

## The Bible Library

The Bible is not one book, it is 66 – in fact it is a library of books under one cover! 39 of these are found in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

The books of the Old Testament may be divided into five main parts: Law – Genesis to Exodus; History – Joshua to Nehemiah; Wisdom Literature or poetry – Job – Song of Solomon plus Lamentations; there are three story books – Ruth, Esther and Jonah; The other books are all Prophecy.. Generally speaking, the Books Genesis - Deuteronomy contain God's *law* to His old covenant people, Israel (the early beginnings of mankind are also recorded in Genesis). Joshua - Esther tells the *history* of the Jewish nation. Job - Song of Solomon contain inspired instructions relative to man's daily problems; hence, *wisdom literature*. Isaiah - Malachi contain *prophecies* of the future: regarding the Jewish people, Gentile nations, and the coming Messiah.

The 27 books of the New Testament may be divided into four parts: Biography/ Gospels – Matthew - John; History – Acts of the Apostles; Letters – Romans - Jude; Prophecy - Revelation. Matthew - John are four gospels telling of Jesus' life, His mission and sufferings. Acts is the *history* of the early church. This book tells us how people become Christians and how the church of Christ was begun, organized and spread. Romans - Jude are letters to Christian churches giving instructions on how to live and serve God. Revelation, the New Testament book of *prophecy*, tells of events which John said "*must shortly come to pass.*" In Revelation, we see the promised triumph of God's people over every evil, even Satan himself!

*Note: in the diagram I have borrowed, the three story books have been subsumed into other sections.*

***The Old Testament is written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek.***

**Hebrew**

From the beginning Hebrew was written down without vowels, and in Israel today you will still find that newspapers are written with consonants only – you have to guess the vowels, and this can radically transform the meaning of a sentence! To explain this you might like to give your pupils the “sentence: “: th ct s n th mt.” Now is this the obvious “the cat is on the mat”, or “the coat is in the moat” or “ the cat is on the meat” etc etc? wrestling with a sentence like this will enable pupils to grasp something of the problems encountered by Bible translators. Where the vowels are added they are known as “pointing” so Hebrew text can be pointed or unpointed.

Hebrew is read from right to left down the page.

Where two vowels come together in Hebrew, or a word starts with a vowel, one of two “breathing” consonants is used to show this.

**Greek**

Greek reads from left to right. It has its own alphabet. Koine (colloquial) Greek was the international language used in the eastern half of the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus, whilst the western half spoke Latin. In fact some of the New Testament authors were definitely not scholars and they “wrote as they spoke”, which can also make translation difficult. The best Greek style can be found in the Gospels of Luke and John.

*If you wish to use the alphabets below for children to write out their own names you will find there are no Js - in Hebrew use a Y, in Greek use an I. Look out for children in your class who have Biblical names – these will obviously be the easiest to transliterate accurately.*

## Hebrew Alphabet



Tet  
(T)



Chet  
(Ch)



Zayin  
(Z)



Vav  
(V/O/U)



He  
(H)



Dalet  
(D)



Gimel  
(G)



Bet  
(B/V)



Alef  
(Silent)



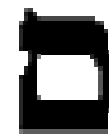
Samech  
(S)



Nun  
(N)



Nun  
(N)



Mem  
(M)



Mem  
(M)



Lamed  
(L)



Khaf  
(Kh)



Kaf  
(K/Kh)



Yod  
(Y)



Tav  
(T/S)



Shin  
(Sh/S)



Resh  
(R)



Qof  
(Q)



Tzade  
(Tz)



Tzade  
(Tz)



Fe  
(F)



Pe  
(P/F)



Ayin  
(Silent)

## Greek Alphabet

Alpha Α α	Iota Ι ι	Rho Ρ ρ
Beta Β β	Kappa Κ κ	Sigma Σ σ
Gamma Γ γ	Lambda Λ λ	Tau Τ τ
Delta Δ δ	Mu Μ μ	Upsilon Υ υ
Epsilon Ε ε	Nu Ν ν	Phi Φ φ
Zeta Ζ ζ	Xi Ξ ξ	Chi Χ χ
Eta Η η	Omicron Ο ο	Psi Ψ ψ
Theta Θ θ	Pi Π π	Omega Ω ω

There is a quick pronunciation guide to the Greek letters below:

A, α	a	N, ν	n
B, β	v, as in vital	Ξ, ξ	x or ks
Γ, γ	similar to y in yard	Ο, ο	o
Δ, δ	th as in this	Π, π	p
E, ε	e as in egg	Ρ, ρ	r
Z, ζ	z as in zorbas	Σ, σ	s
H, η	e as in era	Τ, τ	t
Θ, θ	th as in throne	Υ, υ	e as in era
I, ι	e as in era	Φ, φ	f
K, κ	k	Χ, χ	h as in he
Λ, λ	l	Ψ, ψ	ps
M, μ	m	Ω, ω	o

<b>Our Bible Library</b>	<b>Year Group: KS2</b>	<b>No. of lessons: 4+</b>
<p><b>Learning Objectives:</b> To be aware that the Bible is a collection of books which contains many different kinds of literature. To be able to look up Bible references. To explore how the Bible is translated from its original languages.</p>		
<p><b>Questions for reflection:</b> Why are there so many translations of the Bible? What kinds of things in the Bible do I find difficult to understand?</p>		
<p><b>Activities and experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Explore together the make up of the Bible – two Testaments, chapter and verse references. Practise looking up references – pupils devise Bible quizzes or hunts for each other. Understand that each of the titles are separate books written at different times by different authors. Create together a Bible Library display / diagram / model with different coloured books for the different styles of writing. Extension work – to research some interesting facts about individual books and add this to the display.</li> <li>◆ Look together at examples of a page from the each Testament in their original languages. If these are not readily available (e.g. Torah scroll from your Judaism box) use one of the websites below. Think about the difficulties there could be in translating the scriptures and experiment with sentences such as th ct s n th mt (see above) or transliterating class names. Agree together a set of “guidelines for Bible translators” e.g “you must not change the meaning of a sentence when you translate”. What would you do if you found something you couldn’t translate e.g. where Jesus says “I am the true vine” but the language you are translating into doesn’t have any words for vines or grapes because they are not grown in that country?</li> <li>◆ Select a passage from one of the Gospels and work in small groups with several different Bibles / storybook versions to chart similarities and differences in the telling of the story. Pupils can grade the versions on issues such as accessibility of language and comprehensiveness and discover whether there is a version of the Bible the class would prefer to use.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Websites &amp; Resources:</b> How the Bible came to us . Meryl Doney. Lion. 0856485748. See also “Diocese of Ely Religious Education Guidelines for Church Schools” which has a lot of Bible background information. The Hebrew Alphabet can be found online at <a href="http://www.hitchams.suffolk.sch.uk/synagogue/starter/hebrew.htm">http://www.hitchams.suffolk.sch.uk/synagogue/starter/hebrew.htm</a> there are also a lot of Greek alphabets on-line e.g. <a href="http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/005GreekScript/Alphabet.html">http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/005GreekScript/Alphabet.html</a> You can find the Old Testament in Hebrew at <a href="http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0.htm">http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0.htm</a> and the New Testament in Greek at <a href="http://www-users.cs.york.ac.uk/~fisher/gnt/">http://www-users.cs.york.ac.uk/~fisher/gnt/</a></p>		