

THE BIBLE, OUR FOREVER BOOK

A Church Play for Children
by
Jewell Ellen Smith

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"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand forever."--Isaiah 40:8.

Time, Summer, during Vacation Bible School.

Place, a Church auditorium.

The Purpose, To show how we got our Bible.

The Theme, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The Bible, 66 books in one, is God's words to man, His rules for man, and a record of the coming of Jesus the Christ to reveal God's love for the whole world and His plan for man to receive eternal life.

Length of Play, about 12 to 15 minutes.

Number of Players: 24 (fewer if some youngsters want to take two parts. Girls may play roles of prophets, scribes, etc.)

Props and Furnishings:

A very large replica of the Holy Bible. (Use a cardboard box in which a bed mattress is shipped. Paint it black, with gold colored lettering. Have it so made that it looks like a book, with one edge open for the players to walk out.)

Large Replica of Ten Commandments tablets--with the commandments written thereon.

Several scrolls (use brown paper over large dowels. See Sunday School pictures for how these should look.)

A staff

A stool

A chain for the prisoner Paul

A short sword or dagger

One pulpit-sized Bible

23 average sized Bibles (each player can bring a Bible. Do not use small testaments.)

2 king's crowns--for Solomon and James I of England

Costumes: Two Narrators--modern style dresses. (not casual play suits)

Others--See Sunday School pictures, Bible story books (no bathrobes allowed.)

Characters (in the order of their appearance):

Sue, a narrator

Sally, a narrator

Old Testament Writers:

Aaron, brother of Moses

Moses, leader of The Children of Israel

Samuel, an Old Testament Judge

King Solomon, third king of Israel

(King Solomon's Servant)

Isaiah, a great Old Testament prophet

Jeremiah, the "weeping" Old Testament prophet

Micah, a minor Old Testament prophet

New Testament Writers:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, writers of the Four Gospels

(Roman Soldier, Paul's prison guard)

Paul, author of 13 Books in the New Testament

Those who made copies of the Bible:

A Scribe

A Translator

Jerome, the Latin translator

Luther, the German leader of the Protestant Reformation

Wycliffe, an English translator

Tyndale, an English translator of the New Testament

King James I of England

Gutenberg, the inventor of the printing press

Stage Setting: Replica of Bible should be on center stage and hidden by simple curtains which can be drawn back by narrators. Biblical characters, that is, Aaron down through Paul, are concealed behind Bible and will walk out of it. Other players are off stage. Sue and Sally come on stage together, open curtains. One stands on one side of Bible, the other on the other side

DIALOGUE

SUE: *distinctly, to audience* We are spokesmen for the _____ and _____ grade students of Vacation Bible School. We will present a skit called: **THE BIBLE, OUR FOREVER BOOK.**

SALLY: The purpose of the little play is to show how we got our Holy Bible.

SUE. The Bible is God's Word. It is 66 books, in one. God inspired many different people to write His Word.

SALLY: A few of these writers of long ago will now step out of the pages of the

Bible and tell us what God told them to write.

Sue and Sally step aside, remain on stage in background.

Aaron walks out of the Bible, looking for and calling Moses.

AARON: *calling loudly* Moses! Moses! Where are you? Moses! That brother of mine has been gone for forty days and forty nights! He's supposed to be leading us to the Promised Land! Moses! *paces back and forth*

Moses hurries out of Bible, carrying Ten Commandment tablets.

MOSES: Here I am, Aaron. Why are you so worried?

AARON: Moses, where have you been? You're our leader! And we haven't seen you in forty days and forty nights. The people say you'll never get us to the Promised Land, at this rate! *Aaron notices the tablets* What's that you've got there? *points to tablets*

MOSES: Oh, Aaron, the most wonderful thing happened! I went up on Mount Sinai, and God gave me these Ten Commandments!

AARON: Commandments?

MOSES: They are God's laws for man. We are to keep the commandments, always.

AARON: That's good. Now we'll know how to live. Let me see what these commandments say! *starts reading as Moses sets tablets down at such an angle that the audience can see the hand-lettered commandments*

First, Thou shalt worship God only.

Second, Thou shalt not make idols to worship.

Third, Do not speak the name of the Lord thy God in a vain way.

Fourth, Remember to keep the Sabbath day a holy day for God. Do your work on the six other days of the week.

Fifth, Honor your father and your mother.

Sixth, Thou shalt not kill.

Seventh, Thou shalt not break your wedding vows.

Eighth, Thou shalt not steal.

Ninth, Thou shalt not lie.

Tenth, Thou shalt not covet the things that belong to your neighbor.

MOSES: You know, Aaron, God has been so good to us, that I think I should write down the things He has done--including these laws. Yes, I'm going to make a written record. I will start it off this way, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...."

While Moses is still talking, he and Aaron walk off stage.

Samuel, a very old man with a staff, comes out of the Bible.

SAMUEL: I am Samuel, the last of the Judges God chose for the people of Israel. God first spoke to me when I was a little boy, at our temple. Two of the Books

in the Old Testament bear my name. God told me to warn the people that they must Worship God and serve him faithfully with all their hearts.

Samuel goes off stage.

King Solomon comes out of Bible replica, carrying a scroll. His Servant follows him, carrying a stool.

SERVANT: King Solomon?

SOLOMON: *turning around* Yes?

SERVANT: King Solomon, you said you wanted this stool. Are you going to sit on it?

SOLOMON: Of course! What else do you do with a stool besides sit on it! Put it right here.

Servant places stool in front of Solomon. He sits down.

I want to do some serious thinking--and writing--and I can't think very well when I'm sitting up high on my golden throne.

SERVANT: What are you going to write?

SOLOMON: A new poem about God. I've written one long, long poem called "The Song of Solomon." And I've written a book called "Ecclesiastes." I'd like to write a new song, or psalm, as we call them. I want it to be as fine as this one my father, King David, wrote. *holds up scroll*

SERVANT. What does King David's song say?

SOLOMON: *unrolls scroll* It says this. *reads entire 23rd Psalm*

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

SERVANT: *much impressed* Oh, King Solomon! Nobody could write another psalm as pretty as that! Not even you--the wisest man who ever lived!

SOLOMON: *gives a big sigh.* You're right. *pauses* I know what I'll do! I'll write down all the wise sayings I know! *gets up* Yes! That's what I'll do. I'll call it "The Book of Proverbs."

Go tell all my scribes to report to me, on the double! We'll get started, right away! *Strides off stage.*

SERVANT: *with enthusiasm* Yes, Sir! *picks up stool and follows Solomon off*

stage.

Three Old Testament prophets, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Micah, come out of Bible together.

ISAIAH: We three are Old Testament prophets of the Lord. My name is Isaiah. God told me to foretell the coming of Jesus the Messiah. God first spoke to me one day when I was standing in the temple. I saw a vision of God, and after that I obeyed God and wrote down the things he told me to say.

JEREMIAH: I am Jeremiah, known long ago as "the weeping prophet." This was because the people of my time would not listen to God's words, and this made me sad. I wrote two books for God. My book of poems is called "Lamentations."

MICAH: I am Micah, just a little prophet who wrote a little book. But, I foretold a wonderful thing which God revealed to me. I wrote that the Messiah, the Great King, would be born in Bethlehem.

ISAIAH The Lord our God called many prophets--great and small--and they wrote many books for God's Holy Book. Once, God told me to write these words, and I did.

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

Three Prophets go off stage.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John come out and stand side by side.

MATTHEW: God's sacred book is divided into two parts called "The Old Testament" and "The New Testament." The old part was written before Jesus came, the new part after he came.

We four men wrote the first four books in the New Testament. I wrote the first one. It is known as "The Gospel According to Matthew."

MARK: I am Mark. The word "Gospel" means "good news." I wrote the good news of the coming of Jesus of Nazareth. I told of his miracles, his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his ascension into heaven.

LUKE: I am Luke, a physician. I, too, wrote a book, a gospel, about Jesus. And I wrote another book called "Acts." It tells how the followers of Jesus began to travel and to tell the whole world about Jesus. We began to spread the "good news" everywhere.

JOHN: I am the apostle John. I wrote the Gospel of John so that all people will believe that Jesus is the Christ. Because, those who believe in Jesus will have eternal life. I also wrote the last book in the Bible, called "The Revelation."

MATTHEW: John, tell us, what do you think is the most important thing you ever wrote?

JOHN: The most important? It is what Jesus himself told us one day. These are his words: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." *John 3:16*
Four go off stage.

Roman Soldier and Paul come out. Soldier holds dagger in one hand, the chain fastened to Paul's ankles in the other. Paul, old and stooped, drags his feet. He carries a scroll.

SOLDIER: Paul of Tarsus, I'll never understand you! I can't understand any of you Christians! You've been in prison for years, and I've been your guard for years, and I still don't understand you.

PAUL: Yes, I'm your prisoner here in Rome. I am also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I have fought a good fight, and I have kept the Faith.

SOLDIER: All you do is write letters, and write letters, and write more letters. I'll bet a month's pay that you are fixing to write some more, this very morning!

PAUL: You are right. I must write another letter. I must encourage the Christians in all the churches I've helped to organize--
 The Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, and all the others.
 The letter I write today will be my 13th letter. I will soon be put to death, but my letters will remain.

Come, let me get my ink and pen.

Paul and Soldier leave stage.

Sue and Sally come back to their places beside Bible replica.

SUE: After the Bible was written, it had to be copied many times. And it had to be translated into many different languages.

SALLY: Now, some of the writers and translators and other people who helped to make copies of the Bible will tell us what they did.

Sue and Sally move over to end of stage.

Enter Scribe, Translator, Jerome, Luther, Wycliffe, Tyndale. Also, King James I and Gutenberg.

SCRIBE: *holds a scroll* I am a scribe, a man who could read and write in Biblical times. I--and hundreds of other scribes like me--made hand-written copies of the books of the Bible like this. *holds up scroll*

TRANSLATOR: I am a translator. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. Once seventy-two men from Jerusalem translated the Books of the Law from Hebrew to Greek in seventy-two days.

JEROME: *holds scroll* I am Jerome, the Latin scholar. I translated a copy of the Bible into Latin. This was in the Fourth Century AD. It was called the Vulgate.

LUTHER: I am the famous German churchman Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation. God showed me that I should translate His Book into a language the German people could read. So, I re-wrote the Latin into German. This was in the 1500's.

WYCLIFFE: *holds scroll.* I am John Wycliffe. The English people needed to have the Holy Bible in English. So I translated the first copy for them--more than one hundred years before Columbus discovered America.

TYNDALE: *holds scroll* I am William Tyndale. Fifty years after Mr. Wycliffe made his translation, I made an English translation of the New Testament.

KING JAMES: I'm one of the old kings of England, called James the First. I lived from 1566 to 1625. One of the most important things I ever did was to authorize a new translation of God's Word. It is known as "The King James Version of the Holy Bible." And it is also known as the most beautiful book ever written.

GUTENBERG: *holding a very large Bible* I am the German inventor named Gutenberg. I invented the movable type that led to the printing press. Can you guess what the first book I printed was? It was the Bible!

It took five years to print that Bible, because each letter had to be set by hand. That was between the years 1450 and 1455.

After that, copies of the Bible could be made for all the world.

All Biblical characters return to stage and stand in a cluster on one side of the Bible replica, while the translators and their group assemble in a cluster on the other side. This, so that the audience can see the Bible replica plainly. Now, each player should be holding a modern copy of the Bible.

SUE: *to persons on stage* Fellow Classmates, each of us now holds a copy of the Bible in our hands. What more can we say of this book? *holds up her copy of Bible*

SALLY: We can tell how long it will last!

ALL OTHERS: *with enthusiasm* Yes! It will last forever! *hold Bibles high*

SUE: Forever?

All players open their Bibles toward audience.

ALL OTHERS: *in unison* Yes! "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever!"

THE END

Curtain. If there is no curtain, players simply walk off stage.

--Jewell Ellen Smith, May 28, 1984

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