

An introduction to the most popular book ever written.

The Bible is amazing, it speaks to us in a way no other book can. Many people find it so exciting they can't put it down. It may be old but it gives down-to-earth advice about life today.

What is the Bible?

Did you know that the Bible is a whole library of books—66 in all—and it took over 1000 years to complete? Written in Hebrew and Greek, it is now translated into every major language and hundreds of minor ones.

Isn't it in old English?

No. There are plenty of translations of the Bible in modern English—the Good News Bible or the New International Version are perhaps the best buy.

What is the Bible about?

Many things! Each book tells us more about God. It shows how He created and looks after the whole universe, and that He knows and loves each one of us individually.

The Bible tells us who Jesus Christ is and how to have a relationship with God.

The first part, called the Old Testament, has history; teaching about God; psalms, which are songs and poems; proverbs giving very practical advice on living; and even some very beautiful love poetry in the Song of Songs.

The second part of the Bible is called the New Testament.

The first four books—called 'Gospels'—tell us about the life of Jesus.

'Acts' is about Jesus' followers after his death and resurrection: then there is a collection of letters to the first Christians from their leaders.

The last book in the New Testament, and of the whole of the Bible, is 'Revelation'—a vision which God gave to a man called John.

Good stories

Jesus often used stories to teach people. These are called parables. A very well-known one is the parable of 'The Good Samaritan'. Jesus told this to the Jews who hated the Samaritans. Read it for yourself in Luke 10:25-37.

How to find a verse in the Bible.

The Bible is split up into books, chapters and verses.

If you don't know where a book is, look in the contents list at the front of the Bible.

Be careful if there are numbers in front of the book name; eg, there is John (a gospel) and 1 John, 2 John and 3 John which are letters.

Try finding John 3:16 as an example.

The book is John, this is the fourth book of the New Testament. 3 is the chapter, and the verse is 16.

Here are some verses you may find helpful.

Promise of salvation

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.'—John 3:16

Finding God through Jesus

Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me." '—John 14:6

Confidence in Prayer

'We have courage in God's presence, because we are sure that he hears us if we ask him for anything that is according to his will.'—1 John 5:14

When things are difficult

—John 14:27

Saying sorry to God

—Psalm 51

When you have argued with someone

—Ephesians 4:31-32

Becoming a Christian

—John 5:24 & Ephesians 2:8-10

When God feels far away

—Psalm 139

Promise of forgiveness

—1 John 1:8-9

Love —1 Corinthians 13

When things are getting you down

—Matthew 11:28-30

Death

—Psalm 23 & John 11:25-26

When you are happy

—Psalm 100

Prayer

There's nothing strange about praying.

It isn't something to do only when you are desperate. Prayer is talking to God.

We can ask him for help, thank him for what he has done, or just talk to him like we would to our own father or mother.

Lord God,

I thank you that I have the Bible to tell me about you.

As I read it, help me to understand it. Help me to learn from it how you would like me to be. Amen.

Don't forget, the Bible is a collection of books. The first book—Genesis—is not the best one to start with. Begin with the New Testament. Try reading Luke's Gospel first.