

# Wrapped Up, Tied Up and Zentangled Up in Jesus



**WRAPPED UP  
TIED UP  
ZENTANGLED UP  
IN JESUS**



[www.missionbibleclass.org](http://www.missionbibleclass.org)

A simple artistic method to help children relax and focus in Bible Class.

Recently a group of children got me tangled up in something new.

I was teaching a small group of 9-12 year olds on Sunday mornings for Bible class. I asked the children what ideas they had for helping us learn. Their suggestions are what led us to begin “tangling” in Bible Class.

I had first been introduced to the idea quite some time ago but I had not thought of using it for my Bible class. After learning a bit more about it I realised that the children were “on to something”.

*Zentangle is a method of drawing that is so simple and repetitive that it frees your mind up to relax and focus. Doodling is more freeform and flowing but Zentangle usually follows patterns.*

Don't make the same mistake I did and think that [Zentangle](#) is somehow related to "Zen Buddhism". As I learned more I found out that it is actually an artistic method created by Rick Roberts and Maria Thomas. They describe the actual process of drawing "tangling". They added the word "zen" to describe the calm effect tangling produces as you do it. [You can read more about how it began here.](#)

# How We Tangled in Our Class

Since we were working our way through some great Old Testament lessons from the [Tower of Babel all the way through the Life of Joseph](#) I wanted to emphasise "FAITH"

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph had great faith.



## Here's What We Did

### 1. Prepared a Poster:

The children could have drawn their own letters but, for this first attempt, I decided to pre-print the word FAITH on a paper using big letter outlines. I searched for a suitable font and found one similar to [Janda Manatee Bubble](#). Create your own or use [this one in A4 size](#) or [this one in letter size \(USA\)](#)

### 2. Drew a free-flowing grid to create drawing spaces:

The tangle designs can be done inside the letters or outside, in the white space. I decided to go with the white space outside the letters.

To help the children get started I went ahead and drew out a wavy sort of grid so they would immediately see the small areas to add designs to. By doing this free-hand I was able to create a totally unique pattern for each child.

### 3. Provided each child with a pen:

People take Zentangling to all sorts of levels and spend lots of money on special paper and pens. In our case I just handed each child a fine line black pen. We used fine line Sharpie pens.

### 4. Started tangling:

Each child selected a FAITH poster and began filling each of the "squares" with a unique design. As we all "tangled" we talked about faith. We weren't about finishing the project by the end of class. We just set them aside to be picked up and continued the next time we met.

# What I learned about using Zentangle in Bible class

1. Amazingly, this method really did bring calm to the classroom.
2. Fidgeters stopped fidgeting and were able to draw and participate in conversation all at the same time.
3. The conversation while tangling flowed naturally. The children were relaxed and calm and just chatted about what faith meant in their lives and then about life in general. Even shy children contributed to the conversation since they did not feel undo attention was on them.
4. I provided some patterns that I found online but the children in my class were quite happy to come up with their own designs.

## Links to Videos and Patterns:

I wasn't concerned with following strict guidelines for Zentangle so I was able to find lots of patterns and examples online. A simple online search for "zentangle" will lead you to a number of different examples. Here are a few simple ones that I found.

- [Video \(6 minutes\): Zentangle Art for beginners](#)
- [Video \(Just under 21 minutes\): 24 Doodle Patterns, Zentangle Patterns, Mandala Patterns](#)
- [Video \(5 minutes 21 seconds\): 15 Zentangle Patterns | Part 1 | Tutorial](#)
- [Video \(22 minutes 43 seconds\): 24 Zentangle patterns](#)
- [Blog Post with Patterns: 100+ Fun, Easy Patterns to Draw](#)

And just for fun I'll leave you with the song that I couldn't get out of my head while writing this post!!

### Lyrics:

I'm all wrapped up, all tied up, all tangled up in Jesus.  
I'm all wrapped up, all tied up, all tangled up in God.  
I'm all wrapped up, all tied up, all tangled up in Jesus.  
I'm all wrapped up, all tied up, all tangled up in God.

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I Say L.O.V.E

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# I SAY L.O.V.E

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to go away? This week a friend of mine shared a song with me that has done exactly that.

The song is not fancy. It only has six words. It is a teacher training video and not a performance for the Grammy Awards. Even so, it is stuck in my mind like glue. Listen a few times and I dare you to forget it.

Everybody needs some love.

## Lyrics:

I say L  
I say L-O  
L-O-V  
L-O-V-E

Everybody needs some love. L-O-V-E!

Everybody needs some love. L-O-V-E!

Everybody needs some love. L-O-V-E!

Everybody needs some love.

For more songs and free teaching resources visit [Mission Bible Class](https://missionbibleclass.org)

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# The Puzzling Attraction of Puzzles

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Disorder and exposed edges cause us to be tense and unsettled. We fervently scan for those straight edges to establish a boundary and begin to sort things out. We aren't satisfied until everything is in its proper place and the picture is complete.

*It is no wonder we say we "work" puzzles. The process doesn't seem like "play" at all.*

It is work. Yet, even when there is no outside competition involved, we find pleasure in that work. It is a quest for the solution. A desire to find the answer to the problem. Figuring out how the pieces fit together. Consciously or not, all of us are looking for answers. God, in his wisdom has created us curious and hungry to 'know'. It sometimes feels like very hard work and yet we still seek.

As teachers we can walk alongside children and guide them in the important Christian-life-skill of looking for answers and seeking truth. Throughout their lives truth will always be found in God.

*You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. Psalm 63:1, NIV*

[A good lesson plan](#) for Bible Class should include challenging and pleasurable [learning activities](#) that motivate children to think.

Challenges don't have to be complicated. One simple activity is an adaptation of jig-saw puzzles. [Click here for written instructions and links to good online teaching pictures you can use.](#)

Or watch this 2 minute training video below.

May God bless you as you help children seek answers.

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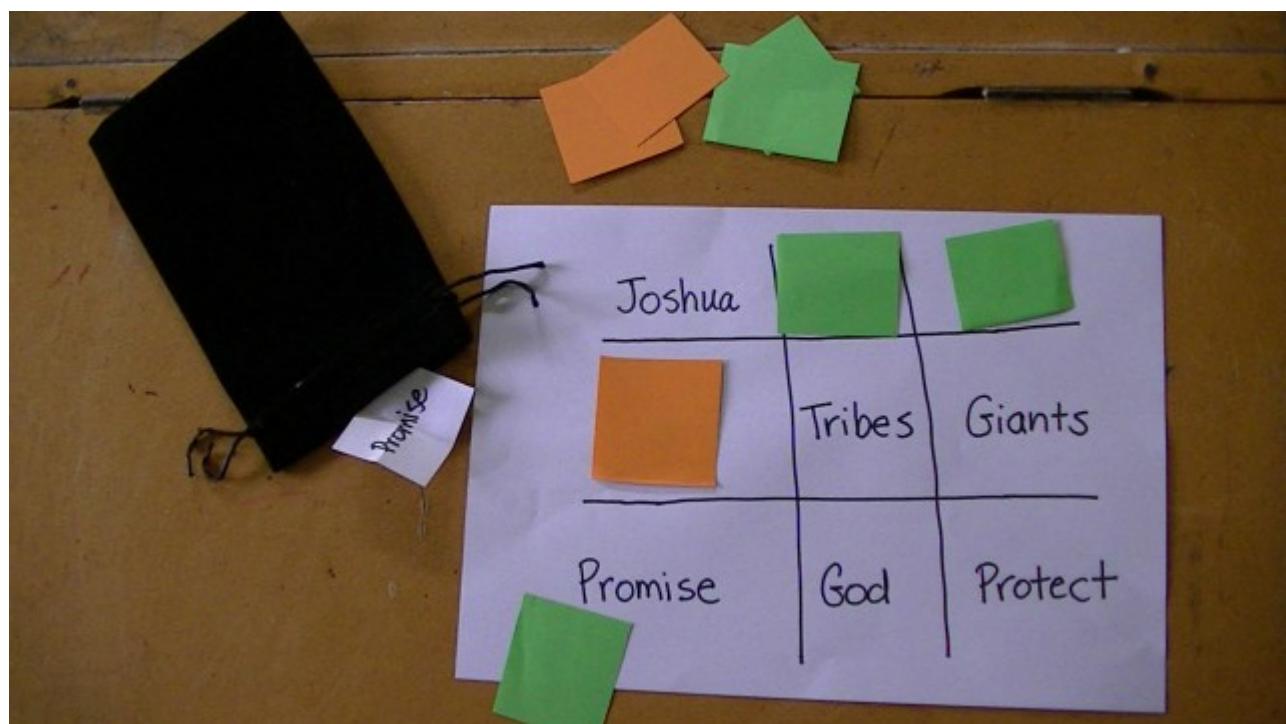
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## Same Game – Different Name

I thought I'd finish off 2014 by posting a simple game to use as a review in Bible Class.

Well, at least I assumed it would be simple!



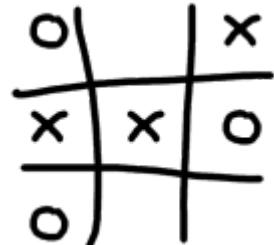
A woman named Debbie (Arizona, USA) emailed me awhile back with the suggestion of adapting an "X and O" game into a review activity for Bible Class. Children list words and ideas and then play a game similar to "tic-tac-toe" or "noughts and crosses". The example in the picture above is from the Bible lesson [Conquering the Land and Fighting Giants](#).

I thought such a simple idea would be easy to explain until I began filming a "how-to" video and writing out instructions. Hopefully, the final result makes sense. [Click here to learn how to use the game in your Bible Class.](#)

## Same Game-Different Name

It turns out that many of us play the game but we know it by different names. That's why I stuck with the simple title of "[X and O Review Game](#)". Here are some of the other names listed by [Wikipedia](#):

- Tick-tack-toe, Tic-tac-toe, Tick-tat-toe, or Tit-tat-toe (USA, Canada)
- Noughts and crosses or Naughts and crosses (United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa)
- Exy-Ozys, Xsie-Osies (verbal name only) (Northern Ireland)
- Xs and Os (Egypt, Republic of Ireland, Canada, Zimbabwe, Romania)
- O-X (Mauritius)



## Older Than You Think

I was amazed to find out that In fact, 1st Century Romans played a version of this game that was very similar to what we play today! So this game has been played since the time of Christ.

## Same Same but Different

As my Thai friends say, "same-same but different". God's Word does not change but it is shared in different languages and by various methods that fit the culture and understanding of the hearer. You know the needs of the children you are teaching. I'm hoping you are reading the ideas on [www.missionbibleclass.org](http://www.missionbibleclass.org) and then adapting them to your own teaching situation and language.

If a simple and inconsequential game of "X and O" can still be played and enjoyed by adults and children century after century then how much more lasting is the Word of God for all people for all time?

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# Food for Thought- Transfiguration

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Even a snack or food can help children understand the meaning of Scripture.

I'm quite confident in this method because it is one that God used often. Stories that come to mind are [The Passover](#), [Manna and Quail](#), [The Last Supper](#) and even in the way we are asked to remember [Christ in communion](#).

Tonight in Bible class we studied about the [Transfiguration of Christ from Matthew 17:1-13](#). The children and I read the Scripture together as we made and ate our snack.

*(Teacher Tip: I found out, the hard way, that 2 of the children were lactose intolerant so you might want to check that first ☺)*

## Supplies:

- Ice Cream
- Cola (any fizzy/gassy drink will do)
- A spoon or ice-cream scoop
- Cups
- Spoons

## Instructions:

1. Read Matthew 17:1-3 to the children and discuss. We spent a while talking about what the word "transfiguration" means (A complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state.)  
*"After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup>There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. <sup>3</sup>Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus." NIV*
2. Continue reading through verse 13 taking time to emphasize verse 5  
*<sup>5</sup>While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"*
3. Now pass out the cups and spoons. Fill each child's cup with 3 scoops of ice-cream. As you do this emphasize the 3 men who appeared on the mountain: Jesus, Moses and Elijah.
4. Now for the "cloud"! Pour cola over the ice-cream and watch the froth rise.
5. My kids loved this. By the time we had repeated the process for each child all the children knew the story well.

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