

# 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 working our way through some great Old Testament lessons from the [Tower of Babel all they 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 draw 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 Manitee 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 Sharpee 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 undue 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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## Same-Same But Different

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For a number of years I have been collecting songs to add to [www.missionbibleclass.org](http://www.missionbibleclass.org). My hope has always been that Bible class teachers who would like to learn new songs can watch and listen to the videos over and over until they have mastered them.

Hearing Christian songs sung in different countries often reveals some interesting variations to what I have been singing the same way for years. In these last couple of days some wonderful Christian women allowed me to video them singing songs to upload to my website. I hope other teachers in Thailand will appreciate listening to them and learning new songs to sing with children.



I thought you might enjoy listening to the Thai version of a couple of old favourites.

[More songs here.](#)

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# Mustard Seeds and Matryoshka Dolls



Teaching Jesus' parables to three and four year olds is challenging. [Pre-schoolers](#) struggle understanding abstract concepts. The figurative nature of the parables will largely pass them by because they usually think in more literal terms.

This morning the class I was teaching tackled the [Parable of the Mustard Seed](#). Jesus told a story about a farmer planting a tiny little

seed. The seed sprouted and grew into the tallest of trees.

We began the class by sorting seeds. The children pulled the tiny mustard seeds from the pile and we marveled that such a tiny seed could grow into a large tree.

The three little boys I was teaching are also very small. They dream of the day when they can be big and strong like their dads. Great men begin as little boys.

Sometimes hands-on activities are helpful in helping pre-schoolers understand concepts. I chose a couple of these to stress the point about growth.

- First, I placed a tiny little paper circle on the table. Then, one at a time, I revealed a set of circles of ever increasing size. The children loved stretching their vocabulary to describe the sizes. Tiny, little, small, medium, bigger, enormous, giant and finally, super super huge.
- Secondly, I was able to make use of some Matryoshka (nesting) dolls that I had on hand. Seeing the sizes displayed in doll form helped the children relate to how they themselves are in the process of growing.

All in all it was a great class.

Sometimes my efforts in teaching seem extremely small. What difference will my teaching make in the bigger picture? This parable reminds me that God does great things from small beginnings.

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# Curiosity that Leads to God

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When was the last time you were curious about something? I mean *really* curious; the kind of curiosity that compelled you to get off the couch, or out of the office to go and earnestly seek out the answer; the burning desire to “know” that enticed you to look around the corner or walk down the untraveller path.

How energising is that quest! How thrilling and satisfying is the answer once found!

I never want to deny a child the chance to feel that energy, thrill and satisfaction. In my rush to GIVE information I must first allow children an opportunity to actually WANT it.

# An Expectation of Curiosity

God draws children to himself through their curiosity. I love how he prepares the Israelites leaving Egypt for future questions their children will ask.

*In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?" tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Deuteronomy 6:20-21, NIV*

Notice he says "when" your son asks you and not "if" your son asks you. God knows children will be curious.

## Curiosity Comes from God and Leads to God

God does not want us to feel the satisfaction before we have answers because *he is the answer*. Only God can satisfy the curiosity and longing children (and adults) feel.

*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. Psalms 63:1, NIV*

## Keep Them Guessing

The Bible is filled with interesting and attention-grabbing stories that children can easily relate to. Before sharing a Bible story I will often share one small part of it as a "teaser". Here's a fun and effective activity to try next time you teach children. [Keep Them Guessing](#) is a simple activity where children are provided with items as clues to guess what comes next.



- A pearl before you tell about the [parable of the pearl of great price](#)
- A stone before you share about the [burial and resurrection of Jesus](#) and the stone rolled in front of the tomb.
- A weed so children will be curious about [the parable of a sower and seeds](#)

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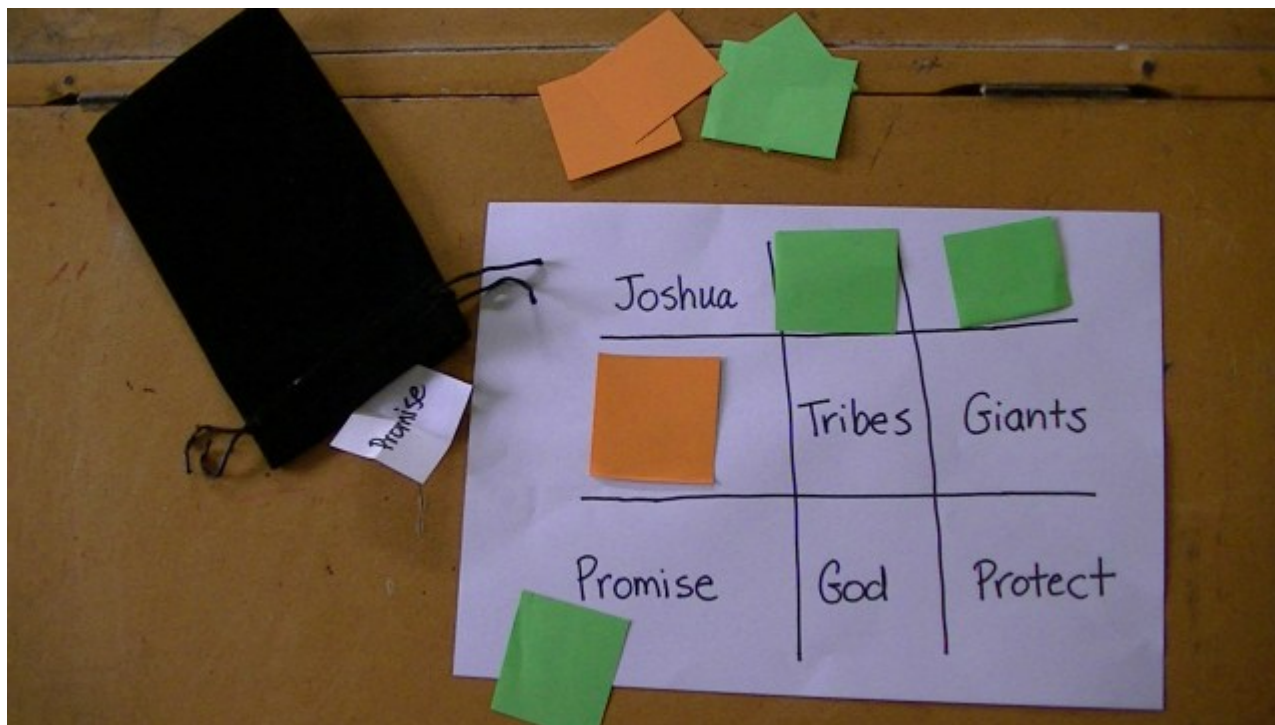




# Same Game – Different Name

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](#).

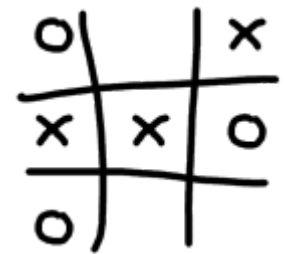
I thought such a simple idea would be easy to explain until I began filming a "how-to" video and writing out instructions. Hopefully, the final result makes sense. [Click here to learn how to use the game in your Bible Class](#).

## 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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