

NEW LECTIONARY NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Scripture resources to support our dioceses



Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

Luke 24:44-45

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How this resource works

This resource is for all Liturgical Ministers, formators, leaders, catechists and teachers in our dioceses.

In each section we provide a range of ideas to help you accompany your parishes and schools in developing their engagement with the Scriptures during and outside of Mass.

These ideas are devised to help you and those you accompany to deepen a love of the Bible and navigate the new Lectionary.

All our ideas are simple suggestions for you to adapt according to your needs and contexts.

They are not an exhaustive list but a platform from which you can develop other resources, tools and approaches to benefit from the new Lectionary.

We encourage you to be creative and flexible in how you use these ideas and resources to suit your communities.

We include helpful web links to support our information.

This resource has been created by the Biblical Apostolate of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.



Introduction



The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God's word and of Christ's body.
[21]

Dei Verbum, 1965

The Lectionary is much more than the four volumes themselves.

- It is a canon within a canon as part of the Roman Missal.
- It is a unique encounter with God's word every single day.
- With a new translation this must surely change the way we participate in all our liturgies and especially Holy Mass.

The new Lectionary using the English Standard Version-Catholic Edition (ESV-CE) is an opportunity for all Catholics to develop a renewed vision of the Kingdom of God and new encounters with Christ. If we grasp this opportunity over the coming years, we will be living in the same spirit as the early disciples did, as they hungered for the gospel and the hopes it promised them for salvation. This is our moment.

For all those Catholics who do not know what the Lectionary is in any detail and why it has changed, we can help them to understand its structure and content, its purpose and pattern, its beauty and wisdom. For those who do know what the Lectionary is – we can take them deeper, wider and further. A new translation brings a new perspective.

The scriptural opportunities enabled by the change of Lectionary are unlimited, but we need to be real about what is possible with what we have and where we are.

Always, we aim to have creativity and inclusivity at heart. We can present the Sacred Scriptures and our liturgies in different ways so that there are no barriers to accessing the Bible and the Lectionary for anyone.

The word of God given to us makes us not only hearers, but also heralds so that we share in Christ's mission and are empowered by the Holy Spirit. [91]. The word that we receive is meant for all; it cannot be kept to ourselves. Since it is true, it belongs to everyone. [92]

Verbum Domini, 2010



How the Bible speaks to Catholics:

Principles and approaches to Scripture



The word 'Bible' comes from the Greek *biblia* which simply means 'books' because the Bible is a collection of books. Yet since the Bible is so much more than the physical nature of the books themselves, the word *Scripture* conveys the wider sense and application of these sacred writings.

In appreciating the new Lectionary and our chosen translations, it is first helpful to explore how the Bible speaks to Catholics.

In the New Testament, the Old is spoken of as 'the Scriptures' or 'the sacred writings' (Matthew 21:42). Gradually the word 'Scripture' has been used in the singular and has become a synonym for the Bible. Catholics cite Acts 8:32 - "Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this..." to support this definition.

The Christian faith is not a 'religion of the book'. Christianity is the religion of the 'Word' of God, a word which is 'not a written and mute word, but the Word is incarnate and living'.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #108

Here are a helpful set of Catholic principles and approaches to reading the Bible whenever and wherever we are engaging with Scripture:

1 *God is the principal author of Sacred Scripture.*

2 God used specific people who wrote in human language at a particular time and place in history. These writers reflected their own personalities, educations and cultures.

The truth that they conveyed is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression.

3 Catholics seek to understand what a sacred author is saying to be true, distinguishing that from something he is using as an image to help them understand the truth more clearly.

4 Divine Revelation is expressed in the Scriptures for our salvation. Its message along with doctrine, worship and Christian life form the deposit of faith. These are the sum of the blessings to be pondered and infallibly realised across time in ever new and fruitful forms.

The Bible is concerned with telling these truths, which are without error.

To help Catholics grow in faith as they read Scripture, the Church gives us three important points for interpreting and understanding the Bible:

- | | | |
|----------|--|--|
| 1 | 'Be especially attentive "to the content and unity of the whole Scripture"' | (Catechism, #112). It all fits together, so we should not just look at selected parts in isolation. |
| 2 | Read the Bible within 'the living Tradition of the whole Church' (Catechism, #113), since the Holy Spirit guides the Church in interpreting Scripture. | Especially helpful is seeing how the saints, popes, early church fathers and mothers and church councils have commented on Scripture throughout history. |
| 3 | Pay attention to 'the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation' (Catechism, #114). | The entire deposit of faith forms a wonderful unity – doctrine sheds light on Scripture, and Scripture on doctrine. |

Catholics believe that there are different senses to our understanding of the Bible:

The literal sense

The meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation. All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal.

The spiritual sense

In light of the unity of God's plan, not just the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs.

The moral sense

The events we read in Scripture should lead us to act justly and fairly.

The allegorical sense

We can find a more profound understanding of events by seeing their significance in Christ; so the crossing of the Red Sea is both a sign of Christ's victory and of Christian baptism.

The anagogical sense

(Greek: anagoge, 'leading')

We can see the realities and events in the Bible in terms of their eternal significance, leading us home to God. So the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem.





Example:

The Parable of the Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37

When we look at the literal sense of this parable, we see the following elements:

The story

A traveller is mugged and left for dead on the side of the road. A Jewish priest and a Levite pass by and ignore him, but a Samaritan stops to help. The Samaritan cleans the man's wounds, carries him to an inn on his donkey, and arranges to pay for his ongoing care.

The cultural context

At the time, Samaritans were considered enemies of the Jews. The Jewish priest and Levite (assistant to a priest) are both heading away from Jerusalem and may have assumed the man was dead. Priests and Levites avoided defiling themselves by coming into contact with anything that was unclean, including a dead person, due to the ritual purity laws they were required to uphold.

When we look at the spiritual sense of this parable, we see the following moral, allegorical and anagogical elements:

The moral elements:

Jesus' message is that, like the Good Samaritan, we are called to love and care for all people regardless of whether we know them or not or where they come from; and to treat them as we would like to be treated. Jesus transcended the ritual purity laws by maintaining that a person's welfare is more important than a person's status or role.

The term 'Good Samaritan' is now used to describe anyone who helps a stranger in need.

The allegorical and anagogical elements:

The traveller represents all of us in need of mercy.

The Good Samaritan represents Jesus and the commandment to love and care.

The Priest and the Levite represent those who place the Law above the duty of care.

The donkey represents Jesus' body as it carries the traveller to safety.

The wine and oil represent the healing sacraments that offer us grace and protection.

The money represents the act of charitable welfare.

The inn represents the Church as the place in which we receive the healing sacraments.

For a longer reflection by Pope Francis: Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship

Encyclical, 2020.

[vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html)

“ Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ... ”

- St Jerome

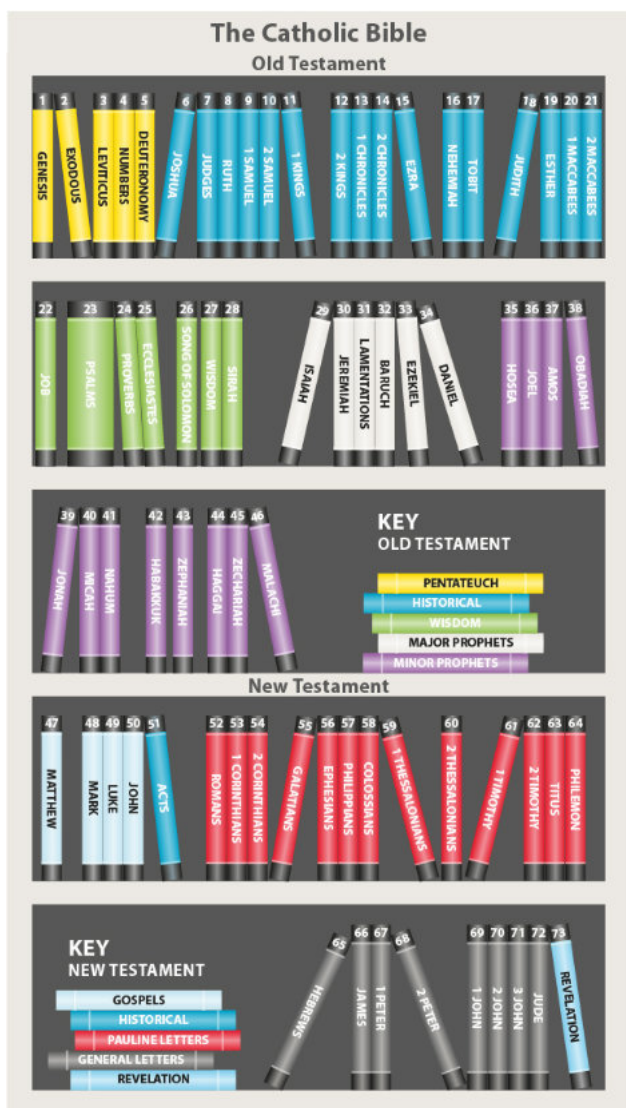
The Books of the Bible

The Bible or the Sacred Scriptures is not just one book.

It is a whole library and contains:

46 books in the Old Testament.

27 books in the New Testament.



The Old Testament includes the following seven books that are not in Protestant Bibles:

- Tobit,
- Judith,
- Baruch,
- Sirach or Ecclesiasticus,
- Wisdom,
- 1 and 2 Maccabees,
- Certain additions to Esther and Daniel.

These are known as Deutero-canonical in some traditions.

The New Testament books are the same in all Bibles.

The genres are:

- Law,
- Prophets,
- History,
- Wisdom literature,
- Gospels,
- Letters,
- Revelation.



The Old Testament

A. The Pentateuch (or 'The Law')

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

These contain some of the classic stories of Scripture, about the creation of the world, the Fall of Adam and Eve, the call of Abraham, and Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt.

B. The Histories

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 and 2 Maccabees.

These books tell the story of the history of Israel, including the entry to the Promised Land, the reigns of various kings, the exile to Babylon and eventual return, as well as struggles against foreign empires.

C. The Wisdom books

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (also known as Sirach). This collection of songs and proverbs contains both practical and religious wisdom.

D. The Prophets

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel and Daniel, as well as the Twelve Minor Prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi).

The role of the prophets is to remind the people and their leaders of their special covenant responsibilities to the poor and oppressed. They speak not in their own name but pass on the word of the Lord. Their challenging words were not often welcomed.

The New Testament

A. The Gospels

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Acts of the Apostles is also included here as it's considered to be a 'part two' of Luke's Gospel.

Since they reveal the life and words of Jesus most directly, the gospels are the most important part of Scripture.

B. The Epistles of St Paul

Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

St Paul wrote these letters to Christian communities throughout the Roman Empire (such as Ephesus and Thessalonica), as well as to some individuals (Timothy, Titus and Philemon).

C. The Catholic or General Epistles

Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude and Revelation (the Apocalypse).

They are known as the 'Catholic' or General Epistles because they were written to the wider Church rather than primarily meant for specific communities.

Approved Bibles

For public and private use

Here are the Bibles that are approved for Catholics to use and quote from by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Code of Canon Law

828 §1

- Books of Sacred Scripture should be approved either by the Holy See or the Bishops' Conference prior to publication.
- They should have necessary and sufficient explanatory notes.

828 §2

- Catholics can work with other Christians on Scripture translations with appropriate explanatory notes.

The Lectionary uses:

- English Standard Version-Catholic Edition (ESV-CE) and the Abbey Psalms and Canticles (a revision of Grail) from Advent 2024.
- Good News Bible-Catholic Edition may be used for Masses with children.

Divine Office List:

- Jerusalem Bible.
- Knox Bible.
- New English Bible.
- Revised Standard Version.
- Good News Bible.

Other approved Catholic editions of Scripture for private study include:

- New Revised Standard Version.
- Revised Standard Version.
- Revised New Jerusalem Bible.
- New Jerusalem Bible.
- Jerusalem Bible.
- The Bible - Nick King SJ.
- Christian Community Bible.
- CEV New Testament.

The whole point of reading and understanding the Bible is to encounter God, understand the revelation he has given us, and to grow in faith and understanding in our everyday life.

We do not read alone, we read the Bible within the tradition of the Church to benefit from the holiness and wisdom of all the faithful who have gone before us.

It is important to remember that we cannot rely on the Sunday Mass readings alone. Sitting in the pew each Sunday, every three years we hear most of the gospels, a quarter of the letters of the New Testament, but only about 13% of the Old Testament. This is why we are encouraged to explore the rest of the Bible as we go about our busy lives and to deepen our faith and understanding of God's revelation to us.





The Catholic Church:

Sacred Space

KEY BIBLE TEXTS:

The Catholic Church
Matt 16:18-19; 1 John 1:1

Welcome and Gather
Ruth 2:4; 2 Cor 13:13

Liturgy of the Word
Old and New Testament books

Liturgy of the Eucharist
Isa 52:13-53; Matt 26:26-28;
Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19-20;
John 4:42; 1 Cor 11:25-26

Sending Out
Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15;
Luke 24:50-51; John 20:21

Sprinkling of Holy Water
Num 8:7a

Sign of the Cross
Ezek 9:4; Eph 1:13

Crossing ourselves before the Gospel
Deut 6:6-9; 11:18-21

Gospel Acclamation
Rev 5:11-14; 19:5-7

Genuflection & Blessing
Isa 45:23; Luke 22:39-46

Penitential Act
Lev 5:5; Neh 9:2; Luke 18:13;
James 5:16

Lord's Prayer
Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4; Titus 2:13;
Rev 1:5-6

Sign of Peace
John 14:27; 20:21; Rom 16:16;
1 Pet 5:14

Baptism
Mark 16:16; Matt 28:18-20;
John 3:5; Rom 6:4; 1 Pet 3:21

Reconciliation
John 20:19-23; 2 Cor 5:18-20

The Altar, Tabernacle, Sanctuary Lamp, Incense Burner & Priestly Vestments
Ex 25-30

THE BIBLE ALIVE IN CHURCH



Here is a visual representation of what you will find inside a Catholic church, and of how we identify and express our Catholic faith physically and spiritually.

It is a great resource for Key Stage 2 and 3 RE lessons and for Children's Liturgy groups.

It helps us to understand:

- What is distinctive about a Catholic church
- Where some of the sacraments take place in church
- What the different parts of the church are called
- Where we worship from in a church
- What other devotions and practices we do inside a church
- The Church's scriptural roots

This poster can be downloaded from our God who Speaks website godwhospeaks.uk/the-bible-alive-in-church-poster/

In using this poster, we can explain why:

We read from the Lectionary on an Ambo or lectern which is positioned in the sanctuary; and why it is usually in a fixed place unlike in many Free Church settings.

Why the lectern is often decorated with symbols from the gospel writers, Mary or St Jerome.

There are four symbols for the gospel writers.

Matthew – a man; Mark – a lion; Luke – an ox; John – an eagle. (**Ezekiel 1:10, Revelation 4:7**)

We have a holy water stoup for blessing ourselves as we enter and leave a church.
(**Numbers 5:17; 8:7**)

We have an altar, a tabernacle, a sanctuary light that burns continuously, incense and priestly vestments. (**Exodus 25-30**)

We use and promote the crucifix in the central apse. (**John 3:14-15; 1 Corinthians 1:23**)

We welcome and gather. (**Ruth 2:4; 2 Corinthians 13:13**)

We make the sign of the cross. (**Ezekiel 9:4; Ephesians 1:13**)

We make a penitential act. (**Leviticus 5:5; Nehemiah 9:2; Luke 18:13; James 5:16**)

We cross ourselves before the gospel. (**Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 11:18-21**)

We sing a gospel acclamation. (**Revelation 5:11-14; 19:5-7**)

We genuflect, and the priest blesses us. (**Isaiah 45:23; Luke 22:39-46; Philippians 2:1-11**)

We remember the sacrifice of the priest Melchizedek. (**Genesis 14:17-20; Hebrews 5:1-10**)

We sing the 'Holy, Holy, Holy' acclamation. (**Matthew 21:1-10; Revelation 4**)

We refer to Christ as the 'Lamb of God'. (**John 1:29,35**)

We say the Lord's Prayer. (**Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4; Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:5-6**)

We make the sign of peace. (**John 14:27; 20:21; Romans 16:16; 1 Peter 5:14**)

We are sent out with a blessing. (**Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:50-51; John 20:21**)

We have statues, icons and stained-glass windows of Mary, Joseph and saints.

We light candles and incense for praying, for interceding, as well as personal and collective worship and reflection.

The Paschal candle is lit at the Easter Vigil (Easter Saturday), through Eastertide and at baptisms and funerals to signify Christ the 'Light of the World', risen from the dead.

(**Exodus 30:1-9; Leviticus 16:12-13; Numbers 7:26; Luke 1:9; Revelation 8:3-5**)

We use ashes (burnt palm branches from Palm Sunday) placed as a cross on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent) as a reminder of our mortality. (**Genesis 3.19**)

We use different coloured altar cloths and priestly vestments for key seasons, feast days of saints or martyrs, depending on which biblical events or feasts we are celebrating.

We depict the Stations on the Way of the Cross (14 stopping points for prayer and meditation) on our walls in stone statues, carved reliefs or paintings of the journey of Jesus' Passion and death.

Structure of the Mass



The new Lectionary provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the beauty of the structure of the Mass and particularly, the relationship between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Look here for information on all the Bible phrases that we use in each part of the Mass -

godwhospeaks.uk/the-bible-alive-in-church-poster/

While we tend to emphasise the Eucharist and sometimes neglect the Bible, our new Lectionary can help us to redress the balance by:

- 1** Showing how a new version of the same Scriptures can shed light on new meanings and phrases, especially from well-known passages that we can overlook through familiarity.
- 2** Comparing the ESV-CE Scripture texts with our previous Jerusalem translation to see differences and similarities, and how these affect our understanding of the texts.
- 3** Considering the scriptural roots of the overall structure and elements of the Mass.

Invite a group to explore the basic structure of the Mass below by considering the relationship between each element and their scriptural foundations.

1 *Introductory Rites*

2 *The Liturgy of the Word*

3 *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*

4 *Concluding Rites*

The Presence of Jesus:

- The Gathering – where two or three are gathered in my name (**Matthew 18:19-20**).
- The Proclamation of the Word.
- The Word became flesh (**John 1:14**) and gives himself in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

1 *Introductory Rites*

The Introductory Rites help the faithful come together as one, establish communion and prepare themselves to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

Opening Hymn and Procession

We gather as a community and praise God in song.

The Greeting

We pray the sign of the cross. The priest welcomes us.

The Penitential Act

We remember our sins and ask God for mercy.

The Gloria

We praise God in song or word.

The Collect

We ask God to hear our prayers.



2 *The Liturgy of the Word*

By hearing the word proclaimed in worship, the faithful again enter into the unending dialogue between God, the covenant people and God's plan for salvation. It is a dialogue sealed in the sharing of the Eucharistic food and drink.

First Reading

We listen to God's Word from the Old Testament.

Psalm

We respond to God's Word in song.

Second Reading

We listen to God's Word from the New Testament.

Gospel Acclamation

We sing 'Alleluia!' to praise God for the Good News. During Lent, we use a different acclamation.

The Gospel

We stand and listen to the Gospel of the Lord.

The Homily

The priest or the deacon explains God's Word.

The Creed

We proclaim our faith through saying the Creed together.

Intercessions

We pray for our needs and the needs of others.

3 *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. It is the vital centre of all that the Church is and does, because at its heart is the real presence of the crucified, risen and glorified Lord, continuing and making available his saving work among us.

Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts

Bread and wine brought to the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist.

Prayer over the Offerings

The priest prays that God will accept our sacrifice and offering.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Dialogue and Preface - Thanksgiving for the whole work of salvation or a particular element of it according to season or festivity.

- Acclamation (Holy, Holy Holy) - *All join their praise to that of the heavenly powers. (cf. Isaiah 6:3).*
- The Epiclesis - *The imploring of the power of the Holy Spirit that the gifts of human hands be consecrated to become Christ's Body and Blood.*
- Institution narrative and Consecration - *Recalling the events and words of the Last Supper, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.*
- Anamnesis - *Our remembering (memorial) of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ into heaven.*
- The Oblation - *The Church gathered now offers the Sacrificial Victim and learns to offer their very selves.*
- Intercessions - *The oblation (offering) is made for the living and the dead in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth.*
- Doxology and Great Amen - *We affirm the words and actions of the Eucharistic prayer to the glorification of God.*



Communion Rite

We prepare to and receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

- Lord's Prayer - *We pray to the Father for our daily bread and for forgiveness.*
- The Rite of Peace - *The Church prays for peace for herself and the whole human family and expresses a mutual charity before being in communion through the Sacrament.*
- The Fraction and 'Lamb of God' - *The breaking of bread and a prayer for mercy and peace.*
- Communion - *We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.*
- Post Communion Prayer - *We pray that the Eucharist will strengthen us to live as Jesus did.*

4 *Concluding Rites*

The Concluding Rites send the sanctified people forth to put into effect in their lives what they have received in Word and Sacrament.

Blessing

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Dismissal

The sending of the faithful to give what they have received in the Word, Sacrifice and Charity of God. The priest or deacon sends the people out to serve God.

- The dismissal gives the liturgy its name. The word 'Mass' comes from the Latin word, 'Missa' and 'Ite, missa est', means 'Go, you are sent'.
- The word 'Missa' comes from the word 'missio', the root of the English word 'mission'.
- The liturgy does not simply come to an end. Those assembled are sent forth to bring the fruits of the Eucharist to the world.

Questions to explore

- 1 What do you notice about this structure?
How does it help you to understand and follow the Mass?
- 2 Which parts of the Mass help you to deepen your faith most readily?
- 3 Apart from the Liturgy of the Word, how else and where can the structure of the Mass enrich your understanding of Scripture?

The Church has always honoured the Word of God and the Eucharistic Mystery with the same reverence.

Since our faith has its origins and sustenance in the word, the celebration of Mass in which the Scriptures are heard and the Eucharist is offered can help us to find and to reveal new wisdom and holiness in the challenges of a different translation.

For reflection

Our chosen Scripture readings are the core text of all our Masses.

They are:

- The story of salvation unfolding before us each week.
- The focus of the homily.
- The shaping of the music.
- The inspiration for the liturgical environment throughout each season.
- The words for our singing of the Psalm and Gospel Acclamation.
- The foundations for our intercessions.
- The healing embrace for all our joys and sorrows.
- The way, the truth and the life that leads us to receive the Holy Eucharist.
- The context of our catechesis and faith formation.
- The guidance for how we live the rest of the week.

It is our privilege and gift to help make these elements as significant as possible.

Blessing of Lectionaries and Book of the Gospels

The new edition of the Lectionary for Mass (**Ordo Lectionum Missae**) confirmed by the Apostolic See in 2023 comes into use in England and Wales on the First Sunday of Advent 2024.

“ From that date forward, no other English language edition of the Lectionary for Mass may be used in the dioceses of England and Wales. ”

- By decree of the Bishops' Conference

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) states:

Special care must be taken to ensure that the liturgical books, particularly the Book of the Gospels and the Lectionary, which are intended for the proclamation of the Word of God and hence receive special veneration, are to be in a liturgical action truly signs and symbols of higher realities and hence should be truly worthy, dignified, and beautiful.

(N.349)

This is further explained in the pastoral instruction Celebrating the Mass given by the Bishops of England and Wales:

The ritual books - principally the Roman Missal and the Lectionary and Book of the Gospels - used in the celebration of the Eucharist serve to communicate God's presence to us in the word or to signify the Church's loving and full response to God. In both capacities they facilitate the action of Christ in the Church.



Books from which the word of God is proclaimed are treated with veneration. They need to be of large size, strong binding, and noble design. Care should be taken that by virtue of their worth, dignity and beauty, the Lectionary and Book of the Gospels can serve as signs and symbols of higher realities.

(N.124)

With this in mind and with a new moment in the life of the Church in these countries with the Liturgy of the Word now to be proclaimed from the English Standard Version – Catholic Edition (ESV-CE) of the Bible it is appropriate that these new Lectionaries and Book of the Gospels be blessed before they are taken for use to the 'table of God's Word' from which we grow in wisdom.

A form of blessing of Lectionaries and Book of the Gospels

***The blessing is used during Mass after the Collect;
the congregation is seated and prepared to hear the Word of God.***

The priest facing the congregation and standing close to the Ambo receives the Volumes at the hands of Readers/Proclaimers of the Word and (Deacon) with hands joined, he says:

The word of God, proclaimed in the sacred Scripture, enlightens our minds and hearts. When the Scriptures are read in the liturgical assembly, God speaks to us and calls us to respond in faith and love.

In the First Letter of Peter we read:

'... love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for

"All flesh is like grass and its glory like the flower of grass.

*The grass withers and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord remains for ever."*

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.'

(1 Peter 1:23-25. ESV-CE)

The blessing of new books of sacred Scripture, these new Lectionaries (and Book of the Gospels) is important to the life of the Church, for they contain within them God's living word. We ask God to bless these books and all of us who will listen to the word of the Lord.

May the word of God proclaimed in this place unfold for us the mystery of Christ and achieve your salvation within the Church.

All may make the following response:

May the word of the Lord take root in our hearts and bring forth a rich harvest. Amen.

All pause for a moment of silent prayer, before the celebrant, with hands outstretched, continues:

Everlasting God,

*when he read in the synagogue at Nazareth,
your Son proclaimed the good news of salvation
for which he would give us his life.*

Bless these Lectionaries (and Book of the Gospels).

*As they contain your words of life,
strengthen by them the faith of your people
who, with conviction and boldness,
put into practice in their lives what they hear in your word.
We ask this through the Word-made-flesh, Christ our Lord.
Amen."*

The celebrant sprinkles the books with holy water.

The Lectionaries are taken to the Ambo, the Book of the Gospels is placed on the Altar.

Mass continues with the First Reading.

Modes and Dynamics of the new Lectionary

There is no perfect translation of the Bible.

Each translation has its strengths and weaknesses, merits and challenges.

In the tension between the emphasis of Formal translation (the words themselves) and Dynamic equivalence (equivalent meaning) – there is always the question of balance and weight.

This is determined in part by how we understand the context and culture of the Bible.

Do we translate the Scriptures into contemporary cultures or the cultures of when the texts were written?

Is the purpose to understand the original intended audience and environment only or do we clarify their relevance and application today?

Each decision the translator makes will shape and affect the mode and dynamic of the selected Scripture texts.



Some of the key changes made that affect the mode and dynamics of the new Lectionary are:

- 1 Typeset:**
An updated, specially modified version of Stone font with rubrics in red.
- 2 Clarity:**
Text set in sense lines for ease of proclamation.
- 3 Study Aids:**
In-line verse numbers simplify cross-referencing for preaching and study.
- 4 Calendar:**
Complete Proper of Saints with new saints and updated national calendars.
- 5 Index:**
Fully indexed with page numbers and Lectionary numbers for all biblical references, psalms and feasts, including national propers.
- 6 Music:**
New music settings for Gospel Sequences and Psalm settings being composed.
- 7 Gender inclusive:**
Where a text indicates inclusion of both men and women, e.g., when Jesus or an apostle is addressing a crowd, the term now used is 'brothers and sisters' as in St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians and in the Acts of the Apostles.
- 8 Overall syntax:**
Texts contain less poetic phrasing, and a simpler syntax compared with the Jerusalem Bible, which evoke a more immediate style as well as appealing to those of the faithful whose mother tongue is not English.

To help understand the different dynamics at work in each of these modes and to identify who is affected by these modes and dynamics with the new Lectionary, the following list provides a helpful framework.

Using this framework, you can create an 8-part series on getting to grips with the Lectionary. You can identify who is best able to talk about each mode and create an 8-week speaker programme for your parish/deanery to explore these elements further.



<i>Mode and dynamic</i>	<i>People affected by the mode. Those with relevant expertise for your speaker programme.</i>
<i>Proclaiming Scripture</i>	Priests, deacons, lectors, readers and psalmists. Teachers.
<i>Reading from Scripture</i>	All the faithful. Leaders of prayer and catechists. Teachers.
<i>Listening to Scripture</i>	All the faithful. Leaders of prayer and catechists. Teachers.
<i>Preaching from Scripture</i>	Bishops, priests and deacons.
<i>Preparing the Scriptures for Liturgy</i>	Musicians, composers, intercession writers and homily notes.
<i>Praying and Meditating on Scripture</i>	All the faithful. Leaders of prayer, adult and children's catechists. Teachers. Retreat and Day of Recollection givers.
<i>Living out of Scripture</i>	All the faithful. Social justice focus group leaders and Justice & Peace Co-ordinators.
<i>Studying Scripture</i>	All the faithful. Bible scholars and theologians. Bible study group leaders. Teachers.

Questions for speakers and groups to think about for each session:

- 1 What is unique about each of these modes and dynamics relating to Scripture?
- 2 How does the new ESV-CE translation change these modes and dynamics?
- 3 What stays the same regardless of the translation chosen?
- 4 How can these modes and dynamics encourage our love of the Scriptures?
- 5 How can they deepen our relationship with Christ?
- 6 How can they enrich our relationship with each other?
- 7 What is unique about each of these modes and dynamics relating to Scripture?



At The Ecological Dinner in the Kingdom

Maximino Cerezo Barredo

(Spanish, 1932–).

The Liturgical Cycle

Catholics, like most other Christians, maintain a calendar of the Christian seasons which is structured around the life of Christ.

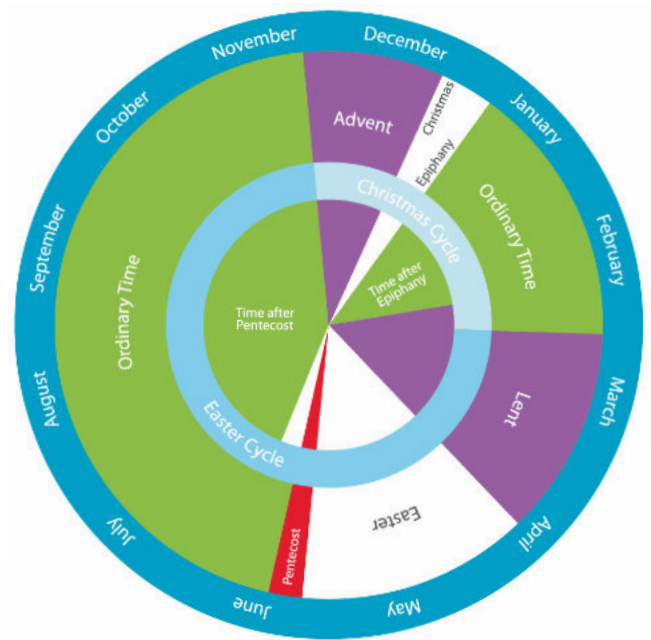
Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord – Holy Trinity, Corpus Christi, Christ the Eternal High Priest et al.

We honour the life of the Virgin Mary and Joseph her husband on specific days and months, and we ask them to intercede for us regularly.

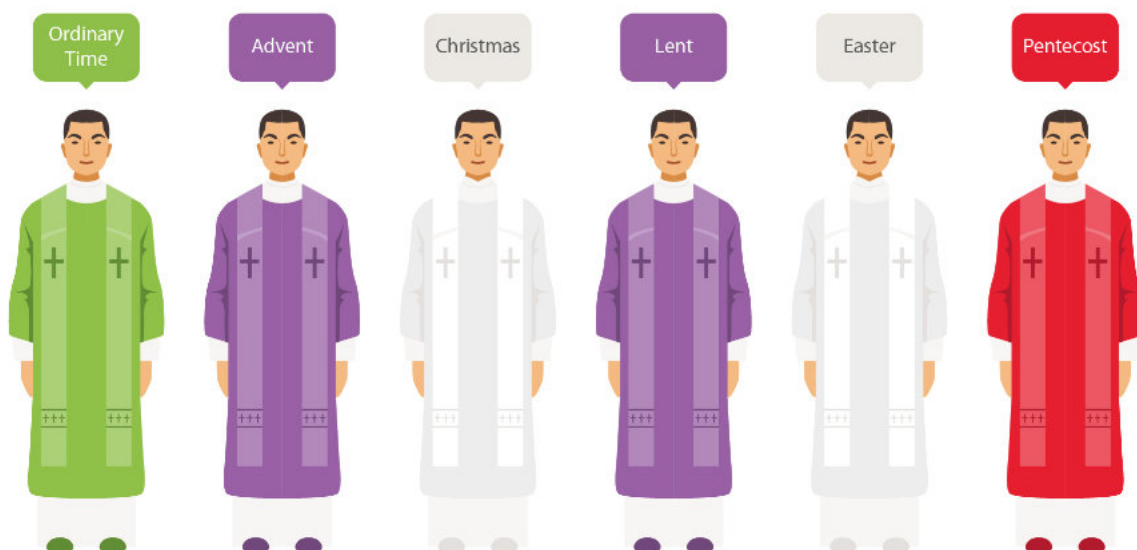
At the General Intercessions some parishes will additionally seek the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Hail Mary takes its central inspiration from Luke 1:28.

We also celebrate many other saints and feast days both publicly and privately.

The Catholic Church believes that the use of different colours in the liturgical and priestly vestments, church decorations and other symbols can help appreciate the mood and sense of a season or feast.



Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) introduced the colour sequence which is still used in all churches today and is inspired by those same colours recorded in the Bible.



| *Common colours for the seasons and vestments. Gold, blue, rose and black are also used.*

How is the Christian year organised in our churches?

The Christian year begins in December on the first Sunday of Advent and continues to the Feast of Christ the King at the end of November of the following year.

The Roman Catholic Mass Lectionary organises the readings for worship services on Sundays in a three-year cycle.

- First reading from the Old Testament or, in Eastertide, from the Acts of the Apostles of the New Testament;
- Responsorial psalm (ideally, to be sung);
- Second reading from one of the New Testament letters;
- And a gospel reading.

The readings selected from the Old Testament, the psalms and the epistles always relate to the gospels so that there is a coherent revelation being told. In this way, God's plans for humanity are seen as being fulfilled in Christ – thus the gospels are the light through which we read and understand the Old Testament.

The Gospel of John is read in all three years particularly at Christmas and in the Easter season. For weekday Masses a different set of readings is used but following a similar cycle.

The Roman Catholic Mass Lectionary is the basis of the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) which is used by many other Churches.

In using the ESV-CE, the provenance of this new translation facilitates greater ecumenical dialogue than with the use of the Jerusalem Bible.

The key seasons are:

- Advent to Christmas; Epiphany to the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord.
- Lent to Easter Sunday; Ascension to Pentecost.

The years are designated A, B or C in the Lectionary for Sundays.

Each yearly cycle begins on the first Sunday of Advent (the last Sunday of November or first Sunday of December). Year B follows year A, year C follows year B, then back again to A.

Year A – uses Matthew's Gospel readings

Year B – uses Mark's Gospel readings

Year C – uses Luke's Gospel readings

The current and forthcoming cycles are:

2024 - 2025 is **Year C**

2025 - 2026 is **Year A**

2026 - 2027 is **Year B**



Seasons and Feast Days

Catholicism is rich in visual and verbal symbolism, and we love our seasons and feast days.

The words and actions of our rituals show us that ordinary things can be made holy by the Word of God and prayer, says St Paul in 1 Timothy 4:4-5. The many faithful people in the Bible and in the history of our Church continue to provide us with inspiration, powerful prayers, and great stories to learn and share.

Our seasons and feast days offer us unlimited creativity in how we share their purpose, meaning and symbols. They are a primary source of evangelisation and discipleship, and enable our faith formation to deepen each year.

As the ESV-CE translation is not as poetic in form and style as the Jerusalem Bible, it can speak to us more directly during these seasons and feast days. We have the space to see them through a new lens and appeal to different audiences. For those who do not relate to poetic language, this translation may help them find their way to God more easily and discover a new relationship with the seasons and feast days that perhaps they did not embrace before.

Here are some ideas for families to try out during the key seasons and feast days:

Make a Healing Tree activity for All Souls' Day based on 'the healing of the nations' quotation in Revelation 22:2, to pray for loved ones who have died.

godwhospeaks.uk/healing-tree-activity/

Make a Jesse Tree activity for Advent to learn about Jesus' genealogy recorded in the gospels of Matthew (1:1-17) and Luke (3:23-38).

catholicicing.com/?s=jesse+tree
thereligionteacher.com/?s=Jesse+tree

Follow our **Donkey Detective** stories from Christmas to Easter through the donkey's role within God's plan.

godwhospeaks.uk/the-christmas-donkey/
godwhospeaks.uk/the-easter-donkey/

Reflect on the **in-between times** period between Easter and Pentecost.

godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#iep

Design a set of clouds for all the apostles and Mary and suspend them in your church and school for **Ascension Day**.

catholicicing.com/celebrating-solemnity-of-ascension/

Make **Pentecost** a focus on belonging and inclusion by: Celebrating the diversity of languages and cultures in your parishes.

Celebrating neurodiversity in your communities.

Hosting a choir festival with songs in different languages.

godwhospeaks.uk/pentecost/

For **Creationtide** explore the story of Noah and his wider role in the Old and New Testament with our **Noah Day**

godwhospeaks.uk/run-your-own-noah-day/

Instead of Halloween decorations, put up some images of angels and archangels, and show the power of God's light and truth.

Angels

godwhospeaks.uk/our-top-ten-angels-in-the-bible/

Archangels

godwhospeaks.uk/video-the-four-archangels/

For all our saints and seasons resources

godwhospeaks.uk/saints-seasons/

For all our seasonal posters
godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/

The Seven Sacraments

Catholics have always recognised how words, actions, symbols and images speak powerfully to the soul.

These intrinsic elements of our rituals and sacraments point beyond this world to the life of God and bring his grace and power into our lives.

As St Paul tells us,

Ordinary things can be made holy by the Word of God and prayer

(1 Timothy 4:4-5).



The seven sacraments are rooted in Scripture and form the backbone of our Catholic life.

Baptism	(Matthew 28:18-20)
Confirmation	(Acts 8:14-17)
Eucharist	(Luke 22:14-20)
Reconciliation	(John 20:19-23)
Marriage	(Matthew 19:1-11)
Holy Orders	(2 Timothy 1:6-7)
Anointing of the Sick	(James 5:14-15)

With a new Lectionary translation, the choice of readings for each sacrament offers us some new ways to participate in and deepen our understanding of what the sacrament mediates.

Another significant way that the Church brings the message of Scripture to life is through sacred signs known as the 'sacramentals'. These differ from the seven sacraments. They are rituals, blessed objects and symbols that bring God's blessings into our lives such as:

- Being marked with an ash cross on Ash Wednesday as a symbol of repentance **(Job 42:6)**
- The washing of feet on Maundy Thursday, re-enacting what Jesus did at the Last Supper **(John 13:1-15)**
- Using a baptismal candle to represent bringing light into the world **(Matthew 5:14).**

All of our signs, symbols and sacramentals can draw us closer to God.



Invite speakers to offer a 7-part course on how the Lectionary:

- Provides new depths to how we participate in these sacraments.
- Provokes us with the choices of readings we make at these transformative times.
- Benefits from the Church's development of these sacraments from key parts of the Bible.
- Helps us to explore the key elements of the Mass that run throughout Scripture and the sacraments: bread, water, wine, oil and light.
- Raises awareness of the social justice implications of these elements when they are not available in our poorest lands.

Building Scripture into your participation in the sacraments:

- If you are attending a baptism, take time to meditate on the baptism of Jesus (**Luke 3:21-22**).
- If you are attending a confirmation, read some of the Acts of the Apostles (**Acts chapters 1-10**).
- If you are engaged, read Tobias' hymn of love (**Tobit 13; or 1 Corinthians 12-13**).
- If you are attending an ordination, read a New Testament Letter (e.g., **Philippians; Hebrews**).
- If you are preparing for Reconciliation, read the story of the Prodigal Son (**Luke 15:11-52**).
- If you are caring for a loved one, friend or neighbour who is sick or dying, you might find comfort in the psalms (**Psalms 6:2-3; Psalm 62; Psalm 138; Isaiah 38:10-20**).
- If you are attending the Holy Eucharist take time to meditate on its origins in the Bible: (**Isaiah 52:13-53; Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19-20; John 4:42; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26**).

Readers and Lectors

We know that helping people develop not just technical skills but faith conviction in how they read in Mass helps listeners to hear the Word of God differently and helps the readers to believe more confidently.

To facilitate this movement between reading, understanding and believing we recommend that readers and lectors prepare not just the readings they will be proclaiming, but make time to study the wider books of the Bible that they are reading from as well as explore a basic overview of how the Bible works, outlined in our earlier section on How the Bible Speaks to Catholics.

We are not just disciples from an inherited faith

God always speaks to us in the present tense. Faith is handed down, but it is not second-hand. So when we read with conviction, the Word of God is heard in the present tense, rather than just as an account of God's words and actions in the historical past.

Each Sunday Mass has three readings and a psalm:

- the first from the Old Testament;
- then the psalm – either sung (preferred) or read;
- a second reading from an epistle (i.e., either from a letter or from Revelation, depending on the season);
- and the third from the gospels.

In the weekday cycle of readings over two years as opposed to three on Sundays, it is generally just a first Reading, Psalm and Gospel.

This arrangement brings out the unity of the Old and New Testaments and of the history of salvation, in which Christ is the central figure, commemorated in his Paschal Mystery.

As Catholics, because we do not read alone – we read the Bible within the tradition of the Church, to benefit from the holiness and wisdom of all the faithful who have gone before us – this makes our Lectionary and our Scripture texts dynamic and life-transforming.

The Bible always thinks we are in the story

It asks us to recognise ourselves in the story, to claim that part and then to live it. When we convey that in our reading it can change our relationship with the texts and reveal new depths in our faith and spirituality.

With the new Lectionary there are helpful changes to facilitate this understanding and way of reading the Scriptures more fruitfully such as the use of 'sense lines' and verse numbers.



Reader and Lector training

Each diocese offers Reader and Lector training differently and at different times.

Regardless of how you provide this training, it should be fulfilled annually.

You might like to ask neighbouring parishes or deaneries to collaborate together when offering reader and lector training. Or you could benefit from different ideas implemented in other dioceses and share best practice.

New and existing Readers and Lectors can be commissioned either on their own or with Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. It may be preferable if they can be spoken of together to emphasise the relationship between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are often commissioned at the Feast of Corpus Christi.

If you would like further help with reader and lector training, please contact:

Fleur Dorrell on fleur.dorrell@cbcew.org.uk

The Sunday of the Word of God: Celebrating the Gift of God's Word

The Sunday of the Word of God is always the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time in January. It is a good time to commission readers and lectors, and to emphasise the importance of the Scriptures as central to our faith and their relationship to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. As Word and Sacrament go hand-in-hand this becomes a visible sign and affirmation of that relationship, and facilitates an opportunity to celebrate those being commissioned for another year and to give thanks for the Lectionary.

- During the Mass you should enthrone the Bible demonstrating its central place in our faith and practice.
You may wish to use a Rite of Enthronement.
- Invite parishioners to bring their own Bible to Mass to be blessed and to celebrate the variety of editions and translations.
You may wish to use a Rite of Blessing of Bibles.



- Invite children and other artists in your parish to draw pictures of the four gospel writers and their symbols, to be displayed around the altar or another part of your church.



Matthew ***Mark*** ***Luke*** ***John***
a man *a lion* *an ox* *an eagle*

- Encourage them to look up the origins of these symbols in **Ezekiel 1:10** and **Revelation 4:7**.
- Invite people to share their favourite Bible passages or sayings during coffee time after Mass or on your parish social media.
- Invite parishioners to display Scripture texts in their houses during Lent and Advent.
- Invite your priest or deacon to give your house a blessing during the year using a gospel reading that invites God's peace into our homes e.g., **Luke 10:5-6**.
- Launch a Bible study group or Bible book club. (There are helpful tips on starting a group or club at the end of this resource.)
- Plan some ecumenical opportunities and events to study and pray with the Bible together, benefitting from other Christian approaches to the Scriptures.

Creed and Coffee Mornings



The Creed is our profession of faith.

In reciting the words 'I believe' or 'We believe', we give our assent to the divine truths, revealed by God, in accordance with the Scriptures and the living tradition of the Church.

While no creed contains absolutely everything about our faith, they do provide us with a summary of our core beliefs.

In the Catholic Church we use both the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. They echo the trinitarian baptismal formula we find in the Great Commission by Jesus to his disciples in Matthew 28:16-20:

¹⁸ "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

Matthew 28:16-20

Creed and coffee mornings

We say the Creed every Sunday but how often do we make time to think about what it really means? Which parts stand out for us and which phrases are more puzzling?

Invite a group of parishioners to reflect on the Creed over coffee.

Ask them to prepare beforehand by praying with the Creed for about 20 minutes and then highlighting all the phrases:

- that inspire them
- that puzzle them
- they want to know more about
- that are memorable to them

Or ask your group to read and compare the two Creeds that we say, and encourage an exploration of how they speak to us differently about our faith and beliefs.

Use our chart of Bible phrases to explore the biblical roots of the Nicene Creed -

godwhospeaks.uk/the-bible-alive-in-church-poster/

At the group session – start with a simple prayer and then invite anyone who wishes to share their thoughts and ideas to do so but do not make this compulsory.

One fun way to offer an ice breaker is to watch this very short but fun video on YouTube:

The Creed for Robots -

youtube.com/watch?v=OYNeTwWU1RE

Or challenge the group to a 'Creed quiz' using this resource -

trivia.stanneaz.org/

Going deeper - *I Believe: Forty Meditations on the Nicene Creed* by Richard Maffeo.

Spirituality and the Saints

The new Lectionary encourages us to deepen our faith through its inclusion of feast days to celebrate the great saints of our Church.

The Catholic Church has a wonderful history of spiritual traditions and ancient prayer tools to suit all personalities and preferred styles. Our spirituality is traced back to the letters of Paul in which he uses the Greek term *pneuma* to signal a life lived in alignment with God's Spirit. Christian spirituality presumes, through God's grace, a human desire and capacity for growing in union with the Trinity. To live a Christian spirituality is to attend to what is of God and to deepen in a life of conversion that has discipleship as its goal.

Christian spirituality gets expressed most authentically in the living out of our Christian baptismal promises. At the heart of these promises stands rejection of everything that is not of God and the decision to live in accordance with the ways of God. Renewed commitment to our baptismal promises is made possible by God's grace, sustained by Christian community, and supported through engagement in meaningful spiritual practices rooted in the Scriptures.

Almost from the beginning, the Catholic Church recognised that living the Christian faith is not a 'one size fits all' proposition. The Church in Jerusalem had a different character and flavour from the Church in Rome, the Church in Ephesus or indeed the Church in Thessalonica. As the faith communities matured, even more varied spiritual approaches began to emerge under the inspiration of saints such as Benedict, Dominic and Francis, Thérèse of Lisieux and Teresa of Avila, extending to modern times with people such as Oscar Romero, Padre Pio, Dorothy Stang, Sr Faustina and Carlo Acutis.

God's creation is diverse and therefore God desires diversity. That diversity is most evident in the uniqueness of every human person. To discern a spiritual way from within the Church's traditions is to enhance our religious experience, not oppose it. It is a way to grow and mature in faith while still being an active participant in the corporate life of the Church. A person does not so much choose a spiritual path, so much as he or she discovers the path that fits best with their personality, temperament and outlook on life.

There are 4 elements to all Catholic spirituality:

- 1 It is Christocentric**
Rooted and focused on the life, teachings, death and resurrection of the person of Jesus Christ.
- 2 It is Trinitarian**
Jesus came to show us the way to God. The God who is Father-Son-Spirit.
- 3 It is Biblically rooted**
Christian tradition is rooted in the sacred texts of the Old and New Testaments.
- 4 It is Ecclesial**
Christian spirituality is lived in the context of community that goes out into the world in mission and service.

Spiritual practices are concrete and specific, consciously chosen actions that give practical purpose to our faith and way of life, and move us towards greater spiritual maturity.

We engage in spiritual practices because we seek a way of life that touches us and changes us, and which springs from the heart spoken about in **Psalm 4:7**, from the source of our reflection in **Isaiah 6:10** and the foundation of our will in **1 Samuel 24:5**.

Invite people from different spiritual traditions to pray and share their approach and experience of Scripture for a fruitful formation series in your deaneries.

They can encourage people to discover:

- How these traditions developed different approaches to the Scriptures.
- How these approaches speak to different personalities and gifts.
- The great variety and range of prayer forms.
- What inspired the saints to live the way they did through their reading of the Bible.

You can use our Top Tens series on our *God who Speaks* website, which includes our favourite top 10 saints

godwhospeaks.uk/our-top-10-saints/

Invite your primary schools to ask their pupils to dress up as saints for a day.

If you want to go deeper then start by exploring and using one of the main spiritual traditions:

- **Lectio Divina**
- Scriptural reading, meditation and prayer.
- **Benedictine spirituality**
- Praying with the Bible.
- **Dominican spirituality**
- Preaching from the Bible.
- **Franciscan spirituality**
- Living out the Bible justly.
- **Carmelite spirituality**
- Befriending God in the Bible.
- **Ignatian spirituality**
- Discerning God's will with the Bible.
- **Eastern Catholic spirituality**
- Praying and meditating with the Bible.

Celebrate ten saints' days.

Read up on the saint of the day. Follow the liturgical year or use this list for each month.

1 *Ss Timothy and Titus*

26 January

2 *Ss Simeon and Anna*

2 February

3 *St Joseph*

19 March

4 *St Mark the Evangelist*

25 April

5 *St Joan of Arc*

30 May

6 *St Barnabas*

11 June

7 *St Mary Magdalene*

22 July

8 *St John the Baptist*

29 August

9 *Ss Hildegard of Bingen*

17 September

10 *St Luke*

18 October

11 *St Cecilia*

22 November

12 *St Stephen*

26 December



Two popular Scriptural traditions are Lectio Divina and the Jesus Prayer.

1 Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a way of praying with Scripture that developed in the monastic tradition often translated as 'sacred reading'. The method is ancient but remains relevant for all of us today. It promotes communion with God and increased knowledge of God's word.

Lectio Divina is broken down into the following steps named in Latin as:

Lectio	Reading the scriptural text/s
Meditatio	Meditation on the scriptural text/s
Oratio	Prayer with the scriptural text/s
Contemplatio	Contemplation on the scriptural text/s
Actio	Action arising from the scriptural text/s

2 The Jesus Prayer

A prayer commonly practised in the Christian East is known as the Jesus Prayer.

*“ Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the Living God,
have mercy on me, a sinner.
Amen ”*

Pope Francis promotes this approach when he says:

‘There is one particular way of listening to what the Lord wishes to tell us in his word and of letting ourselves be transformed by the Spirit. It is what we call Lectio Divina. It consists of reading God’s word in a moment of prayer and allowing it to enlighten and renew us.’

In the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to ask

- Lord, what does this text say to me?
- What is it about my life that you want to change by this text?
- What troubles me about this text?
- Why am I not interested in this?
- Or perhaps: What do I find pleasant in this text?
- What is it about this word that moves me?
- What attracts me? Why does it attract me?

The Catholic Prayer Bible: Lectio Divina Edition is a helpful introduction.

The Jesus Prayer is valued highly because it:

- Uses the holy name of Jesus (e.g., **Galatians 1:3**).
- Uses the words of Scripture (**Luke 18:13, 18:38**).
- Contains the heart of the gospel message of God’s great mercy.
- Fulfils the biblical invitation to ‘pray without ceasing’ (**Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12**).

By seeing our new Lectionary as a means to consider familiar and unfamiliar texts from a new spiritual perspective, and benefitting from the great spiritual traditions, we can help each other to grow as pilgrims. We can open up new ways to discern and nurture our roles and vocations as well as our prayer life.

Praying with Scripture

Praying with the word is a powerful way of tuning in to God.

And it does not have to be complicated - there are many simple ways that you can use the Bible to pray.

For almost 2,000 years, Catholics have turned to Scripture to guide their prayer lives. The words of some of the best-loved prayers such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Sign of the Cross come from the sacred page. For centuries, meditation on Scripture has been at the heart of the Church's daily prayer.

The Church tells us that prayer is **'the raising of one's mind and heart to God'**. This can involve speaking to God, prayerful reflection or simply listening to him in silence.

The Bible has a role in all of these. We can talk to God using the words of Scripture, meditate on a particular passage or simply allow him to speak to us through the text itself.

St Isidore of Seville says:

Anyone who wants to be always united to God must pray often and read the Bible often. For in prayer it is we who are speaking to God, but in the readings it is God speaking to us.'

Try the Psalms

The psalms are a collection of heartfelt prayers for the whole range of life's ups and downs. Cries from the heart to do with dealing with abandonment (**Psalm 22**), illness (**Psalm 41**), the struggles of old age (**Psalm 71**), sleepless nights (**Psalm 77**) or depression (**Psalm 88**); joy and rejoicing (**Psalm 16; 33; 43; 65**), trust (**Psalm 33**), forgiveness and mercy (**Psalm 51**), hope and refuge (**Psalm 70**), help and protection (**Psalm 121**) - they are all there.

The psalms are central to the Church's prayer life. Some of the most famous, due to their focus on repentance, are known as the 'Seven Penitential Psalms'. These are Psalms **6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130** and **143**. You might like to pray with one each week during Lent.

Scripture is the greatest story ever told, and it is also a wonderful prayer book.

This kind of reflective, prayerful reading of Scripture can really bring the words to life for us and a new Lectionary provides the ideal opportunity to put this into action.

There are many kinds of prayer and many different methods to suit life's situations.

St Paul tells us that petition (asking for what we need) is just one type of prayer:

'First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people...'

(1 Timothy 2:1a).

We also learn from Scripture that prayer can be about everything from issues at home (**Genesis 25:20-23**), to thanks for food (**1 Timothy 4:3-5**), to issues of national catastrophe (**Lamentations chapter 5**).



The Pope urges that if we feel oppressed or fearful, loving or joyful, there is a psalm that can accompany us and enrich our prayer by not reducing it merely to requests. The psalms open us to a prayer that is less focused on ourselves, and rather on praise, blessing, and thanksgiving. When psalms, or verses, 'speak to our heart', he said,

'it is good to repeat them and pray them during the day.'

Since they are prayers...

'for all seasons there is no state of mind or need that does not find in them the best words to be transformed into prayer.'

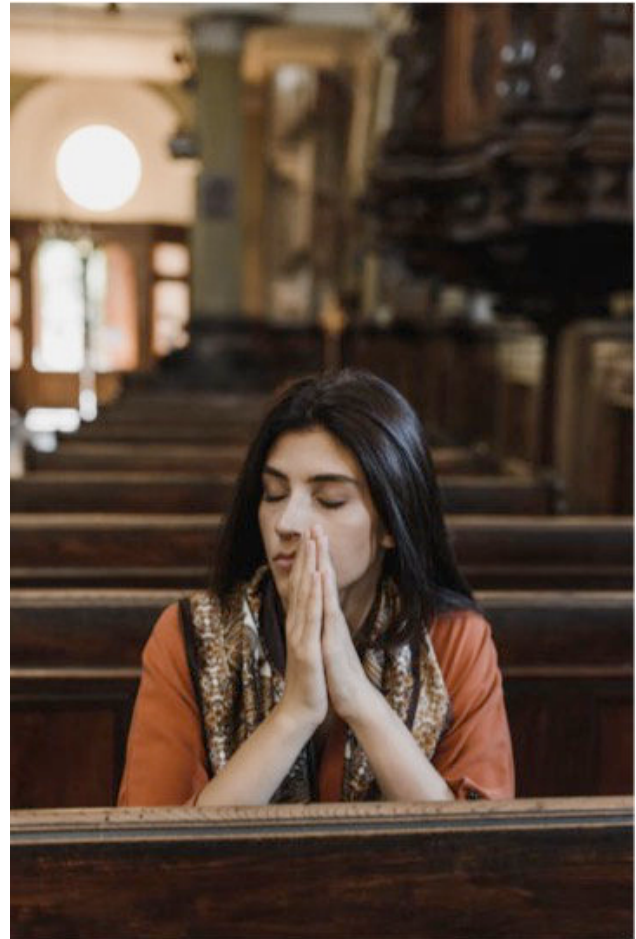
Pope Francis in his Wednesday General Audience of June 2024 says of the Psalms:

'I would like to recall that the Church already possesses a symphony of prayer, whose composer is the Holy Spirit, and it is the Book of Psalms.'

The Book of Psalms, like any symphony, he observed, 'contains various "movements," that is, various genres of prayer: praise, thanksgiving, supplication, lamentation, narration, sapiential reflection, and others, both in the personal form and in the choral form of the whole people.'

'All the Books of the Bible... are inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the Book of Psalms is especially "full of poetic inspiration" and have had a special place in the New Testament...'

'What most commends the Psalms to our attention is that they were the prayer of Jesus, Mary, the Apostles and all the Christian generations that have preceded us.'



Follow the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours

The Church's rhythm of daily prayer, the Divine Office, is designed to help focus our everyday lives by sanctifying the day and the whole range of human activity (cf. **GILH. N.10**).

It will help you both to 'tune in' to the word and also join your prayers to those of countless others across the globe.

The General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours gives a wonderful exposition of the place of the Psalms in the Church's prayer and of its Scripture base and significance.

www.divineoffice.org/general-instructions/

"In keeping with the ancient tradition of the universal Church, Morning and Evening Prayer form a double hinge of the Daily Office and are therefore considered the principal Hours and celebrated as such." (**GILH N.37**).

Night Prayer or Compline make a fitting conclusion to the sanctification of the day with the prayer and hope for a restful night.

The Divine Office is available online – universalis.com/

Dip into the daily Taizé readings

The international and ecumenical Taizé community based in France has a major focus on praying with the Bible. Every day, the community meditates together on a short Bible passage.

You too can join in by downloading their app, which enables you to get a few lines of Scripture to pray with right onto your smartphone.

taize.fr/en

Get some Spiritual Exercise

The Spiritual Exercises were a series of biblically-based meditations or 'exercises' written by St Ignatius Loyola to help people to deepen their relationship with God. The method partly involves visualising the scene of various biblical stories – e.g., imagining the Holy Family's journey to Bethlehem or what took place at the Last Supper. You can do the Spiritual Exercises online or as part of a guided retreat.

ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises

jesuitinstitute.org/

Include the Bible in your devotions

It's easy to build Scripture readings into Catholic devotions, such as the Rosary or the Stations of the Cross, which are at heart meditations on the lives of Jesus and Mary.

The Rosary is the Bible in bead form. Rosary groups can gain a new lease of life if time is taken to examine the texts behind each mystery rather than just saying the prayers.

The Vatican website has an excellent section on praying the Rosary with short reflections and all the Bible references for each of the mysteries. This offers a space in which to offer some more catechesis on how the Rosary could be prayed more biblically.

vatican.va/special/rosary/documents/misteri_en.html

As we follow Jesus to his death through the stages or the Stations of the Cross, why not make next Lent a chance to do something radical with the new translation? Again, the Vatican website has superb annual meditations on the Stations by different spiritual writers and in multiple languages, which could be shared in your church communities.

vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/documents/index_via-crucis_en.html

The Virgin Mary in Scripture

We can get to know God better by reflecting on the way he changed the lives of biblical characters. Mary, the mother of Jesus, has traditionally been somebody who helps us see God's grace in a very obvious way. Choose the next feast day which commemorates Mary to do some biblical meditation on God's gift of grace and Mary's 'yes' to his invitation.

Download our Mary in Scripture posters.

godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#ols

Visit the National Gallery (Sainsbury Wing) in person or online to see many different paintings of Mary's life and devotion.

nationalgallery.org.uk/

The Arts and Scripture

Throughout Christian history, the Scriptures have inspired works of art, architecture, drama, embroidery, icons, mosaics, music, poetry, sculpture and stained-glass windows. As a result, the creative world can be an enjoyable way to start exploring the Bible.

Whether we think of churches and cathedrals, music and movies, or paintings and plays, Scripture has been 'translated' into art forms in countless creative ways. Within the Catholic tradition, that includes the stunning ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, the giant statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro and the beloved Christmas carol, *Adeste Fideles* (O Come All Ye Faithful), to name just a few.

Experiencing biblical art is a unique way of appreciating the mysteries of the faith, since what cannot be said in words or expressed in thought can be brought to light in art instead.

As the Catechism of the Church puts it:

'the true and the beautiful belong together, for God is the source of beauty and also the source of truth. Art, which is dedicated to the beautiful, is therefore a special path to the whole and to God.'

Catechism, ##2500-2503; 2513



The Bible itself describes how the message of God can be shared through a range of creative activities. Several books of Scripture, such as the Song of Songs, the Psalms and Lamentations were designed to be sung. The great Temple of Jerusalem was decorated with beautiful wood carvings, golden statues of angels and an embroidered curtain (**1 Kings chapter 6; 2 Chronicles chapter 3**). And the prophets often performed what they had to say in dramatic mime (**Isaiah chapter 3; Ezekiel 12:1-7; Acts 21:10-12**).

So how you choose to get creative is really up to you. It might involve visiting an art gallery or listening to some biblically-themed music. It could mean doing something really hands-on, like making a nativity scene with the kids or starting a biblical photography project. Or it might just mean sitting out in the garden with a novel based on Scripture. Simply pick the artistic activity that's right for you.

Catholic art and culture have always attempted to illustrate, encounter and experience in tangible form the teachings of the Bible and the Catholic Church. While most people think of being a Catholic as a set of specific beliefs and practices, Catholicism has a *look*, a *culture* and an *ethos* that go towards presenting and depicting its Catholicity and sacred meaning.

You may like to read Pope Francis' document on *The Via Pulchritudinis, The Way of Beauty*.

cultura.va/content/cultural/en/pub/documenti/ViaPulchritudinis.html

Glimpse the gospel at the gallery

For centuries painters have transferred the stories of the Bible onto canvas. The National Gallery in London holds the majority of western biblical paintings in the UK, including works by world famous artists such as Leonardo, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Rembrandt and Titian. The gallery offers a Life of Christ audio tour, guiding you around various works that depict various gospel scenes. You can also explore online.

nationalgallery.org.uk

The Art and Culture section on our *God who Speaks* website has lots of art and Bible videos and articles to inspire you visually -

godwhospeaks.uk/art-and-culture/

Visio Divina

Create a *Visio Divina* group in your parish for those who prefer to pray with an image first rather than a text, as a way to help them engage with the Bible more easily.

To help get started, go to

upperroom.org/resources/visio-divina

Church and Art trail

Invite an artist, art historian or art teacher in your parish to develop a trail to see biblical art in your church and other churches near you. Help to nurture a sense of sacred beauty as you pray and reflect on the art and relevant Scripture passages on your Church and art trail.

'Lo & Behold' is a virtual art gallery of biblical images and stained-glass windows found in Catholic churches across the UK. Each image has a short commentary on the biblical story and signposts you to the relevant church.

loandbeholdbible.wordpress.com/

Picture the Bible

As you can see, engaging with the Bible does not have to involve lots of text; you can experience the Scriptures in visual form and online.

Or read an *Illustrated Bible* or get creative with *Colour the Gospel*, a range of Catholic colouring books for adults that are based on Scripture.

Why not follow our God who Speaks

posts on:

Facebook

facebook.com/GodWhoSpeaks

Instagram

instagram.com/thegodwhospeaks/

Inspiring biblical art exists in churches right across the country. Our suggestions include:

- 1** The famous 14 Stations of the Cross at St Mary's the Hidden Gem, Manchester
biddengem.catholicfaith.co.uk/home2.html
- 2** The beautiful biblical mosaics at Sacred Heart church, Droitwich
sacredheartdroitwich.org.uk/
- 3** The selection of biblical paintings found at St George's, Hove, East Sussex
stgeorges-hove.org.uk/
- 4** The reproduction of the Sistine Chapel at English Martyrs church, Worthing
english-martyrs.co.uk/our-church/visiting-us/sistine-chapel-ceiling/
- 5** The full set of Rosary scenes at Our Lady of the Rosary & St Dominic's, London
rosaryshrine.co.uk/
- 6** The astonishing set of biblical stained glass at Holy Rood Church, Watford
parish.rcdow.org.uk/watford/parish-profile/architecture-in-brief/
- 7** The Jesse Tree stained glass window at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
stmaryscathedral.org.uk/
- 8** The modern-day Last Supper painting featuring parishioners at St Paul's, Tintagel
churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2008/11-january/news/uk/news-in-brief
- 9** The west window of Erdington Abbey, Birmingham, which depicts no less than 24 scenes from the New Testament
erdingtonabbey.co.uk/
- 10** The huge statues of the 12 apostles in the nave of the Brompton Oratory, London
bromptonoratory.co.uk/#about

Music

St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:18-19 guides us to use music in our worship of God:

'...be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.'

The Lectionary, with its new Abbey psalm settings, opens up new creativity for your parish music groups and helps us all to hear and sing the psalms differently, as well as try new hymns and gospel acclamations.

- 1. Liturgy gives us words to pray and sing.
- 2. Liturgy rightly shapes our thoughts and words.
- 3. Liturgy reminds us that we are part of the global and historic body of Christ.
- 4. Liturgy helps develop holy habits.

The Greek word leitourgia, from which we get the word liturgy, is found in the New Testament and can be translated as 'work', 'service', 'ministry' and 'worship'.

Here are some helpful links for composers and musicians:

For Composers

liturgyoffice.org.uk/Missal/Music/Composing/OLM-Composers-Guide.pdf

For Psalm Settings

Bear Music - Martin Foster.

Free psalms for every Sunday -

bearmusic.info/

Music for Liturgy - collection of composers

Small fee per download -

musicforliturgy.online/

The Revised Responsorial Psalter, McCrimmons -

mccrimmons.com/shop/hymn-books-music/the-revised-responsorial-psalter/#29785

Clifton Psalm Book - Christopher Walker

New Responsorial Psalms -

decanimusic.co.uk/

While cathedrals around the country have choirs that include biblically-based music in their performances, you can also find all of the suggestions below on YouTube. Read along with the English translation as you listen.

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|
| 1 | The Creation oratorio by Joseph Haydn, based on the book of Genesis | 6 | The Apostles oratorio by Elgar, telling the story of the apostles in the gospels |
| 2 | The Canticum Canticorum cycle of motets by Giovanni Pierluigi Palestrina, based on the Song of Songs | 7 | George Frideric Handel's English language oratorio, Messiah, which covers much of the Old and New Testament |
| 3 | The St Matthew Passion oratorio by J S Bach, based on Matthew's Gospel | 8 | The setting of the Virgin Mary's Magnificat song by Franz Schubert |
| 4 | Christ on the Mount of Olives by Ludwig Van Beethoven, based on Luke's account of the last night of Jesus | 9 | The Juditha Triumphans oratorio by Vivaldi, based on the Catholic book of Judith |
| 5 | The Biblical Songs cycle (Opus 99) by Antonin Dvorak, based on the Psalms | 10 | Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's setting of the Stabat Mater, which tells the story of the Virgin Mary at the cross. |

How can the new Lectionary shape your liturgies so that you might worship God and minister to others in your work and service in the name of the Lord?

Colossians 3:16 also encourages us to

| *'sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.'*

Singing the psalms and other parts of Scripture outside of Mass is a great way to make the Bible your own. You could join in with Gregorian Chant on YouTube, meditate with biblical chants from Taizé or pray with carols during the Christmas season.

Did you know that Handel's Messiah composed in 1741 contains 81 Bible verses from 14 different books of the Bible, with the most coming from the book of Isaiah (21 verses)?

Enjoy a classic biblical blockbuster

The Bible's epic tales have been brought to life in many memorable movies:

- 1** The Ten Commandments
- 2** The Passion of the Christ
- 3** The Prince of Egypt
- 4** Jesus Christ Superstar
- 5** Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat
- 6** One Night with the King
- 7** The Greatest Story Ever Told
- 8** Exodus: Gods and Kings
- 9** The Nativity Story
- 10** Risen

If you would like to listen to contemporary music then Bernadette Farrell is the leading Catholic hymn writer whose hymns and worship are based on the Scriptures.

itunes.apple.com/gb/artist/bernadette-farrell/id75910545

Or take a look at Matt Redman –

mattredman.com/music/

Jo Boyce - CJM Music -

cjmmusic.com/

Margaret Rizza –

margaretrizsamusic.com/

For either Lent or Advent, invite a musician to give a talk about how the texts of Handel's Messiah were chosen from Scripture and collated by Charles Jennens, so that Handel could compose the music so creatively, before you sing or listen to it in your churches.

Use our *God who Sings* model to gather choirs from different parishes to sing biblical songs and hymns from classical and modern composers and celebrate the Lectionary in music.

For Pentecost Sunday or during the Pentecost season, invite choirs to sing in different languages and make it a really multi-cultural annual concert party.

Film

Invite parishioners to set up a monthly film group to watch the latest Bible-based films

such as The Chosen Series which is free to download from:

UK and Ireland website -

thechosentv.co.uk/

YouTube -

youtube.com/@TheChosenSeries

Prepare by reading a few chapters from one of the gospels to get you started.

Mark's Gospel is the shortest if you prefer to read a whole gospel first.

Drama

Open the Book in Primary Schools

Open the Book (OtB) is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. It is a great way to volunteer and immerse yourself in the Bible creatively. Or invite the OtB team nearest you to your school.

biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/

Get theatrical at Christmas and Easter

'Passion' plays that dramatically recreate the Easter story are a British tradition that stretches back centuries. You too can join in the drama by attending or taking part in a production. The Wintershall Estate in Surrey organises the UK's largest events at both Christmas and Easter but over 100 take place across the country.

wintershall-estate.com and passion-plays.co.uk

Alternatively, why not be part of a growing trend and start or experience a 'live Advent Calendar'? (A festive community event that features a series of window displays or performances leading up to Christmas).

Poetry

For all you poets and poetry lovers, start a group to write and read biblical poetry.

To help your inspiration take a look at the beautiful poetry by Fr Mark Skelton, a Catholic priest and poet of Plymouth diocese who has written a wonderful collection of biblical poems on our *God who Speaks* website.

godwhospeaks.uk/back-to-life-poetry/

Or Bishop Graham Kings' poetry about women in the Bible inspired by a series of icons and music.

godwhospeaks.uk/women-in-scripture-icons-poems-and-music/

For our other resources on women in the Bible.

godwhospeaks.uk/women-in-scripture/
godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#bh

Can you give your school, home or parish hall a biblical makeover?

Can you decorate your school walls, parish or home with inspirational Bible texts and stories?

If you would like more ideas and information about engaging with Scripture in your home, then take a look at this resource designed to find God in every room of your house.

Room for God: At Home with the Sacred @£3.99.

biblesociety.org.uk/product-search/Room%20for%20God/



Social Justice and Scripture



Recycling old Lectionaries

As we replace our existing Lectionaries with the new editions, how can you recycle them responsibly? Can you send your old Lectionaries to a developing country that needs them and who is using the same translation?

This is a good way for parishes to work together to support other countries.

If you would like further information about recycling Lectionaries, please email Fleur Dorrell on fleur.dorrell@cbcew.org.uk

Turning Tables: A Toolkit for Scripture and Social Action

As Catholics we are called to live in relationship with God and with each other and to care for each other at all stages of our life.

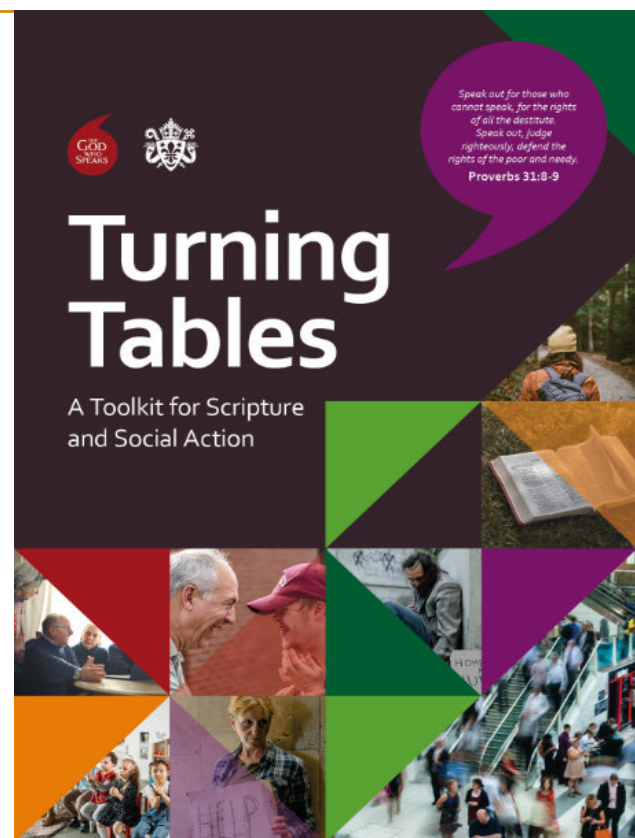
Dei Verbum exhorts us to make the Word of God not only

'the soul of theology, but also the soul of the entire pastoral care, life and mission of the Church'

(cf. DV 24).

Scripture encourages us to speak out for those who cannot speak, defend the rights of those who suffer and are vulnerable, and to challenge the status quo. This can feel like a huge challenge and not easy to achieve, so this resource helps you to put your faith into action. With a biblical foundation and plenty of practical examples from how to contact your MP or MS, lobby on an issue, write a press release, choose a cause or volunteer in your neighbourhood, *Turning Tables* is the ideal resource for Catholics who want to transform society with faith and integrity and take the heart of the Lectionary into the world in which we live. It is a free PDF resource online.

godwhospeaks.uk/



cf. Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship, Encyclical, 2020.

vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

The Seven Works of Mercy

In Matthew's Gospel (25:31-46), Jesus gives a sermon on the Last Judgement. He compares people with sheep and goats who will be separated at the end time by how they cared for other people.

Jesus says:

“for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

These merciful acts are to be performed not just for the sake of charity, but to deepen one's faith by imitating Christ and his teachings. A believer is reminded of their wider responsibilities to those in need and can receive grace by performing them. These acts support the emphasis Jesus places on serving others rather than worshipping God through sacrificial rituals,

as we read in Matthew 9:13 where we are told that God

‘... desires mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous but sinners.’

Known in the Catechism as the ‘Seven Corporal Works of Mercy’, they are:

- 1** To feed the hungry.
- 2** To give water to the thirsty.
- 3** To clothe the naked.
- 4** To shelter the homeless.
- 5** To visit the sick.
- 6** To visit those in prison.
- 7** To bury the dead.



Some of these acts are also mentioned in the Book of Isaiah 58:7-10, but the seventh act of burying the dead is found only in the Book of Tobit and not in Matthew's Gospel. It was added to the list during the Middle Ages.

In Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Dives in misericordia* written in 1980, he states that:

‘Jesus Christ taught that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but that he is also called ‘to practice mercy’ towards others.’

And in an address on the 2016 World Day of Prayer for Creation, Pope Francis invited the world to make ‘care for creation’ a new work of mercy, describing it as a ‘complement’ to the existing works of mercy.

Pope Francis described this new work as having both corporal and spiritual components. Corporally, it involves ‘daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness’. Spiritually, it involves contemplating each part of creation to find what God is teaching us through them. This pronouncement included many quotations from his encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si’* and is further supported in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Laudate Deum*.

Neurodiversity and Scripture

Neurodiversity affects more than 15% of the UK population according to the latest research.

Neurodiverse communities

It is very likely that plenty of people in the Bible were also neurodiverse and perhaps this identification can provide a new route into Scripture for some of our parishioners.

In our churches, being aware of those who are *sensory seeking* and those who are *sensory avoiding* is a big step.

We cannot change a lot of things quickly, but it is helpful to know what is do-able in our parishes and deaneries.

To help you raise awareness and support your neurodiverse parishioners here is a Neurodiversity Checklist created to help parishes identify what they might do in practical ways to help foster belonging in our churches.

It is not exhaustive so do speak to your neurodiverse parishioners, families, practitioners, SEND teachers and other experts in this field to help you support and benefit from the many gifts of neurodiverse people and their communities.

This is a very challenging list which raises some important questions.

It might seem tangential to a new Lectionary, but all of these issues can be a barrier to many people coming to or staying in Mass, to engaging with the Lectionary and Scripture.

Neurodiversity Checklist

- 1 Are your Mass texts available enlarged or on a screen?
- 2 What type and format of music do you use?
- 3 Can people wear headphones if the music is too loud or too quiet?
- 4 How often do you use incense?
- 5 What type of lighting do your churches have?
- 6 Do you have fixed pews or can people lie down if they are uncomfortable sitting for more than 10 minutes?
- 7 How are breaking norms of behaviour handled? e.g., fidgeting, not sitting still – is there a place that they can move to without distracting other people?
- 8 What are the visual aids to help people focus and stay calm, e.g., statues, stained-glass windows, a prayer space, Stations of the Cross?
- 9 Is physical contact expected such as for the Sign of Peace?
- 10 What is optional or compulsory during Mass?
- 11 Is arriving late or leaving early acceptable?
- 12 Are wheelchair users given Holy Communion first or last? What does this say about your priorities?
- 13 What roles and vocations are nurtured for neurodiverse children and adults in your parishes?
- 14 How can you help your parishioners to support each other's needs?
- 15 Is your church tolerating or celebrating neurodiversity?
- 16 Is your church preaching about neurodiversity?



An advantage of using *Universalis* on your laptop, tablet, phone or other device is that you can enlarge the text and some texts are now available in audio for personal and private use.

Light of Truth

A group of Catholics from across the dioceses have created a great website, *Light of Truth*, hosted by the Dominican Sisters in Portsmouth diocese, for helping in this area. They have many great resources and offer training, signposting and further information.

lightoftruth.uk/inclusion

On our *God who Speaks* website we have:
Autism-friendly Christmas and Easter stories -

godwhospeaks.uk/the-christmas-story-in-plain-english/

godwhospeaks.uk/the-easter-story-in-plain-english/

Mark's Gospel signed for our deaf communities -

godwhospeaks.uk/marks-gospel-re-told-in-british-sign-language/

Activities for schools with minimal text -

godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/

godwhospeaks.uk/education/

Dyslexia friendly gospels available from Bible Society -

biblesociety.org.uk/product-search/dyslexial/

Getting started with Bible book clubs and study groups

Introduction

While the Bible can seem a bit daunting at first, there is as much within it for beginners as there is for experts.

Pope Gregory the Great (540-604) once described Scripture as a river –

‘shallow enough for lambs to paddle in, but also deep enough for elephants to swim!’

The trick is to take things step by step. You do not have to launch into the deep end straight away – it is OK to just put your toe in the water first.

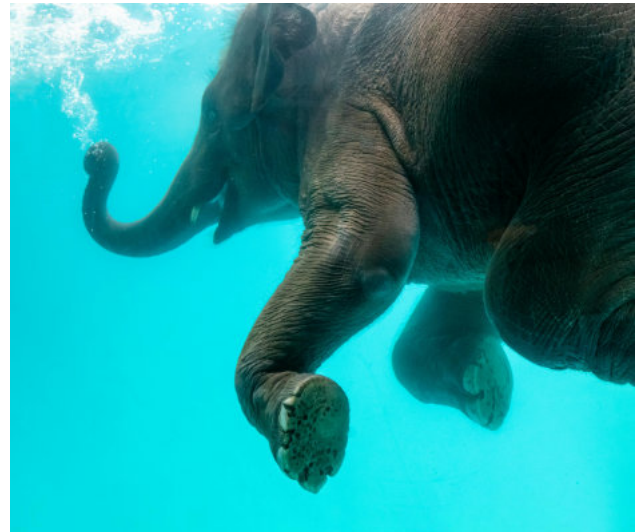
Jesus himself recognised that some people are beginners, while others are advanced learners. Sometimes, with biblical scholars, he took part in intellectual discussions about the exact meaning of certain verses.

He knew, however, that this was a bit too advanced for many people. So he often told religious stories and parables that were based on things that they could relate to, such as family arguments, unemployment or even dealing with nightmare tenants. As a result, the gospels contain both simple and complex material.

Getting started

You can begin with the Bible that you already have at home. However, if you’re looking to buy one, modern translations such as The Christian Community Bible or The Good News Bible (Catholic edition) can be helpful for Catholics just starting out. They tend to be written in more ‘down to earth’ language.

As you become more familiar with the Bible, or want to study it more seriously, you can always buy another translation later, such as the English Standard Version- Catholic Edition to tie in with our new Lectionary, the New Revised Standard Version or The New Jerusalem Bible. If you would like to begin with the gospels only then buy the Pocket Gospels with helpful introductory notes from Bible Society.



Start small

It’s OK to start small – even just a sentence, a verse, or a paragraph is enough to begin with. After all, the shortest verse in the Bible is made up of just two words - ‘Jesus wept’ (**John 11:35**). However, these two words speak volumes about Jesus as a person – how he was not afraid to cry in public, the depth of his feelings for his dear friend Lazarus and how his reactions were human, just like ours.

Pick a person from the Bible

At its heart, the Bible is a collection of people stories. Finding out as much as you can about just one character from within its pages is another potential ‘way in’.

Don’t make life hard for yourself

Some of the simplest books of the Bible to start with include the gospels, the Psalms, Proverbs and the letters of St John. These are generally easier to follow – and will prevent you from feeling lost or confused. Other parts of the Bible, such as some of St Paul’s Letters, can be hard going for beginners so maybe delay trying these out until you’re more comfortable with some of the other books.

Scribble and doodle

Since Catholics refer to it as 'Sacred Scripture', some people can be reluctant to make notes in their Bibles. But over the centuries there is a long tradition of monks scribbling notes in the margins of the Bible. So feel free to underline and make notes about texts that speak to you. Doodle if it helps! Your scribbles will help you refer back to these texts later and to recall their particular significance to you.

Follow a Bible reading plan

As you get to grips with the Bible, following the Church's existing Scripture reading plan is a good starting place. As it is based around the Lectionary it will help you gradually read your way through much of the Bible. Check out resources such as the iBreviary app or the Magnificat guidebook for more information. This is also a great way for you to get to know your way around Scripture.

ibreviary.org/en/magnificat.com/english/index_uk.asp

Get to grips with Scripture using an introductory version

If you are still a bit nervous about launching straight into Scripture, you may wish to get a helping hand. There are many 'mini' versions of the Bible available that provide some basic orientation on key themes and passages.

Examples include:

The Bite-Sized Bible; The Espresso Bible; The 100 Minute Bible; The Pocket Gospels from Bible Society.

biblesociety.org.uk/product-search/catholic+gospels/

Read and reflect on seven famous passages in one week

Starting with passages that you may have heard before can be a good starting point.

We suggest reading one famous passage a day for seven days.

Suggestions include:

- The Ten Commandments (**Deuteronomy 5:1-22**);
- The Lord is my Shepherd (**Psalms 23**);
- The Beatitudes (**Matthew 5:1-12**);
- Love your Neighbour (**Mark 12:28-34**);
- The Parable of the Prodigal Son (**Luke 15:11-32**);
- The Hymn to Love (**1 Corinthians 13**);
- The Fruits of the Holy Spirit (**Galatians 5:16-26**).

Bible book clubs and Bible study groups

These are a brilliant way to encourage parishioners to get together, read, reflect and pray outside of Mass times. Combining prayer, fellowship and Scripture-sharing builds supportive communities within your parish and helps to nurture faith and spiritual formation.

Look at Bible Society's easy-to-follow guide in setting up a Bible book club in your parish

biblesociety.org.uk/resources/bible-book-club/

Some Bible study groups help clergy discern what they want to preach on for the following Sunday. This not only supports clergy but enables parishioners to find their voice too.

Other groups help lay speakers and teachers to think about Scripture texts that they are talking about in schools and other places, as well as providing a chance to deepen their faith and prayer life in a gentle, learning environment.

There are so many different formats in which we can read the Bible with technology developing more tools for more learning styles that, whether in physical form or online, Scripture is more accessible than it has ever been.

While we're moving to the ESV-Catholic Edition we can still encourage a healthy reading of different versions of Scripture for private devotion and study such as the approved list on page 10.

The Bible in everyday life

Pope Francis advises reading the Bible on the bus.

'Everyone should carry a small Bible or pocket edition of the Gospels and should find at least a few minutes every day to read the word of God.'

The range of available formats (such as pocket Bibles, audio downloads or apps for your smartphone) makes it easy to benefit from God's word on the go. And, since the Bible includes stories of people in a range of life situations, there's something for everyone. Hebrews chapter 11 tells us that faith played a critical role in the lives of many biblical characters including:

- Brothers who fell out (Cain and Abel),
- A man who was close to God in old age (Enoch),
- A family who survived a natural disaster (Noah),
- A migrant (Abraham),
- A woman who became a mother in old age (Sarah),
- A father who died in peace (Isaac),
- A young man who made a major life decision (Moses),
- A prostitute who helped those in need (Rahab),
- As well as many others who fought in wars, went to prison, or lived in extreme poverty.

Reflect on Scripture in your travel time

As the Pope said, travelling on the bus, in the car or on a train are all perfect opportunities to spend some time with the Bible. However you choose to do it – reading, listening or watching a video – spending time with a Scripture verse, passage or story while on the move is a low-stress way of tuning in to God.

The Pray as you Go app is the perfect tool for listening to God on the go or to start your day with an easy-to-follow Scripture reflection and prayer time.

pray-as-you-go.org/

We learn a lot from Bible characters – they can encourage us in our daily discipleship. Keeping their memory alive is a powerful way to share our faith, doubts, hopes and fears as we seek to know Christ more deeply.

Their stories are as relevant today as they were in ancient times and are no different from many newspaper headlines today:

**Society Beauty
Beheads
Drunken General**

(Judith chapter 13)

**Demands for Release
of Notorious Robber**

(Matthew 27:15-26)

**Bereaved Dad Battles
Dangerous Skin Disease**

(Job chapters 1&2)

**Famous Preacher
Marries Prostitute**

(Hosea 1:1-8)

Mortgaged Mum's Anger at Royal Tax

(Nehemiah 5:1-5)



Pick a parable

The parables of Jesus in the gospels are timeless stories that touch on many aspects of human nature. They are easy routes into the Bible for beginners. Within the stories, you'll find desperation, anger, love, sorrow, forgiveness, carelessness, selfishness, persistence and kindness. Try one out today.

Consider your character

Finding a character in Scripture that appeals to your personality is another way in. If you are creative, you might like to choose a musician such as David or a dreamer such as Joseph. If you are into politics and social justice, you might find the prophets – who spoke out often – interesting reading. Or if you love common sense, the Psalmists and Wisdom writers might be up your street. If you enjoy learning, perhaps a scholar like Ezra might inspire you.

Get off the beaten track

There are many fascinating men and women in the Bible that you may not have heard of. Check out stories of women such as

- The judge Deborah (**Judges chapter 4 and 5**)
- First-time mother Hannah (**1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2**)
- Queen Esther of Persia (**Esther 2:5-18**)

In terms of men, take a look at the stories of

- The farmer Laban (**Genesis chapters 29-32**)
- The politician Nehemiah (**Nehemiah 1**)
- The soldier Judas Maccabaeus (**1 Maccabees 3:1-26**)

Explore your hobbies and interests

While Scripture does not go into detail about leisure activities, it does include stories that you might relate to your personal interests. These include:

- Dancing (**Exodus 15:20**)
- Music (**1 Chronicles 25:1-8**)
- History (**Psalms 78:1-4**)
- Caring for animals (**Proverbs 12:10**)
- Interior design (**Proverbs 24:3-4**)
- Astronomy (**Isaiah 40:26**)
- Learning languages (**Daniel 1:1-5**)
- Science (**Wisdom 7:15-22**)
- Athletics (**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**)
- Exercise (**1 Timothy 4:8**)

For all you scientists, we have a great series on our *God who Speaks* website on Scripture, Science and our Catholic Faith from a scientist and priest, Fr Gareth Leyshon of the Cardiff-Menevia Archdiocese.

godwhospeaks.uk/scripture-science-series-1/

Reflect on your life stage

The Bible covers the whole of life, from cradle to grave. You'll find passages relating to

- Childhood (**1 Samuel chapter 3; Proverbs 1:8; Mark 10:13-16**)
- Young adulthood (**Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; Proverbs 20:29; 1 Timothy 4:12**)
- Married life (**1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:21-33; Hebrews 13:4**)
- Parenthood (**Psalms 127:3-5; Proverbs 22:6; Colossians 3:21**)
- Singleness (**Acts 21:8-9; 1 Corinthians 7:7-9; 32-35**)
- Older age (**Ruth 4:13-16; Ecclesiasticus 25:4-6; Luke 2:25-38**)

The Big Picture

We might all have a copy on our shelves, but the Bible is actually a book for everybody, where we meet together.

Benefiting from the wisdom of other Catholics – saints and scholars, popes and parishioners – will help you to see the bigger picture and appreciate the message of Scripture more deeply.

There are no two ways about it; as the Bible itself says, some of its contents are ‘hard to understand’ (**2 Peter 3:16**). While some of Scripture is reasonably straightforward, it does also contain complex ideas, puzzling passages and unfamiliar cultural references.

As a result, we could all do with a helping hand when it comes to making sense of its meaning. This ‘helping hand’ can come in many forms. First and foremost, we can benefit from the perspectives of the pope, the bishops, priests and deacons. After all, part of their ‘job description’ is to help us to understand Scripture and our faith in Christ. We can also turn to what Scripture scholars have to say about the meaning of particular books or passages.

On top of that, we can also look to the thinking of saints and scholars from centuries past. Catholics all over the world have read, prayed with and commented on the meaning of Scripture for almost 2,000 years. To get the hang of the Bible, it is wise to benefit from this bank of wisdom.



But there is another, more important, reason to understand Scripture within the context of the overall tradition of the Church. And it's this: the Holy Spirit inspired people to write the Bible in the first place, to help us to understand its authentic meaning today.

The Holy Spirit guides all of us as we read the Bible. Catholics also believe that the Holy Spirit guides the pope and bishops in a special way in their role as teachers. This is because Jesus gave Peter and the apostles, and their successors (the popes and the bishops), the authority to teach in his name (**Matthew 16:13-20; 28:18-20**).

In this sense it's their responsibility to teach us the whole word of God. This includes all of the ‘traditions’ received from the apostles - not just those written down in Scripture (**1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 John 12**).

These traditions include the Creeds we say at Mass, the decisions of Church Councils, and the contents of the Catechism of the Church. Getting a handle on this bigger picture will help to shine light on some of the puzzling passages and tricky texts.



Here are some other ideas on how you might connect the Bible with different aspects of the Church's faith and tradition:

Get the gospel from the pope

Every Sunday in St Peter's Square, the pope shares a short reflection on the day's gospel reading, followed by the 'Angelus' prayer. It is then translated into several languages and published on both the Vatican website and the Pope App.

w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2016.index.html

Go global in your approach

Since a hallmark of the Catholic Church is its universality, it is worth taking a look at what is available across the globe.

The Christian Community Bible, published in the Philippines, is available free online and comes with helpful notes. For Christmas time, German, Spanish and Italian nativity scenes can be particularly striking. And lastly, the Irish Jesuits offer a range of biblical reflections.

sacredspace.ie

Reach for a commentary

There are many readable, reasonably-priced Catholic commentaries that will help you to understand and apply the individual books of the Bible. Sources include the Catholic Truth Society; The Navarre Bible series and Baker Publishing.

Tune in to the Holy Spirit

Since the Holy Spirit is the original inspiration for the Bible, getting to know the Spirit better will enable us to appreciate the meaning of its message. The Holy Spirit: a Bible study for Catholics by Fr Mitch Pacwa SJ (Pauline Books and Media) includes seven sessions on the importance and role of the Holy Spirit in living and understanding our faith.

A crash course in Scripture

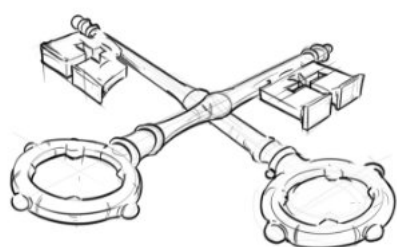
The famous Bible translator St Jerome wrote that:

'we cannot come to an understanding of Scripture without the help of the Holy Spirit who inspired it.'

One of the most important things you can do before leafing through the Bible is to pray.

Each time, before you begin to open the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the meaning of the text you have in front of you.

Our seven keys to success are:



1 *Recognise the Bible as food for your soul*

Many Catholics have heard the voice of God speak to them through the Bible. So powerfully did he hear from God, St Dominic used to nod, whisper, laugh and cry while meditating on Scripture. After reading **Luke 4:16-19**, St Vincent de Paul felt God call him to start a religious order focused on helping those in need. And St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, a Jewish Catholic who was murdered at Auschwitz, felt God speak to her through the story of Queen Esther in the Old Testament.

By spending time with the Bible, we too can allow God to speak to us. Over time, the words we read will shape our outlook on life – for the better.

As St Bernard of Clairvaux said:

'The Word of God is a living bread, the food of the soul. Let it sink into your inmost heart and pass into your affections and way of life. Eat plentifully of it and your soul will rejoice.'

2 *Learn how to find your way around*

To begin with, the Bible can be a difficult book to navigate. However, there are some simple hints and tricks that will help you to get the hang of it. If you have a hard copy of the Bible at home, ordering or making some biblical index tabs will enable you to find your way around. Sticking the tabs on the first page of each book will also help you get a sense of the overall structure of Scripture as you flip through.

In terms of getting the gist of the message of the Bible as a whole, there are a number of things you can do. One way to get familiar with the key people and stories of the Old Testament, as well as their religious significance, is to read the series of useful summaries found throughout the Bible (**Nehemiah 9:5-37; Psalms 78, 105 and 106; Ecclesiasticus chapters 44-49; Acts chapter 7 and Hebrews 11:1-39**).

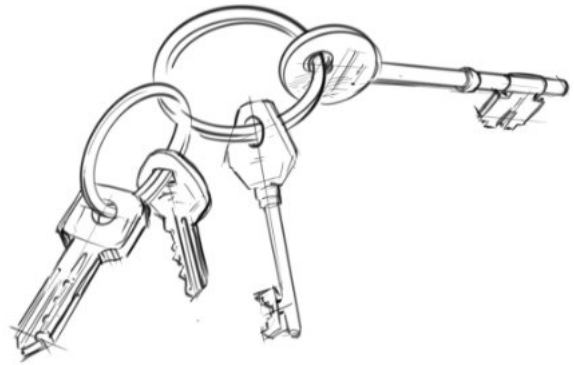
Similarly, the speeches of St Peter and St Paul - recorded in the book of Acts - will also give you the 'headlines' of the gospel story as well as some basic teachings (**Acts 10:34-33; 13:17-39; 17:22-31**).

Some versions of the Bible also include a little introductory blurb before each book. These are definitely worth reading and will provide some basic orientation. If your copy does not include these, do not worry. The New Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition), the Good News Bible (Catholic Edition), the Christian Community Bible (found online) and New Jerusalem Bible all present the texts in a readable format.

3 *Appreciate the variety of what's in the Bible*

Although today it is conveniently bound together in one volume, it is important to remember that the Bible isn't just one book. Catholics believe it's a collection of 73 books – 46 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New. These books were written in various parts of the world, in three different languages, over the course of several thousand years. Although there is definitely an overall thread, there is also a real mix of material.

Since it is broken down into chapters and verses, it is easy to make the mistake of thinking of the Bible as a kind of instruction manual. Of course, Scripture contains lots of life advice, as well as many 'dos and don'ts' in the form of laws. However, the majority of the Bible is actually made up of other kinds of literature – stories, songs, personal reflections, histories, genealogies and so on.



In the main, Scripture tells us stories of how God has intervened in the lives of individuals, families, towns and nations. Throughout the Bible, you'll find tales of single mums and dying dads, corrupt politicians and brave soldiers, welcome births and painful bereavements, sick kids and squabbling siblings, soulful singers and famous artists, rich landowners and penniless farmers. All of human life is there, in a series of timeless stories.

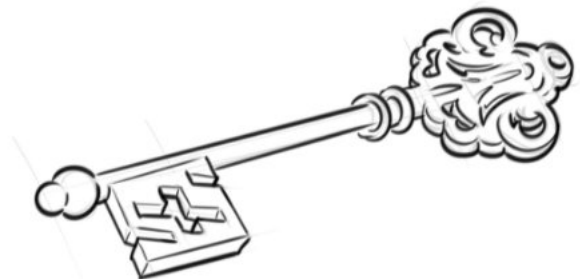
4 *Don't skip the 'first series' - The Old Testament*

The Bible is made up of two major sections – the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was mostly written in Hebrew and covers the life and history of the Jewish people up until the time of Christ. The New Testament, written mostly in Greek, speaks of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and how those in the early Church were empowered to spread his teaching across the world.

Sometimes, people can find reading the Old Testament a bit of a struggle. It can feel very unfamiliar, even off-putting. However, skipping straight to the New Testament is like missing the whole first series of a TV programme. The New Testament helps us to understand the Old better, and vice versa. As the Church tells us:

'God, the inspirer and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New.'
(Dei Verbum 16).

Quite often, you will find that the New Testament provides added meaning to the stories and sayings of the Old Testament. For example, consider the following passage from the Old Testament: 'The young woman is with child and will give birth to a son, whom she will call Immanuel' (**Isaiah 7:14**). While this verse may have had a particular meaning at the time of writing, the New Testament tells us that it is also a prophecy about the birth of Jesus (**Matthew 1:20-23**). So if you are a bit lost when reading the Old Testament, a good rule is to see if the New Testament can shine any light. This way of reading will help you find the thread of meaning that runs right through the Bible.



5 *Understand how truth is expressed in the Bible*

Sometimes, people can have questions about the truth of the Bible. Are we meant to take it literally? How does it fit with science? What are we supposed to do with 'dark passages' that describe violence or other kinds of disturbing behaviour? These kind of questions are important if we are to understand how the Bible relates to us today.

The Church tells us that the Bible, because God is its author, is true. Its truth, however, is expressed in a variety of ways. Some of it can indeed be taken at face value. Other parts, however, need to be understood differently.

For example, **Psalm 98:8** says:

'Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together with joy.'

The Psalmist didn't *literally* mean that the rivers would break into applause. He was using symbolic language, just as we might sometimes say that it is *'raining cats and dogs'*. This kind of language communicates the truth, but it would be a mistake to interpret it literally.

It is also possible to approach the interpretation of the Bible from different angles. Scripture itself tells us that some of its symbols have several meanings (**Revelation 17:9-10**). And St Paul tells us that some of the stories in the Old Testament actually have meaning hidden beneath the surface, in that they also tell us something about Christ or about the moral life (**1 Corinthians 9:8-10; 10.1-3**). This is why the Church talks about the two 'senses' of Scripture – the ability to understand it both literally and spiritually (**Catechism, ##115-118**).

There are many different kinds of literature in the Bible. The collection includes poems, songs, historical accounts, symbolic stories, fictional stories (e.g., the parables), letters, proverbs, genealogies and so on. To arrive at the truth, we need to appreciate what kind of literature we are reading and interpret it appropriately. This is especially important when we are considering questions about the relationship between science and the Bible. For example, the Church tells us that while the first chapters of Genesis (which includes the story of creation and of Adam and Eve) describe real events, they do so in symbolic language. It is not necessary, therefore, to worry about how to 'reconcile' scientific findings about the origins of the universe, or evolution, with the Bible.

Finally, it is worth remembering - especially when it comes to 'dark passages' in the Old Testament – that the Bible records the good, the bad and the ugly. St Paul tells us that some of the grim reading in the Old Testament is included to show us what not to do (**1 Corinthians 10:6-11**). Tales of murder, rape and exploitation that you may come across show us what harm and damage these actions do and their wider impacts. In this context they are as relevant today in showing us right and wrong ways to behave with each other.

A helpful link for exploring some of these issues is the 'She Too' Podcast series on violence against women in the Bible - biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/shetoo/

6 *Interpret the Bible using the three golden rules*

To help Catholics as we read and interpret the Bible, the Church has set out three golden rules to guide us. These are:

I *Pay attention to the unifying theme of the Bible, which is to reveal God to us*

As the Church puts it,

‘all divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ.’
(Catechism, #134).

The ultimate aim of reading the Bible is to get to know God personally. Understanding more about what God said and did – as well as how God was awaited, listened to and followed, can help us all to build a closer relationship with him and with Christ.

II *Read Scripture within the context of the living Tradition of the Church*

Scripture and Tradition go together hand in hand. The traditions of the Church, which go back to the apostles, are not just dusty old ideas from past centuries. They are timeless truths that can shine a light on our lives today. The Holy Spirit guides the Church so that we can appreciate how the traditions of the Church, including Scripture, apply to new developments in the world.

III *Compare any passage with what other parts of the Bible have to say on the subject*

When reading Scripture, it is important to consider how a verse or passage relates to other parts of the Bible. Often, themes, ideas or stories are repeated elsewhere. In some versions of the Bible, you will find ‘cross-references’ in the margin. These are references to other parts of the Bible that are similar in content, or which refer to the text. Cross-references are always worth reading. They will help you to get the big picture. The online tool biblehub.com can help you with this if your Bible doesn’t contain them.

7 Listen to what the Bible has to say about itself

Regular reflection on the words of the Bible is good for us

'Engrave on your heart the commandments that I pass on to you today. Repeat them over and over to your children, speak of them when you are at home and when you travel, when you lie down and when you rise. Brand them on your hand as a sign, and keep them always before your eyes. Engrave them on your door-posts and on your city gates.'

(Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Meditating on the Bible is a key to success

God told Joshua, who led Israel: 'Constantly read the book of this law and meditate on it day and night that you may truly do what it says. So shall your plans be fulfilled and you shall succeed in everything.'

(Joshua 1:8)

Scripture provides direction for our lives

'Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light for my path.'

(Psalm 119:105)

The Word of God is a real source of strength

Jesus pointed out: 'Scripture says: One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

(Matthew 4:4)



Christ is mentioned throughout Scripture

Jesus said to two of the disciples: 'Everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the prophets and in the psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.'

(Luke 24:44-45)

The Bible was written to have a positive effect on us

'And we know, that whatever was written in the past, was written for our instruction, for both perseverance and comfort, given us by the Scripture, to sustain our hope.'

(Romans 15:4)

Scripture is inspired by God and useful for our Christian life

'Besides, you have known the Scriptures from childhood; they will give you the wisdom that leads to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God, and is useful for teaching, refuting error, for correcting and training in Christian life.'

(2 Timothy 3:15-16)

Further reading and resources

Websites and videos

God who Speaks website godwhospeaks.uk/

- Please include the *God who Speaks* web link on your Parish websites and Newsletters so that more Catholics can sign up to our monthly Mailchimp and benefit from free and regular Scripture resources, ideas, advice and updates.

The Introduction to the Lectionary

liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/LM-Introduction

YouTube videos on why the Lectionary text has changed from the Archdiocese of St Andrew's and Edinburgh:

Bishop Hugh Gilbert OSB on "Introducing the English Standard Version."

[youtube.com/watch?v=9VmjpgvOxkWg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VmjpgvOxkWg)

Fr Paul Denney on "The New Lectionary."

[youtube.com/watch?v=OjCvYGDc5Mk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjCvYGDc5Mk)

Fr Adrian Porter SJ on "Proclaim the Word in the Liturgy." [youtube.com/watch?v=shuALIEpUGk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shuALIEpUGk)

General Introduction of the Roman Missal

liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Documents/GIRM.pdf

General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours

<https://divineoffice.org/general-instructions/>

Liturgy and Scripture

liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture/index.shtml

Leaders of Children's Liturgies of the Word resource

liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS/LOWC.pdf



Bible Activities for families and children

thereligionteacher.com/bible-activities

godwhospeaks.uk/education/

godwhospeaks.uk/our-top-tens/

godwhospeaks.uk/saints-seasons/

Books and Pamphlets:

Catholic Truth Society –
All Lectionary resources

ctsbooks.org/lectionary/

The New Lectionary Explained -

ctsbooks.org/product/the-new-lectionary-explained/

People's Sunday Missals

Hodder Sunday Missal - £18.99 or £15.39
on Amazon

johnmurraypress.co.uk/titles/none/sunday-missal/9781399822

CTS Sunday Missal - £19.95

ctsbooks.org/product/sunday-missal/

- Latin and English texts side by side, introductions for major feasts and seasons.

Redemptorist Sunday Missal - £19.95

rpbooks.co.uk/your-new-sunday-missal-esv

Bible Translation and the Making of the
ESV Catholic Edition by Mark Giszczak,
Augustine Institute.

ctsbooks.org/product/bible-translation-and-the-making-of-the-esv-catholic-edition/

Maria Hall – Liturgical Formation and
Training in Parishes and Schools.

mariahall.org/

Readers' resources

Ministering the Word of God by Fr Allen
Morris –

amazon.co.uk/Ministering-Word-God-Allen-Morris/dp/1784690422

ctsbooks.org/product/ministering-the-word-of-god/

The Word is very near you: A resource for
Ministers of the Word by Fr Allen Morris –

ctsbooks.org/product/the-word-is-very-near-to-you/

Hearing God's Voice: A new lectionary for
the Church by Bishop Hugh Gilbert OSB

ctsbooks.org/product/hearing-christs-voice/

Apps and digital tools:

Universalis website and app

universalis.com/

- Free app gives readings for today and the week ahead.
- Paid app is £9.99 one off fee for a smartphone/tablet
- or £19.99 to cover all devices.

Magnificat -

uk.magnificat.net/

Divine Office -

divineoffice.org

For plenty more recommendations

godwhospeaks.uk/recommendations/

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Emmaus, 2002. Painted mural.

Dining room of the Centro de Formación de Animadores, Gatun Lake, Panama.

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Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

