

New Testament Sunday School Assignment

By Samantha Ives

Books of the New Testament

In order they appear with author, audience and theme

GOSPELS

1. Matthew

Author: Anonymous – maybe Matthew

Audience: Unknown but probably Jewish Christians

Theme: Jesus is the Son of God – the King of the Jews

2. Mark

Author: Anonymous but maybe John Mark, a friend of Paul

Audience: The Christians in Rome

Theme: Jesus the kingly Messiah comes to earth as a human. Jesus demonstrates God's power.

3. Luke

Author: Luke

Audience: Theophilus and Gentile Christians

Theme: God has a plan for the world: Jesus, he has come to save both the Jews and the Gentiles (Non Jewish).

4. John

Author: The beloved disciple - most likely John

Audience: A Christian community

Theme: Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, reveals God's love for us in his life and his death.

HISTORY

5. Acts

Author: Luke (carries on from the book of Luke)

Audience: Theophilus and Gentile Christians

Theme: The 'Good News' is for Jews and Gentiles (Non Jewish). The Holy Spirit guides Christians to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ all through the Roman Empire.

LETTERS – Paul

6. Romans

Author: Paul

Audience: The church in Rome

Theme: Jews and Gentiles are one people through the salvation of Christ. We are all saved by grace; by faith in Jesus the Christ and we follow God with the help of the Holy Spirit.

7. 1 Corinthians

Author: Paul

Audience: 1st letter to the Corinthians

Theme: This letter of instructions advises the Corinthians to change their ways to God's ways. The message of the cross is both wisdom and power and we need the Holy Spirit to receive it and to live it.

8. 2 Corinthians

Author: Paul

Audience: 2nd letter to the Corinthians

Theme: More instructions on how to live 'God's way'. Paul tells the Corinthians they don't have to follow the law of the Old Testament anymore –just follow and love Jesus and by doing this, we will treat others well and do the right thing.

9. Galatians

Author: Paul

Audience: Gentile believers in Galatia

Theme: Paul argues that we are free from the law and that the Holy Spirit helps us to do what is right.

10. Ephesians

Author: Paul

Audience: A letter that was to be passed around to many churches in Asia (including Ephesus)

Theme: A letter of encouragement explaining that Jesus Christ is really powerful and He helps us to defeat our powerful enemies. Christ brings the Jews and the Gentiles together.

11. Philippians

Author: Paul

Audience: The church in Philippi

Theme: Joy through suffering and focus on our goal - to become like Christ.

12. Colossians

Author: Paul

Audience: New believers in Colosse

Theme: Christ is all that is needed – He is the truth that sets us free from sin and religious rules and helps us to love everyone. Be Christlike in your everyday life.

13. 1 Thessalonians

Author: Paul

Audience: 1st letter to new converts in Thessalonica

Theme: Be strong in your faith because Jesus is coming again.

14. 2 Thessalonians

Author: Paul

Audience: 2nd letter to new converts in Thessalonica

Theme: Salvation for the Thessalonians, judgement for their enemies and Jesus Christ hasn't returned yet.

15. 1 Timothy

Author: Paul

Audience: 1st letter to Timothy and the church in Ephesus

Theme: A letter of instructions to Timothy to help him lead the church, such as guarding the truth, qualifications of church leaders and how to engage different groups.

16. 2 Timothy

Author: Paul

Audience: 2nd letter to Timothy and the church

Theme: A letter to encourage perseverance in spite of suffering and to stay loyal to Christ and the gospel message.

17. Titus

Author: Paul

Audience: Titus (a Gentile) and the church in Crete

Theme: Instructions for Titus to set the church in order. Christians should live like Jesus especially the leaders and the gospel of grace is the truth.

18. Philemon

Author: Paul

Audience: Philemon a Gentile believer in Colosse and the wider church.

Theme: Onesimus (who was probably a slave), a new Christian, should be forgiven and welcomed. We are all brothers (there is neither slave nor free) in Christ.

LETTERS – others

19. Hebrews

Author: Unknown

Audience: A specific group of mainly Jewish Christians that are isolated from the wider church.

Theme: A letter of encouraging the group to keep going in spite of hardship.
Jesus the Christ and the Messiah - takes away our sin, so that we can talk to God whenever we want.

20. James

Author: James

Audience: Believers in Christ, among the Jewish Diaspora (Diaspora are Jewish people living outside of Israel)

Theme: When difficult things happen, stay close to God. Be responsible for how you live – practice what you preach and don't blame others.

21. 1 Peter

Author: Peter

Audience: persecuted Christians living across Asia Minor

Theme: Jesus suffered to set us free from sin, when we face hardship try to behave like Jesus.

22. 2 Peter

Author: Peter

Audience: various churches across Asia Minor in general

Theme: Grow in your faith and be more like Jesus. Don't listen to false teachers - Jesus is coming again, so be ready.

23. 1 John

Author: Could be the Apostle John

Audience: believers within various churches, most likely Gentile

Theme: Encourages Christians to stay loyal to Jesus and not to listen to lying prophets (people who say they hear from God).

24. 2 John

Author: Could be the Apostle John

Audience: "dear lady and her children" (2 John 1:1). This could be a particular woman or speaking metaphorically of the church.

Theme: Beware of false teachers – stay loyal to Jesus.

25. 3 John

Author: Could be the Apostle John

Audience: Gaius

Theme: Christian hospitality, especially to visiting Ministers.

26. Jude

Author: Jude

Audience: Unknown – probably a group of Jewish Christians

Theme: God's grace is not an excuse to behave badly.

APOCALYPTIC

27. Revelation:

Author: John

Audience: Christians in the area of Asia Minor

Theme: A revelation of Jesus. God's plan to save the world from the beginning to the end of time, told symbolically.

GENRE

Bible genres are different 'styles' of writing. For example there are movie genres e.g. horror, action, family, fantasy etc and music genres e.g. rock, pop and country. In the New Testament there are 4 writing genres (writing styles): Gospels, history, letters and apocalyptic.

Gospel

The word gospel comes from the Greek word evangelion, which means announcing the good news. The Gospels are a biography – an account of Jesus' life and death.

History

These books give an eyewitness account of what has happened in the past.

Letters

These are letters written to others. So if we were sending a letter today it would be in the form of an email or a Facebook message.

Apocalyptic

This is a big picture prophecy - a message from God for the whole world. It's very symbolic in its style.

The Gospels – Poster

Matthew

'Ekklesia' - A community of people gathered around Jesus

The Parables of Jesus

God's kingdom came to earth in the form of Jesus

God's plan is happening through the life of Jesus

Jesus in the Old Testament (61 direct quotes from the OT)

Mark

An emotional description of Jesus' life

The Good News is powerful

Jesus the Messiah

Jesus the Human

Jesus the Son of God

Through the lens of the cross

Luke

The story of Jesus from birth until His death, resurrection and ascent to heaven.

Jesus = forgiveness

The Holy Spirit features in Luke

God has a plan for everyone (Jews and Gentiles alike)
God offers us salvation through Jesus.
God cares for the weak, the poor and the sick.

John

Part 1. The prologue - A powerful, symbolic and creative introduction to Jesus
Part 2. The Book of Signs – The signs that show us who Jesus is, e.g. Jesus calmed the storm, a sign that Jesus has the power over the weather.
Part 3. The book of glory – Jesus knows he is going away so he prepares his disciples to take over his work when he goes.

The I AM's

1. "I am the bread of life."
2. "I am the light of the world."
3. "I am the door of the sheep."
4. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep"
5. "I am the resurrection, and the life."
6. "I am the way, the truth, and the life."
7. "I am the true vine."

Resources

How to read the bible book by book: A guided tour
By Gordon D Fee and Douglas Stuart

An Introduction to the New Testament
By David A DeSilva

Introducing the New Testament
By John Drane

New Testament Top Town

Before you begin spend about 10 minutes talking about the following with the explanations provided and encourage questions:

1. The bible is a library of books. There are 66 books in the bible 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.
2. Each book has its own writing style, which called a genre.
3. Each book has an author.
4. Each book has a theme.

The game.

Break the children into teams of 4-6 peoples and get them to name their group. Make sure there are a couple of adults with each team. Explain during the game they will hopefully is learn something new about the New Testament, while having fun. The idea is to race against the other teams and gain the most points. Each game has a time limit (play that by ear as there will be varied levels of knowledge).

Pegs on the line

Put the pegs (books of the New Testament) in order they appear in the bible on to the washing line.

½ point for each correct place

Ping Pong Balls in the Bucket

Hit the balls (books of the New Testament) into the correct bucket (genre type).

½ point for each correct place

Card blitz

Put the correct description (author, audience and theme) into the correct cup (book of the New Testament), children

are allowed to use the bible in this game. Place the cups about 12 steps away from the groups – groups have to carry the cards to the cup – no hands allowed. Once at the cups match the description to the cup as above.

½ point for each correct place

Count up the points and announce the winning team.
Everyone gets a small prize.

When the game is finished – debrief.