

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

The Contextual Bible Reading Study Guide has two sections. The first section is general information for students to better understand the genre of the current book for LTCNW. This section is additive. This means that the 7th-12th graders will need to be familiar with both the 3rd-6th grade material and their own. The Contextual Bible Reading Quiz will use the terms in this section. The Quiz Questions will not be asking students to define these terms. Instead, the students will need to apply these concepts to the passage in question (See Section II for examples). It might help to make flashcards to remember what each term means.

The second section will have example questions from this year's book(s) for the student to practice and apply the knowledge from the first section. Unlike the Bible Bowl study guide, these passages and questions will not be used at the Convention Event.

SECTION 1: GENRE STUDY GUIDE

This year's book: Genesis (2022) **This year's genre: Ancient Hebrew Narrative**

Narrative is a fancy word for a story. Almost half of the Bible is in narrative form (~43%). This means that God's spirit, which we believe filled the human authors, thought that stories were one of the best ways to help us understand God and our role in the cosmos. Some stories are about their own experiences, and some stories are about the experiences of others. Sometimes they even tell stories that might not have happened in order to teach us about God, people, and how we ought to relate to God.

What is the shape of a story? When we talk about narratives, we like to think about them as an arc, or a rollercoaster. All stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Imagine hearing a story without one of these key pieces; the story wouldn't make much sense! Characters in a narrative will encounter problems (usually one big problem) and then have a series of experiences until the problem is resolved or addressed. Unlike actual roller coasters though, characters will end in a different place than when they started. Either they or the world will have changed in some way.

NARRATIVE REFERENCES:

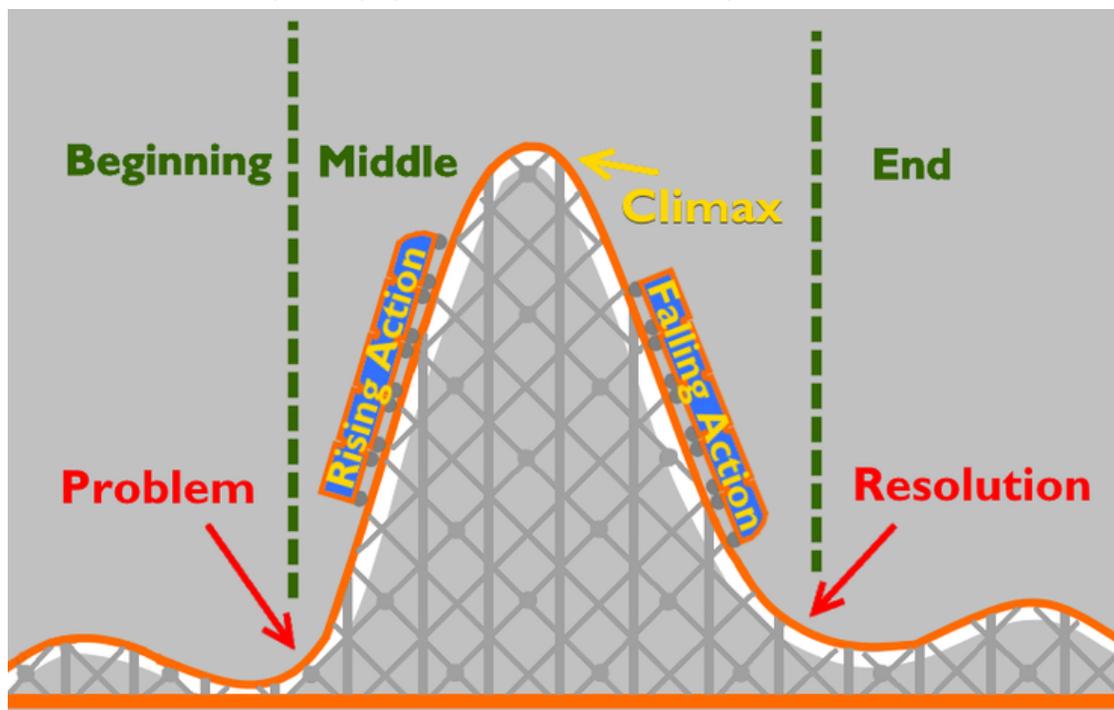
- **3-6th Grade Terms and Definitions**
 - **Characters:** The characters are those people, spiritual beings, and animals that are a part of the narrative arc.
 - **Main Character:** The main character (or protagonist) of a story is the primary character (or sometimes a group of characters) that is faced with the main problem. Their lives are changed as a result of the problem and the story revolves around their experience. Readers are meant to consider the story from this perspective first.
 - **Adversary:** The primary character that opposes the main character (sometimes called the antagonist). Some stories have antagonists, sometimes problems are non-characters. A careful audience will also consider the story from this person or group's perspective.
 - **Supporting Characters:** Those characters who help, hinder, or interact with the main character in various ways. These characters' perspectives should also be considered
 - **Main problem:** The central dilemma that the protagonist is trying to overcome. Sometimes the main problem is resolved and the protagonist no longer has to worry about the dilemma. Sometimes the dilemma gets worse or changes in nature. Regardless, the main problem will

always be central to the plot of the story and will be addressed in some way before the end of the story.

- o **Resolution:** When the main problem is addressed in a significant way, this is called the resolution. The resolution brings the story to a close. Sometimes there are some details that follow which wrap up the loose ends of the narrative, but the resolution brings the narrative to a conclusion.

- **Additional Concepts for 3rd-6th Grade**

- o **Author's meaning:** Authors write their stories to shape and change an audience. They do this by giving us an account of events in such a way to teach us about God, humans, and how we ought to live.
- o **Hebrew texts:** Hebrew is the language that the Old Testament is primarily written in. Hebrew texts are characteristically sparse in detail. Unlike our own writing, ancient authors give us barebones accounts and only mention details if they are critical for the meaning of their story. This means that when they mention a detail, it is going to be very important. These authors also love to write in puzzles and riddles (Prov 1:6), which means that if you read something strange, the author wants you to pay close attention and study more.



The Narrative Roller Coaster

- **7th-12th grade Definitions**

- o **Introduction:** The introduction of a story provides the setting, characters, and context for the reader. The introduction is usually those details that are provided before the main character experiences the main problem.
- o **Setting:** The setting is the location and place that the events in the narrative take place. In the Bible, places are often important for the events that took place there before. For example, Bethel appears many times as a place of worship throughout Israel's history. The names of places often have meanings significant to the narrative (Bethel means "house of God").

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- **Rising Action:** After the main problem of a story occurs, things usually get worse and worse for the main character. This part of the story is called the rising action.
 - **Climax:** Just when the main problem seems overwhelming, something will happen in the story to move it toward the resolution. This part of the story is also known as the turn because of how it turns events away from disaster and toward resolution. The climax is also a great way for the author to embed meaning and who or how they think a problem ought to be solved.
 - **Falling Action:** The problem is not yet solved, but the main character is now working toward the solution, which may seem inevitable.
 - **Conclusion:** After the resolution, the author often wraps up the story by giving out details that the reader might be curious about, or preparing the reader for subsequent stories.
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- **Additional Terms for 7th-12th Grade**
 - **Narrative Patterns:** To connect stories together in interesting ways, the author of the narratives will often pattern the way they tell the story to bring another story to mind. For instance, when Sarai gives her servant Hagar to Abram (Genesis 16), the same language and phrases are used as when Eve gives the fruit of the tree to her husband Adam (Genesis 3). The authors intend for us to consider the similarities and differences between two (or more) stories when they use these kinds of patterns.
 - **Ancient Meditation Literature:** The Bible isn't meant to be read once, figured out, and then discarded or put on a shelf. The spirit-filled authors spent their lives designing a beautiful, rich, and deep collection of texts that were meant to be read daily over a lifetime. We ought to take the advice of the Psalmist in Psalm 1 and meditate on these scriptures day and night in order to gain God's blessing (Ps 1:1-2).
 - **Ancient Context:** The Bible was written for us but it was not written to us. We have to remember that the authors of the Bible were real people in a real context. This context is far removed from our situation, but we honor them by trying to understand them in their context as best we can. When we approach narratives, we ought to set our own questions, issues, and preconceptions aside and simply let the author teach us. Once we have done that for a good while, we can return to some of our own questions and concerns (if they are still relevant).

SECTION 2: EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

Example passage and questions for 3rd-6th Grade (Teacher's Guide):

Read this passage (Genesis 12:9-13:1 ESV) and answer the questions:

And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb. Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels. But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had. So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

1. Who is the main character (or protagonist)?
 - A. The Lord
 - B. Abram**
 - C. Sarai
 - D. Pharaoh
2. What is the main problem of the story?
 - A. The Lord promises the land to Abram
 - B. There is a famine in the land
 - C. Abram gives his wife away**
 - D. The Lord sends plagues on pharaoh's house
3. What is the resolution for the story?
 - A. Abram returns to the land
 - B. Abram returns to Bethel
 - C. Pharaoh gives Sarai back to Abram**
 - D. Pharaoh asks Abram why he tricked him
4. Who is the adversary in this narrative?
 - A. Abram
 - B. Sarai
 - C. God
 - D. Pharaoh**

5. How is Hagar related to this story?

- A. She was more beautiful than Sarai.
- B. She was a princess of Egypt.
- C. She also experienced a famine.
- D. She was likely one of the servants Abram obtained in Egypt.**

6. Who is God protecting in this story and why? (Short Answer)

God is protecting Abram in spite of his mistakes because he is protecting his promise to Abram. Though the Egyptians are (possibly) hurt, God is also protecting them from Abram's mistake by bringing Sarai out of Pharaoh's house.

Example Passage and Questions (7th-12th Grade)

Read this passage and answer the questions (Genesis 12:6-13:4 ESV)

Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb. Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels. But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had. So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord.

1. Which detail is part of the introduction?
 - A. There was a famine in the land.**
 - B. Abram acquires great possessions.
 - C. Pharaoh's advisors praise Sarai to Pharaoh.
 - D. Pharaoh asks Abram why he tricked him.

2. Which event is part of the rising action?
 - A. God promises Abram the land of Canaan
 - B. Abram's family flees a famine
 - C. Pharaoh treats Abram well for Sarai's sake**
 - D. Pharaoh sends Abram on his way

3. Which event is the climax (or turn) of the story?
 - A. Pharaoh taking Sarai from Abram
 - B. God afflicting pharaoh's house with plagues**
 - C. Abram returning to Israel
 - D. Abram returning to the altar at Bethel

4. Which event is part of the falling action of the story?
- A. Abram leaves the Negev for Egypt
 - B. Pharaoh questions Abram**
 - C. Abram moves from place to place in the Negev
 - D. Abram calls on the name of the Lord
5. What later major Biblical narrative uses the same pattern in this one?
- A. Tower of Babel
 - B. Jacob at the Well
 - C. The Exodus from Egypt**
 - D. The exile from Jerusalem
6. What is the author trying to communicate with this story's climax? (Short Answer)

Abram (and God's people) get themselves into trouble when they fail to trust in God's plan (staying in the promised land), but God will protect them in spite of their failures so that he can bring about his Messiah and promised blessings. Abram does not deserve God's protection, but God provides it because he has partnered with Abram.

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