

International Sunday School Lessons

What Is the Uniform Series (International Sunday School Lessons)?

The Uniform Series is a six-year plan for reading and studying the Bible. The series includes more than just Sunday school lessons, but daily Bible readings as well. By participating in the Uniform Series, a believer will be given help in knowing the content of the Bible, to understand its message, and to respond to that message by living a life of faith and love.

The Bible is, of course, central to this plan. An attempt is made to take at least one lesson or daily Bible reading from each book of the Bible over a six-year span. Naturally, some parts of the Bible are more “teachable” than others, and these sections get most of the attention in the series.

What is “uniform” about the Uniform Series?

Uniform means “the same,” and there are two ways this series demonstrates “sameness.” First, the series is the result of the combined efforts of several denominations and publishing houses, and is thus shared by all of them. That means a class in the Christian church on the corner, another in the Methodist church down the street, and still another in the Presbyterian church across town might all be using the same text on any given Sunday. Each of these churches can buy curriculum or annual commentaries on the Uniform Series from their favorite publisher.

In some of those churches you’ll see the second level of uniformity. In every class, of every age student, the same text or theme will be addressed. Uniform Series lessons are available for every age-level from some publishers. (Standard Publishing produces material on the Uniform Series only for adults.) This allows for family discussion of the day’s Sunday school lessons in those churches that use the Uniform lessons in that way.

How is the Bible used in the Uniform Series?

The Uniform Series is designed to get students into every part of the Bible over its six-year plan. That does not mean a student will study every verse in the Bible in that time. The Bible contains over 30,000 verses, so a plan would need to cover some 100 verses a week in order to include every verse in six years—even more if any verses were repeated in that time. Instead, the Uniform Series presents an overview of the entire Bible.

This overview is not simply a condensed study of Genesis through Revelation. Rather, the Uniform Series arranges the texts under 8 topical heads: God, Creation, Hope, Faith, Community, Tradition, Justice, and Worship. Each quarter in the six-year study features texts related to one of these themes, so each theme appears three times in the course of the study. Throughout this study, participants will be directed to every part of the Bible. Some parts of the Bible—the Gospels, for example—will be studied more often than others. Typically the winter quarters will include lessons about the birth of Christ, and spring quarters will include lessons about his resurrection.

The people who develop the Uniform Series believe the Bible is the record of the revelation of God in Christ, the key resource for understanding the Christian faith, and as the most effective means of confronting persons with the great concerns of the gospel. These concerns include personal faith, values,

human relationships, social responsibility, Christian hope, and the implications of Christian discipleship under the lordship of Christ and in the fellowship of his Spirit.

Can I just keep six years' worth of lessons and then repeat them?

Naturally, a church could repeat old lessons from the series, but the Uniform Series is not merely a cycle that repeats every six years. Every six-year study is completely new and fresh. Texts that were not used in one "cycle" may appear in the next. This way the student is enabled to study even more of the Bible the longer he or she sticks with the Uniform Series.