



The Bible - the story of the story

A creative way to tell the story of the whole Bible.

Downloaded from Barnabas in Schools - Exploring Christianity creatively - www.barnabasinschools.org.uk

This activity is based on the Godly Play model. The preparation is quite time consuming but the end result is well worth the effort.

Preparation

- A sandy-coloured base cloth that rolls out to a metre in length and which is 23cm wide; mark this off into eight equal sections with seven thin pieces of wood (blunted kebab sticks for example), so that when it is rolled up the whole has the appearance of an ancient scroll
- a small pottery dish with bits of broken wood inside and plenty of tiny red and yellow beads among the wood that give it the appearance of being a glowing camp fire
- ten flat grey stones kept on a red heart-shaped tray; on each stone are scratched key words from the Ten Commandments
- a small gold box to represent the ark into which the stones will fit
- some pieces of hand-made paper to represent papyrus and some clay tablets with markings, made from air-drying clay
- a special-looking scroll (larger than the others that come later), kept in a gold box and made from two rolling pin-like pieces of wood with hand-made paper rolled around, on which are written some Hebrew words - download some lines from the Internet; paint the ends of this Torah scroll gold
- eight more smaller scrolls in a flat gold box (the staircase rods from a doll's house accessories pack make useful ends for these); one larger scroll that will be the book of Isaiah
- some photocopied sheets of the early manuscripts of the Greek New Testament (John's Gospel for example) stapled together onto some stiff brown card to represent the first codices on vellum (animal hide) - keep this in a silver envelope
- more rolled-up scrolls of paper to represent the pastoral epistles
- a mounted photocopy from one of the illustrated Latin manuscripts of the Bible such as a page from the Book of Kells, in a second, larger silver envelope
- a complete printed Bible



How To:-

Roll out one section of the scroll from your right to your left and say:

In the beginning was the story.

Place the campfire in the centre and trace a circle around it slowly, as you say the next words:

The people of God gathered in circles around their campfires in the desert. They did not need pictures or pages. In the glow of the fire they heard how the gift of light was given and how the darkness came too. Beside their tents they listened to the story of the flood and were glad when the rainbow appeared. Beneath the stars they were told of Abram's long journey and the promise of the Great Family.

Bible books: The stories of Genesis

Roll out the scroll underlay to reveal the second section. Bring out the red heart-shaped tray, as you say the following:

After Moses had taken the people of God through the water into freedom, God gave him words to write down. The ten words were carved on stone tablets.

Put each of the ten flat stones down, saying the commandments as you do so. Put down the ark.

They kept this part of their story safe in the Ark, which went everywhere with them.

Bible books: The stories of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

Roll out the scroll underlay to reveal the third section.

When the people of God came into the land they had been promised, they settled in towns and cities.

Place the clay tablet with its writing on the third section and then the pieces of handmade paper.



Here they began to write their stories down, first on clay tablets and then on a kind of paper made from reeds called papyrus.

Roll out the base cloth one more section. Open the gold box and take out the Torah scroll.

The most important words from God were written on a great scroll. This part of the story is called the Torah. The priest read from it to the people whenever they worshiped God.

Open the Torah scroll to reveal the Hebrew writing.

But they did not want to forget other stories too, so they recorded these in the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah. They also wrote out the songs they sang and some of the poems, which had become part of their story.

Put four of the smaller scrolls around the Torah.

Bible books: The stories of Joshua, Judges, Ruth; the histories of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles; stories from Job, Proverbs, the Psalms and Song of songs

Unroll the underlay to reveal the next section.

Prophets are people who listen carefully for God's voice and God speaks to them; they seem know what God is thinking. The words of some of these prophets were put down on scrolls.

Put out the rest of the scrolls from the flat gold box, including the large one, which is the prophecy of Isaiah.

Now the people of God could always read the warnings and the promises that God had given them.

Bible books: The books of the Prophets; Lamentations

Point deliberately to several scrolls.

In the scrolls of these prophets, it was written that one day someone would come, who would be a king forever; but he would be a king that no one expected.

Unroll the underlay a stage further.

When Jesus began his work in the synagogue at Nazareth, he read from the book of the prophet Isaiah, where it says:

Pick up the big scroll and unroll it to read the following above the sixth section, but afterwards replacing it on the fifth section where it comes from.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the



blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Bible books: Luke 4 and Isaiah 61

Jesus did and said amazing things and people did not want to forget his words. In the years after he had died and then had been seen alive again, some of his friends and followers wrote everything down on parchments.

Open the silver envelope and show the parchment 'codex' of John's Gospel, before placing it on the sixth section.

Now anyone can read these words of the Gospels and discover the story for themselves.

Bible books: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

Unroll the seventh section of the base cloth. Put down the rolled-up letter scrolls.

The story was taken across the sea and over the land. The Christians wrote letters to each other and to the new churches.

Bible books: The pastoral letters from Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John to churches and individuals

And in each new country, the people of God took great care to write the whole story down.

The monks in Britain and Ireland made careful copies by hand, decorating each page with colourful pictures and beautiful writing. You can still see these manuscripts today.

Open then second, larger silver envelope, and then put down the copy of a page of an illuminated manuscript.

Unroll the final section and put down a Bible.

In the end the story was printed as a book. After many struggles and much hard work it was produced in different languages. Some Bibles even have pictures and special notes to help people understand what is there. The story went out to the ends of the earth and it is still travelling today.

Look!

Pick up the Bible and hold it so everyone can see it clearly.

It is all here in the Bible. It is a whole library of storybooks. Let's open the cover and let the stories out!



Open the Bible to reveal its many pages of stories holding it first over the campfire section and then over each of the other sections in turn, flick through the pages of the Bible, saying...

Here are the stories from the desert and the ten words from God...

Here are the most important laws and the history of their kings...

Here are the songs they sang and the poems they wrote...

Here are the warnings and the promises of the prophets...

Here are the Gospels that tell the story of Jesus...

Here is the story of how the Church began with all letters that the first Christian leaders wrote, to help those churches go on sharing the story.

In the beginning was the story.

In the end there is still the story.

Now we can all read the story for ourselves.

And there's more.

You too can become part of this story - part of God's story.

I wonder what your story will be.