

**DISCIPLE I**  
**Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study**  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION**

**Orientation Meeting**

- 1. Prayer**
  - 2. Getting Acquainted**
  - 3. Materials:           Study Manual**  
                                  **Study Bible**
  - 4. Goal of Disciple – Study Manual.....Read on Page 6**  
**How to use Study Manual**
    - Scripture**
    - Daily prayer – Psalm – great for praise, petition, sorrow, comfort**
    - Daily Readings**
      - Notes for questions – verses to remember --- facts/events/connections/insights**
    - Daily Prayer**
      - Foundation for beliefs**
      - Communion w/God**
      - Source of comfort**
      - Source of help**
      - Source of strength**
- Principles for Bible Study**
- Disciple Covenant**
- Pray daily for each other**
  - Prepare daily by reading and taking notes**
  - Be present every week but faithful to study when absent**
  - Participate in every session by both listening and discussing**
  - Commit to discipleship**
  - Always share joy and encouragement**
- 5. Roster, Schedule**
  - 6. Mission project & social event each semester**
  - 7. Disciple Retreat: This is a very important event which will be the capstone for our study**
  - 8. Joys and Concerns**
  - 9. Review first Disciple lesson**
  - 10. Closing Prayer**

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**Week 1: The Biblical Word**

**GATHERING**

Week 1 Theme: **Authority**

Theme Scripture: *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serve God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

Disciple Commission: *...Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**VIDEO PRESENTATION**

**Notes from viewing:**

**Questions for Discussion:** Why read the Bible? What can you hope to gain by reading the Bible in the company of your Disciple group?

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

Analyze the types of literature contained in the Bible: *Law, History, Prophets, Poetry and Wisdom Writing (OT), Gospels and Letters (NT)*. In groups, look at the passages read during the week. Identify the characteristics of each type of literature. What relationship do you see between the type of literature and the message it carries? Define the word discussed in the Study Manual assigned to the group. Share ideas with the whole group

**Group I**      **Psalm 84; Exodus 15:1-18**  
**Canon** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group II**     **I Kings 19; Acts 9**

**Torah** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group III**     **Exodus 20, Ephesians**

**Pentateuch** \_\_\_\_\_

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- **In what situations do we pay attention to what Scripture says?**
- **Why do we pay attention to Scripture?**
- **How or why does Scripture have authority in my life?**

**ENCOUNTER THE WORD**                      **Psalm 84** (Read around)

The Psalms are wonderful tools for personal prayer. There are psalms written for those in sorrow, those who are asking forgiveness, those who are joyful, those who are thankful. As a group, discuss:

1. What human emotion does this psalm address?
2. What images appeal to you? Do you have a special place to be with God?

**HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

The Marks of Discipleship will serve as standards or goals for the Disciple Student. Each week, together read aloud the Human Condition found on the first page of the weekly lesson and discuss any valid points or feelings found in this statement. Then read the Mark of Discipleship for the week. Discuss what ways the Mark of Discipleship can lift us out of the Human Condition.

**Human Condition:** Inside me is this persistent longing to reach out to Someone; this desire to know if God has anything to do with me, to say to me: this need to know if the Bible has any power to offer me.

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples place themselves under the power and authority of Scripture.

What is the relationship between the experience expressed in the Human Condition and the knowledge and experience of belonging to God?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

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**Week 2: The Creating God**

**GATHERING**

Week 2 Theme: **Wonder**

Theme Scripture: *So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female.” Genesis 1:27*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD Presentation**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

1. We have two stories of Creation (Genesis 1 and 2): Do you discern a difference or reason for two stories?
2. The first man was created by God on the sixth day of creation and placed in the Garden of Eden. He and his wife Eve became the ancestors of all people now living on the earth. Adam was unique and distinct from the animals in several ways....Adam failed to keep God’s command....the consequences of disobedience were loss of innocence, hard labor for man, hard labor of childbirth for women, separation from God (Garden of Eden). What do you think is the meaning of God’s forming “man from the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7)?
3. Explore the issue of reclaiming Sabbath as a day of rest (Genesis 2:2). What changes in attitudes about ourselves and toward God would we need to make if we took the sacredness of Sabbath seriously? What benefits would come from treating Sabbath as sacred? How would society be affected if Christians seriously observed Sabbath rest?
4. What sense of *wonder* is conveyed in the poetry of Job 38 and 39?

**ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

**Psalm 100 (read together)**

1. Which lines are familiar? Why?

2. On what occasions might you use or recall this praise?

## **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** I wonder who made me and my world. If there is a Creator, what is this Creator like? Why was I made? Geologists point to rocks that are billions of years old. Astronomers speak of stars that are millions of light years away. In a universe so big, surely I am only a speck of dust.

What is your reaction to this statement?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples know they belong to God, that God has claim on them.

How do you reconcile the feeling of being only a “speck of dust” and, yet, belonging to God? Do you feel God really cares about each person? Why?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

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**Week 3: The Rebel People**

**GATHERING**

Week 3 Theme: **Sin**

Theme Scripture: *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned. Psalm 51:3-4*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

Review the Bible accounts and daily reading notes for evidence of temptation, of rebellion, of alienation, of wickedness, of relationship, of freedom. What instances of repentance are shown by the sinner when faced with mistakes? How is God's grace demonstrated in this event? What are the effects on the individual(s)?

**Adam and Eve      Genesis 3**

**Cain and Abel      Genesis 4**

**David and Bathsheba    2 Samuel 11:1 – 12:7**

**Several theological concepts arise from these scriptures. Define:**

- the fall
- original sin
- the sinful nature of human beings
- free will/freedom of choice
- confession
- repentance

**Let's study the effects of sin on person's lives. Read Jeremiah 8:18-9:11 and 2 Samuel 11:1-12:7.** Identify any evidence of temptation, of rebellion, of alienation, of wickedness, of relationship, of freedom, and of grace. Where any one of these experiences is present, what are its effects on persons' lives?

### **ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

**Noah: Genesis 9:1-19**

1. Read the passage aloud
2. What does this passage tell us about our relationship with God? About Noah?
3. How are we like Noah?
4. What does this passage tell us about the relationship between God & us?

### **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** Because we have the capacity to make choices, we see ourselves as self-sufficient. We become self-centered. And because we want no limits placed on us, we rebel against our Creator in our attempt to take control. Yet we know that there is turmoil in the world and in ourselves, but we don't know why.

There are some courses of study in our colleges that take the position that we cannot know what is right and what is wrong. In many ways this is a reflection of the Human Condition. What is your reaction?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples acknowledge their rebellion, accept responsibility for their sin and repent.

Silent Personal Reflection: (individually, reflect on the following statement and write your response)

By my actions, in what ways do I rebel against God? How can I accept responsibility for this sin and repent?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

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**Week 4: The Called People**

**GATHERING**

Week 4 Theme: **Covenant**

Theme Scripture: *I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*  
*Genesis 12:2-3*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

We are beginning the study of the history of the people of Israel. This lesson introduces the covenant between God and His people with a special mission. This theme will weave its way through the remainder of the study of the Old Testament.

Refer to maps in the Bible and Study manual to review the geography related to this lesson.

In **Genesis 12:2-3**, God gives Abram/Abraham a *seven-fold promise*. Review this promise.

How would you describe Abraham?

Left home and family to journey to an unknown land: Genesis 12	Faithful?
Lied about who his wife was: Genesis 20	Liar?
Through manipulation, acquired land for Sarah's burial: Genesis 23	Schemer?
Willing to sacrifice only son: Genesis 22	Willing to obey without question?

In groups, discuss the “calling” of people to fulfill God’s purpose. Notice a similar theme in these stories...*the calling of the least* .....God’s use of a person of low social status, a poor person, a faithful person, a rascal, a fool, a boaster, a dreamer, an unenlightened person. Keep these descriptions in mind as you discuss the following stories. Use daily reading notes to help you shape the story to share with the group.

**Jacob and Esau      Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-45**

Why did God allow Jacob to be chosen over Esau?

**Jacob, Rachel, and Leah      Genesis 29:1-35**

Was God testing Jacob? In what ways?

**Joseph      Genesis 37; 39; 40; 41 (use daily notes from these readings)**

What special gift(s) were given Joseph? How did these gifts help fulfill God’s Covenant with his people?

**ENCOUNTER THE WORD      Genesis 32:9-32 (read aloud)**

In this passage, we learn of Jacob’s reluctance to meet with Esau after their period of estrangement. What does this say about Jacob and his conscience? How does Esau receive his brother?

God re-names Jacob “*Israel*”...the beginning of the nation. We will follow Jacob’s descendants through his 12 sons who become the 12 Tribes of Israel throughout the Old Testament.

**HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** We are bewildered, overwhelmed. We search for a way to make sense out of life. We don’t know what to do. We don’t know how to begin. We yearn for a call that will take us beyond ourselves.

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples respond to God’s call to enter the covenant community of faith and express commitment to the covenant through to the tithe.

In what ways does the Mark of Discipleship offer comfort to the Human Condition?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

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**Week 5: God Hears the Cry**

**GATHERING**

Week 5 Theme: **Deliverance**

Theme Scripture: *I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them.*  
Exodus 3:7-8

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

In the first chapters we learn of Pharaoh's hardened heart during the plagues. The critical issues are (1) whether Pharaoh *operated as a free and responsible person* in refusing Moses' requests or (2) whether *he was caused* to act against his own will by the action of God. It is clear from the text that Pharaoh was acting as a free and responsible person. God simply strengthened the intent to refuse Moses' request. Clearly God did not cause Pharaoh to act against his own will. God progressively revealed more of himself and his power through the series of miracles that Moses performed. Through the historian Josephus and archeological evidence, we can place the time of the Exodus around 1445 B.C. In the land of Goshen, the Israelites were protected from the plagues.

Israel's history is always viewed through the lens of the Exodus. In groups, read the assigned scriptures and determine

Do you detect an understanding of a relationship with God in this story? Do you find a time of doubt and fear in the Israelites?

Did those involved in this event understand that God was at work?

Was this a turning point in the story of the Exodus?

**Passover**

**Exodus 12:14-30**

**Crossing the Red Sea          Exodus 14:5-31**

**Manna and Quail                Exodus 16:1-36**

**ENCOUNTER THE WORD                                Exodus 3:1-15; 16-22; 4:1-17**

1. Volunteers read the passages aloud.
2. What do you think the writer wanted to convey in this account of Moses' selection as the one who would lead the way? Does Moses fit the description of "the least" in any way?
3. What meaning does this passage have for the church today? For each of us as individual members of the church?

**HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**One half of the group read in unison:**

**Human Condition:** Human beings who are humiliated, exploited, or enslaved cry out for deliverance. They wait for a deliverer. They plead, "Does anybody care?"

**Second half of the group answers in unison:**

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples hear and obey God's call to be bearers of God's message of deliverance.

In what ways are the faithful "commissioned" to bear God's message of deliverance in today's world?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

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**Week 6: God Sends the Law**

**GATHERING**

Week 6 Theme: **Order**

Theme Scripture: *Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances that I am addressing to you today: you shall learn them and observe them diligently.* Deuteronomy 5:1

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

*The New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* defines “Torah” as “guidance or direction from God to His people.” In earlier times, the term Torah referred directly to the five books of Moses or the Pentateuch. Moses told the people, “Command your children to observe to do all the words of this law.” While the English word “law” does not suggest this, both the hearing and the doing of the law made the Torah. It was a manner of life, a way to live based upon the covenant that God made with his people. The Torah, both then and now, should be seen as a total way of life for the Jewish people. It requires complete dedication because it is seen as God’s direction for living the covenant relationship.

Keep this definition in mind as you read and discuss the Scriptures defining and explaining the Law given to the Israelites:

1. Look for a sense of fairness and justice
2. How do the laws demonstrate God’s love and compassion?
3. How do these laws compare with the models we have in our society today?

**Group 1: Laws of Social Welfare (Exodus 21, 22; Leviticus 19:9-10, 15, 32-34; Study Manual pages 44-45)** (try to determine if there is a distinction between murder and manslaughter)

**Group 2: Food Laws (Leviticus 11; Study Manual pages 45-46)**  
(try to discover the purpose of these laws)

**Group 3: Laws of Justice (Exodus 23:1-13; Leviticus 19:35-36; Deuteronomy 25:13-16; Study Manual 46-47)** (try to make direct comparisons with laws we have today)

**Group 4: Relationships with God and Fellow Man (Leviticus 29; Study Manual 47-48)**  
(try to relate God's direction to laws we have today)

**Discuss the Study Manual comments (p. 44-48)**

## **ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

### **Deuteronomy 8:1-19**

What does this passage tell us about God? What does this passage tell us about people? What does this passage tell us about the relationship between God and his people?

## **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** We cannot abide chaos. We want structure. Boundaries give a sense of security. We need order to feel we belong.

Agree? Disagree? Give reasons.

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples keep God's law by doing it.

What is the relationship between the experience expressed in the Human Condition and the knowledge and experience of belonging to God?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

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**Week 7: When God Draws Near**

**GATHERING**

Week 7 Theme: **Atonement**

Theme Scripture: *the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement. Leviticus 17:11*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

Explore the subject of sin and guilt. Review your notes from the reading in *Leviticus 4-6:7*. (The *NIV Study Bible* has a chart of Old Testament Sacrifices) What types of sin are covered in the passages? How is the need for worship and atonement of God's people satisfied in the ritual's outline?

Explore the place of worship for God's people. Review the elements of the Tabernacle which God instructed his people to build: *Exodus 26-27*. Explore the meaning of each piece of the Tabernacle. Why do you think God's instructions were so specific? (For example – the purpose of the rings on the furnishings; use of the acacia wood. ).

Explore the order of worship. Review your notes from the readings in *Leviticus 16-17; Deuteronomy 16* and Study Manual page 53. What purpose does the order of worship we observe today serve in your life? Does this order or ritual give you a feeling of reconciliation with God and with our neighbors?

- remembrance, atonement, thanksgiving

## ENCOUNTER THE WORD

## EXODUS 40:16-38

1. With the glory of the Lord entering the tabernacle, the great series of events that began with the birth of Moses and his rescue from the Nile, foreshadowing the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, come to a grand climax. From now on the Israelites march through the desert with the Lord leading them. What can we learn about God from this Scripture?

2. Characteristics of Hebrew worship are *corporate, mandatory, prescribed*. What is meant by

*corporate* \_\_\_\_\_

*mandatory* \_\_\_\_\_

*prescribed* \_\_\_\_\_

Which of these can we apply to our own worship experience today?

Adam Hamilton has challenged members of COR to become more than “a one-hour-a-week Christian.” How does this challenge relate to our studies today of corporate, mandatory worship?

## HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP

**Human Condition:** When God draws near to us, we feel guilty and ashamed because of our sin. We are overwhelmed by our need of forgiveness when we are in the presence of God. What are we to do?

Do you agree?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples commit themselves to corporate worship.

My commitment will be demonstrated in these ways:

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## CLOSING PRAYER

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**Week 8: The People Without a King**

**GATHERING**

Week 8 Theme: **Leadership**

Theme Scripture: *The LORD raised up judges, who delivered them [Israel] out of the power of those who plundered them. Judges 2:16*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

**Review:** The sons of Jacob were the patriarchs of the Twelve Tribes of Israel: Levi, Simeon, Reuben, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Dan, Gad, Naphtali, Manasseh (son of Joseph), and Benjamin. We will read about the tribes who are the descendants of these men in the story of Israel's leaders. The Twelve Tribes were given the "land of milk and honey,"---Canaan by God. The Canaanites who occupied the land were descendants of Ham, son of Noah. The society was sharply divided into two classes: the lower class who lived as slaves and the upper class of merchants, farmers, craftsmen, priests and soldiers.

**Assignment:** In groups, organize the important events of each leader in story form. As you prepare your story, consider the condition of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. Use "The Bible Teaching" section of your study manual, your daily notes and your Bible commentary. Is there a case where God called "the least?"

**Joshua and the Fall of Jericho (Joshua 5:13-6:27)**

**Deborah and Barak (Judges 4-5)**

**Gideon (Judges 6, 7, 8:22-28, 33)**

**Samson (Judges 13:1-5 and v. 24; chapters 14-16)**

**ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

**Joshua 24:1-28**

1. What pattern are you beginning to see in the history of Israel and their covenant with God?
2. What does this passage tell us about God?
3. What does this passage tell us not just of the Israelites, but of the human race?

**HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** We cannot tolerate political disorder and confusion. We swing between desiring unity born of faithfulness and wanting to “do our own thing.” We need leadership. Please, somebody give us a sense of direction.

What aspect of this statement do you find relevant to our society today?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples provide a sense of direction and purpose through godly, obedient leadership.

What is a Disciple’s responsibility when in the role of leadership in family, church, society?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

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**Week 9: The People With a King**

**GATHERING**

Week 9 Theme: **Security**

Theme Scripture: *“If you fear the Lord and serve him and heed his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well; but if you will not heed the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the had of the Lord will be against you and your king.”* 1 Samuel 12:14-15

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

In order to see the reoccurring theme of covenantal relationship, falling away, and returning to the Lord, let’s review a chart of Biblical history. When and where were the periods of apostasy (a falling away from faith)? Apostasy is different from false belief which is the result of ignorance.

2000 BC	Period of the ancestors: Abraham and Sarah, Issac, Jacob, Joseph
1700 BC	Jacob’s family enters Egypt
1260 BC	Moses leads the escape from Egypt
1220 BC	Joshua leads the people into Canaan; period of the Judges
1020 BC	Beginning of the monarchy: Saul, David, Solomon
922 BC	Division into Northern and Southern Kingdoms after the death of Solomon

Use daily reading notes and The Bible Teaching section of the Study Manual to look for the following themes in the stories of the leaders of Israel. Not all themes may be represented in each story.

- The “least” chosen to lead

- Apostasy of the people and/or leader
- Repentance
- Punishment

**Samuel** Describe Samuel's character. Why was he so devoted to serving the Lord? Did his family follow in his footsteps? Read Samuel's farewell after appointing Saul (**1 Samuel 3:19-21; 12:21-25**) How does this foreshadow what will happen to Israel?

**Saul** Why and how did Saul fail to live up to the requirement of King? Read **1 Samuel 13**. Was this a fair test? Why or why not? Could Saul be considered a "least"? Should a king be held to a higher standard?

**David** David is presented as a brilliant military strategist, a model king --- give examples. Would you consider David "chosen from the least"? (From David's lineage came Jesus Christ) In what ways did David fail? Read **2 Samuel 11**. What was David's punishment?

**Solomon** Describe Solomon's lifestyle as king. What about Solomon's wisdom? Read **1 Kings 3:6-9**. How did Solomon forget the Lord? What were the consequences?

## **ENCOUNTER THE WORD** **1 Kings 9:1-9**

What meaning does this passage contain for today's world?

## **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** We demand leaders, hoping they will bring security and peace. We want our leaders to make decisions for us, to tell us what to do so we won't have to take responsibility for ourselves and our actions. But power tends to corrupt; we discover our leaders, like us have feet of clay.

What is your reaction to this statement? Do you agree with all or part?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples maintain a perspective on leadership that supports and respects godly leaders but gives true allegiance only to God.

What areas of our government have you found in conflict with this Mark of Discipleship? What about the controversy over the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

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**Week 10: God Warns the People**

**GATHERING**

Week 10 Theme: Warning

Theme Scripture: *“See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel: I will never again pass them by.” Amos 7:8*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

We continue our theme of **Warning** as we look at the prophets and the roles they played in the history of Israel. We have seen the people ask for, plead for, and receive their deliverers, then reject them:

The leaders: Moses and Joshua who led Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land

The judges: Deborah and Gideon who called the people of Israel back to the Lord

The kings: Saul, David, and Solomon who were chosen and appointed by the Lord

The prophets: Elijah, Amos, Isaiah who warned the people

In groups, look for examples of apostasy. What is the nature of the disobedience? Is there also paganism or injustice?

**Group I**      **Elijah’s Flight**                      **1 Kings 19**  
Why did Elijah have to flee? What was the result?

**Group II**      **Judgment Prophesied for Israel**      **Amos 2:4-16**  
What parallels do you find in today’s society?

**Group III    Six Woes and Judgments    Isaiah 5:8-25**  
Enumerate the woes and the resulting judgment.

**ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

Read 1 Kings 19:1-18

Read this passage aloud. Discuss how Elijah felt, what he thought, and what is thought about God. What new insight does this give you?

If we look at today's society through the lens of the prophets' messages, would these warnings still be in effect? Consider:

- apostasy: in what ways have people turned away from God?
  - environment: destroyed ozone, nuclear power waste, pollution
  - health: alcohol and drug abuse, tobacco use, abortion, cloning
  - family unit: dissolution, impact on children, divided families
  - violence: murder, robbery, sexual assault, incest, violence in the media
  - socio-economic: homelessness, poor and hungry; joblessness
  - alternative religions: Satanism, witchcraft, astrology, materialism, new age
- What others could be added to the list? \_\_\_\_\_

**Plumb Line:** a plumb line was used to check the vertical line of a wall or building. If the wall was straight, the lead cone swinging from the end of the line would barely touch the wall. The plumb line became a symbol of God's measuring a nation of people. How would our nation/society measure up today?

**HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** Generally we do not heed warnings until too late. We hate to be told we are doing wrong. We don't really believe that severe punishment will come to us. Let us alone. We are getting along fine. We will call you when we need you.

Would you rewrite this statement? How?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples recognize and listen to prophetic voices raised about community, nation, and world and at time become the prophetic voice.

Are we willing to be "prophets"? What are the pitfalls? What are the benefits?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Divine Message (as seen on a wall plaque)  
*Don't make me come down there.*  
-- God

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**Week 11: God Punishes the People**

**GATHERING**

Week 11 Theme: **Consequences**

Theme Scripture: “*Have you not brought this upon yourself by forsaking the Lord your God, while he led you in the way?*” Jeremiah 2:17

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

As we continue to study the Scripture as to why the people were punished, we need to understand the pagan practices that had crept into the Israelites’ worship:

**Asherah:** Portrayed as wife of Baal, Lord Prince or god who brought rain and fertility, Asherah was the favored deity of women. The wives of David and Solomon worshipped her as well as Jezebel. She was sometimes worshipped as the wife of the Lord Himself, a pagan abomination of the worst sort. The Asherah Pole was a wooden cult pillar used in worship of this goddess.

**Chemosh/Molech:** Child sacrifice as burnt offerings was part of the worship of these gods, a practice expressly forbidden by God.

**Other practices:** Idols and worship practices to other gods had crept even into the Temple. Incense was burned to other gods; priests bowed down to the rising sun and the heavenly hosts within the Temple.

In the reading in Lamentations, there are references to *Ephraim* which means Israel and to *Ariel* which means Jerusalem. After the downfall of Jerusalem, the people brought in married the Israelites and became the *Samaritans*, an important people to remember when we begin the New Testament.

Briefly skim the scripture references to get the large picture of sins committed by each King and the nation of Israel which led to their capture and exile by enemies. Fill in the chart during group discussion in order to get a visual picture of the sins and the years of disobedience involved:

<b>Scripture and King</b>	<b>Years Reigned</b>	<b>Deeds</b>	<b>Evil(-)</b>	<b>Good (+)</b>
<b>2 Kings 17:1-17</b>	<b>Hoshea</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>evil</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>2 Kings 18:1-7</b>	<b>Hezekiah</b> _____			
<b>2 Kings 21:1-9</b>	<b>Manasseh</b> _____			
<b>2 Kings 21:19-25</b>	<b>Amon</b> _____			
<b>2 Kings 22:1-13</b>	<b>Josiah</b> _____			
<b>2 Kings 23:36-37</b>	<b>Jehoiakim</b> _____			
<b>2 Kings 24:8-14</b>	<b>Jehoiachin</b> _____			
<b>2 Kings 24:18-20</b>	<b>Zedekiah</b> _____			

Silently read 2 Kings 25:1-12: What reaction do you have to this punishment? Zedekiah was a weak and indecisive king who betrayed the king of Babylon in an agreement. Should leaders be held to a higher standard than the people they govern? Why or why not?

Silently read Isaiah 30:15-18. God is the parent admonishing his errant children. What arrogance does he point out? What is the promise?

## **ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

### **Jeremiah 24**

The prophet describes a metaphor. Who or what are the basket of figs? What are the good figs? The bad figs?

What does this text have to say to the church today?

If I took this passage seriously, what change would I have to make in my life?

## **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** We think we can sidestep the consequences of our actions, but we cannot. We deceive ourselves. We think religious practices will save us. We think wealth or prestige will protect us. But we are held accountable. We usually respond to punishment with denial, blame on others, anger, depression and despair.

What are some examples in society today which reflect this statement?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples accept consequences of their sin, seek forgiveness, look for healing and new opportunities for faithfulness.

As a Disciple, I will seek forgiveness, healing, and new opportunities for faithfulness in these ways:

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## **CLOSING PRAYER**

**DISCIPLE I**  
**Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study**  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION**

**Week 12: God Restores the People**

**GATHERING**

Week 12 Theme: **Comfort**

Theme Scripture: *Comfort, O comfort my people says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.* Isaiah 40:1-2

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

The theme of this lesson is *comfort*. The Jews had suffered great losses: their homes, their possessions, and their land. After Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and carried the Israelites into captivity, they provided the slave labor for extensive building projects in Babylon. **(At what other time did the Israelites provide slave labor for building projects?)** The location of Babylon, “the model of paganism and idolatry,” was approximately 30 miles south of modern Baghdad.

Cyrus, King of Persia, allowed the Jewish captives to return to Jerusalem after Nebuchadnezzar was overthrown. Cyrus is called “God’s Shepherd, his anointed,” the only pagan ruler to be honored with the title of anointed in the Bible. He is known as a wise, talented leader, but not a follower of Israel’s God. **(Why would God use such person in His plan? In what ways does Cyrus fit the “calling of the least likely?”)**

Read the following Scripture passages for their theme. Rewrite the ideas to create a story with this theme which can be continued by each group in one story of God, His promise, His forgiveness:

**Group 1 - Who is God?**

**Isaiah 40:10-12 and 25-31; 41:8-10**

**Group 2 - God's Promise to Israel**

**Isaiah 42:6-9; 43:14-19; 44:21-23; 49:8-9**

**Group 3 - God's Forgiveness**

**Isaiah 44:22-23; 46:3-4; 53:1-12**

## **ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

**Isaiah 45:1-13**

What does this passage tell us about God? What does this passage tell us about human beings represented by Cyrus? What does this passage tell us about the relationship between God and Cyrus as a human being?

## **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** In the darkest hour of our misery, our guilt and our pain, when we experience the consequences of our sins and the sins of others, we angrily blame others, refuse comfort, and deny new, creative possibilities. We think all is lost.

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples choose to serve rather than to despair when suffering the consequences of sin.

In what ways does this Mark of Discipleship offer comfort or answers to the Human Condition? As Christians, from where is our strength drawn in times of doubt, despair, and adversity?

Notice the in the story of Ezekiel and the wheels, Ezekiel's understanding of God was enlarged. In teams recall other accounts in Scripture where persons' understanding of God grew. Share personal experiences of growth in understanding of God.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

**DISCIPLE I**  
**Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study**  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION**

**Week 13: Songs of the Heart**

**GATHERING**

Week 13 theme: **Worship**

Theme Scripture: *O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts far away. Psalm 139:1-2*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prayer before study**

**DVD PRESENTATION:**

**Notes from viewing:**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

Read Psalm 139 aloud, a prayer for God to examine the heart and see its true devotion. Discuss the assigned section and the questions:

**Psalm 139:1-4** What does this passage tell about God?

**Psalm 139:5-12** What does this passage tell about us?

**Psalm 139:13-18** What does this passage tell us about our relationship with God?

**Psalm 139:19-24** What is the author's appeal in the section? What is the pledge?

**Whole Group:** Refer to your notes from daily reading. Did you find a Psalm that especially appealed to you? What was the appeal? In what ways would you use this Psalm in your daily worship or prayers? Share with the group.

Study Manual – written responses

Select a psalm, or part of a psalm, to memorize.

## **ENCOUNTER THE WORD (read each Psalm aloud)**

1. Psalm 23 God is portrayed as the Good Shepherd King (shepherd was widely used as a metaphor for kings)  
“lie down in green pastures...”: contentment, security  
“beside still waters..”: shepherds looked for still water for the sheep to drink safely  
“guide me in the paths of righteousness...”: shepherds led sheep safely even through dangerous areas (rocky, steep, rugged)  
“your rod and your staff...”: the rod was also used for counting, guiding, rescuing  
“prepare a table...anoint my head...”: honored guests at banquets were treated so  
“dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” The Hebrew word for *forever* suggests *throughout the years*.
2. Psalm 42 Prayer for deliverance. What familiar lines do you hear?
3. Psalm 100: Giving thanks. What is familiar about the lines in this Psalm?

### **Read Psalm 22**

**What does the psalm tell us about God? About us? About the relationship between God and us?**

## **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** We hide parts of ourselves – certain feelings and thoughts – from God, ourselves, and others. To be whole, we need to express our true selves before God and within the worshipping community of faith.

Is this true about people? About us? What is important about expressing our true selves to God and the worshipping community?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Disciples trust God with all their thoughts and feelings.

Can we? Is this an easy thing to do? Why or why not?

Psalms of praise (Psalm 147 and 116)

- Often used in corporate worship

- Two types: descriptive (praise the attributes of God) and declarative (give thanks for a specific act)
- Teach us who God is

Psalms of lament (Psalm 13 and 74)

- Two types: solitary voice (“rescue me”) and corporate voice (God is asked to intervene)
- Prayers to God asking for help

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

**DISCIPLE I**  
**Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study**  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION**

**Week 14: The Righteous Are Like a Tree**

**GATHERING AND PRAYER**

Theme: **Right Living**

Theme Scripture: *O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.* Psalm 139:1-2

Prayer before study

**DVD PRESENTATION**

Notes from viewing

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

The theme word for this lesson is *right living*. How would you define *right living*?

What is different about understanding right living for *its own reward* and understanding right living *for reward*?

Look at selected Proverbs (also called the “Book of Wisdom” and “Sayings of the Wise”). In groups, rewrite the selected verses in your own words. You may want to include some contemporary “wise sayings” which share the same theme.

**Rewards for Chastity and Faithfulness**

Proverbs 5:1-11; 15:26; 16:7; 22:1

**What the Lord Detests**

Proverbs 6:16-19; 6:30-31; 17:15; 20:10; 20:23

## **Warnings**

Proverbs 6:6-11; 11:31-12:1; 20:1,4,13,17; 22:22-23

## **Rewards for Wickedness**

Proverbs 11:1-7; 14:14, 17; 21:13; 17:13

## **Promises**

Proverbs 11:21; 12:11; 14:14, 22, 32; 15:17; 22:6

## **ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

## **Psalm 112**

This Psalm is an acrostic poem: each line begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet (an acrostic poem in English would have lines beginning with the letters a, b, c, d, etc. in succession)

Read Psalm 112 in unison. Look at each section of the poem:

What are some of the promises to the man who fears the Lord?

What are some of the responsibilities of the man who fears the Lord?

What are some promises to the wicked?

Does this poem give you comfort? In what ways?

## **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** Page 98 of the Study Manual

Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Page 104 of the Study Manual

What are some of the “costs” of right living?

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

**DISCIPLE I**  
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**Week 15: When Trouble Comes**

**GATHERING AND PRAYER**

Theme: **Suffering**

Theme Scripture : For my sighing comes like my bread, and my groanings are poured out like water. Truly the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, not am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes. Job 3:24-26

Prayer before study

**DVD PRESENTATION**

Notes from viewing

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

Job is the fullest development in Scripture of the issue referred to by the theologians and philosophers as the “problem of evil” or *theodicy*. Simply put, the matter is this: since humans, especially the innocent, suffer pain and evil, then what kind of God must there be? Logic suggests one of three answers:

1. God is righteous, but he is not powerful enough to prevent suffering;
2. God is all-powerful, but he is not truly good and has elements of evil in his nature;
3. All pain and evil is, in fact, deserved by the sufferer and sent by God (in other words, the truly innocent do not suffer).

**Viewpoints on Suffering:**

The Biblical view finds these answers unacceptable and the book of Job wrestles with the alternative. Job reveals a wider arena than humanity can observe. The conflict of the ages between God and Satan must end with the demonstration of both the righteousness and supremacy of God. He lets the innocent suffer to demonstrate that in his sovereignty he receives glory even when his people suffer and persevere in faith without understanding why. From a merely human point of view, the answer is that there is *no answer*

*given to the problem of evil. From a divine perspective, the answer is that God's glory is served even when evil is permitted.* (from *Understanding the Bible* by Kendell Easley).

In the end, Job's battle with Satan is over and God restores Job. God does not allow us to suffer without reason. At times the cause of the suffering may be hidden from our understanding in the mystery of God's divine purpose.....we must trust in Him and always turn to Him....We know that He is a God who loves us and does only what is right. (from *Halley's Bible Handbook with the New International Version*).

**Discussion:**

What is your reaction to these statements? Do these explain such events such as the Holocaust, September 11, or natural disasters such as earthquakes? Remember, Christ's death is God's ultimate answer to the problem of evil, and that God *allowed* his Son to die on a cross! Those who study Job today should interpret it in view of its original purpose.

Turn to page 109 of your study manual. (Assign members of the class to reach role). Read the drama excerpt from Chapters 3-42 of the Book of Job. As these passages are read:

- try to identify the different kinds of counsel offered by Job's friends
- observe how their explanations are still used today
- consider the sense in which the explanations are partly true buy not completely appropriate

Job _____	Zophar _____
Eliphaz _____	Elihu _____
Bildad _____	The Lord _____

**HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** Page 106 of the Study Manual

Could suffering be compared to gold or silver being refined in a fire? Or the crystal or diamond that is cut and polished to diamond brightness? What about the potter who shapes and molds a piece of clay into a thing of art? Can we find any benefits from suffering? Or, is this an illogical statement?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Page 112 of the Study Manual

Is this statement easy to say? Is it harder to practice? Why or why not?

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**DISCIPLE I**  
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**Week 16: The People Hope for a Savior**

**GATHERING AND PRAYER**

Theme: **Hope**

Theme Scripture: *As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship....that shall never be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13-14*

Prayer before study

**ABOUT DANIEL**

As far as we know, Daniel was the only Hebrew prophet to spend his entire career working as a public servant for pagan empires outside Israel. He served at least three kings and two governments in a career that lasted from around 605 B. C. to at least 539 B. C. The fact that throughout his life Daniel maintained a reputation for undoubted honesty and unswerving commitment to the Lord makes him an important model for Christians in the marketplace today (*Word in Life Bible*).

**DVD PRESENTATION**

Notes from viewing

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

*Apocalyptic Literature* (a *pock uh LIP tik*). The word *apocalypsis* is a Greek word meaning “revelation.” Therefore, apocalyptic literature is a special kind of writing that arose among the Jews and Christians to reveal certain mysteries about Heaven and earth, human kind and God, angels and demons, the life of the world today and the world to come. Two books in the Bible – the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation -- are good examples of apocalyptic literary form.

In groups, explore the following themes in the Book of Daniel:

**Group I: Study Manual**

Review the commentary in the manual to get a picture of the time in which Daniel was written, the period of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Describe this period for others in the group.

**Group II: Daniel 7**

Identify the apocalyptic themes and characteristics used here. Use your Bible’s commentary to explain the symbolism.

**Group II: Daniel 12**

Look for themes of hope and promise in this passage. What gives the people comfort?

**ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

**Isaiah 65:17-25 *New Heavens and New Earth***

Read aloud this apocalyptic section of Isaiah, listen and look for the symbolic meaning. Share your ideas with the group:

- 1<sup>st</sup> reader: V.17-19      What is the new heaven and new earth described by Isaiah?
- 2<sup>nd</sup> reader    V. 20-23      What promise is heard in these verses?
- 3<sup>rd</sup> reader    V. 24-25      How would you interpret God’s promise in this section?

**HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** Page 114 of the Study Manual

In what areas or times of our society do you feel this statement may be true?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Page 119 of the Study Manual

What do we share in the way of heritage with the Jewish people?

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**DISCIPLE I**  
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**Week 17: The Time of Transition**

**GATHERING AND PRAYER**

Theme: **Context**

Theme Scripture: *See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.* Malachi 3:1

Prayer before study

**DVD PRESENTATION**

**SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL**

1. Review the chart of Biblical history found on page 126 of the Study Manual
2. Review the stories of Esther and Jonah.

**The Story of Queen Esther**

What was God's purpose for Esther who was living as an exile? What did this event mean for Judaism?

**The Story of Jonah**

Jonah was called to prophesy at the time Hosea and Amos, active in Israel, were denouncing Israelites for their widespread idolatry and arrogant rebellion against the Lord. Why did Jonah run away? Contrast and compare Jonah's faith with that of the sailors on the storm-tossed ship (Jonah 1:4-16).

## **ENCOUNTER THE WORD**

**Jonah 3:10-4:11 (read aloud)**

What does this story mean for us and our lives? Have we allowed ourselves to become “up-side down” in our concern for people?

What does this story teach us about our calling as Christians?

## **HUMAN CONDITION VERSUS MARK OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Human Condition:** Page 120 of the Study Manual

What is your experience regarding this statement?

**Mark of Discipleship:** Page 126 the Study Manual

With this background as the foundation, we move from the Old Testament and our historical connection with the Jewish faith into the study of the New Testament.

What difference does it make to understanding the Bible when Christians see themselves as connected to the people of God through the Old Testament?

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**