

Unit 1 Reading Guide Answer Key

Old Testament: United with God, Separated by Sin

Chapter 1: God's Original Plan

Article 1: The Fullness of Creation

1. His [God's] saving plan is ultimately fulfilled through the Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ—the Paschal Mystery.
2. God created the world as a place of beauty, goodness, and love. However, human sin has marred God's intent, and brought ugliness, division, and hatred into the world.
3. The goodness of all creation reflects the goodness and glory of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
4. Creation is certainly one way that God connects Heaven and Earth. But creation is not limited to what we can see, hear, taste, smell, and touch; it also includes everything in the universe that we can't see.
5. What are some things that fit into the “invisible” category? Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and angels are “invisible” things.
6. Angels are spiritual creatures with intelligence and free will. The word *angel* means “messenger” and describes their role: angels are the servants and messengers of God.
7. Another way God connects Heaven and Earth is through each of us! Every human being is a union of both the physical and the spiritual worlds. We are human, but we are made in the image and likeness of God.
8. Human beings are made for communion, that is, for intimate relationship. We see this most fully reflected in marriages. Husband and wife become one through their deep mutual love, a love that mirrors the love God has for all his children.

Article 2: Creation Accounts: The Literary Form

1. Through the Bible, God communicates his revealed truth. The Bible conveys the truth, which “God wants to reveal through the sacred authors for our salvation” (CCC, number 137). In some of the Bible's writings, like the first eleven chapters of Genesis, this takes the form of figurative or symbolic stories.
2. These first chapters of Genesis are primeval history, meaning they cover a time before humans kept a written record of the events in their lives. These chapters reveal spiritual truths that complement the truth revealed through science and history.
3. Figurative language is a literary form that uses symbolic images, stories, and names to point to a deeper truth. Figurative language can teach us religious truths, but it is not meant to be scientifically or historically accurate.
4. It's important to remember that the biblical accounts are God's Word. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the human authors used their skills and talents to express these truths using the literary form of figurative language.
5. The Creation accounts of Genesis uniquely express the truths that God wants us to know for our salvation. Among others, these truths include that there is only one God, that God is all-powerful, and that humans are given the gift of free will.



6. This was God's plan: humans, all of creation, and God, living in complete peace and harmony with one another. This is what is called the state of original holiness and original justice.
7. The second Creation account of Genesis teaches us that God created us to be happy and to live united with him and with one another. Though each one of us is different, we were made to live in communion with one another.

Article 3: You Can't Un-Ring That Bell

1. In Genesis, chapter 3, Adam and Eve also chose to believe a lie and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was a bell that humanity could not un-ring. They had crossed a line into a forbidden territory that profoundly affected their experience of the world; the way they related to God and to each other was forever changed.
2. Etiology is the study of the origins or causes of things. For example, ancient cultures around the world have employed folk stories to explain all sorts of things, including death, geological landmarks, the origins of social or natural occurrences, the name of a place, and even why bears have such short tails.
3. The purpose of these [etiologies] was not to give a scientific or historical explanation. Rather they are creative explanations used by the human authors to convey a religious truth that was inspired by the Holy Spirit: how sin leads to shame and how sin brings isolation, causes pain and suffering, disrupts our harmony with nature, and leads us away from God and life.
4. Why is it wrong for humans to separate from one another and from God? Acknowledging differences and separating things in our everyday experience is not necessarily bad. It is good to know right from wrong and to know that it is virtuous to help others and wrong to harm them.
5. The problem comes when sin distorts our ability to see clearly. Sometimes we see the world through our small, self-centered viewpoint. Sin causes us to focus on ourselves, making us feel better or more entitled, creating separations that can be destructive to our relationship with God and one another.
6. Original Sin is the sin of the first human beings, who disobeyed God's command by choosing to follow their own will. They lost their original holiness and became subject to death. Since then, we have suffered from its consequences.
7. Human beings have limitations. We live in a specific place and time and, far from being omniscient, our views are often tainted by a culture that is marked by sin. Knowing this, we should always be cautious of believing we can come to the truth on our own power.

Article 4: The Wages of Sin

1. Not all sin leads to a physical death, but it certainly can slowly chip away at our spiritual life. The Fall from Grace, the biblical Revelation about the origins of sin and evil in the world, shows the consequences of our ancestors' sin.
2. The consequences of sin, humanity's loss of peace and harmony, are communicated through the etiological elements of the second Creation account.
3. Sin separates and disrupts the harmony that God intended. Just as a physical death separates body and soul, a spiritual death separates us from God and one another.
4. God did not create evil and is not the cause of it. God created humans to love him and one another, and in order to love, we must have the capability to choose to love. Because we were made in God's image, we have the gift of free will.



Article 5: The Cycle of Sin Begins

1. The origin of sin is dramatized in the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis, chapter 3, but the story does not end there. Their disobedient act against God sets in motion a cycle of sin. That sinful inheritance, Original Sin, leads to concupiscence, the tendency of human beings to be attracted to sin.
2. The influence of concupiscence does not force Cain to commit this grave sin (murdering his brother). God's encouragement to Cain is that he has a choice; he can "rule over it." God has confidence in humanity's innate goodness to overcome temptation.
3. Because of Original Sin, we all suffer from concupiscence. Certainly, sinful behavior can be learned from others, but concupiscence is much more perplexing than this.
4. In general, it is good to focus on the positive aspects of who we are and what we do. It is important to understand that all of us—without exception—are made in the divine image and are infinitely loved by God. Yet it would be wrong to ignore the source of pain and suffering in our world.
5. Original Sin is not only the act committed by our earliest ancestors; it is also the fallen state into which every person who has ever lived on the planet is born, with the exception of Jesus and his mother, Mary.
6. We are not guilty of our ancestors' personal sin, because we did not commit it. Nonetheless, we have contracted this sinful condition as a result of their sin.
7. Yet there are sinful situations for which entire communities can be held accountable. These can come in the form of a nation's laws. Even if an individual were against these laws, each member of the community is responsible for working toward their end.

Chapter 2: Bound to God: The Covenants

Article 6: Ending the Cycle

1. The Easter Vigil is the liturgy celebrated on Holy Saturday, the night before Easter Sunday. It celebrates the coming of the light of Christ into the world. It's also the time when adults and older children are received into the Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, the Eucharist, and Confirmation.
2. The [Easter Vigil] liturgy usually begins outside, then everyone in the congregation processes into a darkened church holding candles lit from the Paschal candle. These candles represent Christ's light, which ends the darkness of sin and death.
3. After everyone has entered the church, the deacon or priest offers up a hymn of praise called the Easter Proclamation, or the Exsultet.
4. A paradox is a statement that seems illogical or contradicts itself. Nonetheless, it expresses a truth. Some of Jesus' teachings are paradoxical.
5. In the New Testament, Jesus teaches that not all suffering is a punishment for (or a consequence of) sin. In fact, he goes in the opposite direction, implying that the blind man's suffering provides an opportunity for God's healing power and love to be revealed.

Article 7: The Promise

1. Like a loving parent, no matter what we do, God's love for us never wavers. Scripture tells us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Love is who God is, so for him to quit loving us, he would have to cease being God!



2. Even though our sins bring pain and suffering to us and to one another and certainly do not please him, they still play no role when it comes to his love. There is nothing we can do to make God fall out of love with us.
3. In one verse of this chapter (Genesis 3), there is also an announcement that God will be victorious over sin and death. The verse is called the Protoevangelium. *Proto* means “the first” or “the earliest form of.” *Evangelium*, means “good news.” So Protoevangelium refers to the “first announcement of the good news,” or first gospel.
4. In the account of God’s punishment of the snake, we are allowed a glimpse of the first announcement of the “Good News” of the coming of Jesus Christ. The snake is only able to strike at the heel and inflict injury (sin), whereas the woman’s offspring (Jesus Christ) will strike at the snake’s head, a more powerful blow that could bring an end to the life of the snake (evil).
5. The Protoevangelium is an early foreshadowing of the Paschal Mystery, that Christ will ultimately conquer sin and death.

Article 8: Covenant: A Relationship and a Remedy

1. Recall that a covenant is a solemn agreement between human beings or between God and human beings in which mutual commitments are made. Through the covenants, God established a special relationship with his people. Though sin brings about division, the covenants are the ties that bind us to God.
2. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew term most often used to express a covenant is berit, which originally meant a shackle or a chain. This helps us understand that covenants were a means of binding God with his people.
3. The Hebrew phrase sometimes used for establishing a covenant is *karat berith*, which would mean “to cut a covenant.” *Cutting* refers to some physical elements in the rituals used by ancient peoples for establishing a covenant.
4. Covenants also establish formal relationships, with mutually understood and agreed-upon commitments. Like in any relationship, the actions of people in a covenant are guided by their respective roles.
5. When a covenant is established between equals, each person usually makes similar commitments. Sometimes the commitments are different, especially in the case of God’s covenants with humanity.
6. In these situations, God takes on the role of leader and provider, while we commit to being faithful and obedient. This is not because God wants to control us, but rather it is because he is all-powerful and loves us.
7. Through covenants, God begins to restore humanity to a state of grace—that is, a proper relationship between humanity and himself. The laws established by some of the covenants aid in this process of restoration. Sin is disobeying God’s Law and therefore harming our relationship with God; obeying covenant laws does the opposite.
8. God established and renewed covenants throughout salvation history. He started with Adam and Eve and also formed special relationships with Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and King David. His covenantal relationship was ultimately fulfilled with Jesus Christ, who was the fulfillment of the Old Law and mediator of the New Covenant.



Article 9: The Covenants with Noah and Abraham

1. In the Old Testament we can find events and people that seem to foreshadow the work of Jesus Christ. Typology is the study of God's work in the Old Testament as a prefiguration of what he accomplished through Jesus Christ. Typology shows us the unity of God's plan in both the Old and New Testaments.
2. Christians read the Old Testament in the light of our faith in Jesus Christ. We recognize that the Old Testament can help us better understand the meaning of the New Testament.
3. In the covenant with Noah, there is a sense that God is reestablishing the justice and holiness that he originally intended for humanity. There is a universal nature to it.
4. Directly after God makes this covenant, Noah's descendants multiply to become all the nations of the world. This is a way of saying that God's covenant with Noah now extends to all the nations of the Earth and will remain so as long as the world lasts. This prefigures Christ's outreach to the Gentiles, in which Jesus will "gather into one the dispersed children of God" (John 11:52).
5. The exclusive relationship God was establishing with Abraham would eventually lead to the realization that there was only one true God. This is the beginning of monotheism, the religious truth that is the foundation of many of the world's great religions today.
6. God's covenant with Abraham is not so much a legal arrangement to enforce loyalty as it is an ever-deepening relationship of faithfulness and love. This relationship, however, is not just for the good of Abraham and his and Sarah's descendants, but also for all future generations.

Article 10: The Covenants with Moses and David

1. To better understand the biblical writing about the covenants that God established with his people, it is helpful to look at the treaties and agreements that people in the ancient Near East created with one another.
2. There were two types of treaties:
 - Parity treaties were established between two parties of roughly equal status.
 - Vassal treaties were established between unequal parties in which the greater power forces a less powerful party to cooperate.
3. The treaties tended to have many of the following elements in their format:
 - The Preamble names the powerful king and offers his titles.
 - The Historical Prologue identifies the kind acts of the great king and provides the reasoning for the vassal nation to obey.
 - The Demands list the specific duties the vassal nation must perform.
 - The Deposit of the Treaty explains where the treaty can be found, as well as when public readings will occur.
 - The List of Witnesses often consists of the gods of the two countries.
 - The Curses and Blessings name the penalties if the treaty is not honored and the promises assured if the treaty is honored.
4. The Sinai Covenant teaches us that Yahweh is clearly the true King of Israel. Like a vassal treaty, the Sinai Covenant is conditional, but the benefits of this covenant are unique! God describes the Israelites as his "treasured possession" (Exodus 19:5). They are a Chosen People set aside for himself. God's great love for his people is expressed through the Sinai Covenant.



5. Sometimes the perception of God's portrayal in the Old Testament is slanted toward an image of an angry and vengeful deity, but this is an incomplete picture. When he reestablishes the covenant with the Israelites through Moses, the Lord characterizes himself as a merciful and loving God.
6. The Hebrew word hesed best characterizes God's role in the covenantal relationship. God's hesed is an active and involved love that is always faithful, no matter what the circumstances are.
7. God's love is expressed in the Mosaic Law. The Law encouraged the Israelites to avoid sin, and in doing so, prepared them to receive the one living and true Son of God, Jesus Christ.
8. The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional agreement. There were obligations that both God and the Israelites had to obey, and if they did not, there were consequences. Unlike that covenant, God's covenant with King David is one-sided and unconditional. God makes a promise and there is nothing David has to agree to do.
9. Even though this is an unconditional promise, King David is still bound by Mosaic Law and there are still consequences for the sinful actions of David and his descendants. But with the Davidic Covenant, God chooses to emphasize the unconditional and eternal nature of the covenant—the kingdom on earth will take the most righteous and obedient of David's descendants—Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3: Pointing toward Christ's Sacrifice

Article 11: The Past: A Glimpse into the Future

1. The Old Testament prefigures what will be fully revealed in the New Testament: the Paschal Mystery. The Paschal Mystery refers to the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ through his Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
2. Events in the Old Testament often offer us previews of the events that occur in the New Testament. One of the first prefigurings of the Paschal Mystery is the account of the testing of Abraham. As part of God's covenant with Abraham, God promises Abraham many descendants.
3. Time passes, and Abraham and Sarah are getting quite old and are still childless. Finally, the miraculous happens. Sarah, who is well past her child-bearing years, give birth to a beloved son, Isaac. God is faithful in keeping his promise!
4. Years pass, and everything seems good. Then, unexpectedly, another test is required. God asks Abraham to do something that does not make sense: offer up his son as a sacrifice to the Lord.
5. God had assured Abraham that he would have many descendants, and Isaac is his only son. In order to follow God's will, Abraham is prepared to lose what God has promised him. He trusts God enough to give up the son he loves.
6. The account of Abraham preparing to sacrifice Isaac is a signpost that points toward the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is easy to see how the sacrifice of Isaac offers a preview of the events of the Paschal Mystery when Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, freely accepts his own sacrificial death.

Article 12: The Lamb of God

1. Most years, as Christians are celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in their Easter liturgies, Jewish people around the world are celebrating Passover. Passover celebrates the deliverance of the Chosen People from bondage in Egypt, paving the way for the Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land.



2. In the Jewish Passover celebration, we can find the roots of our own liturgical celebrations. Many of the words, gestures, and symbols of this ancient Jewish ritual are the roots of the Mass.
3. In the synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—Jesus celebrates a meal called the Last Supper just before his death. The Last Supper takes place during a Passover meal with his Apostles. During this meal, Jesus establishes a new covenant by offering his own Body and Blood in the Eucharist.
4. In the Gospel of John, the Last Supper occurs *before* the Passover celebrations. Jesus is sentenced to death at the same time the Passover lambs are being slaughtered, making an even more powerful connection between Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.
5. Since the first sin of Adam and Eve, humanity has been enslaved by temptation and evil. Through their disobedience, sin enslaved us and separated us from God and one another. Now Jesus' obedient sacrifice unites God and humanity and frees us from the slavery of sin.
6. We call this tendency toward sin concupiscence. As a result of Original Sin, all humanity is afflicted with this tendency, even after our Baptism. Knowing and believing that we are united in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are freed from the slavery of sin.
7. During the Mass, the unleavened bread and wine that was used in the original Passover now become the true Body and Blood of Christ. When we consume the Eucharist, we are accepting God into our bodies and into our lives. The Eucharist strengthens us against concupiscence, against the slavery of sin.

Article 13: Carrying the Sins of Others

1. Original Sin and our personal sin have damaged our relationship with God. When we recognize our part in causing this damage, it is natural to feel guilt and shame. The Good News is that Jesus Christ's sacrifice offers us the forgiveness and reconciliation needed to restore our relationship. He has carried the burden of sin for all of humanity.
2. Guilt is not a bad thing, but it doesn't feel good. Still, it is an essential element of the human experience—it is our conscience's way of telling us that we have done something wrong.
3. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation offers us the opportunity to admit our guilt and receive God's forgiveness. Long before Catholics ever went to confession, the Israelites had a yearly ritual in which the community was able to purge their guilt, called Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. Atonement refers to reparation or payment for wrongdoing or sin, and reconciliation with God.
4. On Yom Kippur, the high priest would lay both hands on the head of a goat and confess all of the sins and trespasses of the Israelites. In this holy ritual, the community acknowledges and takes responsibility for their sins.
5. The Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Like the scapegoat who carried the sins of the community so they could be free, the Son of God bore the burden of our sins so that humanity could find the freedom of eternal salvation.

Article 14: Love Requires Sacrifice

1. Love requires sacrifice, so much so that we can confidently say that there is no love without sacrifice. Love, also called "charity," is the virtue by which we love God above all things. Out of that love of God, we also love our neighbors as ourselves.
2. The instructions for the different types of ritual sacrifices the Israelites made at the Temple are detailed in the Book of Leviticus. There are directions for both communal and individual sacrifices, as well as for different types of situations such as daily sacrifices and sin offerings.



3. Most important, sacrifices were signs of love and devotion to God. This love requires that we give the best that we can, as illustrated by Abel's sacrifice. What the actual gift is will depend on the giver. Love is not a contest. It is offering your best to God and others.
4. Just as the sacrifices offered in the Temple were made as signs of love and devotion to God, Christ's sacrifice on the cross was a sign of God's love and devotion to us. The Temple sacrifices prefigured the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
5. [Jesus] is the "New Adam" who lived as God had originally intended for all of humanity to live. His complete obedience to the Father modeled for us dedication to following God's will.
6. Jesus' sacrifice is a sign of his love as the Son of God, love that is expressed through his obedience to the Father.

Article 15: The Prophets: Hints of the Coming Messiah

1. In the Old Testament, the prophets were often mistreated and sometimes even killed for doing the right thing. Their words and lives pointed toward the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, who suffered a similar fate.
2. The Old Testament prophets' call to be faithful to God and act justly hints at what God had planned for the mission of Jesus Christ. Jesus fit very comfortably into the tradition of the Jewish prophets, but there was one major difference. The prophets were messengers of God's Word, and Jesus was God's Word—in the flesh.
3. Some prophets performed outrageous symbolic gestures to get people's attention so that they might hear God's message. In his prophetic role, Jesus also carried out a few tactics aimed at shocking the people to their senses.
4. [Jesus] condemned hypocritical religious leaders and declared that tax collectors and prostitutes would enter Heaven before them. In perhaps his most powerful symbolic gesture, Jesus flipped over the tables of the money-changers and drove them out of the Temple to reclaim it as God's.
5. God's prophets were threatening because they spoke the truth, and the truth meant that people had to let go of their current comfortable way of life. Calling for change angered people because change can be difficult and painful. Instead of changing, they chose to silence the ones calling for change. The same was true for Jesus.
6. Jesus preached a New Law that valued love and compassion over ritual purity. Jesus often criticized the leaders for their hypocrisy and treatment of the poor and outcasts. Ultimately, Jesus was accused of blasphemy by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme council, and sentenced to death.
7. The message of the prophets was not only about condemnation and punishment. Many also proclaimed hope for the future. They told of a coming messiah, a Hebrew word meaning "anointed one." This messianic hope was their belief that a leader, sent by God, would come to protect and unite Israel, and lead the nation to freedom.

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