

## LESSON 18: What's in the Bible?

### AIM

To give the children a broad overview of the contents of the Bible (8.3.2, 8.3.3).

### OUTCOME

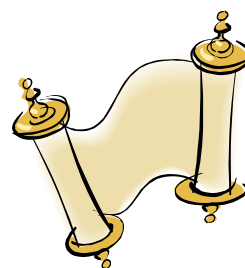
Learners demonstrate a practical familiarity with the Bible and its contents

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

#### 1 The most amazing book in the world!

The Bible can be described as the world's best-known book. It is certainly the world's longest-standing best seller. It didn't look like a book at all when it was first written. Originally it was written on a series of scrolls, one for each book except for the Book of Isaiah, which took three scrolls it was so long! The scrolls were kept in clay pots.

Since the invention of printing, complete books of the Bible have been published in more than 1775 languages and dialects. The story of the Bible spans more than 4000 years of the world's history. All kinds of people, from different times, races and backgrounds have been involved. People have argued and fought over the Bible's message. It has changed the lives of countless peoples. Men and women have been prepared to die in order to see it distributed as widely as possible. This story is one of the most remarkable and exciting in the world.



#### 2 What is the Bible? People tend to think of the Bible as one long book, a bit like a history book, but it is actually a collection of separate books written by many different people over a long period of time. It is a library of 73 books in the Catholic Church, and 66 in the Protestant churches. Think of the Afrikaans word for library - biblioteek! The Greek word 'biblos' means 'book'. It was actually the name given to the inner bark of the papyrus plant out of which paper was made.

Having been written by many different writers over a long period of time, there is a lot of variety in the Bible. But through this human variety comes the voice of the living God, speaking to people then, and through them, speaking to us now. Let's take a closer look at some of the variety.

#### 3 An overview of the Bible: The Bible has been referred to as a string of very precious pearls. But if we have no thread to string them together they remain a bit useless. Most people know the key figures and stories in the Bible, for example, David and Goliath, or Daniel in the Lion's Den. But they cannot connect the stories in order.


The first overview can be gained by referring the children to their Bible's content page. Point out that the Bible is divided into two main sections:


Time before Jesus - OLD TESTAMENT

Time from Jesus' birth - NEW TESTAMENT



### WHAT YOU NEED

- \* Bible (1)
- \*  Copies of the Bible Library (3) ⇨
- \* Bible, candles, matches, icons (4)
- \* Five readers prepared (4)
- \* Bible or Book of Psalms (5)
- \* Prepared slips of paper (8)
- \* Bible reading roster (10)

A second overview is given in the two worksheets that accompany this lesson, namely, the Old and New Testament Bible Libraries. Let the learners become aware of the different kinds of books we find in the Bible.  ⇒

- 4 **Prayer Celebration:** Place a Bible in centre, surrounded by candles and suitable icons. References are given in square brackets. Point out to the readers that these are *not* read!

LEADER: There are various pictures used to describe the Bible: A lamp - for guidance and leading the way.

READER 1: Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path [Psalm 119: 105].

LEADER: Milk - to nourish and make us grow.

READER 2: Be like new born babies, always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so that by drinking it, you may grow up [1 Peter 2: 2].

LEADER: A Sword - to protect us on our journey.

READER 3: Take the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you [Ephesians 6: 7].

LEADER: A Seed - new life and growth.

READER 4: The seed is the word of God [Luke 8: 11].

READER 5: A reading from the Book of Psalms: [Psalm 78: 1-4].

ALL: Spirit of God, guide us in our study of your Holy Bible. Help us to know and live your truth in our lives. Amen.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 5 **St Francis of Assisi** used to use the book of Psalms to help him pray. He would select a few lines from one psalm and a few lines from another and join them together. Then he would sing and dance to his own psalm medley. Here is an example:

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;

I will declare all your wondrous deeds. [9:2]

I say to the Lord, you are my Lord,

You are my only good. [16:2]

Invite the learners to compose their own psalm medley, and to use it as a personal prayer. They may write it out on a scroll and display it around the prayer corner in your classroom.

- 6 **Keeping a Journal:** Invite the learners to keep a journal to write their own words and thoughts in, especially the ones about their own personal relationship with God.

- 7 **Play “Bible Alphabet”:** Seat the children in a circle, with one child in the centre. He or she points to a child in the circle and calls out any letter of the alphabet (except perhaps X). Then, while the one in the centre counts to 10, the other must give a proper name in the Bible starting with that letter. If the child cannot respond in time, he or she must exchange places with the child in the centre.

A variation of this game is to divide the children into groups. Each group has to find proper names in the Bible beginning with as many letters of the alphabet as possible in 5 minutes.

- 8 **Family Relationships:** Prepare slips of paper with FATHER, SON, HUSBAND, WIFE, SISTER, BROTHER, GRANDFATHER, GRANDMOTHER, FRIEND written on them. Make enough for your whole class to be able to draw one each. Distribute them to groups. Then read out pairs of names, for example Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Abraham and





# New Testament Bible Library

PROPHECY		OTHER LETTERS		LETTERS BY PAUL		HISTORY		GOSPELS	
Revelation		Hebrews	Philemon	Romans	Acts		Matthew		
		James		1 Corinthians			Mark		
		1 Peter		2 Corinthians			Luke		
		2 Peter		Galatians			John		
		1 John		Ephesians					
		2 John		Philippians					
		3 John		Colossians					
		Jude		1 Thessalonians					
				2 Thessalonians					
				1 Timothy					
				2 Timothy					
				Titus					

## LESSON 19: Using Bible References

### AIM

To show the children how to find their way around the Bible by locating given references (8.3.4, 8.6.2)



### WHAT YOU NEED

- \* Bibles (2)(4)(5)
- \* Two envelopes for each group in the class, with the suggested texts and references on separate pieces of paper inside them (6)
- \* Coloured cards (7)
- \* 73 match boxes, sticky paper, 1 larger box (8)
- \* Bibles (11)

### OUTCOME

Learners demonstrate a practical familiarity with the Bible and its contents

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Bible Bookcase:** In LESSON 18 we saw that the Bible isn't just one book. It is a whole collection of books - laws, writings, poetry, history, good news and letters. The common factor in all of them is how they speak to us of God, revealing God's nature, power and tender love for us.
- 2 **Finding your way in the Bible:** Ask the learners to open their Bibles and get to know our way around. Remember there are two parts: OLD TESTAMENT - where the books tell us the story of God's relationship with his people before Jesus was born and NEW TESTAMENT - which tells us about Jesus and how he makes us God's friends.

REFERENCES: explain that each book in the Bible is divided into chapters. Each chapter is divided into smaller parts called verses, for example: Isaiah 43:1-2 directs us to

BOOK	CHAPTER	VERSE
Isaiah	43	1-2

Point out that the names of the books of the Bible can be shortened (abbreviated) for quick reference, for example Genesis becomes Gen, Leviticus becomes Lev. Remember to explain that some books such as 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel refer to the fact that there are 2 books, a first and a second.

- 3 **Practical application:** First let children copy the following into their books.
  - [Mark 9: 2] means the Gospel of Mark, chapter 9 verse 2.
  - [Luke 5: 4-8] means the Gospel of Luke, chapter 5, from the beginning of verse 4 right through to verse 8.
  - [1Kings 19:12] means the First Book of Kings, chapter 19, verse 12.

As a first exercise, help the children to find these texts, and to read them aloud.

- 4 Children then find the following **texts** and transcribe them into their books:

John 1: 43      John 6: 35      John 8: 12      John 10: 11      John 15: 17

- 5 Play **Find the Verse:** Choose a chapter from one of the books of the Bible and let the children find it in their own Bibles. Read a verse at a time from the chapter. The first to spot the verse being read, gains a point.
- 6 Play **Jumbled verses:** Issue each group with 2 envelopes, one containing Bible references, the other, the actual text words, for example:

- [Isaiah 41:13] For I, Yahweh your God, will take you by your right hand.
- [John 14: 6] Jesus said: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”
- [Zephaniah 3: 17] Yahweh, your God is with you. He will jump for joy on seeing you, for God has renewed his love.
- [John 14: 15] If you love me you will keep my commandments.
- [Isaiah 40: 8] The grass withers, the flower fades but the word of our God remains forever.
- [Psalm 139: 14] For so many marvels I thank you, a wonder am I, and all your works are marvels.

They will have to look up the verse in their Bibles to confirm the matching. However, explain that since the Bible was not originally written in English, but in ancient Hebrew and Greek, there are many different translations.

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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 Design and make a **Bible bookmark** for your own Bible. Choose a short quote from the Bible and inscribe it on your bookmark.
- 8 Make a model of a **Bible Library**: You will need to collect matchboxes for this, 73 in all. Cover each box with sticky paper on 3 sides like a book jacket. Write the name of the book on the spine, and place a text of your choice from that book inside the box. Find a suitable box to create shelves in and arrange the books in their correct order, as in the worksheets in LESSON 18. Grade 4’s love opening a “book” each day and reading the text. This project is best tackled as a group one.
- 9 Children design and draw their own **front covers** for the Old Testament or New Testament.
- 10 **Committing passages to memory**: The children can be challenged daily to commit the verse to memory that is drawn from the Bible Library matchboxes.
- 11 **Literary forms of the Bible**:
  - Family trees or **GENEALOGIES** trace the descent of a person, family, or group from their ancestors. Encourage children to read Matthew 1:1-17 to see the ancestors of Jesus.
  - **SHORT STORIES** are used to teach important lessons such as the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-16.
  - **LAWS** were set down to guide God’s people. Find the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20: 1-17.
  - **WISE SAYINGS** are contained, for example, in the Book of Proverbs. See 21: 13.
  - **FABLES** are stories in which animals can think and talk like human beings to teach an important truth. Find the story of Balaam and his donkey in Numbers 22: 22-35.
  - **SONGS AND PRAYERS** contain many of the beliefs of the people of God. You will find good examples in the Book of Psalms.
  - **HISTORY** gives a factual account of the events of the past. The two books of Samuel tell the history of the first kings of Israel.
  - **SPEECHES** are another kind of literary form or way of writing. One of Paul’s most famous speeches is recorded in Acts 17: 22-31.
  - Beautiful examples of **POETRY** can be found in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, in the Psalms, and in the Song of Solomon.