

Junior Soldiers

Unit 13 : Lesson 1

Reading the Bible



PURPOSE: To give the children an opportunity to explore and understand how all the pieces of the Bible fit together to form the 'Big Picture'.

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

- Ephesians 1:3-10 (NLT)
- 1 Corinthians 8:6 (CEV)
- Ephesians 2:4-5 (CEV)

The Bible is long and can be confusing at times, especially when we focus on one small part of it. These verses are each related to the 'Big Picture' or main storyline of the Bible. When we understand the overarching storyline of God's Word, it helps us to see where individual verses, chapters or stories fit in.

- What makes the Bible different from any other book?
- What do you feel are the three key themes of the Bible?
- How would you sum up the overarching story of the Bible?

Take some time to pray for those who will be participating in this lesson. Ask God to help them to find new insights into his Word.

Additional Resources:

- The Jesus Storybook Bible
- Agents of Truth tract (AOT) – 'God's Special Book'

Note: Unit 14 Lesson 1 is a good follow up to this lesson as it explores ways in which children can creatively engage with the Word.

What you will need

For 'Connecting In'

- Bibles
- Option 1: Download the clip from The Bible Project – 'What is the Bible?' - www.theBibleproject.com/product/what-is-the-Bible-video
- Option 2: Several different story books
- Two identical A3 printed copies of a picture or photograph
- A pair of scissors
- A box (shoe box size) OR large bowl

For 'The Main Thing'

- The uncut picture from the 'Connecting In' activity
- A pair of scissors
- Equipment depending on the options you choose to offer
 - » draw a picture
 - ◇ pens/ pencils/ markers and paper
 - » use Piclab (an app to combine words and photographs)
 - ◇ mobile phones or iPads with the app loaded
 - » write the words in fancy letters
 - ◇ pens/ pencils/ markers and paper
 - » draw a cartoon
 - ◇ pens/ pencils/ markers and paper
 - » make a symbol using play dough or clay
 - ◇ play dough
 - ◇ clay/paper clay

For 'Tying In'

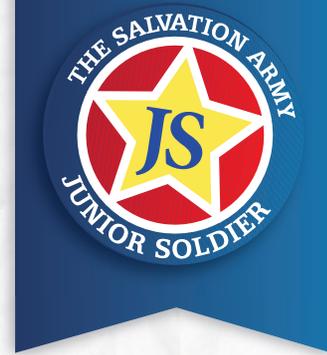
- Bibles
- Copies of the scripture references for the children to look up

For 'Memory Verse'

- Printed copies of each of the pictures OR
- Copy the pictures into PowerPoint and use a multi-media projector

For 'Home and Beyond'

- Print enough copies of the 'Home and Beyond' cards for each child



Connecting In

Did you know the Bible wasn't divided up into chapters and verses when it was originally written?

In fact, the books of the Bible had all been around for about 1000 years before they were divided up. Why do you think someone would have gone to the trouble of separating the whole Bible into little pieces like this?

Let's try something...

- I want you to open your Bibles up to the place where it talks about the word of God being like a lamp that gives us light to walk. (*Most children will not know where to start.*)
- Okay, I will give you a hint. It's in the book of Psalms. Go ahead and find it now.
- It's going to take you a long time to search through the whole of Psalms, so I will tell you the chapter – it's 119.
- There are 176 verses in chapter 119 of Psalms. It could still take you a while. What if I tell you that it can be found in verse 105?

Now, can anyone guess why the Bible might have been divided up into chapters and verses?

Option 1

Play the clip from the Bible Project – 'What is the Bible?'

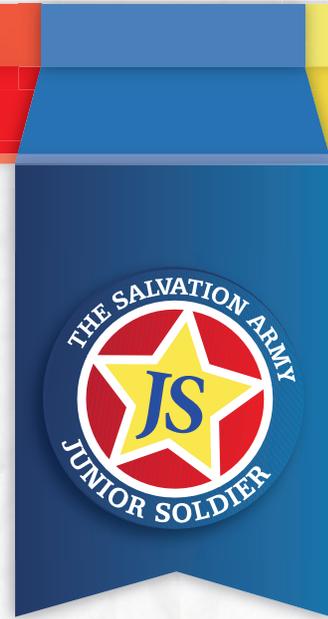
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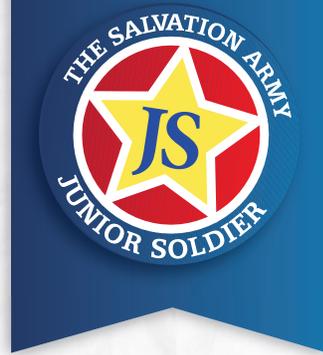
Option 2

Choose several different books – don't tell or show the children the titles.

- For each book, read the children one randomly selected sentence
- Ask the children to use that one sentence to try and figure out what the book is about

Print two A3 copies of a picture. DO NOT SHOW THE CHILDREN THE PICTURE BEFORE YOU BEGIN. Take one of them and cut it up as you talk through this information, SHOWING THE CHILDREN THE BLANK SIDE OF THE PAPER...





The Bible is made up of lots of little pieces.

- We can divide the Bible up into two large pieces – The Old and New Testament (*Cut the picture in half and hold up the two pieces, blank side towards the children*)
- The Old and New Testament can be divided up into books
 - » Ask the children to guess how many books are in the Bible (66)
 - » Put the halves together and make several more cuts through, keep on putting the cut pieces together to create more and pieces
 - » The Bible is like a whole library of books in one cover
- The books can be divided up into chapters
 - » Does anyone know the longest book? (Psalms has 150 chapters)
 - » Continue to cut the picture into smaller pieces. You might need to place some of the pieces into a bowl or box now as there should be many of them
 - » How many chapters does the shortest book have? (Four of the books, like Philemon, have just one chapter)
- Then, each of these chapters can be broken up into even smaller pieces, called verses.
 - » Does anyone know the chapter with the most number of verses? (Psalm 119 with 176 verses)
 - » How many verses do you think the shortest chapter has? (Psalm 117 has only two verses)
 - » Continue to cut the picture into smaller pieces
 - » Altogether, the Bible has 31,173 verses

Now imagine, if we cut this picture up into 31,173 pieces, took just one of them (hand a single piece of the picture to each child) and tried to figure out what the big picture originally was.

What would this task be like?

Take a look at your one piece and tell me what information it gives you about the picture.

- *For example, it's green so there might be a tree in the picture*
- *Or, it looks like water so maybe it is a picture of the ocean*
- *Or, I think this is an eye so I think there might be people in the picture*

Sometimes, we take just one verse and try to figure out what the Bible is about. Even if we looked at an entire chapter, it would only be 1 out of 1,189 chapters.

Show the original picture.

We need to know what the big picture is before we can really make sense of all the little pieces.

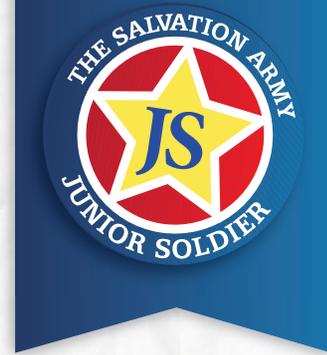
The Main Thing

What do you know about the pieces of the Bible?

- Run to the left side of the space if you think the statement is true
- Run to the right side of the space if you think the statement is false
 - » The Bible is the second biggest selling book in history (*It is the biggest selling book in history*)
 - » The Bible contains 42 books (*It contains 66*)
 - » The Bible has been read in countries throughout the world
 - » The Bible contains a book called Habakkuk
 - » The Bible contains a book called Peter
 - » At least 40 people helped write the Bible
 - » The Bible was the first book ever to be printed on the printing press
 - » The stories of Genesis were around for about 10 years before they were first written down (*They were around for thousands of years before they were written*)
 - » The Gospels, Matthew, Mark Luke and John, are an eye-witness account of the life of Jesus
 - » Parts of the Bible are very gruesome
 - » Samson killed a lion with his bare hands
 - » The word 'eternity' occurs 22 times in the Bible (*It only occurs once*)
 - » The Bible contains a story about a donkey that can speak
 - » The Bible was originally written in English (*It was originally written in Greek Aramaic and Hebrew*)
 - » The Bible contains a lot of poetry

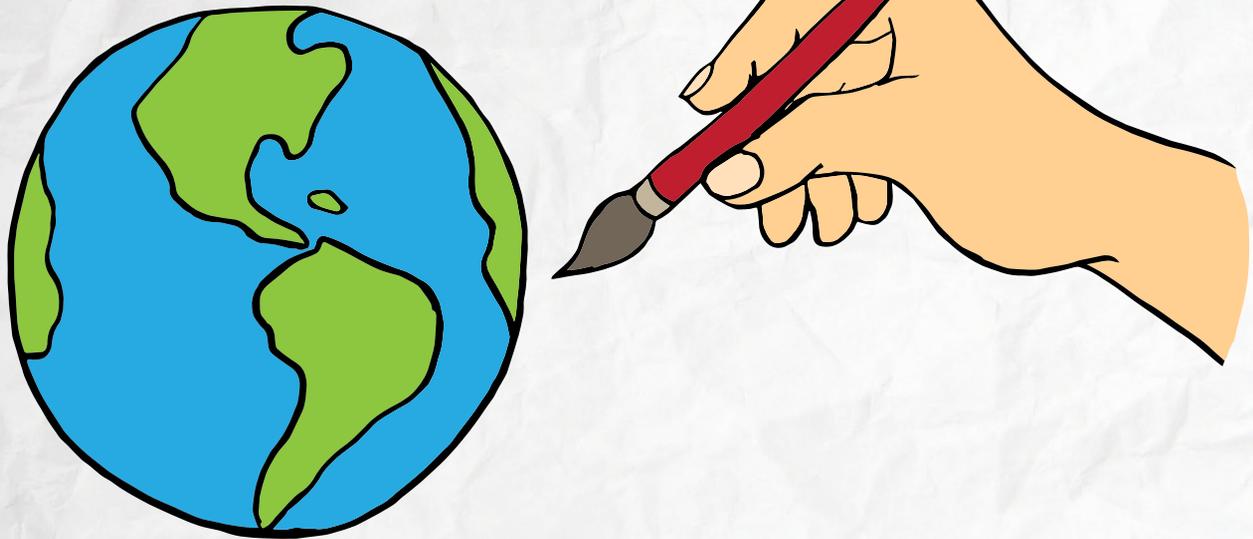
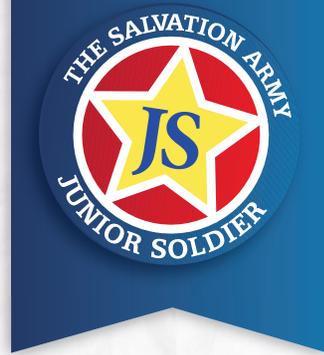
What are some of the themes or important ideas in the Bible?

- Brainstorm - What are some of the big themes or ideas in the Bible?
 - » Divide the children into groups of 2-3 to discuss
 - » Multiply the number of groups/ pairs by 3 and cut the second printed picture from the 'Connecting In' activity into that many randomly shaped pieces.
For example, 3 groups = $3 \times 3 = 9$ pieces; 5 groups = $5 \times 3 = 15$ pieces
 - » Give each group three pieces of the picture
 - » Ask each group to write a different theme or idea on each piece
- Ask the groups to come back together
 - » Give the children an opportunity to share their ideas and put the pieces back together to form a whole
- When we take the big ideas and themes of the Bible and put them together we start to get a better picture of what the Bible is all about



What is the big picture or main storyline of the Bible?

- The Bible is a big book and it can be confusing at times but let's think about how we would take all of these themes and ideas and sum them all up.
- This is how one person summed up the big picture or main storyline of the Bible:
 - » God made us, loves us and wants us to love and live for him forever
 - » Divide the summary up into four sections and use one of the following options to represent each section
 - ◇ draw a picture
 - ◇ use Piclab (an app to combine words and photographs)
 - ◇ write the words in fancy letters
 - ◇ create some freeze frames (A drama technique – characters form a picture to show a scene and freeze in place)
 - ◇ draw a cartoon
 - ◇ make a symbol using play dough/paper clay



Tying In

When we read most books we start from the beginning and read through to the end. Remember that the Bible is a series of smaller books put together in a kind of one book library. This means that we don't have to read it all in order for it to make sense. But it helps us to understand it much more clearly if we understand the big picture of the Bible



How to look up Bible verses

1. Find the index at the start of the Bible
2. Look up the name of the book
3. Find the chapter (which is the large number)
4. Look for the verse (which is the small number)

Practice looking up these verses and read them aloud in pairs. Talk about how each verse fits into the big picture of the Bible.

- Obedience - Hebrews 5:8
- Grace – 2 Corinthians 8:9
- Life through Jesus is forever – Titus 3:7
- Story of Jesus – Hebrews 2:9-10 OR 1 Timothy 2:5
- Creation – Romans 1:20
- Salvation – 1 Corinthians 1:30
- God's love is unconditional – Psalms 36:5
- Selflessness and sacrifice – Romans 3:25

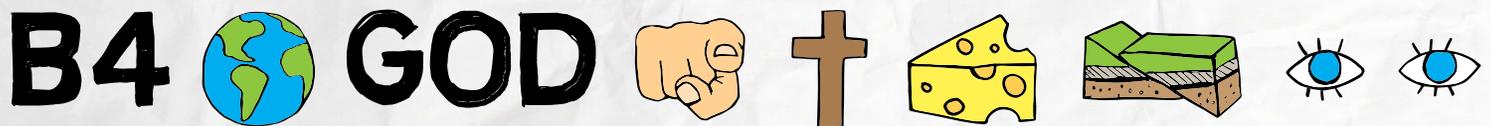
Memory Verse

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)

Ask the children to look up the memory verse in their Bibles and read it aloud together twice.

Ask the children to close their Bibles. Show each of the pictures in turn as you read the Bible verse.

Ask the children to join you to recite the verse. Use the pictures to help them to remember.



Prayer Time

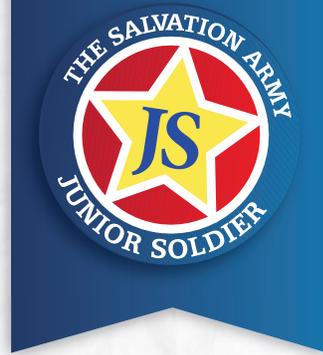
- Choose one theme each
- Thank God for that theme/ idea
- Ask God to help you understand more about that idea and how it fits into the big picture of the Bible

Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Challenge yourself to read a whole book of the Bible. You might like to choose one of these which are the shortest five books. You could try timing yourself to see how long it takes. Write down or tell your parents or Big Bud one thing about what you read.

1. 3 John (219 words)
2. 2 John (245 words)
3. Philemon (335 words)
4. Obadiah (440 words)
5. Jude (461 words)



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