

Old Testament Revision

From my experience New Testament books get studied a lot more often than books from the Old Testament. So when the people in a Bible study group get around to studying a particular OT book their memories of OT history may be a little rusty. You could begin the series with a study which is a broad revision of the OT. To make it fun you could test the group by reading some quotes and listening to some sound bites. The group's job is to say where the quote is from and its context. The leader can mix things up by having some easy quotes and some hard ones as well as a quote or two from the particular OT book that will be studied during the rest of the series.

Below is an example of what I mean.

After each quote and answer the leader should fill in the OT history roughly up to where the next quote takes the story. Don't be too detailed or the group will guess where the quote is from before you read it out. In the following example some of the following sound bites may be hard to obtain so just use whatever you can get a hold of. What the leader says is in **bold** and the answers are in ordinary print. Instructions to the leader are in (parentheses).

1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Where? Gen 1:1

Context? creation

2. "The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Where? Gen 12:1-3

Context? God promises Abram that he will become a great nation and lead them to the Promised Land.

3. (Play the first section of Bob Dylan's Highway 61. If the group can't understand the words as they are sung you may have to use the translation below:)

Translation: God said to Abraham "Kill me a son."
 Abe said "Man, you must be putting me on."
 God said "No."
 Abe said "What?"
 God said "You can do what you want to but, the next time you see me coming you better run."
 Well Abe said "Where do you want this killing done?"
 God said "Out on Highway 61."

Bible: Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"
 "Here I am," he replied.
 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

Where? Gen 22:1-2

Context? Bible: Abraham & Sarah finally have a son in their old age but God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son as a test of Abraham's faith.
 Bob Dylan: You can get away with anything in America, out on Highway 61.

4. "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour."

Where? Ex 20:12-17

Context? 10 Commandments made at Mt Sinai while God's people were on their way to the Promised Land.

5. As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

Where? 1 Sam 17:48-49

Context? David kills Goliath, the Philistine champion. Israel has a king, Saul, but David will be the next and greatest king besides Jesus.

6. When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.

Where? 2 Sam 7:12-16

Context? God's line of kings, through David, will be established forever.

7. (Play the first section of "I know that my redeemer liveth" from Handel's Messiah. If the group can't understand the words as they are sung you may have to use the translation below:)

Translation: I know that my Redeemer liveth, and he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

Bible: I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;
I myself will see him with my own eyes - I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

Where? Job 19:25-27

Context? Bible: Job defends himself against accusations that he has deserved the terrible things that have happened to him. His innocence will ultimately bring him to see God in the flesh.

Handel's Messiah: Comes immediately after the Hallelujah Chorus

8. "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want."

Where? Ps 23:1

Context? Ps of David. Even in the most difficult of circumstances David trusts God to rescue him and bring him goodness and mercy.

9. (Play the first section of “Rivers of Babylon” by Boney M. If the group can’t understand the words as they are sung you may have to use the translation below:)

Translation: By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down. Yeah we wept when we remembered Zion. (twice)
 When the wicked carried us away in captivity, required from us a song. }
 Now how shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land. } (twice)

Bible: By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.
 There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs,
 our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
 How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?

Where? Ps 137:1-4

Context? God’s people are in exile in Babylon and living in misery.

10. (Play the appropriate verse from “His Banner Over Me Is Love” from Scripture in Song.)

Bible: He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

Where? Song of Songs 2:4

Context? Multiple meanings have been suggested for Song of Songs.
 The 2 main ones are that it is an allegory for God’s love for Israel/the church
 OR a poem about the love of a man and a woman.

11. (Play the sound from the section of the movie “Chariots of Fire” where Eric Liddell is in a church reading the lesson.)

As read from KJV: Behold, the nations are as a drop in the bucket and are counted as the small dust in the balance. All nations before him are as nothing. They are counted to him as less than nothing and vanity.
 He bringeth the princes to nothing. He maketh the judges of the earth as a vanity.
 Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?
 He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no strength he increaseth might.
 But they that waiteth on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles.
 They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

Bible: v 15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales;
 V 17 Before him all the nations are as nothing, they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.
 V 23 He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.
 V 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary,
 V 29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
 V 31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
 They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Where? Isaiah 40:15-31

Context? Bible: God is bringing his people out of exile in Babylon and back to the Promised Land.

Chariots of Fire: Eric Liddell reads from Isaiah in church before he competes in the 1924 Olympics in Paris.

12. Does anyone remember which Old Testament book we studied last?

13. **‘The time is coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD.**

‘This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the LORD. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, “Know the LORD,” because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,’ declares the LORD. ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.’

Where? Jer 31:31-34.

Context? God’s people are in exile in Babylon but Jeremiah looks ahead when there will be a new exodus and a new covenant.

To finish

14. (a) Do you have a favourite Old Testament book?

(b) What is it?

(c) Why is it your favourite?

15. (a) Do you have any difficulties reading the Old Testament?

(b) What are they, if any?