

LETTERS & DEVOTION

Bible: How to Read the Bible, and the Life of Christ

Free sample: Unit 1, Lessons 1 to 8

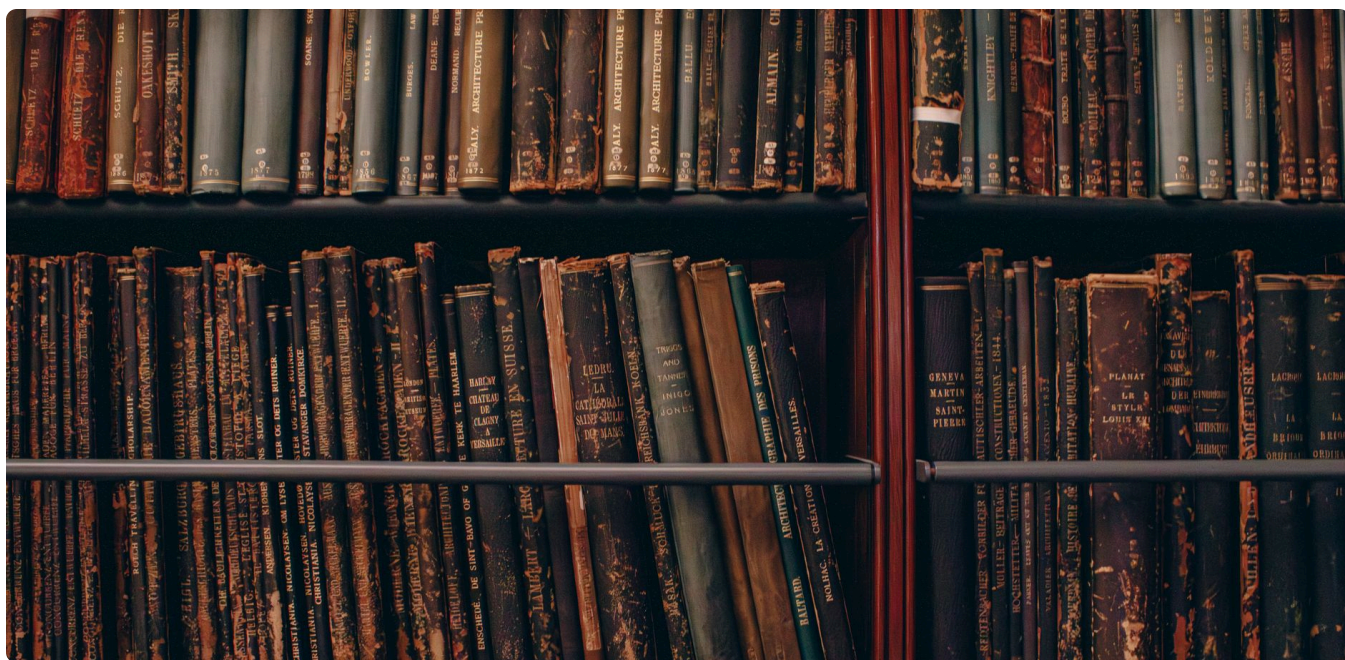
These are 8 lessons from *Bible: How to Read the Bible, and the Life of Christ: Grade 6*, a Grade 6 year a parent runs at the kitchen table. Each lesson is a short script for you, a page to read together, and a practice sheet you may copy for your household. Answers are at the back.

Bible: How to Read the Bible, and the Life of Christ: Grade 6. Sample edition.

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Letters & Devotion is a Christian curriculum: a Bible course in every grade from the King James text, and science taught as scientists teach it, including an old earth. Standards references: Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.



BIBLE • UNIT 1

What Kind of Book Is This

Nine weeks on genre. The Bible as a library of sixty-six books in seven kinds of writing: narrative, law, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, gospel, letter and apocalyptic. Each week reads a short sample and asks what mistake people make when they read that genre as if it were another one.

In this unit

1. A library, not a book
2. Narrative, and the question a story is answering
3. Law, and why a code is not a story
4. Poetry, and how Hebrew rhymes
5. Wisdom, and why a proverb is not a promise
6. Prophecy, which is mostly not prediction
7. Gospel, and why there are four
8. Letters, and reading somebody else's mail

A library, not a book

Goal: Read, examine and write about “A library, not a book” (2 Timothy 3:14-17 and Psalm 119:97-105), and say 2 Timothy 3:16 by heart.

About 120 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: A library, not a book

Four sittings this week, about thirty minutes each: read the passage, read the context note, work the questions, write.

READ: 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and Psalm 119:97-105, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

CONTEXT:

The Bible is one book made of sixty-six books, written by around forty people over roughly fifteen hundred years, in three languages.

Some of it is history. Some is law, poetry, letters, sermons, wisdom, visions. Those are called genres, and each one is read differently.

It was not written to us, but it was written for us. Every book had a first audience who spoke a different language and lived a long way away.

The King James Version you are reading is a translation made in 1611. Older copies of the Greek and Hebrew have been found since, which is why other translations word some lines differently.

MEMORY WORK (2 Timothy 3:16):

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

DISCUSS:

1. Open a Bible to the contents page. How many books are between Genesis and Revelation, and which ones have you never heard of?

2. Why would it matter whether the thing you are reading is a law, a poem, or a letter?
3. Name one book you own that you read a totally different way from a novel. What tells you how to read it?

WRITE OR DO: Start the notebook you will use all year. On the first page, make a table with four columns: book, genre, who wrote it, who first read it. Fill in three rows for books you already know something about. You will add to this table for the next eight weeks.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: A library, not a book

1. How many books is the Bible made of, and over how long were they written?
 - ☐ A Twelve books, written over about a hundred years
 - ☐ B One long book, written down by a single author over the course of just one lifetime
 - ☐ C Sixty-six books, written over roughly fifteen hundred years
2. What is the King James Version?
 - ☐ A The oldest surviving copy of the Bible
 - ☐ B The language the Bible was first written in
 - ☐ C An English translation made in 1611
3. The verse says all scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for what?
 - ☐ A for instruction in righteousness
 - ☐ B for settling arguments about the future
 - ☐ C for singing in the congregation
4. The week uses the word genre. What does it mean?
 - ☐ A The name of the person who wrote a book
 - ☐ B A kind of writing, and each kind is read differently
 - ☐ C The order in which the different books happen to appear one after another in your printed Bible

Narrative, and the question a story is answering

Goal: Read, examine and write about “Narrative, and the question a story is answering” (Genesis 1:1-2:3), and say Genesis 1:1 by heart.

About 120 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Narrative, and the question a story is answering

Four sittings this week, about thirty minutes each: read the passage, read the context note, work the questions, write.

READ: Genesis 1:1-2:3, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

CONTEXT:

This is narrative: writing that tells you what happened, in order, with a shape.

The shape here is deliberate. Days one to three make three empty spaces: light and dark, sky and sea, dry land. Days four to six fill them: sun and moon, birds and fish, animals and people.

The first readers lived among neighbors who worshipped the sun, the sea and the storm. This account calls those things made objects, not gods. That was the shocking claim.

It is answering who made the world and why, and whether it is good. It is not written in the form of a modern scientific report, and it does not claim to be.

MEMORY WORK (Genesis 1:1):

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

DISCUSS:

1. Draw the two columns: what is formed on days one, two, three, and what fills it on days four, five, six. What do you notice?
2. If you lived somewhere that worshipped the sun, which line in this chapter would

bother you most?

3. What is something you believe is true that you could not prove with an experiment?

WRITE OR DO: Write half a page answering one question: what is Genesis 1 claiming, and what is it not claiming? Then find a page in a science book about the origin of the earth and list, side by side, one thing each source tells you that the other does not.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Narrative, and the question a story is answering

1. How are days one to three and days four to six related in Genesis 1?
 - ☐ A The first three make empty spaces and the second three fill them
 - ☐ B The first three are about people and the second three are about animals
 - ☐ C There is no pattern; the days are in no particular order

2. The first readers lived among neighbours who worshipped the sun, the sea and the storm. What does Genesis 1 say about those things?
 - ☐ A That they are things God made, not gods ☐ B That they do not really exist
 - ☐ C That they are smaller gods who serve the greatest God

3. How does the memory verse begin?
 - ☐ A The heavens declare the glory of God.
 - ☐ B In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.
 - ☐ C In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

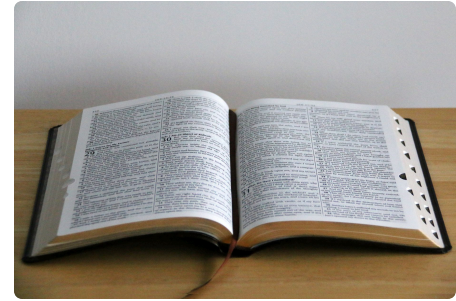
4. The week calls Genesis 1 narrative. What is narrative?
 - ☐ A Writing that records a long and detailed list of rules and regulations for an entire nation to live by
 - ☐ B Writing that argues a case point by point
 - ☐ C Writing that tells you what happened, in order, with a shape

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 3

Law, and why a code is not a story

Goal: Read, examine and write about “Law, and why a code is not a story” (Exodus 20:1-17 and Leviticus 19:9-18), and say Deuteronomy 6:5 by heart.

About 120 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Law, and why a code is not a story

Four sittings this week, about thirty minutes each: read the passage, read the context note, work the questions, write.

READ: Exodus 20:1-17 and Leviticus 19:9-18, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

CONTEXT:

Law is a genre. It is written to a specific nation, at a specific moment, to order how they live together.

Notice where the Ten Commandments start: with what God has already done, bringing them out of Egypt. The rescue comes first and the rules come second.

Israel's law includes worship rules, food rules, court rules and farming rules mixed together, because it was the law of a whole country and not only of a religion.

Leviticus 19 is a good sample: leave the corners of your field unharvested so the poor can eat, do not curse the deaf, do not take sides because someone is rich.

MEMORY WORK (Deuteronomy 6:5):

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

DISCUSS:

1. The commandments come after the rescue, not before it. Why would the order matter?
2. Which of the laws in Leviticus 19 surprised you, and why?

3. Write one rule your household actually runs on. Who benefits from it, and how would you explain it to a visitor?

WRITE OR DO: Sort the Ten Commandments into two lists in your notebook: those about God, and those about other people. Then write a paragraph on one commandment you think is the hardest to keep, and say why it is hard rather than why it is good.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Law, and why a code is not a story

1. Before the Ten Commandments are given, what does the text put first?
 - ☐ A A list of the rewards for keeping them
 - ☐ B A stern warning about the harsh punishments waiting for anyone who broke the commandments later on
 - ☐ C What God has already done, bringing them out of Egypt
2. Leviticus 19 tells farmers to leave the corners of their fields unharvested. Why?
 - ☐ A So the poor could come and eat
 - ☐ B So the harvest could be offered at the temple
 - ☐ C So the soil could rest for a year
3. The verse says to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy what?
 - ☐ A might
 - ☐ B money
 - ☐ C days
4. Why does Israel's law mix worship rules, food rules, court rules and farming rules together?
 - ☐ A Because the food rules were the most important part
 - ☐ B Because the writers put them down in whatever order they remembered them
 - ☐ C Because it was the law of a whole country and not only of a religion

Poetry, and how Hebrew rhymes

Goal: Read, examine and write about “Poetry, and how Hebrew rhymes” (Psalm 23 and Psalm 13), and say Psalm 23:1 by heart.

About 120 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Poetry, and how Hebrew rhymes

Four sittings this week, about thirty minutes each: read the passage, read the context note, work the questions, write.

READ: Psalm 23 and Psalm 13, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

CONTEXT:

About a third of the Old Testament is poetry, and Hebrew poetry does not rhyme sounds. It rhymes ideas.

A line says something, and the next line says it again in different words, or says the opposite, or takes it one step further. That is called parallelism, and it survives translation, which rhyme would not.

Poetry uses pictures on purpose. Calling God a shepherd is not a claim that he carries a crook; it is a claim about protection, feeding, and being led.

Psalm 13 shows the other thing this genre does: it complains to God, out loud, for four verses, before it trusts him in the last two. That complaint is in scripture.

MEMORY WORK (Psalm 23:1):

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

DISCUSS:

1. Find two lines in Psalm 23 that say nearly the same thing twice. What does the second line add?
2. Psalm 13 starts with 'how long' four times. Why do you think a prayer like that was

kept and sung?

3. Write two lines of your own about this week, where the second line says the first one again in different words.

WRITE OR DO: Copy Psalm 13 into your notebook with a line break wherever a new thought starts. Mark with an arrow every place the second line repeats, reverses or builds on the first. Then write four lines of your own psalm about something that is actually bothering you.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Poetry, and how Hebrew rhymes

1. Hebrew poetry does not rhyme sounds. What does it rhyme?
☐ A Ideas ☐ B The names of God ☐ C The lengths of the lines
2. What shape does Psalm 13 have?
☐ A It complains to God for four verses and then trusts him in the last two
☐ B Six full verses of confident praise and thanksgiving, without a single complaint anywhere in the psalm
☐ C It is a list of rules for praying properly
3. The memory verse is the first line of Psalm 23. How does it go?
☐ A The LORD is my shepherd; he leadeth me beside the still waters.
☐ B The LORD is my rock and my fortress. ☐ C The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
4. In Hebrew poetry, what does a second line usually do to the line before it?
☐ A It rhymes the last word of the first line
☐ B It repeats it in different words, or says the opposite, or takes it a step further
☐ C It changes the subject completely so that the poem keeps moving forward to a brand new idea each time

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 5

Wisdom, and why a proverb is not a promise

Goal: Read, examine and write about “Wisdom, and why a proverb is not a promise” (Proverbs 1:1-7, Proverbs 10:1-12 and Ecclesiastes 3:1-11), and say Proverbs 1:7 (part) by heart.

About 120 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Wisdom, and why a proverb is not a promise

Four sittings this week, about thirty minutes each: read the passage, read the context note, work the questions, write.

READ: Proverbs 1:1-7, Proverbs 10:1-12 and Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

CONTEXT:

Wisdom writing observes how life usually goes. Proverbs is a collection of short sayings about the way things generally work.

Generally is the key word. 'A soft answer turneth away wrath' is true most of the time, and there are people for whom it will not work, and Proverbs knows that.

Job and Ecclesiastes are in the same section of the Bible and they push back. Job is a good man whose life goes wrong, which is the exact opposite of the usual pattern.

So this genre argues with itself on purpose. Read Proverbs for how life normally runs, and Job and Ecclesiastes for what to do when it does not.

MEMORY WORK (Proverbs 1:7 (part)):

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.

DISCUSS:

1. Pick one proverb from chapter 10 and describe a real situation where it would not hold true.
2. Ecclesiastes says there is a time for everything, including a time to weep and a time to lose. Why might that be in the Bible?

3. What is a saying your family repeats that is mostly true but not always? Where does it fail?

WRITE OR DO: Write two paragraphs. The first explains one proverb from chapter 10 in your own words. The second describes a situation where following it would not produce the promised result, and says what you think a wise person would do instead.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Wisdom, and why a proverb is not a promise

1. What does a proverb do?

- ☐ A It observes how life generally goes ☐ B It guarantees a result if you follow it
☐ C It records a law that Israel had to keep

2. The week names Job as the opposite of the usual pattern. Why?

- ☐ A He never actually existed, and his own book plainly says so at the very start
☐ B He is a bad man whose life goes well ☐ C He is a good man whose life goes wrong

3. The memory verse says the fear of the LORD is the beginning of what?

- ☐ A knowledge ☐ B obedience ☐ C sorrow

4. A soft answer turneth away wrath. How does this week say a saying like that should be read?

- ☐ A As true every single time, without a single exception anywhere in life
☐ B As a rule that stopped applying after the Old Testament
☐ C As true most of the time, with people it will not work on

Prophecy, which is mostly not prediction

Goal: Read, examine and write about “Prophecy, which is mostly not prediction” (Amos 5:18-24 and Micah 6:1-8), and say Micah 6:8 (part) by heart.

About 120 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Prophecy, which is mostly not prediction

Four sittings this week, about thirty minutes each: read the passage, read the context note, work the questions, write.

READ: Amos 5:18-24 and Micah 6:1-8, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

CONTEXT:

Most people assume a prophet is someone who tells the future. Most prophecy in the Bible is about the present.

A prophet is a prosecutor. He shows up to say the nation has broken the covenant it agreed to, names exactly how, and calls them back before the consequences arrive. Amos is speaking to people whose worship is impressive and whose courts are corrupt. He says God hates the festivals. That is not an attack on worship; it is an attack on worship offered by people cheating the poor on Monday.

Prophecy does look forward too, and often in layers: a warning about the next fifty years that later readers found was also about something much further off.

MEMORY WORK (Micah 6:8 (part)):

and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

DISCUSS:

1. Amos says God hates their feast days. What exactly is he angry about?
2. Micah lists three things God requires. What is the difference between doing justly and

loving mercy?

3. Where in your week is there a gap between what you say you believe and what you actually do?

WRITE OR DO: Write a short prophetic speech, half a page, in Amos's style, about something you think is genuinely wrong in the world you can see. It must name a specific behavior, not a general feeling, and it must end with a way back.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Prophecy, which is mostly not prediction

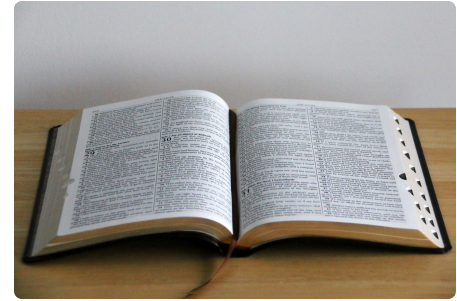
1. Most prophecy in the Bible is about what?
☐ A The distant future ☐ B The present ☐ C The private lives of kings
2. Amos says God hates their feast days. What is God angry about?
☐ A That they hold festivals and religious celebrations at all, no matter how they are conducted
☐ B That the same people whose worship is impressive are running corrupt courts
☐ C That they are worshipping the wrong gods at the festivals
3. Micah lists what the LORD requires. What are the three things?
☐ A To fear the LORD, and to love thy neighbour, and to honour the king
☐ B To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God
☐ C To keep the feasts, and to pay the tithe, and to guard the temple
4. The week calls a prophet a prosecutor. What does that picture mean?
☐ A That he defends the nation against God's accusations
☐ B That he brings a case that the nation has broken the covenant it agreed to
☐ C That he personally carries out the punishment against the people himself, without any trial at all

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 7

Gospel, and why there are four

Goal: Read, examine and write about “Gospel, and why there are four” (Luke 1:1-4 and John 20:24-31), and say John 20:31 (part) by heart.

About 120 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Gospel, and why there are four

Four sittings this week, about thirty minutes each: read the passage, read the context note, work the questions, write.

READ: Luke 1:1-4 and John 20:24-31, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

CONTEXT:

A gospel is not a biography and not a news report. It is a portrait written to persuade, and it says so.

Luke opens by telling us he interviewed eyewitnesses and put it in order. John closes by telling us he left a great deal out and chose what he included on purpose.

Matthew, Mark and Luke overlap heavily and are called the synoptics, which means seen together. John covers different ground and is more reflective.

Four accounts of the same events will differ in detail and order. That is what independent testimony looks like; four documents that matched word for word would be more suspicious, not less.

MEMORY WORK (John 20:31 (part)):

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

DISCUSS:

1. John says he selected what to include. Does that make his account less reliable or more honest?
2. Luke was not there. What does he say he did instead, and would that satisfy you?

3. Tell the story of one thing that happened in your family this week, then ask someone else who was there to tell it. What is different, and what does that show?

WRITE OR DO: In your notebook, start a Gospel Comparison page you will use for the rest of the year. Four columns: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Whenever an event this year appears in more than one gospel, note what each one includes that the others do not.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Gospel, and why there are four

1. Luke was not there for the events he writes about. What does he say he did instead?
 - ☐ A He simply copied Matthew's whole gospel out, word for word, from start to finish
 - ☐ B He wrote down a dream he had been given
 - ☐ C He interviewed eyewitnesses and put the account in order
2. Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the synoptics. What does the word mean?
 - ☐ A Written by eyewitnesses
 - ☐ B Written last
 - ☐ C Seen together
3. John says these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is what?
 - ☐ A the Christ, the Son of God
 - ☐ B a good teacher sent from God
 - ☐ C the king of Israel for ever
4. What kind of writing is a gospel?
 - ☐ A A full biography covering the whole of a life evenly
 - ☐ B A portrait written to persuade, which says so
 - ☐ C A neutral news report with nothing left out

Letters, and reading somebody else's mail

Goal: Read, examine and write about “Letters, and reading somebody else's mail” (Philemon 1-25 and Ephesians 4:25-32), and say Ephesians 4:32 by heart.

About 120 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Letters, and reading somebody else's mail

Four sittings this week, about thirty minutes each: read the passage, read the context note, work the questions, write.

READ: Philemon 1-25 and Ephesians 4:25-32, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

CONTEXT:

Twenty-one of the twenty-seven New Testament books are letters, written to real people about specific problems.

Philemon is the clearest example: one page, one situation. Paul is writing to a slave owner about Onesimus, a runaway slave, and asking him to receive the man back as a brother.

Because a letter answers a question we cannot hear, reading one is like listening to half a phone call. Half the work is figuring out what was said on the other end.

That is why the same rule shows up twice this year: find the occasion first, then the argument, then what carries across to you.

MEMORY WORK (Ephesians 4:32):

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

DISCUSS:

1. What problem is Paul writing about, and what exactly is he asking Philemon to do?
2. Paul says he could command him but would rather ask. Why would he choose that?

3. Write the letter you would need to send to repair something in your own life. You do not have to send it.

WRITE OR DO: Write a one-page letter in Paul's shape: greet the person, thank them for something true, name the request, give the reason, and say what you will do yourself. Choose a real situation, either yours or one you invent in detail.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Letters, and reading somebody else's mail

1. What is Paul asking Philemon to do?
 - ☐ A To send money to the church at Ephesus
 - ☐ B To sell Onesimus to Paul as a permanent household servant
 - ☐ C To receive Onesimus, a runaway slave, back as a brother
2. How much of the New Testament is letters?
 - ☐ A Twenty-one of the twenty-seven books
 - ☐ B All twenty-seven books
 - ☐ C Only four of the twenty-seven books, the same four as the gospels
3. The verse says to be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as who has forgiven you?
 - ☐ A even as the whole church at Ephesus has already forgiven every one of you
 - ☐ B even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you
 - ☐ C even as your fathers forgave you
4. The week says reading a letter is like listening to half a phone call. Why?
 - ☐ A Because the letters themselves are damaged ancient manuscripts and half of every single one has been physically lost over the centuries
 - ☐ B Because the letters were dictated out loud
 - ☐ C Because a letter answers a question we cannot hear, so half the work is figuring out what was said on the other end

Answer key

Bible

Lesson 1	1. C 2. C 3. A 4. B
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Lesson 2	1. A 2. A 3. C 4. C
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Lesson 3	1. C 2. A 3. A 4. C
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Lesson 4	1. A 2. A 3. C 4. B
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Lesson 5	1. A 2. C 3. A 4. C
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Lesson 6	1. B 2. B 3. B 4. B
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Lesson 7	1. C 2. C 3. A 4. B
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Lesson 8	1. C 2. A 3. B 4. C
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Unit 1 check-up	1. C 2. B 3. B 4. C 5. B 6. B 7. C 8. C 9. A 10. A 11. C 12. C 13. C 14. A 15. B 16. A
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The same lessons, with a teacher who talks back

Every lesson in this book also lives at **lettersanddevotion.com**, where Clara, a built-in teacher, works through it with your child as a conversation: she explains a wrong answer instead of marking it, reads aloud for a child who cannot read yet, and keeps the hours and the transcript for you.

One price covers every grade and every child in the family. The first 30 days are free, nothing is charged before day 30, and you can cancel in one click.

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