

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.

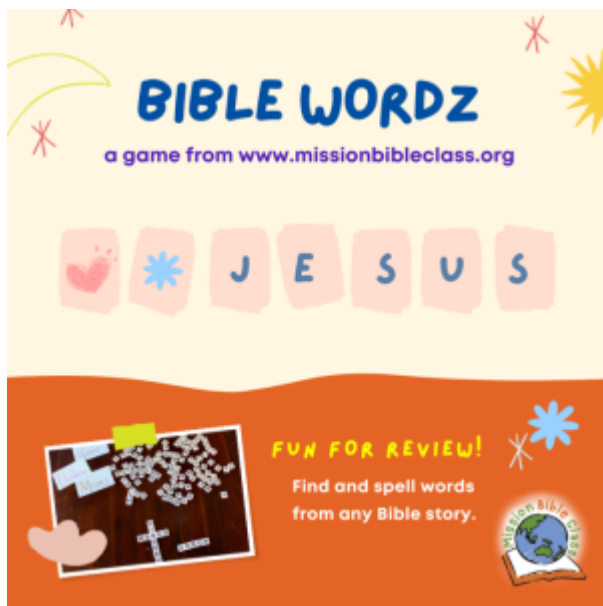
For a while, the children just mimic me. I can tell that they have not quite figured it out. Then, one day, it “clicks”. That’s what happened this past Sunday. For the first time, one of the children realised that those letters spell BIBLE!

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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Learning from the Life of Paul



Learning from the Life of Paul



From a blinding light to angry mobs to a shipwreck, the Apostle Paul's story is one that involves devotion, determination and drama.

These sixteen lessons from the life of Paul help children grasp how God used Paul and others to expand the reach of the good news of Jesus to far away places .

The lessons are already covered on www.missionbibleclass.org within the book of Acts section but are grouped together here so that you can teach them as one unit.

Online materials make it easier to keep children and families engaged in the Word of God. Instead of printed materials lesson links can be emailed to teachers and parents each week.

Each of these sixteen lessons listed below include:

- A Bible lesson and teaching instructions
- Practical and enjoyable activities to help children learn
- Links to other online resources
- A slideshow to view online or download and use
- The same slideshow in .pdf if you choose to download and print
- An online video depicting the story from Paul's point of view

[Click here to view the lessons.](#)

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I Think I'll Just Hum...



Sometimes I prepare what I think is a great class and yet my students struggle to think past the surface level of the Bible story. But sometimes, often when I least expect it, the kids run ahead of the teacher and want to go deeper.

Instead of just appreciating the facts or even the drama of the story they may ask questions about the characters or wonder why the characters did what they did. They might want to discuss motivations and causes. They may even ponder over what God was up to or discuss how he interacted with the characters.

Sometimes the Biblical truths become personal. They dig deep into a child's heart and convict them to act upon these truths.

And then sometimes, like this past Sunday, a child takes one more step and actually makes a plan. It is at times like these that a teacher knows she has truly passed on the message.

Earlier in the week a young woman and I had prepared a lesson together on the [Tower of Babel](#) using the [Lesson Template](#). This time I stood back and she did the teaching.

- First she had the letters of the words “proud” and “humble” written on cards. She mixed the letters up and showed how to unscramble them to form the words.
- Then she drew the face of a girl on a balloon and spoke as if she was the girl on the balloon. She began “bragging” about everything from her good looks to her amazing skills at sports. Every time she bragged she would blow some more hot air into the balloon. The bragging continued until the balloon finally popped.
- Using a simple flip chart she then told the story of how people began building a tower thinking only of how they would make a great name for themselves. God was not pleased and mixed up their language so it must have sounded like they were just babbling to one another. Not being able to communicate led to the people going their separate ways.
- After this, two towers were built in class...

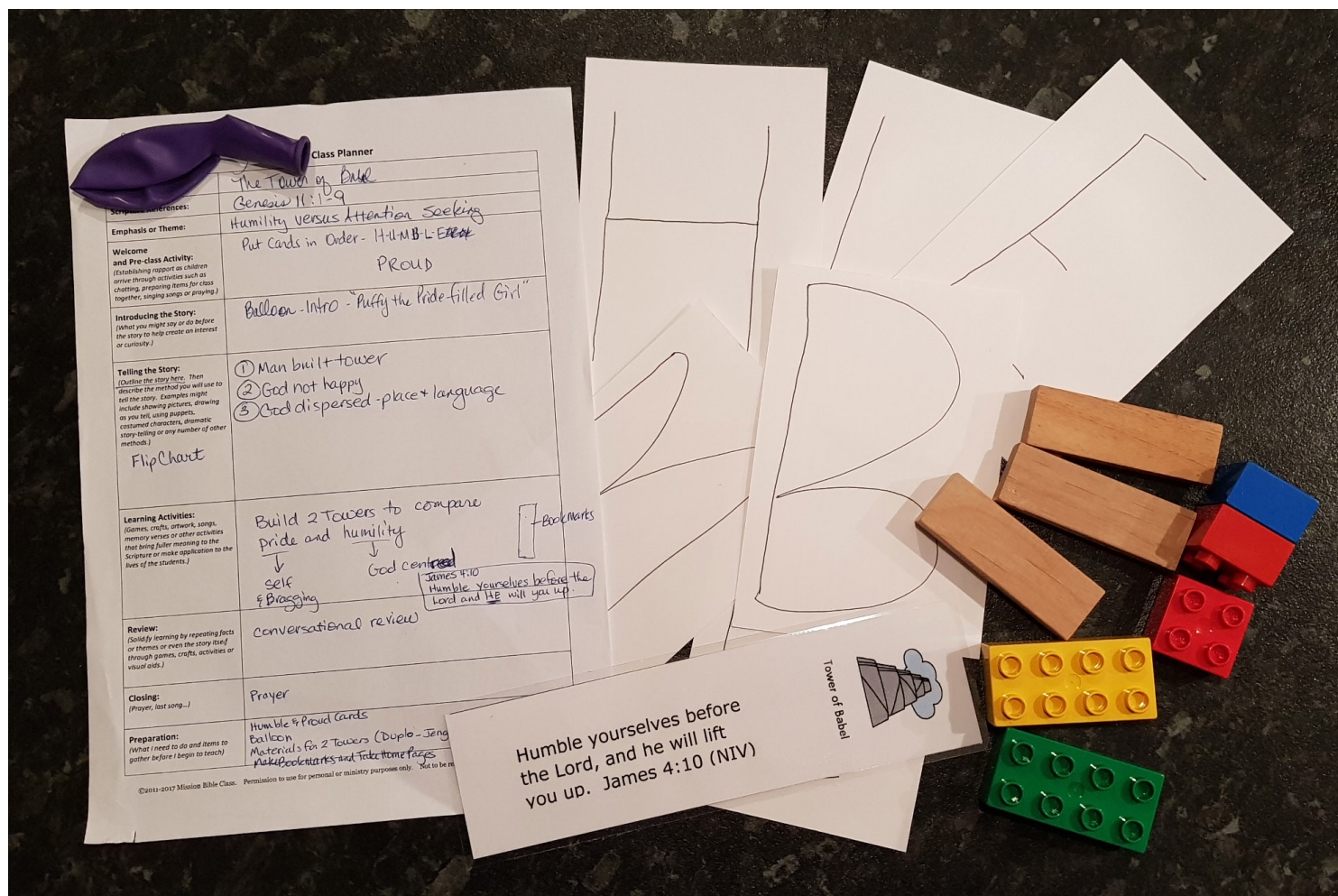
- One was built out of large Lego blocks. As each block was stacked the young teacher talked about how great God was.
- The other tower was built from wooden Jenga blocks. As we had planned, I built this tower making a point to blatantly brag about my own abilities at each level. As expected, my tower crashed and the first one held.
- As we gathered back together we looked once more at the word “humble” and talked about what it meant.

One boy had taken in the facts and had been convicted that he should be humble. But now, he was ready to put it into ACTION. At his own instigation he devised a way to go deeper!

And here is a seven year old boy's simple plan of action...

“Every time I start being too proud I think I’m going to just hum.” In answer to the perplexed expressions on our faces he went on to explain, “I’m going to hum because that will help me stop being proud and remember to be HUM-ble.”

Yes, that little boy really understood the message. He has a plan of action and now, so do I. Next time I start thinking that teachers have all the answers...I’m going to start humming.



Walking and Jumping and Praising God!



[The Healing of a Man Who Could Not Walk](#)

What an amazing Bible story! A disabled man well known for begging. Two apostles who responded to the beggar by giving him much more than money. A man who could now walk because of the healing power of Jesus Christ.

Children can really relate to expressing excitement in the same way that this man did. He praised God while walking and jumping in front of everyone. Of course we had to practice this for a while in our class this past Sunday.

We also used our feet to express praise. First, we wrote "Praise God" on the centre of a piece of paper. Then we used our toes to paint.

It was messy. It was joyful. And it allowed the children to relate to the feelings the man had and to express praise with even the most humble of instruments...toes.

Oh, for this exuberance in accepting God's power in my life!

But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you: By the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth—stand up and walk!"

Then Peter took the man's right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk. He went into the Temple with them, walking

and jumping, and praising God.

All the people recognized him. They knew he was the crippled man who always sat by the Beautiful Gate begging for money. Now they saw this same man walking and praising God. The people were amazed. They could not understand how this could happen.

Acts 3:6-10, International Children's Bible



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Wading Lambs and Swimming Elephants



As a Scripture was being publicly read in the church of my childhood I would sometimes watch my grandmother's finger slide across the page of her Bible. As a small child I would light up when I could occasionally read a word or two.

There is no other book like the Bible in its importance for people of all ages. It has always amazed me how God's Word can seem so simple and yet so complex. Even when I am reading Scripture as I prepare lessons for infants and toddlers I am often astounded at a new concept that I had never noticed before.

I think Gregory the Great said it best many many years ago when he wrote the following (emphasis is mine),

*"Divine speech sometimes stirs up the clever with mysteries, but more often provides consolation for the simple with the obvious. It has out in the open food for children but keeps hidden away the things that fill the minds of the eminent with awe. Scripture is like a river again, broad and deep, **shallow enough here for the lamb to go wading, but deep enough there for the elephant to swim**".*

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT: *MORALIA ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB*,
SECTION 4. [CLICK HERE FOR FULL TEXT](#).

What a blessing to help lambs wade in God's Word! As I teach children I want to be attentive to their stage of development and help them experience God fully. I usually have my own Bible open on the table when I am teaching so that children can see that I refer to it and respect what God says.

In addition to my own Bible I want children to be very familiar with handling a Bible on their own. If at all possible I try to have bibles available for the children. Over the years I've developed a few measures for what children of various ages are able to do so I'm sharing them with you here in case you might find them useful in your teaching and at home.

Infants and Toddlers



**Ages
0-2 Years
Infants-Toddlers**

- Allow the infants and toddlers to hold small Bibles. These should be inexpensive because they will inevitably, at one time or another, be chewed and pulled apart and the pages torn.
- Show them how to hold the Bible carefully and how to turn pages.
- Place a sticker of Jesus inside the front cover so the children can “find Jesus” when they hold their bibles.
- Hold the Bible in front of each child, in turn, and slide your finger along as you “read” from it. I usually read, “God Loves Suzy.” (inserting the child’s name) Or “God loves Mummy.” “God loves Daddy.”

Pre-School (ages 3-5 years)



**Ages
3-5 Years
Pre-School**

- Pre-Schoolers can look at pictures in a children’s Bible. If you do not have picture Bibles then tuck pictures between the pages of a Bible before class.
- Guide the children in pretending to read along with you as you tell a story or read a verse.
- Children of this age can learn to spell and write a few basic Bible words. I use magnetic letters or puzzles to do this. And of course they are learning to write letters at this age so they really enjoy just writing the letters. We practice one word over a few weeks until the children have it down. They are so proud of themselves!
 - G-O-D
 - J-E-S-U-S
 - B-I-B-L-E ([song](#))

Younger Primary School Age (ages 6-7 years)



**Ages
6-7 Years
Primary**

- Children of this age can learn to recite the names of the 66 books of the Bible. I think it really helps to

learn them by singing the songs.

- ([New Testament Song](#))
- ([Old Testament Song](#))
- With help, children can find a book, chapter and verse in the Bible when given a Scripture reference. This is much easier to accomplish with a few children than a big group.
- Depending on their reading ability they can usually read a Bible verse that you have chosen (short and simple).
- They can use their finger to follow along in their own Bible as the teacher reads

Older Primary School Age (ages 8-10 years)



**Ages
8-10 Years
Primary**

- Depending on reading level children of this age might be able to read a few verses in a row or even a very short Bible story. You will have to plan this carefully if children are reading out loud in class. This can be embarrassing for some children and it does take time.
- Children in this age group can copy verses onto paper. These can be used in the classroom or taken home as reminders.
- Children aged 8-10 years are often able to confidently find a verse from a book, chapter, verse reference. A fun game is for the teacher to call out a reference (like Ephesians 6:1). The children then “race” to find the verse in their Bible and begin reading.

Pre-Teen (ages 11-12)



**Ages
11-12 Years
Pre-Teen**

- By the pre-teen years children can usually read a set of verses or a Bible story of reasonable length from the Bible.
- A teacher can challenge them to read a verse or set of verses and then:
 - Outline what they have read
 - Point out the most important words and/or
 - Name the characters and describe them based on what they have read.
- Also guide them to read a verse, group of verses or a Bible story and then describe:
 - What this reading reveals about God
 - How the pre-teen's thoughts and feelings are affected by what they have read, and/or
 - What actions they might take based on what they have just read.

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