

# WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE - REVIEW

## HIGH SCHOOL

### GOALS

Why is the Bible important to me?  
Review knowledge learned last year about the Bible

### LESSON

**Materials Needed:** White board, dry erase markers, 4 posters (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), post-it notes, pens/pencils

**Extended Learning Opportunity for Teachers:** "Introduction to the Bible - Lesson 2"  
by Dr. Jeannie Constantinou

*[https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/searchthescritures/  
introduction-to-the-bible-lesson-2-inspiration-and-inerrancy](https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/searchthescritures/introduction-to-the-bible-lesson-2-inspiration-and-inerrancy)*

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Choose an activity below to get to know each other:

- **Name Memory Game** - First person says their name. Second person says the first person's name + their own name. Third person says the first person's name + second person's name + their own name. This continues around the room until everyone has gone.
- Intro to the **Four Corners Activity** - Choose one of the following statements (or create your own) and present it to your students for discussion as a way to get to know each other better and to teach them how to do the Four Corners Activity. These questions are intentionally simple and opinionated to encourage the kids to participate. A) Cats make the best pets. B) Green vegetables are the tastiest vegetables. C) Summer is the best season of the year.
- **The Story of You** - Read the Story of You (optional) and explain to the students that the baby's parents put a lot of thought and effort into choosing the baby's name. How did you get your name? Are you named after a relative or a specific saint? Is there a story behind your name?

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## FOUR CORNERS ACTIVITY

*The intended goal of this activity is to encourage the children to think about the role of the Bible in their lives and why the Bible is important to them. Additionally, this activity will allow the children to hear others' thoughts, think through their initial choice, possibly adjust their understanding of the importance of the Bible in their life, and provide movement during the lesson.*

Choose one of the following statements below and write it on the white board:

- As Orthodox Christians, we should read the Bible regularly.
- The Bible is relevant to my everyday life.

Provide each student with a post-it note and pencil/pen. (Teachers can participate too.)

Give them a couple of minutes to reflect and write down whether they:

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

and why they chose their answer. A sign will be in each corner of the room correlating to the four answers and each student should be instructed to place their post-it note on the sign they chose and stay standing with their group.

Ask for a volunteer from each group to share why they answered the way they did. After each volunteer has shared their reason, ask if anyone would like to move corners. If anyone moves, ask if they would be willing to share why they moved. Then ask for a second round of volunteers to share why they answered the way they did. Keep going until you feel that the topic has been fully discussed by the class.

Everyone can return to their seat and you can go over the main points of the discussion on the white board for review.

# WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE - REVIEW

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### GOALS

Why is the Bible important to me?

Review knowledge learned last year about the Bible

### LESSON

**Materials Needed:** ball with review questions; post-it notes and posters (if doing the Intro to the Four Corners Activity)

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**What does the word *Bible* mean?** The word *Bible* means “the Book” and is used in reference to all of the books included in the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is not a single book, but a collection of separate books placed together.

**What is Holy Scripture?** When we refer to *Holy Scripture*, we are talking about the holy writings that are included in the Bible.

**What are the two main parts of the Bible?** 1) The Old Testament and 2) The New Testament.

**What is another word for testament?** The word *testament* is a translation of the word *covenant*. Covenant is the promise or formal agreement between God and us - the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. What is the difference between these two parts of the Bible?

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

**The Old Testament is a covenant between God and who?** The Old Testament is the covenant between God and the Israelites (the Jews). For us, as Christians, it points to the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

**What language did the Hellenistic Jews speak?** Around the year 250 B.C., the Jewish Law (the first 5 books of the Old Testament) was translated from Hebrew to Greek. This was done because Greek had become the dominant language of the time, much like English is the dominant language today. This happened after Alexander the Great had conquered an enormous area of land - the size of many countries - and hellenized them, which means he brought the Greek language and culture to all the lands he conquered. This is something to remember for when we have our introduction to the four gospels in a few weeks - these Jews, who spoke Greek and translated the Jewish Law from Hebrew to Greek, are called Hellenistic Jews. They kept their religion but had adopted the Greek

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language around them. (Inside of Palestine, the Jews still spoke Hebrew.)

**What is the Greek translation of the Jewish Law called?** The Greek translation of the Jewish Law (Torah or Pentateuch) is called the Septuagint. This name, the Septuagint (70), is in reference to the number of Jewish men who translated it from Hebrew to Greek. The Jewish High Priest had chosen six men from the twelve tribes of Israel to work on this project. (6 men x 12 tribes = 72 translators) One of those translators was the Prophet Symeon the God-Receiver.

When Symeon was translating the Old Testament and read, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb, and shall bring forth a Son,” (Is 7:14) he was going to scratch it out and write, “a young woman” instead, but an angel stopped his arm and told him that it was indeed correct and to leave it how it was already written. The angel also told Symeon that he would not die until he held the child.

Let’s think about this for a minute. How does our dating of time work? Until recently, when it was changed in academia, we referred to time before the birth of Christ as B.C., which meant Before Christ. We referred to the time period after Jesus was born as A.D., which meant Anno Domini (In the Year of the Lord). The translation of the Jewish Law was done approximately 250 years before Jesus was born! We read about Symeon in Luke 2:25-35 when he finally gets to hold Christ. (*read to students*) Symeon was way beyond what we would consider an old man by this point! Is there any wonder at all that Symeon prayed, “Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation...”

**Where did we receive the Prayer of Saint Symeon?** If you listen closely towards the end of many services, you will often hear Father read a prayer indicating to us that we are almost finished. This prayer is called the Prayer of Saint Symeon and we get it directly from the Bible.

**Tell me about the feast day of the Presentation of the Lord into the Temple.**

Additionally, this event in the Bible is one of our major feast days - the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, which we celebrate on February 2nd. (And we commemorate Saint Symeon and Anna the Prophetess the day after.) Can you think of anything else that is related to the Presentation of our Lord into the Temple that occurs in our lives today? A 40 day blessing is when a mother brings her baby, who is 40 days old, to the church to be blessed, just like the Theotokos brought Christ to the Temple to be blessed as a baby.

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The books of the Old Testament are divided into sections:

- The Law (The first five books or the Pentateuch)
- Historical Books
- Books of Wisdom
- The Prophets

This is a brief introduction to the Old Testament, but there is one more thing to keep in mind before we move on to learning about the New Testament. The Book of Psalms is found in the Old Testament. It is part of the section collectively called the Books of Wisdom. If you have the version of the Orthodox Study Bible that contains only the New Testament, you will find that Psalms is included in it. Why is it included here if it is part of the Old Testament? The Psalms are the songbook (the Psalter) of the Church. We use them extensively in our church services and they are extremely important to us.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT

**Are the 4 gospels found in the Old Testament or the New Testament? Name the 4 gospels.** The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The Gospels tell us about the life, teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Acts tells us about the apostles' ministry. The epistles are letters written to individuals or groups of people providing them instruction from Saints Paul, James, Peter, John, and Jude. The last book of the New Testament is the book of Revelation which was written by Saint John.

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**Where do we learn about many of our major feast days - from the Old Testament or the New Testament?** We learn about many of our major feast days from the New Testament - the Nativity of Christ (December 25th), the Presentation of Christ into the Temple (February 2nd), the Annunciation (March 25th), Palm Sunday, Pascha, the Ascension of Christ (40 days after Pascha), Pentecost (50 days after Pascha), and the Transfiguration (August 6th).

During the Divine Liturgy, we will hear a reading from the epistles by one of our chanters and then from one of the Gospels by either Deacon George or Father Vasile. Additionally, during Holy Week, we will learn about the death and resurrection of Christ from the gospels.

**Which gospel did we study last year?** Mark

**Which gospel are we studying this year?** Matthew

## WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE - REVIEW

3RD & 4TH GRADE

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**Which gospel did we study last year?** Mark

**Which gospel are we studying this year?** Matthew

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1ST & 2ND GRADE

## GOALS

Why is the Bible important to me?

Review knowledge learned last year about the Bible

## LESSON

**Materials Needed:** Orthodox Children's Bible Reader

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## OUR CLASSROOM AND OUR CLASS

- Explain the students' routine when you walk into the classroom (light your "candle", kiss the icon, and move your photo to the church, then find a seat)
- How do we act when we walk into the narthex? (Are we quiet or loud? Show me by how you walk into our classroom.) How do we light a candle? (Do we play with the sand or play with the wax? Show me what you do.) How do we kiss an icon? (Are we reverent or silly? Do we make the sign of the cross and a prostration? Show me what you do.) How do we sit or stand in church? (Are we talking to our friends or listening quietly? Show me what you do.) This can be practiced as many weeks as needed until the children do it on their own without being reminded. This provides the opportunity for guidance on how we act when we are in church.
- Our class prayer
- We are going to have a snack every Sunday too. Explain how you will be doing snack: When are you having snack? (At the beginning or end of class) Is the teacher passing out the snack or does the child quietly choose a snack?

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## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Choose an activity below to get to know each other:

- **Name Memory Game** - First person says their name. Second person says the first person's name + their own name. Third person says the first person's name + second person's name + their own name. This continues around the room until everyone has gone.
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## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

*(Hold up the Orthodox Children's Bible and show it to the students as you explain:)*

The word *Bible* means "the Book" and is used when we are talking about all of the books included in the Old and New Testaments. It teaches us about God.

When we talk about *Holy Scripture*, we are talking about the holy writings that are inside the Bible.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

For us, as Orthodox Christians, the Old Testament tells us about the coming of the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ. Jesus has come to save the world!

There are two main parts to the Bible: 1) The Old Testament and 2) The New Testament. The Old Testament teaches us about the people who lived before Jesus. It is the biggest part of the Bible and comes first. The very first book of the Old Testament is Genesis. Show the icons of the Creation of the world and then ask, "Has anyone heard the story of Creation from their parents? Can you tell us what happened?" This story is found in the Old Testament.

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## THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament teaches us about people who lived at the same time as Jesus. It is much smaller than the Old Testament and comes after it. The very first book of the New Testament is the Gospel of Matthew. We are going to be studying this book in Sunday School this year!

In the first chapter of Matthew, we learn about the genealogy of Jesus. Genealogy means that we're going to learn about Jesus' family and we're also going to learn more about our own families as well!

We are going to be spending a lot of time learning about the stories in the Bible this year because it teaches us all about Jesus.

## LORD, HAVE MERCY

We are going to learn how to sing "Lord, have mercy" in many different languages this year! Today we are going to sing "Lord, have mercy" in English and Greek. Let's practice!

# WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE - REVIEW

PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN

## GOALS

Why is the Bible important to me?

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## LESSON

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- Hand Signals: We're going to learn some quiet ways I'm going to remind you of to look at me, turn down your volume, sit in your seat, and how we're going to answer questions. Let's practice!
- Our class prayer
- We are going to have a snack every Sunday too. Explain how you will be doing snack: When are you having snack? (At the beginning or end of class) Is the teacher passing out the snack or does the child quietly choose a snack?



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