Biblical Concordances, Dictionaries and Glossaries

Biblical Concordances

Teacher Background

A Concordance is a book containing an alphabetical list of all the key words of the Bible together with the name of the book and the chapter and verse where each word occurs. It is particularly useful when searching for themes commonly found in scripture. Most concordances link words that are connected in meaning and distinguish individual people, places and things. The formats of concordances differ widely. A selection of recommended concordances is included in the Resources section towards the end of this module.

Most searches using a concordance take one of three forms:

- Looking for a specific word (e.g. unleavened, shepherd, cross)
- Looking for an idea or theme (e.g. faithfulness, parables, light)
- Looking for a specific name of a person or place (e.g. Bethlehem, Peter, Persia, Martha)

All concordances abbreviate the name of the book of the Bible in which the scripture passage will be located. Students may not be familiar with many of these abbreviations. An explanation of the abbreviations usually appears in the front of most Bibles.

Dictionaries and Glossaries

Teacher Background

A Bible dictionary provides definitions and short articles of people, places and technical terms associated with the study of the Bible and scriptural texts. They are arranged in alphabetical order in much the same way as a general dictionary. A variety of print version Bible dictionaries have been designed for younger students.

A Bible Glossary usually appears at the end of a Bible. It defines specific biblical terms located with the text. In some Bibles, glossaries are called Word Lists or Theological Glossaries. The Catholic edition of the Good News Bible provides an excellent Word List for use by students.