



Celebrating 20 years of Open the Book in Messy Church

An OtB Storyteller provided this copy for us to share with your Messy Church!

Welcome to Messy Church!

This year is a big celebration. It's the 20th Anniversary of Open the Book (OtB).

Open the Book is a project to enable people from the local church(es) or Churches Together to go into their local primary school and do Bible Storytelling in a fun, interactive way.

Over 200 years ago, there lived a Welsh girl called Mary Jones. Mary was from a poor family, the daughter of a weaver, and they had no Bible. Welsh Bibles were scarce in those days. But Mary longed for a Bible of her own. So she saved up for 6 long years. Once she had got all the necessary money together, she walked 26 miles to Bala, over mountainous terrain, barefoot as usual, to obtain a copy from Revd Thomas Charles, the only person with Bibles for sale in the area.

On arriving in Bala, Mr Charles told Mary that all of the copies which he had received were sold. She had to wait two days for another supply of Bibles to arrive, but when they came, Mr Charles gave Mary three copies for the price of one. Mary's story – and her determination to have her own copy of God's written word – soon became the talk of the churches in the area. And, in 1804, with the help of people like Thomas Charles, Bible Society was founded to give everyone access to the Bible.

OtB is part of Bible Society and today we are going to celebrate the Bible that Mary Jones loved so much and that, thanks to her determination, is easily available to all of us today.

Please stick together as a family for your safety and to make sure than no one misses out on any of the fun, including the grown-ups!

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Six activities:

Building the Bible

Inspired by pinterest.co.uk/lego/ and pinterest.co.uk/discover sundayschoolactivities or try pinterest.co.uk/explore/books-of-bible/

What to do

This is a race! Starting with Genesis at the bottom, how fast can you stack the Old & New Testament book Lego bricks in the right order? Have Bibles available to help you get the books in the right order. For younger children, they could sort the bricks into Old and New Testament groups. It's a great activity to adapt for different ages and you may be surprised at how competitive it gets!

Talk and think about

Can you think of a story in the Old or New Testament? Share your favourite story or take a look at the Bibles and read a story you do not know so well.

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Bible Story Bingo

What to do

Hunt for Bible story pictures around your church building/meeting place and mark them off with a cross on your sheet. There could be 3 areas to search or scattered around. Hint - some stories may be in more than one place... This activity can be adapted. Download the separate Editable Answer Sheet and pictures from freebibleimages.org/ and stick around the room for families to hunt down & match to the story.

Talk and think about

Which story was the hardest to find? Which story was the easiest to find? Which stories didn't you know?

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Trumpets

What to do

Use the materials to make a cone shaped trumpet. We will use the trumpets for the Celebration time, 'Walls of Jericho'.

Talk and think about

God helps Joshua solve a problem in the story today. Do you have a problem going round your head that you can't solve on your own?

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Bring light to the world

What to do

Children must be supervised by an adult parent/carer who has responsibility for the child, not the Messy Church team. Sparkler will be handed to an adult supervising the child.

Talk and think about

The Bible brings light to the world. It is God's Story. It is lots of stories telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them. How can you share God's Story and pass on the light to others?

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Mary Jones Journey

What to do

- Take off your shoes and socks
- Step into the wet paint
- Walk along the paper

Talk and think about

Think about the journey that 15-year-old Mary Jones made over 26 miles. Her feet probably got very wet on the journey. What's the furthest that you have walked? How far would you walk for something you really wanted?

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Edible Bibles

Inspired by [pinterest.co.uk FigBible](https://pinterest.co.uk/figBible)

What to do - turn a fig roll into a Bible:

- Trim the biscuit coating off one side so the fig shows on 3 edges
- Ice your Bible cover
- Add an edible bookmark

Talk and think about

The Bible is God's Story. It is lots of stories telling one Big Story. It's the story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them. Do you own a Bible? How often do you read it?

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Talk

Which activity was your favourite today? Grown-ups? What better way to celebrate than with an OtB Story from *The Lion Storyteller Bible* called – ‘The Walls Fall Down’ which is about the Battle of Jericho based on Joshua 6 and found in OtB Year 1 Handbook.

We need a Narrator, an Angel wielding a sword, a lead adult for Joshua and a lead adult for the soldiers (*this story is great to do with any number of people. For us, the children all wanted to be soldiers with their trumpets and all the adults made the Walls of Jericho*). Retell story & use the OtB Handbook for the conclusion.

It seems strange that God would want the walls of Jericho to fall down doesn't it? But the people who lived in the city were doing some very bad things and God wanted Joshua to help sort out the problem. Do you have a problem that is going round and round in your head? Or do you know someone else with a problem? Close your eyes for a minute and think about those problems.

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Prayer

Dear God

You helped Joshua to solve his problem in an unusual way in today's story. Please help us with all the problems we've been thinking about today. (*This first prayer is from the OtB handbook*).

Thank you for the example of Mary Jones who walked 26 miles up and down hills to buy a Bible of her own. Thank you that because of her determination it is so easy for us to read about you in our Bibles.

Thank you for the OtB teams in our town and across the country. Thank you that this year is a special celebration of 20 years of Open the Book.

We pray that every school in the country would be able to have an OtB team to share your stories.

Amen.

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