

# “The Word of God”

by Rev. Dr. Stephen F. Noll

The conviction that the Bible is the inspired Word of God is a central belief held by Christians throughout the ages. The Catechism teaches that we call the Scriptures the Word of God “because God inspired their human authors and because God still speaks to us through the Bible.” (1979 Book of Common Prayer).

## The Old Testament: God’s Word to Israel

Christians believe that the Old Testament is as much God’s Word as the New. But the Old Testament is quite different from the New in that it is addressed to the people of Israel from ca. 2000-200 B.C. Anglican worship services usually include separate Old and New Testament readings. The Old Testament contains a wide variety of writings:

Spring 2023

### IN THIS EDITION

this quarter explores

### WORD OF GOD

Passing the Torch—  
Family Edition:  
Family  
Bible Night

Coming Up on the  
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Lighting the Lamp:  
Anglican Activities  
for Toddlers and  
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Lighting the Lamp:  
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Anglican Activities  
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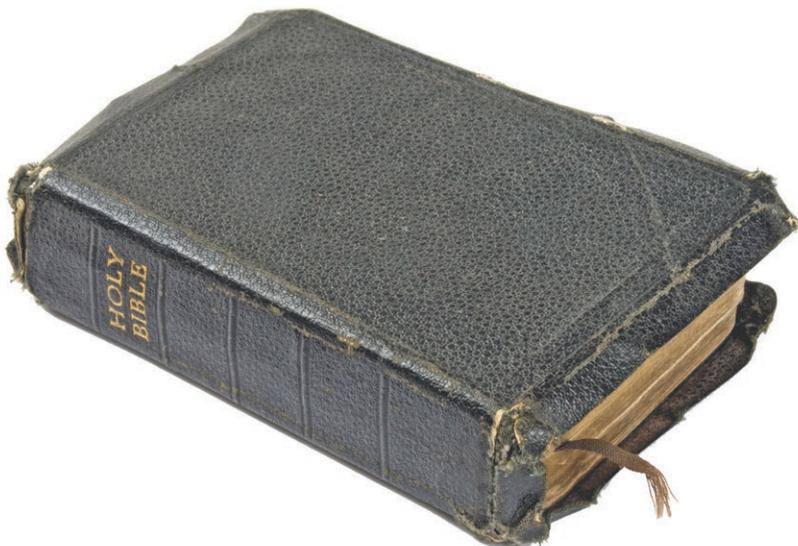


- The Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), in which God chooses, saves, and establishes His covenant with Israel, the children of Abraham.
- The Historical Books, which recount the repeated failure of Israel to keep the covenant and God’s gracious provision of kingship through David’s lineage.
- The Prophets, who speak of God’s coming day of judgment and salvation.
- The Wisdom Books and the Psalms, which are Israel’s proverbs for good living, and its prayers and praises for communion with God.

## The New Testament: God’s Word Made Flesh in Jesus

God’s Word in the Old Testament prepared the way for His Son. The Old Testament establishes the truth that the Lord is the one God, Creator of heaven and earth; the New Testament reveals the fullness of this God: the Father, who sent His Son into the world to redeem us, and who sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts to bring us to Himself (Gal. 4:4-6). The New Testament also contains a variety of writings:

- The Gospels are “theological biographies” of Jesus, telling the story of His birth, ministry, suffering, death (“passion”), and resurrection.
- The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of how the Holy Spirit guided the church to preach the Gospel from Jerusalem, the center of Judaism, to Rome, the center of the Gentile world.
- The Epistles show in various ways what it means for Christians to “live by faith” in the context of the Church as Christ’s Body.
- The Book of Revelation is a vision of Christ’s Second Coming and of the Church’s patient endurance and witness in a hostile world until He comes.



### FEEDING ON THE WORD OF GOD

- Archbishop Thomas Cranmer’s collect (printed below) specified several ways we are to feed on God’s Word. Pray it as you read God’s Word.
- **READ THE BIBLE.** Spend time reading through the entire Bible. You can follow the “Daily Office Lectionary (*The Book of Common Prayer* [1979]) or some other plan.
- **STUDY THE BIBLE.** Try reading commentaries or study guides that explain and relate different parts of the Old and New Testaments.
- **LEARN THE BIBLE BY HEART.** Memorize key passages and verses. What are some ways you can help your students with this?
- **MEDITATE ON THE BIBLE** and apply it to your life. As you spend time in God’s Word, ask His Spirit to nourish your life with it.

### ARCHBISHOP CRANMER’S COLLECT:

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

–Archbishop Thomas Cranmer  
(*The Book of Common Prayer* [1979])

# Coming Up on the Church Calendar

Throughout history, Christians have followed the church calendar to remember the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the beginnings of the Church. Consult *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979) for more information. Here are a few events that occur this quarter:

**The Annunciation (March 25)** – celebrates when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be Jesus’ mother. Luke 1:26-38 recounts Mary’s willingness to serve. As an unmarried woman in a culture that emphasized honor, Mary’s “Yes” to God risked everything. Traditional color used in churches is white for purity.

**Palm Sunday (April 2)** – Christians begin to relive Holy Week. In church, palms are handed out to wave like the crowd greeted Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem. The service also includes a Gospel account of the crucifixion. Traditional color used in churches is purple for royalty or repentance.

**Maundy Thursday (April 6)** – Christians remember the Last Supper where Jesus instituted the Eucharist as a sacrament. The word Maundy refers to commandments, and thus Christians observe not only the command to celebrate Communion, but to love one another by serving each other. Maundy Thursday services may include members washing each other’s feet to follow Jesus’ example in John 13. Traditional color used in churches is red for the blood of Christ.

**Good Friday (April 7)** – is when Christians remember Jesus’ death on the cross. This day is called “Good” because if He did not die for the sins of the world, all humanity would be lost. On the cross, Jesus achieved victory over sin. Good Friday is a “Fast Day”—to somberly reflect on our own sins for which Jesus died. Traditional colors used in churches are red for the blood of Christ or black for death.

**Easter (April 9)** – is the biggest celebration in the Christian year. The Resurrection is a core Christian belief. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, our faith would be in vain. (See 1 Cor. 15:12-18.) The Resurrection is a historic event that demonstrates God’s power. Traditional colors used in churches are white or gold for celebration.

**Good Shepherd Sunday (April 30)** – is the informal name for the fourth Sunday of Easter because the Scripture readings feature John 10 where Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd. Traditional color used in churches throughout Easter is white for celebration.

**Pentecost (May 28)** – celebrates the Holy Spirit coming to Jesus’ followers as described in Acts 2:1-4. The Holy Spirit helps Christians understand the Word. In addition, the Holy Spirit produces fruit in Christians’ lives (Gal. 5:22). Without the help of the Holy Spirit, serving God is impossible. The traditional color used in churches for the Holy Spirit is red.



# Passing the Torch— Family Edition

## Celebrate with Family Bible Nights

As Sunday school emphasizes the Bible this quarter, spend time discovering God's Word in your family. Take some time each week (or every other week) to create a family tradition. Spending time in God's Word together can draw your family closer to God and each other. Here are a few ideas to help you get started:

### GET IT ON THE CALENDAR:

Put your Family Bible Night on the calendar. Be flexible in adjusting the time if need be.

### CREATE A PLAN:

How is the evening going to work? You might want to have a favorite dinner to start the evening's fun. Or you may want to have a snack at the end of your Bible time. Based on the ages of your family members, determine how long you want your activity to last.

### CHOOSE A LEADER FOR THE WEEK:

Let each family member take a turn leading the night—even a preschooler. The leader should choose a favorite Bible story or passage, or the Gospel lesson from Sunday's worship, and then decide how to explore it. If a young child is the leader, help him or her prepare by reading the story several times during the week and talking about it. Maybe a family acts out Jesus calling the disciples from Luke 5 with the couch as a boat and a towel as a net. Another week could be a movie night to watch a video of a Bible story and then compare it with the passage in the Bible that the movie covers. Be creative! Have fun!

### Resources to Get You Started –

Be sure to have a variety of Bibles available for your family. If you have preschool or early elementary children, you may want to have a Bible storybook. Use this to help young children prepare for the night they are leading. Once children are in second or third grade, they will want to have their own Bible to use. Check out your local Christian bookstore or Amazon.com for age-appropriate Bibles for your family.



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# Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Toddlers In Your Toddler/2 Classroom



Lighting the Lamp

## March Activities

**Materials:** One copy per child of the Bible coloring project on page 13 of this supplement, crayons

■ Show the Bible coloring page. **This picture can help us think of the Bible. The Bible is God's Word. The Bible tells us how God made the world. The Bible tells about Jesus.** Let the toddlers color the Bibles. As the children work, talk together about what the Bible tells us.

**Materials:** Coloring utensils, glue sticks, construction paper cut-outs for each child—one small circle (head), one triangle (body), one larger white circle, "speech bubble" shape with "Do Not Be Afraid" written on it.

■ **Annunciation (March 25; use on March 19) An angel spoke to Mary and told her not to be afraid. God was giving her a baby. Mary said "yes" to God. Her baby was Jesus. We are going to make angels to remind us that God says not to be afraid.** Help the children glue the small circle to one point of the triangle. Fold the large circle in half and glue it to the back of the triangle for wings. Glue the speech bubble to the head. Let the children decorate their angels.

## April Activities

■ As you read the Bible story to the children, give them actions to do. Before the story starts, pick specific words/actions within the story to have the children act upon, and tell them what the words are. The actions provided with the Bible story in your teacher's guide work well for this.

**Materials:** 2 x 5 inch pieces of tissue paper or crepe paper streamers in spring colors cut into the shape of wings using the pattern on page 12 (4-5 per child), 1 chenille stem per child

■ **Easter (April 9) At Easter we remember that Jesus died, but came to life again. The butterfly helps us remember that Jesus died and rose again.** Help your toddlers create a butterfly bracelet. Let each child choose 4-5 papers for a butterfly. Help each child stack the papers. Lay the middle of a chenille stem on top of the middle of the stack of papers. Twist the chenille stem around the papers to create the butterfly, then twist the ends of the stem together to create the bracelet. Trim the chenille stems to fit a child's wrist.



## April and May Activities

■ **Good Shepherd Sunday (April 30) Set out several stuffed animal sheep. Psalm 23 is a special prayer song from the Bible. It tells us that God is our Shepherd.** Let the children play with the sheep. If your toddlers have good verbal skills, help them learn the Bible verse, [Jesus said], "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11).

■ Create a Bible center with Bible storybooks. Have a helper there to read Bible stories to the children and talk about how the stories are from God because the Bible is God's Word. Repeat the activity throughout the month of May.

Reproduce and send home *Passing the Torch—Family Edition* (Page 4 of this supplement).

# Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Preschool-Aged Students In Your Preschool Classroom



Lighting the Lamp

## March Activities

**Materials:** Coloring utensils, glue sticks, construction paper cut-outs for each child—one small circle (head), one triangle (body), one larger white circle, “speech bubble” shape with “Do Not Be Afraid” written on it.

■ **Annunciation (March 25; use on March 19) An angel spoke to Mary and told her not to be afraid. God was giving her a baby. Mary said “yes” to God. Her baby was Jesus. We are going to make angels to remind us that God says not to be afraid.** Help the children glue the small circle to one point of the triangle. Fold the large circle in half and glue it to the back of the triangle for wings. Glue the speech bubble to the head. Let the children decorate their angels.

**Materials:** 1 piece of paper per child per week, coloring utensils, three-hole punch, string cut into 1-inch lengths (3 per child) (All quarter)

■ Create picture books in your preschool classroom throughout the quarter. At the end of each lesson’s Bible story, talk about what the Bible tells of what God did or who Jesus is. Have each child draw a simple picture to show what they learned. Write what they learned as a sentence on the paper. Use the three-hole punch and the string to put the pictures together into a book.

## April Activities

**Materials:** One copy per child of page 13 of this supplement, white crayons, watercolor paints, cups with water, paint shirts

■ Use a white crayon to color a cross on each Bible. Show the Bible coloring page. **This picture can help us think of the Bible. The Bible is God’s Word. The Bible tells us how God made the world. The Bible tells about Jesus.** Have preschoolers paint their papers with watercolors. The wax cross will resist the paint so the cross will “appear” on the Bible. As the children work, talk about what the Bible tells us.

**Materials:** 2 x 4 inch pieces of tissue paper or crepe paper streamers in spring colors cut using the pattern on page 12 (4-5 per child), 2 chenille stems per child cut into 4-inch lengths

■ **Easter (April 9) At Easter, butterflies can help us remember that Jesus died.** Help your preschoolers create butterfly rings. Let each child choose 4-5 papers for a butterfly, then stack the papers. Have the child lay a chenille stem on top of the middle of the stack of papers. Twist another chenille stem around the papers and chenille piece to create a butterfly. Shape and trim the ends of the stem together to form a ring. Children can fold the straight chenille stem for antennae.



## April and May Activities

■ **Good Shepherd Sunday (April 30) Create a worship activity this week. Set several stuffed sheep around the room. Psalm 23 is a special prayer song from the Bible. It tells us that God is our Shepherd.** Let the children play with the sheep and take care of them as if they were shepherds. Gather the children together and talk about how they took care of the sheep. Deepen the discussion by asking, “**How does Jesus take care of you?**” Help your preschoolers learn the Bible verse [Jesus said], “I am the Good Shepherd” (John 10:11).

■ As you read the Bible story to the children, give them actions to do. Before the story starts, pick specific words/ actions within the story to have the children act upon, and tell them what the words are. For example, with a story in 2 Samuel 6 when King David celebrates bringing the Ark into Jerusalem, you might tell the children, “When I read the word *dance*, get up and dance, and when I read the word *rejoice*, yell the word ‘hooray!’” Repeat the activity throughout the month of May.

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# Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Elementary-Aged Students In Your Early Elementary Classroom



Lighting the Lamp

## March Activities

■ Place a colored bookmark in the Table of Contents of the Bible you use when telling the Bible story. Each week, write out the Bible reference for the day's story as well as the reference of the unit memory verse. Write out the book of the Bible instead of abbreviating it to help children match the names in the Table of Contents with the name on your paper. Encourage a couple of children each week to find the Bible story and the memory verse in the Bible. Be sure to offer bookmarks so that a child can mark the pages. Putting up the Bible timeline found with the downloadable visual resources included in your *Creative Teaching Aids* packet might also be helpful.

**Materials:** Small rocks, blank labels, pencils

■ **We are in the season of Lent. During Lent we remember that Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. The devil tempted Jesus to not obey the Father. The desert is full of barren rocks.** At the beginning of your class time each week, ask children to think about the wrong things they are tempted to do. Have them write or draw a temptation on a label and put the label on a rock. Pile the rocks in an area of your classroom. Spend time talking about asking Jesus for help in times of temptation.

## April and May Activities

■ Collect a box of Bible-time props. Things like towels and ties work for making headdresses. Old adult-sized shirts can be cut down to make tunics. After you finish telling the story, have the children use the props and costumes to retell it.

**Materials:** One copy per child of the Bible coloring project on page 13 of this supplement, white crayons, watercolor paints, cups with water, paint shirts

■ Show the Bible coloring page. **This picture can help us think of the Bible. The Bible is God's Word. The Bible tells us how God made the world. The Bible tells about Jesus.** Have children use a white crayon to color a cross on their Bible. Let them lightly paint with watercolor on their papers. The wax of the crayon cross will not absorb the paint so the cross will "appear" on the Bible. As the children work, talk together about what the Bible tells us.

**Materials:** White taper candle for each child, Easter and cross stickers, white glue, paint brushes

■ **Easter (April 9) is a day for joy! Jesus died but rose again! Jesus is stronger than death. In church, there may be a large candle burning. It reminds us that Jesus is the light and has overcome the darkness of the world.** Give each child a candle and several stickers. Let the children decorate the candles with the stickers. To keep the stickers on the candles, let the children lightly brush over the stickers with glue. Encourage the children to have their families use the candles as part of their Easter celebrations.

■ **(April 30) This day is nicknamed "Good Shepherd Sunday" because of the reading from John 10.** As part of a worship time in class, read John 10:1-16. Use small manipulatives for a tiny scene. After laying down a towel as a field, create a circle with interlocking blocks or rocks with an opening. Using cotton balls for sheep and an action figure as a shepherd, let the children move the figures to act out the verses about the Good Shepherd as you read it one more time. **Why is Jesus our Good Shepherd?**

# Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Elementary-Aged Students In Your Elementary Classroom



Lighting the Lamp

## March Activities

■ Use a song tune to help children learn the books of the Bible. A familiar tune for the books of the Old Testament is the Irish folk song "Michael Finnegan." There are also several different songs that can be found on YouTube. The Bible Overview Chart found in your *Creative Teaching Aids* packet would be helpful as you work on learning the song.

**Materials:** Small rocks, blank labels, pencils

■ **We are in the season of Lent. During Lent we remember that Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. The devil tempted Jesus to not obey the Father. The desert is full of barren rocks.** At the beginning of your class time each week, ask children to think about the wrong things they are tempted to do. Have them write or draw a temptation on a label and put the label on a rock. Pile the rocks in an area of your classroom. Spend time talking about asking Jesus for help in times of temptation.

## April Activities

**Materials:** Blank paper, coloring utensils

■ On **Easter (April 9) we celebrate that Jesus conquered death when He rose from the dead.** Read Luke 24:1-8 together as a class. Let the children create eight-frame comic strips showing the events of the passage and how Jesus gained victory over both sin and death.

## April and May Activities

**Materials:** Bibles, service bulletins, and highlighters.

■ **Every Sunday in church, parts of the Bible are read to teach us God's Word. Usually we hear an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, a New Testament reading, and a reading from a Gospel. The Gospels tell us about events when Jesus was on earth.** Give each child a bulletin. Working together, find and highlight the Scripture readings and where they occur in the service. Help your students find the passages in the Bibles. Talk together about the following questions: **Why is it important to read the Bible in church? Why do you think we read different parts?**

**Materials:** A 1 x 6 inch slip of paper for each child, writing utensils, craft eyes, cotton balls, glue

■ **April 30 is Good Shepherd Sunday. Psalm 23 is a special prayer song from the Bible. It tells us that God is our Shepherd.** Read Psalm 23 aloud from your classroom Bible. As a class, create a list of all the ways a shepherd takes care of sheep. Extend the discussion by drawing parallels to how Jesus takes care of us. Give each child a slip of paper. After the children have written on the strips of paper about one way Jesus takes care of them, have them glue a cotton ball onto one end of the strip. Then have them glue eyes onto the cotton balls to make sheep. Use this as a Good Shepherd bookmark.

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## HERO FOR CHRIST

(use on March 19)



painting by H.W. Pickersgill

### Hannah More

#### WHERE SHE LIVED:

1745-1833 in England

#### WHAT SHE DID:

Hannah More was a famous author in her time. When she visited the local church she found only one Bible; it was propping up a flower pot. She decided to help the children learn to read the Bible. Hannah and her sisters started over a dozen schools for children whose parents couldn't pay for them to learn how to read the Bible. Hannah served Jesus by helping children learn to read the Bible so they could come to know Jesus, too.

### HERO FOR CHRIST: ACTIVITY

Give each child a note card. **How did Hannah More serve Jesus? Write a prayer on your card asking Jesus to show you what He wants you to do for Him. On the other side draw a picture of how you can serve Jesus.**

# Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Elementary-Aged Students In Your Upper Elementary Classroom



Lighting the Lamp

## March Activities

■ Encourage students to bring their own Bibles to Sunday school each week. Before beginning each lesson, give students time to find and mark the Bible passages they will study in their Bibles. Construction paper strips work well as bookmarks. The first week, have each student put a colored bookmark in the Table of Contents to help them find the passages easily. Ask the children to read the passages used in the study directly from their Bibles. Encourage students to mark passages they find meaningful to them in their personal Bibles.

## April Activities

**Materials:** Bibles, service bulletins, and highlighters

■ **Every Sunday in church, parts of the Bible are read to teach us God's Word. Usually we hear an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, a New Testament reading, and a reading from a Gospel. The Gospels tell us about events when Jesus was on earth.** Give each child a bulletin. Working together, find and highlight the Scripture readings and where they occur in the service. Help your students find the passages in the Bibles. Talk together about the following questions: **Why is it important to read the Bible in church? Why do you think we read different parts?**

**Materials:** Blank paper, coloring utensils

■ **On Easter (April 9) we celebrate that Jesus conquered death when He rose from the dead.** Read Luke 24:1-8 together as a class. Let the children create eight-frame comic strips showing the events of the passage and how Jesus gained victory over both sin and death.

## April and May Activities

■ (April 30) **This day is nicknamed "Good Shepherd Sunday" because of the reading from John 10.** As part of a worship time in class, read John 10:1-16 together. Make a list of characteristics of a shepherd. Then create another list of qualities sheep have. Divide the class into groups. Have each group discuss how we are like sheep. Then have them spend time talking about how Jesus is our Good Shepherd. Gather the groups together and close with a prayer.

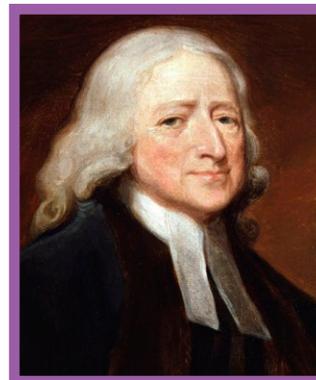
■ Each week, pick a verse from the lesson that you or the students find encouraging. Challenge the students to memorize this verse each week.

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## HERO FOR CHRIST

(use on March 5)



By George Romney

### John Wesley

**WHEN HE LIVED:** 1703-1791 in England

**WHAT HE DID:** John Wesley, a clergyman for the Church of England, traveled to Savannah, Georgia as a missionary. John knew a lot about God, but didn't know how to trust Him. On the way, his ship was in a bad storm. Some German Christians traveling with him showed John how to trust in Christ, not himself. After returning to England, John began to preach that Jesus takes away sin. He even preached in fields where poor people could come hear him. He and his brother started Methodist societies, where people could learn about Jesus.

### Hero for Christ: Activity

**John Wesley wrote about coming to know Jesus: "I felt my heart strangely warned. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation." Take an index card. Write a list of the things for which you really trust Christ alone.**

# Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Youth

## In Your Middle School Classroom



Lighting the Lamp

### March Activities

■ **Lent began on Ash Wednesday, February 22, and lasts for 40 days plus Sundays. Christians remember Jesus' time in the desert.** Share what the desert is like in Israel—desolate and lonely. (You have permission to print and display the picture on page 14.) Spend class time during Lent for partners to discuss times when they feel desolate and lonely. **When are you tempted?** Encourage students to share Scripture verses that give them strength.

■ **The Annunciation, March 25, is when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be Jesus' mother.** On March 19, have students read Luke 1:26-38. As an unmarried woman (not much older than they are now) in a culture that emphasized honor, Mary's "Yes" to God risked everything.

Talk about: **What risks did Mary take in obeying God? When you are in a risky situation, what Bible verses do you find encouraging?**

### April Activities

■ **Easter is April 9. The Resurrection is a core Christian belief. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, our faith would be in vain.** Spend time exploring what Scripture has to say about Easter. Divide into four groups. Have each group look up the Easter account in a different Gospel. Work together to create a chart showing the similarities and differences in the accounts.

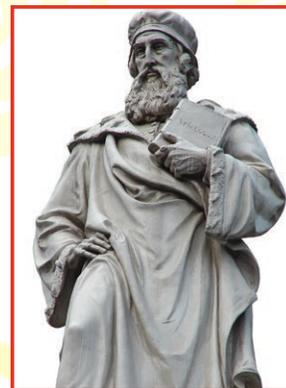
### April and May Activities

**Good Shepherd Sunday (April 30) is the informal name for the Fourth Sunday of Easter. The Scripture readings feature John 10 where Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd.** As a worship activity this day, read through John 10. Discuss how we can "follow him because we know his voice" (John 10:4). Close your worship time with the Collect for the day.

■ Ask students to come up with two or three "life verses" and MEMORIZE them. "Life verses" are verses that especially encourage a person. Keep a running list in your classroom of these verses as a share-point for the class.

### BACK IN TIME

(use on March 19)



### John Wycliffe

**WHEN HE LIVED:** c1330–1384

John Wycliffe was a leading scholar of his day at Oxford. He advocated that the Bible should be in the language of the people rather than in Latin as only the wealthy and well educated understood Latin. Under his supervision, the first English Bible was produced. Wycliffe also commissioned "poor preachers" to teach the Scriptures to people who had not heard them before.

### Back in Time Discussion:

Show the class copies of John 3:16 in various languages (you can print these from websites like BibleGateway.com). Be sure to include Latin as well as languages the teens might take in school. Then discuss: **What difficulties would you have in reading the Bible in another language? Why is it important to have the Bible available in our own language?**

# Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Youth In Your High School Classroom



Lighting the Lamp

## March Activities

■ **Lent began on Ash Wednesday, February 22, and lasts for 40 days plus Sundays. Christians observe the 40 days to remember Jesus' time in the desert.** Share what the desert is like in Israel—desolate and lonely. (You have permission to print and display the picture of the desert in Israel on page 14.) Spend class time during Lent for partners to talk about times in their lives when they feel desolate and lonely. **When are you tempted?** Encourage students to share Scripture verses that give them strength.

■ **The Annunciation, March 25, is when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be Jesus' mother.** On March 19, have your students read Luke 1:26-38. Remind students that Mary was probably around their age, or possibly younger. As an unmarried woman in a culture that emphasized honor, Mary's "Yes" to God risked everything. **What risks did Mary take in obeying God? When you are in a risky situation, what Bible verses do you find encouraging?**

## April Activities

■ **Easter (April 9) is the biggest celebration in the Christian year. The Resurrection is a core Christian belief. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, our faith would be in vain. The Resurrection is no mere comforting myth, but a historic event that demonstrates God's power.** Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-18 together. Then, spend time exploring what Scripture has to say about Easter. Divide into four groups. Have each group look up the portion of a different Gospel that tells about the Resurrection. Have the groups work together to create a chart showing what is similar and what is different about the accounts.

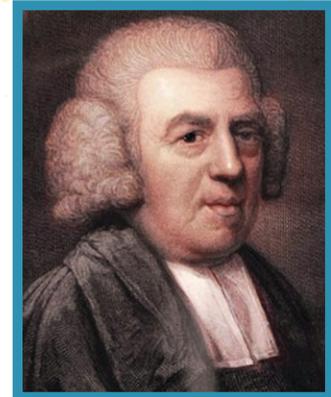
## April and May Activities

**Good Shepherd Sunday (April 30) is the informal name for the Fourth Sunday of Easter because the Scripture readings feature John 10 where Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd.** As a worship activity this day, read through John 10. Discuss how we can "follow him because we know his voice" (John 10:4). Close your worship time with the Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979).

■ Challenge students to come up with two or three "life verses" and memorize them. "Life verses" are verses that are especially encouraging. Keep a running list in your classroom of these verses.

## BACK IN TIME

(use on May 28)



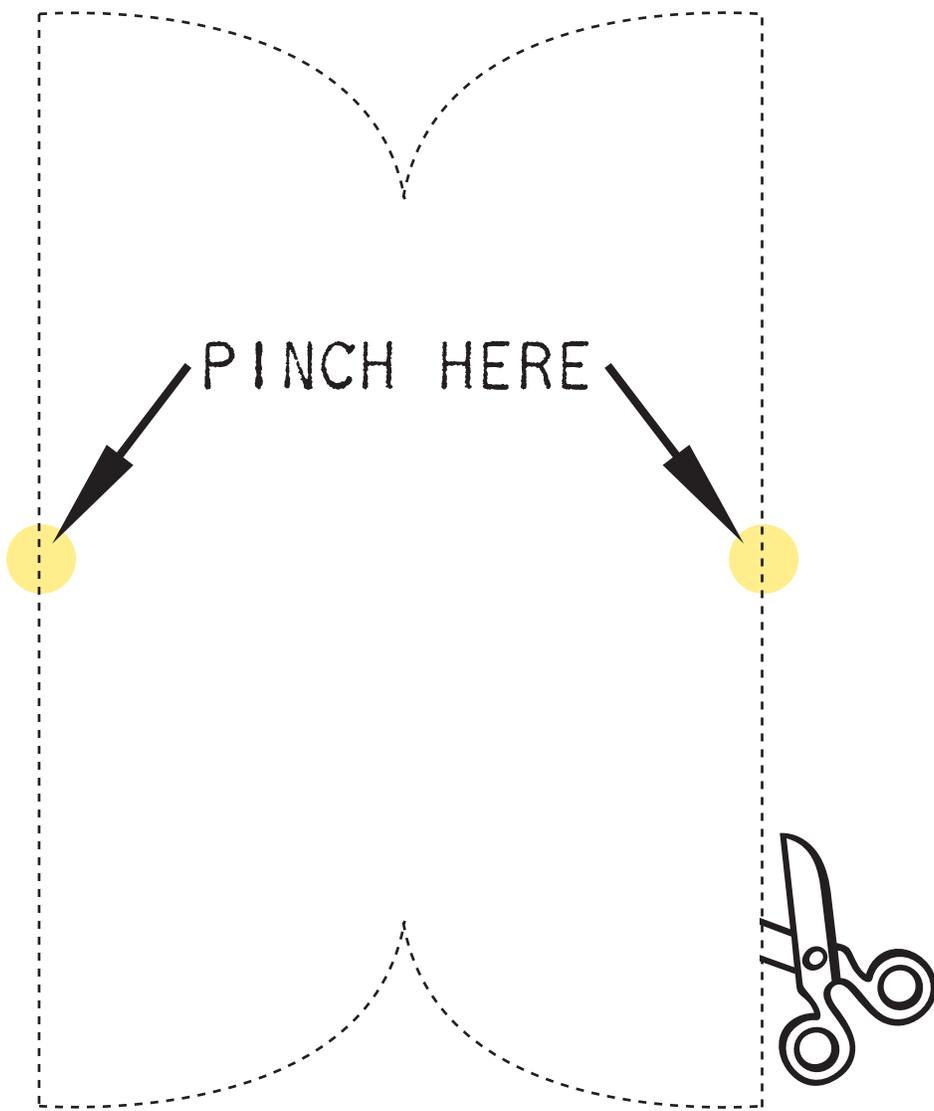
Artwork © Hans Eworth

## John Newton

(1725–1807) After a rebellious youth, John Newton began a career at sea. He was known to be a rough sailor leading other sailors to curse God. Newton finally became convinced of his sinfulness during a fierce storm. He also became convinced of God's grace to forgive him. John Newton ended up a slave-ship captain. He eventually gave this up and was ordained an Anglican priest. His preaching led many people to the Lord. He also encouraged William Wilberforce in his efforts to abolish slavery in England. Newton is most well-known for writing the hymn "Amazing Grace."

## Back in Time: Discussion

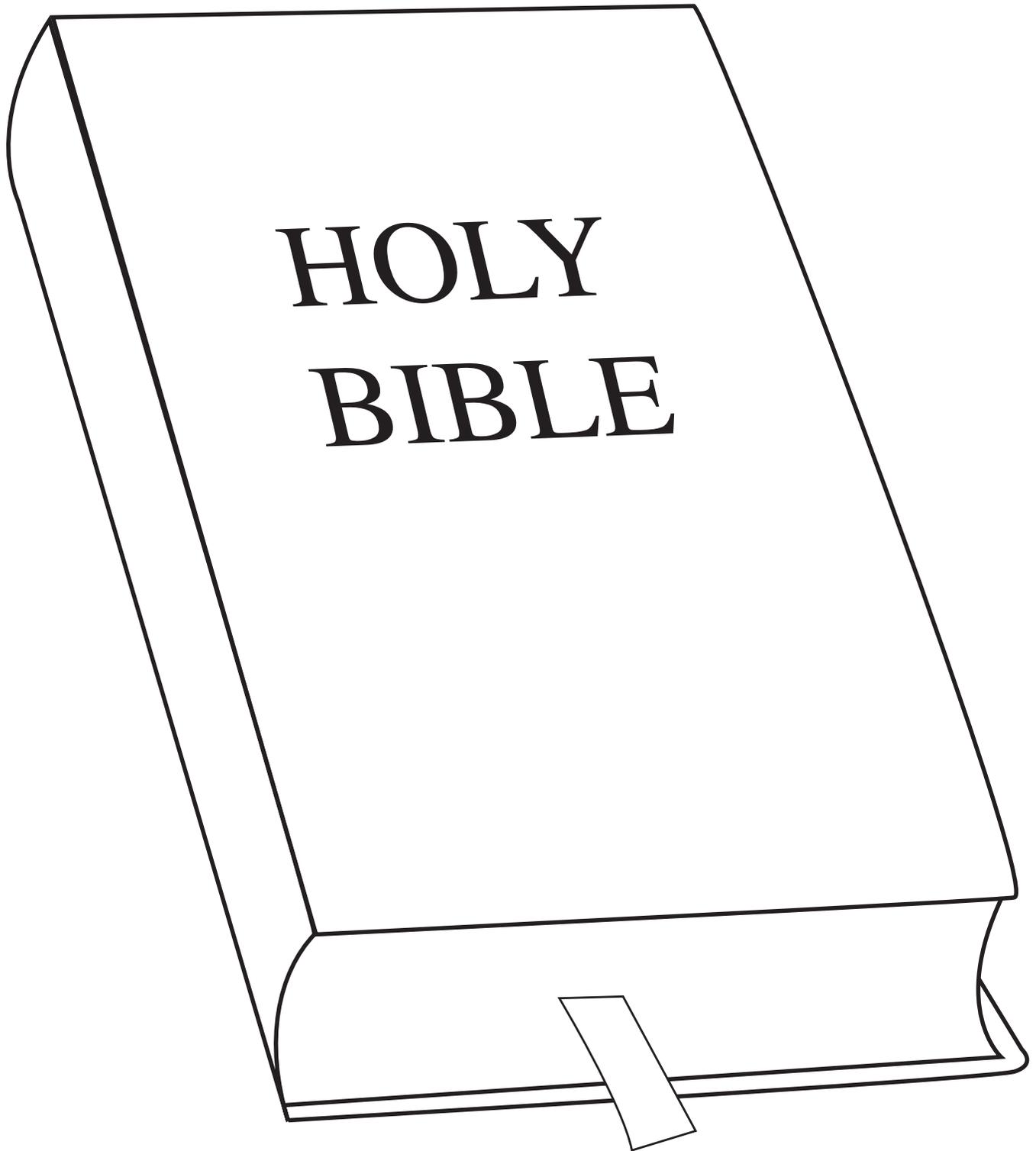
**Read through the words of "Amazing Grace" in a hymnal.** Consider downloading and playing it for the class. **What do the words say about grace?** Look up verses and passages on grace as a group. (Use a concordance as a starting point.) **Which verse could become a "life verse" for you?**



## Butterfly Pattern



# The Bible is God's Word



# The Wilderness of Judea

