

St Francis Weekly News for Bible Sunday

25th October 2020



This bulletin may have come to you by email or through your letterbox, if you received it on paper but are happy to receive an email in future please email deborah.lechmere@ntlworld.com If you know anybody else who would like this delivered or emailed please contact Deborah or Revd Janet: revdjanetwyer@outlook.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

HEARTSEASE COMMUNITY MONEY ADVICE CENTRE



You will have seen mention previously in this newsletter of this new service which we hope to open in the New Year. This week we have received a second grant for the service which means we have over half the funding now.

We thought it was a good time to explain a little more about the centre. Initially we plan to open for two half days a week, although we may be able to be flexible to suit individual circumstances. The money advice service will be truly local with two trained debt advisers who have lived in the area for over 25 years. This means we will be able to quickly learn who to speak to at local organisations, or what help different housing associations or utility providers can offer. However, because we are affiliated to a national organisation we will also have access to advice from the head office when we need it.



We will be able to advise on any level of debt, initially we will need to refer to our head office for any insolvency solutions, although we will still be the friendly local face to support you. We will be able to help you work out your situation and talk

through all the alternatives with you. We will be able to establish a budget, help you find ways to increase your income or reduce your spending, and negotiate with creditors. We can only advise, but we work with you so that you decide the best way forward in your circumstances.

Although we will be trained in debt advice we will be happy to see those who are not in debt but would like some help to prevent this. Perhaps, you have lost a job and are now living on a much reduced income. Again we can help you to look at a budget and find ways to increase income or reduce spending.

We also aim to provide you with access to laptops and a printer, or a mobile phone where this could help. This could enable you to speak to the benefits office without using all your own credit or to produce a CV to help with job hunting.

If any of our readers has recently purchased a new computer, or is planning to, and the old one is still able to access the internet perhaps you could consider donating the old one to us, so we can provide a service to our clients. If this is the case please speak to Deborah or David on 01603 466542.

REV WINNIE AND BROTHER EYORE



As you will see if you look in our window, Rev Winnie and Brother Eeyore are busy praying. They are a bit fed up with being damp and soggy all the time, and have decided to pray for fair weather. Let's hope we have a bit less of the rain this week thanks to their efforts on our behalf!

REMEMBERED WITH LOVE



On Sunday November 1st at 3pm we are holding a memorial service for the feast of All Souls, 'Remembered with Love'.

We are inviting all those who have been recently bereaved, and the service is welcome to all. Perhaps you too would like to come along and commend to God the memory of someone you miss. That's Sunday November 1st at 3pm.

THE CURATE'S CORNER

Last Wednesday morning, you may remember that it was absolutely pouring down with rain, not only that, but it began in the early hours and persisted all the way to after lunchtime. I was outside in the street that morning and a passing lady said to me, "excuse me! Would you mind having a word with your boss about all this rain?" I laughed, and replied "I'll be having a word with him later!". She gave me a very serious look and said "thank you!" as she struggled off pushing her umbrella against the deluge.

As it happens, I was going to be having a word later, as I do every day at 5; clergy are obliged to pray the 'offices', as they are called, twice a day. I do have to admit though that it didn't occur to me to mention the rain, not least because by then it had stopped. Later that evening, I had a think about asking God directly for things, and about prayer in general.

There is a handy (!) way we can remember the main things we do when we pray:



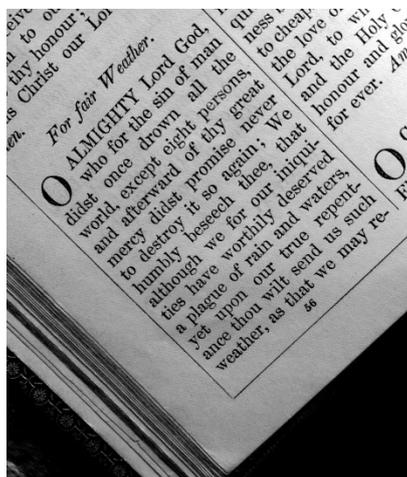
As you can see, we give thanks to God for his gifts and blessings that have been freely given to us – not least the fact that we've safely arrived at a new day, for instance. We praise Him for his power and glory, and His great love for us, amongst many other things.

On the middle finger it says 'confess', which may sound a bit odd or unusual. What it really means is that we should search our consciences about those things we ought not to have done – and also, things we didn't do that perhaps we should! This is a very healthy spiritual exercise. At first we may be tempted to believe that we are blameless until we realise that even little things we sometimes do, such as being rude to or impatient with other people, are things which fall short of the behaviour that God expects from us, if we are to become the people we are really meant to be. And if we are honest before God, then we will be forgiven, and we can resolve to improve ourselves.

On the forefinger we see 'praying for others', and this is very important. We will always find ourselves praying for those who are ill, suffering, bereaved – those known to us, and generally all who suffer in the world, too. Very often our prayers are answered; I have seen many examples of people recovering from illnesses of many kinds against all the odds, and we cannot discount the possibility that our prayers have indeed helped. We must always remember though, that it is God's will that we should always desire for, not our own. Hence the line in the prayer Jesus taught us, the Lord's Prayer, that says 'your will be done on earth, as in heaven.'

Finally, on the thumb, we have 'ask for ourselves'. Often we will be asking for guidance and the ability to discern God's will for us through the gift of the Spirit. Sometimes we will pray that our talents and abilities can be put to use to help others. At other times... now, is this the point where we can pray for the rain to stop?

Well, funnily enough, in the Book of Common Prayer, which is the foundational book of prayers for the Church of England, there is indeed a set form of prayer for just that! - it's the prayer 'For fair weather'. It is also one of our oldest, as it was originally part of our first communion service in English written in 1549, and so would have been said every Sunday in those days; a hark back to the time when a good harvest was a matter of life and death.



The prayer sounds almost comical today, and reflects the old belief that, in former times, nearly every misfortune was deemed to be a sign of God's punishment for our sins. Interestingly though, it is worth reflecting on the fact that climate change really is down to us – and the call for repentance, which means changing our hearts and minds and doing something about it, has never been more necessary.

Every blessing,

Fr Tracy

BRANCH OF THE GUILD OF HEALTH AND ST RAPHAEL IN NORWICH

The Guild of Health and St Raphael has existed in some form since 1904 and was founded to bring Christians together to promote, support and practice Christ's ministry of healing. The Guild is ecumenical, inclusive and prayerful. There are local branches across the UK and a small group has now set up in Norwich. We are operating entirely online.

We hold a prayer meeting on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 4.00 pm using a set service format, and on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7.00 pm we have a short presentation followed by discussion. Both meetings are on Zoom. If you are interested please contact us at the following email address:

norwichguildofhealth@gmail.com

There is more information about us on our website:

<https://norwichguildofhealth.weebly.com/>

Eleanor Laming

BIBLE READING

This Sunday we celebrate Bible Sunday. Each week in this newsletter we include several Bible readings that are to be used in our Sunday service. Maybe this had made you think about exploring the Bible more. Perhaps, somewhere in the house you have a Bible sitting on a shelf. Depending on your age this may be a translation dating back to 1611 in a language we no longer recognise.

Today choosing a Bible is a bit like choosing a coffee. In the past you went into a café and asked for a coffee and they asked do you want milk? Now you go in and are faced with an endless set of combinations of coffees, milks and additional flavourings. Similarly even up to the 1970's you asked for a Bible and there were just a few on offer. Now the choice is endless. But, why all these variations and which is right for you. Some Bibles are regarded as accurate word for word translations, but because there are a range of ancient versions of the Bible even these can differ considerably. Others are designed to be easier to read and give the sense of the original text rather than a word for word translation.

If you have access to the internet a good starting point is Biblegateway.com who provide the ability to read the Bible in a huge range of versions from the King James version (KJV) (we sometime know it as the authorised version) published in 1611 to those published in the last 10 years. The version used in this newsletter is the New Revised standard version (anglicised)(NRSV). You could pick one of today's readings and look at it in different versions to see how they differ and which you find helpful. There are also a range of Bible apps for your mobile phone. If you need further help or don't have access to technology please speak to somebody at the church for help.

Once you have chosen a version then you can continue to use it on the app or buy one, if you would like a Bible but cannot afford it please again talk to somebody at church.

The Bible is actually a collection of books (66 in all) and most people would not recommend starting at page 1 and reading through it in order as you would do with another book. A good starting point would be with one of the gospels which tell the story of Jesus. Mark is the shortest of these and so could be a good start.

Another way of reading would be to obtain some Bible reading notes, published regularly which take you through a range of different passages and explain them in more detail. Again some notes are available on line if you have access to a phone, tablet or computer.

Perhaps, you have children or grandchildren who you would like to learn more about the Bible. For very small children I would recommend some of the brightly coloured children's Bible story books published by Lion. For older children and young people there are specific translations, such as the International Children's Bible and the Youth Bible and you can get age specific Bible reading notes to help them understand more.

PASTORAL CARE MATTERS

As a community leader I have received the following information with the request that I pass this on to as many people as possible.



The reality is that Covid 19 is a real threat to the wellbeing of many people and as the winter months draw closer so does the need for vigilance in keeping it at bay.

With the increase in the concerns about the spread of the virus and the accompanying hardships that many people are living with never has it been more necessary for us all to treat one another with kindness.

And never before has it been so vital for us to look and listen out for folk who might be struggling.

Please, if you would like the opportunity to have a chat, or if you need some assistance of any kind please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We are very happy to talk with you if that would be helpful.

Please do not feel that you are alone - help and support is always available, whatever may be troubling you.

Revd Janet [07990 576118]
Father Tracy [07834 845623]
Eleanor [07840 206716]

Also, there is always someone available in the church building weekdays 10.00am – 12.00pm; please feel free to knock at the door, it will open to you.



USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Childline: 0800 1111

Samaritans: 116 123

Domestic Violence Hotline: 0808 2000 247

[If you hear a neighbour in distress please do not hesitate to call this number or 999; you could save a life]

Mind: 0300 123 3393

Age UK: 0800 169 6565

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

Following on from discussions with the Bishop's office, we are now about to relaunch our confirmation preparation sessions.

If you have ever thought about being confirmed; or would like to know what it means to make a commitment to Jesus by being confirmed into the Church of England please contact Revd Janet or Fr Tracy. We will be very pleased to hear from you.



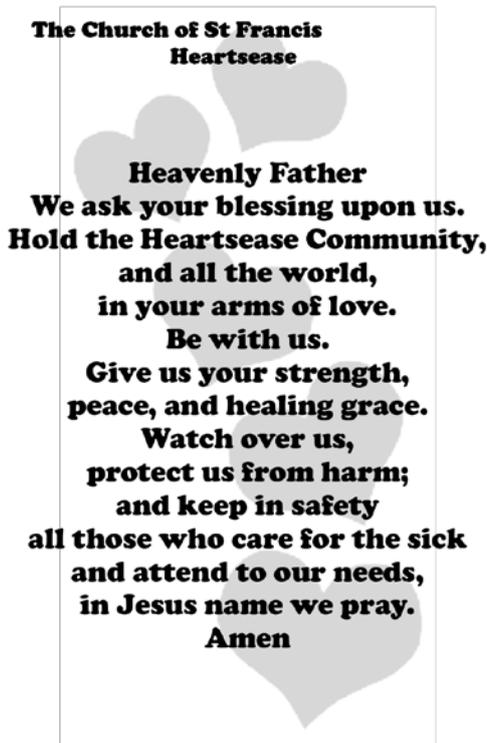
FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: Margaret T; David & Cynthia S; Darren L; Maegan; Tom; Riley & his mum and family; Jeanette, David & Grace; Paula; Pete; Lauren; Fr Brian; Hazel; Ben; Frazer.

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Doreen; Rosemary; Sheila; John; Joy; Shirley.

We remember with love Barbara Ferries; Maureen Websdale; Joan Tyrrell; Stanley Lloyd and all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends.

PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES



God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR BIBLE SUNDAY

Blessed Lord,
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning;
help us so to hear them,

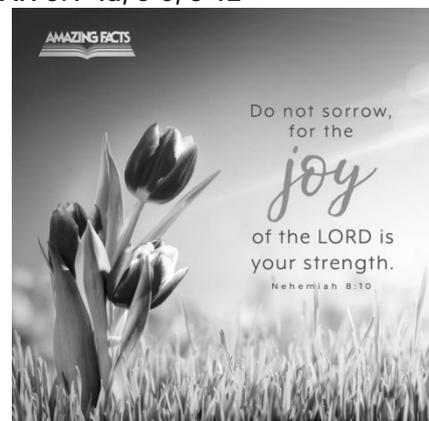
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast
the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Merciful God,
teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty,
that trusting in your word
and obeying your will
we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

God of all grace,
your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry
with the bread of his life
and the word of his kingdom:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your true and living bread;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

READINGS FOR BIBLE SUNDAY

NEHEMIAH 8:1-4a, 5-6, 8-12



When the seventh month came—the people of Israel being settled in their towns—all the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. The scribe Ezra stood on a

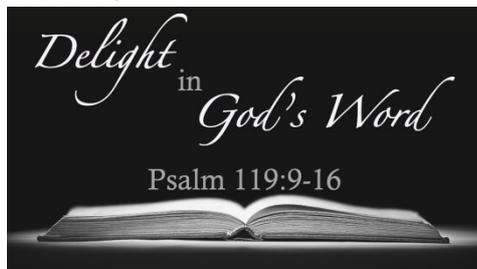
wooden platform that had been made for the purpose;

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.' So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, 'Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.' And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

PSALM 119:9-16



How can young people keep their way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

With my whole heart I seek you;

do not let me stray from your commandments.

I treasure your word in my heart,

so that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O LORD;

teach me your statutes.

With my lips I declare

all the ordinances of your mouth.

I delight in the way of your decrees

as much as in all riches.

I will meditate on your precepts,

and fix my eyes on your ways.

I will delight in your statutes;

I will not forget your word.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-17



As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

MATTHEW 24:30-35

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see "the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'



REFLECTION FOR BIBLE SUNDAY

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us that, while Heaven and Earth may pass away, His words will not pass away. And in the letter from St Paul, he exhorts the Colossians to let the word of Christ, dwell in them richly. In our psalm, the psalmist tells God that he will not forget His word. And Nehemiah tells us of how the words of God's law are made to be understandable to the people. How do we hear the word of God? We hear it when we hear the bible being read aloud.

Now, I know from bitter experience there's one thing that most human beings do not like to do. In a previous life, my work was in a very technical environment. When staff had problems with the equipment, people would say to me: "I can't make it work! There's something wrong! It doesn't do what it's supposed to!"

My answer to them was always "Have you read the manual?" At this point, I'd always get a look of complete and utter terror. Maybe that's part of the reason why people find the Bible so daunting.

Now I'm not trying to suggest that the Bible is an instruction book. In fact, the bible is a whole library of books – 39 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New. People have classed these books in various categories – laws, history, poetry, wisdom, prophesy and revelation, stories, letters – a list that can go on and on.

One category that we don't very often hear the bible squeezed into, is journalism. Which is interesting, because I would suggest that the bible is indeed a journal. It's a journal of the relationship of humanity with God.

The climax of that relationship, is the physical appearance of God, in the form of Jesus Christ, which makes our relationship, with God, right. If I'm right in thinking this, then this journal takes a definite shape.

It's a series of big conversations. It's a big conversation between the Old and the New Testament.

It's a big conversation between Jesus and his disciples.

It's a big conversation between the followers of Jesus and those who lived after him. And most importantly of all, it's a conversation between Jesus – and us, in fact, it's a conversation between heaven and earth.

I would also suggest, perhaps rather controversially, that the 15th century divines were absolutely right to be fearful of the mass translation and distribution of the Bible. Because they knew that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. They knew that knowledge is power, and they knew that power can be abused. We've seen it over and over.

The American Civil War was fought between two similar tribes who both read the Bible in the same language, in the same translation, who both found biblical reasons to justify their actions for and against human slavery. And that led to a great deal of slaughter and resentment, and we still see the aftermath of that today: the 'Black Lives Matter' movement is directly descended from the result of interpreting the Bible to suit ourselves. We cannot read the Bible literally, as if it were just a book. We cannot pluck things out of context. We cannot read the Bible all on our own.

We need to pray for some help. Where might that help come from?

In Paul's letter, he advises the the Colossians to 'clothe themselves in love'. He asks them to let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. In Nehemiah, the people are listening to the words of the Law in a holy place, as part of their worship. They are letting God into their hearts. We cannot learn to understand the holy word of God, unless we do pretty much the same. We are helped to do this by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are big clues in the Bible about the connection between God's word and the Holy Spirit. In 2 Timothy 3:16, we read that 'all scripture is given by inspiration of God'. Now the original Greek word translated as inspiration, is a word that means, literally, 'God-breathed.' In the opening chapters of Genesis, we read 'God formed man out of the dust from the ground, and breathed in his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul'. In many languages the word for breath is the same as the word for spirit. And so to be inspired, is to be breathed into, by God. Life is therefore, a blend of the material world, and the Holy Spirit. The spirit is the go-between, the thing that moves us towards the sense of otherness, the sense of awe, the sheer emotion of an encounter with that which is divine. That is what makes creation, and most of all, all life, sacramental.

It may be a mystery, but we are not here by accident, and death is not the end. The Bible is a set of vitally important books, written by people trying to work stuff out, struggling, wrestling with God. But these words have been breathed into, and

can continue to be breathed into again and again. The word is a living thing! A living thing that continues to live amongst us. That is what I mean by reading the Bible with the help of the Spirit. Without Him, we get hopelessly lost.

it's occurred to me so many times now, when I pray the psalms, that the connection between God's breath, the spirit, and God's word is such a big one. Psalm 33: By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth. Psalm 147: He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he bloweth with his wind, and the waters flow. And then guess what: the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Again and again, spirit or breath of God, and the word of God, occur together. And in complete contrast, Palm 135 says of the images of the heathen: They have mouths and speak not....neither is there any breath in their nostrils.

The breath, the spirit, the word – all this is, is really about one thing. Life. Life in God. Phillipians 2: 'Holding forth the word of life.' 1 John 1: 'our hands have handled the word of life'. And finally, John 6:63 – Jesus said 'the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, they are life.

Back in the days of Nehemiah, the public reading of scripture was important, just as it is now. Back then too, it was important for the scriptures to be thought about, and explained. Much later, St Paul is calling the Colossians to abandon their gnostic

heresy and seek true liturgical experience – which, then as now, includes the reading of scripture, and also the singing of psalms. This is of course what we are called to do today, to proclaim, and to explain, the words of holy scripture.

To me: this is a call to mission. Yes, we are called to do many things but please, let us not forget about our call to proclaim the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be fed, by word and spirit. We need our hearts to be healed. We need to be set free from all that gets in the way, whether it's prejudice, resentments, pressures to conform – whatever.

And most of all – most of all, we need to help others to do the same. And the way to do that, I would suggest, is to not try to force God into a corner.

You cannot catch the Spirit.

You can only look at what the Spirit is doing and try to follow it. And when you do, you will always see a pattern. A sense of recognition, a sense of having to make a choice, and then in some way, a sacrifice.

You can chase the butterfly but you will not catch it. You can only follow. But if you sit in silence, and wait: sometimes, just sometimes, the butterfly might just land in your palm.

Silence and waiting. That's how to read the Bible, I think. And that's how you can arrive at the truth.

Father Tracy



God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to others; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. Do not be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive him. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you. Do all these things; but most important, love each other. Love is what holds you all together in perfect unity. Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. You were all called together in one body to have peace. Always be thankful. Let the teaching of Christ live in you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Everything you say and everything you do should all be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS 2:15
Adam and Eve


Tower of Babel


Joseph's Coat of many colors
 GENESIS 37:3


David and Goliath
 1 SAMUEL 17


Ezekiel gets a new heart
 EZEKIEL 36:26

 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
 DANIEL 3
FierY furnace

Gideon
 JUDGES 7


Hannah and Samuel
 1 SAMUEL 1:27


Dear Israel:
 THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD:
 AND THOU SHALT
Love
 THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THINE
Heart's
 AND WITH ALL THY
Soul
 AND WITH ALL THY
might's

JOSHUA 6:1-27
walls of Jericho


King Solomon
 1 KINGS 3:6-28


DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5
Abraham Obeds
 GENESIS 22:5


Daniel and the Lions
 DANIEL 6


Moses
 EXODUS 14:21-31


Noah's Ark
 GENESIS 6:22


Passover
 EXODUS 12


Queen
 ESTHER 4:16


Temple
 PSALM 9:11


Ruth
 RUTH 2:23


EXODUS 20:3
 REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT
Holly
Sabbath

Ten commandments
 EXODUS 20:17


Unleavened bread
 EXODUS 12:39

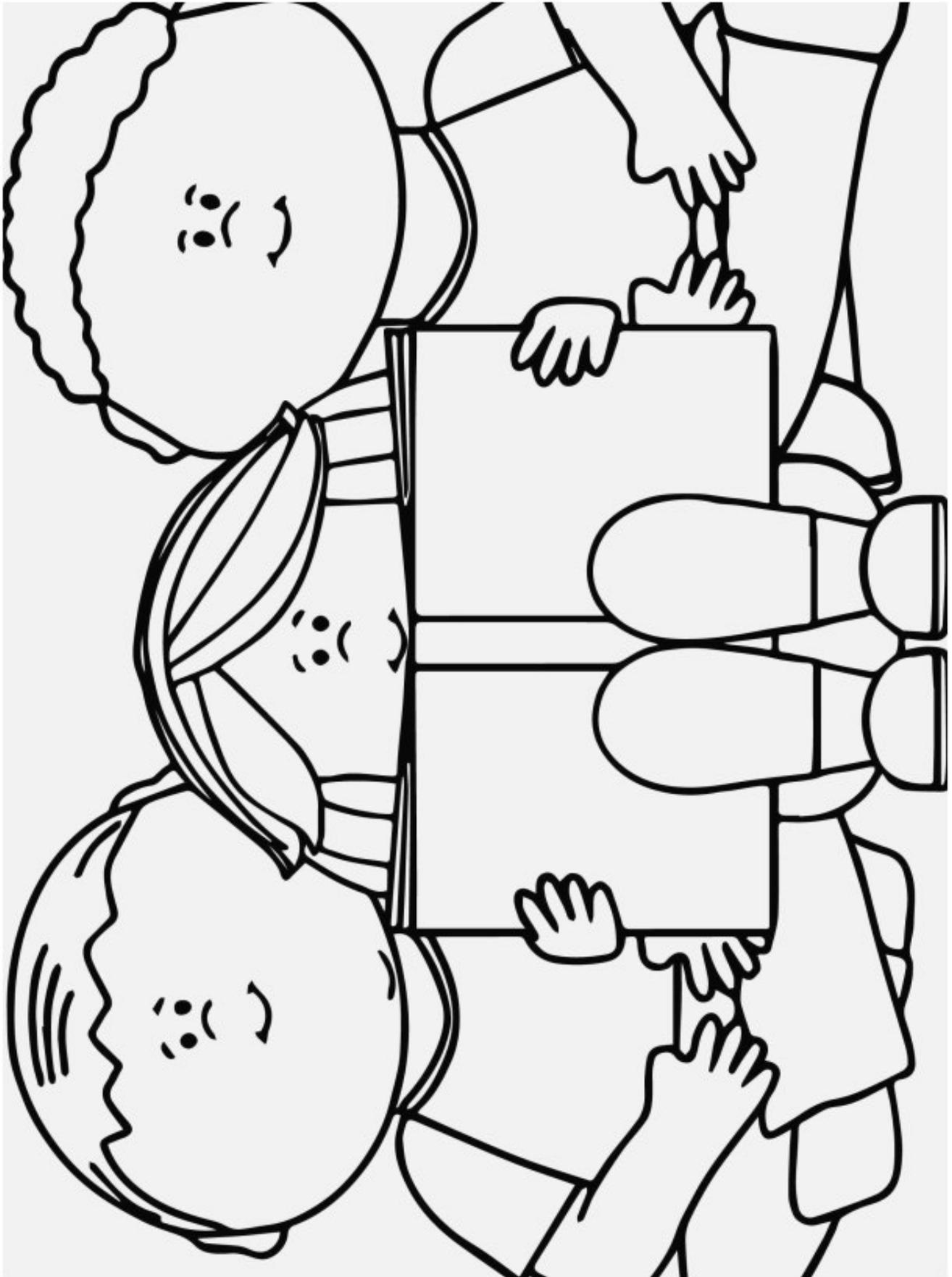

EXODUS 26:31-33
The Temple Veil


Jonah and the Whale
 JONAH 1:17


I will exalt you
 my God the King
 I will praise your name forever and ever
 PSALM 145:1


Yahweh
 I AM WHO I AM
 EXODUS 3:13,14


Zion

Learn About The Bible

What is in the Bible?

The word Bible means “books”, and the Bible is made up of many books.

Connect the dots to find out how many books are in the Bible.



books in the
Old Testament



books in the
New Testament



books in the
whole Bible

Bible Writers Puzzle

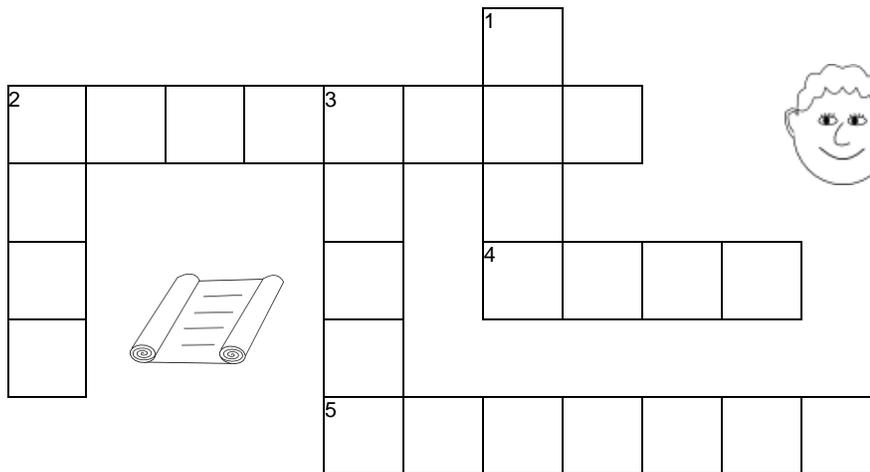
The books in the Bible were written by about 40 different people. Some wrote only one book. Each of the Bible writers in this puzzle wrote more than one book.

ACROSS

2. He wrote 2 books of prophecy
4. He wrote a gospel and a book of history
5. He wrote 3 books of poetry and wisdom

DOWN

1. He wrote 12 letters
2. He wrote 5 New Testament books
3. He wrote the first 5 books of the Bible



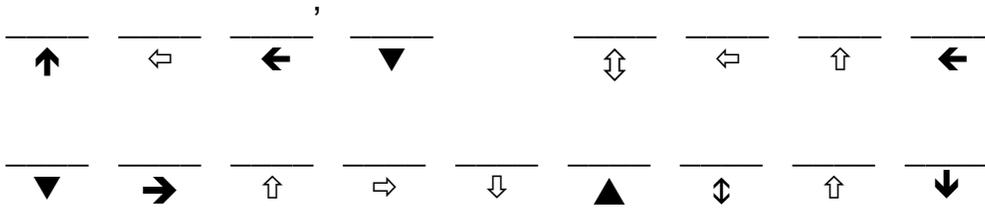
Name List: JEREMIAH, JOHN, LUKE, MOSES, PAUL, SOLOMON

The Bible is Inspired by God

“Inspired” means “God-breathed”. God told the Bible writers what to write. Then they wrote it in their own words.

Other Names for the Bible

Use the code to learn two other names for the Bible.



Code:



What Does the Bible Teach about Itself?

Look up and read each verse, and draw a line to what it says.

Psalm 119:11	The Bible lasts forever.
Psalm 119:105	The Bible is a light to show us where to go and what to do.
Isaiah 40:8	If I remember what the Bible says, it keeps me from sinning against God.
2 Timothy 3:15	The Bible helps us understand salvation through faith in Jesus.
2 Timothy 3:16 (first part)	The Bible teaches us what to do and corrects us when we are wrong.
2 Timothy 3:16 (second part)	The Bible is inspired by God.

The Bible and You

Put a checkmark next to each thing you should do.

- Read the Bible often.
- Memorize Bible verses.
- Look in the Bible only when you have a problem.
- Study the Bible.
- Believe the Bible.
- Obey the Bible.

