

Trail Guide
to
Bible Geography

A Teacher's Manual
With Daily Geography Drills

Cindy Wiggers & Adam Gullett
with Dianna Wiebe

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Published by Geography Matters, Inc

Cover design by Alex Wiggers

Photography by Kim Whitmore-Weber

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ISBN: 978-1-931397-81-0

Printed in the United States of America

Geography Matters, Inc

800.426.4650

www.geomatters.com

Acknowledgments

We would first like to express our gratefulness to our Creator who made such a fascinating earth for us to live on and study. We are also thankful to the Lord for the creative ideas and inspiration that He gave to us in writing this book.

Cindy

Special thanks to my dear husband, Josh, for all of your input, assistance, technical expertise, maps, abundant patience, and your special formula deadline coffee!

Thanks to my son, Alex, for creating the awesome Bible Timeline Figures in time for release with this project. Your commitment to a high standard of excellence will take you far in life.

Thanks to Dianna Wiebe for her input with the Old Testament section and the brief overview of the Holy Lands essay. Your faithfulness and willingness to take time away from Grapevine Studies to collaborate with me on this project contributed to the success of this book in a great way.

Adam

First and foremost I want to thank God my Creator for all his many blessings, for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this book and for the families it will touch.

Thanks my wonderful wife, Hannah, for your love and support with anything I put my hand to. You are such a blessing to my life and my best friend. I look forward to when we teach this curriculum to Will and Evelyn.

Thanks to Cindy Wiggers for allowing me to be a part of this project and for putting up with my constant delays. Your patience has earned you a lifetime supply of dark chocolate.

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Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Introduction

You hold in your hands a simple guide to studying the geography of biblical lands. It is divided into three sections for addressing a variety of learning styles. These sections are:

- *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* - weekly geography drills, where students gain experience using a Bible atlas by answering two questions each day. (Answer key provided!)
- *POINTS OF INTEREST* - take your students off the trail to explore Bible lands through mapping assignments and trail blazing with a variety of other additional assignment choices. These additional choices range from making crossword puzzles, to performing research, to writing essays, making 3-D maps and see-through maps, building a timeline, cooking, and oh, so much more.
- *GEOGRAPHY THROUGH LITERATURE* - finish the school year with a six-week unit study using *The Bronze Bow*. Experience the Jewish culture during the time of Christ, through the eyes of a trio of teenagers in Israel.

This is the third book in the *Trail Guide to Geography* series. All three guides are part teacher manual, part lesson plans, and part guidebook all rolled into one. The series allows for flexibility while providing clear guidelines for any parent, co-op leader, or teacher. Students will use additional resources to answer questions and perform *POINTS OF INTEREST* activities and assignments. These resources are explained in the instructions.

Learning geography is much more than knowing where places are located or the names of oceans and bodies of water. Geography encompasses climate, landforms, culture, languages, religion, animals, natural resources, mapping... need we say more? This guide touches on all aspects of geography while expanding your student's knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Your students will travel with different biblical characters and examine biblical events while observing the geography surrounding those people and events. Students will complete this course with a greater understanding of how geography impacted the people and events of the Bible and how geography impacts our lives, today.

We use a hands-on, student-initiated approach to learning which provides long-lasting results. Using the *Trail Guide* books as your guide, your students will learn their geography in a meaningful way that is both fun and memorable.

So, read over the instructions, become familiar with how to use the *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* and *POINTS OF INTEREST* sections, pull out your resources, and get ready for a fun-filled, fact-finding year of Bible geography.

Shalom!



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Instructions

NECESSARY RESOURCES

The *Trail Guide to Bible Geography* is written as a teacher's guide with geography drills. You do not need additional student workbooks because students will be building their own Geography Notebooks. However, you will need additional resources to teach Bible lands geography. This section describes required materials your student's will need as well as some additional resources that may enhance the study and aid students even further. (For ordering information see Appendix.)

Core supplemental resources include:

- Bible Atlas (level appropriate)
- Bible
- Bible Lands Activity Maps
- *The Bronze Bow*

Additional supplies to have handy:

- three-ring binder
- colored pencils
- plastic three hole punched page
- protector pockets (to store large maps)
- travel videos of the Holy Land
- overhead projector sheets
- color Vis-a-Vis overhead projector pens

Student Bible Atlas

The Student Bible Atlas is recommended for the primary and intermediate levels of *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS*, and is an excellent resource for mapping assignments. This atlas is richly colored with 30 maps of Old and New Testament and also shows archaeological sites. It is published by Augsburg Press.

Atlas of Bible Lands

The Atlas of Bible Lands is the best resource for answering the secondary level of *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* drills, for performing the mapping assignments, and locating timeline dates. Published by Hammond, this atlas has a neat timeline section comparing nations of the ancient world.

Bible Lands Activity Maps

This set of outline maps was custom designed for use with the *Trail Guide to Bible Geography*. The set includes specific large-scale outline maps of the Holy Lands and a poster-size blank timeline. The maps allow plenty of space for students to draw and label biblical places and events. Student will use these maps for the assignments in the "Mapping" section of the *Trail Guide*. If possible, provide each student with their own set of maps.

The Bronze Bow

The Bronze Bow, a Newberry Award winning novel, written by Elizabeth George Speare, depicts life and Jewish culture at the time of Christ; a time when becoming free from Roman rule was very important to the people. This book is used during the last six weeks of study to incorporate both literature and geography. It truly gives readers insight into the customs and ways of life in Roman occupied Israel. (Although this book is available at the library, it is so good you'll want your own copy!)



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Instructions

GEOGRAPHY TRAILS

The *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* section of the *Trail Guide* is a series of daily questions written at three different levels of difficulty. They are designed to teach students to use an atlas and to help them develop critical thinking skills. Students should be able to answer two questions a day in 5-15 minutes. All you need to do is provide the appropriate atlas and review with your students how to use it before beginning. You may need to work with them the first week or two, especially those in the primary level, but once they can navigate their way around the atlas easily, the daily drills will take only about five minutes. Now the fun begins! The most common feedback from the first two *Trail Guides* has been how students enjoy the daily questions and challenges they present.

Since three different learning levels of *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* are provided you can literally use this book for three years with one student or teach several levels of students at the same time. Each week focuses on a particular area or specific biblical characters so everyone studies the same topic together!

The *Trail Guide* is divided into Old Testament and New Testament. Many of the events in the Old Testament occurred in the same places as the New Testament, so there are some similar questions in both sections. This serves as a mini-review, but will also help students see the connections between biblical events and the geography of the Holy Lands.

It's as simple as that. Two questions a day for four days each week. And your students will develop a general consciousness of the geography of the Holy Lands. The answer key, of course, is located in the back of the book.

Levels

There are three levels in the book: primary, intermediate, and secondary. These three levels are not based upon grade levels or age of students, but upon developmental ability. Don't make the mistake of getting stuck on a certain level because you believe your student(s) belong there according to age or grade. Here are the guidelines we used to form the questions for each level. Grade levels are given only as an approximation. Let the students be your guide.

☿ Primary

Students using the primary level questions will follow the trails marked with this symbol. Please don't put your 2nd or 3rd grader on this level without providing lots of help. To enjoy and complete the assignment in 5-15 minutes, students should read well and be able to easily navigate their way on an atlas. At this level the same page in the atlas will be used all week. To work independently 4th or 5th grade students should be able to:

1. Identify places using north, east, south, and west terminology.
2. Locate: continents, places, regions, mountains, and major bodies of water.
3. Choose between 2 possible answers.
4. Use the provided Bible references to answer questions.
5. Calculate approximate mileage.

Recommended atlas: *Student Bible Atlas*.



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Instructions

Intermediate

Students using the intermediate level questions will follow the trails marked with this symbol. All of the above skills are utilized, with added complexity. Students will use more than one page in their atlas each week. To work independently 6th or 7th grade students should be able to:

1. Identify places using cardinal directions such as northeast, southwest, etc.
2. Draw conclusions from information on maps.
3. Locate topics such as islands, rulers, climate, vegetation, bodies of water, and elevation.
4. Utilize information on other parts of the atlas beyond just the maps.

Recommended atlas: *Student Bible Atlas*.

Secondary

This is the most difficult level in the *Trail Guide*. Students will utilize the skills for both primary and intermediate levels but with added complexity. To work independently, students in the 8th grade and above should be able to:

1. Answer more specific questions about cities and development.
2. Locate appropriate pages in the atlas for each question. They will not necessarily be on the same page or two.
3. Locate topics such as kingdoms, provinces, terrain, boundaries, and customs.
4. Identify past and present (Then and Now) names of the same location.

Recommended atlas: *Atlas of Bible Lands*.

Using Atlases

If you provide the recommended atlases and a Bible, your students will be able to find the answers to the questions easily. You can use a Bible atlas from your library, and they'll probably have no trouble answering the questions. However, please be aware that different publishers have different information in their atlases as well as different spellings for places. The correct answer for the questions in the *Trail Guide* may not be found on an alternative atlas. Just something to keep in mind if you provide students with atlases other than the ones recommended.

Finding Answers

Bible atlas maps depict a variety of historical periods, empires, and more. You'll probably need to help students select which maps to use at first. For the most part this *Trail Guide* is in chronological order, as are maps in any historical atlas. Look at the map titles and legends and locate the region or period that corresponds with the topic of each week's lesson. In the primary level, students will normally use the same map all week and move on to a different map the following week. The intermediate level will use up to two maps from the atlas, and the secondary may use as many as three different maps in one week. Some questions will best be answered from the thematic maps such as those focussed on physical relief, climate, or vegetation.



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Instructions

Bible

Students will use their Bible throughout this course. In the *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* section, a scripture reference is included in parentheses following the question when answers are best found in the Bible. Use whatever version of the Bible you prefer. Any attempt to teach doctrine in this course has been avoided.

Scheduling Geography Trails

This course allows for flexibility when planning your school schedule. You may want to start or end your Bible lesson each day with these *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* questions. Another option is to assign them at the beginning of the school day, while students are gathering their thoughts. Whatever time you choose is fine, but it's best to schedule these five-minute drills at the same time each day. To improve retention of facts and develop geography awareness, it's more effective for students to perform the drills five minutes a day for four days, than it is to do 20 minute lessons in one day. If at all possible, keep a four-day routine.

During the final week before beginning the literature unit, challenge students to write their own *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* questions. They've been answering questions by using their atlas for many weeks, they should be able to come up with a few of their own. Encourage them to create questions that can be answered from only one or two pages in their atlas. They may want to use some of the unused pages in the atlas that were not used, perhaps, "Early Churches," or "Major Archaeological Sites." Students can swap questions with one another or try to stump the teacher. Make it fun!

If you only used this teacher's guide for the *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* questions and answers you'd more than get your money's worth from this book, but it doesn't stop there. On the flip side of every *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* page you can slow down on your trek through the Bible lands to take a closer look at the *POINTS OF INTEREST* along the way.

POINTS OF INTEREST

This section provides a whole week's worth of assignment choices to further enhance your study of Bible geography. Just as you'd do on a drive along the countryside, you can pull off at the *POINTS OF INTEREST* signs for a better view.

You choose as much or little as your time and objectives allow. Don't expect your students to do everything, or they'll get overwhelmed. Select those which will help establish an atmosphere that encourages learning. Let their interests be your guide.

The *POINTS OF INTEREST* is divided into two sections:

- Mapping
- and Trail Blazing.



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Instructions

Mapping

The more students DO with the information they are learning the more they remember and understand it. Each week, students will have the opportunity to create their own maps by using a variety of outline maps. They will label places, events, and routes of journeys. They'll compare names of places through biblical history, shade maps with color depicting climate and terrain, and more. Mapping places, events, journeys, and features are a natural way to solidify Bible geography knowledge.

Occasionally mapping assignments provided aren't found in the primary and intermediate atlas. These are identified with the deer hoof-print trail marker and are intended for secondary level students only.

Bible Lands Activity Maps

Weekly mapping assignments are given at the top of each *POINTS OF INTEREST* page. Students will need a set of "Bible Lands Activity Maps" for these projects. The large-scale outline maps provide students plenty of space to mark and label physical features, cities, bodies of water, kingdoms, and more. This set includes the following 17" x 22" maps:

- Ancient Civilizations
- Europe and the Middle East
- Israel (2 copies)
- Eastern Mediterranean (2 copies)
- PLUS a 23" x 34" Mark-It Timeline of History

Each **Mapping** assignment indicates which map to use. Israel and Eastern Mediterranean maps are used in both the Old Testament and New Testament sections. Students should use a fresh map when beginning the New Testament section and will be reminded to do so in the first couple of weeks of New Testament assignments. Store these large maps in the front and back pockets of the three-ring binder, or place them in page protector sheets in the Mapping section of the notebook. Weekly **Mapping** assignments can usually be done in one sitting and should generally take no more than 30 minutes. (To order "Bible Lands Activity Maps" see Appendix.)

Outline Maps

There are six, reproducible, 8.5" x 11" size outline maps included in the Appendix. These are used for assignments given throughout the **Trail Blazing** section. You may make as many copies of these maps as you need for one family, one classroom, or one co-op group class. Remember, unless otherwise indicated, students will generally use the large maps in the "Bible Lands Activity Maps" for the **Mapping** assignments. The small maps are really not large enough to get the most out of the **Mapping** assignments; too much information in such a small space looks cluttered and can become confusing. Provide the larger maps, if at all possible.

Most students really enjoy filling in their outline maps. It's fascinating to see the personality and individuality of each student reflected in the quality of their maps. However, don't expect students



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Instructions

who've never used outline maps to jump into these projects without assistance and encouragement. You may need to work with them the first few times. A blank map can be a bit intimidating at first. Show them the similarity in shapes to the maps in their atlas to help them recognize landforms and bodies of water.

Legend

Students will be creating a legend on many of their outline maps. This is simply a box on an unused area of the map, such as seen on the *Dead Sea* map. In this box, student will include a key explaining the symbols on the map. For instance, in week one of the mapping section, students identify the Zagros Mountains. They will place three brown triangles at the location of the Zagros Mountains on their *Ancient Civilizations* map. In the legend they will place three brown triangles with the name "Zagros Mountains" written next to it. In other weeks they will be instructed to depict certain journeys, using specific colors, which will be noted in the legend by whose journey that color represents. The legend should be large enough to allow information to be added in following weeks.

Legend	
△△△	Zagros Mts.
■	Fertile Crescent
■	Desert
■	Nile Delta
---	Israel
---	Judah

Helpful Hints for Mapping

You'll be delighted at what wonderful maps your students can create using their atlas and outline maps. Provide colored pencils or fine-tipped markers that don't bleed through the paper. Encourage students to use their best penmanship and to be consistent. You can use the same Bible atlas as a reference to find the proper location of the places listed. Some maps in the atlas focus on physical features or climate and land usage. Make sure your students understand how to read these thematic type of maps. Once they get used to performing this kind of **Mapping** exercise, most students will do it with pleasure, and hopefully, with an increased level of pride.

Trail Blazing

It's one thing to pull off the side of the road to look at a point of interest, but to really get a good look, try blazing a trail off the beaten path. In this section of assignments, that's just what you'll do.

Students will have the opportunity to study alternative topics of interest, write summaries, make 3-D maps and see-through maps, study climate, land usage, plants, animals, gems, and minerals of the Bible lands. Here they'll begin building an awesome notebook filled with topics related to their study of Bible geography. In addition, they'll create a Bible timeline using the reproducible template included in the Appendix and/or the blank timeline poster from the "Bible Lands Activity Maps" set. Studying geography is a great way to practice creative writing, develop research skills, encourage artistic talents, and inspire students to tap into their natural curiosity, interests, and abilities.



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Points of Interest Instructions

Geography Notebook

Each week students add to a Geography Notebook creating a personalized record of their Bible geography study. The notebook will be comprised of the *POINTS OF INTEREST* assignments they complete throughout the course. For more excellent results with the Geography Notebook, share these helpful hints with your students several times during the year:

- Use your best penmanship.
- Add to your notebook weekly.
- Include drawings, reports, pictures, maps, and reproducible sheets from the appendix.
- Keep the notebook in a safe place where it will not be misplaced or damaged.
- Share your notebook with one another for inspiration. Let your notebook provide others with good ideas.
- Be creative. Your notebook will reflect your interests and abilities.

Using a three-ring binder makes it simple to add pages and dividers. If you use the type of binder with a front see-through sleeve, students can even design their own front cover. Plastic sheet protectors can be obtained from most office supply stores and make good pockets to store the larger maps. Here are some suggested names for sections, but feel free to let students organize notebooks as they see fit:

- Maps
- Reports
- Plants
- Crosswords
- Bronze Bow
- See-through Maps
- Animals
- Minerals and Gems
- Weapons and Warfare
- Timeline

These are simply guidelines for organizing the notebook. Be flexible. There's no wrong way to put it together. You may decide to include more or less material. If you let your students design their own notebooks (with a little guidance), they'll probably do a better job than you'd expect. Let the notebook reflect each student's individuality.

Scheduling Points of Interest

The *Trail Guide* is flexible and designed to easily meet your objectives and scheduling needs. Depending on how much work you assign, students could work about half an hour a day on the *POINTS OF INTEREST* section, four to five days a week. Or, you may decide to do the five-minute *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* drills Monday through Thursday and select from the *POINTS OF INTEREST* assignments for a more extended time on Friday. Consider reserving a full class period for projects or assignment that would benefit from the extra time, such as making a salt dough map or doing research for an essay. Also, be sure to consistently set aside time for students to show their work and explain what they have learned with others.



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Points of Interest Instructions

Review

At the end of about every six weeks there is a week reserved for review. Although students will still have the five-minute geography drills on those weeks, there are no new *POINTS OF INTEREST* assignments. This gives you the opportunity to study subjects of special interest without falling behind. Take advantage of those unique teachable moments when you come upon a subject that piques student curiosity. Let the review weeks serve as a catch-up or delve into projects that require more time.

Trail Blazing Projects

Projects make learning fascinating and memorable. **Trail Blazing** assignment choices allow you to teach a variety of grade and developmental levels and also provide you several years of usage from one book. Don't expect students to do all of the projects listed on each weekly *POINTS OF INTEREST* page. You might want to let them choose their own projects. Allowing students the freedom to select the types of activities that interest them often causes them to take ownership of their education and helps to foster a positive attitude about doing the work.

These creative assignments are given throughout the year, but the more detailed instructions on how to do them are included here for your convenience. You may want to place a paperclip on this page to make finding these instructions easy. The instructions are written so you can read them to the students, or let older students read the instructions themselves.

Mapping

Mapping assignments given as a **Trail Blazing** project generally use the outline maps found in the Appendix. Make copies ahead of time to have them handy when needed. This general chart will help you figure out how many of each map to copy.

Map	OT	NT	Total
Fertile Crescent	2		2
Israel-Sinai	3		3
Holy Lands	2	5	7
Galilee		4	4
Dead Sea		2	2

3-D Maps

Making 3-D maps will improve your perspective of the land you are studying. To create a 3-D map, tape an outline map on the bottom of a piece of cardboard or a cardboard pop-can case. Pile the salt dough or coffee clay on the map and spread it out to the edges of the land area shown on the map. The dough should be thicker for mountainous regions and lower at valleys and rivers. Use a toothpick or other such tool to make crevices or physical detail. Let the map dry overnight (or a couple of days – depending upon how thick the map is). Take a photograph of the 3-D map to include in your Geography Notebook.

Salt Dough

Here's a simple recipe for salt dough to create a 3-D map of the biblical lands.

2 parts flour
1 part salt
1 part water

Mix ingredients together. If crumbly, add a little more water.
Paint with tempura paints or use food dye on the salt dough before forming into the 3-D map.



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Points of Interest Instructions

Coffee Clay

This is an interesting recipe for homemade clay you can use to make 3-D maps.

1 C flour
1/2 C salt
1 C used coffee grinds
1/2 C cold left over coffee

Stir until well blended. Knead on floured surface until smooth. After creating 3-D map, air dry or bake at 175°F, for 30 minutes.

Climate, Land Usage, and Vegetation Maps

Make your own thematic maps depicting interesting information about the area you are studying. Use the climate, land usage, or vegetation map from the atlas as a guide and shade your outline map in a similar fashion by using colors to depict the subject. Include a legend defining the colors.

Animals of the Holy Lands

Because animal life depends upon the physical characteristics of a place where it lives, learn what animals are indigenous to the Holy Lands. Develop an "Animals of the Holy Lands" notebook or establish an animal section in your Geography Notebook using the template provided in the Appendix. You will be reminded when to add new animals to the section. Notice how climate, soil, and water affect biological life. Always include pictures or drawings when possible. Add scripture references from the list provided in the Appendix.

Plants of the Holy Land

Plant life also depends upon the climate and soil conditions. Learn what plants naturally grow in the Holy Lands. Develop a "Plants of the Holy Land" notebook or establish a plant section in the Geography Notebook using the template provided in the Appendix. You will be reminded when to add new plants to the section. Notice how climate, soil, and water affect biological life. Include pictures or drawings and scripture references from the listing in the Appendix.

Minerals and Gems of the Holy Land

Many people don't realize the Holy Lands are rich with gems and minerals. Develop a "Minerals and Gems of the Holy Lands" section for your Geography Notebook by using the template provided in the Appendix. For several weeks, you'll be reminded to research and study some of the minerals and gems. Write a brief summary. Include how these resources are used today and how they were used in biblical times. Scriptural references for minerals and gems are also provided in the Appendix.

Roving Reporter

Write a newspaper article as though you were present during some of the events of biblical times. Use your Bible and any additional historical references that you can find. In your article, note the climate and terrain and how it affected the event you "observed." Put the report in your Geography Notebook. If you like to draw, add a picture with a caption.



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Points of Interest Instructions

Crosswords

Make a crossword puzzle using the grid in the Appendix. Give clues for words that run across and down. Be sure to number the first box of each word and match the number with the across or down clue. Shade all unused boxes. Copy the crossword to share with others and place one in your notebook. Remember to include the answer key.

Word Search

Make your own Word Search using the grid in the Appendix. First make a list of biblical places, people, events, animals, plants, foods, or other topics. Write the letters in each cell of the grid, across, down, diagonally and in reverse. Share letters from one word with another where they cross in the grid. Fill in the remaining boxes of the grid with other random letters. Make copies to share. Put the Word Search in your Geography Notebook along with the answer key.

Geography Terms

Nestled in the **Trail Blazing** section about once a week is a shaded box identifying a geography term selected from the region of your study. Define the term and include these definitions in your Geography Notebook in a "Geography Terms" section. If you enjoy drawing, you may prefer to use the template in the Appendix to make your own "Illustrated Geography Dictionary" for your notebook. If time doesn't allow you to make a geography dictionary during the year you'll have another opportunity in last few weeks of this course during *The Bronze Bow* literature unit.

An especially useful visual aid for recognizing and defining geography terms is a "Geographical Terms Chart." Sometimes, just reading a definition from the dictionary isn't enough to picture in your mind what a physical feature of the earth, such as a plateau, really looks like. However, it's easy to understand what a plateau is when you can see it labeled right on the spot in a scene where the plateau is located. That's what you'll see on this illustration along with nearly 50 other terms labeled on the picture. In addition, over 150 terms are defined on the back. You can use the pictures to help you draw your own and can also copy the definitions for your "Geography Terms" section. (For ordering information see Appendix.)

See-through Maps

Creating see-through maps is a project best suited for intermediate and secondary level students. You will use clear acetate or overhead projector sheets and water-based Vis-A-Vis overhead projector pens for marking on the plastic. Starting with an outline map as a base you will create layers. Each layer builds upon another to see past place names compared to modern day names. You can place journeys of different Bible characters or empires and kingdoms on separate layers. Creating see-through maps takes time and patience, but is an awesome addition to your Geography Notebook when completed. *Then and Now Bible Maps* by Rose Publishing is an atlas with just such layers. It's an excellent resource to use as both a reference and a guide.



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Instructions

Instructions for Making See-through Maps

1. Use the outline map listed in the assignment as a base map.
2. Paperclip the base map face up, behind a sheet of acetate, and line up so all sides fit perfectly.
3. Mark the sheet of acetate with the trail, or whatever your are assigned, and label it. Tape a tab with the title (e.g. "Abraham's Journey") on the outer edge of the map. If you write the title on each layer instead of using a tab, be sure the titles don't end up covering each other, preventing you from reading them.
4. Repeat for additional layers always making sure to line up the pages perfectly with the guide. Use a tab for each new title or write each layer's title in a different place on the sheet. Use a different color marker for each layer so you can see all pages at once and you can recognize which layer depicts which topic. Match the color of the marking with the color used to title the map.
5. Use a three-hole punch on each sheet and place in a separate binder. Now you have your own layered see-through map or mini-atlas! Always keep the original map in the back because it's forming your boundary.
6. When using an original map over and over again as your base store the original in a sheet protector to prevent it from getting folded and crinkled.

Biblical Timeline of History

It's amazing how any history study comes alive when you depict memorable moments on a timeline. Like the Bible, this *Trail Guide* is divided into Old Testament and New Testament. Since every effort has been made to cover the material in a loose chronological order, adding to a Bible timeline just makes sense. This helps you to see the how the Bible events all flow together in history. Make sure to delegate a section in your notebook for the timeline.

Using the timeline template in the Appendix, put a span of 100-200 years or so on the shaded boxes of each page. You can add more time to your timeline than suggested here, whenever needed. If any page of the timeline gets too full of information and you have more to add, it's easy to tape an additional page to the outside edge and fold it in. This provides extra space when needed.

For a more interesting looking timeline try any or all of the following:

- color-code family lineages, kings, and prophets
- include your own drawings or pictures copied from books or magazines
- tell what you have learned in a sentence or two or add character summaries
- add Bible timeline figures

(For an awesome set of reproducible color Bible timeline figures that you can print out on your home computer from a CD-ROM, see ordering information in Appendix.)



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Instructions

GEOGRAPHY THROUGH LITERATURE

During the final six weeks of this course, you can take your students on a journey through the region of Galilee incorporating geography and literature in the mini-geography through literature unit using *The Bronze Bow*, by Elizabeth George Speare. It is fascinating to study geography while reading historical novels. The first few chapters of nearly any novel describe in great detail the setting of the story. You'll find a tremendous number of geographical terms and geography concepts if you know what to look for. When reading *The Bronze Bow*, take advantage of this opportunity to teach the terms, as they will have meaning as the story unfolds.

The Bronze Bow

This insightful book gives students a glimpse into the ministry and personality of Jesus Christ. They'll see Christ through the eyes of three teens—a set of brother and sister twins, which are offspring of a local rabbi, and a young Jewish zealot who they meet by chance. In their own way these three each learn the true role of the Messiah. Meet Jesus along with them and experience their struggle to understand how He fits into the picture of saving their world from Roman rule. Students will also learn about Jewish culture and traditions from *The Bronze Bow*.

This is a great read aloud book. Let students have the opportunity to take turns reading aloud. Select from the projects and assignments provided, as you have done all year. The literature unit includes:

- questions for comprehension and discussion
- mapping
- plant studies
- animal studies
- character studies
- research
- hands-on activities
- geography terms
- vocabulary words

Again, do as little or as much as YOU deem necessary.

This is also a fun project to do during the summer to ward against the summer doldrums, while keeping thinking skills activated. Your students will LOVE getting to know Christ and the culture of the times from this perspective. The author, Elizabeth George Speare, has a reputation for accuracy in depicting historical events and the life and times of her characters.



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

Instructions

Let's Get Started

Okay, you have your instructions, your teaching manual, and your resources, so it's time to get started. Let's quickly re-cap:

To use the *GEOGRAPHY TRAILS* sections (the five-minute daily drills) of the *Trail Guide* you only need the Guide, a Bible atlas, and a Bible. Your students will gain valuable skills and lay a foundation for some insight into the geography of the Bible Lands using this section of the book.

To have a more comprehensive Bible geography study, assign additional *POINTS OF INTEREST* activities. Try to have appropriate research materials on hand to help make the projects flow smoothly. Additional recommended resource suggestions are included in the Appendix.

The *Trail Guide* is intended to help make learning fun and memorable. The goal is to help make the Bible more real to you and your students as you understand biblical accounts of events in light of the geography of the area!

When you're ready to study U.S. and World Geography, consider:

- *Trail Guide to U.S. Geography* and
- *Trail Guide to World Geography*.

Shalom to you and your students as you venture through the Holy Lands. You'll start off with an overview of the land, climate, and history of this region and follow the footsteps of familiar Bible characters. May your camel keep up with the caravan as you guide your students on a trip to the geography of the Bible lands!



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

The Holy Lands: A Brief Overview

by Dianna Wiebe

Geography of the Land

The geography of the Holy Lands is like that of no other place on earth. It lies in five distinct geographical and climate zones. The changes from one zone to another are so abrupt, that it is almost possible to stand with your left foot in one zone while the right foot is still in another. In this region you can find Euro-Siberian vegetation, Mediterranean zone, steppe land, pure desert, and tropical vegetation all within the bounds of the small middle eastern country of Israel.

Located between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean on the boundary line between desert and vegetation, Israel boasts a unique combination of arid desert and fertile land. Mountains rising from the Mediterranean Sea drop off below sea level to the Jordan River Valley, (which is a small part of the Great Rift Valley that spans from Syria to Africa). The western slope of the central mountain range is green and the eastern slope is desert.

Climate

The prevailing westerly winds from the mountains create an interesting variety of climate conditions. Within short distances you will find plains, mountains, deserts, and fertile lands. Israel has basically two seasons: a rainy winter and hot dry summer. Remarkably, the change from one season to the other can occur as quickly as overnight! Rain falls in abundance in the rainy season and is often accompanied by such strong winds that it blows sideways. Flash flooding is a problem in the drier areas.

Israel looks like a paradise of flowers in February and March after the rainy season. Yet in summer you wouldn't recognize it by its dry hills. In one hour, you can drive from Jerusalem at 2700-ft altitude and be at the lowest point on earth, the Dead Sea. Interestingly, Jerusalem is located such that half the rain that hits it flows to the Mediterranean Sea and half flows through the desert to the Dead Sea.

Milk and Honey

God called Israel the land of milk and honey because, even though the land is mostly arid, it can support both animals and flowering plants. The drier south and east regions in the Judean and Negev deserts, make it perfect for raising sheep, goats, and camels. (The "milk.") Its wetter north and western regions on the fertile coastal plains and Galilee make it perfect for growing crops. (The "honey.") The diverse climate and geographical features all on this small tract of land create unique growing conditions. Apples and pears, typically grown in colder climates, can be seen in the same garden with tropical fruits, like strawberries and bananas. In fact, this small region is host to over 3000 species of plants.

Tracing the Steps

In this geography course you will study the Holy Lands while following the steps of significant people from the Bible. God introduces Himself to us in Genesis as the Creator of heaven and earth. God created a fascinating place in which He put the man He named Adam. From Creation to the Great Flood of Noah's time, there was only a limited knowledge of the geography of the earth. After the flood we are introduced to several cities including Babel, which is located south of the present-day city of Baghdad, Iraq. We begin this study of geography 20 generations after Adam with the man Abraham/Abram.



Trail Guide to Bible Geography

The Holy Lands: A Brief Overview

Abraham to the Promised Land

This journey begins with Abraham, whose life started in Ur. You'll follow him as he obeyed God and moved his family to Canaan, the land God had promised to him and his descendants. You'll look at the lives of Abraham's descendants beginning with Isaac and Jacob. Then watch as Joseph, a son of Jacob, was sold into slavery and taken from Canaan to Egypt, later to be joined by the rest of the family. This chosen family would remain in Egypt, in bondage until God's chosen time to deliver them. You will study the journeys of Moses as he was raised in Egypt, fled to Midian, returned to Egypt to deliver the Israelites, led the people 40 years in the desert, finally saw the Promised Land, and was buried by God Himself.

Conquests and Kingdoms

You will not only cross the Red Sea but will also cross the Jordan River, as Joshua led the children of Israel in conquering the Promised Land. Mapping the settlements of the 12 Tribes of Israel, the cities of refuge, and the Levitical cities will be part of your study. You will see the kingdom of Israel strong and united under Saul, David, and Solomon and then divide into two separate countries of Israel and Judah during the reign of Solomon's son. Then you'll study how Israel and Judah were taken into captivity by Assyria and Babylon, but not left without the promise of God that they would one day be returned to their land. Additionally, you'll look at the intertestamental period (the time between the Old Testament and New Testament) and look briefly at the Maccabees, Alexander the Great's kingdom, and the Greeks.

In the New Testament section you will trace the steps of Christ, learn where He walked, ministered, healed, and lived. You'll locate the places where the disciples ministered, and map all of Paul's missionary journeys. Through all of these journeys pay attention to the lifestyle, climate, land, seas, and culture of those who lived in the Holy Lands.

Footprints

As you walk alongside these biblical characters, try and image what they saw and what it was like to walk in their sandals. Experience the heat, the cold, the steep mountains, the dry river beds, the sand, and the sunsets. Watch how God interacted with these people and how they responded to God. As you observe the paths different men of the Bible took, may you use wisdom on which trail you choose to walk in your life. What will people learn from your footprints?

When possible, use travel videos and other visual resources so you can actually see this land. Better yet, set a goal to see the Holy Land for yourself. See where the Patriarchs walked, the city of David, the place where the Temples stood, where Jesus lived, and where the gospel was first preached, and then see what God is doing in this land today!



GEOGRAPHY TRAILS

Week 1 - Abraham: Ur to Egypt

Day 1



What gulf is east of Ur? What mountain range is to the north of Ur?



What two rivers are nearest Ur? What body of water is southeast of Ur?



What was Abraham's city of origin? What two names identify the gulf that was southeast of Ur?

Day 2



Name a river in the Fertile Crescent. What desert is in the Fertile Crescent?



What river did Abraham follow on his trip to Haran? As Abraham traveled from Ur to Haran, what general direction did he travel?



If you were invited to the palace in Ur, which harbor would you sail into? (Hint: Suburbs) What is the distance between Ur and Haran?

Day 3



What plateau is west of the Fertile Crescent? What island is west of the Fertile Crescent?



Describe the Fertile Crescent. (Hint: You might need to read text on map) In what Canaanite town did the Lord appear to Abraham? (Genesis 12:6-7)



What Empire is SW of Mitanni? What group of people lived near Shechem? (Genesis 12:6)

Day 4



What is the first city that Abraham might have stopped at on his trip from Ur to Haran? To what land did Abraham go after leaving Haran? (Genesis 12:5)



When Abraham settled in Hebron, what kind of life did he lead: Nomadic or Urban? Did Abraham enter Lower Egypt or Upper Egypt?



In what general direction did Abraham travel after leaving the land of Canaan? (Genesis 12:10) What two trade routes could Abraham have taken on his journey from Shechem to Egypt? (Hint: Use Palestine-Routes Map.)




POINTS OF INTEREST


Abraham: Ur to Egypt

Mapping

Ancient Civilizations

- Place three brown Δ 's at the Zagros Mountains. Label this color and symbol in the legend.*
 - Label the following bodies of water: Persian Gulf, Tigris River, and Euphrates River.
 - Label, Canaan, Lower Egypt, and Upper Egypt using all CAPS.
 - Label the following places: Ur, Cyprus, Haran, and Babylon.
 - Shade the Fertile Crescent in light green. Label light green in the legend, "Fertile Crescent."
 - Shade the Syrian Desert in tan and label it. Label tan in the legend, "desert."
 - Shade the Anatolian Plateau in orange and label it. Label orange in the legend "plateau."
 - Shade the Nile Delta in dark green. Label dark green in the legend, "Nile Delta."
-  Label the Lower Sea.

Eastern Mediterranean

- Label these places: Shechem, Hebron (Mamre), and Cyprus.
-  Draw and label the following routes in gray: The Way of the Sea and The Way of Shur.

Trail Blazing

Make a 3-D map of the Fertile Crescent using salt dough or coffee clay. Paint the fertile crescent section of land in orange.

Using the Fertile Crescent map, mark Abraham's journey from Ur to Egypt in blue. Label this map "Journeys of Abraham."

Study the Fertile Crescent. Learn what made it fertile and how it was named. Understand how its climate differs from the surrounding climates. Learn what crops are best suited to this area.

Abraham was born 20 generations after Adam and Jewish tradition puts the birth of Abraham in the year 1948 after Creation. The Jewish calendar counts the years since Creation, find out what year it is on the Jewish calendar. (<http://www.jpost.com>)

The Nile River enters Egypt in the south at the highest elevation, known as Upper Egypt, then flows north toward the area known as Lower Egypt, before it reaches the Nile Delta and empties into the Mediterranean Sea. Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the climate, elevation, and commerce of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.

Write a paragraph about the nomads. Include the definition of nomad, where they slept and where they got their food and supplies.

See-through Maps

Start your own see-through map using the Fertile Crescent map. On an overhead transparency sheet, mark the country or empire boundaries of Babylon, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Canaan, and Egypt during the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Use different colors to represent each empire. Label each color in a legend. Label this overlay "Then."

*See legend sample on page 13.

