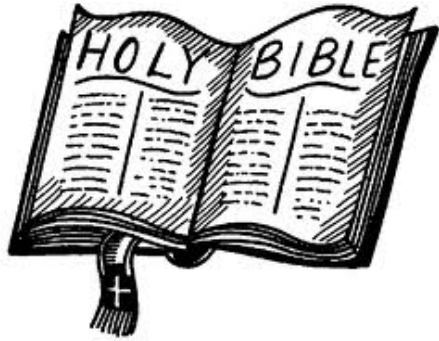


The Bible 101: An Introduction, or Refresher

Welcome to a 4-part online project offered by St. Peter's Church Faith Formation! Although designed for families of children receiving their first Bible, anyone can use these sessions to get to know, or simply revisit, the written word of God.



Reading the Bible in Different Ways

The Bible is such an important book, but it wasn't always written like it is today. It was originally written in several different languages, like Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Eventually, it was translated into Latin, which is how it was read in church. It was read in church because most people couldn't afford their own copy to have at home. About 500 years ago, two things happened that changed everything: the printing press made it easier and more

affordable for people to have books at home, and the Bible was translated into English (and eventually a lot of other languages!).

Over the years, the Bible has been translated many times. Although the words still mean the same thing, and God's message still proclaims love and salvation, the versions can sound very different! The most traditional version, the King James Version (KJV), is beautiful and poetic, and a little fancy. Another version, the New International Version (NIV), was translated in the 20th century by a group of Bible scholars using the texts in their original languages—it probably sounds similar to the version we read at church. One of the most recent translations is The Message, which was translated to be in the language ordinary people use today. Some consider it slangy and casual, but the author, Eugene Peterson, argues that that is how the stories about God were originally written: in the daily language of everyday people!

In a few weeks, we will be reading the story of Jesus's birth from the book of Matthew. Let's take a look at two important passages from Matthew, the story of Jesus's birth and Jesus giving us the Lord's Prayer. Read the three different translations of the same story, and think about which version makes the most sense to you. Compare them to the Bible you use at home. Talk about what you like, and don't like, about the different translations—you can even try telling the story in your own words!

Matthew 1:18-25

The Story of the Birth of Jesus

KING JAMES VERSION (KJV)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. ²⁰ But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. ²² Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child,

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and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. ²⁴ Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: ²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV)

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[c] because he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”^[d] (which means “God with us”). ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

THE MESSAGE (MSG)

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.) Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced. ²⁰⁻²³ While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: “Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—‘God saves’—because he will save his people from their sins.” This would bring the prophet's embryonic sermon to full term: Watch for this—a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son; They will name him Immanuel (Hebrew for “God is with us”). ²⁴⁻²⁵ Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He named the baby Jesus.

Matthew 6:9-13

KING JAMES VERSION (KJV)

⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

NEW INTL VERSION (NIV)

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation,^[a] but deliver us from the evil one.^[b]”



Jesus Gives Us The Lord's Prayer

THE MESSAGE (MSG)

⁹⁻¹³ “With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this: Our Father in heaven, Reveal who you are. Set the world right; Do what's best—as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You're in charge! You can do anything you want! You're ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes.