

## Lesson 1- Old Testament

### Purpose

- To introduce them to the Bible, its format and show how to use it.

### Materials

- Folders
- Bibles

### Background Information

The word *Bible* means “little books”. The Bible is one book, but it is also a collection of books. Sixty-six books were written over 1600 years by at least 40 different authors. You will find just about every kind of writing in the Bible – love letters, songs, historical records, and diaries visions of the future, genealogies, and suicide notes. The Bible was the first book printed on a printing press. There are two main ways that we can communicate with God. The first one is to read our Bible (his Word) and the other is praying.

The Bible is divided into two main sections - the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament focuses on God’s interaction with the people of Israel. The New Testament, written later, focuses on Jesus and his early followers called Christians. The word *testament* means treaty or covenant, an agreement made between two people. God entered into a contract with the people of Israel in the Old Testament. God’s new contract (in the New Testament) is made with anyone who will commit to following Jesus. In each testament the terms of the agreement are spelled out. The Bible is an instruction manual for people who want to do what pleases God.

The first and longest major division of the Bible is called the Old Testament by Christians (Jewish people refer to it as the Hebrew Bible.) Thirty-nine individual biblical books are included in the Old Testament. Some of the books are named for their author – like the book of Daniel. Some are named for their main characters (Esther is about a Jewish girl who became a courageous queen). The original Old Testament was written in two languages. Most of it was written in Hebrew. Small sections of a few books were written in Aramaic.

The second main section of the Bible is the New Testament (27 biblical books). Like the OT some of these books are named for their author (John), others are named for their content (Acts records the “acts” or deeds of early Apostles). Many are also letters written to various churches and are named for the first to read the letter (Ephesians). The New Testament was originally written in Greek.

Today we use a standard way of writing references to Bible verses. For example John 1:12 means the *gospel of John* (the Bible book), chapter 1 and verse 12. The Bible reference is the “address” of the verse in the Bible. If more than one verse is referred to a dash appears in the statement. John 1:12-14. This means the book of John, chapter 1, verses 12 through 14. If it reads John 1:12,14 that means verse 12 and also verse 14. If there is only one chapter, the number refers to the verse (Jude 8 means Jude chapter 1 (the only one) and verse 8. Some verses are long and separated into two parts. In that case a small case, letter tells you which part (John 1:12a).

There are also many translations of the Bible, but we will address this later in the year.

## Procedure

-Do handout 1-1, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6 and bring to class