

# Open the Book



What is it? It is an exciting project to enable and facilitate the telling of Bible stories in primary schools. The project initially started in the Bedford area but is now spreading to other towns in the country. Here in Derby, since 2000 the project has been developing and we now have many schools visited each week by an "Open the Book" team. The project provides a fantastic link between school and the local church, something which is vital if we are to reach children in our communities with the gospel. It has also shared the responsibility of school assemblies among the congregation and enabled many people who never thought they could do an assembly to be pleasantly surprised.

The stories are based on the Lion "Storytellers Bible" written by Bob Hartman, and used by permission. The stories are written for telling out loud and the project seeks to accompany them by the imaginative use of visual aids and simple drama. The 30 ten minute stories are in sequence giving "snapshots" of the Bible from Genesis to Acts.

The children are welcomed into the assembly by the "Open the Book" song which the children soon learn and join in with. The story presentation is followed by a short prayer and possibly another simple song.

The stories are delivered by a team of three people. Current teams consist of men and women of varying ages, many have never worked with children before, but have a desire to share the Bible stories with today's children. Sadly we have a generation of children who have not been read the Bible stories at home and do not go to a church to hear them. We have a responsibility to these children.

All volunteers are trained in use of props, storytelling technique, school protocol and in child protection. They are also asked to undertake to keep a set of guidelines. The time commitment needed by a team member is usually around 45 minutes each week, this allows for prayer before, actually rehearsing the story in the school and then presenting the story and packing away.

Initially there is a lot of work making costumes, painting props, etc but once the "kit" is ready the work runs smoothly as the props are passed from team to team.

Initially the project was offered to schools for a year, but it has proved so successful that many of the schools are still welcoming "Open the Book" teams each week as many as five years later.

Currently we have groups in Duffield, Belper, Breaston, Repton, Peak Forest, Alfreton, Ripley and Great Longstone. Ashbourne (churches together) and Longford considering the project. Perhaps this is a project that your deanery, or churches together could develop.

Over 4,000 children across our Diocese hear a Bible story delivered by an Open the Book team each week, that has to be good news.

The titles of the 30 stories covered during the year are:

From the Old Testament:

In the beginning

A sad day (Adam and Eve)

A special promise (Noah)

God's friend (Abraham)

Joseph the dreamer

Joseph the ruler

The secret baby (Moses)

The Great Escape (Exodus)

The fall of Jericho

Ruth

Samuel hears a voice

David the giant killer

Elijah and the widow

Helpful servant (Naaman)

Jonah the Groaner

Daniel and the Lions

A time to build. (Nehemiah)

From the New Testament

The first Christmas

Who is this Jesus?

The storm on the lake

The marvellous picnic

The Kind stranger

The big spender

Jesus and the children.

The great parade (Palm Sunday)

A dreadful day (Good Friday)

A happy day (Easter Sunday)

Goodbye at last (Ascension)

Pentecost

The early church.

## HEAD TEACHER COMMENTS

“Open the Book” assemblies are always an exciting blend of music and drama and something to think about. All our children have benefited from a wide range of Bible stories, brought to life in such an interesting way. (county head.)

“Open the Book” have been coming into our school for two years. I would recommend them to anyone, they are very sensitive in their approach, we always enjoy their assemblies. (county head)

## Head teacher comments continued.....

Staff and children look forward to the next story with eager anticipation. The quality and ingenuity of the props makes the whole experience something to be remembered. We have valued the links we have built through "open the book" with members of the congregation at our church. It is good for the children to welcome them into school and it is good for them to come into school themselves. (church school head)

### Code of Practice All storytellers agree:

1. To present the story simply ie to offer a Bible story and not a sermon!
2. To liaise closely with their allocated school, for example over timing.
3. To prepare these stories to the best of their ability.
4. To show respect and sensitivity to those of other faiths, and of none.

We would ask that volunteer storytellers are accompanied by the school's staff during all storytelling sessions.

More information please contact me Helen Proudfoot on 01332 388663 or email [helenproudfoot@ddb.org](mailto:helenproudfoot@ddb.org) or write to Church House, Full Street, Derby DE1 3DR.