Grade 10 Christian Religious Education

Terms 1, 2 and 3 - notes for 23 topics

IN EVERY TOPIC

- What you will learn and the key words.
- Short, clear notes with worked examples.
- Questions to try and a topic test, with the answers at the back.

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Strand 1.0 The Old Testament | Term 1

1.1 The Holy Bible

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

- describe the Bible as the inspired word of God
- identify human authors inspired to write the Holy Bible
- organise the Old Testament books according to their categories
- distinguish the literary forms used in writing the Bible
- utilise the poetic form and present a song from the book of Psalms
- acknowledge that the Bible is the inspired word of God

KEY WORDS

Bible, inspired, author, Old Testament, Pentateuch, prophet, psalm, poetry, literary form, canon.

1. The Bible as the inspired word of God

What "inspired" means

The Bible is a collection of 66 books: 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. Christians believe that it is the word of God. The word "inspired" means that God breathed into the writers, so that what they wrote is what God wanted his people to know. The New Testament says that all scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching, correcting and training in right living (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and that the prophets spoke from God as the Holy Spirit moved them (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The passages that the syllabus names show the same idea. God's word is true and lasts for ever (Psalm 119:160). God's word does not return to him empty but does what he sent it to do (Isaiah 55:11). God touched the mouth of Jeremiah and put his words in it (Jeremiah 1:9). God's word brings joy and hope, like the harvest after the tears of sowing (Psalm 126:6).

Handling the Bible: keep it clean and in a safe place, do not put other things on it, open it with care, read it with a quiet mind, and use it to learn and to live, not only to carry. Reading with respect is a way of showing that we honour the God who speaks through it.

2. Human authors inspired to write the Bible

The human authors

About forty people over roughly one thousand five hundred years wrote the books of the Bible. Moses is named as the writer of the first five books, the Law. David wrote many of the psalms, and Solomon is linked to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos and Micah wrote the messages God gave them. In the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote the Gospels; Luke also wrote Acts; Paul wrote many letters to churches and to individuals; Peter, James, Jude and John wrote other letters; and John wrote Revelation.

They were farmers, shepherds, kings, fishermen, a doctor, a tax collector and scholars. God inspired them in different ways: through direct words (Jeremiah 1:9), through dreams and visions (Daniel 7:1), by leading them to record events they saw or heard (Luke 1:1-4), through songs and prayers (Psalms), and through wisdom gained by careful thought that the Spirit guided (Proverbs).

The human writers used their own languages, styles and experiences, and yet the message was from God. This is why the Bible has both a human side and a divine side. Task: search online or in the library for one author, and share the book or books he wrote, when he lived and how God inspired him.

3. The books of the Old Testament and their categories

Categories of the Old Testament books

The 39 books of the Old Testament are grouped by type. The Law (Pentateuch) has five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The history books have twelve: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The poetry and wisdom books have five: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

The prophets have seventeen books in two groups: five major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel), which are longer; and twelve minor prophets, which are shorter (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi). Checking the total: 5 + 12 + 5 + 5 + 12 = 39 books.

Activity: use charts or flash cards to arrange the books in order and in their groups; solve a jigsaw puzzle of the books in a group; and practise saying the books in order, perhaps to a rhythm or song. Knowing the categories helps you to find a passage quickly and to know what kind of writing you are reading.

The 39 books of the Old Testament

Law 5 books	History 12 books	Poetry and wisdom 5 books	Major prophets 5 books	Minor prophets 12 books
Genesis	Joshua, Judges	Job	Isaiah	Hosea, Joel
Exodus	Ruth	Psalms	Jeremiah	Amos, Obadiah
Leviticus	1 and 2 Samuel	Proverbs	Lamentations	Jonah, Micah
Numbers	1 and 2 Kings	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Nahum, Habakkuk
Deuteronomy	1 and 2 Chronicles	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Zephaniah
	Ezra, Nehemiah			Haggai
	Esther			Zechariah
				Malachi

5 + 12 + 5 + 5 + 12 = 39 books

The five groups of Old Testament books

4. The literary forms used in writing the Bible

Literary forms

The Bible uses many forms of writing. Narrative or history tells the story of people and events, as in Genesis, Joshua and Acts. Law gives rules for life, as in Exodus and Leviticus. Poetry uses rhythm and pictures, as in Psalms and Job. Wisdom sayings give short pieces of advice, as in Proverbs. Prophecy delivers messages from God about the present and the future, as in Isaiah and Amos. Gospels record the life and teaching of Jesus. Epistles (letters) were written to churches and people, as in Romans and 1 Timothy. Apocalyptic writing uses symbols to describe the end of time, as in Daniel and Revelation. Parables are short stories that teach a lesson, as in Luke 8.

Why it matters: a psalm should be read as a prayer or a song, with its pictures, and not as a scientific report; a proverb is a general truth and not a promise for every case; a law belongs to a time and place, and we ask what it teaches about God; and a letter answers particular problems in a church and gives lasting lessons. Reading each in the right way helps us to understand it.

Task: in groups, list the literary forms, describe each on a chart or slide, and create a poster showing the forms and relevant books in each category. Choose one form, such as a song, and prepare a creative way of presenting it to your classmates, for example a skit, a drama or a song.

5. Project: presenting a psalm in poetic form

Project: a psalm in song

Materials: Bibles, copies of the chosen psalm, local instruments or objects for rhythm, and a checklist for feedback; groups of four.

The Book of Psalms has 150 songs and prayers, collected over many years. Many are linked to David. They express praise, thanks, sorrow, trust, repentance and hope. Hebrew poetry does not depend on rhyme but on parallelism (a line is repeated, contrasted or developed in the next line) and on pictures such as a shepherd, a rock, a fortress, a tree or a river. Examples: Psalm 23 (trust in God as shepherd), Psalm 100 (thanks), Psalm 121 (God who keeps), Psalm 51 (sorrow for sin) and Psalm 150 (praise).

Task: 1. Choose a psalm and read it slowly in your Bible. 2. Note its mood, the pictures it uses and its main message. 3. Decide on a creative way to present it: sing it to a tune, set it to a chant with rhythm, act it as a skit, or read it in parts with actions. 4. Practise, then present to the class. 5. Peers use a checklist (clear voice, understanding of the message, creativity, teamwork) to give kind and useful feedback. 6. Each learner writes one sentence: "This psalm reminds me that God is..."

Conclusion: the Bible is the inspired word of God, written by human authors in many forms, and it speaks to our joys and troubles as well as to our minds. Acknowledging it as God's word means to read it, respect it and obey it.

TRY THESE

1. How many books are in the Bible, and how many are in the Old Testament and the New Testament?
2. What does the word "inspired" mean when used of the Bible?
3. Name three human authors of the Bible and one book that each wrote.
4. Give two ways in which God inspired the writers.
5. Name the five books of the Law.
6. How many books are in the group of history books, and name three of them?
7. Name four literary forms used in the Bible.
8. In which literary form is the Book of Psalms mainly written?
9. How many psalms are there in the Book of Psalms?
10. What is parallelism in Hebrew poetry?

TOPIC TEST

T1. Explain why Christians read the Bible even though it was written a very long time ago.

T2. Explain how Luke's introduction to his Gospel (Luke 1:1-4) shows that inspiration did not mean that the writers did no research.

T3. Explain why the prophets are called major and minor.

T4. Explain why it is a mistake to read the picture language of a psalm as if it were a literal description.

T5. Explain how singing a psalm can help a person in a difficult time.

Strand 1.0 The Old Testament | Term 1

1.2 Methods of Studying the Holy Bible

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

- summarise five methods of studying the Holy Bible
- examine the benefits of studying the Holy Bible
- apply the inductive method of studying the Bible to specific Bible texts
- utilise the biography method to study the book of Jonah
- desire to read the word of God daily to grow spiritually

KEY WORDS

inductive, observation, interpretation, application, biography, topical, concordance, commentary, devotion, meditate.

1. Why we study the Bible: its benefits

Benefits of studying the Bible

Studying the Bible means reading it carefully in order to understand and live by it. It gives many benefits. 1. Guidance: it is a lamp for the feet and a light for the path (Psalm 119:105). 2. Teaching and correction: it teaches what is right, shows what is wrong and trains us in good living (2 Timothy 3:16-17). 3. Protection from sin: keeping God's word in the heart helps a person to avoid sin (Psalm 119:9, 11). 4. Faith: faith grows by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). 5. Hope and comfort: the scriptures give patience and encouragement (Romans 15:4). 6. Wisdom: it makes even the young wise (Psalm 19:7; Proverbs 2:6). 7. Knowledge of God and of salvation through Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15). 8. Spiritual growth like milk for a baby (1 Peter 2:2).

Interview a resource person, such as a pastor, priest or chaplain, and ask: How has the Bible helped you? Which methods do you use to study it? How often do you read it? Note their key points.

Reflection: a person who reads the Bible daily grows in the knowledge of God, learns to make wise decisions and finds strength in trouble. Write a sentence beginning: "One way in which the Bible can help me this term is..."

2. Five methods of studying the Bible

Methods of Bible study

Five common methods are these. 1. The inductive method: the reader observes what the text says, interprets what it means and applies it to life, moving from the text to the meaning. 2. The biography method: the reader studies the life of one person in the Bible, such as Jonah, Moses or Ruth, and draws lessons from that life. 3. The topical (theme) method: the reader collects verses on one topic, such as faith, integrity or forgiveness, and studies them together. 4. The book method: the reader studies a whole book, chapter by chapter, noting its author, purpose, main themes and message. 5. The word or verse-by-verse method: the reader takes a verse or a word and studies its meaning using a Bible dictionary or concordance.

Other helps: devotional reading, where one reads a short passage each day, thinks about it and prays; memorising verses; and group study in a Bible study group.

Task: in groups, search the internet or the library for five methods, and share what you find. Choose one passage, for example Psalm 23 or the story of Ruth, and decide which method would suit it best and why.

3. Tools for Bible study: dictionary, concordance, commentary and digital Bibles

Tools for Bible study

A Bible dictionary explains the meaning of words, people and places. A concordance lists the words of the Bible in alphabetical order with the verses where each one is found. A Bible commentary explains the passages, chapter by chapter, and gives background. A Bible atlas gives maps. A Bible encyclopaedia gives information on many topics. Digital Bibles and websites let you search for a word or a theme in seconds, and compare versions. Choose reputable sources, and remember that human books and websites help us to understand but are not the Bible itself. How to use a concordance: look up the word alphabetically, read the list of verses, and turn to those that seem useful. Task: use a concordance or a Bible app to search for verses on the themes "integrity" and "purity". For example: on integrity, Proverbs 10:9, Psalm 15 and Job 2:3; on purity, Psalm 119:9, Matthew 5:8, 1 Timothy 4:12 and Philippians 4:8. Write them in your notes, and say in one sentence what each teaches.

Care: when using the internet, keep to the task, avoid unsafe sites, and check that the source is trustworthy. Present your findings to the class as a chart or slides.

4. The inductive method of Bible study: observation, interpretation and application

The inductive method

The inductive method moves from the text to its meaning to our lives. Step 1, observation: read the passage several times and note what it says. Ask: Who is speaking or acting? To whom? What happens? Where and when? What words are repeated? Step 2, interpretation: decide what the passage meant to its first hearers and what it teaches. Ask: What is the main message? Why did the writer say this? What does it teach about God and about people? What other verses help to explain it? Step 3, application: ask what the passage means for me. Ask: What must I believe? What must I stop or start doing? Which promise can I trust? Who can I help?

Rules: read in context, not one verse alone; let the Bible explain the Bible by comparing other passages; use the plain meaning of the passage first; and apply the lesson with honesty and prayer.

Model: try the method on Psalm 23. Observation: the writer says that the Lord is his shepherd; he lacks nothing; the Lord leads, restores and protects; he will live in God's house for ever. Interpretation: God cares for his people as a shepherd for his sheep. Application: I can trust God in every situation, so I need not fear.

5. Applying the inductive method to Matthew 13:44-46 and Romans 8:28-32

Practical: inductive study

Materials: Bibles, worksheets and notebooks; groups of four.

Text 1, Matthew 13:44-46. Observation: the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, and a merchant who finds a fine pearl; each person sells everything in order to have the treasure or pearl. Interpretation: the kingdom of God is of greater worth than anything else, and it is worth giving up everything for it; finding it brings joy. Application: I should put God's kingdom first in my choices, my time and my money, and not let other things matter more.

Text 2, Romans 8:28-32. Observation: God works all things together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose; those whom he foreknew he predestined, called, justified and glorified; if God is for us, no one can stand against us; and God did not spare his own Son but gave him for us. Interpretation: God is in control, has a plan for his people and has shown his love by giving Christ, so they can trust him even in trouble. Application: when I face problems in school or at home, I can trust that God is with me and working for my good.

Task: in your group, work through both texts using the three steps, and write reflection notes: what did you learn, and how will you apply it? Share with the class, and listen to the different applications. Note that people may apply the same text in different ways, but the meaning must stay true to the passage.

6. The biography method of Bible study: the story of Jonah