



## On your marks

2011 was the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Version of the Bible. Although there had been Bibles in English before this time, the appearance of the Authorised Version, as it is also known, was a landmark moment. The greater availability and accessibility of the Christian's special book had explosive consequences for individuals, the nation and the world. Now anyone could hear or read its stories for themselves and respond to its good news about God's love.

## Get set

The following idea is a way into exploring what sort of book the Bible is and could be used as the introduction to a short series with a children's group or as part of an all-age service that focuses on the Bible. This material would also work as an outline for Collective Worship in school, perhaps as part of a special series of assemblies to celebrate the Bible.

This idea is a part of a series of four. See also: [What's in the Bible? What's so special about the Bible? What's the story of the Bible?](#)

You will need: a collection of favourite books (your own and some that are popular with the children and adults with whom you are working); a Bible, hidden or out of sight somewhere until you need it.

## Go!

1. Have your nose buried in a book and appear so absorbed that you don't even notice your 'audience' for while!
2. Be surprised when you suddenly become aware of 'others' waiting for you to say something! Explain that you just couldn't put the book down - it is so exciting. Say a few things about the book and why you think it is so good.
3. Ask your group/congregation or the children in the assembly if they have any favourite books that they go back to again and again.
4. Many of us have favourite books. Sometimes they might be detective stories, adventure stories, thrillers, science fiction, tragedy, fantasy, romance or books of facts and figures. Take a quick vote as to the popularity of these different genres!
5. What usually grabs most of us is a good story! What has happened? What is going to happen? Who's done it? How will he or she get out of this? And so on.
6. Now just imagine if there were a book that were all those things rolled up into one - great story, touching romance, terrible tragedy, exciting thriller, murder mystery, science fiction, amazing facts. And a book that was also full of all those questions. What next? How is it all going to end? And even



who's done it?! Now that would be an incredible book!

7. Guess what - there is such a book. It's a bestseller; it's been around for centuries; there are billions of copies in circulation; it's available in many languages; there are people who read it religiously every day; but it's been around so long that many people have forgotten what a great read it is. Have you guessed what it is yet!? Take out a Bible from where it is 'hidden'. If you are in a school, perhaps it's been there all along on a focus table!

8. Christians believe that the Bible is the best book going! It's their favourite book and it's so full of stories that it's bursting with drama, adventure, mystery, tragedy, murder, facts and figures, romance and excitement. It's got almost 2000 years of stories in it - so you're never going to get bored with it. It's written by over 40 authors, so there's always a new take on things. And it's so full of questions and things to make you think that it will always keep you guessing!

9. I wonder how you decide on a new book to read? Maybe the cover? Or the recommendation of a friend? Or do you, like me, take a sneak preview? Do you read the first line... and maybe the last line or just dip into the middle and see if it grabs you?  
And if you do just that with the Bible, you'll soon find out why this is a Christian's favourite book. Let's try it.

10. Open up at the first line and read Genesis 1:1. Turn to the last line and read Revelation 22:21. Now go to the middle verse of the Bible, Psalm 118:8. Perhaps you can ask others in the group/congregation/assembly to read out these verses?

11. This book starts with God... it ends with Jesus... and it all revolves around who we put our trust in. It's about God, Jesus and having faith. That's the sort of big story it is and why so many people around the world - even today over two billion - still read or listen to its stories regularly.

12. These three verses are the clue to why it is so popular. 2011 is a special year because 400 years ago a version of this book first appeared in English that was readily available in the UK, and more people than ever before got hooked on reading this book. They just couldn't put it down!

13. I wonder what sort of stories could be so exciting? I wonder what sort of plot could keep people glued to its pages? I wonder what's in this Bible that makes it such a favourite book? Well, that's what we'll explore next!