



## **Useful games & exercises to familiarise Young People with the Bible**

One of the main stumbling points to using the Bible more as a young Catholic is feeling intimidated and overwhelmed about where to start. For a 21st century reader, used to bite-size chunks on the internet and accessible literature, the prospect of delving into a collection of ancient texts with seemingly little application to today's society is, at best, unnerving.

One way in which we can help as youth ministers is to break down some of the barriers that young people feel when they approach the Bible. And one of the best ways of doing this is to acknowledge that sometimes those barriers exist for us too! There is no shame in admitting that you don't know the answer to a question about the Bible or that you're not sure what a particular text means, or where it is located. What's important is that you're willing to make the journey of discovery together.

If you are interested in developing your own relationship with Scripture, there are some useful links and resources listed elsewhere in DYSpatches: the resource, which will give you a few good ideas about where to begin.

### **USING THE CONTENTS PAGE**

Remember, a Bible's contents page is there to be used! There's no shame in looking up books in the contents, and you should take time out with any group to show them how to navigate books, chapters and verses. When you are taking part in a prayer time or an activity based on a Bible story, try finding the story together. Remember, unless you are all using the same translation of the Bible, the page number will be different on each edition.

You might want to flag up slightly confusing anomalies – like the difference between John (the Gospel) and 1, 2, and 3 John (the letters).

Similarly, some versions of the Bible may have a concise 'index' or 'concordance' at the back of the Bible to help you find key words and

where they are mentioned. These are particularly found in Study Bibles and in many Youth Bibles.

**NOTE:** A version of the Bible that is increasingly used in the Catholic Church is the 'Christian Community Bible'. This is different from other Christian versions in the way that it arranges the books of the Old Testament, placing the Prophets before some of the Writings, thus mirroring the way in which the Hebrew texts were originally arranged (and still arranged for many Jews). At the beginning of the Christian Community Bible it gives a thorough explanation of why they've chosen to do so.

### **BIBLE SHOWDOWN**

This is a lighthearted way to encourage your group to navigate the Bible. Give a Bible each to two young people, and make them stand back to back. After taking three steps away from each other, shout out a Bible reference (for example, John 3:16). They then should search for the passage in the Bible, and the first to locate it, turn round and shout it out wins the showdown... Winner stays on, and another group member can challenge them. Continue until one person is Bible Knowledge victor!

**Warning** – make sure you've checked the verses before you play the game, in order to make sure they exist, and you're not getting the pair to hunt down 'Philemon 2:17' when it is only one chapter long!

### **BIBLE CLUES**

If you have a little more timncordance ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)) where you can type in words, and it will offer you any occurrences of that word in the Bible. For example, if you would like your group to scavenge for a stone, you could give them the clue:

'Would any of you give a \_\_\_\_\_ to your son when he asks for bread?' Matthew 7:9

Once they've located the verse, they'll see it's a stone that they're after, and then they will be able to hunt for it. You should award some points (2?) for a completed passage, and then more points (5?) for an object that has been collected.



To add complexity, you could make the answers all have first letters which make an anagram which groups must solve for bonus points.

To turn the scavenger hunt into a treasure hunt, you should generate clues that will send the group to a destination, where they will find the next clue, for example:

‘Noah built an \_\_\_\_\_ to Yahweh and, taking some of all the clean animals and all the clean birds, he offered burnt offerings on it.’  
Genesis 8:20 = will give the answer ‘altar’

### **BIBLICAL DRAMA**

Choose a story for each group to either make into a human statue, to act out, or to make contemporary for the rest of the larger group. If you want to boost the group’s confidence, you can offer them a scene that you know they will be very familiar with (Good Samaritan, Jesus’ Birth etc)... if you would like to challenge them, offer them a passage reference, which they must look up, discuss, and then convey the meaning of to the rest of the group.

Some groups need incentivizing to do activities like this, and will appreciate an element of competition – you can split the group into 2, and have 2 people from one side silently act out an episode to the rest of their group, rather like Pictionary. If their own side don’t guess within 3 attempts, the other team can steal the bonus points.

### **BIBLICAL HYMNS**

Grab a hymn book from your church, and frequently you’ll find that many of the hymns we sing are steeped in Scripture. If you’re looking for a particular hymn to remind your group of a passage, try looking at the back of the full music version, and you’ll generally find a ‘scriptural reference’ index.

