

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

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 & President, *The Great Adventure*

Sarah Christmyer, Co-developer & 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

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

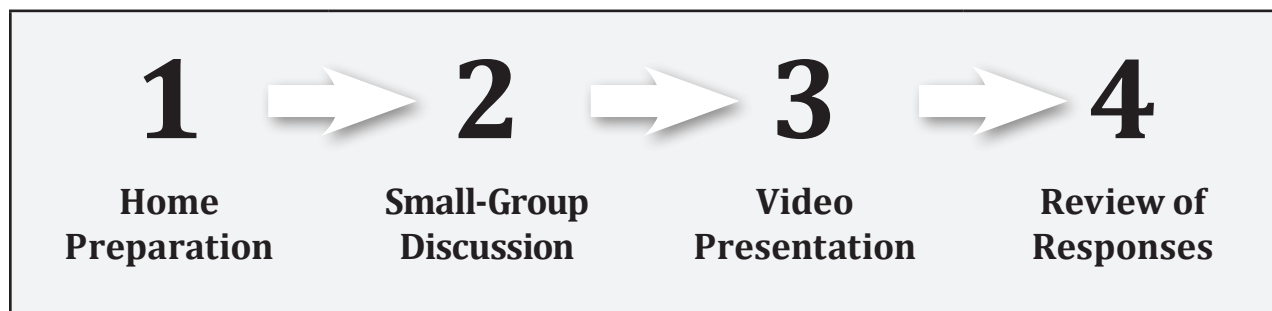
Materials for *Matthew: The King and His Kingdom* include:

- **Study Set.** 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 Study Set 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.*)
- **The Great Adventure Bible Study Leader’s Companion** (free download) provides step-by-step instructions for leaders on planning, promoting, running, and facilitating a Bible study. (*This Leader’s Companion is available at BibleStudyForCatholics.com/downloads.*)

In addition, every participant, leader, and small-group facilitator should have a Catholic Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. We recommend the Revised Standard Version–Catholic Edition (RSV-CE) or the New American Bible (NAB).

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 1: Home Preparation

Note: There is no home preparation required for Session 1.

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 2: 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 BibleStudyForCatholics.com/Facilitators. Be sure to follow the “Ten Commandments of Small-Group Discussion” on page xi.

Step 3: 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 4: Review of Responses

Note: There are no responses for Session 1.

The final step—reviewing the responses at the back of this Study Set—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 BibleStudyForCatholics.com/leaders, or call our Study Consultants at 1-800-376-0520.

Session Outline and Reading Guide

Each session in this Study Set has the following sections. (Note: Session 1 follows a different format.)

1. Session Questions (used during **Step 1: Home Preparation** and **Step 2: 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 3: Video Presentation**)

3. Session Responses (used during **Step 4: 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 Times) | Main Reading | Additional Bible Readings | <i>Catechism</i> 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 6:23; 11; 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, 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, 10-14; Sirach 48:4, 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 |
| 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; Mark 2:7; James 5:14-15 | (none) |
| 11. Matthew 10 – Jesus Commissions the Twelve (56:23) | Matthew 10 | Genesis 3:15; Matthew 4:12-6; 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; 2 Peter 1:6-8, 17-18, 4:12-13, 5:10 | 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 Times) | 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, 13, 12:10; Hosea 9:10-17; Zechariah 9:9-10; Matthew 16:21, 17:22-23, 26:39, 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, 9-10, 13, 14:4, 12; Ezekiel 32:1-2, 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, 21-24, 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

- Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)
- Small-Group Discussion (40 minutes)
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.
- Video Presentation (55 minutes)
- 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.