

Learn about the *Word*

Overview

Help students become more familiar with the contents and translations of the Old and New Testaments

Prepare to Teach

Gather copies of the *Bible* in a variety of translations.

Print and cut apart a set of cards with the books of the *Bible* on them for each student (available at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-books-of-the-word-flashcards.pdf>).

Materials Needed

- Different translations of the *Bible*. Ideally, these should include a “study *Bible*” and the “Kempton translation” of the *Word* by New Church scholars, as well as the King James Version and some versions that use modern language. Gather enough *Bibles* so that each student can use one.
- 1 deck of cards per each student, each deck to contain all the books of the *Word*, but not in proper order. Make these ahead, or if you have enough time, have students make them.

Directions

It’s interesting and useful to understand what you can learn from all the different versions of the *Word* or *Bible*. They’re different for several reasons. We can look in the different copies of the *Bible* we have here and see if we can see examples of some of these differences.

Translation

Bibles vary because they have been translated from the original language they were written in. Does anyone know what languages the *Word* was written in? Old Testament - Hebrew, New Testament - Greek, Writings - Latin. People study these languages until they know the language well enough to translate words into English that we can understand. However, each translator does this a little differently, even though each one is trying to get the reader to understand what the words meant in the original language. Some translators are more concerned about being as close to the original words as possible so that it is most accurate, and other translators are more concerned with making the sentences easier for English readers to understand.

Purpose of particular publication of the *Bible*

Some *Bibles* give you the straight story with no other stuff added into the book. Other *Bibles* add pictures or maps. Some *Bibles* have an index so you can look up a particular word and see where it gets mentioned in the different books of the *Bible*. Or a *Bible* might have a concordance where you can look up people, places, and phrases, e.g. you could look up “garden of Eden” or “alpha and omega.” Some *Bibles* called “study *Bibles*” give you extra information to help you understand what you are reading; for example, they might add a note to tell you what a cubit is or where the Assyrians came from or why the Jews didn’t like the Samaritans and so on. Some *Bibles* introduce each

book of the *Bible* with a page or two about who wrote the book and what the story was behind the book getting written. Some *Bibles* have a write-up at the beginning that tells you something about how the *Bible* was translated. Some *Bibles* are aimed at a particular audience, for instance children's *Bibles* which often have many pictures (be careful though, the translations of the words in these *Bibles* are often pretty far from what the story originally said).

The *Bible* and the *Word*

Some of the books of the *Bible* are not included in New Church copies of the *Word*. That is because some of the books don't have continual inner meaning or correspondences all the way through them, only off and on. New Church copies of the *Word* have only the books with continual inner meaning or correspondences all the way through. However, we know that the other books are still very important and helpful and should also be read for all that we can learn from them, so it's useful to have a good copy of the *Bible* as well.

The Order of the *Word*

It's a lot easier to find your way around in the *Word* or the *Bible* if you have some idea where the different books are. For instance, who knows which book is first? (Genesis) What about last? (Revelation) Now what about the book of Isaiah? Malachi? Mark? We're going to get some practice with the books of the *Bible*.

Activity

Give each student a deck of cards and a copy of the *Word/Bible*. (Alternately, give the cards to each student and have them write names of the books on the cards, if there is time.) If possible, spread the students out so they have to work alone or only in pairs, so they don't just look at someone else's instead of trying to do the activity for themselves. Tell them that the cards are not in correct order (or have them shuffle the cards). First they are to organize the cards as best as they can (lay out Genesis at the beginning, for instance). Once they've done all the ones they remember, they can start looking in their *Bibles* to help them. Once they've done it once, reshuffle the deck and try again, seeing if they can remember a few more.

For those who finish earlier, challenge them to see if they can find any of the following in their *Bibles*:

The snake or serpent in the garden of Eden

The rainbow in the Noah story

The shepherds in the Christmas story

The 10 Commandments

Daniel in the lion's den

Jonah being swallowed by the big fish

The ten plagues