What is the Bible? Often Christians say the Bible is God’s Word. In the Bible are stories and ideas that tell us and show us who God is and what God is like. The first words of the Bible are: “In the beginning” and the last word is “Amen.” In between are all kinds of stories; long stories, short stories, scary stories, funny stories, confusing stories, and comforting stories—and all of these stories tell us about God and God’s Way.

“If you look at a window, you see flyspecks, dust, the crack where Junior’s frisbee hit it. If you look through a window, you see the world beyond.”
— Frederick Buechner, pastor, writer, and theologian; from Wishful Thinking

What do you see? What do you see?
When you use Picture the Bible, you will do more than look at the Bible’s stories. You will look through these stories. After all, these stories have something to say to you! Remember: The Bible is your story!

Picture the Bible is one such resource and the Wisconsin Conference UCC would like to show our recognition of, and appreciation for, the work and ministry you are engaged in by offering a four-week curriculum/resource package from Picture The Bible in time for Eastertide. This unit, God’s Way, can be used now or in the future. Curriculum can be expensive and this is our gift to you. While you have the option to purchase hard copies of the curriculum resources, the Wisconsin Conference UCC is providing online access to the materials so that you can print out the copies you need. We are excited to make this resource available to you and hope you will be inspired and encouraged by all it has to offer.

With gratitude for your faithfulness and commitment to faith formation.

Lisa Hart
Associate Conference Minister
for Faith Formation and Justice Ministries

Franz Rigert
Conference Minister

What is in this packet?
This information and idea page:
Four art reproductions (printed back-to-back):
Four age-levels of resource pages for each of four biblical texts:
- Jesus Blesses the Children
- The Sermon on the Mount
- Jesus Feeds 5,000 People
- Let Justice Roll
A “Little Book” with four stories and activities.
**When could I use these resources?**

The short answer is use them when it is right for you and your congregation.

The longer answer is these resources could:
- become the focus of Sundays (worship and education) in Eastertide;
- provide the basis for multigenerational in-person gatherings on your church lawn;
- be the center of Sunday School or faith formation events;
- provide curriculum for a series of Zoom adult Bible studies;
- be woven into your confirmation program;
- support at-home education for your families;
- inspire you to be creative and find a time and opportunity that fits your ministry needs and goals.

**How do I use these resources?**

**Picture the Bible** resources support biblical literacy and interpretation through conversation. “Conversation” is key. The resources are designed to get people of all ages talking about Bible texts, wondering what they meant to their first listeners, and asking what these ancient, yet always new texts say to us in our world today. The pages intentionally blur the line between leader and learner so all participants have the opportunity to contribute ideas.

Leaders do not need to take much time for preparation and do not necessarily need theological training.

**Using the Resource Pages**

Embedded in the resources pages are ideas and images to engage people in the conversation. Leaders and learners move through the pages together, learning from each other. A few suggestions:
- Use the resources pages to help learners explore the Bible text and relate it to their own lives. With few exceptions there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to the discussion questions.
- Move through the page in a way that works for your group. There is no prescribed path through the page, although it makes good sense to start with the top front as it introduces the Bible text, art, and identifies the theme.
- Ask questions that encourage learners to explore the text and ideas deeply and reflectively.

**Asking Questions**

The questions you ask have a lot to say about the character of your conversation. In general ask fewer questions to test learners’ memories (How many disciples are there?) and more questions designed to explore ideas. Some suggestions:
- How do you think about…? How else could you describe…?
- If you were the character, what would you do?
- What’s the most important idea in this story?
- How would you feel if…?
- Why do you think Jesus said…?
- Find evidence to show that God acts in surprising ways?
- How do these stories fit together? What does this story tell you about God’s way?

**Art Reproductions**

Sharing the art is a key component of **Picture the Bible**. The art helps people explore key aspects of the Bible text. Display the art and share it with your congregation in your online format. Access to electronic image files is provided (see below).

**Little Book**

The Little Book in your packet is an example of a simple book you can easily print, fold, staple, and cut. The Little Book features the four stories of this study and is a great resource to send home with families or for children to receive in the mail. A surprise Little Book arriving in the mail is an easy, fun way to stay connected to families while providing them with at-home faith formation resources.

**Image Files and Additional Copies**

Your packet includes examples of all pages.

For access to the image files and more copies:

Send an email to stacy@firstchurchrf.org to receive free access to electronic files to download and print. Print the number you need. You will also have access to files of the art images to share with your congregation.

Call First Congregational Church (715-425-2052) during business hours to place an order for hard copies. Hard copies of each page for each story and the Little Book will be sold in individual sets of five. You can order multiple copies of only the pages you need. The cost for each set of five is $2.00. Please allow adequate time for packaging and delivery if you select this option. Shipments will be sent out Mondays–Thursdays.
Go and multiply:

Miraculous Multiplication

Mark included stories in his gospel he thought were important. How so?

Think about:

4 Resource levels

—

The world has more than 7 billion people.

The world has more than 7 billion people.

Of those:

—

That's a lot! David Smith imagined the world as a

The world was the bread baskets

There are 12

The Second Harvest Heartland community is fueled by the passion, time and

—

Second Harvest Heartland forํ alongside and strengthens the hunger

—

Second Harvest Heartland distributes to ever−food shelf in Minnesota as well as non−governmental organizations in Minnesota rescues good,

—

A Biblical Pictoral Timeline

Context of this story:

—

Escape to Egypt

Background

—

Identify themes in Matthew 1 and 2 that you want to watch for in the rest

—

Jesus to Israel and the Exodus? What is left behind in these two passages?

—

Between Moses and Jesus. Why might it be meaningful that Moses and Jesus

—

Consider together:

—

What do you think pushed Herod to be violent? What pushes leaders today

—

Sometimes this story is called "The Slaughter of the Innocents."

—

Where is God in this story?

—

React!

—

What we do

—

The inside pages include a variety of ideas to discuss and information to explore.

—

The inside bottom pocket graphic poses two summary questions about the story. What will you take with you?

—

The back page offers background about the text and a list of questions to consider.

—

Family pages were developed for in-home use during the pandemic.

—

The back page includes a picture to color as well as conversation starters that connect the Bible text and contemporary life.

—

The front page focuses on questions and ideas specifically geared to helping young children experience the art and explore the story. The back page is a coloring page matching the art.
Extending the Learning

Add some creativity to the activities in the resource pages to extend the experience. For example:

- **Jesus Blesses the Children**: Encourage people, young and old, to make an abstract self-portrait. Make a slide show of all the finished masterpieces or arrange them on a bulletin board. Marvel at the wonderful variety of God’s people.

- **The Sermon on the Mount**: Create Fibonacci art by reproducing the Fibonacci spiral with paper and markers or paint or even with fabric. Discuss how science and math help us to learn about God’s creation.

- **Jesus Feeds 5,000 People**: Color the mosaic and then explore other ancient Christian mosaics. Work together to create your own large or small mosaic.

- **Let Justice Roll**: Invite people to play games of Monopoly where players are randomly assigned different rules. Talk about the experience. How does or doesn’t this way of playing Monopoly reflect what things are like in the world today?

- **God’s way**: Guide people in a conversation about God’s way. What is it? What isn’t it? Where is God’s way evident? How can we participate in God’s way? What inhibits God’s way? How can the congregation’s ministry be guided by a commitment to God’s way?

Worship and Preaching

PTB resource pages are filled with images and ideas. Many of them lend themselves to preaching. Draw upon ideas in the resource pages to both support your sermon as well as connect faith formation events to Sunday worship. As part of this gift, you also have access to a digital version of the art that can be used for projection in worship or on a bulletin cover. To receive the digital file, email stacy@firstchurchrf.org.

For more information

- Attend or view a recorded Zoom session about the materials in this packet on March 23, 2021 at 11:00 am. To register, contact Lisa hart at lhart@wcucc.org

- Contact Pastor Stacy Myers at stacy@firstchurchrf.org (715-425-2052) or Lisa Hart at lhart@wcucc.org.

More **Picture the Bible** Resources

52 Bible stories

The resources you received in this packet are a special edition of **Picture the Bible**. The **Picture the Bible** collection of resources includes 52 art images and corresponding conversation pages.

**Picture the Bible** resources include:

- **Conversations pages** in 4 levels for each of the 52 stories
- **52 12x12” art reproductions**, available in sets. Please note that the art reproductions you received in this packet are small, special edition reproductions.

More **Little Books** of seven stories each, grouped thematically.

**Coloring** books, grouped thematically, with a story synopses and questions to ponder.

Forthcoming in Spring 2021 is a **Picture the Bible** children’s story Bible. Visit [this link](https://www.thepilgrimpress.com/collections/new-releases/products/picture-the-bible). Ask for the book at your local independent bookseller.

To view a trailer for this new book, visit: [this link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9LY-kgDQys&feature=youtu.be).

**Light in the Darkness**, a short storybook featuring Picture the Bible art.


Visit [PicturetheBible.com](http://picturethebible.com) to order these and other resources!