

Wednesday Wellspring: A Bible Study for UU's (part 1)

Bible Study 101: Valuable Information for Serious Students

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worksheet / discussion topics / study guide

1) Meeting Your Bible

What is your Bible's full title, publisher, & publication date?

Where did you get your Bible? (source, price, etc.)

What's your Bible like? (leather cover, paperback, old, new, etc.) Any Gospels words in red?

What translation is it? (King James, New American Standard, Living Bible, New International, etc.)

Does your Bible include Apocrypha? (Ezra, Tobit, Maccabees, Baruch) Preface? Study Aids?

What are most common names for God used in your edition? (Lord, Jehovah, Yahweh, God)

The Bible in your hands, in book form, with book titles, chapter and verse numbers, page numbers, in a language you can read, at a reasonably affordable price, is a relatively recent development (starting @ 1600's). A Bible with cross-references, study aids, footnotes, commentary, maps, etc. is probably less than 50 years old! Early Hebrew (Jewish) Bible 'books' (what Christians call the Old Testament) were on 20 - 30 foot long scrolls and lacked not only page numbers & chapter indications but also had no punctuation, vowels, and spaces between words! The most popular Hebrew (Jewish) Bible @ the time of Jesus was the "Septuagint" - a Greek translation. Remember Alexander the Great conquered the Middle East and elsewhere an "Hellenized" the 'Western world.'

2) Discussing the Bible (breakout rooms for 10 minutes. Choose among these questions; each person shares 1.

Okay one bullet point to be discussed, but please let everyone say something!)

- What are your past experiences with the Bible? (e.g. family, school, church, Bible in our culture)
- What are your pre-conceived notions, misconceptions, or overheard claims about the Bible?
- What have you wondered about or wanted to know more about the Bible?
- If time, turn to Psalm 23 & read aloud & compare a few lines from several different translations

3) Discovering the Hebrew Bible's Contents

Compare your Bible's Table of Contents side by side with the Hebrew / Jewish Bible (Tanak) below
Torah ("Law - teaching" also called Pentateuch (1st Five Books) and called "Books of Moses":

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Nevi'im (books of the prophets):

Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, 12 minor prophets (Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Kethuvi'im (writings):

*Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra
Nehemiah, 1-2 Chronicles*

4) Investigating the Hebrew Bible's Sources, Formation, & Editing

brief history of the Middle East and the "people of the Book" (Canaanites, Hebrews, Israelites, Jews)

summary of major theories by scholars (Wellhausen's Documentary Hypothesis and others)

list of biblical literature (laws, genealogies, short stories, history, wisdom, poetry, prophecy, apocalypse)

5) Sharing a few Hebrew Bible verses (infamous, inspiring, controversial, UU friendly – I'm open to suggestions!)

Torah laws (Exodus – e.g. 10 Commandments, Levitical laws (e.g. kosher) and our USA

Prophets (Micah, Amos, Isaiah & others), politics, and our USA

Philosophy (Job, Ecclesiastes)