

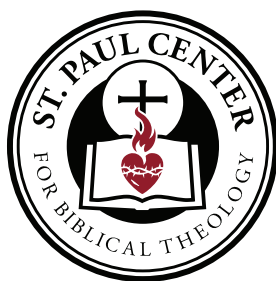


THE BIBLE
and the
CHURCH
FATHERS



JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE
LEADER GUIDE





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Front Cover Image: *The Four Fathers of the Latin Church* – Jacob Jordaens

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WELCOME TO JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Journey Through Scripture is the St. Paul Center’s dynamic Bible study program designed to help ordinary Catholics grow in their knowledge of Scripture while deepening their understanding of the riches of our faith. Distinctively Catholic, Journey Through Scripture reads the Bible from the heart of the Church, considering both the Old and New Testaments and how they work together. It’s grounded in history, yet it actively engages topics faced by today’s Catholics. More than just an ordinary Bible study, it’s biblical catechesis.

The Bible and the Church Fathers is the fourth study in the Journey Through Scripture series. In twelve beautifully produced lessons, you will learn who the early Church Fathers were and how they shaped the way we read Scripture. You’ll discover the Church’s favorite tools for reading it, and you’ll understand Scripture’s relationship to Tradition and, in particular, to the Sacraments.

What’s more, you’ll recognize the powerful effect of Scripture on the Church Fathers. For them, this was no academic pursuit. Their love of God’s Word transformed their lives—just as it has the power to transform ours today.



Study Components

The Bible and the Church Fathers is designed for both group and individual study. It contains six possible components, all of which can be ordered at JourneyThroughScripture.com.

- ✦ This leader guide
- ✦ *The Bible and the Church Fathers* Participant Workbook
- ✦ *The Bible and the Church Fathers* DVD set
- ✦ *The Fathers of the Church* by Mike Aquilina
- ✦ *Faith of Our Fathers* by Mike Aquilina
- ✦ *Consuming the Word* by Dr. Scott Hahn

HOW TO USE THIS LEADER GUIDE

This leader guide will serve as just that—your guide to helping participants for the duration of the study. The first thing to note is that this guide contains all the same material found in the participant workbook: review notes, lesson objectives, review and discussion questions, additional references, memory verses, and more.

In addition, it contains text intended only for you, the leader. In each of the lessons, this text is green and comes in two forms. Information that is not necessarily communicated to participants is under the heading  **LEADER NOTE**. Suggested text you can use for sharing information with participants is found under the heading  **LEADER SAYS**.

At the end of every lesson, there are readings listed to help you and the participants go deeper into



the material. These readings come from Sacred Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the two titles by Mike Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church* and *Faith of Our Fathers*, and *Consuming the Word* by Dr. Scott Hahn. These books are available for purchase at JourneyThroughScripture.com.

TIPS FOR LEADING JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

The first step in leading this study is always to bathe your efforts in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to use you for the glory of God and to bless the study. Consider asking others to intercede for you and the participants of the study.

Catholic Bible study is a spiritual, intellectual, and ecclesial undertaking. And it involves real spiritual warfare. “For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12). Don’t be unarmed as you go into battle.

Choose a Good Time and Location - Ask yourself who you are targeting as study participants: stay-at-home moms, teens, a men’s group? Tailor your study to your audience by arranging a convenient time and place to draw together your intended demographic.

Be creative in your timing. For example, some Journey Through Scripture studies are offered at the same time as religious education classes for children. This arrangement allows for parents to attend a Bible study instead of simply waiting for their children’s class to finish.

Location is a key factor, so make it convenient and comfortable so that people will want to stay and participate. Make sure everyone can see and hear the video.

Marketing - To help spread the word about the study, you can download the editable poster at journeythroughscripture.com. Print as many as you like and ask permission to post them throughout the parish and/or insert them in the parish bulletin.

Purchasing Workbooks - Once you know how many workbooks you will need, you may order them online at JourneyThroughScripture.com. To inquire about parish or bulk discounts, email us at customerservice@stpaulcenter.com. Consider shipping delivery options when placing your order. It helps to order workbooks 10 days before the beginning of your study to ensure you receive them in time for your study.

Preparation - Take some time before each lesson to prepare by reading through the notes so you’re familiar with what’s coming. Read the answers to the review questions in this leader guide. Preparation doesn’t just include *personal* preparation, though. It’s also wise to check your equipment ahead of time to make sure everything is working smoothly before people arrive.

Small Groups - Whether you employ small groups for discussion following the video presentation is completely up to you and your group. Journey Through Scripture allows for a great deal of flexibility in this regard. The review and discussion questions at the end of each lesson provide good material for such groups.



If you decide to break into small groups, try to assign some extroverted people to each of the groups. However, you don't want them to act as moderators, but more like facilitators, keeping the conversation on track and making sure that everyone who wants to contribute can do so.

Refreshments - Plan in some social time with refreshments if you can. Snacks need to be neither elaborate nor expensive. There is something quasi-sacramental about eating together: it is a family activity and, gathered as the Church, that's what we are. This also affords participants an opportunity to get to know each other, which is a very valuable and, in some areas, difficult-to-achieve part of parish life.

Name Tags - Providing name tags is especially important for the first few sessions when people are getting to know each other.

Start on Time - This teaches the people who come late to arrive on time the following week and doesn't punish those who show up on time. The study group leader should wait around for a bit after the session is over. This will give people who may have been afraid to speak up in front of others a chance to ask a question.

Bible - Encourage participants to bring a Bible to the study. Journey Through Scripture uses the Revised Standard Version Second Catholic Edition for all Scripture references that are not directly from the liturgy.

SAMPLE JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE SESSION

Journey Through Scripture is intended to be a very flexible study. Below is a sample of how a typical session might look:

Amount of Time	Section
5–7 minutes	Announcements, prayer, and introduction of the lesson
25–30 minutes	Video
10 minutes	Break
10–15 minutes	Review questions (omit if running short on time)
10–15 minutes	Discussion questions
2 minutes	Review of memory verse and preparation for next lesson
1 minute	Closing prayer

From here on, all leader information in this guide will be printed in green. All text that is printed in black is identical to what your participants see in their workbook (see Leader Guide–Participant Workbook page cross-referencing).



Lesson 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FATHERS

LEADER RESOURCES

 LEADER NOTE**Opening Prayer and Introduction**

At the beginning of the first session, introduce yourself and then open in prayer. If you are not comfortable praying in your own words, you can use the prayer written below. Each lesson has an opening and closing prayer written out for your use. Let your participants know that there is a list of Common Prayers on page 94 of the Participant Workbook.

 LEADER SAYS**Opening Prayer**

“Heavenly Father, we thank you for calling us here to study your Sacred Scriptures under the tutelage of the Fathers of the Church. As we commence this study, we ask for the assistance of your Holy Spirit to guide us on the way as we learn to read the Sacred Page as it was read by the early Church. We ask this in your Son’s name as we pray: Our Father . . .”

Welcome

“Welcome to our first lesson of *The Bible and the Church Fathers*. This study is unique in that, more than an ordinary study of Scripture, it is a historical overview of the early Christian Church’s approach to the Word of God. As we embark on this journey, we will explore the catacombs and crevices of our ancient Church, delving deeply into her rich history through the eyes of the Church Fathers. What we’ll discover is that the Fathers of the Church are as relevant now as they were in the early centuries of Christianity.

This study is a part of Journey Through Scripture, a Catholic Bible study series from the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, an apostolate dedicated to teaching Catholics how to read Sacred Scripture from the heart of the Church. Though it’s focused on Catholic doctrine and teaching, everyone—Catholic or non-Catholic—is welcome. In fact, we encourage you to invite friends to come with you.”

Introduction to the Lesson Order

“Before we begin the video and start the study, I want to quickly go over what’s in your workbook so that you know what to expect as we go through this series. First, you’ll see at the beginning of Lesson One that there is a description of this particular study on page 5. Starting in Lesson Two, you’ll see review notes from the previous session at the beginning of the lesson. It’s a good idea to read these review notes before we begin the current lesson to reinforce what we went over last time.

Next, you’ll see a little film projector icon with the title ‘What We’ll Cover in Lesson One.’ This tells us what we’ll see in the video lesson. For example, Lesson One begins with an overall introduction to the study and then moves into the main presentation.



Under the title “Themes Covered,” you’ll see a quick list of the major points that will be covered in the lesson, followed by a list of Scripture references read in this lesson. These are listed in case you want to go back and read them later.

Each one of the videos is about 25–30 minutes long.

After the video is finished, we’ll break into groups and go over the review and discussion questions. You’ll also notice there is a suggested memory verse for each lesson, as well as further reading to help you get the most out of this study. *The Bible and the Church Fathers* is based on two titles from Mike Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church*, 3rd edition and *Faith of Our Fathers: Why the Early Christians Still Matter and Always Will*; as well as Dr. Scott Hahn’s book, *Consuming the Word: The New Testament and the Eucharist in the Early Church*.”

Setting the Stage

“We are about ready to begin our first session. As noted in the bullet points under ‘What We’ll Cover in Lesson One,’ on page 6 of your Participant Workbook, you’ll notice that in this session we will discuss the role of the Fathers in Sacred Scripture and identify the four classic criteria needed to earn the title “Church Father.” We will also see that the Church Fathers provide a link back to the teachings of Christ and are vital witnesses to Tradition. Let’s begin!

LEADER NOTE

Start video. When video is complete, refer to the next leader note.





Lesson 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FATHERS



When we speak of the Fathers of the Church, we're referring to those who have preceded us and have passed the Faith on to us, particularly in the centuries immediately following Christ. These men instructed the early Church in the doctrine of the Apostles, providing a close link to the teaching of Jesus himself.

Throughout the course, we'll encounter great teachers and cranky old men, hotheads and pacifists, as well as monks and poets. We're going to read some of their writings and hear some of their stories. We're even going to meet some of the heretics and heresies the Fathers battled in the preservation of the Truth entrusted to them.

What we'll find is that the Fathers of the Church are just as relevant now as they were in the earliest Christian centuries. So let's begin, because the Fathers are like an ancient chest full of priceless treasure that can't help but enrich your love for God and his beautiful Church.



WHAT WE'LL COVER IN LESSON 1 *(Workbook pg. 6)*

Introduction

Matthew Leonard, host of the series

Themes covered

- ✦ Who are the Church Fathers?
- ✦ The four criteria to be a Church Father
- ✦ The Fathers as a link to the teachings of Christ

Scripture Verses Read in Lesson 1

- ✦ 1 Corinthians 4:15–16



LEADER NOTE

Take a short break at the end of the video and then begin the review and discussion questions. If your group is large, break them up into appropriately sized groups (6–10 people). Explain the purpose of the review questions (see below) and let them know how long you have set aside for this section.

Brief answers to the review questions are listed below so you can help along any group that may not be able to answer a particular question.

LEADER SAYS

“The review questions on page [xx] are exactly that: a review of the material from the video. If you were listening closely, Matthew Leonard discussed the answer to each of these questions in the lesson segment. See if you can answer them.”

REVIEW QUESTIONS *(Workbook pg. 8)*

1. What is a father?

One who precedes us in time and gives us life, or makes us who we are. The Church Fathers were those who have preceded us and have passed the Faith on to us, particularly in the centuries immediately following Christ. These men instructed the early Church in the doctrine of the Apostles, providing a link to the teaching of Christ himself.

2. What are the four criteria necessary to be a Father of the Church?

Orthodox doctrine, holiness of life, Church approval, and antiquity.

3. When was the Patristic period in the Church?

The first century to the close of the eighth century.

4. What does “orthodox” mean?

Right teaching.

LEADER NOTE

Once your participants have completed the review questions, move on to the discussion questions. Tell them how long they have to answer these and then tell them the difference between the review and discussion questions.

LEADER SAYS

“While there are specific answers to the review questions that come directly from the lesson materials in the video, the discussion questions are different. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions are meant to spur a conversation between the people in the group.”



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS *(Workbook pg. 9)*

1. Is there anything in this lesson that you have just heard for the first time?

2. Why was it so important to the Fathers to guard the Church's doctrine? What made that work particularly challenging?

3. Which one of the four criteria to be a Church Father do you find the most compelling when discussing the Fathers with someone considering coming into the Church?



 LEADER NOTE
Memory Verse and Follow-Up Reading

Before dismissing the participants, please point out the memory verse for this lesson on page 9, as well as the follow-up reading for Lesson Two.

 LEADER SAYS

“God in heaven, all fatherhood comes from you. We thank you for giving us these men as paternal shepherds to guide your Church by preserving her teachings and leading holy lives. Help us also to be imitators of Christ in a suffering world in need of saintly witnesses. Glory be to the Father . . .”

— THIS LESSON’S MEMORY VERSE —

“**F**or though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.”

— 1 Corinthians 4:15–16 —



PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT LESSON

- ✦ John 21:15–19
- ✦ 1 John 4:1–3
- ✦ *The Fathers of the Church* by Mike Aquilina, “Introduction,” pp. 17–32, 266–268
- ✦ *Faith of Our Fathers* by Mike Aquilina, “The Fathers as Teachers,” pp. 7–26



