

LEADER GUIDE

THE BIBLE YEAR

*A Journey Through Scripture
in 365 Days*



MAGREY R. DEVEGA

**THE BIBLE YEAR
LEADER GUIDE**

**The Bible Year:
A Journey Through Scripture
in 365 Days**

Book

978-1-7910-2341-6 *Paperback*

978-1-7910-2342-3 *ePub*

Leader Guide

978-1-7910-2343-0 *Paperback*

978-1-7910-2344-7 *ePub*

Pastor Guide

978-1-7910-2345-4 *Paperback*

978-1-7910-2346-1 *ePub*

Also by Magrey R. deVega

Awaiting the Already

Embracing the Uncertain

Almost Christmas

Hope for Hard Times

Savior

LEADER GUIDE

THE
BIBLE
YEAR

*A Journey Through Scripture
in 365 Days*

MAGREY R. DEVEGA

Abingdon Press | Nashville

THE BIBLE YEAR

A Journey Through Scripture in 365 Days
Leader Guide

Copyright © 2021 Abingdon Press
All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act, the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, or in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission can be addressed to Rights and Permissions, The United Methodist Publishing House, 2222 Rosa L. Parks Blvd., Nashville, TN 37228-1306 or e-mailed to permissions@abingdonpress.com.

978-1-7910-2343-0

Scripture quotations unless noted otherwise are from the Common English Bible. Copyright © 2011 by the Common English Bible. All rights reserved. Used by permission. www.CommonEnglishBible.com.

21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 — 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Contents

To the Leader	9
Session 1: Genesis 1:1–11:32.....	15
Session 2: Genesis 12:1–30:43.....	18
Session 3: Genesis 31:1–Exodus 12:30.....	21
Session 4: Exodus 12:31–34:35.....	24
Session 5: Exodus 35:1–Leviticus 23:44	27
Session 6: Leviticus 24:1–Numbers 21:35.....	30
Session 7: Numbers 22:1–Deuteronomy 16:22	33
Session 8: Deuteronomy 17:1–Joshua 11:23.....	36
Session 9: Joshua 12:1–Judges 16:31.....	39
Session 10: Judges 17:1–1 Samuel 15:35	42
Session 11: 1 Samuel 16:1–2 Samuel 7:29.....	45
Session 12: 2 Samuel 8:1–1 Kings 11:43	48
Session 13: 1 Kings 12:1–2 Kings 17:41	51
Session 14: 2 Kings 18:1–1 Chronicles 27:34.....	54

Session 15: 1 Chronicles 28:1–2 Chronicles 24:27.....	57
Session 16: 2 Chronicles 25:1–Nehemiah 4:23.....	60
Session 17: Nehemiah 5:1–Job 14:22.....	63
Session 18: Job 15:1–Psalm 12:8.....	66
Session 19: Psalms 13:1–41:13	69
Session 20: Psalms 42:1–68:35	72
Session 21: Psalms 69:1–101:8	75
Session 22: Psalms 102:1–126:6	78
Session 23: Psalm 127:1–Proverbs 3:35.....	81
Session 24: Proverbs 4:1–15:33.....	84
Session 25: Proverbs 16:1–26:28.....	87
Session 26: Proverbs 27:1–Ecclesiastes 12:14.....	90
Session 27: Song of Solomon 1:1–Isaiah 23:18	93
Session 28: Isaiah 24:1–52:12	96
Session 29: Isaiah 52:13–Jeremiah 16:21.....	99
Session 30: Jeremiah 17:1–49:39.....	102
Session 31: Jeremiah 50:1–Ezekiel 21:32.....	105
Session 32: Ezekiel 22:1–Daniel 6:28.....	108
Session 33: Daniel 7:1–Amos 9:15	111
Session 34: Obadiah–Habakkuk 3:19	114
Session 35: Zephaniah 1:1–Malachi 4:6	117
Session 36: Matthew 1:1–12:50	120
Session 37: Matthew 13:1–25:46	123
Session 38: Matthew 26:1–Mark 10:45	126
Session 39: Mark 10:46–Luke 4:13	129

Session 40: Luke 4:14–14:35	132
Session 41: Luke 15:1–24:53	135
Session 42: John 1:1–10:42	138
Session 43: John 11:1–Acts 5:16	141
Session 44: Acts 5:17–23:35	144
Session 45: Acts 24:1–Romans 13:14	147
Session 46: Romans 14:1–2 Corinthians 3:18	150
Session 47: 2 Corinthians 4:1–Ephesians 2:22	153
Session 48: Ephesians 3:1–1 Thessalonians 3:13	156
Session 49: 1 Thessalonians 4:1–Titus 3:15	159
Session 50: Philemon–James 2:26	162
Session 51: James 3:1–1 John 5:21	165
Session 52: 2 John–Revelation 11:19	168
Session 53: Revelation 12:1–22:21	171
Notes.	175



Enrich your small group experience
with weekly videos for *The Bible Year*,
available through Amplify Media.

Use **Promo Code BibleYear22** to get
3 months free if you sign up for a 1-year subscription.*
Or call 800-672-1789 to ask about our latest offer.

Amplify Media is a multi-media platform that delivers high quality, searchable content with an emphasis on Wesleyan perspectives for church-wide, group, or individual use on any device at any time. In a world of sometimes overwhelming choices, Amplify gives church leaders media capabilities that are contemporary, relevant, effective and, most importantly, affordable and sustainable.

With Amplify Media you can:

- Provide a reliable source of Christian content through a Wesleyan lens for teaching, training, and inspiration in a customizable library,
- Deliver your own preaching and worship content in a way your congregation knows and appreciates,
- Build your church's capacity to innovate with engaging content and accessible technology,
- Equip your congregation to better understand the Bible and its application, and
- Deepen discipleship beyond the church walls.

Sign up for Amplify Media at:

<https://www.amplifymedia.com/annual-pricing>,

Use **Promo Code BibleYear22** at checkout.*

*Promo code valid from October 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022.
After promo code expires, call 800-672-1789 to ask about our latest offer.

To the Leader

Reading the Bible promises to enrich our faith, as we find ourselves in its stories and teachings and encounter the God who created us and called us to be followers of Jesus. Reading the Bible together with others—whether we do so as a small group or as a whole congregation—draws us closer to God and to one another. When we read in conversation with others, it opens a path for us to ask and wrestle with difficult questions we have about Scripture, or that the Bible poses to us. Often, it is the mere freedom and permission to raise questions aloud with others that can encourage people who would otherwise struggle with the faith. Most importantly, reading the Bible together can elicit novel insights from the diversity of voices around the room, unlocking new, life-giving ways to look at a text.

This Leader Guide contains a year's worth of small group sessions to help you guide your small group in reading the Bible together, using *The Bible Year* as a resource. Whether you commit to reading the whole Bible together in a year, or choose a portion of it, this resource will help you dig deeper into the text and its meaning for your life. As you read and lead your group's discussions, may the Holy Spirit speak to you and guide you to encounter God each time you open the Bible and each time you gather together.

HOW TO FACILITATE THIS STUDY

This study makes use of the following components:

- **The Bible.** A variety of translations are both allowable and desirable in your small group. Multiple translations allow

you to compare wording and open the possibility for new insights into the text. Some great translations include the Common English Bible (CEB), New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), and New International Version (NIV).

- The daily devotional, *The Bible Year: A Journey Through Scripture in 365 Days*. The weekly overviews and daily devotions give you and your group background and prompt reflection on your daily Bible reading. The devotional includes space to write down your thoughts briefly each day.
- **This Leader Guide.**
- *The Bible Year videos* (optional), available via Amplify Media (www.amplifymedia.com). There are fifty-three short videos available, featuring Magrey deVega and other pastors, scholars, and Bible teachers exploring the text each week and setting the stage for group discussion. If you choose to use *The Bible Year* videos, you will need a computer or television with Internet access so that you can watch the video segments as part of your group session.

Each session should take approximately 45–60 minutes to complete, and consists of the following segments:

- **Opening (5–15 minutes):** Open with prayer, review the week's Scripture texts, and invite initial impressions and responses from the daily devotional.
- **Discussion (30–45 minutes):** Discuss the Scripture text using discussion questions that are provided.
- **Closing (5 minutes):** Invite the group to raise any prayer concerns or reasons for thanksgiving, then close with prayer.

HELPFUL HINTS

Preparing for Each Session

- Pray for wisdom and discernment from the Holy Spirit, for you and for each member of the group, as you prepare for the study.

To the Leader

- Before each session, familiarize yourself with the week's Scripture passages. Read the text carefully and make notes of anything you want to be sure to discuss.
- Review the discussion questions for the session and select the ones you want to spend the most time with in your group. Be prepared, however, to adjust the session as group members interact and as questions arise. Prepare carefully, but allow space for the Holy Spirit to move in and through the group members and through you as facilitator.
- Prepare the space where the group will meet so that the space will enhance the learning process. Ideally, group members should be seated around a table or in a circle so that all can see one another.

Shaping the Learning Environment

- Create a climate of openness, encouraging group members to participate as they feel comfortable.
- Remember that some people will jump right in with answers and comments, while others need time to process what is being discussed.
- If you notice that some group members seem never to be able to enter the conversation, ask them if they have thoughts to share. Give everyone a chance to talk, but keep the conversation moving. Moderate to prevent a few individuals from doing all the talking.
- Communicate the importance of group discussions and group exercises.
- If no one answers at first during discussions, do not be afraid of silence. Count silently to ten, then say something such as, "Would anyone like to go first?" If no one responds, venture an answer yourself and ask for comments.
- Model openness as you share with the group. Group members will follow your example. If you limit your sharing to a surface level, others will follow suit.

- Encourage multiple answers or responses before moving on to the next question.
- **Ask:** “Why?” or “Why do you believe that?” or “Can you say more about that?” to help continue a discussion and give it greater depth.
- Affirm others’ responses with comments such as “Great” or “Thanks” or “Good insight” —especially if it’s the first time someone has spoken during the group session.
- Monitor your own contributions. If you are doing most of the talking, back off so that you do not train the group to listen rather than speak up.
- Remember that you do not have to have all the answers. Your job is to keep the discussion going and encourage participation.

Managing the Session

- Honor the time schedule. If a session is running longer than expected, get consensus from the group before continuing beyond the agreed-upon ending time.
- Involve group members in various aspects of the group session, such as saying prayers or reading the Scripture.
- As always in discussions that may involve personal sharing, confidentiality is essential. Group members should never pass along stories that have been shared in the group. Remind the group members at each session: confidentiality is crucial to the success of this study.

TIPS FOR ONLINE MEETINGS

Meeting online is a great option for a number of situations. During a time of a public-health hazard, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, online meetings are a welcome opportunity for folks to converse while seeing each other’s faces. Online meetings can also expand the “neighborhood”

of possible group members, because people can log in from just about anywhere in the world. This also gives those who do not have access to transportation or who prefer not to travel at certain times of day the chance to participate.

There are a number of platforms for online meetings. Google has two products, one called Google Hangouts and one called Google Meet. You need only a Google account to use them, which is free.

Another popular option is Zoom. This platform is used quite a bit by businesses. If your church has an account, this can be a good medium. Individuals can obtain free accounts, but those offer meetings of no longer than 40 minutes. For longer meetings (which you will want for this study), you must pay for an account.

Some other platforms to consider: GoToMeeting, Web Meeting, Microsoft Teams, and others. Search the internet for “web conferencing software,” and you will probably find a link to top-ten rating sites that can help you choose.

Training and Practice

- Choose a platform and practice using it, so you are comfortable with it. Engage in a couple of practice runs with another person.
- Set up a training meeting.
- In advance, teach participants how to log in. Tell them that you will send them an invitation via email, and that it will include a link for them to click at the time of the meeting.
- For those who do not have internet service, let them know they may telephone into the meeting. Provide them the number and let them know that there is usually a unique phone number for each meeting.
- During the training meeting, show participants the basic tools available for them to use. They can learn other tools as they feel more confident.

During the Meetings

- **Early invitations.** Send out invitations at least a week in advance. Many meeting platforms enable you to do this through their software.
- **Early log in.** Participants should log in at least ten minutes in advance, to test their audio and their video connections.
- **Talking/not talking.** Instruct participants to keep their microphones muted during the meeting, so extraneous noise from their location does not interrupt the meeting. This includes chewing or yawning sounds, which can be embarrassing! When it is time for discussion, participants can unmute themselves. However, ask them to raise their hand or wave when they are ready to share, so you can call on them. Give folks a few minutes to speak up. They may not be used to conversing in web conferences.

SESSION 1

Genesis 1:1–11:32

Overview

In the opening chapters of Genesis, God creates the heavens and the earth. God makes humans in God's image, entrusting them with dominion over all other creatures and charging them to care for the earth.

When the first man and woman follow the cunning serpent's suggestion and eat fruit God had forbidden them to eat, they try in vain to hide from God. God drives them out of the garden of Eden into a life of hard labor and broken relationships with nature, each other, and God.

As humanity grows, so does its violence and wickedness, beginning when Cain murders his brother, Abel. God destroys the world with a great flood, but first directs Noah, a righteous man, to build a large boat in which he, his family, and some of every living species survive. God establishes a covenant—a solemn agreement—with Noah and all living creatures, and promises to never destroy the world by water again.

The world's nations descend from Noah. When they try to build a tower that reaches the heavens, God confuses their shared language and scatters them across the world.

Opening

- Begin with prayer.

- Invite a volunteer or volunteers to summarize the week's readings, using the overview above as a reference.
- Invite the group to share initial responses to the readings, as well as any questions they may have.
- Ask for volunteers to share some of their daily responses from this week from *The Bible Year* devotional.
- If you are using *The Bible Year* videos, play the video for today's session now.
- Continue your discussion of the week's Bible passages with the questions below.

Discussion Questions

1. Genesis contains two stories about God creating the world (1:1–2:4a; 2:4b–3:24). Why? How do these accounts contradict and complement each other? What questions about the world's and humanity's origins do they leave unanswered?
2. What does the Bible's assertion that God is Creator mean to you personally?
3. Genesis 1 emphasizes God saw creation as "supremely good" (v. 31). Where do you see this fundamental goodness in the world? Where is it harder to see, and why? How are you drawing attention to the world's goodness?
4. If humans are created in God's image (1:27), what does this truth mean for the way we should relate to the created world, to other life, to each other, and to God? Give specific examples.
5. Why did God command the man and woman to not eat from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (2:17)? Why did they? What changes after they do?
6. How does the primal drama of disobedience and its consequences in Genesis 2–3 play out in the world today? In your life?

7. Why does Cain kill Abel (4:1-16)? What does the story of the world's first murder tell us about human beings? What does it tell us about God? Where do you hear innocent blood crying for justice today? How, specifically, are you acting as your brothers' and sisters' keepers?
8. What does the story of Noah's Ark tell us about how God regards and responds to human violence? Why does the covenant between God and "every living thing...on behalf of every future generation" (9:12) matter today?
9. Why does God stop the people from building their tower (11:1-9)? What do you think about this story's explanation of humanity's linguistic and geographic diversity as an act of God? Are humans still trying to build such towers today? If so, how?

Closing

- ✦ Ask for several volunteers to summarize what they have found most meaningful about your discussion or about the biblical text this week. How might God be calling them to respond to it?
- ✦ Invite the group to raise any prayer concerns or lift up any reasons for joy and thanksgiving.
- ✦ Lead the group in a short closing prayer or invite a volunteer to do so.