

LETTERS & DEVOTION

Bible: Survey and Christian Doctrine

Free sample: Unit 1, Lessons 1 to 8

These are 8 lessons from *Bible: Survey and Christian Doctrine: Grade 9*, a Grade 9 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: Survey and Christian Doctrine: Grade 9. 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

The Old Testament Books

Nine weeks placing all thirty-nine Old Testament books: the Torah, the histories from Joshua to Kings and the second telling in Chronicles, the return under Ezra and Nehemiah, the wisdom books, the Psalms, the major prophets and the Twelve. Ends with how the Old Testament actually closes and the four hundred years that follow.

In this unit

1. Sixty-six books, one claim
2. The Torah: five books that set the terms
3. Joshua to Kings: the history that indicts its own people
4. Chronicles to Esther: the same story told again, and the return
5. Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
6. The songbook: Psalms and the Song of Solomon
7. The major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
8. The Twelve: short books, no small subjects

Sixty-six books, one claim

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Sixty-six books, one claim” (Luke 24:44-49 and Psalm 119:97-105), and say Luke 24:44 (part) by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Sixty-six books, one claim

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Luke 24:44-49 and Psalm 119:97-105, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

The Bible is not a book. It is a library of sixty-six documents written across roughly fifteen centuries, by dozens of people, in three languages, and collected over time rather than composed at once.

By any normal expectation that should produce a mess. Sixty-six documents from that span of centuries usually disagree with each other about the basic questions, and often about the facts.

The claim this course tests is that these do not: that the collection has a single subject, which is what God is doing about a world that has gone wrong, and that the subject is a person.

Jesus makes that claim himself in Luke 24, and he makes it using the Hebrew arrangement of the Old Testament, law and prophets and psalms, not the order printed in your English Bible.

You are allowed to test a claim like that. A survey that only admires the Bible teaches nothing. Read the table of contents this week the way you would read evidence.

MEMORY WORK (Luke 24:44 (part)):

all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets,

and in the psalms, concerning me.

DISCUSS:

1. Luke 24:44 names three divisions of the Hebrew scriptures. What are they, and how does that arrangement differ from the order of books in the Bible on your desk?
2. If sixty-six documents by that many authors really do share one subject, what would count as evidence for it? What would count as evidence against it?
3. Name one thing you believe about the Bible because somebody told you, and say honestly whether you have ever checked it.

WRITTEN WORK: Start the notebook you will keep all year. Rule the first double page into five columns: book, testament, division, roughly when written, one sentence on what it is. You will fill in all sixty-six books over the next eighteen weeks. Do the five books of the Torah now. Then, on the very first page, write a paragraph stating what you currently believe the Bible is and where that belief came from. Date it. You will read it again in week 36.

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

Practice: Sixty-six books, one claim

1. The essay calls the Bible a library rather than a book. What does it mean by that?
 - ☐ A Sixty-six documents written across roughly fifteen centuries, by dozens of people, in three languages, and collected over time
 - ☐ B One work composed at once and later divided into sixty-six sections for reference
 - ☐ C A collection of the best religious writing produced across the whole ancient Near Eastern world, gathered later for its literary quality and popularity
2. The memory verse names three parts of the Hebrew scriptures that Jesus says speak of him. Which three?
 - ☐ A The law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms
 - ☐ B Moses, the kings, and the wisdom books
 - ☐ C The law of Moses, the histories of the kings, and the gospels written about him later
3. The essay says Jesus uses the Hebrew arrangement of the Old Testament rather than the order printed in an English Bible. What is the difference it is pointing at?
 - ☐ A The Hebrew arrangement was completely lost sometime during the long exile and cannot now be reconstructed from any surviving source
 - ☐ B The Hebrew scriptures contain different books from an English Old Testament
 - ☐ C The same books are grouped and ordered differently, so law, prophets and psalms is not the sequence on an English contents page
4. Why does the essay say a collection like this should, by any normal expectation, be a mess?
 - ☐ A Because ancient writers across that many centuries were often careless, and the copies that survived became unreliable over time
 - ☐ B Because three languages cannot be rendered into one another without contradiction
 - ☐ C Documents written centuries apart by dozens of people usually disagree about the basic questions, and often about the facts

The Torah: five books that set the terms

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “The Torah: five books that set the terms” (Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 19:1-8 and Deuteronomy 6:1-9), and say Deuteronomy 6:4 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: The Torah: five books that set the terms

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 19:1-8 and Deuteronomy 6:1-9, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are one work in five parts, called the Torah, which means instruction, or the Pentateuch, which just means five books. They are usually treated as the origin story of a nation, and they are, but the shape argues something larger: eleven chapters cover the whole world, and then everything narrows to one family through whom all the families of the earth are supposed to be blessed.

Exodus is the hinge. A God who rescues slaves before he gives them law is making a claim about what kind of God he is, and the order is not decorative. The commandments in Exodus 20 open by naming the rescue that already happened. Leviticus and Numbers are the books people skip. They are worth knowing in outline because the New Testament argues from them constantly: priesthood, sacrifice, clean and unclean, a holy God living in the middle of a camp.

Deuteronomy is Moses preaching the law a second time to the generation that will actually enter the land. Jesus quotes it more than almost any other book.

MEMORY WORK (Deuteronomy 6:4):

DISCUSS:

1. Why would it matter that Exodus puts the rescue before the commandments rather than after them?
2. Genesis 12:3 says all families of the earth will be blessed through Abraham. Track that promise forward: what would have to happen, centuries later, for it to be kept?
3. Deuteronomy 6 tells parents to talk about this at home, on the road, going to bed and getting up. Describe how instruction actually happens in your house, accurately, not ideally.

WRITTEN WORK: Write one sentence per book for all five, in your notebook, in the format: this book is about X and it exists in the collection to do Y. Then write half a page on Leviticus specifically, a book you have probably never read: skim its contents, and argue for or against the claim that a modern reader can understand the New Testament without it.

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

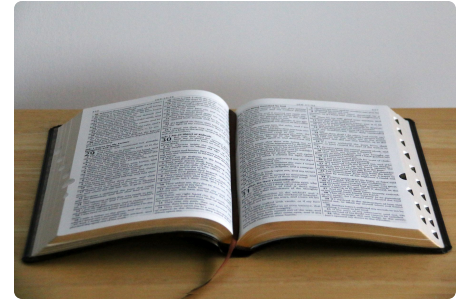
Practice: The Torah: five books that set the terms

1. The essay gives two names for the first five books and says what each means. Which pair is right?
 - ☐ A Torah, which means covenant, and Pentateuch, which means the writings of Moses
 - ☐ B Torah, which means instruction, and Pentateuch, which just means five books
 - ☐ C Torah, which means law court, and Pentateuch, which means the beginning
2. The memory verse begins 'Hear, O Israel'. How does it go on?
 - ☐ A The LORD our God is a mighty God ☐ B The LORD our God is one LORD
 - ☐ C The LORD our God hath brought thee out of Egypt
3. The essay says the order in Exodus is not decorative. What order does it mean?
 - ☐ A The rescue from slavery comes first, and the commandments in Exodus 20 open by naming it
 - ☐ B The rescue and the commandments are given in the very same chapter, so it is impossible to say which one comes first
 - ☐ C The commandments come first, and the rescue follows as the reward for keeping them
4. The essay describes the shape of Genesis as a narrowing. What narrows, and to what?
 - ☐ A The five books narrow to one, since only Genesis carries the promise
 - ☐ B Eleven chapters cover the whole world, and then everything narrows to one family through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed
 - ☐ C The story begins with just one family in the garden and gradually widens back out to cover the entire whole world by the very close of Genesis

Joshua to Kings: the history that indicts its own people

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Joshua to Kings: the history that indicts its own people” (Joshua 1:1-9 and Judges 2:11-19), and say Judges 21:25 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Joshua to Kings: the history that indicts its own people

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Joshua 1:1-9 and Judges 2:11-19, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings run from entering the land to losing it, and they are the most uncomfortable stretch of the Old Testament.

The conquest in Joshua is warfare with religious sanction, and honest readers have been troubled by it for two thousand years. Christians answer in different ways, and none of the answers make it comfortable.

What is strange about these books is who they make look bad. National histories usually flatter the nation. This one records the judges as increasingly awful, David as an adulterer and murderer, Solomon as a compromiser, and almost every king as a failure. That editorial choice is itself an argument: the writers are not selling a golden age, they are explaining an exile, and the thesis is that the people broke the covenant and were warned repeatedly.

Ruth sits in the middle of it like a held breath, four chapters about a foreign widow's loyalty, and it ends with a genealogy that runs to David.

MEMORY WORK (Judges 21:25):

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own

eyes.

DISCUSS:

1. A national history that mostly records its own leaders failing is unusual. What does that suggest about why these books were written and who they were written for?
2. The conquest passages have troubled readers for centuries. State the difficulty as sharply as you can in two sentences, without softening it.
3. Judges 21:25 describes people doing what was right in their own eyes. Where in your own week do you decide what is right by that method, and does it work?

WRITTEN WORK: Build a one-page timeline of this period in your notebook: conquest, judges, united monarchy under Saul, David and Solomon, the split into Israel and Judah, the fall of Samaria, the fall of Jerusalem. Mark rough dates. Then write a paragraph answering one question: what is the book of Judges arguing by getting steadily darker instead of steadily better?

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

Practice: Joshua to Kings: the history that indicts its own people

1. Which books does this week cover, and what stretch of the story do they run through?
 - ☐ A Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, from the exile to the return
 - ☐ B Genesis through Deuteronomy, running all the way from creation to Israel standing at the very edge of the land
 - ☐ C Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, from entering the land to losing it
2. The memory verse says that in those days there was no king in Israel. What does it say followed from that?
 - ☐ A Every man sought out the counsel of the priests before acting
 - ☐ B Every man did that which was right in his own eyes
 - ☐ C The people cried out for a king
3. What does the essay find strange about these books considered as national history?
 - ☐ A They mostly record their own leaders failing, which is not how national histories usually work
 - ☐ B They were written by foreigners rather than by Israelites, which explains the unflattering picture
 - ☐ C They keep only the successful kings and leave the failures out
4. How does the essay describe the place of Ruth in this stretch of books?
 - ☐ A The full historical record of the eventual split between the northern and the southern kingdoms of Israel that followed after Solomon's own death
 - ☐ B The account of the fall of Jericho and the division of the land
 - ☐ C Four chapters about a foreign widow's loyalty, sitting in the middle of it like a held breath and ending in a genealogy that runs to David

Chronicles to Esther: the same story told again, and the return

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Chronicles to Esther: the same story told again, and the return” (Ezra 1:1-4 and Nehemiah 8:1-12), and say Nehemiah 8:8 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Chronicles to Esther: the same story told again, and the return

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Ezra 1:1-4 and Nehemiah 8:1-12, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

First and Second Chronicles retell material you already read in Samuel and Kings, and the differences are the point rather than a problem to be explained away.

Chronicles was written for people who had come back from exile to a small, poor province, and it emphasizes the temple, worship and the line of David, because those were the questions that community actually had.

Two accounts of the same events, written for different audiences with different emphases, is how history has always worked. Noticing that trains a skill you will use on the four gospels in week 10.

Ezra and Nehemiah are the return: a ruined city, a rebuilt wall, opposition from every side, and a public reading of the law where people wept when they finally understood what it said.

Esther is the odd one out. God is not named once in the entire book, which is either an oversight or the most careful theological move in the Old Testament, and the second reading is far more likely.

MEMORY WORK (Nehemiah 8:8):

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused

them to understand the reading.

DISCUSS:

1. Compare one episode in Chronicles with its version in Samuel or Kings. What did the Chronicler include, leave out, or emphasize, and what does that tell you about his readers?
2. Esther never mentions God. Argue for the position that this is deliberate and that the book is making a point about how God works when he is not visible.
3. Nehemiah 8 describes people who had the text but could not follow it until someone gave the sense of it. Where do you currently need that, and who could do it for you?

WRITTEN WORK: Write a page comparing two accounts of the same event, using any parallel passage in Samuel or Kings and Chronicles. Set them in two columns, list every difference you can find, and then argue in a paragraph for why the differences exist. Do not settle for saying one is wrong.

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

Practice: Chronicles to Esther: the same story told again, and the return

1. What does Chronicles emphasize, and why?
 - ☐ A The prophets of the northern kingdom, because their books had been lost
 - ☐ B The temple, worship and the line of David, because it was written for people back from exile in a small poor province who had exactly those questions
 - ☐ C Military campaigns waged against Egypt and all of the surrounding hostile nations, because the readers of the book were actively preparing themselves for war
2. What is unusual about the book of Esther, according to the essay?
 - ☐ A God is not named once in the entire book
 - ☐ B It contains no named characters at all
 - ☐ C It is the only Old Testament book written in Greek
3. The memory verse describes what was done with the text at the public reading. Which description matches it?
 - ☐ A It was very carefully copied out, sealed with wax, and stored away inside the newly rebuilt temple
 - ☐ B It was read distinctly, the sense was given, and the people were caused to understand the reading
 - ☐ C It was read aloud once, and the people were left to work out the meaning themselves
4. Why does the essay say the differences between Chronicles and Samuel or Kings are the point rather than a problem?
 - ☐ A One of the two accounts simply had the historical facts completely wrong, and the other one exists solely to correct it
 - ☐ B Chronicles was written first, so Samuel and Kings had to change the story
 - ☐ C The two accounts were written for different audiences with different questions, which is how history has always worked

Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes” (Job 1:1-22, Proverbs 3:1-12 and Ecclesiastes 3:1-11), and say Proverbs 9:10 (part) by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Job 1:1-22, Proverbs 3:1-12 and Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

The wisdom books are about how life actually works, and the striking thing is that they do not agree with each other on the surface.

Proverbs says the diligent prosper and the lazy go hungry, and that is generally true.

Job is about a righteous man losing everything, which is what happens when the general rule does not hold. Ecclesiastes says everything is vapor and you will die and be forgotten.

Read as competing claims, that is a contradiction. Read as genres doing different jobs, it is a complete education: a proverb states a reliable pattern, not a promise, and the other two books exist because patterns have exceptions and life has an end.

Job is worth reading closely because of what God does not do. He never explains. He asks about seventy questions and gives no answer to the one Job asked, and Job is satisfied anyway.

Ecclesiastes is the book to hand a fourteen-year-old who has started noticing that adults are chasing things that do not last. It got there first.

MEMORY WORK (Proverbs 9:10 (part)):

DISCUSS:

1. A proverb is a reliable pattern, not a guarantee. Why does treating proverbs as promises damage people, and what happens when the promise fails?
2. God answers Job with questions instead of explanations. Why might that be a better answer than the one Job asked for?
3. Ecclesiastes says a lot of activity is chasing wind. Name something you spend real time on that you suspect belongs in that category, and defend keeping it or drop it.

WRITTEN WORK: Write a one-page argument on this question: do Proverbs and Job contradict each other? You must state the strongest version of the case that they do before you answer it. A paper that never lets the objection breathe will not count.

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

Practice: Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

1. The memory verse says the fear of the LORD is what?
☐ A The end of all sorrow and grief ☐ B The beginning of wisdom
☐ C The whole duty of man
2. Which book does the essay describe as being about a righteous man losing everything?
☐ A Job ☐ B Ecclesiastes ☐ C Proverbs
3. The essay says a proverb states a reliable pattern rather than a promise. What follows from that difference?
☐ A A proverb can be generally true and still have exceptions, which is why Job and Ecclesiastes sit alongside it
☐ B A proverb applies only to the person it was first written for
☐ C A proverb is fundamentally unreliable and should therefore never be trusted or acted upon by anyone at all, ever
4. The essay says Job is worth reading closely because of something God does NOT do. What?
☐ A He never once speaks to Job at all, leaving him without any reply whatsoever
☐ B He never restores anything Job lost
☐ C He never explains, and gives no answer to the question Job actually asked

The songbook: Psalms and the Song of Solomon

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “The songbook: Psalms and the Song of Solomon” (Psalm 22:1-21, Psalm 100 and Song of Solomon 8:5-7), and say Psalm 42:1 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: The songbook: Psalms and the Song of Solomon

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Psalm 22:1-21, Psalm 100 and Song of Solomon 8:5-7, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

The Psalms are one hundred and fifty poems in five collections, and they are the only book of the Bible written mostly to God rather than from him.

That changes how you read them. A psalm is not primarily information about God; it is language a community was given for praising, complaining, confessing, and in a few uncomfortable cases demanding that enemies be destroyed.

About a third of them are laments. That proportion is an argument in itself: a worship book that is one third complaint is not pretending faith feels good most of the time. Hebrew poetry rhymes ideas rather than sounds, which is why it survives translation. A line says something and the next line restates it, reverses it, or pushes it further.

The Song of Solomon is love poetry, frankly physical, and it is in the canon. Christians have read it allegorically for centuries and also plainly, and a ninth grader should know that both readings exist and that the plain one is not embarrassing.

MEMORY WORK (Psalm 42:1):

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

DISCUSS:

1. Roughly a third of the Psalms are laments. What does it say about Israel's worship that so much of its songbook is complaint?
2. Psalm 22 opens with abandonment and ends in public praise, and the New Testament quotes it at the crucifixion. Read it whole and describe the turn: where does it happen, and what changes?
3. Write four lines of Hebrew-style parallelism about something true in your own week. Say it, then say it again differently.

WRITTEN WORK: Memorize Psalm 42:1 and one full psalm of your choosing under ten verses. Then write your own psalm, at least twelve lines, using parallelism, on something you are actually dealing with. If it is a lament, let it be a lament and do not resolve it in the last line just because you think you should.

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

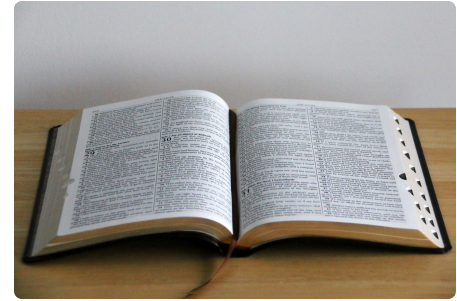
Practice: The songbook: Psalms and the Song of Solomon

1. The memory verse compares the soul to an animal. Which comparison does it make?
 - ☐ A As the eagle mounteth up very high on its great wings, so riseth my soul unto thee, O God
 - ☐ B As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God
 - ☐ C As the sheep followeth the shepherd, so followeth my soul after thee
2. What does the essay say makes the Psalms unlike the rest of the Bible?
 - ☐ A They are written mostly to God rather than from him
 - ☐ B They were all written by one man
 - ☐ C They are the only poetry found anywhere in the whole Bible
3. The essay says Hebrew poetry rhymes ideas rather than sounds. What does the second line of a pair typically do?
 - ☐ A End with the same sound as the first line
 - ☐ B Restate the first line, reverse it, or push it further
 - ☐ C Repeat the first line again, word for word and unchanged
4. About a third of the Psalms are laments. What does the essay say that proportion argues?
 - ☐ A That the Psalms were written during one especially bad century
 - ☐ B A worship book that is one third complaint is not pretending faith feels good most of the time
 - ☐ C That laments were only ever meant to be sung privately at home, rather than together in public worship

The major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “The major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel” (Isaiah 6:1-8 and Jeremiah 31:31-34), and say Jeremiah 31:33 (part) by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: The major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Isaiah 6:1-8 and Jeremiah 31:31-34, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

A prophet in the Bible is not mainly a predictor. He is a prosecutor: he brings a covenant lawsuit, names what the nation has actually done, and says what follows.

The charges are consistent and specific. Idolatry, and treating the poor badly, and religious observance running smoothly on top of both. Isaiah 1 and Amos 5 say the worship is offensive precisely because the justice is absent.

Prediction is there, but it works differently than people expect. Most of it is near-term and political, and the passages Christians read as pointing to Christ sit inside speeches about invading empires.

Jeremiah is the one to know personally. He preached for forty years, was believed by nobody, watched the city fall exactly as he said it would, and took no satisfaction in it. Lamentations is the funeral for the city.

Ezekiel and Daniel introduce the visionary mode that Revelation will use later: beasts, statues, numbers, and images that are meant to be decoded rather than pictured.

MEMORY WORK (Jeremiah 31:33 (part)):

I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God,

and they shall be my people.

DISCUSS:

1. A prophet brings charges before he predicts anything. What are the two charges that recur most, and why do they belong together?
2. Jeremiah 31 promises a covenant written on hearts rather than stone. What is actually different about it, and what problem is it solving?
3. The prophets attack religion that runs smoothly while the poor are ignored. Where would that charge land in your own church or family, if it were made honestly?

WRITTEN WORK: Read Isaiah 1:10-20 and Amos 5:18-24 side by side. Write a page answering this: what exactly is God objecting to, given that the people were doing the sacrifices he had commanded? Then add one paragraph applying the same charge to a modern situation you actually know about.

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

Practice: The major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

1. The essay says a prophet in the Bible is not mainly a predictor. What is he mainly?
 - ☐ A A priest responsible only for offering the daily sacrifices at the great temple
 - ☐ B An adviser who tells the king what will happen next year
 - ☐ C A prosecutor, bringing a covenant lawsuit and saying what follows from it
2. The memory verse describes where God will put his law. Where?
 - ☐ A In their inward parts, written in their hearts
 - ☐ B On tables of stone kept safely inside the ark of the covenant
 - ☐ C In the mouths of the priests
3. Which pair of charges does the essay say recurs through the prophets?
 - ☐ A Foreign alliances, and neglect of the temple building
 - ☐ B Idolatry, and failing to keep the festivals ☐ C Idolatry, and treating the poor badly
4. How does the essay describe Jeremiah's career?
 - ☐ A A short ministry that ended when the king repented and the city was spared
 - ☐ B A career spent entirely among the exiles far away in Babylon, whom he only ever wrote letters to but never once actually met in person
 - ☐ C Forty years of preaching that nobody believed, then watching the city fall exactly as he had said, with no satisfaction in it

The Twelve: short books, no small subjects

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “The Twelve: short books, no small subjects” (Amos 5:18-24, Micah 6:6-8 and Jonah 4:1-11), and say Micah 6:8 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: The Twelve: short books, no small subjects

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Amos 5:18-24, Micah 6:6-8 and Jonah 4:1-11, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are called minor for length only. In Hebrew Bibles they are one scroll, the Book of the Twelve.

They cover about three hundred years and they are not interchangeable. Amos is a farmer attacking the wealthy of a prosperous northern kingdom; Haggai is talking to discouraged builders after the exile; Nahum is about Nineveh falling and Jonah is about Nineveh being spared.

Jonah is the one that catches people out. It is a short story about a prophet who succeeds completely and is furious about it, because he did not want mercy shown to that nation, and the book ends with God asking him a question he never answers.

Habakkuk is a prophet who argues with God about why evil goes unpunished, is given an answer he likes even less, and ends by saying he will trust anyway.

Micah 6:8 is the compressed version of everything the Twelve are saying, and it is three demands rather than one: justice done, mercy loved, and yourself kept small.

MEMORY WORK (Micah 6:8):

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; 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. Jonah is angry that God spared his enemies. What is the book arguing by ending on an unanswered question instead of Jonah repenting?
2. Micah names three requirements. Which of the three is hardest to fake, and why?
3. Habakkuk complains, gets an answer he dislikes, and trusts anyway. Have you ever done that, or did you stop at the complaint?

WRITTEN WORK: Make a reference page in your notebook: all twelve, in order, one line each covering roughly when, to whom, and the one thing that book is about. Then choose the shortest one you have never read, read it in a sitting, and write a paragraph on what it would have cost the original audience to accept it.

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

Practice: The Twelve: short books, no small subjects

1. Why are the twelve short prophetic books called minor?
 - ☐ A For length only, and in Hebrew Bibles they are one scroll, the Book of the Twelve
 - ☐ B Because they were written later than the major prophets and add nothing new
 - ☐ C Because the early church disputed for generations whether they truly belonged in the collection
2. The memory verse names three things the LORD requires. Which three?
 - ☐ A To fast often, to pray without ceasing, and to give generous alms to the poor
 - ☐ B To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God
 - ☐ C To fear, to obey, and to offer sacrifice
3. What is Jonah angry about?
 - ☐ A That nobody in Nineveh would listen to him
 - ☐ B That God spared Nineveh, a nation Jonah did not want shown mercy
 - ☐ C That he was sent to his own people instead of to a foreign nation
4. The essay says the Twelve are not interchangeable. Which pairing does it use to show that?
 - ☐ A Amos and Haggai both address the very same generation living in the very same city
 - ☐ B Micah and Malachi were written in the same decade about the same king
 - ☐ C Nahum is about Nineveh falling and Jonah is about Nineveh being spared

Answer key

Bible

Lesson 1	1. A 2. A 3. C 4. C
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Lesson 2	1. B 2. B 3. A 4. B
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Lesson 3	1. C 2. B 3. A 4. C
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Lesson 4	1. B 2. A 3. B 4. C
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Lesson 5	1. B 2. A 3. A 4. C
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Lesson 6	1. B 2. A 3. B 4. B
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Lesson 7	1. C 2. A 3. C 4. C
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Lesson 8	1. A 2. B 3. B 4. C
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Unit 1 check-up	1. B 2. C 3. A 4. C 5. C 6. A 7. C 8. C 9. C 10. C 11. A 12. C 13. A 14. A 15. B 16. B
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