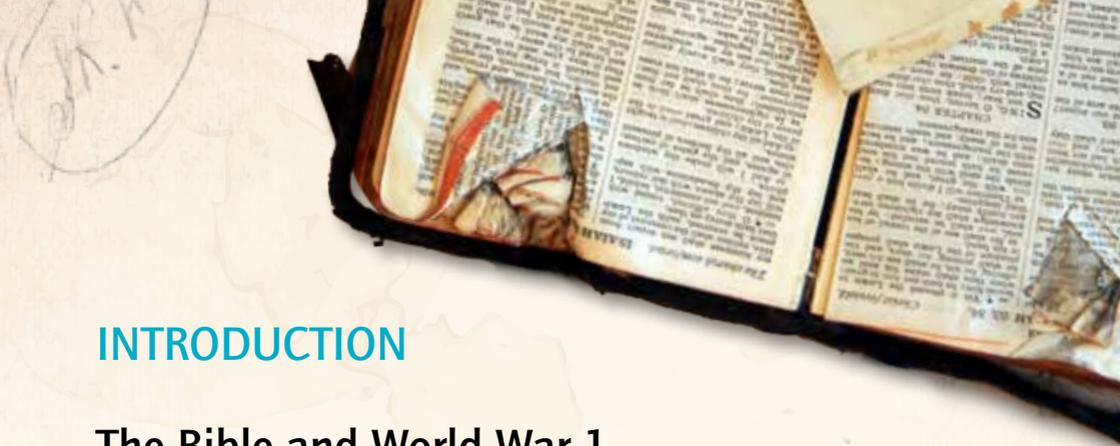


WORLD WAR 1 Commemoration Order of Service





INTRODUCTION

The Bible and World War 1

This year is the centenary of World War 1. What's that got to do with the Bible or indeed Bible Society? The answer is a great deal.

In 1914 Britain was a very different place. The Bible was part of everyday life. Knowledge of it meant that you were considered both respectable and educated.

And so many people did have a working knowledge of the Bible. Between 25-29 per cent of the population went to church every single Sunday; 90 per cent of children attended Sunday School and just one per cent of Britons said that they were atheists.

What may surprise people today is that every member of the British Armed Forces was given a New Testament as part of their kit: uniform, helmet, boots, Bible.

Bible Society distributed some 9 million Bibles in 80 different languages during the war – a phenomenal achievement.

This year it has been working with the world's leading academic on Christianity and both World Wars, Dr Michael Snape, from Birmingham University. He says that it is impossible to understand the war without the Bible.

PLAY VIDEO 1 DR MICHAEL SNAPE

For some of you World War 1 will be much more of a reality as you will have had fathers or grandfathers who fought in that war. But for the younger members of the congregation the scale of loss and destruction it inflicted on the lives of so many people may be difficult to grasp.

It is impossible to gather precise figures and know what happened to all the 6 million men who fought in the war but the statistics from Birmingham University show that:

- 6 million British men fought
- 65,000 of them suffered from shell shock
- 170,000 of them became prisoners of war
- 1.7 million of them were wounded
- And 772,000 of them died



[We have turned the numbers above into rounded percentages. All you need to do is work out how many people are likely to be in your congregation and then turn the percentages below into numbers. You then need to hand out four sets of coloured stickers at the start of the service – one for each group. Not everybody will have stickers as there are not figures for all 6 million soldiers – we assume most survived.]

Out of the 6 million soldiers:

- 1% suffered from shell shock
- 3% became prisoners of war
- 28% were wounded
- 13% died

[Now instruct the congregation to do the following:]

Could everyone please stand up. You are the 6 million men who were mobilised from Britain during World War 1.

- Everyone with a yellow sticker sit down. You are all shell shocked.
- Everyone with a green sticker sit down. You have been taken prisoner of war.
- Everyone with a pink sticker sit down. You are wounded.
- Everyone with an orange sticker sit down. You are all dead.

Those of you left standing – your lives are changed forever, but you are alive.

FIRST HYMN – O GOD OUR HELP IN AGES PAST

Throughout the rest of this service we will be hearing the stories from the families and friends of those who fought in the war and hearing the voices of those who fought in the war read by members of the congregation. All the material has been collected by Bible Society. You can see more of their work on their website: worldwar1bible.com

The first story is that of George Hever Vinall told by his grandson, Steve.

PLAY VIDEO 2 STEVE VINALL ON GEORGE VINALL

Now let's hear the letter George wrote home:

**MEMBER OF CONGREGATION TO READ
GEORGE'S LETTER** (p124 of *Hear My Cry*)

**MEMBER OF CONGREGATION TO READ
PSALM 146** (p122 of *Hear My Cry*)

SECOND HYMN – LEAD US, HEAVENLY FATHER, LEAD US





Our second story is that of Arthur Ingham told by a relative of his dear friend, John Moody.

PLAY VIDEO 3 PHILIP DOUETIL ON ARTHUR INGHAM

MEMBER OF CONGREGATION TO READ ARTHUR INGHAM'S STORY (p120 *Hear My Cry*)

MEMBER OF CONGREGATION TO READ PSALM 145 (p118 *Hear My Cry*)

MEMBER OF CONGREGATION READS IN *FLANDERS FIELDS* BY JOHN MCCRAE (p73 *Hear My Cry*)

THIRD HYMN – *GUIDE ME O THOU GREAT REDEEMER*

Our third and final story is that of Walter Young told by his son, John.

PLAY VIDEO 4 JOHN YOUNG ON WALTER YOUNG

MEMBER OF CONGREGATION TO READ THE STORY OF WALTER YOUNG (p76 *Hear My Cry*)

MEMBER OF CONGREGATION TO READ PSALM 67 (p42 *Hear My Cry*)

END WITH A PRAYER (p87 *Hear My Cry*)

FINAL HYMN

GRACE





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