

SCALA GENTIUM

Reading God's Two Books with the Gospel of Matthew

The Last Age of the Cumaean Song

Unit I • Week 1 — the Sibyl's Bargain

TEACHER MANUAL

You do not need to know Roman history, Latin, or how to teach writing. Every line you must say aloud is printed in red; everything you grade has a key. Writing and memory now run from their own curricula; nothing of theirs is trained or graded here.

BEFORE THE WEEK

How to Use This Manual

Your job this week is four things: read aloud with your student (Day 1), work alongside them through the history and Scripture pages (Day 2), hold the key beside Day 3's study pages, which run themselves — your part is the two-minute close, printed on the study-day spread — and run Friday whole: the week's finished piece read aloud, and the three gleanings into the book. The pages carry the teaching; the keys in this manual carry the grading. Writing and memory run from their own curricula, on their own schedules — the Workbook's last page, the Quarry, hands them the week's material from the story.

How to read the red lines

Red bold lines in quotation marks are read aloud as written. Everything else on the script pages is for your eyes: what answers to expect, and what to do with each.

“Lines that look like this are said aloud, exactly as printed.”

Expect: lines that look like this tell you what answers are coming, and what to do with each — press, accept, or leave half-resolved.

The parent is a fellow student. When you don't know, say “I don't know — let's see if the History Companion does.” The curriculum is built for that sentence.

The ramp is deliberate

If Week 1 feels light on commentary and comparison, that is the on-ramp, not the program. The Lapide track runs one excerpt per week (three in Week 5, when Matthew 1 is read entire with him), every excerpt feeds Day 3's study pages, and the content exam — a quarter of the unit grade — tests these readings directly. The comparative method is taught formally as the Week 7 exercise (“set the two side by side”), argued in the “Where Christians differ” boxes, carried into the Aeneid at the Shelf's Visits (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8), and staked by every student in the Week 9 thesis and defense. Week 1's own comparison box is the method in miniature — one myth, one count, four lines — and the program grows it only as the student comes to hold both terms: the pagan voice this week, the Evangelist's count across the weeks that follow.

THE ONE RULE

Never rush to supply the answer.
Silence up to a slow count of ten is the thinking working.

End on time even if unfinished.

DAY 3 · STUDY

Running the Study Day

Day 3 was a led conversation; it is now a study day — the same ground, on pages the student can run alone. Families told us the truth twice: the conversation added the most, and its forty-five minutes were the hardest of the week to give. So the pages now do the leading, every question has its answer in the key, and your three questions have short answers.

What do I do? Hand over the pages; stay near. A younger student, or one who struggles alone: sit with them and read Parts 1 and 2 together — the genealogy aloud is better with two voices anyway. You are checking written work against the key on the next pages, not sustaining a conversation.

What do I say? Two red lines at the close, printed below. Nothing else is required of your voice all day.

How do I know it worked? Three checks. The six answers match the key in substance — the key says what must be present; the wording is free. The comparison box's right column is filled, every line. The seed is six sentences. An empty line is the only failure, and it is repaired by sitting down together at the part where the pages went quiet.

The close — two minutes, verbatim

“Read me the box — your column, the right one, straight down.”

Just listen; the completed box in the keys tells you if a line went wide. One correction at most, and make it a question: “read the counting verse again — what does the count arrive at?”

“Now the sentence: the Sibyl's whole sin was — what? Write it on the Whole Sin page, then read it to me.”

File it with the Week 1 work. Done is done; Week 9 finishes every thought this page starts.

If your family loves the conversation: the full 45-minute Socratic script — Day 3 until this printing — now lives in the appendix, and it is still the finest instrument in this manual for a household with the hour. Run it as enrichment, any evening this week: it replaces nothing, and the study pages still happen. Co-ops: your tutor still runs it on the co-op day, as written.

WHAT THIS STUDY IS FOR

By Friday the student can say, in one written sentence, what the Sibyl's whole sin was — and has seen, in a box they completed themselves, what the Gospel's count promises that her bargain could not.

EVERY UNIT

From now on, every study day opens with a destination line like the one above and ends at the same kind of box.

WEEK 9

File the closing sentence. It is compared with the Week 9 essay, and the distance between the two is the unit's measure of growth.

APPENDIX

The Conversation, Kept

The forty-five-minute script was Day 3 until this printing; the study pages now carry the day, and the script is kept whole — for the family with the hour, for the co-op tutor, whose room it was built for, and for any evening a conversation wants to happen. The page before it answers the fear it usually raises.

THE CRAFT · THE OLDEST CLASSROOM ON RECORD

The scripted conversation kept in this appendix is the oldest teaching method on record: Socrates taught by questions in the Athenian agora, and once walked an untaught boy to a geometry proof by asking alone. The medieval universities made the form their engine — the *disputatio*, where the objections are heard first and answered after — and every article of St. Thomas's *Summa* is one of those classroom disputations in miniature. The script's branches are the same form, sized for a kitchen table.

Find it: Plato, *Meno* 82b–85b (the boy and the squares) · any article of the *Summa Theologiae* — objections, *sed contra*, answer, replies

OPTIONAL

Everything from here to the keys is enrichment. Skipping it costs nothing on the assessment side.

BRANCHES

One addition to the red-line rules: Branch lines mark where students reliably split. Take the branch that matches the answer you actually got.

APPENDIX · THE CONVERSATION

If Your Student Gives You Three Words

Forty-five minutes sounds long, and some students answer in three words. Read this page once and most of the fear should go.

First, the arithmetic. You read the red lines, you read two passages aloud, and the session ends with the student writing by hand: the student's talking share of the forty-five minutes is nearer twenty. Second, the script expects thin answers. Every movement has a branch for silence, and the branches are not emergency exits but the ordinary road; most sessions will use them.

Five moves that work in any movement, as often as needed

1 · Read it again.

“Let me read that line once more. Just listen.”

Then re-ask the same question. Half of thin answers are memory problems, not thinking problems.

2 · Offer two, ask which.

“Some readers say she was greedy; some say she was careless. Which is closer?”

Choosing *is* thinking, and it is easier to disagree with an answer than to produce one.

3 · Make them point.

“Find the sentence that made you say that.”

If there was no answer at all: “find the sentence on this page that bothers you most.” A finger on the text restarts a stalled mouth.

4 · Write first, talk second.

“Take two minutes and write me one sentence about it.”

Then discuss the sentence they wrote instead of the question you asked. This single move rescues most quiet students.

5 · Bank the three words. Take the short answer, write it down where the student can see it, and say:

“We’ll test that in a few minutes.”

Returning to a student's own words later is worth more than extracting a paragraph now.

NOT FAILURE

A movement that ends early — the minute counts are ceilings, not quotas. Move on.

A session that ends at thirty minutes with the closing sentence written — a short real conversation is worth more than a long dragged one, and the question you did not finish returns in Week 9 anyway.

Reading the red lines word for word, all year. The script is not training wheels to outgrow; it is the instrument.

FAILURE

Supplying the answers yourself so that the silence stops. That is the one rule, and it is the only one.

APPENDIX · SOCRATIC SCRIPT

The Sibyl's Bargain — 45 Minutes

OPENING · 5 MIN

“Who is telling us this story, and what does she say she wants?”

Expect: the Sibyl; she wants to die. If the student stops there, follow:

“Is that all she wants? Does someone who only wants to die bother to count?”

Expect some version of: she also wants the count to *end*, to mean something. Leave it half-resolved; say the story will answer it.

MOVEMENT 1 · 12 MIN

The bargain

“The Sibyl says: ‘I did not ask to stay young. It was not folly... That was my whole sin.’ What exactly was her sin? She asked for a gift — is asking for a gift a sin?”

Branch A (“she was greedy”): press —

“Read the line again. She says it was not folly, and the god gave freely. Where is the greed?”

Steer toward: the fault wasn’t *wanting* years but not knowing what years are *for* — she asked for quantity without end or purpose.

Branch B (“she forgot to ask for youth”): accept, then deepen —

“That’s the mechanism. But she calls it a sin, not a mistake. What’s the difference between a mistake and a sin?”

Branch C (silence): give the handhold —

“She says the young ‘do not know that youth can be spent.’ Spent like what?”

(Like money, like grain — the story’s counting images.) Then return to the main question.

Land it:

“Is her punishment just — a thousand years of exactly what she asked for?”

Let disagreement stand; note it on paper. This question returns in Week 9.

Read aloud: “*He meant well, and meaning well has been enough to ruin many children.*” Then ask:

MOVEMENT 2 · 12 MIN

The gift that harms

“How can a poem — a gift, given in gratitude — ruin a child?”

Expect: it told him he was something he wasn’t; it was taught by a grieving mother and nurse; “it went into him with his milk.”

Press:

“Who, if anyone, did wrong here? The poet? The nurse? Quinctia? Grief itself?”

Expected good answer: no one *decided* — “grief decided it.” If the student wants a villain, point to the sentence and ask what it does to the search for one.

Personal turn (handle gently, don’t force):

“The story says: ‘A child has no defense against such gifts.’ What were you given before you were old enough to refuse it — a name, a language, a faith, a family’s expectation? Is that unjust, or is it simply what it is to be a child?”

Do not resolve this; it is the seed of the Week 4 chreia and ultimately of the Week 9 thesis (what can only be received).

Read aloud: “*Rome did not count its years toward anything... as though time were a road that ran nowhere.*” Then ask:

MOVEMENT 3 · 10 MIN

Two kinds of time

“The Sibyl counts. Rome names. What’s the difference between counting toward something and just keeping track?”

Expect struggle; offer the story’s own pair when needed: a count *runs out*, and *something comes*; a tally *only grows*, and *nothing comes*. Ask for modern examples of each (a countdown to a feast vs. a scoreboard; Advent vs. a bank balance).

Press once:

“Which kind of time do you live in most days?”

Take one answer each, no commentary.

Student writes one sentence, by hand, in the Workbook, completing: “The Sibyl’s whole sin was <...>.” Read them aloud. File the sentences — they are compared with the student’s Week 9 essay at unit’s end, and the distance between the two is the unit’s measure of growth.

CLOSING · 5 MIN

Where this week is heading: every movement above plants something harvested later. The bargain → Seneca (Week 3 Bench). The gift → the chreia (Week 4) and Joseph receiving a

son not his own (Week 5). The two kinds of time → the Interlude (Week 4) and the thesis (Week 9). You never need to say this; the structure says it.

KEYS

Day 2 — Lapid Questions

1. Matthew is echoing Genesis 5:1 deliberately: Moses gave the book of the generations of the first Adam, which descends to death and the flood; Matthew gives the generation of the second Adam, in whom the generations ascend to life. The echo claims that a second book — a new beginning of mankind — opens here.
2. Because the promise was made to these two above all: to Abraham, that in his seed all nations should be blessed; to David, that one of his body should sit upon his throne forever. David is named first because “Son of David” was the title by which the people called the Christ they awaited.
3. It argues — name by name — that the promise was kept; and it argues it to the Hebrews, who knew the promises and could check the names.

GRADING

Full sentences; gist over wording. A right idea poorly put is a writing note, not a wrong answer.

KEYS

Day 3 — The Study Day

1. Three sets of fourteen: Abraham to David; David to the transmigration of Babylon; the transmigration to Christ. *Must be present*: three, fourteen, and the three endpoints.
2. The count runs through the catastrophe without stopping or starting over — captivity could not break the line, because God was keeping the promise, and God is not captive. *Must be present*: the count survives the disaster, and someone — God — is keeping it.
3. At Christ. The count does not merely stop; it arrives — the generations were going somewhere, and verses 16 and 17 name where. *Must be present*: Christ as arrival, not stopping-place.
4. Years as many as the grains of dust in her hand — and she forgot to ask for youth.
5. The gift became her burden. Any quotation that shows the weight serves; the usual finds are “the young do not know that youth can be spent” and “I want the count to end. I am afraid of the count ending.” *Must be present*: a real quotation, marks and all.

GRADING

Substance over wording, as always. Each key ends with the one thing that must be present.

Parts 5 and 6 are not graded for content — check that they exist and are full sentences. Part 5 is personal; read it only if invited.

6. Her counting is the hope she does not know she has: a count hopes to end *in* something. Accept any wording in which the counting wants an arrival. “She just wants it over” misses the question’s own hint — send the student back to it.

The comparison box, completed

The myth saw	The Gospel reveals
Men long for a life that death cannot end — the Sibyl got hers, and it is her punishment	...arrives at Christ (accept: Jesus; life)
She bought her years by bargain, and the bargain became her burden	...were given a promise (accept: covenant) — a gift, nothing they bought
Rome counted its years “as though time were a road that ran nowhere”	...a road that runs to Christ (accept: Bethlehem; the Messiah)
Her whole sin: years without asking what years are for	...each hands the promise on, until it is kept

DAY 5 · THE GLEANING

The Week’s Harvest

The student has marked the Reader all week — maxims, real people and places, the 🍷 beside lines worth keeping. Friday harvests the marks: three gleanings, copied by hand into the commonplace book — at least one a *spoken line*, word for word, with who said it and when; each entry closed with one line of the student’s own: *kept because...* Say:

“Open your marked pages. Of everything you flagged this week, read me the three you’d keep.”

Expect: more than three candidates, usually. Let the student cut their own list down; you never choose for them. If one is a spoken line, the rule is satisfied — if none is, ask:

“Which of those is said aloud, by somebody, to somebody? Keep that one.”

Rescue (a week with no marks at all):

“Open to the page that made you look up from the book. Read from the top until something stops you again.”

FRIDAY’S CLOSE · 10 MIN

At the close of Friday’s reading aloud, while the book is still on the table.

THE RULE OF THREE

Never more than three. Leaving good lines in the field is half the exercise.

PILOT NOTE

Any notebook until the bound journal ships; entries transfer into it later.

CHECKED FOR

Completeness and attribution only — never taste. The choosing is the student’s, all year.

The line that stops them is the gleaning; the habit of marking usually follows a week behind the habit of harvesting. Not failure.

Co-op: the harvest is home work, after the co-op day — same ten minutes, any listener.

CO-OP

The Same Week, Redistributed

Same content, co-op days in bold. Home Days 1–2 are prerequisites for the first co-op day — the tutor opens by collecting the annotation marks, so unprepared students are visible gently and immediately. In both tracks, writing and memory run from their own curricula at home.

Day	Where	Work
1	Home	Reading aloud + annotation · Scripture page
2	Home	History spread or video · Lapide questions
3	Co-op	Tutor harvests annotations (10 min: “read me your best underlined proverb”) · the Socratic script (appendix), as written — the branches matter more with eight voices · the study day’s written parts run at home, before the next home day
4	Home	The study day’s written parts, checked against the key · writing-curriculum day, from the Quarry
5	Co-op	The week’s writing read in a circle, whatever curriculum it was written in · peer response: each listener gives one “keep” (a phrase quoted back) and one question — never advice · gleanings shared: each student reads one keeper aloud · tutor introduces Week 2 by reading Ch. II’s first page aloud

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