

# Third Grade Bible Presentations: Preparing and the Ritual

The giving and receiving of the Third Grade Bible can be one of the most meaningful rituals of a child's life. However, for many 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, receiving it in front of the congregation can be stressful if they feel like everyone is watching them. By giving them their Bible and making it a "holy experience" helps them focus on what really matters (that this is the Word of God given to them as a precious gift) instead of focusing on who is watching them.

Here are the steps to creating a beautiful experience for the children and the congregation.

## 1) Preparing the Children

To help the children understand how ancient and precious the Bible is, the day before the Bible Presentations, create a "Journey through Time" and take the children on an historical journey of how the Bible we have today came to be. This is simple and should not cost you anything. Be creative and use materials you already have for the props. Before the children arrive place the props in many different locations so that, as they learn, they journey from station to station.

### **Create a "Journey through Time."**

#### **Introduction:**

Gather the children and say:

The Bible is very precious and has a very long history. We are going way, way, way back in time to discover where the Bible began. Follow me. (Walk to station one.)

#### **Station one: Oral Tradition**

**Prop:** A fire of some kind. You can use paper or an electric fire or whatever you want. Invite the children to sit in a circle around it.

**Say:** A long time ago, long before Jesus was even born, people used to sit around the fire and tell stories about God. There were no books, no paper and so telling the stories was very important. Many times they would sit outside in the evenings around a fire and tell stories. Parents would tell these stories to their children and when their children grew up they would tell it to their children. If these people had stopped telling the stories of God to each other, we would never have had the Bible. This is called oral tradition and this is how the Bible first began. (Walk to station two)

#### **Station Two: Engraving the Text**

**Prop:** A rock and chisel of some kind

**Say:** Once people learned to write, they still did not have paper to write stories on, so they would draw on stone or chisel stone and

write important things down. Let me show you... (demonstrate how difficult it would be to chisel rock). It was very difficult so they could not write down every word of every story but some things were chiseled in stone, like the Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses. So once people started to write important things, they chiseled rock. Some of our Bible was recorded and shared that way, but it was mostly shared as the people continued to tell stories. (Walk to station three.)

**Station Three: Written Word**

**Prop:** Scroll (You can make one out of old paper with burnt edges for effect)

**Say:** After a long time, and as the alphabet became better known, people used animal skin and then paper to write the Bible stories on. This is a scroll. And scrolls did not have pages. The entire Bible was written down on one long piece of paper or animal skin sewn together. Scrolls could be so big and so heavy that two people had to carry it. Jesus would have read from a scroll. He did not have books to read. (Walk to station four.)

**Station Four: Books are invented**

**Prop:** An empty journal, berries in a bowl, something to smash the berries with, and a long feather.

**Say:** As you can see a long time has passed on our journey through time. And finally the people began to start to write in books. But every word in the book had to be written by hand with a feather and ink that they made themselves.

(Crush the berries to create ink. Using the feather write in the book. Be sure to make a mistake and try to fix it.)

**Say:** It was very difficult to write the Bible stories and monks, holy people, used to spend their entire life copying one page of the Bible into another one so that others could read it. And if they made a mistake they had to start all over. It was hard work, but the Bible was so precious to them, they worked hard to pass it along. And, since it took such a long time to make a Bible, only churches could have them. Individual people did not have a Bible and could not read it at home. (Walk to station five.)

**Station Five: The printing press is invented**

**Prop:** An Old Bible

German Johannes Gutenberg, around 1440, invented something amazing. A printing press and on the printing press books could be copied much faster. Finally, people could have their own Bible and read it at home, at work and at school. (Walk to station six.)

**Station Six: Today**

**Prop:** Many different Bibles, adult, teen children versions & your phone or ipad or laptop with the Bible on it.

**Say:** And today, Bibles come with many different covers, but the stories inside are still the stories of God that were shared with others, beginning with the oral tradition, where stories were told around fires, and then chiseled on rock, then written on scrolls made of animal skins and paper, and then copied into books by hand and finally printed on the printing press. And now the Bible is even on my (Phone or whatever). The Bible is so precious that it has carefully been handed down for all these years... and now it is time for you to be given your very own Bible! I am not going to show it to you because I want you to be surprised when you receive it. But when you receive it, in a very holy ritual, I want you to know a little bit about the stories that will soon be read in your *very own Bible!*

The first part is the Older Testaments. These stories all happened before Jesus was born and there are so many great stories! Creation, David and Goliath, Noah's Ark, Moses and the Ten Commandments. I can't wait for you to get your Bible and read these stories. And guess what? Jesus read and heard the stories in the Older Testament when he was a little boy. He heard the story of David and when you read the story of David, you are reading the same story that Jesus did! When you read any of the stories in the first part of the Bible, the Older Testaments, you are learning the same stories that Jesus did.

The second part of the Bible begins here (show them) with Matthew. And in these books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we can read the wonderful stories about the life of Jesus! We can read about his birth, about his life and all the people he healed, forgave and taught. And we can read the sad part about his death on the cross and of course, we can read the happiest part, about his resurrection! You are going to love reading this part of your Bible!

And the last part of your Bible (show them), are the writings that happened after Jesus died and as the church began. These are the letters of some of Jesus' disciples and of Paul who shared the news about Jesus with so many people around the world!

Your Bible is the greatest gift I could ever give you and our church is so proud and happy to give you your *very own Bible!!!*

Let's go now and practice for the presentation. (Go into the sanctuary and rehearse for the presentation. Explain it first and then rehearse it two times so that they will be relaxed and ready.)

### **The Bible Presentation Ritual**

(To be done in front of the congregation, in the front of the church as near to the altar as possible.)

**Needed:** The Bibles to present to each child

A kneeler

**Introduction:** There are many gifts that our children will receive in their lives: toys, bicycles, books, computers, clothes, and candy. But there is no gift more precious than the gift our congregation is presenting them with today. The Holy Bible is the greatest gift because it is the word of God which guides us, gives us wisdom, inspires us, teaches us and leads us into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Children, today we are giving you the most precious you will ever receive: your very own Bible. As I call your name, please come forward and kneel.

(One at a time, read aloud each child's name. They will each kneel down facing you or your Sr. Pastor. As you or your pastor gives them their Bible, say: "This is the word of God. Read it, believe it and live it." Then have the children line up facing the congregation.

\*A way to share the presentation is for you to give them the Bible and then have the child carry it to the minister to be signed.

After each child has received their Bible, turn to the children and say, "This is the most precious gift you will ever be given. I pray that you will read it everyday." Then turn to the congregation and say, "And I pray that we, by being present today and witnessing the presentation of these Bibles are inspired to

recommit to reading our Bibles everyday. It is not only the most precious gift a child will ever receive, it is the most precious we have ever received. Children, thank you for reminding us how very special the Holy Bible truly is.”

Then, facing the congregation, lift the Bible and say: This is the word of God. Read it, believe it and live it!

