

Old Testament Women 1

A ten week study

By Kathy Applebee



This Bible study is designed to be taught with the DRISAR format

D – Discuss. Break the class into small groups and allow each group to choose which discussion question(s) they wish to talk about. This allows for the formation of relationships as well as giving everyone in the group, if it is large, the opportunity to speak. Alternatively, the facilitator can lead a whole group discussion or do a four corner activity.

For four corners – prominently post one discussion question in each corner and allow the class to move to the question they want to discuss. This gives people an opportunity to move around and elect what and with whom they wish to discuss. Inform the groups they will have 5-7 minutes to discuss. They should choose a spokesperson to share one or two points with the entire group when you reassemble. Allow 5-7 minutes for discussion. Call the group together and have each group share briefly what they discussed.

Discussion can provide a warm up as well as activating prior knowledge about a topic.

R – Read. Read the scriptures.

I – Imagine. Imagine what life was like for this woman. How does it differ from modern day American women and their daily experiences? How are we alike? Good readers make pictures in their mind as they read. Some readers, even adults, need to be guided to make these mental images, particularly if the material has elements foreign to what they know or have experienced. Add supplementary materials for your specific mix of students including graphics, maps, power point or video clips to make the scriptures come alive.

S - Speculate. Apply what has been read and imagined to go beyond the surface. Allow people to brainstorm, keeping in mind we cannot know for sure anything the Bible does not explicitly tell us.

A - Apply. How does this apply to my life? Can I avoid a pitfall? Follow an example? Read the Bible with more clarity?

R- Reflect. Personal reflection time is important. Allow time for the class to journal silently or meditate briefly before prayer or pray silently before the facilitator or volunteer closes in prayer.

Please note that Eve, Esther and Ruth are three part series. Each contains a certain amount of overlap so they can be used individually. It is possible to divide a large class into three subgroups and have each group report back to the entire group about their particular “snapshot” of the woman. Then ask the class to synthesize the information. How has the woman changed over time? How have her important relationships, including the one with God, changed?

Life Stressor material

This can be used with each lesson or as a final culmination. Have students total up a Biblical woman’s points on the chart. Discuss what kind and amount of stress these women were under. During class or

reflection time or as homework, they may wish to total their own and compare and contrast with the Biblical characters.

Culmination

I asked the woman to think about which woman's story resonated the most with them and if they chose to, to share why. We discussed what one image or point stuck with them throughout the study. Having formed a relationship with the class, the facilitator should tailor the final summary to the group.

Eve the Mother

BEFORE YOU READ: Choose one or more of the following to discuss.

Where did you get information, answers to questions about your first pregnancy? What surprised you the most during that time?

Who did you turn to for advice with your first child? Did you get any really good advice? Terrible advice?

The only human being Eve had seen was Adam. How do you think she reacted when she first set eyes on newborn Cain? What might she have been expecting?

READ: Gen 4: 1-2

Imagine being Eve. How would the second child be easier than the first? Harder? Compare child rearing then and now. What three things would be the hardest to do without if you were Eve?

READ: Gen 5: 1-5. The rest of the chapter chronicles Adam's descendents. Adam lived long enough to see his great-great-great-great-great-grandchild Lamech. Imagine living 930 years and seeing that many descendents. What would you like about it? Dislike? If you had the opportunity to live that long (in reasonably good health and not quite so primitive conditions) would you do it?

READ: Titus 2: 3-4 How can older Christian mothers help younger women? Can you think of a particularly helpful older woman in your past? What makes them stand out in your mind?

What from this, pertains to us today?

Be ready to share a summary of what you read, discussed and concluded.

IF YOU HAVE TIME: Read Gen 3: 20 – 24. Speculate how Eve might have felt, having to leave Eden. When she related this event (or series of events) to her children, grandchildren etc, what lesson did she try to instill in them?

Eve the Deceived

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BEFORE YOU READ choose one or more of the following to discuss briefly:

Share a time you had been deceived either through advertising, a salesman, possibly your own child or teenager. How did you feel about being deceived?

Share a time when you were blamed for something. Were you responsible? Does how that makes you feel differ when you really are responsible and when you're just getting unjustly blamed?

Share a time (possibly when you were a teenager) when you deceived a parent. What happened?

READ: 2 Cor. 11:3 and Gen 3: 1-24. You might want to choose one person to read each character (Eve, Adam, God, the serpent) while one person reads the narration.

READ: Jn. 8:42-44. How does Jesus describe Satan?

IMAGINE you are Eve. Read verse 12 again. What is your emotional or verbal reaction to what Adam says? Read verse 13. If you were Eve, how would you have answered?

READ: Proverbs 28:13, I Jn. 1:9

What kind of response does God want to "What is this you have done?"

We are unlikely to hold a conversation with a snake in a tree and be deceived. What are some more likely scenarios? What "advice" or advertising seems to be a problem? How do you avoid the temptation when this occurs?

What from this, pertains to us today?

Be ready to share a summary of what you read, discussed and concluded.

IF YOU HAVE TIME: Read Job 2: 7-10. In both incidences, a wife urges her husband to do something negative. What differences are there? Choices, outcomes, etc?

Eve the Heartbroken

BEFORE YOU READ: Choose one or more of the following to discuss

Share a time when you did not get along with your sibling(s).

Share a time when your young children experienced jealousy with each other. What happened? Did someone have to intervene?

What happens when adult siblings quarrel? Can you share a personal experience?

READ: Gen 4: 1-16, 25 and 1 John 3: 11-12

IMAGINE you are Eve. Someone brings you news of Abel's death. Then you find out it was his own brother who murdered him. Speculate what emotions and thoughts Eve experienced.

As far as we know, this is the first incidence of human death. Eve is unlikely to have prepared herself for this tragedy. How would you console someone in her position? According to verse 25, how did Eve console herself? How old were you when you first truly knew what death meant – not just with your head, but with your heart?

Eve lost 2 sons in one day. Do you think she thought back to her decision to eat the fruit in Gen 3: 1-13? If so, speculate what was crossing her mind that day and in days to come.

READ Psalm 133. What is your reaction to it? Read it again as if you were Eve. Speculate what her reaction would be.

What from this, pertains to us today?

Be ready to share a summary of what you read, discussed and concluded

IF YOU HAVE TIME:

It is likely she had at least had one daughter between Cain and Seth because Cain is exiled and has a wife, which had to be his sister. How would you feel/be thinking if you were that person (sister/wife?) (verses 13-17) Was it fair for her to be exiled too? Does something similar happen today, situations where wives or family members pay for someone else's mistakes?

Read Luke 15: 11-32. We know what the father's reaction was to the son leaving and returning. Speculate what the mother's reactions were. Even though the younger son returned safely, what kind of trouble could be in store for the family because of the older brother's attitude? As a mother, what would you do?

Job's wife

DISCUSS: Do you know anyone who has had shingles? What is that like? What are some painful conditions that patients suffer from?

READ: Job 1: 1-5. What is Job's family status? Social/financial status? Spiritual practices?

SPECULATE: What is Job's relationship to other people in the nearby area? With God? His family?

READ: Job 1: 13-19. What has Job's wife lost in one day?

SPECULATE: If you lost your job, (spouse's job if you are married) and all your children died in a disaster like the collapse of the building they were in, tornado, etc, would you be numb? Angry? Sobbing? _____? Would you be able to make the funeral arrangements? Business decisions? Do daily activities like dress, bathe, cook and clean?

REREAD: Job 1: 14-15. The Sabeans, in the process of stealing, did what to all but one servant?

SPECULATE: Would Job and his wife have valuable goods (rugs, jewelry, etc) at their living quarters? Could Job's wife be concerned that the Sabeans might attack her and Job in their living space to rob them further? Kill them?

Compare what Job's wife has gone through with the Life Change Unit/stress test. How stressed is she?

READ: Job 1:20-22. What is Job's response to the tragedy?

READ: Job 2: 7-8. What has happened to Job?

READ verses 12-13. How bad/disfiguring is this disease?

SPECULATE: If your spouse had this happen to them, what would you think, feel, do? Would you ever wish it happened to you not them?

READ: Job 2: 9-10. What is Job's wife's response to the stresses? Job's?

READ: Job 2: 11-13. Generally speaking, who is more likely to need to take out troubles, males or females?

Who comes to comfort Job's wife?

READ: The following scriptures. Which of the following scriptures can Job's wife turn to for comfort and strength? Which one resonates the most with you and something you currently struggle with or face?

2 Cor. 1: 8-9, 2 Cor. 4: 7-10, 16-18; 2 Chronicles 14:11, Psalms 55:22, 1 Peter 5:7, Romans 8: 35, 2 Corinthians 12:9-11 Matthew 6: 25-34,

READ: Job 3: 1, 11-13, 20-26. What is Job's mental state?

SPECULATE: If you heard your husband (after suffering great loss) say something similar to this, would you be concerned about the possibility of suicide? If so, what would you do to try to prevent this? What would Job's wife been able to do to prevent him from committing suicide? How much sleep do you think she is getting through all of this?

Esther becomes Queen

Have you (or anyone in your family) ever been in a pageant or beauty contest? What was fun? Not fun? If you were queen (somewhere) what are 2 ways your life would be better, more fun? What household task would you LOVE never having to do again?

If you had been orphaned, who would have stepped in to take the place of your parents? Would you have chosen this situation? If not, who would you have liked to take your parents place and why?

BACKGROUND: King Xerxes of the Persian Empire is defied by his wife. Queen Vashti has been dethroned at the urging of Xerxes' councilors.

READ: Esther 2: 1-4. Do you think this is a good method to choose a queen? A wife? Why or why not?

READ: verses 5-7 and 19-20. How were Mordecai and Esther related? What was their relationship like?

SPECULATE: Why does Esther continue follow Mordecai's advice? Do you see any parallels between God/Mordecai and us/Esther?

READ: verses 8-11 How many girls must Esther compete with? What kind of impression does she make on Hegai? What 4 perks does Esther get for making a good first impression? How involved does Mordecai stay in her life?

READ: (A year later....) verses 17-18. How is Esther faring?

SPECULATE: How would becoming queen after a year of "special treatment" affect you?

Esther's dilemma

How hard was the decision when you choose your present living situation? What is one of the hardest decisions a parent has to make for a child? Share a decision you made that was difficult. What made it difficult?

Think of a time when it would have been easier to just keep quiet rather than speak out. What was the situation? What did you choose to do? Would you make the same choice again?

Have you ever had to blow the whistle on someone? What happened? Would you do things differently if it happened again?

READ: Esther 2: 5-7 and 19-20. How were Mordecai and Esther related? What was their relationship like?

SPECULATE: If you were Esther and no one in the palace knew you were a Jew, how frightened would you be of the edict?

READ: Esther 4:1, 5-11. How long has it been since Esther has seen her husband?

SPECULATE: Why might they be separated? What is Esther feeling now? How would you feel?

READ: Verses 12-14. Is Mordecai threatening Esther? Is he out of line?

READ: verses 15-17. Esther agrees to do as her cousin asks. How does she face the potential negative consequences? Do you think she is brave? Resigned? Upset?

Mordecai says "And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" How are we to view the "success" and "positions" we achieve?

Esther's happily ever after

What was your favorite fairy tale as a child? What part(s) appeals to you? Why? What fairy tale is the favorite of your child or another child you know well?

Do you know any orphans? How do you know them? Who takes care of them now that their parents are gone?

If you could write your own ending to your life, where would you be, what would you be and most importantly.....what would you mean to the people who are important to you?

READ: Esther 7:1-2. If you were Esther and the King would give you anything up to half the kingdom, what would you ask for?

READ: Mark 6:21-28. When given the same question, what did the daughter of Herodias ask for? Why did she ask for that?

READ: verses 3-4. What does Esther ask for?

COMPARE: Compare Esther and Herodias' daughter. Both had parents/guardians giving them advice which they followed. How else are they alike? Different? What does this say about the influence you have with your children or children you influence?

READ: James 1:27. What religion is pure and faultless before God?

A Xerxes grant Esther's request and Esther saves the Jews from destruction. The holiday of Purim is established as a memorial.

READ: Esther 8: 1-2, 15-17

What was Esther's happily ever after during her lifetime? How will Esther be remembered by the generations after her? How will Herodias and her daughter be remembered? How can we as Christian women take care of orphans?

Ruth and Naomi

READ: Ruth 1:1-5. What is the backdrop to this story?

SPECULATE: Had Naomi's sons lived, would they have moved back to Bethlehem? Why or why not?

- 1) READ: Exodus 22:22-23 & Deuteronomy 10:17-19 & Deuteronomy 27: What legal protections were in place for widows?
- 2) READ: Deuteronomy 24:17-20 & 26:11-13 How were widows and orphans to receive financial aid? Who was to be supported by the tithe besides the religious official?
- 3) READ: Deut. 23:3-6. How were the descendents of Lot regarded concerning spiritual things? Why?
- 4) READ: Genesis 30:1 & Luke 1:24-25 & 1 Samuel 1:5-11. How was barrenness viewed in Israel?

RELIGION IN MOAB: Chemosh was the national deity of the Moabites whose name most likely meant "destroyer," "subduer," or "fish god." Chemosh seems to have had a taste for blood. In 2 Kings 3:27 we find that human sacrifice was a gruesome part of the rites of Chemosh. Such rites, similar to Aztec sun worship, were commonplace in the various Canaanite religious cults, including those of the Baals and of Moloch.

READ: Ruth 1:6-17. What is the significance of "your God shall be my God"?

READ: Ruth 1: 18

SPECULATE: The distance between Bethlehem and Moab is about 60 miles. How long would it have taken them to make the journey? What dangers might 2 unprotected women face on the trip? How far would you be willing to hike on foot with a daughter or mother-in-law? What would you choose to carry for 60 miles?

SPECULATE: Naomi is a childless widow with no land. Ruth is a foreigner, a barren (for 10 years of marriage) widow. What will life be like for them in Israel? How old is Naomi? (consider she had a son who was married for 10 years). Why did Orpah choose to stay?

DISCUSS/REFLECT: If you were Ruth/Orpah/Naomi, what would you have done? Why?

READ: Ruth 1:19-22. Could Job's wife have said essentially the same thing in her condition? Job said "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be his name. Compare and contrast Naomi's attitude with Job and wife.

IF THERE IS TIME

READ: Hebrews 11: 13-16, 24-27. How is Ruth like Abraham? Moses?

Ruth & Boaz 2

What qualities did you look for in a husband? How did that differ from your mother or grandmother? SPECULATE how it will differ from young ladies looking to get married today?

Dramatically read Ruth 2 and 3.

Describe Boaz (2:1-12, 21-22; 3:16-18) SPECULATE: Boaz was the grandson of Judah's prince (Numbers 7:10-12) – the firstborn of a firstborn. How does that affect his standing in Israel?

Describe Ruth (2:6, 10-12; 3:10-11)

REREAD: Ruth 2: 4-13, NOTE ON: Ruth 2:17-19. An ephah of barley; or three seahs of barley, was six gallons. Ruth got enough in one day, for herself and her mother-in-law, which would last five days at least. This was a great deal for one woman to pick up, ear by ear, in one day; besides her diligence and industry, the favor shown her by Boaz accounts for this.

READ: Lev 25: 25-28, 35-38 V. 20. What is a kinsman-redeemer?

NOTE: v. 21-23 – about 3 months

NOTE ON 3:2 Threshing floors were built in an open place outside of the city. Evening breezes were the strongest making winnowing to separate chaff and grain easiest.

READ: Psalms 17:8, Matthew 23:37/Luke 13:34. What does hiding under wings mean?

REREAD 3: 9. It was a Jewish custom at marriage, for a man to cast the skirt of his "talith," or outward garment ([Ezekiel 16:8](#)) over a woman. The word signifies a wing, the allusion may be to the wings of birds spread over their young, to cherish and protect them.

REREAD: Ruth 3:10-11. A woman of Nobel character. How does this relate to Proverbs 31: 8-10? 1 Cor. 13?

How many of the attributes of love apply to Ruth? Naomi? Other women we have studied? Yourself? Can the word money, popularity or power be substituted for love?

What parallels in Ruth redeemed by Boaz and us by Christ?

David waited for a kingdom, 14 years. Think about David with Saul pursuing him, having the opportunity to kill him and not taking it. Ruth was his great grandmother.

SPECULATE: What impact the story of Ruth might have had on David - on his life, writings, choices.

Ruth and the Lineage of Jesus

READ Ruth 4: 1-9, someone as Boaz, someone as the nearer relative and someone as a narrator.

DISCUSS: What happened.

READ: Deut 25: 5-10. This is not the case here but will come up with Judah and Tamar.

SPECULATE: Why might the nearer relative want the land but not Ruth?

READ: Ruth 4: 11-12; Genesis 29:31-35, Genesis 30:1-13, 17-24 and Genesis 38: 6-11, 13-19, 24-26 .
What was Leah's experience with marriage and child bearing like? Rachel's? Tamar?

READ: v 13. Considering she was a childless widow, why is the conception noteworthy?

READ: V. 14-22 and Mt. 1: 1-6

DISCUSS: What was unusual about these women in the lineage of Jesus? Sarah, Rebekah (see Gen. 25: 21-26) Leah? Tamar? Rahab (See Joshua 2: 1, 8-13, 6: 22-25, Hebrews 11: 31, James 2:25), Ruth? Uriah's wife (see 2 Sam. 11:26-27).

How many were widows? Foreigners? Barren? "Sinners"?

The Genealogy of Jesus from Matthew 1

¹A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

²Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

³Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

⁴Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

⁵Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

⁶and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife...

Life Stressors

Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe developed this test to identify the sources and amount of stress encountered in life. The following is a list of stress inducing events, in the order of their Life Change Unit (the weight assigned by mental health professionals, (LCU), from high to low. Note that even positive change or events can cause stress. Circle the items that apply to events e experienced during the 12 months and add up their LCU.

Life Event	LCU
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation	65
4. Jail Term	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being Fired from work	47
9. Reconciliation with spouse	45
10. Retirement	45
11. Change in health of family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual difficulties	39
14. Addition of family member	39
15. Major business readjustment	39
16. Major change in financial state	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Change in frequency of arguments with spouse	35
20. Mortgage for loan or major purchase over \$ 15,000	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work	29
23. Children leaving home	29
24. Trouble with in-laws	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse begins or stops work	26
27. Starting or ending school	26
28. Change in living conditions	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress, manners, associations)	24
30. Trouble with boss	23

31. Change in work hours, conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
33. Change in school	20
34. Change in recreational activities	19
35. Change in church activities	19
36. Change in social activities	18
37. Mortgage or loan under \$15,000	17
38. Change in sleeping habits	16
39. Change in number of family gatherings	15
40. Change in eating habits	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Christmas	12
43. Minor violation of the law	11

If your total is 0-150:

Congratulations! At the moment, your stress level is low. Your chance of illness or accident related to your stress within two years is low. Any change can lead to stress, even enjoyable activities, such as vacations or new forms of recreation.

If your total is 150-300:

You have borderline high stress. Your chance of accident or illness related to your stress within two years is moderate.

If your total is over 300:

Warning: You have a high stress level. Your chance of accident or illness related to your stress during the next two years is great. Stress intervention techniques are strongly urged.

(From Discovery Health <http://health.discovery.com/centers/stress/balancing/stress/assessment.html>)

Other on line self grading tools can be found at <http://www.stresstips.com/lifeevents.htm> or

http://www.medindia.net/Patients/calculators/life_stressor.asp

What does the Bible say about stressful events?

2 Cor. 1: ⁸We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

2 Cor. 4: ⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;

⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body....¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

See also: 2 Chronicles 14:11, Psalms 55:22, 1 Peter 5:7, Romans 8:35, 2 Corinthians 12:9-11, Matthew 6:25-34

Try these online games

Widows in the Bible battleship

<http://www.quia.com/ba/346936.html>

Widows in the Bible rags to riches

<http://www.quia.com/rr/545048.html>

Mothers and their Children

<http://www.quia.com/jg/1483688.html>

Esther 1-2 Matching

<http://www.quia.com/jg/1460301.html>

Esther Rags to Riches chapters 3-6

<http://www.quia.com/rr/374624.html>

Ruth Jeopardy

<http://www.quia.com/cb/450955.html>