

Book

- Training for Service
- Updated by Jim Eichenberger
- Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, OH; © 2011

Review

This book was first published over a century ago. It's now in its fifth edition. It was originally designed as a certification course for Sunday School teachers. Its purpose was to give each prospective teacher an overview of the Bible and in its original edition, to provide an overview of the Bible teaching process. The last three revisions have shifted its emphasis away from teaching and more toward a “big picture” approach to organizing the content of the Bible.

It's organized around the traditional 13-week quarter system used by many churches. It has 26 lessons altogether, so it could be used in one or two quarters depending upon the frequency with which the class meets. Its content includes:

- The Bible – How we got our Bible; God's word to us; Divisions of the Bible; Books of the Old Testament; Books of the New Testament.
- Old Testament Geography & History – 3 Dispensations; The OT world; OT people (2 lessons); OT periods (3 lessons); an overview of the intertestamental period.
- Old Testament Institutions – Altar & tabernacle; Temple & synagogue; The Jewish Feasts.
- The Christ – NT lands; The Christ in prophecy; Life of Christ (3 lessons).
- The Church – The Apostles & the Great Commission; Beginnings of the church; New life in Christ; Life of Paul (2 lessons); The Bible for the whole world.

I've used it as the basis for a 1-quarter survey of the Bible in adult classes. It's generally well-received. More advanced students usually appreciate it as a refresher course. New converts and those who may not be Christians appreciate it as an organizational tool for the Bible.

With the most recent edition, it includes free supplemental materials available on Standard's website.

Unlike most “big picture” approaches to the Bible, which mainly use a topical approach, this one takes you through the story of the Bible from beginning to end, with themes treated as part of the lessons or as separate lessons.

I highly recommend it as a basic overview of the Bible for classroom purposes.