

Unit: 5.1 How and why do Christians read the Bible?

Suggested number of hours 11 (6+5)

Christian Concepts

God – Creation – Fall – People of God – Incarnation – Gospel – Salvation – Kingdom of God

This unit doesn't particularly emphasise any of the concepts in great depth. It will depend on discussions and questions that are raised by the pupils. There will more than likely be an opportunity to mention Gospel and Kingdom of God.

The aim of this unit is to:

- deepen children's understanding of the importance and impact of the contents of the Bible.

Christian Values

Wisdom
Faith
Truth

Key Skills

Interpret
Analyse
Evaluate
Investigate

Key Questions

- How and why is the Bible used?
- Do you need a Bible to be a Christian?
- Why is the Bible holy?
- Why is the Bible a best seller?
- Why are there so many versions of the Bible?

Key Vocabulary

Old Testament, New Testament Gospel, Word of God and translation

Key Experiences

To see and handle a wide variety of Bibles.
To talk to an adult about how and why they use/read the Bible.
Compare the teaching of the Bible and Christian behaviour.
Making connections between Bible passages and Christian values, attitudes or beliefs.

Link to Understanding Christianity

There is no direct link to an Understanding Christianity Unit.

To Begin with

What do the children already know about the Bible and holy books from other faiths? *Create mind maps in groups.* What else would they like to find out?

Make a display of Bibles and holy books from other faiths using pictures and books.

What questions would they like to ask?

Add the children's questions and the key questions to your display.

You are now all on a quest to discover the answers to the questions on your display.

Explore the Text

Look at the titles given to the Bibles. Make a list and then discuss what the titles tell us about the contents and Christian beliefs.

Record in your class RE scrapbook

The Living Bible, The Good News, The Message, The Holy Bible, My Very First Bible, The Adventure Bible etc.

Which of these titles do the children think is the best? Do they think these titles are appropriate? Why?

Can they think of any other suitable titles?

Record in your class RE scrapbook

Do the titles reflect what Christians believe about God's word? The Bible is believed to be the inspired word of God that is flawless and equips the believer.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him." Proverbs 30:5

"The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever." Isaiah 40:8

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12

Use these quotes for a silent discussion. Put each quote in the centre of a large piece of paper. Give pupils an opportunity to silently write thoughts, comments, ideas, questions, etc. on the paper as they pass around the quotes. Then discuss out loud what these quotes are telling us about God's holy word.

Record in your class RE scrapbook

Have any of the questions on your display been answered?

Look at the same passage from the Bible e.g. Psalm 23 in several different English versions including The King James. (use www.biblegateway.com)

Which do the children prefer? Why?

Why are there so many versions?

Record Individually

The Bible is translated into many languages. However, there are 6,912 known languages in the world and 4,400 are still waiting for even one book of the Bible. Using a website such as www.biblegateway.com look at a familiar passage in the Bible in several languages. e.g. the calming of the storm, or feeding of the five thousand in Spanish, French, Hindi, Japanese and Somali.

Children should already be aware that the Bible is a “library” of many books. Ensure that they know it is also made up of a variety of literary forms e.g.

History – Exodus

Poems and Songs – Psalms

Rules – Leviticus

Stories – Jonah, Esther, Ruth

Lists – Matthew 1

Letters – Philippians

Poems - Psalms

Add the names of the books in the Bible and their genre to your big frieze to emphasise that the Bible is God’s big story told in different ways.

Discover the impact

The Bible has been translated into many languages and transported around the world. Why? Can the children remember thinking about this when studying Unit 2.1? Can they remember Mary Jones?

YouTube BBC Teach ‘What is the Christian Holy Bible?’ Religious studies – My Life My Religion: Christianity will jog memories and get the children thinking.

For over 200 years in over 200 countries the Bible Society has been translating and distributing Bibles. www.biblesociety.org.uk

<http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/>

Use this web site to create a brief timeline of the production and translation of the Bible.

Record in your class RE scrapbook

Focus on the life story of the Bible translator William Tyndale.

<http://www.torchlighters.org/episodes/index.php?episode=tyndale>

Record interesting facts thoughts and ideas in your class RE Scrapbook

Here is an opportunity to use your large version of The King James Bible presented to School by the DfE in 2011 commemorating the Year of the Bible. (400 years since the translation of the Bible from Latin into English.)

Robert Morrison 1782-1834 (Born in Morpeth, Northumberland) served God in China for 27 years.

During that time he translated the Bible into Chinese. (This took him 25 years)

The Bible Society and The Gideon’s websites contain brilliant stories about the lengths to which people will go to ensure the Bible is translated and shared with everyone in the world.

The launch of the first ever Jamaican New Testament took place in October 2012. Some five million people around the world speak Jamaican Patois, many of them in Britain. It has taken 20 years of work by The Bible Society of the West Indies to put the New Testament into their language. I wonder if there was a party to celebrate this event? Why?

Why did it take so long to complete the translation?

Did the translators ever want to give up?

What kept them going till the end?

Record individually

I wonder how it would feel to read the Bible in your own language for the first time? I wonder what would be the first story you would want read? Why? I wonder where you would keep your new Bible?

Record Individually

Does the work of the people of The Bible Society inspire you? Why? In what ways does the perseverance and dedication of the translators inspire you? Why?

Record Individually

Have any more of the questions on your display been answered? Are there any new questions to add?

How do Christians use the Bible?
Why do Christians read the Bible?

Ask members of the church, clergy or school staff to visit your class and explain how and why they use the Bible. They may have heard a story of when a particular Bible passage has made an impact. Ask the children to *record individually* what they learnt and found most interesting.

Do you need a Bible to be a Christian?
What do the children think? Set up a debate.

Record in your class RE scrapbook.

A monk called Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne between 698CE and 721CE created the Lindisfarne Gospels. This manuscript is among our greatest artistic and religious treasures. The Gospels can be viewed

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/lindisfarne.html>

Record reactions and children's artwork in the style of the Gospels in your class RE scrapbook.

Make the Connection

The Bible gives guidance for daily living, times of trouble and joy.

How? What? Where?

Record ideas together in groups

At the front of a Bible given out by The Gideons there are lists of references of where to find guidance.

Make links between the Bible passages and Christian values, attitudes and behaviour.

For example

1 Corinthians 13,

Colossians 4 v 2-6,

Matthew 6 v 25 -34,

1 Thessalonians 5 v 16-24,

Philippians 4 v 4-7.

Record Individually

Is following what the Bible says easy? Why? Why not?

Record Individually

What could the children learn from the Bible passages, regardless of their faith backgrounds?

Record Individually

Dive Deeper

The Bible is used to help answer questions about creation, truth, suffering and death, values for living and ethical issues.

If possible look at a current issue in the news and ask the children working in groups to discuss how they think the Bible would address that issue e.g. climate change, a murder, poverty. They can feed back their ideas to the class.

Record in your class RE Scrapbook

What are the children's opinion on these issues? What is the source of these opinions?



How important are holy books in faiths other than Christianity?

Non-Christian Faith Unit

5 hours.

After your topic on the Bible, spend time exploring the importance of sacred books in other religions. Before you plan, check what has been studied when the children have covered Unit 2.1. It is important that pupils build on knowledge and not repeat.

Information and ideas for activities can be found in the **Qur'an** Unit from the BDBE Islam CD and the **Torah** Unit from the BDBE Judaism CD.

If they have not looked at the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, in Unit 2.1 then cover that topic here.

Pupils can research and investigate the holy scriptures of Hinduism.

These include;

The Vedas

These are the most ancient religious texts which define truth for Hindus. They got their present form between 1200-200 BCE and were introduced to India by the Aryans. Hindus believe that the texts were received by scholars direct from God and passed on to the next generations by word of mouth. Vedic texts are sometimes called *shruti*, which means hearing. For hundreds, maybe even thousands of years, the texts were passed on orally.

Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita, or "Song of the Lord" is part of the sixth book of the Mahabharata, the world's longest poem. Composed between 500 BCE and 100 CE, the Mahabharata is an account of the wars of the house of Bharata. It is one of the most popular Hindu texts and is known as a smriti text (the remembered tradition). This is considered by some to be of less importance than shruti (the heard text, such as the Vedas). It has, nevertheless, an important place within the Hindu tradition. The Bhagavad Gita takes the form of a dialogue between Prince Arjuna and **Krishna**, his charioteer. Arjuna is a warrior, about to join his brothers in a war between two branches of a royal family which would involve killing many of his friends and relatives. He wants to withdraw from the battle but Krishna teaches him that he, Arjuna, must do his duty in accordance with his class and he argues that death does not destroy the soul. Krishna points out that knowledge, work and devotion are all paths to salvation and that the central value in life is that of loyalty to God.

The Ramayana

The Ramayana is one of India's best known tales. It tells the story of Prince **Rama** who was sent into exile in the forest with his wife, **Sita**, and his brother, Lakshmana. Sita was abducted by the evil demon Ravana but ultimately rescued by Prince Rama with the help of the Monkey God, Hanuman. The symbolism of the story has been widely interpreted but basically is the story of good overcoming evil. Many people have said that it is a story about **dharma** or duty. Pupils may already be familiar with this story as it is remembered during the festival of Diwali. Retellings of the story can be found on YouTube.

Look at the presentation of the books, the care with which they are treated, where they are kept, the language they are written in, how they are decorated and the focus placed upon them. There are many similarities and differences that can be explored and discussed.

Record in your class RE scrapbook.

You can listen to the Qur'an being read (YouTube) or watch the Guru Granth Sahib being put to bed (YouTube)

The BBC Teach 'My Life My Religion' clips of film on YouTube are very good quality and show children talking about holy books in their faith.

Use quotes such as those listed below to discuss values and beliefs, similarities and differences.

Record Individually

Hinduism

The human body is the temple of God.

One who kindles the light of awareness within gets true light.

The sacred flame of your inner shrine is constantly bright.

The experience of unity is the fulfillment of human endeavors.

The mysteries of life are revealed.

- the Rig Veda

"Truth can not be suppressed and always is the ultimate victor."

-the Yajur Veda

"Life and death, joy and sorrow, gain and loss; These dualities cannot be avoided. Learn to accept what you cannot change."

-the Ramayana

"Do not be led by others,
awaken your own mind,
amass your own experience,
and decide for yourself your own path."

-the Atharva Veda

"One should strongly resent miserliness and indulge in charity because one can acquire the never-ending wealth of immortality by doing so."

-the Rig Veda

Sikhism

“He who has no faith in himself can never have faith in God.”

— Guru Nanak, Sri Guru Granth Sahib

“For each and every person, our Lord and Master provides sustenance. Why are you so afraid, O mind? The flamingos fly hundreds of miles, leaving their young ones behind. Who feeds them, and who teaches them to feed themselves? Have you ever thought of this in your mind?”

— Guru Nanak, Sri Guru Granth Sahib

“Even Kings and emperors with heaps of wealth and vast dominion cannot compare with an ant filled with the love of God.”

— Guru Nanak, Sri Guru Granth Sahib

“Speak only that which will bring you honour.”

— Guru Nanak, Sri Guru Granth Sahib

Islam

So be patient. Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth – Qur’an 30:60

Allah is the best of providers – Surah Al-jumu’ah : 11

He is with you, where you may be; and Allah is seeing your deeds – Al-hadid: 4

Indeed he does not like the proud – Qur’an 16:23

“Everyone acts according to his intentions, and your Lord is Best Aware of him whose path is right.” Qur’an 17:84

And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful. Qur’an 48:14

By the end of this unit pupils will know that:

| | |
|---|--|
| ▲ | there are several different genre of writing in the Bible. |
| ▲ | there are many translations of the Bible in English and other languages. |
| ▲ | the Bible is used to help answer questions about creation, truth, suffering and death, values for life and ethical issues. |
| ■ | people of other faiths have holy books that teach, guide and impact on their daily lives. |
| ■ | the Bible is the inspired word of God. |
| ◆ | the Bible gives guidance for Christian living and this impacts on believers lives and communities. |

| By the end of this unit pupils are expected to be able to: | |
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| ■ | make links between Bible passages and Christian values, attitudes and beliefs. |
| ■ | use religious language to ask relevant questions. |
| ■ | talk about the work and perseverance of Bible translators. |
| ✦ | describe what inspires and influences them. |
| ✦ | describe the impact of the content of the Bible on believers' lives. |
| ✦ | use religious vocabulary to show understanding of religious texts. |
| ✦ | make comparisons between the Bible and other holy books. |

| I know: | ✓ | ? |
|--|---|---|
| that the Bible is the inspired word of God. | | |
| that there are many translations of the Bible. | | |
| that the Bible guides Christians and effects their daily lives. | | |
| about holy books from other faiths and their impact. | | |
| I can: | ✓ | ? |
| ask good questions that improve my learning. | | |
| tell you about the work of Bible translators today and in the past. | | |
| describe how what I have learnt inspires and influences me. | | |
| describe the impact of the content of the Bible on a believer's life. | | |
| use religious vocabulary to show I understand texts from the Bible and other holy books. | | |
| recognise and talk about the similarities and differences between holy books. | | |
| explain how the teaching in the Bible helps to answer ultimate and ethical questions. | | |

Resources

Reflection and Response CD

Book shelf of Bibles



Look at the titles of the Bible.
 What do they tell us about the contents and Christian beliefs?
 Why do you think the Bible is given different titles?
 Why are there different Bibles for children, youth and adults?
 Which one of these Bibles would you like to look at?
 Are there any questions you would like to ask?

The Word of God



Matthew 4 v 4
 Jesus answered "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"
 Jesus is quoting the Book of Deuteronomy.
 What do you think he means?
 How can someone live on the word of God?
 The Bible is the word of God.
 What is this passage of scripture challenging us to think about?
 Look carefully at the display. What message does it give to people visiting the church?

The full resources can be found on the Reflection and Response CD