

Looking Back at 2023

I recently had a look back over the year 2023 and wanted to share some of that review here. God is good!

MISSION BIBLE CLASS

A quick glance at the year 2023

WEBSITE RESOURCES

- Daily average 7,441
- Total page views 2,604,168



GLOBAL REACH

- Podcast episodes downloaded in 149 countries
- Website viewed from 231 different countries

WORKSHOPS & ENGAGEMENTS



SOCIAL MEDIA

Pinterest:
7,200 followers
227,600 monthly views

Youtube Channel:
5,752 subscribers
215,553 views
3,300 hours watched

Facebook Page:
2,100 followers

THE VISION: Christians around the world equipped to value and spiritually nurture children.

THE MISSION:

Equip
Online resources, 52 podcast episodes, 4 workshops, 2 classes, and a camp

Mentor
1 intern from Texas and 3 from Oklahoma, USA

Promote
8 speaking engagements

THE FIELD:

25% of the world's population is under the age of 15 years.



WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Via emails and website comments

"I want to tell you I LOVE your material. My husband and I use it for our Wednesday night class with 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders. Your work is so impressive...The 4 year old teacher is using it too. I also use it with my home studies with my 11 and 13 year old! So far I've used your outline to guide my class through the Old and New Testament...I also use a Bible Timeline to accompany the lessons that I use to point us to Jesus and the New Testament church. Thank you for sharing your hard and great works with the world!" From Amanda

"I am a volunteer Sunday School Teacher and it's my first time to teach. No training from Bible School. But I am very glad that I have found this Mission Bible Class in the internet and it is a great help for me as new teacher in the Bible class in our church. Thank you so much for sharing this for free."
From Winnie

"This is my first time of coming to this website and I am wowed! You really made Bible lessons easy for me as a Christian teacher."
From Yemi

"Time and again, I find very solid ideas AND accurate theological information that really complement the lessons we plan. You and your work are a blessing in Texas!" From Amy

"Thank you for writing this. Even though it was written for children, it resonated with things that I have gone through in my life as well." From Nathan

"Wow! This is what I need in Kenya as I train ministers and future missionaries in Nairobi Kenya." From George

"Absolutely brilliant page, not just for the children, but for me an adult, a visual learner, I am studying ministry at uni and needed help to prepare a sermon, this page has helped tremendously, often adult studying is over whelming, so this site allows me to see and learn as a child does. God bless you!"
From Naomi

"By God's will, we engaged in many services, including Sunday school in South Sudan. We ministered to approximately 40 churches in the areas of Shuwaibat, Tonj, and Rumbek. We used your curriculum, which benefited them very much in preparing and presenting lessons."
From Medhat



New Worker Joins Mission Bible Class

Welcome
Aboard
Gina!



Mission Bible Class is excited to welcome Gina Nored as she joins the ministry in New Zealand for 2 years as part of the Helpers in Missions Program.



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I sometimes receive emails thanking the Mission Bible Class “staff” or “team” for providing resources. It often surprises people to know that the only staff or team member is me (Mary Nelson). From time to time, I have had short-term help from interns. Churches and individuals have also made the work financially viable. But, as for the published material

you see here on this website, it has all been done by me from my laptop. It has been a joy!

For at least the next two years, I will not be working alone. Gina Nored will join me in helping equip Christians around the world to value and spiritually nurture children.

Gina recently graduated from [Lipscomb University](#), Honors College (Nashville, Tennessee, USA). She holds two degrees. One degree is a Theology and Ministry, B.A., and the other is in Interdisciplinary Education, K-5; B.A.

Gina has already had some experience in missions as a team member at [Next Generation for Christ](#), where she has written children's Bible curriculum and, among other things, managed Christian camps in Croatia.

Gina will be coming to New Zealand as part of the Helpers in Missions (HIM) program. This program and Mission Bible Class share the same sponsor: [The Memorial Road Church of Christ in Edmond, Oklahoma](#). It is great to have them come on board as well.

I am excited to see how God will work through Gina in the next couple of years. Watch this space! As this story unfolds, you'll hear more about Gina and Mission Bible Class.

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A Very Special Happy Birthday

A Very Special

Happy Birthday

An interactive way to teach children
about the beginning of the church
(From Acts chapters 1 & 2)

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Every child can relate to the idea of a birthday party. Try this interactive story-telling method to help children celebrate the beginnings of the church.

Background:

The “birth” of the church was long-anticipated and expected. From the beginning chapters of Genesis and onwards, we read how God, the Father, worked out a plan to redeem imperfect people back to himself. In the Gospels, Jesus speaks of building “his church”. Then, in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit ushers in a new age and the birth of the church.

Among the crowds gathered in Jerusalem, there were one hundred and twenty believers gathered and waiting just as Jesus had told them to do. By the end of the festival, specifically the Day of Pentecost, three thousand others had been added to this group of followers. The Day of Pentecost marks the beginning of an age when imperfect people could have their sins washed away in baptism and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This was the beginning of the church.

Items to Gather:

- 12 cupcakes topped with soft icing or whipped cream
- A plate or platter for the cupcakes
- 12 candles
- Matches or a lighter
- “Sprinkles” or “Hundreds and Thousands” (or any tiny cake decorations)
- A gift box and wrapping paper.
- The following verse that you have transcribed on an index card or piece of paper:
“Peter said to them, “Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38 ICB

Prepare:

- The words below are provided as a guide and are not meant to be read like a script. Keeping this in mind, read and become very familiar with the events of [Acts 1:12-2:41](#) so that you are able to share the story with the

children in a natural way. For additional help, refer to the lesson: [Sermon at Pentecost](#).

- Place the verse card inside the gift box and wrap it like a birthday gift.

How to Tell the Story:

1. **Introduction:** Ask the children to share their experiences of birthday parties. As you and the children are talking about this, set out the 11 cupcakes and the gift box on a table in front of the children. (Keep the 12th cupcake hidden from view.)
2. **The church had a beginning:** Explain that birthday parties are a way of remembering and celebrating the birth or beginning of a person's life. "Today, we are going to talk about a different kind of beginning. It is not the beginning of a life of one person. This is the beginning of the church."
3. **One hundred and twenty followers of Jesus:** Just before his ascension, Jesus had told the apostles to go to Jerusalem and wait for a special gift to arrive. ([Luke 24:49](#)) Tell the children about the 120 followers who had gathered together with the apostles. Now, add a few sprinkles to the tops of the cupcakes. Ask the children to help you estimate 120 sprinkles in all.
4. **Eleven Apostles:** Ask the children to count the cupcakes and point out that there are only 11. Talk about how Jesus had chosen 12 Apostles, but after Judas betrayed Jesus and died, there were now only 11. Matthias was chosen to replace Judas. This is the time to bring the 12th cupcake out from hiding.
5. **Arrival of the Holy Spirit:** Have the children make sounds like the wind and then talk about how the apostles heard a sound like a mighty wind. Place a candle in each of the cupcakes and, as you light them, talk about the flames of fire resting upon the head of each apostle. The sound of wind and flames made it clear that the Holy Spirit was there that day. We cannot see the Holy Spirit, but we know he was there because of these things. Jesus said that the Spirit would give power. Explain the power these 12 men now had to speak in languages they had not even studied.
6. **Peter's Sermon:** The Holy Spirit also gave Peter the power to courageously preach a sermon to a huge crowd of people that day. Push one of the cupcakes in front of the others as you talk about the sermon content. Jesus wanted all of the Jews to have good hearts and turn to God. Peter told this crowd of Jews that, instead of following Jesus, they had crucified him.
7. **"What should we do?":** The people felt terrible (quietly blow out the candles and set them aside). They had done a terrible thing. How could they ever make it right? They asked Peter.
8. **The gift for everyone:** Peter knew that the Holy Spirit had given the apostles a special kind of power, but the Holy Spirit was also a gift that God wanted everyone to have in their life. Peter knew exactly what to say to the people that day. Now, you or one of the children can open the gift and read Acts 2:38.
9. **Three thousand people were baptised:** As you discuss this, group the cupcakes back together and bring out the sprinkles again. Remind the children that there were 120 believers at the beginning of this day. Begin adding more sprinkles to the cupcakes so that you cover them with what seems like 3,000. These may even spill over onto the plate. Talk about how 3,000 people were added to their number on that day.
10. **Conclusion:** This was the beginning of the church. In the book of Acts, we read that, from that day forward, more and more people began to follow Jesus and were baptised. And even today, when people are sorry for their sins and are baptised, God still adds them to the church as well. Some day, I pray that even you will be added to that number.

And now it is time to celebrate and eat those cupcakes!

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Never a Truer Word

Do you remember the first words you recognised when you began to read? The three and four-year-olds that I teach are so pleased with themselves when they begin to realise that they can spell the word B-I-B-L-E.

We work on this skill for quite some time. Each week we sing the [B-I-B-L-E song](#). I display the letters, and we point to each one as we sing it. When I pick up my bible, I point out the letters and say them.

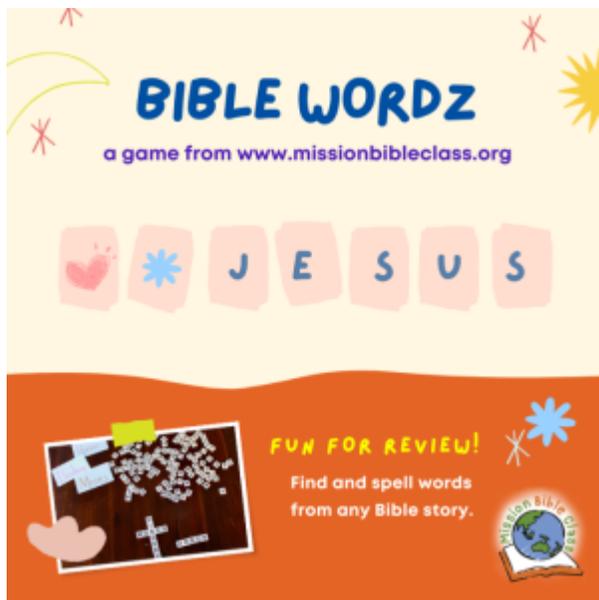
For a while, the children just mimic me. I can tell that they have not quite figured it out. Then, one day, it “clicks”. That’s what happened this past Sunday. For the first time, one of the children realised that those letters spell BIBLE!

We sang the song as usual, and he pointed to the letters. But, this time, he then looked at me and said, “That says BIBLE!”. He then looked all over our classroom, pointing out the word everywhere he saw it. It was on each bible in the room. It was on a room poster. The word BIBLE was outlined on the bulletin board. He was so excited!

Recognising words as we read our Bible is another way of learning. Pointing out and talking about words like “Jesus” and “forgive” can be life-changing.

I’m always looking for games that help children learn and are adaptable to any lesson. The [Bible Wordz game](#) is one of those.

In this adaptable game, children form words from letter tiles. The words relate to words found in the Bible lesson. Thanks to Tamako Weiss for putting this game together for me.



Supplies:

1. Individual letter tiles: Use tiles from games like Scrabble or Bananagrams. Magnetic letters are another good choice. Alternatively, make your own from paper or bottlecaps. You will need enough tiles to form multiple words
2. Index cards or paper to create word cards

3. A flat surface, like a table, on which to play
4. (optional) 30-second timer
5. (optional) Prizes. These can be stickers, candy bars, bookmarks, or inexpensive toys

Preparations:

1. Collect or prepare letter tiles.
2. Create the word cards by writing a keyword on each card.

How to play:

1. After telling the bible story, show students the keyword cards. Take time to explain the meaning of each word.
2. To begin the game, the students spread the tiles (face up) on the table surface.
3. Set the timer for 30 seconds. When the time begins, students try to spell as many keywords as possible before the time is up.
4. Students can use word grids or make the words individually.
5. This can be done as a group or as a competition. If competing, whoever spells the most words in 30 seconds wins.

Ways you can adapt this game:

1. Ask the children to use a bible and choose the keywords on their own. They can then create their own word cards and play the game.
2. Use very simple words for younger children and more complex ones for older children.
3. Use review questions instead of word cards. Plan ahead so that you can ask questions that have one-word answers. Ask the review question, and the students spell out the answer using the letter tiles.
The following example is from the story [Moses Does Not Honour God](#).
Question: Who struck the rock twice? Answer: Moses.
The first child to guess and spell M-O-S-E-S wins the round.
4. Skip the cards and timer and play straight from the Bible. Choose a set of verses and form as many words as possible from those verses.
5. There are many ways you can adapt this game. Choose what is best for your class and students.

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A Weekly Podcast for Bible Teachers



Congratulations from Buzzsprout!
1st EPISODE PUBLISHED

Calling all Bible teachers...

Do you struggle to find time to prepare for your lessons? I know I do.

I call myself a “Bible Teacher”, but sometimes, when I’m in a rush, I find myself spending less time studying the Bible and more time gathering craft supplies, planning activities, and preparing my classroom. If I’m honest, I really want to study the Bible first and then get to the glitter and glue after that.

This is where the [Bible, Glitter and Glue Podcast](#) comes in.

Each week we invite you to join two teachers as we study from the Bible and exchange ideas for creatively sharing God’s Word. Episodes are 20-25 minutes in duration and directly connect with the bible lessons on this website. This means you can begin preparing for your class as you travel, while you are exercising, or as you are preparing dinner.

We’ve started at the beginning of the New Testament and our aim is to cover each of the [172 bible lessons on the website](#). Check out some of our episodes below.

Podcast Co-Hosts

I’m so excited to be co-hosting a podcast with my husband, David. This is something new for both of us and we’ve been on a huge learning curve.



Mary (that's me) is the founder of [Mission Bible Class](#), a ministry that provides free resources to people who want to share stories from the Bible with children (that's you).

Her interactive games, crafts, visual aids and teaching instructions are designed to be used without purchasing expensive supplies or printing volumes of paper.



David W. Nelson (that's my husband) has been involved in Christian ministry for his entire adult life. He has served as a preacher, a teacher, a missionary and an elder in his local church congregation.

David teaches various bible-related subjects at the [South Pacific Bible College](#) in Tauranga, New Zealand. His qualifications include a Diploma of Preaching, a Bachelor of Religious Education, and a Master of Arts (Christian Ministry).

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