



ST. PAUL CENTER

# TEACHER & LORD

LEADER GUIDE

Bible Across America | Advent Bible Study





# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for leading a *Bible Across America Fall 2025* group study! Jesus reminds us, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20). Studying God’s Word in a group setting can bring the text to life in amazing new ways.

We strongly suggest that you open and close each group study session in a word of prayer. Opening with prayer is an excellent practice that helps set the tone for the meeting and join everyone together in fellowship. Closing with prayer allows the group to remain in spiritual communion as they are sent forth.

In this short guide we’ve condensed the most important information for leading a session into brief bullet points. For each week, you’ll find:

✿ **The Scripture readings for that week.**

✿ **Old Testament passages.** These are the Old Testament passages your group is using to reflect on this week’s Gospel passages. These texts are designed to help participants appreciate the truth of St. Augustine’s maxim when interpreting Sacred Scripture: “The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New.”

✿ **Suggested artwork.** Contemplating beautiful works of art allows more of our senses to be engaged in Scripture study. Consider having an image of the suggested artwork for each session available to view and discussing how it relates to the Scriptures and to the topics for each episode.





Suggested artwork for this week: *The Mystical Nativity* (c. 1500)  
by Sandro Botticelli



# WEEK 1:

## “TO WORSHIP HIM” - *The Infancy Narratives*

### Monday

The Scripture readings for this week are:

- ✿ Matthew 2:1–12 – The adoration of the Magi
- ✿ Luke 2:22–38 – The presentation in the Temple
- ✿ Luke 2:41–52 – The boy Jesus teaching in the Temple

These are the reading questions your group is using to help them prepare for Wednesday’s episode:

1. The text from Matthew describes how the Magi “worshipped” the baby Jesus. What does this suggest about who they think He is?
2. Both the Presentation and the Finding in the Temple form part of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. In your experience, are these mysteries easy to pray with? Why or why not?
3. What can Mary and Joseph’s experience of losing Jesus for three days teach us about the compassion they have for us whenever we feel distant from Jesus?

### Wednesday

It is an excellent practice to begin and end each group study session in a word of prayer.

This week’s episode will revolve around the following questions:

1. When the boy Jesus is found in the Temple, He is teaching the “teachers,” but He is first described as listening and asking questions. What might this have to say to us about both teaching and learning?



2. Who are the “magi” in our day whose journey to Jesus is calling us to worship Him as Lord anew? What are the “stars” guiding them to Jesus?

As your group reflects on the episode, you may find the following points helpful for guiding the discussion:

- ✿ The Magi are most likely astrologers from Persia. In Matthew’s account, they are noteworthy for being the first Gentiles to recognize the kingship of Christ.
- ✿ The star in Bethlehem was prophesied by Balaam back in Numbers 24:17–18. Herod, an Edomite, was troubled by the latter part of the prophecy: “Edom shall be dispossessed.”
- ✿ According to Exodus 13:2, 12–15, every firstborn male belongs to the Lord and must be consecrated to Him. Luke’s infancy narrative highlights the fact that Mary and Joseph were devout observers of the Mosaic Law.

## Friday

These are the Old Testament passages your group is using to reflect on this week’s Gospel passages. These texts are designed to help your group to appreciate the truth of St. Augustine’s maxim when interpreting Sacred Scripture: “The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New.”

- ✿ Micah 5:2 – Prophecy of a ruler arising from Bethlehem
- ✿ Isaiah 60:1–6 – Prophecy of the gathering in of the nations
- ✿ 1 Samuel 1:21–28 and 2:26 – Consecration of the boy Samuel in the Temple



# WEEK 2:

## “A NEW TEACHING WITH AUTHORITY”- *Exorcisms*

### Monday

The Scripture readings for this week are:

- ✿ Mark 1:21–28 – The beginning of Jesus’s public ministry in Capernaum
- ✿ Mark 5:1–20 – The Gerasene demoniac
- ✿ Mark 9:14–29 – The boy with the mute and deaf spirit

These are the reading questions your group is using to help them prepare for Wednesday’s episode:

1. Are there any common patterns in the way the demons seek to hurt the people they are afflicting? Are there similarities in how demons respond to Jesus?
2. The episode with the demons being cast into the herd of pigs feels strange. What might Jesus be trying to teach us through this dramatic action?
3. What do these passages reveal to us about the relationship between faith and spiritual healing?

### Wednesday

It is an excellent practice to begin and end each group study session in a word of prayer.

This week’s episode will revolve around the following questions:

1. In the synoptic accounts, why is Jesus’s first miracle an exorcism?
2. Why isn’t the now-exorcized Gerasene man permitted to follow Jesus?





Suggested artwork for this week: *The Blind of Capernaum*(c. 1500)  
by James Tissot

3. The possessed are described as mute and deaf, living among tombs, and wounding themselves. What do these images tell us about sin (and not just the more dramatic demoniac)?

As your group reflects on the episode, you may find the following points helpful for guiding the discussion:

- ✿ Mark's Gospel uses exorcisms to underscore Jesus's power and authority. The exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac is unusual in that it offers a rare case of Jesus refusing to allow someone to follow Him. His instruction to the man to "go home" may suggest that the man's demonic possession resulted from sins connected to his family or friends. Instead of following Jesus, the man must first return home to heal those broken relationships.
- ✿ In ancient Jewish thought, the sea was primarily seen as a symbol for chaos and death. By casting the demons into a herd of pigs—animals that were considered unclean under the Mosaic Law—who then drown themselves in the sea, Jesus offers a spectacular demonstration of how He has come to destroy both moral and ritual uncleanness.

## Friday

These are the Old Testament passages your group is using to reflect on this week's Gospel passages. These texts are designed to help your group to appreciate the truth of St. Augustine's maxim when interpreting Sacred Scripture: "The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New."

- ✿ Exodus 14:26–28; 15:1 – Pharaoh and his army are cast into the sea
- ✿ Jonah 2:2–6 – The sea as a Jewish symbol for death
- ✿ Psalm 77 – The God who hears our cries





Suggested artwork for this week: *The Sermon on the Mount* by James Tissot

# WEEK 3:

## “THY KINGDOM COME” - *The Sermon on the Mount*

### Monday

The Scripture readings for this week are:

- ✿ Matthew 5:1–12 – The beatitudes
- ✿ Matthew 6:9–15 – The Lord’s Prayer

These are the reading questions your group is using to help them prepare for Wednesday’s episode:

1. What might be the reason for Jesus making poverty of spirit the first of the eight beatitudes?
2. Do all the beatitudes make sense to you, or do any of them feel surprising or even slightly random?
3. Instead of beginning with asking God for things, the Lord’s Prayer begins with recognizing who He is. What can this teach us about how we ought to pray?

### Wednesday

It is an excellent practice to begin and end each group study session in a word of prayer.

This week’s episode will revolve around the following questions:

1. Is there a particular beatitude or petition of the Lord’s Prayer that challenges you, encourages you, consoles you, etc.?
2. How can the Lord’s Prayer function not only as an important memorized vocal prayer in our life but also as a structure or model for prayer?
3. What does it mean to us that Jesus begins His most famous sermon with a series of blessings?

As your group reflects on the episode, you may find the following points helpful for guiding the discussion:

- ✿ The Sermon on the Mount begins with Matthew 5:1 and ends with Matthew 7:29. The overarching theme is one of Jesus establishing the Law of the Covenant, which perfects and completes the Old Law.
- ✿ The setting of the Sermon on the Mount recalls how Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19–24). An interesting difference is that Moses brought the Law down the mountain to the people, whereas Jesus brings the people with Him up the mountain.
- ✿ The Lord's Prayer is a model of Christian prayer. Its opening line recognizes God's identity as Father and the relationship we share with one another as His adopted children. The prayer has seven petitions, with the first being "hallowed be Thy name" and the last being "deliver us from evil." That is, the first half of the prayer glorifies God, while the second half asks Him to assist us in our various needs.

## Friday

These are the Old Testament passages your group is using to reflect on this week's Gospel passages. These texts are designed to help your group to appreciate the truth of St. Augustine's maxim when interpreting Sacred Scripture: "The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New."

- ✿ Exodus 19 – Moses descends Mount Sinai to deliver God's Law to the people
- ✿ Isaiah 61:1–7 – The Good News of the coming Messiah
- ✿ Malachi 1:6–11 – The holiness of God's name



# WEEK 4:

## *“TAL’ITHA CU’MI” - Healings of Mark 5*

### Monday

The Scripture readings for this week are:

✿ Mark 5:21–43 – The raising of Jairus’s daughter and the healing of the hemorrhaging woman

These are the reading questions your group is using to help them prepare for Wednesday’s episode:

1. What risks do Jairus and the bleeding woman take in seeking healing from Jesus? What do their actions teach us about the power of faith?
2. Under the Mosaic Law, the bleeding woman and anyone she touched were considered ritually unclean. Yet when she touches Jesus, He is not made unclean; she is made clean. What does this teach us about the authority of Jesus?
3. What do these healings reveal to us about the gentleness of Jesus?

### Wednesday

It is an excellent practice to begin and end each group study session in a word of prayer.

This week’s episode will revolve around the following questions:

1. What about these stories remains so attractive to us?
2. Why does Jesus want to know who touched Him?
3. Why does Jesus say to the hemorrhaging woman “be healed” (v. 34) several verses after she was already seemingly healed (v. 29)?
4. What might we make of the sandwiching of these miracles together and the interruption and delay of Jesus’s journey to the house of Jairus?



Suggested artwork for this week: *Christ Healing a Woman with an Issue of Blood* (c. 1548) by Paolo Veronese

As your group reflects on the episode, you may find the following points helpful for guiding the discussion:

- ✿ Both the hemorrhaging woman and everything she touches are considered ritually unclean under the Mosaic Law (see Leviticus 15:25–30). This excludes her from full participation in the covenantal life of Israel. To the crowd’s astonishment, Jesus removes her uncleanness through physical contact, underscoring both His divine authority and His healing power.
- ✿ Mark 5 offers a famous example of what is sometimes referred to as a “Markan sandwich.” Mark enjoys crafting such narratives, in which one story is broken up by inserting another story in the middle. In this case, the healing of Jairus’s daughter is interrupted by the healing of the hemorrhaging woman. Mark uses this literary technique when he wants two scenes to mutually interpret one another. Usually, the center of the “sandwich” is the key to interpreting the whole; in this case, the center is the woman’s faith (v. 34) and the need for Jairus to show that same faith (v. 36).

## Friday

These are the Old Testament passages your group is using to reflect on this week’s Gospel passages. These texts are designed to help your group to appreciate the truth of St. Augustine’s maxim when interpreting Sacred Scripture: “The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New.”

- ✿ 1 Kings 17:17–24 – Elijah raises the widow’s son
- ✿ 2 Kings 5:1–14 – The healing of Naaman
- ✿ Psalm 30 – Thanksgiving for recovery from illness





Suggested artwork for this week: *Christ with Mary and Martha* (1570–1575) by Tintoretto

# WEEK 5:

## “ONE THING IS NEEDFUL”- *Luke 10*

### Monday

The Scripture readings for this week are:

- ✿ Luke 10:1–24 – The sending of the seventy disciples
- ✿ Luke 10:25–37 – The Parable of the Good Samaritan
- ✿ Luke 10:38–42 – Jesus visits Martha and Mary

These are the reading questions your group is using to help them prepare for Wednesday’s episode:

1. Why did Jesus send out the seventy disciples in groups of two? Wouldn’t they have covered more ground if they each went alone?
2. Is the Good Samaritan supposed to represent us or Jesus? Might he represent both?
3. Jesus defends Mary by reminding Martha that “one thing is needful.” But what is that one thing exactly?

### Wednesday

It is an excellent practice to begin and end each group study session in a word of prayer.

This week’s episode will revolve around the following questions:

1. How does Jesus’s description of the mission and joy of the Seventy differ from our expectations?
2. Why might Jesus have preached the Parable of the Good Samaritan right after the sending and return of the Seventy?
3. What should we make of Jesus’s apparent rebuke of Martha?



As your group reflects on the episode, you may find the following points helpful for guiding the discussion:

- ✿ Luke 10 falls in what is often referred to as Luke's travel narrative, which spans from Luke 9:51 all the way to Luke 19:47. The narrative describes Jesus's long journey to Jerusalem, where He will meet His death.
- ✿ Samaritans came from the region in central Palestine that lay between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north. In Jesus's day, Jews and Samaritans were fierce rivals with different sanctuaries of worship (Jerusalem for the Jews, Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans) and different cultural customs. The Jews considered the Samaritans impure because their ancestors had intermarried with pagan peoples and worshipped false gods.
- ✿ While Mary comes off better than Martha in the Luke 10 episode, it's important to remember that Jesus never criticizes Martha's more active apostolate; He merely faults her for her anxiety and for trying to pull her sister away from the feet of the Lord. In John's Gospel, we see Martha portrayed in a more positive light when she makes a profound declaration of faith in Jesus as the holy Son of God and long-awaited Messiah (see John 11:20–27).

## Friday

These are the Old Testament passages your group is using to reflect on this week's Gospel passages. These texts are designed to help your group to appreciate the truth of St. Augustine's maxim when interpreting Sacred Scripture: "The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New."

- ✿ Numbers 11:16–30 – Moses appoints seventy elders to help govern Israel
- ✿ Leviticus 19:18 and 34 – Love of neighbor and for the stranger
- ✿ Psalm 27 – "One thing have I asked of the LORD"



# WEEK 6:

## “WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF”

### - *Parables of Luke 15*

#### Monday

The Scripture readings for this week are:

- ✿ Luke 15:1–7 – The Parable of the Lost Sheep
- ✿ Luke 15:8–10 – The Parable of the Lost Coin
- ✿ Luke 15:11–32 – The Parable of the Prodigal Son

These are the reading questions your group is using to help them prepare for Wednesday’s episode:

1. What do these parables teach us about the proper source of deep and lasting joy?
2. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is the longest of all Jesus’s parables, which suggests that He considers its message especially important for us to hear. Why might this be?
3. Does the younger son in the parable symbolize all sinners or only those who have committed particularly awful sins?

#### Wednesday

It is an excellent practice to begin and end each group study session in a word of prayer.

This week’s episode will revolve around the following questions:

1. What is Jesus trying to teach us with the repetition of the theme of rejoicing at the end of the three parables in Luke 15?
2. Beyond money, what does the younger son’s desire for his share of the inheritance represent?



Suggested artwork for this week: *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (c. 1666) by Rembrandt

3. What moves me to “return to myself”?
4. How can we better understand our identify as sons and daughters of the Father in order to avoid the errors of either son?

As your group reflects on the episode, you may find the following points helpful for guiding the discussion:

- ✿ The Parable of the Lost Sheep draws on rich Old Testament imagery wherein both Yahweh and the coming Messiah are depicted as shepherds to God’s people (see Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11; Micah 5:4; Ezekiel 34:11–16, 22–24).
- ✿ Since the names of the parables did not originate with Jesus, some theologians have proposed that the Parable of the Prodigal Son could be more accurately labeled as the Parable of the Two Sons or the Parable of the Father’s Love.
- ✿ Clearly, the life-affirming love of the father lies at the heart of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and both sons struggle in their different ways to accept this love. Both of them find it challenging to accept that their life at home was never about blindly following the rules; it was always about discovering a deep and abiding joy in doing the father’s will.

## Friday

These are the Old Testament passages your group is using to reflect on this week’s Gospel passages. These texts are designed to help your group to appreciate the truth of St. Augustine’s maxim when interpreting Sacred Scripture: “The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New.”

- ✿ Ezekiel 34:11–16 – God as the shepherd of His people
- ✿ Psalm 51 – David’s prayer of repentance
- ✿ Hosea 11:19 – God’s fatherly love for wayward Israel





Suggested artwork for this week: *The Transfiguration* (c. 1516–1520)  
by Raphael

# WEEK 7:

## “LISTEN TO HIM” – THE TRANSFIGURATION

### Monday

The Scripture readings for this week are:

✿ Matthew 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–13; and Luke 9:28–36 – The Transfiguration

These are the reading questions your group is using to help them prepare for Wednesday’s episode:

1. In what way is the Transfiguration a manifestation of the Blessed Trinity?
2. According to Luke’s account, what does Jesus discuss with Moses and Elijah on the mountaintop? Why is this significant?
3. The Transfiguration seems like a big deal, but sometimes Catholics aren’t quite sure what to make of it. What is this event supposed to teach us?

### Wednesday

It is an excellent practice to begin and end each group study session in a word of prayer.

This week’s episode will revolve around the following questions:

1. Peter wanted to remain on the mountain top, but Jesus and the apostles had to come back down again. Why? What does this tell us about our own spiritual lives?
2. The Transfiguration happens when Jesus is at prayer. What does this reveal about Jesus and our own life of prayer?
3. Beyond being representatives of the Law and Prophets, what does the specific appearance of Moses and Elijah suggest to you?

As your group reflects on the episode, you may find the following points helpful for guiding the discussion:

- ✿ The Transfiguration is a Trinitarian event: The Incarnate Son is arrayed in glory; the Holy Spirit appears in the form of a bright cloud; and the Father is heard in the voice from heaven.
- ✿ The Transfiguration offers us a glimpse of the joy that awaits us, serving as an outward sign of the glorious transformation for which our mortal bodies are destined.
- ✿ At the same time, the Transfiguration challenges us to embrace the path of suffering that still lies between us and heaven. Even after His manifestation of glory, Jesus still chooses to come back down the mountain. He still chooses to take up His Cross—and He invites us to do the same.
- ✿ In Luke’s account, it is Christ’s “departure”—in Greek, His exodus—that is the topic of His conversation with Moses and Elijah. The new and greater exodus Jesus will accomplish in Jerusalem will be a deliverance not from Egypt but from sin. This time, the journey will be defined not by the blood of lambs smeared on doorposts but by the blood of the Eternal Lamb poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

## Friday

These are the Old Testament passages your group is using to reflect on this week’s Gospel passages. These texts are designed to help your group to appreciate the truth of St. Augustine’s maxim when interpreting Sacred Scripture: “The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New.”

- ✿ Exodus 24:13–18 and 34:29–35 – Moses sees God’s glory on Mount Sinai
- ✿ Deuteronomy 18:15–19 – Prophecy of a future prophet like Moses
- ✿ 1 Kings 19:8–13 – Elijah encounters the presence of God at Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai)













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