

Choosing your Bible **Theology Department**

For our studies at Episcopal School of Jacksonville, students need a top notch translation of the Holy Scriptures. We ask our students not to use paraphrased versions or versions that reflect “popular trends” that come and go with the rise and fall of pop culture. We also ask our students not to use versions that have been translated with a deliberate bias toward a particular sectarian view that departs from mainstream scholarship. There are many very good Bibles to choose from.

Any of the following are useful for effective study, reflecting the best of both Catholic and Protestant scholarship. It is not necessary for students to have a “study Bible” edition, but it is helpful if Bibles have a brief concordance, a few maps, and footnotes that offer basic information about the text. Our textbooks include extensive background materials and help with principles concerning the art of interpretation. Please let us know if you have questions about a Bible not listed below. Any of our Theology faculty will be happy to have a look and advise you concerning your choice of a Bible. For additional information, read [“A Brief Description of Popular Bible Translations”](#) from the American Bible Society.

[The Orthodox Study Bible](#) (uses the NKJV text): Two things make this Bible interesting. First, the Old Testament is based on the *Septuagint*, the Greek translation of the Old Testament used by the New Testament writers and which was the version of the Old Testament used by the early Christians. Second, the footnotes are based on gleanings from the Church Fathers, which makes this Bible very useful in grasping the Faith of the early Church. We typically stock this in our Campus Store.

[RSV Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha](#) This is one of the the versions we stock in the Campus Store. Many prefer this original version of the RSV over the more recent NRSV because it reflects a more disciplined approach to translation than we have seen in recent years. It has been a leading choice for scholastic study for over 50 year

[The \(New\) Jerusalem Bible](#) A Catholic version originally done in French, the English version is very pleasing to read and reflects essentially the same scholarship as the NAB (see above). As in the NAB, it will include the additional Old Testament Books. There are various editions of this Bible. The *Saints Devotional Edition* of this translation offers readings from the great teachers and preachers of classical Christianity—very nice!

[NAB New American Bible](#)

This is the text ([click here for full text online](#)) read in the services of the Roman Catholic Church, and was completed in the late 1960s following Vatican II. It is considered one of the best contemporary English translations by both Catholic and Protestant scholars. This version will include some of the books known as *The Apocrypha* as part of the Old Testament, following the tradition of the Church in the 15 centuries preceding the Reformation.

[REB Revised English Bible](#) with Apocrypha This is a contemporary British translation done by an ecumenical committee of scholars, both Catholic and Protestant.

[NIV New International Version](#)

This is an excellent modern translation. The Study Bible linked here offers superb support for a student of the Bible.

[KJV King James Version](#)

Completed by use in the Church of England in 1611, this one is, of course, a great classic of the English language, but it is not always the easiest to use. It is by definition the quintessential Bible of Anglicanism, although it is not widely heard in most parishes any more. Please note that some versions of the KJV will have the *Apocrypha*, while others will not.

NKJV

New King James Version As the title suggests, this is a contemporary rendering of the original King James Version. It has proven to be very satisfactory to those who have used it.

NASB New American Standard Bible

Extremely popular among evangelical groups such as Campus Crusade for Christ and others during the 1970s, it remains a very reliable and clear translation. It does not, however, arrange verses in paragraph structure, but lists each verse as a separate unit, following the tradition of the King James Version. The Apocrypha is not part of this version.