

Week 1 / Pre-teens KS3

Introducing the Bible

Session plan

Core value: 'Read the Bible. Meet God. Transform.'

Key Verses:

Isaiah 40.8

'The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.' (ESV)

Hebrews 4.12

'For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword.' (ESV)

Luke 24.32

'They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"' (ESV)

Resources:



Best Books sheet (provided)



Pens and a yellow felt tip pen



Open Doors chart of dangerous places in the world to be a Christian



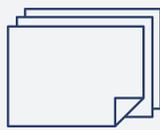
Hand mirror



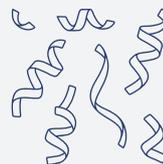
Length of string or rope



'Start' and 'End' flashcards



Multiple sheets of paper



Confetti



Lots of piece of paper that have 'God', 'Jesus', 'God loves you' written on them



Symbol for Jesus in Korean, on paper in black ink



ORIGINS
& MEANING



EXODUS
& FREEDOM



EXILE
& PEACE



MESSIAH
& LOVE



SPIRIT
& COMMUNITY



HOPE
& HOME

Bible Starter

Reference the key Bible verse – if using paper, write out the verses on separate pieces of paper like the diagram below. Read the verse aloud together.

Start each reading with these lines: *'The Bible is FULL of God's words; it is a marvellous treasure chest, full of beautiful and important things. What does it have to tell us today?'*



Zoom tweak

- The easiest way to achieve this is to have the verse on a PowerPoint and share your screen
- You can also have it written on paper which you can hold up to the screen

Activity – Best Books

The Bible is popular

Ask the young people about some of the best books they have ever read (even the non-readers will have something). Allow them to be silly – they can choose a child's book they read a lot when little e.g. Ask them about the basic premise of the stories – beginning, middle and end. List all their books in the 'Best Books' sheet (provided). Then ask them to give each book a star mark – how many stars would they colour out of five for their chosen book?

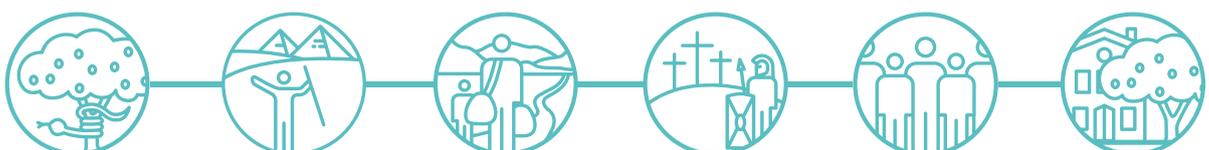
Now ask them to repeat the process for the Bible – what is the basic premise of the Bible, do they know? How many stars would they give it?

Application: Your favourite books sell by the thousands every year. They are very popular. But the Bible outsells all of these books every year! The Bible is the world's bestseller!

The basic premise of the Bible is that it is all about Jesus and how much he loves this world. Did you know the Bible is so powerful, it changes lives every day around the world? In fact it's so powerful that Bibles are banned in some countries. It can be very dangerous to be a Christian and own a copy of the Bible! Reference the 'Open Doors' chart here to find out the most dangerous countries.

Zoom tweak

- You can email the book review sheet to the young people ahead of time and ask them to complete it before the session
- OR you can complete it for them as they talk you through the books they like



Activity: Robert Jermaine Thomas story

(Summarise this story, but please be sensitive with the details according to the nature of your group. Have a world map or globe to show where places are.)

There was a man called Robert and he lived in Wales (show on map). Robert loved God and loved the Bible. He wanted to tell everyone about God and give everyone the Bible, so he started by going to China (show on map) to tell people about God and give them the Bible. Robert then heard about a place called Korea and wanted the people that lived there to have the Bible (show Korea on the map). However, Korea was a dangerous place to go, especially if you were taking the Bible.

But Robert learnt the Korean language (show the word for 'Jesus'). 예수

Robert helped translate the Bible into Korean; he got on a ship with the Korean Bible. As their ship approached Korea, soldiers started to shoot at it. However, Robert managed to jump off the ship. He handed out Bibles to anyone he could see as he waded to shore, all the time shouting 'Jesus, Jesus' (said as 'yesu').

The last man to whom Robert handed a Bible killed him. The Korean people were told to destroy all the Bibles, but instead they started to use the pages in the Bible as wallpaper in their houses. Guess what happened? People started to read their Bible wallpaper. Remember – the Bible is God's words; it is powerful and can change people's lives. People read the Bible on their walls. They started to love Jesus and their lives were changed.

Application: The Bible will last forever because it's full of God's words. That makes it powerful. God's words change people's lives

Zoom tweak

- Have the world map and relevant countries they need to see on your screen – perhaps each country is a separate PowerPoint slide
- Printed pictures could also work

Activity: The Bible is popular – is it reliable?

Ask the young people to define reliable (they can Google it on their phones). Reliability is something considered trustworthy and consistently good in quality.

Question: Does the Bible fit into these parameters?

Question: What proof do you need that the Bible is reliable? Let us compare it to two other great works of literature of its time.

Have three piles of books (or boxes of paper)

Pile 1 – 30 books (this is your biggest pile and must be noticeably taller – the taller the better)

- Label this pile 'The Bible'

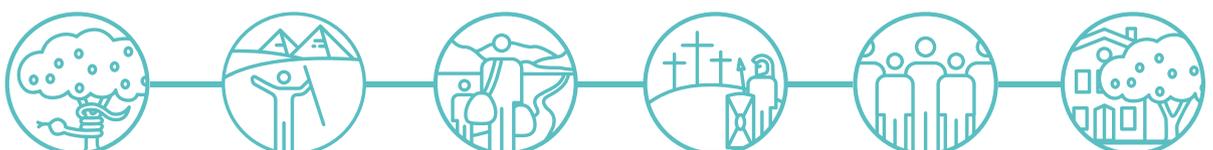
Pile 2 – Eight books

- Label this pile 'The Iliad by Homer'

Pile 3 - Three books

- Label this pile 'Annals of Imperial Rome by Tacitus'

Application: Let's compare the Bible with some world famous literature – I know you have never probably heard of these two books (refer to *The Iliad* and *Annals of Imperial Rome*), but thousands of years ago, these were popular pieces of literature. Let us start with the smallest pile:



'Activity: The Bible is popular – is it reliable?' continued

(The key here is the difference in size of the piles for the visual impact. Share as little or as much information as you feel your group will connect with)

Pile 3 – Tacitus

Tacitus was one of Rome's greatest historians and politicians. The *Annals* looks at the reign of four Roman Emperors. However, there are only 33 hand-written copies of this great book. The gap between when he wrote his book and the age of these copies is around 800 to 1000 years. Even so, they are considered very reliable!

Pile 2 – Homer

The Iliad is an epic poem at the centre of Greek literature. Homer is thought to be the author and is one of the most influential authors of all time. There are 18,000 genuine hand-written copies remaining. The gap between the writing of this poem and the age of the oldest manuscripts is 450 years – again, they are considered to be reliable.

Pile 1 -The Bible

There are more than 66,000 ancient hand-written copies of the Bible in circulation, some 42,000 for the Old Testament and 24,000 for the New Testament – yep, that is why this pile is MUCH bigger. The gap between when the New Testament manuscripts were written and the earliest surviving fragments and manuscripts is remarkably short.

Application: The Bible is incredibly reliable ancient literature! It is powerful, it is popular, and it is reliable. This is because it wasn't written by historians, politicians nor influential authors, but by God himself with the help of many human authors. In terms of reliability and trustworthiness, the Bible surpasses expectation – we can trust its reliability. As a historical text, filled with songs, letters, stories, poems, this book stands up as a valid, reliable, historical text. So read it, meet God and then decide if you trust what it says. People who trust the Bible often say that it has changed their lives!

Zoom tweak

- Have a PowerPoint slide with the manuscripts and the number of copies in existence all mixed up – ask young people to try and match them correctly
- On a second slide have all the answers correctly ordered for them to check their answers
- Place the facts about the Bible on separate PowerPoint slides or if it's easier, pieces of paper that you hold to the screen

Activity: Change lives how?

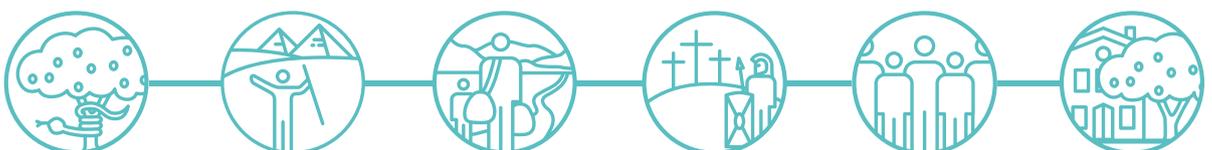
The Bible is inspired by God, who used many human writers to contribute to the Bible. These authors included kings, poets, shepherds and doctors. The Bible is an epic story that centres on Jesus and how much God loves the world and people he has created.

Read: 2 Timothy 3.16 (NLT)

'All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.'

Use the following questions to form a discussion about the Bible:

1. How do you think God and human writers came together to produce the Bible? (As an illustration you could say that this: 'People often think that Christopher Wren built St Paul's Cathedral in London. But that's not quite true. Lots of builders came together to build it, based on the plans and inspiration provided by Christopher Wren.)



'Activity: Change lives how?' continued

2. Do you think the Bible teaches us about life, the world we live in and why we are here?
3. How does the Bible correct us when we are wrong?
4. How does the Bible teach us to do what is right?
5. How would you explain to your friends what the Bible is? What would you tell them?

Zoom tweak

- On one Power Point slide have the 2 Timothy 3.16 verse and the questions
- Work through them one at a time

Application: In the Bible we learn how to be the people God has designed us to be. It shows us how to live and be transformed (Romans 12.2). When we read the Bible, we meet God on every page. No wonder it's popular and powerful. No wonder it transforms us.

You could watch Finny's story of how the Bible changed his life in prison from Session One of The Bible Series resources.

Activity – Mirror, mirror ...

Hand a mirror around the room, one young person at a time. As they look into it, have fun by inviting them to ask the mirror anything they wish for.

Application: The things we asked for often involved making our lives better (repeat some of the things the group asked for). We might look in the mirror and wish we had better teeth, looked slimmer, looked like (name a famous actor/model/singer).

Read: James 1.23 which talks about the Bible being like a mirror. In what ways could this be true? When you look in a mirror, you fix things – take food out of your teeth, brush your hair, add make-up etc.

The Bible shows us what in our lives needs fixing and how to fix it. Jesus fixed it for us, we simply have to believe it, do our best to follow him and live in ways that honour him. This is how we transform.

Zoom tweak

- Hold a real hand mirror up to the screen
- OR have a PowerPoint image of a mirror
- OR have emailed ahead of the session and ask the young people to have a hand mirror to hand ready for the session

Activity: Start to end

Place a length of string on the floor and tell young people it represents the storyline of the Bible. With paper and pen, place a 'Start' and 'End' marker in relevant places. Split the line in half and reference the first half as the Old Testament and the second half as the New Testament. Ask the group to think of big events in the Bible, write them on pieces of paper and then add them to the storyline in order as best as they can remember.

Zoom tweak

- Have a PowerPoint slide with a line and a start and end point
- Allow young people to talk through stories that they know in the Bible and discuss the order the stories come in
- Have a PowerPoint slide or sheet that has the timeline with some of your own stories added in (e.g. Creation, Noah, Joshua, Samson, Daniel, birth of Jesus, Jesus' baptism, healings, cross, resurrection, Pentecost, New Heaven and New Earth)

Application: The Bible is full of lots of incredible stories, people and events that centre on the person of Jesus. Jesus is the hero of the whole Bible story. Ultimately, the Bible centres on the cross, the death and resurrection of Jesus. As we read the Bible and get to know Jesus, we can be transformed and changed by the Holy Spirit. Over the next few weeks we are going to be looking at the big story of the Bible and how it all points to Jesus.

Creative prayer

Hold out the Bible that has been pre-filled with lots of pieces of paper that read 'God', 'Jesus', 'God loves you'. Seat the young people in a circle. Stand in the middle and open the Bible so all the pieces of paper fall out on the floor (maybe add some confetti to have a greater visual effect). Allow some to fall on the heads of your young people. Ask them to close their eyes and pray.

Zoom tweak

- Pre-send in the post an envelope that they can't open until you say in your session
- Inside it have a handful of the confetti and the 'God', 'Jesus' and 'God loves you' messages inside
- Ask them to open their envelope and tip the contents onto an open Bible
- As they do this you pray

Pray

Lord, thank you for giving us the Bible. Thank you that because you are powerful, the Bible is powerful.

Jesus, help me read the Bible and to know you better.

Help me to put into action the things you tell me through it.

God, you are great and Almighty – your words are more precious than gold.

Your words will transform my life. Amen.

Next Session:

Session 2: Origins & Meaning

