



On your marks

2011 was the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Version of the Bible. Although there had been Bibles in English before this time, the appearance of the Authorised Version, as it is also known, was a landmark moment. The greater availability and accessibility of the Christian's special book had explosive consequences for individuals, the nation and the world. Now anyone could hear or read its stories for themselves and respond to its good news about God's love.

Get set

The following idea is a way into exploring what's in the Bible is and could be used as part of the introduction to a short series with a children's group or as part of an all-age service that focuses on the Bible. This material would also work as an outline for Collective Worship in school, perhaps as part of a special series of assemblies to celebrate the Bible.

This idea is a part of a series of four. See also: [What is the Bible? What's so special about the Bible? What's the story of the Bible?](#)

You will need: a library card; a selection of books on a shelf, some big, some small; some fat and some thin (for the range of books needed see 3 below); a Bible

If you are going on to use the craft suggestion then you will need old video cassette boxes, sticky labels, colouring pens and paper and some shelving (or an /old bookcase) .

Go!

1. Ask the group/congregation or assembly how many of them have used their local library. Show your own library card and share any personal stories of visiting the library to find books to borrow. Maybe you went to find travel guides or maps for a holiday; or to read a newspaper; or borrow a story on CD; or search or order a new book by a favourite author.
2. Libraries have always been special places right through history. They have been storehouses for books that keep safe all that people think is important and worth preserving. The Bodleian Library in Oxford is the oldest in Britain and has 11 million books! There is a copy of every single book that is published in the UK in the British Library in London and it has over 14 million books! In the past there was a great library in Alexandria in Egypt that was very famous in its day, and because it was so special you can imagine how much was lost when that library sadly caught fire and was burned down about 40 years before Jesus was born.
3. I have brought in a shelf with some books on it to give a flavour of the variety of books you find in a real library.
Pick up the different books one by one and explore what sort of book each is. Maybe you could involve children and adults at this point to help you.

The range of books should include:



- Books with true-life adventure stories
- Books of rules and information about a sport
- Some history books
- Some poetry
- Books of advice on keeping fit and healthy
- Some song books
- Books about global warming and advice about how to save the planet
- Some biographies
- A more modern history book
- Some books of famous letters
- A science fiction book about the future

I wonder which of these books you would choose to take away with you on holiday? Ask a few to chose and if possible give a reason for their choice.

4. Well, all this should keep me well supplied with reading for a while! They are going to weigh me down, though, if I try to pack all these into my suitcase.

Try lifting the shelf and staggering with it for a short distance or perhaps challenge others to do it!

5. What I need is an all-in-one library of these books; something I can carry easily or maybe even fit into my pocket. Now, I can't afford one of those new e-readers yet and anyway I like to feel the books I am reading and turn real pages, so what can I do? I need just one book that has this all variety inside. And, guess what, there is a book that does just that!

Produce a Bible.

6. The Bible is the Christian's special book and is really a whole library of books, all inside one cover! Flick through its pages as you say: there are no fewer than 66 books in here, of all shapes and sizes. Long books and some as short as a page! In fact there are so many books here that most Bibles are printed in double columns to fit it all in. Some Bibles are big and some are printed so that they are small enough to fit in your pocket. I am holding a whole library in my hands! No wonder Christians think this book is special.
7. And just like my library shelf, there is the same variety of books in here too! As you mention the following sections pick up a corresponding book from your shelf and connect it with the Bible you are holding in your other hand. There are:

- True life adventure stories of people like Abraham and Moses
- Golden rules about how to play the game of life well - the Ten Commandments and the laws
- Histories of kings and leaders; and battles and wars - for example, about David and Saul
- Poems and songs - like Psalms and Solomon's song
- Good advice - like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
- Warnings and hopes - the books by the Prophets
- Biography - the Gospel stories about Jesus
- More history - in Acts



- Letters - written to the new churches and young Christians
 - And even mysterious visions of the future - in a book called Revelations
8. You can get 66 books for the price of one - now that's a bargain! To help us see what an amazing collection this Bible is, I need ten of you to help create a human visual aid of the Bible library.

Invite ten children and adults to stand in a line facing the others. Each one is given a simple action from the list below that they perform repeatedly to create the big picture of the whole Bible library come alive!

- Adventure - marching boldly on the spot with determination
- Law - instructing seriously with a raised finger
- History - fighting with a sword
- Poems and songs - mime singing into a pretend microphone
- Good advice - stroking an imaginary beard
- Warnings and hopes - looking into the distance and shaking the head slowly
- Gospel stories of Jesus - cradling a baby and then slowly becoming a cross shape
- Acts of the Apostles - standing and pretending to speak to a great crowd
- Letters - bent over writing a letter with an old-fashioned quill pen and ink
- Revelations - looking shocked and puzzled and then amazed!

Set the whole line off with their actions as you end by saying: the Bible is a great library of books: books of story, law, history, poetry, song, advice, prophecy, Gospels, letters and visions of the future!

9. This library of books gives you an idea why the Bible is so special. And 2011 is a special year because 400 years ago a version of this book first appeared in English that was readily available in the UK, and more people than ever before got hooked on using this library. They had never realised there was a so much in it! And still today there are millions of people who visit this library regularly. They don't need a library card and they don't even need to leave home. They can carry this library with them! And Christians say that the books in this library have turned their lives inside out and upside down!
10. I wonder how books can do that? I wonder what sorts of books are so powerful that people visit this library again and again? I wonder what's so special about this Bible? Well, that's what we'll explore next!