

# Looking Back at 2023

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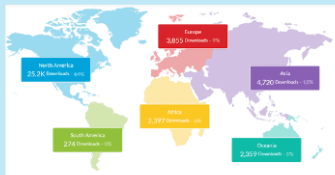
I recently had a look back over the year 2023 and wanted to share some of that review here. God is good!

# 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



# A Very Special Happy Birthday



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!



# 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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# 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 repetetive 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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## Yes, This Counts at Home

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# PRAYER CARDS:

Reminding us to pray for our brothers and sisters



The troubling story of Joseph and his brothers leads to good discussion about getting along with siblings.

Genesis 35:23-26; 37:1-36

another teaching idea from [www.missionbibleclass.org](http://www.missionbibleclass.org)

The best lessons are not what goes on in my Bible class. The best lessons are what the children take with them when they leave.

Years ago I was teaching children about the [Fruit of the Spirit](#). One young child was in total agreement with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and faithfulness. These were great concepts and he loved learning about them and exploring how they apply in church and in school and with his friends. But I'll never forget his reaction when I mentioned that the Fruit of the Spirit should also be displayed to our brothers and sisters in our family.

This young man, moments before, had been enthusiastic when talking about these concepts in various other settings. Now, he looked at me in shock and horror and said, "What! This counts at HOME too?"

This child realised a truth that is for all of us. It is God's intention that we apply what we learn to ALL parts of our lives.

[Prayer Cards](#) are one way to help children understand this important truth.

I was able to use these recently when teaching about [Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery](#). As we explored the tense relationship between Joseph and his brothers I asked the children in my class to consider relationships with their own siblings. Even if we do not always get along we should want the best for them. One way to do this is to pray for them.

I supplied paper, scissors and pens. As we talked about our siblings we wrote their names on cards. In class we prayed for each one. Then, the children took the cards home so they could remember to pray for their siblings.

Yes, prayer counts at home, too.  
[Full instructions for prayer cards](#)

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