

Bible Presentation and Celebration Ideas

For Children's Ministry

Congregations and formation leaders often gift children bibles and present them in worship. Sometimes Story Bibles are given at Baptism, or birth or adoptions. Then often bibles are presented to 3rd graders (or elementary age children) as they become more proficient readers. Some congregations follow with study bibles at Confirmation or for High School Graduation. Congregations are encouraged to be generous and offer bibles to anyone of these ages who is connected to the congregation in any way as a gift and not with any requirements attached to earn one.

There are many ways to enhance the presentation of Bibles as well as to make it part of the Worship liturgy. Below are some suggestions for presenting bibles to elementary age children.

Bible Presentation

The B-I-B-L-E Presentation

Today the Faith Formation committee is happy to present on behalf of this congregation, bibles to our Third Graders. _____ representing the children's committee and I are here to represent you, the congregation and the promises we made at baptism to help bring up children in the faith.

We place the Word of God in the hands of these beloved children of God. These gift bibles are the _____ Edition which include maps, stickers and helps specifically designed for children in Third Grade and older. The bibles include the children's names and have been provided by a contribution from the _____ Adult Sunday School Class. In addition, the bibles include a bookmark sharing favorite Bible verses of the Staff and your families. Please come forward as we call your names to receive your Bible from Pastor _____. (read names)

We hope you will take time each day to read and explore God's word to us which we find in the bible. This is another milestone in your journey of faith. The B-I-B-L-E that's the book for me!
(Close with a prayer)

Unwrapping the Bible – There are many options for this method of presentation.

- ❖ The Bible is wrapped in the following way (either each individual Bible or just one that is used as an example). Each layer is explained and then removed to reveal the next layer of paper.
 1. General gift-wrapping paper (outermost layer) - The Bible is a gift, like a present.
 2. Brown paper sack - The Bible is for everyone, including every day, ordinary people like you and me.
 3. Map (any roadmap) - The Bible can help show you the way and take you to many new and exciting places.
 4. Newspaper - The Bible is filled with good news.
 5. Gold paper (innermost layer) - The Bible is a treasure.
 6. *Also....* The gift-wrapped Bible can be placed in a large mailing envelope (or manila envelope) - This Bible comes as a special delivery from the congregation.

- ❖ Here are a couple of other options around wrapping bibles from Barbara Bruce in the book [Celebration of the Bible](#).
 - A. Wrap Bibles in three layers. First, wrap the Bible in gold paper to signify that it is a precious gift. Next, wrap the package in newspaper to signify that the Bible is a book about the good news of God interacting with God's people. The third (outer) layer is wrapped in gift wrapping paper and signifies that the Bible is a gift from this church family. Explain the significance as the child unwraps each layer. The gold paper is always the first layer on and the last layer to be unwrapped.
 - B. *OR* Wrap the Bible in maps (ask for donations), since the Bible is a map with directions of how we can live our lives.
 - C. *OR* Wrap the Bibles in large blueprint paper (ask for donations) since the Bible is a blueprint to follow for how we can live our lives.

Tell the Story of your/a Bible – Share as a part of the worship liturgy and presentation various bibles and their story. Bring your bible from elementary school to show and say when and where you received it. Hold up the Bible of an ancestor. This might be a large family bible or a tiny pocket bible from the 1800's your relatives traveled west with. Perhaps your congregation has bibles which originally were owned by church saints like Mission Co-workers or educators in the church archives or library you can hold up, showing their notes and underlines. Or ask everyone to bring their bible to worship the morning of presentations and share with a neighbor in the pew about it.

Personalizing - Ask the pastor and formation leaders to inscribe the bibles with a scripture citation and personal note to each child with the child's name and leader's signature and date. Or add a bible gift plate in the front of the bible with the congregation's name and date as well as child's name.

Bookmarks – Create a bookmark with the favorite bible verse of the pastor, educator/formation leader, children's music director, Sunday school teacher/s, and parent. Also include a space for the child to write a verse in. Place the bookmark in the Bible at one of the verses. Or make a bookmark with the Bible in 50 words found [here](#) and a logo for your church on the other side of the bookmark.

Highlights or Tabs – Ask parents or caregivers, pastor, formation leader, and Sunday School teacher to highlight or mark with a sticky tab important bible verses in each bible. Consider asking one of those people to actually read the verse as part of the presentation in worship.

Bible Buddies – Pair older members of the congregation with children, asking them if they would be willing to write a note to the child with their favorite bible verse which would be placed in the bibles. Then encourage them to pray for their child through the year and send them a birthday and Christmas card. Some churches ask bible buddies to help cover the cost of the bibles. In other congregations a specific adult Sunday School class contributes the funds for the bibles and is recognized as such when presentations are made.

Other Liturgy Suggestions –

- ❖ [Bible Presentation Liturgy](#) – Rev. Heather Prince Doss of Eliot Presbyterian Church, MA.
- ❖ [An Order for the Presentation of Bibles to Children](#) – UMC Discipleship Ministries
- ❖ [Presentation of Bible and Blessing Their Use](#) – Rev. Lisa Degrenia, UMC

TIP: Remember to take pictures of the children holding their bibles and with the formation leader and pastor or Bible buddies if they have one. Then present families with photos and share with the congregation or save to share when they graduate.

Educational opportunities to accompany bible presentation

One-time Class - for children and parents to help understand God's Big Story found in the bible and how they are a part of it. Parents and Caregivers can learn together with their children and become familiar with the contents and how to use it at home. Perhaps share a meal after the presentation and do it then.

Bible 101 - A mid-week or Sunday morning class for several weeks for elementary children followed by one session with parents and caregivers. [Learning to Use My Bible](#) from Abington/Cokesbury is one resource. Encourage children to write and draw in their bibles. Create memory games to learn the books of the bible or put them in order from index cards. Share one of the songs teaching the books of the bible.

Overnight Retreat - with children or families after they receive their bibles. This can be an opportunity to do become more familiar with the contents and how to use one's bible through scavenger hunts and activities. You can also decorate canvas tote bags to be used to carry one's bible or cloth bible covers or make beaded bible bookmarks.

[Getting to Know Your Bible](#) – From Building Faith, three classes perhaps during Advent. Includes a scavenger hunt, learnings about the Hebrew scripture, the New Testament and an opportunity to highlight their bibles.

[I Got a New Bible!!! Now What??](#) – playlist of activities from Michigan Conference, UMC including What's in my Bible? and videos with books of the Bible, What is the Bible?, What is a testament?, Tools to use your bible and so on. This link can be shared with families or used as content for one of the above gatherings.

BONUS TIP: Look for opportunities for children to read from their bibles throughout the year and encourage them. This could be in Sunday School, as a liturgist reading scripture in worship, for video recordings of scripture for online, at Vacation Bible School, at a retreat, or as part of an at home family spiritual practice.

Choosing Bibles

Besides planning how and what to do for the presentation of the bibles, one also needs to decide what bible to present and to which ages. [Choosing Bible Resources for Older Children](#) is a video with [Wondering Model for at Home PDF](#) from the [Opening Doors to Discipleship](#) Training Site. Elizabeth Caldwell shares ideas and makes suggestions of Bibles which are included in the list below. Note some are story bibles and some are interpretations of the complete text. Often story bibles are given to younger children and interpretations to readers.

Bible Suggestions:

- [Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible](#), Elizabeth Caldwell and Carol Wehrheim, Flyaway Books, 2018
- [Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook](#), Brittany Sky, Abingdon Press, 2020
- [Deep Blue Kids Bible](#), Common English Bible, Cokesbury, 2019
- [CEB Student Bible](#), Common English Bible, Cokesbury, 2015
- [The Peace Bible: A Storybook Bible](#), MennoMedia, 2023
- [Children of God Story Bible](#) – Bishop Desmond Tutu, Zondervan, 2010
- [Additional books of Bible Stories](#) – Flyaway Books
- [How to Choose a Children's Story Bible](#)

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