

Catholic Bible Institute in the Diocese of Orange
GUIDELINES for MONTHLY PAPERS
One-Page Reflection Papers for Year 1 (New Testament)

Choose *one* of the specific texts that you will be given from the part of the Bible we cover each month. Read it, study it, reflect upon it, and write a short paper covering the following four levels of interpretation:

Levels of Interpretation:	Questions to Consider:
LITERAL	What is the content of this biblical text? What is it <i>literally</i> about? Also, what is the literary <i>genre</i> or <i>style</i> of this ancient scriptural text?
RHETORICAL	What message did the author <i>intend</i> to convey to the <i>original</i> readers? What did the biblical author want these readers to <i>know</i> and/or to <i>do</i> ?
PERSONAL	What does this text mean to me , here and now, on a <i>personal</i> level? How can I apply it to my own life today, <i>as an individual believer</i> ?
COMMUNAL	What does this text say to all of us together, <i>as a faith community</i> today? How can Christian Churches apply these lessons for the common good?

Note: The first two levels focus on the *ancient* world (the original author and original audience), while the last two levels focus on our *modern* world (today’s readers, individually and collectively).

LITERAL: What is the actual **content** of the biblical text, as written by the ancient author? (*events, people, problems, etc.*) What literary *genre* is used by the biblical author? (*narrative, dialogue, letter, parable, symbolism, etc.*) Is some helpful background information found in your "Study Bible" and/or our textbook?

RHETORICAL: What was the original **message** or intended purpose of this text? (*God creates, forgives, saves, etc.*) What lesson did the ancient writer want the original readers to know or learn? (*God’s fidelity despite human sinfulness; God cannot be contained in a building; God wants us to forgive others; etc.*) How did the biblical author expect the readers to react? What did he want them to do in response?

PERSONAL: What does this biblical text say to **me** personally? How can I apply this message in my own faith life today? (*to trust God’s faithfulness and love; to acknowledge my own failures; to love and care for others; etc.*)

COMMUNAL: What does the biblical text mean for **us**, in our communal lives together, in the church, society or world? (*God loves us, so we must love and care for one another; We must be better stewards of creation; We must not waste our talents, but use our resources and gifts for the common good; etc. – be specific!*)

Practical Tips and Instructions:

- After doing all of the assigned readings each month, write a short *reflection paper* (**one full page**) on one of the biblical texts that you can choose from several selections you will be given each month. In your paper, cover the four levels of interpretation (the four sets of questions), as explained above.
- Include a *short header* on the top of the page (your Name, Group, and the Date; the Biblical Text with ref.).
- Write **one paragraph** for **each** of the four parts. Each paragraph should have approximately *equal length*. *Label* each of your four paragraphs appropriately (Literal, Rhetorical, Personal, Communal).
- Papers must be **typed**, *single-spaced* (double-space *between* paragraphs), on a standard page (8½ x 11”), using 10 to 12-point type-size, with one-inch margins all around (top, bottom, left, right). In other words, write one full page with little wasted blank space. *See the reverse side for a sample.*
- **Email** your paper to your group’s reader within two weeks after each session. It will be read and returned with comments the following month. No “grades” will be given, but papers not meeting the minimal expectations need to be re-written. No certification will be given for failure to do all the monthly reflections.
- In **May 2017**, *instead* of the usual one-page paper, you will submit a *slightly longer year-end reflection paper*. You will be given a separate handout later with more detailed instructions on this formal paper.

Nicholas Lopez
"Martha" Group
April 7, 2017

A Great Cloud of Witnesses (Heb 12)

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