Formed by Truth

Formations: A Redemptive-Historical Approach to the Old Testament

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Introduction

The Purpose of Formed by Truth

The purpose of Formed by Truth is to help students know God and love Him more. Rooted in Romans 12:2, this curriculum emphasizes the reading and study of God's Word, recognizing Scripture as the final authority for understanding who God is and how His truth should shape our lives.

It is God who speaks, the Holy Spirit who works, and the student who responds.

Students are encouraged to spend meaningful time in Scripture, developing their understanding of God's Word while growing in their relationship with Him. Through reading, studying, reflecting, and applying biblical truths, they have opportunities to grow spiritually while developing valuable academic skills.

The instruction provided is not intended to replace the teaching of parents, pastors, or the local church. Rather, it provides a foundation upon which that instruction can continue to build. As students grow older and begin making decisions independently, they need more than familiarity with selected Bible stories or isolated passages. They need to know how to approach Scripture for themselves, understand what they read, and evaluate their beliefs and decisions in light of God's Word. Proverbs 22:6 reminds parents of the importance of training children in the way they should go. The goal is to support that responsibility by helping students develop habits of Bible reading and study that can continue throughout their lives.

Many Christians have never read the Bible in its entirety. Students who complete both the Foundation and Application levels will have read through the entire Bible over two academic years. More importantly, they will have examined how its books, events, people, and teachings fit together. The desire is that students will not simply finish the Bible, but will develop a greater desire to return to it.

An Immersive and Exploratory Approach to Learning

Students will learn through an immersive and exploratory approach supported by systematic and explicit instruction.

Rather than studying primarily isolated theological topics or individual Bible stories, students begin by reading Scripture itself. They encounter biblical events, characters, promises, and teachings as they progress through the text. They are encouraged to observe

carefully, ask questions, recognize connections, and consider the significance of what they read. This does not mean students are left to interpret Scripture without guidance. While the Holy Spirit enables believers to understand and respond to God's Word, careful study also matters. Students receive instruction in biblical interpretation, literary forms and techniques, and historical and cultural context to help them understand Scripture faithfully.

Some activities teach specific concepts or skills. Others encourage students to investigate Scripture, organize information, compare passages, or reflect on what they have learned. Rather than relying primarily on repetitive worksheets or questions that require students to restate information they have just read, assignments are designed to help students understand Scripture, organize their discoveries, recognize connections, and communicate what they have learned. The goal is meaningful engagement rather than busywork.

Making Room for Reflection and Spiritual Growth

Although students are expected to meet academic requirements, there is also room for thoughtful reflection and spiritual growth.

Students encounter questions that require careful consideration. Sometimes Scripture provides a clear answer. Other times, they may need to examine additional passages, conduct research, or recognize that God has not revealed everything they might wish to know. Learning to distinguish between what Scripture teaches, what can reasonably be inferred, and what remains uncertain is an important part of biblical study.

Daily devotional activities encourage students to approach Scripture prayerfully, literally, applicably, and responsively. Each week, students are guided through these four approaches as they learn to pray before reading, understand Scripture within its original context, consider how biblical truths apply to their lives, and respond personally to God's Word. Through this process, students gradually develop habits of personal Bible study that can continue beyond the course.

While these activities are designed to fit within the daily schedule, they should not become exercises completed merely to satisfy an assignment. There may be occasions when a passage deserves additional thought, prayer, or reflection..

When God speaks through His Word, students should take time to listen and respond.

Understanding the Old Testament

Students study the Old Testament through a combination of biblical reading, historical investigation, and geographical exploration. The reading plan follows a generally chronological approach while considering the literary purpose and organization of individual books. Whenever practical, books are read in their entirety rather than divided into smaller portions to maintain a strict chronological sequence.

For example, Isaiah is read as a complete book even though his ministry spanned the reigns of several kings. Job is placed between Genesis 11 and 12, while Ruth is read following Judges. Psalms and Chronicles are reserved for later in the course, allowing students to reflect on and review the biblical history they have already studied.

Throughout the year, students examine the people, places, events, promises, and teachings of the Old Testament within their historical and cultural settings. The goal is not to cover every possible detail, but to provide a substantial foundation for understanding the Old Testament and its significance within Scripture as a whole.

The Five Areas of Study

Students develop a notebook organized into five major sections. Each serves a distinct purpose, although students frequently recognize connections between them. Some sections contain reference materials that students complete and consult as needed. Others grow throughout the year as students encounter additional information.

1. Bible Study Tools

This section focuses on developing students' ability to read, understand, and interpret Scripture.

Students learn foundational principles of biblical interpretation, including the importance of context, literary forms, and literary techniques. They examine how different kinds of biblical writing communicate meaning and how those differences influence interpretation. Some materials are provided as reference sheets, while others are developed by students as they encounter new techniques and concepts. These tools are intended to support students in their personal Bible study beyond the completion of the course.

2. Names & Attributes of God

The ultimate purpose of studying Scripture is to know God.

Throughout the Old Testament, students encounter God's names, descriptions of His character, and accounts demonstrating His attributes. They compile information about who God is, drawing their observations directly from Scripture. This section encourages students to recognize God's character throughout the biblical account rather than studying His attributes only as isolated theological concepts.

3. God's Promises

God makes promises throughout Scripture, including promises communicated through formal covenants.

Students examine these promises, identifying to whom they were made, what was promised, whether conditions were attached, and how they relate to God's purposes. They also consider whether promises have been fulfilled or remain future, as well as any continuing conditions or responsibilities associated with them. Particular attention is given to understanding the original recipients and meaning of each promise, distinguishing promises made to specific individuals or nations from truths that apply more broadly.

4. Biblical History & Geography

Historical and geographical context can greatly influence how a passage is understood.

Students develop timelines, maps, genealogical charts, and other resources that help them understand when and where biblical events occurred. They examine geographical features, historical circumstances, and relationships between biblical events and the surrounding world. Rather than simply memorizing dates and locations, students develop a historical framework that helps them understand the biblical account.

5. Progressive Revelation

God's revelation unfolds throughout Scripture.

Students trace important developments in God's dealings with mankind, His promises, His expectations, and His unfolding purposes. This includes examining biblical prophecies, recognizing their historical context, and considering whether their fulfillment has occurred or remains future.

Students also complete a weekly activity titled Connecting the Testaments. Although the focus is on understanding the Old Testament within its original context, Christians

today have the benefit of possessing the completed Scriptures. Connecting the Testaments allows students to examine relevant New Testament passages and recognize how later revelation provides additional understanding without replacing or changing the original meaning of earlier passages.

Academic Expectations and Skill Development

Academic Expectations

As a two-credit high school course, Foundation includes approximately 256 hours of instruction and independent study over 32 weeks. Students should plan to work four days per week, spending approximately two hours each day on reading, study, and activities.

Students are expected to complete their assignments thoughtfully, engage with the material, and take responsibility for their learning. While the workload is substantial, the expectations are reasonable for students who have developed age-appropriate academic habits and are accustomed to completing independent assignments.

The Bible serves as the primary textbook, supported by two additional required resources: the *Holman Bible Atlas* and *Experiencing God for Teens*, along with the instructional materials provided.

Students may use the Bible translation of their choice throughout the course. Unless otherwise specified, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV), and Scripture references are based on the KJV text.

Academic Skill Development

The primary academic emphasis is biblical literacy, reading comprehension, information organization, and synthesis. Students receive explicit instruction in biblical interpretation, literary forms and techniques, historical context, and methods of organizing information.

Students should enter the course with a reasonable foundation in reading comprehension and basic writing skills. They should be comfortable reading independently, following written instructions, and communicating their thoughts in writing. Those unfamiliar with this approach to learning may initially need additional time to complete assignments as they develop the habits necessary for independent study.

Throughout the course, students apply what they learn through written narration, summarization, freewriting, reflection, and activities that encourage them to examine relationships across Scripture. The emphasis is not on producing polished compositions or

mastering advanced writing techniques, but on processing information thoughtfully and communicating their understanding clearly. These experiences strengthen students' ability to think critically, make meaningful connections, and approach Scripture with greater understanding while developing skills useful for future academic study and lifelong learning.

How to Get the Most Out of This Course

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning while parents remain involved in providing support, accountability, and encouragement. Three primary resources support daily instruction: the Student Manual, Student Notebook materials, and Student Resource Guide.

The Student Manual

The Student Manual is the primary instructional resource. It contains weekly reading assignments, explanations, directions, devotional activities, and instructions for completing notebook assignments. Students can work through much of the material independently because the manual provides the guidance necessary to complete their daily assignments.

The Student Notebook

The Student Notebook contains reference pages, worksheets, and organizational materials that should be printed and placed in a binder. Students also create additional materials throughout the year. The completed notebook serves as a personal record of their learning and a resource for future Bible study.

The Student Resource Guide

The Student Resource Guide provides additional guidance for completing and reviewing assignments. It functions somewhat like an answer key, but it is not intended to provide a single correct response to every activity. Many assignments involve personal reflection, observation, interpretation, or synthesis. In these cases, the guide provides examples of appropriate responses rather than exhaustive answers. Other assignments, such as identifying historical information or organizing genealogies, have more objective expectations. Students and parents should use the guide to evaluate understanding, identify missing information, and consider additional possibilities.

For a fuller explanation of its purpose and appropriate use, consult the introductory section of the Student Resource Guide.

The Parent's Role

Although students are encouraged to work independently, parental involvement remains valuable. Parents are encouraged to review their students' progress, discuss what they are learning, and provide guidance and accountability. While some assignments invite discussion with a parent or trusted adult, parents are not expected to prepare daily lessons or provide extensive instruction.

Parents may also consider following the same Bible reading schedule as their students. Reading the passages alongside them provides opportunities for meaningful conversations, shared discoveries, and spiritual growth within the family. Even when parents are familiar with the biblical accounts, revisiting the passages can refresh their memories, deepen their understanding, and help them engage more thoughtfully in discussions with their students.

The goal is to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning while maintaining opportunities for parents to participate in their spiritual and academic development.

Appendix Resources

The appendix provides additional resources and guidance to help families adapt and implement the course according to their needs.

Evaluating Student Work

Families may use different approaches to evaluating student achievement. The appendix offers guidance on grading, assessing understanding, and documenting progress. Parents remain responsible for awarding and documenting credits.

Special Accommodations

Parents of students who require special accommodations are responsible for determining and implementing appropriate adjustments based on their child's individual needs. The appendix offers suggestions for adapting assignments and learning activities.

Optional Scripture Memory

Scripture memorization is encouraged but is not required for Foundation. Families who wish to incorporate memorization may use the optional Scripture memory tracks provided in the appendix or select passages that complement their students' studies.

Academic Sources and Further Study

A bibliography identifies academic resources that informed the development of the course and provides opportunities for further study. While these resources offer valuable historical, literary, and theological insights, Scripture remains the final authority for biblical interpretation.

More Than a Completed Course

Students will encounter challenging passages, unfamiliar historical settings, difficult questions, and opportunities to think carefully about what they believe. They will also encounter the character of God, His faithfulness, His holiness, His promises, and His dealings with mankind throughout biblical history.

The hope is that students will finish with more than a completed course, an organized notebook, or two high school credits. The desire is that they will have developed a deeper understanding of God's Word, a greater appreciation for the unity of Scripture, stronger habits of independent study, and a growing love for the God who has revealed Himself through its pages.

Training the mind. Transforming the heart.