

Chapter 5

Parish Religious Education Adaptation

Student Preparation

- Students were assigned to read Chapter 5, “The Journey Takes New Shape: A People at Home” (pages 112–129).
- Students were asked to locate a Bible at home to thumb through the six books of Deuteronomic History which are the focus of this chapter.

Warm-up (about 20 minutes)

- Collect the assigned Review and Reflection questions from Chapter 4 that students have been completing. Orally review student answers to the “Review and Reflection” questions on page 89 which address key themes in Exodus.
- Referring to Chapter 4, point out that the word “exodus” means “road out.” Ask students to reflect on what the Hebrews may have felt and feared as they took the “road out” of slavery in Egypt to follow Moses towards the Promised Land and freedom. (*As an aside, point out that it’s hard for anyone to leave something familiar—even if it is enslaving—to move to something new and liberating. Invite students to elaborate on that point from their own life experience or observation.*)
- Ask students to leaf through Chapter 5 to name and identify principal actors in the “cast of characters” in the six books which comprise the Deuteronomic History. (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 3 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings.) These are the characters who take the Exodus story to the next step—the conquest and settlement in the Promised Land. (*Joshua, King Josiah, Gideon, Samuel, Deborah, Samson.*)

Part 1: Lesson (about 30 minutes)

Text Reference: Introduction, Understanding the Events of Settlement (pages 112–120)

- Share carefully selected current event articles (world, national or local news, sports, entertainment) from both old and recent newspapers or magazines with small groups of two to three students. (The publishing dates of each article should be cut-off or masked.) Issue a five-minute challenge to the groups to find and underline “textual evidence” that dates or helps to chronologically bracket the articles. Have the small groups briefly defend their views.
- Refocus the groups on Scriptural exegesis. Explain that some of the methods they used to date articles are employed—in a more scholarly fashion—by Scripture scholars. The six books of Deuteronomic History share common literary phrases which link them to the Book of Deuteronomy. Scholars have also discovered that these books share trademark themes such as the importance of the city of Jerusalem. The books that comprise Deuteronomic History were all written after 587 B.C., scholars have deduced.
- In their small groups, ask students to quietly reread “Israelite Warfare Traditions” (pages 118–119) up to the sub-heading “Read 1 Samuel 7–8” on page 119. Each group should briefly discuss what “Miracle Warfare” meant to the Jews struggling from c. 1200 to c.1030 B.C. to settle Palestine, their new homeland.
- Ask the small groups to re-configure as groups of 5 or 6. Provide each group with a handout listing and briefly describing the main points of the Just War Doctrine. (see “Peace over War,” page 120). Each group should quickly create a hypothetical but believable modern case for war. Be available to advise groups in creating a scenario that would fulfill just war provisions. One person in each group should act as recorder and should keep the group’s “case” for the next session.

Break/Writing Exercise (about 15 minutes)

- Join students for refreshments or simply for a fifteen-minute break.
- Assign students to do the Journal Assignment on page 124 which will require reading the full story of one of these three judges—Deborah, Gideon, Samson—in the book of Judges.

Part 2: Lesson (about 30 minutes)

Text Reference: Exploits of the Judges, Israel at Home in Palestine, Further Reflections (pages 121–129)

- Read or summarize, for the students, the introductory paragraphs of “Exploits of the Judges” on page 121. Explain the unique role of judges as both spiritual and military tribal leaders, and situate their roles in historical context. “The judges filled the gap in leadership between the time of Joshua (c. 1200 B.C.) and the beginning of the monarchy (c.1030 B.C.)”

- Solicit student input on the capsule accounts of Deborah, Gideon, and Samson in this section. How are these stories believable? Who is the true hero? What is the repeating theme about God's role? How can that theme be meaningful for us today?
- If possible, show ten to twelve slides or display large format photos of archaeological finds in Palestine's hill country while giving a brief overview of "Israel at Home in Palestine." Focus on these central points:
 - The central hill country of Palestine grew in population between 1200 and 1000 B.C. Pottery shards that seemed to be Canaanite and evidence of political unrest throughout the region suggest that Canaanites—along with Hebrew slaves from Egypt—settled in villages in these coastal plains.
 - Dramatic climactic changes seem to have occurred in this period. This may have prompted major population migrations to the cooler, less populated hills of Palestine.
 - Resettlement of the Hebrews, initiated by Joshua, likely took from 200 to 300 years. A gradual process such as this would have facilitated a more peaceful settlement with the Canaanites.
 - The *Bet Av* ("House of the Father") was the basic social unit of an Israeli village in this era. Bet Avs, led by village elders, were allied in a loose association with other Bet Avs to help with agriculture and military defense. A group or cluster of allied Bet Avs was called a *Mishpachah*.

Prayer Experience (about 20 minutes):

- Reduce the room light and ask a student to light candles or if available an oil lamp to establish a prayerful environment. Play softly some Jewish instrumental or vocal music. (Borrow from public libraries or a synagogue. The messianic evangelization group, *Jews for Jesus*, has excellent music resources.)
- Briefly discuss the story and significance of the tiny book of Ruth found between the book of Judges and 1 Samuel. Explain that Ruth, a Moabite woman, married a Hebrew and was now a childless widow in a foreign land. Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law who was also a widow, told Ruth to return to her native land to find a new husband and a new life.
- Read Ruth 1:7–18.
- Pause and ask students to consider the gift of faithfulness in their own lives.
- Invite students to voice prayers of thanksgiving for those who have not abandoned them, and for those who have traveled with them on difficult journeys.
- Conclude with meditative Jewish music.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

- Assign the Review and Reflection questions from pages 114, 120 and 124—but not 128.
- Have the students read Chapter 6, "The Monarchy: The Journey Takes a New Direction" (pages 132–153).