

The Books of the Bible

Today's lesson presented children with an overview of the entire Bible, focusing on both the individual books of the Bible and the kinds of writing included in the Bible. The material used in the presentation includes a small wooden bookshelf with wooden "books" to represent each book of the Bible. If you choose to retell the version of the lesson printed below, you will need a Bible.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today's Godly Play presentation. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today's story?

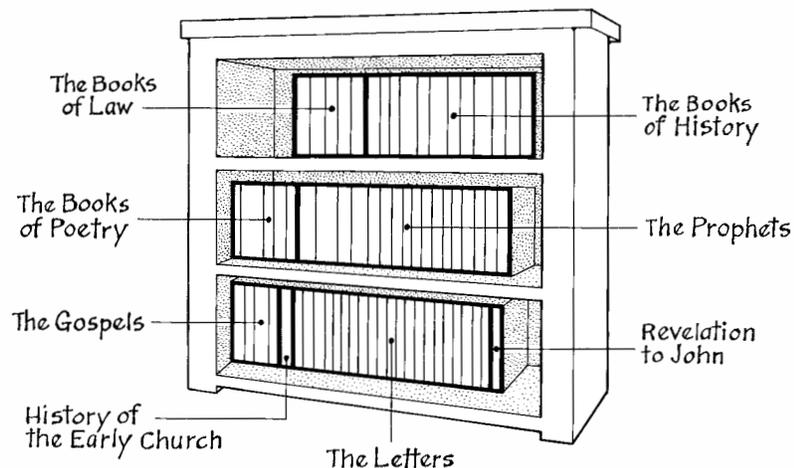
Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or

her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen* in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today's presentation offered below. Whether you read the lesson or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today's lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the presentation can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying "Amen."

The Presentation

This is the Holy Bible. It wasn't always a book. A long time ago it was stories people told to each other. Then the stories were written down on pieces of soft leather, then on a kind of paper made from reeds called papyrus. Finally the printing press was invented and the Bible became a book.



Wondering

- **I wonder** which one of the books you like best?
- **I wonder** which one is the most important one?
- **I wonder** which one is especially for you?

Here is the “front door” (*open the front cover*) and here is the “back door” (*open the back cover*). You can go inside either way. If you go in the front door, there is a list of everything inside. (*Find the Table of Contents.*) Look at all the books in the Bible. The Bible is like a whole library! Let’s count them.

There are different kinds of books, too. Some are books of law and story: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.*

Some are books that *only* tell stories: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.*

Some are books of poetry: *Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.*

Some are the writings of the prophets, or stories about the prophets: *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.*

Those are all the books in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, we have the four gospels. They come first and tell the story of Jesus four times. They are named after the storytellers *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.*

There is one book that tells us the history of the Early Church: *Acts.*

There are also letters: *Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude.*

And finally, at the end of the Bible, there is a book called the *Revelation to John.*

See, here they are. All Godly Play stories come from the Bible.

Godly Play The Importance of Stories

Children love to hear and tell stories. Stories are where all of us, children and adults together, find our identity, our family. In stories we challenge the messages of the powers-that-be—greed, poverty, powerlessness—that rob us of relationships and meaning.

Through story we also invite one another to give meaning to our world and ultimately to our lives. In research done in Houston, one common factor found in at-risk youth was that they had no stories. Sharing stories and fully entering into them is how we mature.

Telling and actively listening to stories is more important than it seems.

To carry stories within us is to become wisdom-bearers, God-bearers, like Mary herself. The elders of a community tell their stories, and children find meaning in those stories and relationships with those elders. Perhaps the best way to sum up many of the possibilities and limitations of narratives and language itself is to tell a story about your family right now.