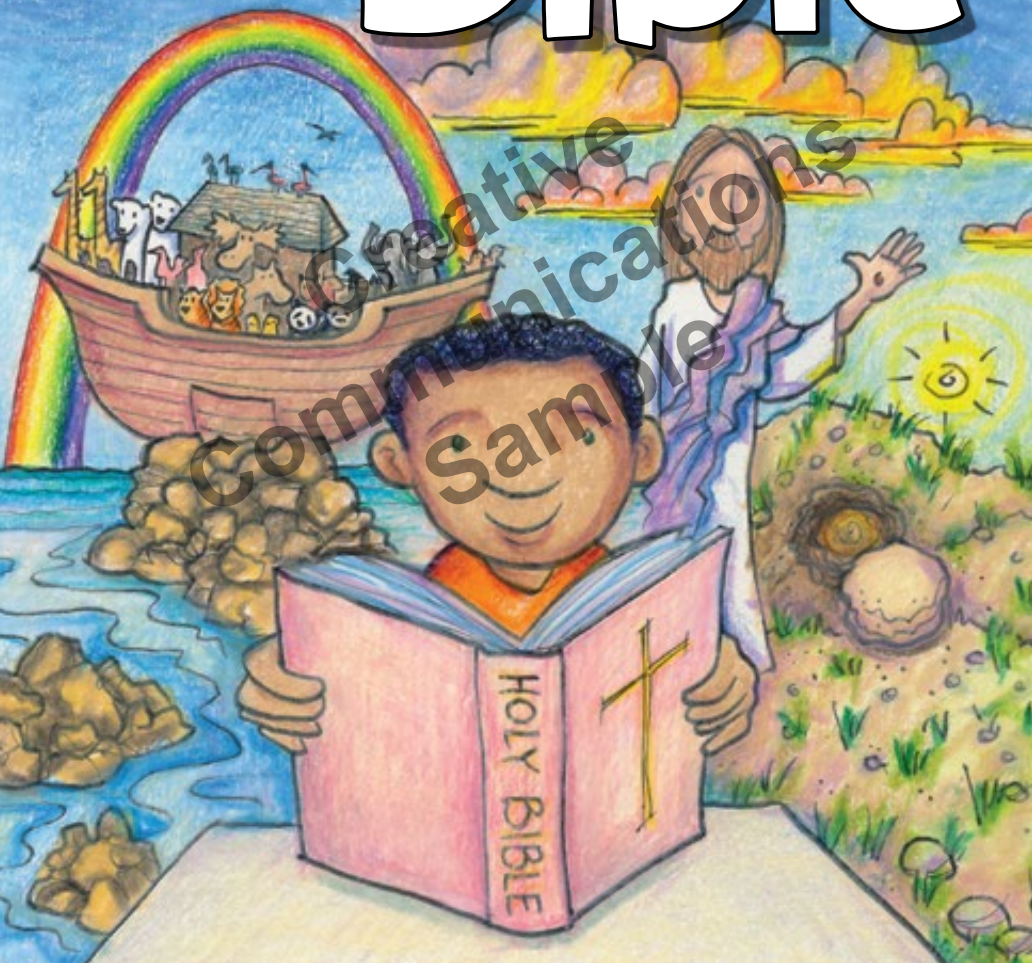
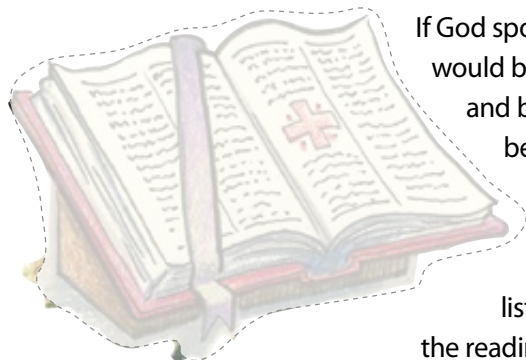


Learning About the Bible



Fun with Faith

God Wants to Talk to You!

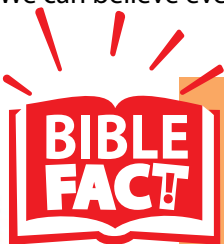


If God spoke to you, what do you think it would be like? Would his voice be loud and booming, like thunder? Or would it be soft, like a breeze rustling in the trees? Well, did you know that God does speak to you? He really does! Next time you're in church, listen to what's said at the end of the readings: "This is the Word of the Lord."

Think about that. When we hear the words of the Bible, we are hearing God's own words. That's true whether you read the Bible or hear it spoken. The Bible is what God is saying to the whole world, and to you.

How does God do this? Did he sit down one day with an old-fashioned pen and some paper and just start writing? Okay, probably not. But God guided the people who wrote the Bible. These writers used their own words and ways of saying things. God, through the Holy Spirit, gave them a special kind of guidance that we call Divine Inspiration. So they were able to write what God wanted us to know about him. That's why we say that people wrote the Bible, but God is the Bible's true author.

Did you know that there are no mistakes or errors in the Bible? Everything God reveals in the Bible is good and true because God is truth. He is all-good. We can believe everything God says to us in the Bible!



The Bible is divided into two main sections: the Old Testament, with 39 books, and the New Testament, with 27 books.



That's One Big Gift!

You've probably noticed how big the Bible is—more than a thousand pages long! Why is it so hefty? Think of it this way. Say you write a story about yourself. As good as it probably is, one story doesn't say everything about you. Now imagine trying to reveal God. It would take a lot of stories—maybe even a whole library! That's a good way to think of the Bible. It's not just one book. It's many different kinds of books that tell us about God and his son Jesus. (In fact, the word Bible comes from a Greek word meaning "books.") The books of the Bible contain stories, songs, letters, parables, sayings, laws, prophecies, histories and other types of writing.

Let's take a quick walk through the Bible. We can start at the beginning. The first book of the Bible is called Genesis, and it's about, well... beginnings. It tells the story of God's creation of the world. We hear about Adam and Eve, and Noah and the ark. We also meet two special people named Abraham and Sarah. God had a plan for them and asked them to leave their home and set out for a new land. That was probably scary, but God promised Abraham many descendants. (That means grandkids, great grandkids and so on.) Abraham and Sarah trusted God and did as he asked. Sure enough, Abraham had many descendants. God kept his promise. When we read this story of our ancestors in faith, we see that from the beginning, God has had a plan for us. We can trust God, as Abraham and Sarah did, because God keeps his promises.



God's Gifts of Love

Fast forward from Genesis to the Book of Exodus, when things had changed for God's people. They were living in slavery in Egypt. God chose Moses to lead his people and spoke to Moses by way of a burning bush. He told Moses that he'd heard his people's prayers and would lead them to a land "flowing with milk and honey," where they could live and worship God in freedom.

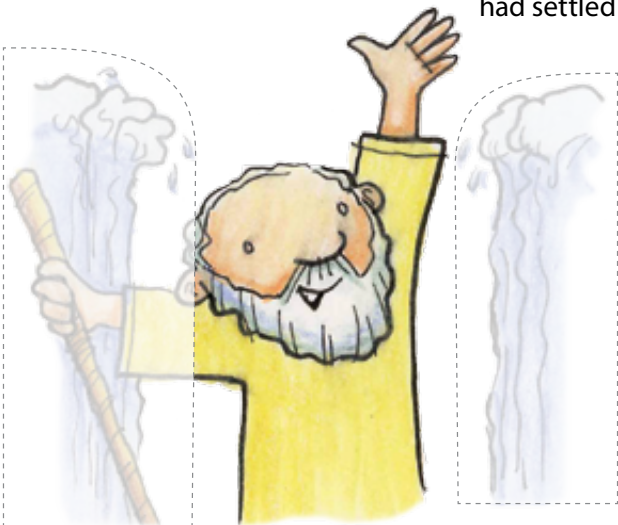


Just as he'd promised, God helped his people. Moses and his people passed safely through the Red Sea, which God miraculously parted for them. But as they wandered for forty years in the wilderness, people began to forget about the good things God had done. They grumbled and doubted God. Still, God showed his faithfulness with miracles, providing food and water in the desert. Then at a place called Mt. Sinai, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. These were more than laws. They were gifts that helped God's people love God and others so they could stay close to God and be happy.


The story continues in the Book of Joshua. By now, Moses had died, and God chose Joshua to bring his people, the Israelites, into the land he'd promised them. It's a pretty exciting story involving spies, battles and a city's walls that crumbled at the sound of blowing horns. Once everyone

had settled in the Promised Land,

Joshua called the people together and said, "Love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Joshua 22:5).



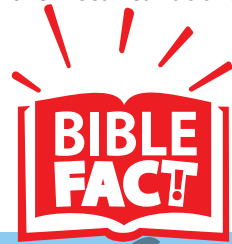
Finding Your Way Around the Bible



The Bible books are grouped together into sections. The first five books are called the **Pentateuch** (PEN-tah-tuke). That's Greek for "five scrolls." Genesis and Exodus are part of this section. They're about the beginning of God's relationship with his people and about God's laws. The book of Joshua is one of the books about the history of Israel. Those books are called—you guessed it—the historical books.

Throughout the Bible, God shows his love by making a **covenant** with his people. A covenant is a promise God makes, the way he did with Abraham, Moses and the Israelites. In return for his goodness, God asks that people love him, trust him and follow his ways. As we've seen, that's not always easy for people.

We are still part of God's covenant today. We follow the Ten Commandments, and we trust in God. But we also know that God has given us the greatest covenant ever, in the person of his son Jesus. Jesus sets us free from the slavery of sin. Like our Old Testament ancestors in faith, we follow Jesus as he leads us to a new kingdom. We are called to trust his Father, just as the Israelites did long ago.



Most Bible stories were told aloud, and passed down through generations. Eventually, people were inspired by God to write everything down.



Do you know your Roman numerals? Put the stickers in order on the tablets.

Learning About the Bible

Are you ready for a special gift? The Bible is a gift from God to you—and to the whole world! It's a pretty big present, filled with stories, adventures, letters and much more.

And it all reveals God's great love.

Find out more about God's love—and the Bible—right here. We'll start with Adam and Eve and meet fascinating people along the way until we get to God's own son, Jesus. Plus, you can have some fun with all the stickers. Before you know it, you'll be a Bible expert! And you'll be hooked—on God's great book!

