



A GARDENER, TWO TRAVELERS, AND A CHEAT

*Adam, Abraham,
Sarah, Jacob*

PEOPLE OF FAITH SERIES
Leader Session Guide

Rachel A. Fuller
Rolf A. Jacobson
Hans H. Wiersma

A GARDENER, TWO TRAVELERS, AND A CHEAT
Adam, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob

Leader Session Guide

People of Faith Series
Book of Faith Adult Bible Studies

This Leader Session Guide is also available for purchase online at www.augsburgfortress.org.

Copyright © 2009 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in critical articles or reviews, no part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without prior written permission from the publisher. For more information, visit: www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights or write to: Permissions, Augsburg Fortress, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209.



Book of Faith is an initiative of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

For more information about the Book of Faith initiative, go to www.bookoffaith.org.

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise marked, are from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-0-8066-9528-0
Writers: Rachel A. Fuller, Rolf A. Jacobson, Hans H. Wiersma
Illustrator: Eric Hanson, erichanson@er-h.com
Cover and interior design: Spunk Design Machine, spkdm.com
Typesetting: PerfecType, Nashville, TN

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z329.48-1984

Manufactured in U.S.A.

13 12 11 10 09 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Genesis
2:4b—4:1

Leader
Session
Guide

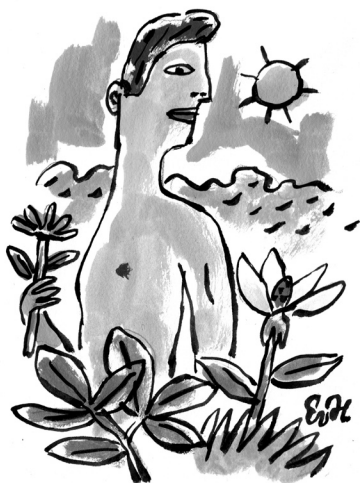
Focus Statement

Adam's story is our story; from it we learn about our central relationships with God, other human beings, and creation.

Key Verse

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." Genesis 2:18

Focus Image



ADAM

ADAM: It Is Not Good to Be Alone

Session Preparation

Before You Begin

Take a moment to pray (see Facilitator's Prayer p. 13). Then read the Bible text, Genesis 2:4b—4:1, twice. In the first reading, listen to the story of Adam as the Bible tells it. During the second reading, highlight or underline any portions of the text you heard afresh.

Session Instructions

1. View the Session Prep Video.
2. Read this Leader Session Guide completely and highlight or underline any portions (beyond that which has already been highlighted for you) you wish to emphasize with the group. Note also any Bonus Activities you wish to do.
3. If you plan to do any special activities, check to see what materials you'll need.
4. Have extra Bibles available in case someone forgets to bring one. It may help if everyone has the same Bible (consider using *Lutheran Study Bible* with its Book of Faith connections, available at augsborgfortress.org/store) so you can refer to page numbers. Learners who are new to Bible study may not know how to look up passages.
4. Keep in mind the conversational nature of Book of Faith Adult Bible studies. Your role is to facilitate the conversation so that everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Session Overview

Because the story of Adam is the first human story in the Bible, it has received a great deal of attention. But often, we don't think of Adam as a person, and instead focus on him as "a first" or get into arguments about whether he lived or when he lived. As a leader, try to get people to think of him as a person—a person with relationships with God, with his wife, with his children, and with creation.

LITERARY CONTEXT

- Resistance to the idea that the people in the Bible are "characters" (some may feel that this demeans the Bible as the word of God). Remind people that to talk about someone as a

SESSION ONE



Tip:

Bible studies can become emotional and personal if they push participants in new and uncomfortable directions. Here are some areas that may be points of contention for this Bible study. As you discuss, be prepared to acknowledge the difficulties and/or offense some may take to this discussion. Remind people that everyone has a right to state his or her views, but nobody has a right to be abusive or aggressive. Be aware of emotional reactions in the room. Stop and address these emotions when they become noticeable and significant in the conversation. Simply naming the emotions will often help.

character in a story does not mean that there is no truth to be found there.

- Homosexuality and male domination over women. Many interpreters have seen a mandate for heterosexual marriage in Genesis 2:24-25. On the one hand, these verses do imply that in the created order, heterosexual activity is the norm. On the other hand, the verses do not address how societies should handle behavior outside the norm. These verses describe what the norm of creation is, but they do not legislate one form of marriage.

The story of Adam takes place in Genesis 2:4b–5:5. Adam is the first character in the Bible [although he isn't the first person named! Eve gets her name (3:20) before Adam gets his (4:25)]. As such, it is the first story that explores what it is to be human and explores basic questions. What does it mean to be a creature in the midst of other creatures? What does it mean to be created by God and to be in relationship with God? What are the primary relationships of human beings and what are those relationships like? What are the central problems and promises of human existence? What is the purpose of human life? Thus, Adam's story is our story, since these issues are still issues for us.

Another reason that Adam's story is our story is found in his name. He is *Adam*, which means "human one." Adam is quite literally (and literarily) an "everyman." The name indicates that Adam's story is the story of each human being—it is representative not only of males, but of every human being.

It is often (but not always) helpful to approach biblical narrative by thinking in terms of "scenes" or "acts." Adam's story has four major scenes, with several scenes in each act:

Scene 1—In the Garden (Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17)

God creates the man and gives him place and work (4b-17)

Scene 2—It Is Not Good to Be Alone (Genesis 2:18-25)

God creates a helper so that the man isn't alone (18-25)

Scene 3—Crossing the Line (Genesis 3)

Tempted into sin (1-13)

Scene 4—Consequences, Consequences (Genesis 3:14–4:1)

Denouement—Adam and Eve have children and die.

For our purpose, the session concentrates on these four scenes of Adam's story, and leaves it open for learners to explore or think about the denouement of his story.