is listening as you tell him how God really does have a plan for his life and how His love is revealed in the Scriptures. He says, "You put a lot of stock in that Bible; where did it come from anyway?" Explain how the Bible came to be.**

Simply put, the Bible came from a people who experienced God personally and as a people, and who passed that experience and knowledge of God on to those who followed them. The Bible is a partial record of the history of the people of Israel, interpreted in terms of their relationship to God, a covenant relationship. There was a need to pass on this story of God's great love and plan of salvation in order to preserve the covenant God had made with His people.

In the beginning, this was done through oral tradition, telling and retelling these important stories, passing them on by memory. Sometimes, this took the form of storytelling, sometimes songs or poetry. So different literary forms were used to give the message of how God was dealing with His people. The important stories, poems, songs or accounts were memorized and told as part of special celebrations. Eventually some of these stories were written down, the start of written tradition. So, side by side, in ancient times, there was the telling of the stories and the passing on of a few written copies of these stories.

You can imagine that in different parts of the country, there existed several oral and a few written accounts of the same stories, each differing somewhat in details. As written accounts became more common, the process of collecting them and editing them began. The editors brought these writings together into a special collection of sacred literature that eventually became known as the Bible.

- 2. You have encouraged your sister-in-law to read the Bible. She calls you up and says, "Which story is the right one? The Bible contradicts itself. It starts right away in Genesis; the first two chapters don't agree." Explain to her about the four traditions in the Old Testament.**

How astute of you to recognize the different flavor and slightly different approach within the first two chapters of Genesis. Actually, they are like two different eye witnesses to an event, who tell the story in a unique way that complements but does not contradict. As a result of long and intense study, Scripture scholars, higher critics of the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch, are able to show us that there are several different sources or traditions in these books, each telling the same basic story but with differences in details, emphasis, and style. An editor fused these different traditions, taking from each whatever suited his purpose, even if it meant telling the same story twice, or putting together details from two traditions, in order to have a fuller account. So the Pentateuch is actually made up of four different traditions: the oldest being the Yahwist or 'J' tradition, followed by the Elohist or 'E' tradition, stemming from the Northern Kingdom after the division of Israel into two kingdoms; the Deuteronomist or 'D' tradition, stemming from the Northern priests who gathered in Jerusalem after the fall of the North to Assyria; and finally, the Priestly or 'P' tradition coming from the Jerusalem priests.

SESSION FIVE: THE ISRAELITES' EXPERIENCE OF GOD

- 1. The Bible teaches us that life is a religious experience, that our God is personal to us. Demonstrate this truth from Scripture.**

As we read the Bible, we see that the relationship that God had with His people, the Israelites, was personal. The whole life of the people was an expression of that relationship. It made them different from the peoples who surrounded them. Their relationship with Yahweh was direct, constant, and intimate. For example, in Yahweh's relationship with Abraham, there is closeness, friendliness, and singleness (See: Genesis 12-25). Yahweh's covenant with Abraham bound them together. Phrases such as "the Lord your God" and "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" show that God was personal to His people. Also, God tells His people that He will go with them, "for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9c). And in the New Testament, Jesus gives us the same message, "and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28: 20b).

- 2. Alice has just suffered a tragedy in her family. You are consoling her and you say, "You know, Alice, our God is a saving God. The whole of the Bible tells us that." Go on and show how the Bible does reveal our**

God as a saving God.

Alice, the marvelous stories of the great men and women of the Bible are not sounding the praises of men and women but of God. God acts always in our lives to save us. The whole of the Bible teaches us that. Just some examples: Genesis 22 shows God providing the ram for Abraham to sacrifice instead of Isaac, and the place is named, "The Lord will provide"; Exodus 14 shows God saving His people from Pharaoh's army at the sea; Joshua, in the Book of Joshua, chapter 23, points out over and over again, how it is the Lord who has fought for His people; and the greatest witness to our God being a saving God is Jesus, who gave His life for us. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow; as He acted yesterday to save His people, in the same way He is acting today to save you and me.

SESSION SIX: THE COVENANT OF GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE

1. The Bible is a religious interpretation of history. Write a brief religious interpretation of your own personal history.

A person might respond in the following way:

I was born to Catholic parents who reared me in schools that gave me an exposure to the truths of Christianity. For many years, this information was intellectually known but not understood in my heart. Finally, I was brought to a very needy place in my life. I see that God used this experience to bring me to Him, because I reached out to Him in desperation and He answered me. After this, I saw that it was God acting in my life, leading me to a firm commitment to Him and to His ways. I began praying for my family, and allowing the Holy Spirit to have a place in my life and in my home. Then the trials came (James 1:2ff). Through my separation and divorce, I have been tested and pruned in the furnace of adversity. I understand now the truth of the word, that God does bring good out of evil for us (Romans 8:28). I serve Him now and am privileged to be involved in bringing evangelization to my parish, to know that through me, He will make a difference here on earth.

2. The history of the Covenant is the substance of the Bible. Explain how this is.

The Bible is a partial account of the history of the Israelite people interpreted in terms of their relationship to their God. Their relationship to their God is based on His choice of them and His making a covenant with them. When God made the covenant with them on Mount Sinai, they were formed into a holy nation and a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6). In order for them to be free to enter into this covenant, they had to be freed from slavery in Egypt. Thus, the Exodus is the most important historical event in the history of the Jewish people. God gave them the Covenant obligations, the Ten Words, the Ten Commandments, which were for them the words of life, giving life to them. The whole of the Law, the first five books of the Bible, presents the Covenant. The prophets speak to the people from the basis of the Covenant, calling the people to be faithful to the

Covenant with their God. They interpret what is happening to the people in terms of how they are keeping the Covenant. The remainder of the books of the Bible, the Writings, elaborate in one way or another on all that the Covenant is and means for the life of the people. The history of the Covenant, therefore, is the substance of the Bible.

SESSION SEVEN: THE NEW COVENANT IS ESTABLISHED

- 1. You are proclaiming the Good News to Ted, telling him that God is a God of love. He says, "That shows you haven't read the Bible. In the Old Testament, God is a God of war, nothing but destruction and slaughter." Show him the images of love relationship that are used for God in the Old Testament.**

Ted, why don't we just take the Bible in hand and look at the Old Testament to see what kind of a God we have. In Hosea 11:1-4, Yahweh is like a father who trains his children. In Isaiah 49:14-16, Yahweh compares His love to a mother's love. In the entire chapter 34 of Ezekiel, Yahweh tells us that He is the Good Shepherd who cares for His sheep, treating each one with love. Then, the whole Book of Hosea carries the image of Yahweh being the faithful husband to an unfaithful wife, a harlot. Though His heart is torn within Him, He cannot throw her (Israel) out. He is constantly calling her back to Himself.

- 2. What is the newness of the New Covenant? What is your personal experience of the effect of the New Covenant in your life?**

The newness of the New Covenant is the new means given to Yahweh's people to be faithful to Him: the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to be faithful. It is the interiorization of this commitment in Jesus. Jeremiah 31:33 tells us that God will put His law within the hearts of His people. The newness of this is in regard to its living reality in the people; the means given for keeping this Covenant is different. The Covenant is everlasting because it is made in the blood of Jesus who is forever faithful.

For the second part of this question, a person might respond as follows:

My experience of the New Covenant has been a holy confidence of belonging to Jesus and knowing that He loves me. It allows me to call on Him in all circumstances, to see Him acting in my life through the power of the Holy Spirit, enabling me to lay down my life in the difficult situation as Jesus did, and to know that He is forever with me. It is the assurance of His holy, enduring, humbling love.

SESSION EIGHT: AN OVERVIEW OF THE THEME OF COVENANT

- 1. God wills to have an intimate relationship with His people. What analogies are used in the Old and New Testament to show this?**

The analogies used in the Old and New Testament that show the intimate rela-

tionship of God with His people are the following:

-Israel is the flock and Yahweh the Shepherd (Ezekiel 34; John 10).

-Israel is the vine and Yahweh the Vinedresser (Isaiah 5:1-7; John 15).

-Israel is the son and Yahweh the Father (Hosea 11:1-7; Matthew 6:6-18).

-Israel is the spouse and Yahweh the Bridegroom (Ezekiel 16:6-14; Book of Hosea; Revelation 21:9-14).

2. The Gospel of John can be called the "Paschal" Gospel. Explain how this is.

The Gospel of John can be called the "Paschal" Gospel because it presents Jesus' entire ministry, passion and His glorification as the Passover mystery. He is called the "Lamb of God" by John, the Baptist (John 1:29). And according to John's Gospel, Jesus is crucified on the feast of Passover (John 18:28).

SESSION NINE: SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. God reveals Himself to us through the historical events recorded in the Bible. Through what means does God reveal Himself to you personally?

A possible answer might be:

God does reveal Himself to me in the daily events of my life. I didn't know this at first. I began to see His life and activity the day I opened the door of my heart and let Him in. I find that when I meet a situation, God uses that to show me something about myself and about Him. I have found that I don't learn it though, unless I am praying, talking to Him about the situation in my prayer, reading the Scriptures to find what light there is for the situation. So, God teaches me about Himself through what happens in my life, through other people relating to me, through prayer, through the Mass, and through what could be called the process of living. I can't say that any one of these means is more important than the other, but in my life, each one of them is essential.

2. John says to you, "You know, I've been looking at the Gospel like you told me to and I've noticed that it contradicts itself. See here in Matthew 14:22-33 and Mark 6:45-52. Can you explain this to me?" Explain to John why there are parallel passages in the four Gospels.

I see what you are saying, John. You are looking at what is called parallel passages in the Gospels, that is, the same story being told by two different writers. If you keep that in mind, you can understand why the two versions might be slightly different, not in a contradictory way but in a complementary way. One of the reasons for the different versions is: the Gospels weren't written until long after Jesus' death and resurrection. For example, Mark is the earliest Gospel and

was written around 65-70 A.D. So what we have recorded here are remembered eyewitness accounts of Jesus' words and actions. Another reason for the differences is the purpose and intent of the particular evangelist, that is, the point he had in mind when writing this certain event for this particular audience. The Gospels were very much influenced by the purpose of the evangelist in writing to his particular audience.

SCRIPTURE WEEKEND EVALUATION

1. What part of each of the sessions did you find most helpful? Why?
2. What part of each of the sessions did you find least helpful? Why?
3. As you reflect over the weekend, what have you learned; what in your life is going to change?
4. How has this weekend affected you as a parishioner?
5. Would you recommend such a weekend to others? Why?

A PRAYERFUL READING OF THE BIBLE

PART 1: READING THE BIBLE.

1. Take up your Bible with reverence calling to mind who it is that will be speaking to you.
2. Before you begin prayerfully reading the Bible, pray to the Holy Spirit to enlighten you so that you might understand the Word of God. Pray:

"Most loving Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, I pray that you would fill me with your Holy Spirit, that He might enlighten my mind, my imagination, my memory, my will, my whole person, so that I may put on the mind, the heart, the values, the image of Jesus, my Lord and Savior, as I contemplate the Gospels, that all may be to your glory and praise."
3. Begin to read slowly, thinking over each verse as you read.
4. The Imitation of Christ has this to say about the reading of the Bible: "If you want to profit from your reading of Scripture, read with humility, simplicity and faith. Willingly consult and hear with silence the words of the saints; and let your joy be in the parables of the ancients" (I, 5).
5. In reading the Gospels, identify yourself with the scene that is being described. See yourself in the place of Jesus. How does He respond to His situation: the people, the apostles, those plotting against Him, the people who are in need? This is how you are to respond. This is how you are to put on the image of Jesus. Or, see Jesus standing before you and put yourself in the person of one of the characters in the scene. Hear Jesus speak His words to you. For example, the young man raised from the dead, or the leper asking for a cure. Take their words upon your lips: "Jesus, son of David, take pity on me." Spiritually, we are in the same plight as these persons. This is one way in which you can bring the Gospel into your everyday life.
6. Consider everything that Jesus says as addressed to you personally.
7. Make a collection of important Scripture texts: the sayings of Jesus and key passages from the epistles, and learn them by heart. Each day select one of these passages as a short ejaculatory prayer that you can pray throughout the day.
8. A very rewarding practice is to read the Bible in the company of a friend who shares your interests, and to share your insights into the Bible with one another. Each of you receives your own personal insights into a passage from the Holy Spirit, and so you will be able to help each other come to a fuller and more fruitful understanding of the Bible.
9. Ideally we should return to the practice of family Bible reading. The father and mother should read the Bible with their children and take this opportunity of sharing with them about the Lord. An Italian Cardinal once said: "It is my belief that our

country would once more be really Christian if there were a crucifix in every home, before which the whole family gathered to read a page from the Gospels" (Cardinal Nasalli-Roca of Bologna, 1925).

10. The Bible must be related to the liturgy. Read what Thomas a Kempis has to say in the Imitation of Christ about the relationship that exists between the Bible and the Eucharist: "Thou hast...given to me, weak as I am, Thy Sacred Body for the nourishment of my soul and body, and Thou hast set Thy Word as a lamp to my feet. Without these two I could not well live, for the Word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy sacrament is the Bread of Life. These also may be called the two tables set on the one side and on the other in the treasury of the holy Church" (IV, II).
11. An ancient proverb reads: "I respect the reader of a single book." Mark well the Christian whose daily reading is from the one book, the Bible.
12. Make a firm resolution to prayerfully read the Bible for ten or fifteen minutes each day and keep to it. Perseverance is necessary if you are to become imbued with the mind and heart of Jesus.

PART 2: METHODS OF SCRIPTURAL READING.

There are traditionally four methods of reading the Bible. Rather than choose one way to the exclusion of the others, it is more fruitful to carry out each of these methods in a continuous fashion.

1. This first method belongs to the oldest liturgical tradition and is called *lectio continua*, that is, a continuous reading of the whole Bible, book by book, each book being read as a whole, and the whole Word of God being read each year.

By prayerfully reading three chapters each day, the Bible will be covered in one year.

This method of reading the Bible may be called the foundation upon which the other three methods build. The living Word demands that we:

- immerse ourselves in it;
- become absorbed in it;
- do this perseveringly;
- develop a long and complete familiarity with the Bible in order to be attuned to the Spirit of Jesus who teaches us through the Word of God.

2. It is good, from time to time, to substitute or to supplement the continuous reading with the reading of one whole book of the Bible at one sitting.

Reading one book of the Bible in one period of time sets forth for us the mes-

sage of that book. It brings out before our eyes, in a sense, the individual glory of each flower in the immense garden of the Bible.

A guide for deciding which book of the Bible to read at a particular time is the liturgical cycle.

Advent and Christmas Time

Isaiah (especially Second and Third Isaiah: chapters 40-66)

Lamentations

Baruch

Ezekiel

Daniel

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Matthew and Luke--the Infancy Narratives

Paul's Epistles--the classic explanation of the Christian Mystery

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Time Before Lent and During Lent

Genesis -- creation, sin, first foreshadowing of judgment and salvation;

Exodus -- wandering in the desert, the entrance into the Promised Land;

Isaiah -- the Suffering Servant Songs, chapters 42-53;

Jeremiah -- calling for conversion of heart;

Gospels -- the passion narratives;

Hebrews -- relating the sacrifice of the Old Law to the sacrifice of the New Law.

Easter Time

Acts of the Apostles

Book of Revelation

First, Second Epistles of Peter

First, Second, and Third

Epistles of John

Epistle of James

Pentecost and Time After

Acts of the Apostles

Joshua

Ruth

First, Second Books of Samuel

First, Second Books of Kings

First, Second Books of Chronicles

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Ezra

Nehemiah

Tobit

Judith

Esther

First, Second Book of

Maccabees

The Canticle of Canticles

Wisdom of Solomon

Sirach

3. This third method, studious reading, is most important for us to deepen the basic continuous readings, and to prepare for their assimilation in prayer.

On the other hand, studious reading alone will not be a preparation for prayer without the consistent carrying out of the lectio continua. It runs the risk of wandering off into study for the sake of study.

Sometimes it will be helpful to follow one great biblical theme throughout the whole Bible. This can be done with the aid of a good commentary, a book of biblical theology, or a concordance.

4. The fourth method of reading the Bible is the true "divine reading" that leads to prayer, that already is prayer. We refer to it as meditation and contemplation.

Having chosen the passage from the Bible for our meditation, we should recollect ourselves, centering ourselves on Jesus. Read the passage with an act of faith in the God who speaks to us. The Word of God that we read is not to remain in our head, but is to descend into our heart and lead to action. Heart knowledge informs the whole person and leads to action. It is a knowledge that brings about a response of the whole person to the Lord's love. When we have this knowledge of God, we begin to have a loyal love for the Lord that arises from within. (See: Part 1)

This type of prayer involves letting the Spirit breathe in us, to console us, to teach us, to exhort us, and to pray in us to the Father.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE TRADITIONS IN BOOK OF GENESIS

Taken from: The Sources of Genesis,
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-Ah, far from the fertile earth shall be your dwelling; far from the dew of the heavens above!

40 "By your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; But when you become restive, you shall throw off his yoke from your neck."

41 Esau bore Jacob a grudge because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "When the time of mourning for my father comes, I will kill my brother Jacob." 42 When Rebekah got news of what her older son Esau had in mind, she called her younger son Jacob and said to him: "Listen! Your brother Esau intends to settle accounts with you by killing you. 43 Therefore, son, do what I tell you: flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran, 44 and stay with him a while until your brother's fury subsides. 45 [until your brother's anger against you subsides] and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send for you and bring you back. Must I lose both of you in a single day?"

Jacob went to Laban, 46 Rebekah said to Isaac: "I am disgusted with life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob also should marry a Hittite woman, a native of the land, like these women, what good would life be to me?"

CHAPTER 28

1 Isaac therefore called Jacob, greeted him with a blessing, and charged him: "You shall not marry a Canaanite woman! 2 Go now to Paddan-aram, to the home of your mother's father Bethuel, and there choose a wife for yourself from among the daughters of your uncle Laban. 3 May God Almighty bless you and make you fertile, multiply you that you may become an assembly of peoples. 4 May he extend to you and your descendants the blessing he gave to Abraham, so that you may gain possession of the land where you are staying, which he assigned to Abraham." 5 Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way; he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, son of Bethuel, the Aramean, and brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

6 Esau noted that Isaac had blessed Jacob when he sent him to Paddan-aram to get himself a wife there, charging him,

as he gave him his blessing, not to marry a Canaanite woman, 7 and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram. 8 Esau realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac, 9 so he went to Ishmael, and in addition to the wives he had, married Mahalath, the daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael and sister of Nebahoth.

Jacob's Dream at Bethel. 10 Jacob departed from Beer-sheba and proceeded toward Haran. 11 When he came upon a certain shrine, as the sun had already set, he stopped there for the night. Taking one of the stones at the shrine, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep at that spot. 12 Then he had a dream: a stairway rested on the ground, with its top reaching to the heavens; and God's messengers were going up and down on it. 13 And there was the Lord standing beside him and saying: "I, the Lord, am the God of your forefather Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying I will give to you and your descendants. 14 These shall be as plentiful as the dust of the earth, and through them you shall spread out east and west, north and south. In you and your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing. 15 Know that I am with you; I will protect you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land. I will never leave you until I have done what I promised you."

16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he exclaimed, "Truly, the Lord is in this spot, although I did not know it!" 17 In solemn wonder he cried out: "How awesome is this shrine! This is nothing else but an abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven!" 18 Early the next morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head, set it up as a memorial stone, and poured oil on top of it. 19 He called that site Bethel, whereas the former name of the town had been Luz.

20 Jacob then made this vow: "If God remains with me, to protect me on this journey I am making and to give me enough bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 and I come back safe to my father's house, the Lord shall be my God. 22 This stone that I have set up as a memorial stone shall be God's abode."

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