



These Things Are Written

**THE STORY OF GOD
AND HIS PEOPLE**



A 26 SESSION
STUDY OF THE BIBLE

leader's guide

**Creative
Communications
Sample**

These Things Are Written

The Story of God and His People

A 26-Session Study of the Bible

Leader's Guide

Creative
Communications
Sample

These Things Are Written

The Story of God and His People

A 26-Session Study of the Bible

Leader's Guide

Index

Session 1: Introduction	6-11
Session 2: Genesis 1-11	12-18
Session 3: Genesis 12-50	19-25
Session 4: Exodus 1-15	26-32
Session 5: Exodus 16—Joshua 24	33-40
Session 6: Judges 1—1 Samuel 31	41-47
Session 7: 2 Samuel 1—1 Kings 11	48-54
Session 8: Israel and Other Nations	55-61
Session 9: Northern Kingdom History	62-68
Session 10: Northern Kingdom Prophets	69-75
Session 11: Southern Kingdom History	76-82
Session 12: Southern Kingdom Prophets	83-89
Session 13: Exile and Return	90-96

By Michael Schmidt and Philip Hoppe. Art and design: Jeff McCall. © 2017 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. 800-325-9414. www.creativecommunications.com. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Purchase of this kit gives the purchaser the copyright release to use the material in any format for use in the church or home.

These Things Are Written

The Story of God and His People

A 26-Session Study of the Bible

Leader's Guide

Session 14: Writings	97-103
Session 15: Between the Testaments	104-111
Session 16: John the Baptist.....	112-118
Session 17: Jesus—Birth and Childhood.....	119-125
Session 18: Jesus—Public Ministry, Part 1	126-132
Session 19: Jesus—Public Ministry, Part 2.....	133-138
Session 20: Jesus—Holy Week	139-145
Session 21: Jesus—Easter Through Ascension.....	146-152
Session 22: Acts 1-8	153-158
Session 23: Acts 9-28	159-164
Session 24: Paul's Epistles.....	165-171
Session 25: Catholic Epistles	172-177
Session 26: Revelation	178-184

These Things Are Written

The Story of God and His People

A 26-Session Study of the Bible

Leader's Guide

Session 1: Introduction

You may lead this prayer or choose a participant to lead. Be aware that some are afraid of leading even a written prayer in front of others.

Prayer

Almighty God, You have provided us with Your holy Word; bless our time of study, that the mysteries that You have hidden therein would be made clear to our eyes. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Have a participant (or several) read this Narrative section. It is intended to be a quick review of the portion of the biblical narrative covered in this session. Again, be aware that some may not like to read out loud in class. Provide a discrete way for them to choose not to read.

Narrative

The size of the Bible alone can be intimidating. For many the thought of attempting to grasp its contents seems like jumping into a lake when they do not know the depth. They are afraid that they will be overwhelmed quickly in the Scriptural waters. Often, therefore, they do not jump in at all. And that is tragic. This is not just a book that has shaped every corner of western culture. It is more importantly God's own telling of His interaction with this world and all of us who live within it. It is the story of His great love shown to those who rebel against Him.

It is true that the Bible is filled with more than enough words and wisdom to occupy one for a lifetime. However, that does not mean one should be afraid to jump in and begin to read, listen and learn. Understanding the basic story that God reveals in the Scriptures is key to understanding all of the specific words and wisdom contained in it. Even more important to grasping this truth is understanding what or who the whole story is really about.

The Bible itself is not arranged as one constant story with each book picking up the story right where the last book left off. This is because God used many different people in many different periods of history to record what had occurred in the past, what was occurring right when they lived, or what would happen in the future.

And that means that while certain parts of the Bible flow together from book to book as a flowing narrative, it is not always that way. For not only did God employ different people to record this history, those people also used different ways of communicating. The Spirit inspired some to write in a way that simply recounted what had happened in a rather straightforward way. Others wrote in poetry. Still others recorded prophecies and revelations given to them.

The Scriptures are therefore as diverse as God's creation itself. We find the proclamations of kings and the dreams of old men. We find the harsh words given to the prophets and the sweet writings of poets reflecting on God's mercy. We read words of sage wisdom and eyewitness accounts of the Savior's life and teaching. God has in His Word employed every means to record for us His interaction with humanity throughout all time. This glorious story is threaded throughout each book, in every style of writing.

Yes, despite the Scriptures' grand variety, the basic story of God's interaction with humanity comes through quite clearly. God creates only to find His precious work destroyed. It is the story of the way He sets out to make right all that has gone so terribly wrong. It is the account of how God leaves heaven in order to make all things new again.

This grand story is comprised of many other smaller stories. And each of those stories is intriguingly filled with people rich in diversity. We read about the real lives of real people in all sorts of times and situations. And yet, each of these smaller stories first and foremost is a story about God's grand story. It is about God redeeming that which is lost. It is about Him making all things new. It is about Him saving those who could not save themselves.

Most of these stories could stand on their own and yet none of them do. And at the center of all of those stories stands one which makes all of the others make sense. None of the Bible can be fully understood apart from this key story. The story of God Himself in the flesh, dying and rising to give to humanity eternal life is what brings all of the other stories together.

Each part of the Scriptures leads us through part of God's interaction between Himself and humanity. Many of these stories you will already know. But watch for the grand narrative being told. Watch how everything leads toward the center and away from it. Behold how God is saving that which is lost.

By the end of this study you will not have drowned in all the depth of the Scriptures. That is not the intention of this study. You will have waded in only so far. God willing, you will have waded in far enough to give you the confidence to wade deeper into the rest of the words and wisdom in the Bible. You will know the basic flow of the Scriptures and its center, which is Jesus. And with that you will be ready for a lifetime of hearing, studying, and reflecting upon the Scriptures.

Prepare to be awestruck by God's absolute persistence in bringing humanity back into a right relationship with Himself. Prepare to be amazed by the absolute lengths to which He went to make all things new. He makes new what sin and rebellion had made so fragile and old. Prepare to behold the One whose work has brought to all humanity salvation and life.

Bible Study

1. What is the Bible?

Answers will vary. This question is intended to get people talking about how they would answer a question like this if someone who did not know the answer asked them. Encourage multiple people to add their answers even if the first answer seems fine.

2. What is the purpose of the Bible?

Answers will vary. Affirm any response that is a valid purpose of the Bible (knowing right from wrong, learning about God, knowing the history of God's people, etc.). At the end of the responses, guide the participants toward knowing that the ultimate purpose of the Bible is to show us the way of salvation through Jesus Christ.

3. What makes the Bible different from other books you may read or hear about?

Science books report on what can be tested. English books tell what men have written. Math books report on what can be proven. History books tell of what happened in the past. Only the Bible tells of how God provided for His people in the past and how He will provide for them in the future, as well as offering the way to eternal life. Only this book is filled from start to finish with the very words of God.

4. Who wrote the Bible?

This question can and should be answered in two ways. First, men throughout many different time periods whose vocations included prophets, priests, kings, apostles, shepherds, a doctor, and fishermen wrote the Bible. You might ask people to list some of the authors they remember. Secondly, we remember that these men did not write of their own power or accord. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The true author of the Bible is God. (See 2 Peter 1:21)

5. What makes the Bible relevant to everyday life?

We remind them of the timeless nature of the Bible, due to its emphasis on man's sin and God's grace which transcends every age. We also can speak of how our entire western culture has been shaped and molded by the Scriptures. Even if we cannot convince them of these things, we remain confident of its relevance based on faith alone. We encourage them to engage the Word and test whether it is relevant to their life.

6. How many Bibles do you have in your home?

Answers will vary.

7. Are they all the same? What makes one different from the others?

They may look and feel different. Some may contain helpful notes while others may have only the text. They also are different in that there are many different translations of the Bible into English (KJV, NKJV, NIV, RSV, ESV, NASB, AAT, etc.). However, each Bible contains the same central message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen for forgiveness, life and the salvation of the world. You may encourage some discussion about the Bible each participant treasures most.

8. How much of the Bible have you read? What has prevented you from reading more?

Answers will vary, but will likely center around having read parts of the Bible but not the whole Bible. Most will have read more of the New Testament than Old Testament. One thing preventing further reading is a lack of understanding of the overall story of the Bible, how the prophets apply to us today, and a general confusion based on the style in which some of the Bible is written, particularly the Writings and the Prophets.

9. How is the Bible organized? What divisions make it easy to find specific parts of the Bible?

Traditionally, the Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is also divided into books, chapters and verses. The teaching of the Bible is divided into Law and Gospel. The Law shows us our sin. The Gospel shows us our Savior.

10. What is the purpose of the Old Testament? (Luke 24:27)

Again, many purposes can be noted, but the primary purpose is to point us forward to Jesus.

11. What is the purpose of the New Testament? (John 20:31)

Again, many purposes can be noted, but the primary purpose is to tell us about Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit upon His Church to tell others about Him, His work and His forgiveness. We are told the story of Jesus so that we might believe in Him and by believing "have life in his name."

12. Who is at the center of everything the Scriptures teach? (Ephesians 2:19-21)

The answer is that the Bible is about Jesus and its purpose is to point us to salvation in Him.

Read this statement as a very brief review of the session.

Concluding Statement

While the Bible is very diverse in many ways, it is simple in its purpose: to lead us to know Jesus and have salvation. Whenever we open it, we should pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal Jesus to us.

Sing this hymn, which helps emphasize the theme of the session.

Hymn

(Tune: St. Flavian CM)

Almighty God, your Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heav'n descend
And righteous fruits abound.

Let not the sly satanic foe
This holy seed remove,
But give it root in ev'ry heart
To bring forth fruits of love.

Let not the world's deceitful cares
The rising plant destroy,
But let it yield a hundredfold
The fruits of peace and joy.

So when the precious seed is sown,
Life-giving grace bestow
That all whose souls the truth receive
Its saving pow'r may know.

You may lead this prayer or choose a participant to lead.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, your Son is the Word made flesh; help us always to see Him as the center of your Word, that He may also be the center of our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Encourage the participants to read or skim through the suggested reading before your next meeting. They will be better prepared the more they are able to read. However, make clear that if they are not able to get the reading done, the next week's narrative will catch them up and they should still come. Reading is beneficial between lessons but not essential to the study.

For Next Week

Review Genesis 1—11.

These Things Are Written

The Story of God and His People

A 26-Session Study of the Bible

Leader's Guide

Session 2: Genesis 1—11

You may lead this prayer or choose a participant to lead. Be aware that some are afraid of leading even a written prayer in front of others.

Prayer

Lord God, by Your almighty Word, You created all things; help us to see the power of Your Word in our lives today, as it is the way that leads to salvation. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Have a participant (or several) read this Narrative section. It is intended to be a quick review of the portion of the Biblical narrative covered in this session. Again, be aware that some may not like to read out loud in class. Provide a discrete way for them to choose not to read.

Narrative

A young boy slaves all morning placing one block upon another in order to turn the imagination of his mind into a concrete reality. When the final block is placed, he steps back and marvels at what he has created. Moments later, his brother's sizable foot comes sweeping through the air and destroys his beloved creation. Pieces fly here and there. Tears running down the boy's face, he decides that this act of destruction will not be the end of the story. He will put everything back in its proper place. And yet, with every step he takes towards this goal, his brother again swings his fierce foot. The creator, though, will not yield to this violence. He will in the end recreate what has been lost.

This is the story of the entire Scriptures. The story of the Scriptures is that of God refusing to yield to the violence of sin. It is the story of Him ensuring that in the end all things would be set right, that in the end everything would be made new. This is the story of the entire Scriptures and it is also the story of Genesis 1—11.

In the beginning, God creates everything in perfection. With His strong Word He calls forth into reality every imagination of His mind. He speaks and light shines forth into the darkness. He speaks again and the heavens break forth in the midst of the watery mass. Next dry land is called out of those same waters. The

seemingly lifeless land then pushes forth at God's decree every type of vegetation. Grass sprouts. Trees begin to climb to the sky. Flowers prepare to cover the earth with every magnificent color. Above the now active soil of the earth appear two lights, one for the day and another for the night. The surrounding sky is filled with bright starry companions for these two great lights. The waters below the heavens, once empty, start to move as tiny fish dart around and great sea creatures glide from one place to another. And as life thrives there in the sea, it also appears in the heavens above. Birds soar from one place to another. And as those birds gaze down upon the earth the next day, they see the dry land kicked up underneath the feet of every imaginable large beast and tiny insect.

And then God reveals what all of this creating has really been about. He reveals the end of all of it. He dips his finger in the dust of the earth and brings forth man. He takes one of man's ribs and crafts woman. Creation ends with man and woman standing upright and being given two tasks. They are to exercise dominion over all that has been made. And they are also given the task of filling the earth with little feet. God steps back and marvels. As He rests, the seventh day is made holy. "Good. Very good indeed," He says of His six days of work.

But all too soon His joy is cut short as the most crafty of all of His creatures is filled with the deceptions of a fallen angel. The devil's lies spew forth and find their home in the ears and hearts of the man and woman God had created. Deceived, they doubt the very same Word that called them into existence. They seek to leave behind their role as creation and seize God's place as creator.

In a moment, all of creation feels the sweeping force of sin. Nakedness becomes evident. Pain and toil become stark realities. Death creeps into every last corner of creation. God mourns the perfection lost but will not yield to this violence. He promises to set all things right. He puts into motion His plan of salvation that rests upon a sacred seed of the frail woman destroying the wily evil one.

Into all of this death comes new life. The woman gives birth to a son and then another. However, the hope inherent in these new children is quickly dismissed. One brother kills another and again death reigns. Sin and its wages of death rule the day as each generation passes. But God will not yield. He continues to act.

Disgusted by all the evil His eyes behold, God unleashes floods of water from above and below over the whole earth in order to destroy everything that has ruined his perfect creation. He closes eight humans and a pair of each kind of animal safely in a tar-pitched ark. Through these whirling waters, He brings them through death unto new life. He places a bow of many colors into the sky as a reoccurring reminder of His unending grace.

But the spread of sin and death will not yet yield even to this grand attack. The pride that had once inspired the devil to rebel again finds its home in the hearts of humanity. They decide that they will make their name great, not by honoring the holy name of the creator, but by erecting a tower in their own name and for their honor. Again, creatures seek to be regarded as the creator. The result is not what they suppose. Confusion and isolation are built in place of their tall tower. God will not be confounded. His promise of restoration through the seed of a woman rides every storm of sin and continues on unabated. Soon God will begin to show just where within the great sea of humanity that child will be born.

Bible Study

1. Where would you expect any book to begin?

We would expect any book to start with the beginning of the story. That is what we find in the book of Genesis. It is the beginning of the story of God and his people. The word "Genesis" itself speaks of origins.

2. The occupants of our world have always been intrigued about the origins of the planet and of humanity. What is the most popular of the theories in this regard among unbelievers? How are those questions answered here in the book of Genesis? (Genesis 1:1)

(Many of these questions have a Bible reference listed in parenthesis. They do not need to be read out loud each time. They are intended to help participants find the answer if they do not already know it. If no one is able to offer the answer, you may have someone read the verse out loud.)

Answers will vary. Things such as evolution, the big bang, intelligent design, and creation might be mentioned. Allow this question to simply be a quick listing of all of these ideas. Try to not engage in a long conversation about these theories. Explain that the scope of our study dictates that we cannot discuss things like this in great depth. Direct interested participants to other resources and venues more appropriate to longer discussion of these topics.

The Bible is clear that all things were created by God in six days at the command of His Word.

3. What power does God use to create all things? (Genesis 1:3)

He creates with his Word. He speaks and creation comes into existence. He speaks and it is. You might also lead the participants to consider that one of Jesus' names in the Scripture is "The Word of God." Remind them that all things are ultimately created through Jesus. (John 1:1-3)

4. Christians have always given God the Father primary credit for creation. But are the other persons of the Trinity present and active in creation? How? (Genesis 1:1-3)

When God is referred to in the Old Testament, we rightly assume it refers to the Father. But already here the Spirit of God is also found hovering over the waters. Lastly, as you might have explored with the last questions, Jesus is the very Word of God used to create all things. The entire Trinity is present and active as all things are created.

5. How does God describe His creation? (Genesis 1:25) What adverb does he add to that description after creating man and woman? (Genesis 1:31)

He calls everything "good." Once humanity stands tall, He calls everything "very good." And God's words are not just an opinion. For Him to say "very good" means everything is perfect.

6. What series of events caused creation to go from very good to very bad? (Genesis 3)

Make sure the participants, or you as the leader, recount the basic story of the fall. Note how Satan attacks God's Word. This is still his tactic in modern temptation. He always begins by asking us, "Did God really say?" As with Eve, the temptation often works on each of us, as we first doubt and then disobey God's Word.

7. What are the consequences of sin for the serpent, the man, and the woman? (Genesis 3:14-19)

The serpent will crawl on his belly and eventually have his head crushed by the seed of the woman. Both man and woman will find pain in labor, man in farming and woman in childbearing. All things begin to die.

8. What does God promise right in the midst of His proclamations about the consequences of sin? (Genesis 3:15)

God promises that a seed (singular in the original language) will crush the head of the serpent. This is the first Gospel (Good News) recorded in the Scriptures. It is the first promise of the Christ Child to come. God will set all things right by destroying the one who brought sin into the world.

9. What are some biblical examples of sin reigning after the fall into sin? (Genesis 4-5)

Answers will vary but may include Cain killing Abel and believers intermarrying with non-believing pagans. Some may even bring up modern examples of sin reigning in the world. Help the participants see how far-reaching the effects of sin are in the world after the fall.

10. How is Noah described? (Genesis 6:9)

He is described as a righteous man. As we can see from his life, this does not mean he was perfect, but it does mean that he was a man of faith. He is made righteous through faith in God.

11. What was the purpose of the flood? Why did God desire such things? (Genesis 6:17)

The purpose was to destroy all flesh. He desired to end the wickedness He saw upon the earth.

12. Who was saved even as the rest of the world was drowned? (Genesis 6:18-19)

Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives would be saved. Also saved are a male and a female of each kind of animal. God saves enough living things to restart creation after the flood. The flood is meant as a new beginning rather than an end.

13. What were those who were saved in the ark to do once the waters receded? (Genesis 9:1)

They were to refill the earth by multiplying their species.

14. What promise does God make to them and what is the seal of that promise? (Genesis 9:11-13)

God promises that He will never again destroy the entire earth with a flood. He places a rainbow in the sky as a seal of this promise.

15. What desire causes the sin present in the building of the Tower of Babel? (Genesis 11:4)
What was God's response to such sin? (Genesis 11:7)

The oldest sin, pride, rears its ugly head again. All sins start with some version of pride, which allows the person to disregard what God has commanded. All sins are a violation of the first of the Ten Commandments God will give later in the Scriptures. God confuses the language of the people in order to destroy their pride. He also scatters them upon the earth.

Read this statement as a very brief review of the session.

Concluding Statement

God creates and man destroys. It is the vicious cycle that repeats itself time and time again in the Scriptures. And yet, God will set all things right. He will send a Child who will crush the head of the serpent who sought to destroy all that God had called good.

Sing this hymn, which helps emphasize the theme of the session.

Hymn

(Tune: St. Crispin LM)

God loved the world so that he gave
His only Son the lost to save
That all who would in Him believe
Should everlasting life receive.

Christ Jesus is the Ground of faith,
Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All that confide in him alone
Are built on this chief Cornerstone.

God would not have the sinner die,
His Son with saving grace is nigh,
His Spirit in the Word doth teach
How man the blessed goal may reach.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
Forgives all sins which you have done;
And, justified by Jesus' blood,
Your Baptism grants the highest good.

If you are sick, if death is near,
This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death,
That is the firmest ground of faith.

Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally!

You may lead this prayer or choose a participant to lead.

Prayer

Lord God, You are the Father of all people; lead us to serve and obey You as obedient children, that all people may know the glory of Your name. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Encourage the participants to read or skim through the suggested reading before your next meeting. They will be better prepared the more they are able to read. However, make clear that if they are not able to get the reading done, the next week's narrative will catch them up and they should still come. Reading is beneficial between lessons but not essential to the study.

For Next Week

Review Genesis 12–50.