



Matthew

The King and His Kingdom

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Welcome to *The Great Adventure*



“To fall in love with God is the greatest of all romances; to seek him, the greatest adventure.”
– St. Augustine of Hippo

The Bible is at the heart of our Catholic Faith—and our relationship with God. It is the living Word of God, where our Father meets with us and lovingly speaks to us. Reading the Bible should bring us closer to Christ, but understanding it is not always easy. Many people tell us they have tried time and again to prayerfully read Scripture, but they get frustrated because they “just don’t get it.”

The Great Adventure is designed so that anyone can make sense of the Bible and experience the life-changing power of God’s Word. At the core of *The Great Adventure* is the concept that there is a story running through the seventy-three books of the Bible that ties all of Scripture together and makes sense not just of the Bible, but of our lives as well.

That story is God’s plan as it has unfolded throughout salvation history and continues to unfold today. Once we grasp this “big picture,” the readings at Mass begin to make more sense, our Scripture reading and study come to life, and we see how our lives fit into God’s loving plan.

Hundreds of thousands of participants have discovered the riches of Scripture by experiencing one or more *Great Adventure* Bible studies. It is our prayer that you will gain a newfound understanding of God’s Word that will transform your life and bring you closer to Christ.

Jeff Cavins, creator and president, *The Great Adventure*
Sarah Christmyer, co-developer and author, *The Great Adventure*

About *The Great Adventure* Catholic Bible Study Program

At the core of *The Great Adventure* is *The Bible Timeline*® Learning System: a simple way to get the “big picture” of the Bible by focusing on the story that runs throughout Sacred Scripture. *Great Adventure* Bible studies explore the biblical narrative in light of Catholic teaching and the historical, cultural, and literary context of the Scriptures to discover what Scripture reveals about God’s plan and our place within it. Studies of individual books of the Bible are supplemented by thematic and “life application” studies.

Every *Great Adventure* study is designed to foster:

- Familiarity with the Bible and ease of reading it
- Bible study habits consistent with the guidelines of the Catholic Church
- Personal engagement in the Word of God
- Faith-sharing based on the Word of God
- Growth in knowledge about Scripture and the Catholic Faith

Not for Duplication

About *Matthew: The King and His Kingdom*



Matthew: The King and His Kingdom shows how Jesus, the promised Messiah, relives the life and struggles of Israel to become the faithful and victorious King. You will come to see Jesus in a new way and discover what his life and teachings mean for us today. Matthew is an ideal follow-up to the basic narrative of Scripture presented in *The Bible Timeline Study*.

Materials

Materials for *Matthew: The King and His Kingdom* include:

- **Workbook:** contains session summaries, home reading assignments, engaging study questions, responses to the questions, talk notes for the video presentations, as well as helpful maps, charts, and diagrams. (You will need one workbook for every participant, study leader, and small-group facilitator.)
- **Video Presentations:** (twenty-four, 55-minute sessions). Presented by Jeff Cavins, these twenty-four video presentations provide comprehensive teaching and commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. (You will need one DVD set.)

In addition, every participant, leader, and small-group facilitator should have a Catholic Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For this study, we recommend *The Great Adventure Catholic Bible*, an RSV-2CE Bible that incorporates the same color-coded *Bible Timeline* Learning System that you will use throughout this program.

How the Study Works

Every *Great Adventure* study includes four essential steps, which are designed to fit together and build upon each other. Following these steps in order will help you to get the most out of each session.



STEP ONE: HOME PREPARATION

NOTE: There is no home preparation required for Session One.

Each session begins with personal study that involves reading Scripture and answering a series of questions that will help you understand and think more deeply about what you have read. Some questions will include additional reading from other parts of the Bible or from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to help you consider the passage in light of the bigger picture of salvation history and Catholic teaching.

We recommend that you allow at least 90 minutes to complete the reading and answer the questions for each session. We also suggest that home preparation be done in several sittings over the course of a week. This will help you create a habit of daily Bible reading and prayerful meditation.

STEP TWO: SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

The small-group discussion is one of the most effective components of a *Great Adventure* Bible study. During this discussion, members of your small group will have an opportunity to share their insights into the Scripture reading. The goal of the small-group discussion is to help participants obtain a richer understanding of the readings and apply them to their lives. Trained facilitators guide the small-group discussion and keep it on track. To learn how to facilitate a small-group discussion, visit ascensionpress.com. Be sure to follow the “Ten Commandments of Small-Group Discussion” on page xiii.

STEP THREE: VIDEO PRESENTATION

Jeff Cavins wraps up each session with a video presentation that offers unique insights and profound connections to help you gain a deeper understanding of the Bible and its relationship to the Catholic Faith, with a special emphasis on ways to apply what you have learned to your life.

STEP FOUR: REVIEW OF RESPONSES

NOTE: There are no responses for Session One.

The final step—reviewing the responses at the back of this workbook—is done at home prior to beginning the reading for the next session. These responses will help you read the Scripture passages for the next session in the proper context.

For the most effective study experience, complete these steps in the following order: (1) Read and answer the questions; (2) discuss them in your small group; (3) view the video presentation; and (4) review the responses. During the discussion, your small-group facilitator will incorporate points found in the responses, but the richness that comes from individual insights can be lost when participants view the responses prior to the discussion.

For more information about how to plan and promote a Bible study and how to facilitate a small-group discussion, visit ascensionpress.com or call 1-800-376-0520.

Each session in this workbook has the following sections. (Note: Session One follows a different format.)

1. Session Questions (*used during Step One: Home Preparation and Step Two: Small-Group Discussion*)

- A.** Establish (or Review) the Context
- B.** Read the Story
- C.** Take a Deeper Look
- D.** Application

2. Session Talk Notes (*used during Step Three: Video Presentation*)

3. Session Responses (*used during Step Four: Review of Responses*)

The following chart offers an overview of the home preparation readings assigned in each session of the study. The main reading is provided in section **B. Read the Story** and should be read before you answer the session questions. Additional Bible readings and *Catechism* readings are provided in section **C. Take a Deeper Look** and should be read as you answer the study questions for each session.

Session (Video Time)	Main Reading	Additional Bible Readings	Catechism Readings (CCC)
1. Introduction (49:20)	(none)	(none)	(none)
2. Matthew 1 – Jesus: The Son of David, the Son of Abraham (52:21)	Matthew 1	Genesis 38; Joshua 2:1-16, 6:22-25; Ruth 1:1, 4:13-17; 2 Samuel 6:11, 6:23; Sirach 46:1-8	430–431, 499–501
3. Matthew 2 – The King in Exile (55:52)	Matthew 2	Numbers 24:15-19; 1 Samuel 16:1, 16:4-13; Isaiah 11, 60:3-6; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Micah 5:2-4	528, 530
4. Matthew 3 – John: The Forerunner to the King (50:50)	Matthew 3	Joshua 3; 2 Kings 1:8, 5:1, 5:10-14; Sirach 48:4, 48:9-10; Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 1:5-36	535–536, 678, 1222–1224, 1265
5. Matthew 4 – The Tempting of the King (56:38)	Matthew 4	Isaiah 9:1-7; Hebrews 4:15-16	85–86, 109–119, 538–540
6. Matthew 5 – The Bar Is Raised by the King (56:53)	Matthew 5	Exodus 20:1-17; Isaiah 42:6-7, 49:5-6; Matthew 6:15	544
7. Matthew 6 – Personal Piety (55:50)	Matthew 6	Philippians 4:6-7	2764, 2803–2854

Session (Video Time)	Main Reading	Additional Bible Readings	Catechism Readings (CCC)
8. Matthew 7 – Choices in the Kingdom (55:21)	Matthew 7	Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Matthew 6:14-15; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; James 4:11-12	117, 678
9. Matthew 8 – The King's Power Demonstrated (47:02)	Matthew 8	1 Kings 19:19-21	(none)
10. Matthew 9 – New Wine, New Wineskins (55:57)	Matthew 9	Leviticus 17:11; Isaiah 43:25; Hosea 6:6; Mark 2:7; James 5:14-15	(none)
11. Matthew 10 – Jesus Commissions the Twelve (56:23)	Matthew 10	Genesis 3:15; Matthew 4:12-16; 4:18, 9:9; Luke 22:28-30; Revelation 21:10-14	(none)
12. Matthew 11-12 – Jesus Confronts an Evil Generation (52:41)	Matthew 11-12	Exodus 20:10; 1 Samuel 21:1-6; Sirach 51:23-26; Isaiah 35:4-6, 61:1-2; John 1:11-13, 3:10; 1 John 5:3	679, 994, 1864, 2168-2172
13. Matthew 13 – Parables of the Kingdom (56:16)	Matthew 13	Matthew 7:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:2	546, 681-682, 827
14. Matthew 14-15 – Instructions to the Twelve (56:31)	Matthew 14-15	Matthew 8:23-27; 14:19; 15:36	1335, 2609-2610
15. Matthew 16 – Jesus Establishes the Church (59:02)	Matthew 16	Genesis 3, 17, 32; Isaiah 22:15-25, 51:1-2; Matthew 4; John 12:24; Romans 8:15-18; Colossians 1:24-26; Revelation 3:7	552-553
16. Matthew 17 – The Transfiguration (54:08)	Matthew 17	Sirach 48; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Peter 1:6-8, 4:12-13, 5:10; 2 Peter 1:17-18	555
17. Matthew 18 – Characteristics of the Christian Community (59:19)	Matthew 18	John 1:12-13; Galatians 6:1-2	526, 1443-1445, 1461-1463, 2284-2287, 2832-2843

Session (Video Time)	Main Reading	Additional Bible Readings	Catechism Readings (CCC)
18. Matthew 19 – Marriage: A Demonstration of God’s Love (60:47)	Matthew 19	Genesis 2:20-24; Exodus 20:1-17; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 3:1-6; Ephesians 5:31-32	1602–1617
19. Matthew 20–21 – Stepping Down into Greatness (57:23)	Matthew 20–21	1 Kings 1:32-46; 2 Kings 9:13; Psalm 118:22-23; Isaiah 5:1-7, 56:6-12; Jeremiah 8:4-9, 8:13, 12:10; Hosea 9:10-17; Zechariah 9:9-10; Matthew 16:21, 17:22-23, 26:39, 26:42	(none)
20. Matthew 22–23 – “Let’s Get Real” (57:42)	Matthew 22–23	Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Luke 16:24; John 7:15-19; Acts 7:1-2; Romans 4:12; 1 Corinthians 4:14-16; Philemon 10; Revelation 19:7-9	558
21. Matthew 24–25 – Jesus Predicts the End of an Era (51:09)	Matthew 24–25	Isaiah 13:1, 13:9-10, 13:13, 14:4, 14:12; Ezekiel 32:1-2, 32:7-8; Matthew 21:13; 23:28	(none)
22. Matthew 26 – The Trial of the Christ (56:16)	Matthew 26	Exodus 12, 24; Psalm 110:1; Daniel 7:1-18; 1 Peter 1:18-19	610, 612–614
23. Matthew 27 – The Passion of the King (56:44)	Matthew 27	Genesis 3:13-24; Psalm 22; Jeremiah 18, 19, 32-33; Zechariah 11:12-13; Matthew 26:75; John 19:1-22; Hebrews 12:18, 12:21-24, 12:28	597–598, 1430–1431
24. Matthew 28 and Conclusion – The Triumph of the King (44:53)	Matthew 28	Daniel 7:14; 1 Corinthians 15:12-24	651–655, 2174–2176

What to Do for Each Session

1. Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)
2. Small-Group Discussion (40 minutes)
3. **Note to Study Leaders:** There is no small-group discussion for the first week. Instead, use this time to divide participants into small groups of eight to twelve people, ensure that everyone has the study materials, and explain how the study works. Each small group should be led by a trained facilitator.
4. Video Presentation (55 minutes)
5. Closing and Prayer (5 minutes)

Getting the Most out of This Study

This study will help you understand the Bible in a new way. The “head knowledge” you gain will help you grow in “heart knowledge” as you follow up on what you have learned. The Bible will always remain a mystery, though, and that is part of the beauty of it: We can never exhaust the treasures of Scripture. Fortunately for us, the Bible is not a subject to master; it is a place to encounter the living Word of God.

Whenever you open your Bible to read, *start with prayer*, and place yourself in God’s presence. You might take Samuel’s prayer as your own: “Speak, for your servant hears” (1 Samuel 3:10). When you read, adopt an attitude of listening. Try not to treat Scripture as a text but as a personal message from God. What is he saying? What does it mean? What does it mean for my life? If you come to the Word focused on having an encounter with the Lord, he will speak to your heart, and you will be transformed.

An Important Note About the Responses to the Study Questions

Responses to the study questions are provided in the back of this workbook. These responses do not exhaust the meaning that can be found in the Scripture reading. People will have unique insights. The responses have two important functions:

1. The first purpose of the responses is to provide participants with a review of each session, which will help establish a context for the reading and questions in the following session. The best time to read the responses is just before starting on the next session.
2. The second purpose of the responses is to provide guidelines for the small-group facilitators.
Facilitators: Complete the Scripture reading and answer the questions on your own before reading the responses in preparation for facilitating the small-group discussion.

Participants should not review the responses for each session until after the session is completed. Although it might be tempting to look at these responses in advance, it is important to wait for the following reasons.

1. Bible study is not about simply watching a video presentation or reading a Bible commentary. It is just as important to immerse yourself in the Word of God itself and engage it with your heart and mind. The questions in *The Great Adventure* studies are designed to draw you into the Scriptures so that the Word of God will be planted and grow in your heart. Reading a response written by someone else may satisfy your mind for a moment, but it will not result in the kind of growth that will occur if you attempt to answer the question on your own first.

2. The success of a small group depends on a good discussion. A group of participants who have spent time pondering the Scripture passages on their own will have more varied insights to discuss.

For these reasons, please wait to read the responses until after the session. When you follow the steps of this study as intended, you will explore the Word of God in different ways—in the reading, the small-group discussion, the video presentation, and, finally, in the responses. Follow these steps over time, and you will be more than fed—you will learn to feed yourself.

Ten Commandments of Small-Group Discussion¹

1. Enjoy yourself!
2. Speak with respect and charity.
3. Do not ridicule or dismiss what others say. Keep comments positive.
4. Come prepared.
5. If you were not able to prepare, let others speak first.
6. Stick to the topic and questions at hand.
7. Start and end on time.
8. Allow silence. Give people a chance to think.
9. Listen to others without interrupting.
10. Keep personal matters within the group.

¹ Adapted from Thomas Smith's original "10 Commandments of a Small Group."

Session One

Introduction

The River Jordan

Matthew: The King and His Kingdom

This study of Matthew's Gospel is the second step in the foundational series of *The Great Adventure* Catholic Bible Study Program.

Author

The author of Matthew's Gospel is not mentioned in the Gospel itself; neither are the authors of the other Gospels mentioned in their texts. But the early Church knew who was responsible for each Gospel and titled them accordingly. In modern times, some scholars have questioned whether Matthew is the author of this Gospel, but his authorship has been the uncontested and unanimous opinion of the Church for nearly eighteen hundred years.

Not much is known about Matthew, also called "Levi." He was a tax collector before answering Jesus' call to discipleship. Like many tax collectors of the time, he may also have been a scribe. Matthew once hosted a feast for Jesus and was later chosen by Jesus to be one of his twelve apostles. The only other time he is mentioned in the New Testament is at Pentecost, when he is recorded as being present in the Upper Room.

Date and Language of Composition

The Gospel of Matthew was written between AD 50 and 100. For some time, the consensus has been that Matthew based his Gospel on Mark's Gospel and wrote around AD 80–90. Most New Testament commentaries take this view, but there is also a strong minority view that Matthew's was the earliest Gospel and was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. This view is supported by the text itself: In Matthew 24, Matthew records Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. If Matthew had been writing after this prophecy was fulfilled, it is hard to understand why he would not have used this historical event to strengthen the main theme of his Gospel, which is that the Old Covenant would be fulfilled in the New Covenant.

According to Papias (AD 130) and Irenaeus (AD 180), Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. This version, which no longer exists, was then translated into the canonical Greek version.

Audience

Matthew most likely wrote his Gospel to Jewish Christians living in and around Palestine. The book assumes that its readers have knowledge of Jewish customs and practices and an intimate familiarity with the Old Testament. Matthew's Gospel quotes or refers to the Old Testament more than one hundred times and reveals the true spiritual meaning of these passages as fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Structure

The structure of Matthew's Gospel is similar to the Pentateuch. It has five main sections, which we call "books." Each includes a "narrative" section and a "discourse" section, a pattern that weaves together the words and works of Jesus in a way that is easy to remember. These five books come between Jesus' ancestry and infancy narratives (called the "Prologue") and his passion, death, and resurrection narratives (called the "Conclusion"). See the diagram and Outline below for more information on these sections.

Outline

	PROLOGUE	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	CONCLUSION
	<i>Birth of the King</i>	<i>Announcement of the Kingdom</i>	<i>Establishment of the Kingdom</i>	<i>The Kingdom Defined</i>	<i>Transfer of the Kingdom's Authority</i>	<i>Announcement of the End of the Old Kingdom</i>	<i>Victory of the King</i>
NARRATIVE	Matthew 1–2 <i>Jesus' ancestry and infancy</i>	Matthew 3–4 <i>John the Baptist and Jesus' early ministry</i>	Matthew 8–9 <i>Miracles; commissioning the Twelve</i>	Matthew 11–12 <i>Jesus confronts an evil generation</i>	Matthew 14–17 <i>Travels and ministry; instructing the Twelve</i>	Matthew 19–23 <i>Events and teaching in Judea</i>	Matthew 26–28 <i>Passion week</i>
	DISCOURSE	Matthew 5–7 <i>Sermon on the Mount</i>	Matthew 10 <i>Missionary instructions</i>	Matthew 13 <i>Kingdom parables</i>	Matthew 18 <i>Life in the Christian community</i>	Matthew 24–25 <i>Olivet Discourse (judgment on Jerusalem)</i>	

- Prologue – Birth of the King (Jesus' ancestry and infancy: Matthew 1–2)

Narrative: Jesus' ancestry and infancy

- Book One – Announcement of the Kingdom (Matthew 3–7)

Narrative: John the Baptist and Jesus' early ministry (Matthew 3–4)

Discourse: Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7)

- Book Two – Establishment of the Kingdom (Matthew 8–10)

Narrative: Miracles; commissioning the Twelve (Matthew 8–9)

Discourse: Missionary instructions (Matthew 10)

- Book Three – The Kingdom Defined (Matthew 11–13)

Narrative: Jesus confronts an evil generation (Matthew 11–12)

Discourse: Kingdom parables (Matthew 13)

- Book Four – Transfer of the Kingdom’s Authority (Matthew 14–18)

Narrative: Travels and ministry; instructing the Twelve (Matthew 14–17)

Discourse: Life in the Christian community (Matthew 18)

- Book Five – Announcement of the End of the Old Kingdom (Matthew 19–25)

Narrative: Events and teaching in Judea (Matthew 19–23)

Discourse: Olivet Discourse: judgment on Jerusalem (Matthew 24–25)

- Conclusion – Victory of the King (Matthew 26–28)

Narrative: Passion week

Historical Perspective and Context

The book of Matthew acts as a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Using many references to the Old Testament promises of God to his people and the messages he sent them through the prophets, the book of Matthew gives us the key to understanding the rest of the New Testament and Christ as the fulfillment of God’s plan. Matthew’s genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1 does not make reference to the return of God’s people to the Promised Land following their time in Babylonian captivity (see Matthew 1:11-12).¹ In his teaching in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus makes it clear that Judah has not yet returned from spiritual captivity, even though some of the people have physically returned to the land. At the time of Jesus’ teaching and ministry, God’s people were waiting for the Messiah to liberate them. They thought this liberation would be in the form of freedom from Roman domination. Jesus did come to liberate the people, but he came to liberate them *from their sin*.

Matthew portrays Jesus as the true King who fulfills the Law the people of Israel have failed to keep. All things find new meaning in Christ. He gives the new law, establishes a new leadership, and builds a new Temple. The message of change in Matthew’s Gospel is difficult for the Jewish leadership to accept, but it is good news for God’s people and for the Gentiles as well.

Jesus shows the people in his teaching that they have relaxed the Law because of their hardness of heart. He “raises the bar” by changing the standards that will be used to judge the people after their return from spiritual exile. He introduces the new law that will accompany the New Covenant. This message is a timeless one. When we examine our own lives, most of us see areas in which we expect less of ourselves than God expects of us. If we read this Gospel carefully, we will see that Jesus is challenging and empowering us to a new level of holiness. To live out the gospel, we must be thoroughly immersed in the kingdom of heaven on earth (the Church).

¹ The events of the Return can be found in the yellow section of *The Bible Timeline Chart*.

Geography

The following maps will help you better understand the events in Matthew's Gospel.

Palestine at the Time of Christ



Jesus' Galilean Ministry



Ministry in Judea



Focus of This Study

Matthew portrays Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Scripture, the true Messiah sent from God, the One the Jews and all of Israel have been waiting for.

The focus of this study will be the establishment of the Church as the kingdom of heaven on earth. The disciples are given special roles in the kingdom, with Peter in a special place of primacy. Throughout the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus fulfills the Old Testament covenants God made with Abraham, Moses, and David. Jesus fulfills God's promise to Abraham to bless "all the nations of the earth." Jesus is cast in the role of the "new Moses" who ascends a new mountain to give the New Covenant law. He is seen as the "Son of David," sitting on his everlasting throne.

May God richly bless you as you study his Word in Matthew's Gospel.

Reminder: Please complete the Scripture reading and study questions for Session Two before the next small-group discussion.

Not for Duplication

SESSION ONE TALK NOTES

Introduction

I. Scripture and Catholic Life**A. Which Bible?**

1. New American Bible (NAB)
2. Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition (RSV-2CE)
3. “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ” (CCC 133)

B. Two senses of Scripture (CCC 115–117)

1. Literal sense
2. Spiritual sense
 - a. Allegorical – Christ
 - b. Moral – me
 - c. Anagogical – future

C. Interpreting Scripture as a Catholic (CCC 112–114)

1. Context and unity of whole Scripture
2. Living Tradition of the Church
3. Analogy of faith – coherence of truths

D. Application of Scripture study

1. Put into practice
2. Psalm 1 – “blessed” (Heb., *ashrei*; literally, “happy”)
3. *Lectio divina* (“divine reading”)
4. “Be doers of the word” (James 1:22-24)

II. Matthew: The King and His Kingdom – Overview**A. First of four Gospels****B. Author**

1. Not identified in the Gospel
2. Traditional understanding – Matthew (Levi)
 - a. Tax collector, called by Jesus; apostle (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27; Matthew 9:9)
 - b. Present at Pentecost (Acts 1:3)
 - c. Martyred

C. Date

1. Difficult to determine
2. Likely prior to destruction of Temple in AD 70 (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1911)

D. Style

1. Past events have enduring significance for the Church Matthew 24 foretells destruction of the Temple

E. Audience

1. Jewish
2. Assumed knowledge of Old Testament

F. Focus

1. Christ as fulfillment of Scripture – true Messiah
2. Establishment of Church (kingdom of heaven on earth)

G. Structure (similar to Pentateuch with five divisions)

1. Prologue: Birth of the King (Matthew 1–2)
2. Five sections, “books” – each with a narrative followed by a discourse
 - a. Book One: Announcement of the Kingdom (Matthew 3–7)
 - b. Book Two: Establishment of the Kingdom (Matthew 8–10)
 - c. Book Three: The Kingdom Defined (Matthew 11–13)
 - d. Book Four: Transfer of the Kingdom’s Authority (Matthew 14–18)
 - e. Book Five: Announcement of the End of the Old Kingdom (Matthew 19–25)
3. Conclusion: Victory of the King (Matthew 26–28)

III. Tips for Approaching This Study

- A. Stay committed to the small group
- B. Take time to do the session questions, and come prepared to discuss them
- C. Session sections: “A. Establish (Review) the Context,” “B. Read the Story,” “C. Take a Deeper Look” (questions), and “D. Application”
- D. Pace yourself
- E. Familiarize yourself with *The Bible Timeline Chart*

Session Two

Matthew 1: Jesus – The Son of David, the Son of Abraham



Bethlehem, Judea

	PROLOGUE	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	CONCLUSION
	<i>Birth of the King</i>	<i>Announcement of the Kingdom</i>	<i>Establishment of the Kingdom</i>	<i>The Kingdom Defined</i>	<i>Transfer of the Kingdom's Authority</i>	<i>Announcement of the End of the Old Kingdom</i>	<i>Victory of the King</i>
NARRATIVE	Matthew 1–2 <i>Jesus' ancestry and infancy</i>	Matthew 3–4 <i>John the Baptist and Jesus' early ministry</i>	Matthew 8–9 <i>Miracles; commissioning the Twelve</i>	Matthew 11–12 <i>Jesus confronts an evil generation</i>	Matthew 14–17 <i>Travels and ministry; instructing the Twelve</i>	Matthew 19–23 <i>Events and teaching in Judea</i>	Matthew 26–28 <i>Passion week</i>
	DISCOURSE	Matthew 5–7 <i>Sermon on the Mount</i>	Matthew 10 <i>Missionary instructions</i>	Matthew 13 <i>Kingdom parables</i>	Matthew 18 <i>Life in the Christian community</i>	Matthew 24–25 <i>Olivet Discourse (judgment on Jerusalem)</i>	

A. Establish the Context

During this first week, read the entire Gospel of Matthew. Do not spend too much time; read through it quickly. Aim for overall impressions rather than trying to absorb everything you read. This will give you the “big picture” you need before you focus on the details. As you read, think about the following questions:

- What were your first impressions?
- What stood out to you about Jesus or his mission?
- What key words or ideas did you notice?
- Are there any concepts you would like clarified or questions you would like answered in the course of this study?

B. Read the Story

Carefully read Matthew 1. Ask yourself the questions *Who? What? When? Where? How? Why?*

As always, pray before you read.

C. Take a Deeper Look

Answering these questions will draw you into the heart of the story. If you do not understand something, make a note of it to bring up in the discussion.

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST (MATTHEW 1:1-17)

1. Matthew is writing to Jewish Christians living in Palestine. Recall what you learned in Session One. In writing to this group, why do you think Matthew begins his Gospel with a genealogy of Jesus?

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MATTHEW'S AND LUKE'S GENEALOGIES

There are two genealogies of Jesus found in the New Testament. Matthew begins his genealogy with Abraham, most likely because of God's promise to Abraham—"Kings shall come forth from you" (Genesis 17:6). His genealogy also establishes Jesus as heir to the Davidic throne, which God promised would last forever (see 2 Samuel 7:16). Luke's genealogy begins with Jesus and goes all the way back to "Adam, the son of God," probably to emphasize the universal nature of Jesus' kingship. Many theories have been proposed to explain the discrepancies between these two genealogies. It is possible that one list reflects legal descent and the other reflects natural descent. (Note: As the foster son of Joseph, Jesus would have received the same legal rights as a natural child.)

2. What titles does Matthew give Jesus in Matthew 1:1, and what do these titles say about him?
3. Matthew includes four women in Jesus' genealogy: Tamar (Matthew 1:3), Rahab (Matthew 1:5), Ruth (Matthew 1:5), and "the wife of Uriah," who was Bathsheba (Matthew 1:6). Do you recognize these names?
 - a. Read about these women in the following verses and record what you learn.

- Genesis 38:
- Joshua 2:1-16 and 6:22-25:
- Ruth 1:1-22 and 4:13-17:
- 2 Samuel 11:

b. What is unusual about these women? Why do you think Matthew draws attention to them in Jesus' genealogy?

4. Think About It: This genealogy is divided into three distinct groups of fourteen names. The first group ends with David, the second with the deportation to Babylon, and the third with the birth of Jesus Christ. Why do you think Matthew draws attention to the deportation but not to Judah's return to the land of Canaan? (For help with this question, review Session One.)

THE BIRTH OF THE KING (MATTHEW 1:18-25)

- 5.** In Matthew 1:21 and 1:23, what names does Matthew say will be given to the new child, and what is the significance of these names? (For help with the first name, see CCC 430–431.)
- 6. Think About It:** “Jesus” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name “Joshua” (“Yahweh saves”).
- a.** Who was Joshua? (There is a good synopsis of his life in Sirach 46:1-8.)

- b.** How is Jesus a “new Joshua” in a spiritual sense?
- 7.** Consider the names for the Messiah found in Matthew 1, including “Christ,” “Son of David,” “Son of Abraham,” “Jesus,” and “Emmanuel.” Do any of these names seem particularly appropriate in your own experience of God’s Son?
- 8.** Some people interpret Matthew 1:25, which says that Joseph “knew [Mary] not until she had borne a son,” as meaning that the Holy Couple had sexual relations after Jesus was born. Here, the word “until” has been translated from the Greek word *heos*, which is used elsewhere in the Bible to indicate a discrete period of time and which does not necessarily imply any change in the future. For example, we read in 2 Samuel 6:23 that “Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.” Just as in Matthew 1:25, the word “to” in this passage has been translated from the Greek word *heos*. Read CCC 499–501. What does the Magisterium teach about Mary’s virginity?

D. Application

These questions will help you apply one of the key themes of the session to your life. After meditating on them, respond to God with a brief written prayer if you choose.

Meditate on the significance of Jesus Christ as “Emmanuel”—“God with us.” How is Christ still with us today? If it is sometimes hard for you to believe God is with you, is there anything in this session that might help increase your faith?

Dear Lord ...

SESSION TWO TALK NOTES

Matthew 1: Jesus – The Son of David, the Son of Abraham

- I. Matthew's Gospel Begins with a Genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17)**
 - A. Christ as a new beginning**
 1. “Genealogy” (Gk., Septuagint uses same word for “Genesis”)
 2. Genesis 5:1 – “the generations of Adam”
 - B. Jesus comes from the lines of David and Abraham (two key Old Testament covenants)**
 1. Abraham (Genesis 12 and 15–22)
 2. David (2 Samuel 7)
 - C. Genealogies are used to make a point**
 - D. Pattern of Jesus’ genealogy (Matthew 1:17) – three groups of fourteen (equals six groups of seven)**
 1. 1:2-6 – Abraham up to David
 2. 1:7-11 – David up to the deportation to Babylon
 3. 1:12-16 – deportation up to Jesus
 4. Jesus begins the seventh “seven” (see Galatians 4:4)
 - E. Importance of numbers in Judaism**
 1. Jewish alphabet of twenty-two consonants used for numbering
 2. David in Hebrew is “DVD” of $4+6+4=14$
 3. Importance of David – glory days of Israel; promised eternal throne
 - a. Jesus is the Son of David
 - F. Third set of fourteen years begins with the deportation to Babylon**
 1. Kingdom divided in 930 BC
 2. Northern tribes deported to Assyria in 722 BC
 3. Southern tribes deported to Babylon in 587 BC
 4. Genealogy does not mention return, restoration from exile
 - a. Daniel 9 – exile will be extended seventy times seven years
 - b. In Jesus’ view, Israel is still in exile
 - G. Inclusion of women in Matthew’s genealogy**
 1. Four “shady ladies”
 - a. Tamar – pregnant by father-in-law, Judah
 - b. Rahab – Canaanite prostitute
 - c. Ruth – Moabite married to a Jew
 - d. “Wife of Uriah” – bore Solomon, the illegitimate son of David

2. Inclusion of sinners and Gentiles in the family of God

H. Parallels to the life of Israel

1. Jacob as the father of both the Old and New Testament Josephs
2. Moses' sister, Miriam = Mary

II. The Birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25)

A. Betrothal

1. Period between covenant of marriage and living together
2. Terminable only by death or divorce
3. Who did Joseph think was the unworthy partner?
 - a. Suspicion theory – Joseph suspects Mary of adultery and seeks to divorce her (Deuteronomy 24:2)
 - b. Reverence theory – Joseph is informed of divine miracle and considers *himself* unworthy

B. Parallels between Old and New Testament Josephs

1. Same name (Matthew 1:18; Genesis 30:24)
2. Fathers named Jacob (Matthew 1:16; Genesis 30:19-24)
3. God spoke to them through dreams (Matthew 1:20-21; Genesis 37:5-11)
4. Righteous and chaste (Matthew 1:19; Genesis 39:7-18)
5. Saved family by bringing them to Egypt

C. Five “formula quotations” in Matthew; first formula quotation is in 1:23

1. A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, Emmanuel, “God with us”
 - a. Isaiah 7:14
 - b. Matthew 28:19-20
2. Literal sense – birth of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1-6)
3. Allegorical sense: fullness in Christ

D. Jesus = “God saves” (Matthew 1:21) – from sin and exile; releases us from bondage

E. “Knew her not until she had borne a son” (Matthew 1:25)

1. Catholic teaching – Mary is a perpetual virgin
2. “Until” – Greek, *heos*, “to” or “until” (no implied change in future)
 - a. See 2 Samuel 6:23 and 1 Timothy 4:13
3. “Brothers and sisters” = same word for cousins, distant relatives