

Unit 4 Reading Guide Answer Key

God Revealed through Holy People and Worship

Chapter 12: Rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple

Article 52: Leaving Babylon, Going Home

1. After almost fifty years of exile in Babylon, most of the Israelites—now called Jews—returned home to Jerusalem.
2. The Babylonian Exile is the crisis that triggered the Jewish People to examine their history and their relationship with God. This in turn brought about the formation of most of the Old Testament.
3. Second Isaiah calls the Emperor Cyrus God's anointed one. He is an unexpected savior because he is not Jewish, and because he is the king of another country: Persia.
4. After the Exile, most of the remaining Israelites live in the southern kingdom of Judah, so they become known as Judeans or Jews. This is where we also get the term for the religious faith of Judaism.
5. All of these communities [living in other cities], called the Jews of the Dispersion (Diaspora), are no less Jewish than their counterparts in Jerusalem.
6. The Diaspora Jews do not have access to the Temple in Jerusalem, so they center their faith life around synagogues. These were buildings that served as the assembly places and centers of worship for Jews who lived outside of Jerusalem.

Article 53: The Temple: Worship Central

1. After the Babylonian Exile, the Jewish People view their history and relationship with God a little differently. A person or group we call the Chronicler wrote the First and Second Books of Chronicles, covering much of the same history but from a different perspective.
2. The interesting thing, though, is that the author of Chronicles hardly even mentions Moses or the Sinai Covenant. The Chronicler emphasizes the importance of proper worship in the Jerusalem Temple. The Chronicler sees this as the most important thing for sustaining their relationship with God.
3. The Israelites considered the Ark most sacred because it was the dwelling place of God. Now the Ark of the Covenant has a permanent home. Only the priests are allowed inside the Temple building. The people offer sacrifices outside the Temple.
4. Inside the Temple is a room called the Holy of Holies. In this room, the cherubim (winged lions with human heads), the guardians and carriers of God's throne, shelter the Ark of the Covenant.
5. No one except the high priest can enter the Holy of Holies, and he only once a year, on the Day of Atonement.
6. First and Second Chronicles covers a period from Adam to the end of the Babylonian Exile. Yet almost half the content focuses on King David and King Solomon and the building of the Temple.



Article 54: Rebuilding Jerusalem

1. The returning exiles also faced opposition. People from neighboring lands had occupied Judah in their absence. Their neighbors start to resent the newcomers.
2. Others, however, want to join forces with the exiles. However, the returning exiles even turn down these people's assistance because of their different religious beliefs.
3. Those who remain in the territory of Samaria in the north intermarry with foreigners from other religions. These Israelites become known as the Samaritans. They reject the Jerusalem Temple and worship instead at Mount Gerizim. This leads to a great deal of hostility. This continues even to the time of Jesus.
4. After the Temple is rebuilt, Ezra, a scribe and priest who is assigned by the Persian king to lead the Jews, arrives from Babylon. Ezra demands that those Jewish men who have married foreigners abandon their wives and children.
5. Nehemiah is a Jewish leader who holds a privileged position in the court of Persia but leaves this post to become the governor of Judah. He is a selfless leader and a model citizen who engages all of the Jewish People in rebuilding the city walls.
6. Jesus often ignores the social barriers that keep people from one another. Like Jesus, we are called to break down what divides us and follow his commandment, "Love one another."

Article 55: Psalms: Songs for Every Occasion

1. For thousands of years, cultures all around the world have marked times and traditions with music. The Jewish People were no different.
2. In the Bible, that musical expression is found in the Book of Psalms, also known as the Psalter.
3. The Hebrew name for this book is Tehillim, which means "praises" or "hymns of praise to God."
4. We sometimes group the Psalms into these categories: hymns of praise or thanksgiving; songs of lament or petition; wisdom hymns; liturgical or worship psalms; and historical psalms.
5. The Psalms are not only the ancient songbook for Jewish worship but are also an important part of Catholic communal prayer. For example, a psalm is sung or recited in the Liturgy of the Word at every Mass. The chanting or recitation of the Psalms plays a major role in the Liturgy of the Hours too.
6. Sometimes when we pray, it's difficult to express what we're feeling. The Psalms can provide words for us when we don't know what to say.



Chapter 13: Ordinary People Give Extraordinary Witness

Article 56: Tobit, Judith, Esther: A Happy Ending

1. The Bible has its own assortment of historical fiction. The canon of the Old Testament includes three short novels, or novellas: the Books of Tobit, Judith, and Esther.
2. The Book of Tobit was written in the eighth century BC. Tobit's story of perseverance and trust in God was exactly what the Jewish People needed to hear during the period of Greek oppression. The Book of Tobit begins with two people whose lives are so bad that they would rather be dead. Like Tobit, Sarah is a good person who has experienced terrible misfortune. Every single one of her seven husbands died on their wedding night.
3. Tobiah, the son of Tobit, is sent to Sarah's town to run an errand. At the same time, the angel Raphael appears in human form and accompanies Tobiah on his journey.
4. The Book of Judith continues the biblical tradition of unlikely heroes as Judith, a woman and a widow, saves her city and the nation from destruction by the Assyrians. Judith's plot to kill the Assyrian general, Holofernes, requires a shrewd use of her beauty and a lot of bravery.
5. Ultimately, this text [the Book of Esther], points toward the goodness of God, while also explaining the origin of the Jewish feast of Purim. The original was written in Hebrew, probably in the third or second century BC. A later Greek version, which includes a number of additions and changes, was composed sometime between 116 and 48 BC.
6. The book [of Esther] is set in the years after the Babylonian Exile, when Persia reigns over Israel.
7. The Jewish People have been the victims of prejudice for centuries. Oppression and genocide are like diseases that must be stopped in the early stages before it is too late. To do this, we need people who are going to speak the truth even though it may have negative, perhaps even deadly, personal consequences.

Article 57: Maccabees Part 1: Fighting a Just War

1. In the second century BC, the Jewish People are ruled by an oppressive Greek general who does not respect their religious faith and traditions. Their successful struggle against the Greek army is recorded in the First and Second Books of Maccabees.
2. Now under the rule of the Greeks, the Jewish People are challenged by the culture of the Greek empire. Greek philosophy, science, and literature give more importance to reason rather than religious beliefs.
3. Antiochus's reign begins a period of harsh persecution of the faithful Jews: he forbids the practice of the Jewish religion, forces the Jewish People to embrace the king's pagan religion, desecrates and robs the Temple, and murders the families who circumcise their children.
4. After committing an intense act of rebellion, Mattathias, his five sons, and others escape to the hills to form a rebel army to fight their Greek oppressors. The word Maccabee comes from the Hebrew word for hammer.



5. After a successful battle, King Antiochus's army retreats, allowing Judas to go to Jerusalem to purify and rededicate the Temple. The Jewish People joyfully celebrate for eight days. Since then, every year in the month of December, the Jewish People remember this event in the feast of Dedication, also known as Hanukkah.
6. Without the Maccabee family's determination and self-sacrifice, it is very possible that Judaism would not have survived.

Article 58: Maccabees Part 2: Witness Testimony

1. A martyr is a person killed because of their beliefs. The word itself means witness—someone who sees, knows, and can testify to something.
2. The Second Book of Maccabees is a bit different than the first. These writings delve into the variety of ways the Jewish People face their persecution, and it explores the spiritual dimension of that experience. The Second Book of Maccabees emphasizes the important of following God's Law, even if it means death.
3. The Greeks . . . attempt to force the Jewish People to abandon their religion. One of the repulsive methods they use to do this is to give people a choice: eat pork or be tortured and killed.
4. Pork is not a kosher food. Jews are forbidden to eat it. If they eat it, they are breaking God's Law and therefore committing apostasy, the act of renouncing one's faith. But what really is at stake is the faith of the entire community. Enduring the torture and refusing to commit apostasy is their witness to keeping God's Law a non-negotiable, essential part of their lives.
5. The story of the martyrdom of a mother and her seven sons offers a graphic and painful example of the cruelty the Jewish People face. It also reflects a new revelation for Judaism: the belief in a life after death.
6. The Second Book of Maccabees is written around 100 BC. Its accounts encourage later generations of Jewish People to remain faithful in the face of oppression and even death. Their determined faith also inspires the early Christians to face their own hardships and persecution with the same trust in God.

Article 59: Maccabees Part 3: Life after Death

1. For most of the Old Testament, little is said about what happens after we die. One of the most striking aspects of the Second Book of Maccabees is the strong belief in the resurrection of the dead.
2. At this point in Jewish history, there is a growing belief and hope by some Jews in a future resurrection, an afterlife, when those who remain faithful to God will be rewarded.
3. This belief in the resurrection of the dead is part of Divine Revelation in Scripture.
4. Purgatory is the state of final purification or cleansing, which one may need to enter following death and before entering Heaven.
5. Praying for those who have died is rooted in our belief that there will be a resurrection of the dead. Every year on November 2, we celebrate All Souls' Day and make special intercession on behalf of those who have died.



6. On November 1, the Church celebrates All Saints' Day, to honor all known and unknown saints, asking them to pray for us.
7. Non-Catholics sometimes confuse our practice of the intercession of the saints. We are not praying to them like we pray to God; rather, we are asking the saints to pray for us. We are grateful for their care!

Chapter 14: The Wisdom Books

Article 60: Wisdom from Above

1. The Wisdom and Poetry Books of the Bible are distinctive among the literature of the Old Testament. These Old Testament books focus on such things as Israel's history, laws, and prophetic oracles; offer moral lessons and sage advice; guide us in our search for happiness and harmony in life; and explore life's mysteries.
2. A proverb is a short saying that is easy to recall and that communicates a wise observation on human life or expresses a religious truth.
3. One of the themes you will find throughout these proverbs is this advice: "Fear the Lord." For the Israelites, having a reverent attitude for God is the foundation for attaining wisdom.
4. The proverbs emphasize virtuous living, offer practical advice on how to deal with daily life, and remind us what is important and what is not.

Article 61: Job: Why Do Good People Suffer?

1. The Book of Job explores the mystery of suffering. It provides a different take on the generally accepted Israelite belief that God punishes the wicked and rewards the good in this life.
2. The author's original audience held fast to the belief in divine retributive justice.
3. The beginning of the Book of Job sets your expectations for a folktale.
4. From the perspective of divine retributive justice, Job is someone who is faithful to God and follows the Law, and therefore nothing bad should happen to him. Wrong!
5. Job desperately wants to understand why all these horrific events are occurring. Near the end of the debate, he challenges God himself.
6. One point we can gather from God's long response is that people learn the most when they reflect on real experience.
7. However, there are some things that humans will never fully understand. This is the point God is making in his long speech to Job. Some things will always be a mystery because, simply put, we are not God.



Article 62: Ecclesiastes: What's the Point?

1. Although the author of Ecclesiastes does not provide any straightforward answers [to pain and suffering], he does point to the continuous presence of God, who is there in good times and in bad.
2. Qoheleth teaches us to put things in perspective. In a famous passage, he makes the point that life has many ups and downs.
3. Qoheleth means that despite our sufferings, we should do everything we can to enjoy the life God has given us.
4. The teacher of Ecclesiastes identifies numerous reasons why our attempts to be happy are just vanity: greedy people are never satisfied; humans do not have any advantages over animals, because in the end, we both die; and the path to wisdom is through sorrow.
5. Ultimately, Qoheleth accepts the mysteries of life, and encourages us to do the same, pointing us to the wonderful presence of God, "who is working in everything" (11:5).

Article 63: Song of Songs: Love Poems

1. First, if we read these passages just as they are, the Song of Songs is a book of poems that affirm the goodness of sexuality.
2. Second, the intimate dialogue of the man and woman in this poetry is not only about sexual attraction. The author of the Book of Song of Songs is using the attraction between a man and a woman as a metaphor: the closeness and intimacy shared between husband and wife is likened to the intimate covenant relationship between God and his people.
3. In the New Testament, Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians and the Book of Revelation also use marriage imagery to describe the relationship between God and the Church.
4. The imagery of the Song of Songs is sure to grab your attention. The fact that it is in the Bible emphasizes the importance and the goodness of our sexuality—a gift from God. Let its engaging poetry remind you of the tenderness and passion of God's love for you.
5. *Catholics Making a Difference*: Blessed Marie-Louise Trichet: Later, she and Father Louis cofounded the religious order, the Daughters of Wisdom. Their charism is to gain heavenly wisdom and make known Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, through service to the poor.

Article 64: Ben Sira: Wisdom Far from Home

1. This movement [of settling in other countries] is called the Jewish Diaspora. Surrounded by Greek culture, Jewish communities worked hard to maintain their cultural identity. Two of the Old Testament books reflect this struggle: the Book of Wisdom and the Wisdom of Ben Sira.
2. With the historical background of the Babylonian Exile and the domination of the Greeks, the author of Wisdom also emphasizes that suffering is not a punishment from God.
3. Like the Second Book of Maccabees, the Book of Wisdom reflects the Jewish People's growing belief in the afterlife.



4. Like the Book of Proverbs, wisdom in the Book of Wisdom is personified as a woman who blesses and guides us to act in accordance with God's ways.
5. The Wisdom of Ben Sira was written by a man named Jesus, but not the Jesus you are probably thinking of! This Jesus finished his book on wisdom around 175 BC. Almost sixty years later, his grandson translated the book from Hebrew into Greek, the common language at that time.
6. The book contains practical advice to guide its readers toward goodness and happiness.
7. One of the highlights of the Wisdom of Ben Sira is the chapters praising the great heroes of Jewish history.

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