



Parent Pages

Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church*

* The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

The Bible and the Elementary Child

For the Elementary Child, the Holy Bible remains a sacred Book to be cared for and treated with great reverence and respect; it also becomes a treasure to be explored, to become familiar with, and to enjoy. As the children grow in their ability to read, they begin to desire independent access to their favorite Scripture passages including Psalms, Prophecies, Infancy Narratives, Parables, and the Paschal Mystery.

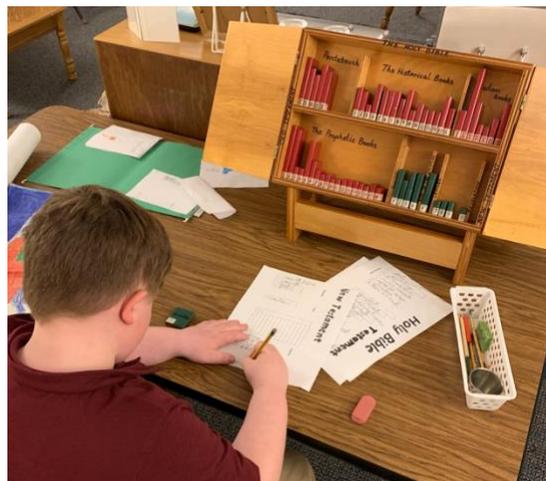
The Books of the Bible

In introducing the Books of the Bible material to the children the two sections of the Old Testament and the New Testament are lifted up, as well as four divisions within each of these sections.

"The **Holy Bible** is one large **Book**, made up of many books, which tells one **history** from creation to the Parousia made by one **God** together with humankind."

The Old Testament

- **The Pentateuch:** This section of the Bible has five books which tell of Creation, Noah, Abraham who is called by God to father a new people, and Moses who leads God's people from slavery in Egypt to the land promised to them by God.
- **The Historical Books:** As the People of God began to make their home in their new land, they had many leaders, good and bad, who established laws and solidified them into a kingdom.
- **The Wisdom Books:** As the People of God reflected on their history, they could see God's hand guiding them. The Wisdom Books are the fruits of this reflection and include their thoughts and prayers.
- **The Prophetic Books:** Throughout the history of the People of God there were some who listened to God in a particular way and then shared His words with the people, speaking of hope, of peace, of a child who would come at the perfect time.



The New Testament

- **The Gospels:** Jesus, the Messiah, was born in Bethlehem. He read the Old Testament and used it to meditate and pray. Jesus did many things: he taught, died, rose, and will come again.
- **The Acts of the Apostles:** After Jesus returned to the Father, his disciples spread the Word, first in Jerusalem to the Jewish people, then all over the world to anyone who would listen.
- **The Letters:** As Christian communities began to grow and spread, the Apostles wrote letters to the people they had spoken to about Jesus, encouraging them, teaching them, and reminding them of God's love.
- **Revelation:** The final Book of the Bible tells of the time yet to come, Parousia, when God's Plan to bring all of His creation to a fullness of life will be complete.

Praying with the Bible at Home

If you have a Bible in your home, take it out and find the table of contents. See if you can find the same divisions listed above: Old and New Testaments. Using the page numbers listed beside each of the Books of the Bible, look up a passage. For example, find the Book of Psalms in your Bible and then look for Psalm 23. It should begin, "The Lord is my shepherd." Elementary children have a great love of looking up Scriptures. Here are some suggestions for helping them in this process:



- The Prayer Cards for the 6-9 (and 9-12) year old child list Psalms and Prophecies which would be a beautiful place to start in looking up Scriptures. Perhaps your child would want to look up three Psalm verses and then choose one to copy and illustrate.
- Using the Scripture Charts for the 6-12 year old child, choose a historical Narrative from Jesus' early life, a passage from His Passion, or an Appearance Narrative to look up, read, and discuss together. What is happening in this Scripture? Is there a word or phrase that stands out to you? How can this Scripture passage help you today or this week?
- The Scripture Charts also list the Parables of Jesus. Choose a parable to look up and read. Is this parable familiar to you? What is happening in the story? Parables always have a deeper meaning in addition to their surface meaning. Could one of the characters in the story be God? Is one you? What deeper truth is God telling you through the Scripture?
- Some Bibles have a list of the Sunday readings in their final pages. Perhaps you would like to look up the Gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday either by using this chart or by looking online. Reading and pondering the Gospel before attending Church can help us to listen more deeply when His Word is proclaimed!
- Make a list of your favorite Scripture passages and invite your child to do the same. Perhaps this list could be made on a piece of paper that can fit into your Bible so that it is available to you when you open your Bible to spend time with Him in His Word.

