

CHOOSING A Bible

There are more than 450 English translations of the Bible. While The Episcopal Church has only authorized fourteen of them for use in public worship, navigating the various editions can still be daunting. Moreover, every translation is also an interpretation, with every one conveying certain theological biases. For instance, the NRSV uses gender inclusive language and the NIV is translated with a more evangelical outlook. Thus, these guided questions can help you figure out which of the most popular translations is best for your needs.

What reading level do you want?



Elementary/ Middle School

New International Version (NIV)
Common English Bible (CEB)
The Message*

*The Message is a very popular and accessible translation for personal use, but it is not authorized for use in public worship in The Episcopal Church.

Early High School

New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)



Late High School/ College

Revised Standard Version (RSV)
Authorized/King James Version (KJV)



Do you care if your version is common in Episcopal worship?



Yes



New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)†

†While all of the translations presented here (except The Message) are authorized to be read in Episcopal worship, the NRSV is the version you are most likely to encounter in any given Episcopal Church's worship.

Somewhat



Revised Standard Version (RSV)
Authorized/King James Version (KJV)

No



New International Version (NIV)
New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)
Common English Bible (CEB)
The Message*

How close to original languages?



Close to original

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
Revised Standard Version (RSV)
Authorized/King James Version (KJV)



A mix of both

New International Version (NIV)
Common English Bible (CEB)



More natural English

New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)
The Message*



How modern do you want the language?



Traditional

Authorized/King James Version (KJV)
Revised Standard Version (RSV)



Modern but formal

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)



Contemporary

New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)
New International Version (NIV)
Common English Bible (CEB)
The Message*



Other considerations



Reader's Bibles

You can buy certain translations (such as the NIV) without chapter or verse numbers to help you read the Bible like you would read other books. One option is *The Path* by Forward Movement.



Study Bibles

A study edition with footnotes and essays is best for learning more about the context and history of the Bible. These include the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* and the *HarperCollins Study Bible*.



Other Features

You can also find editions of the Bible that offer various other features, such as the books split up to assist with daily reading or arranged chronologically.