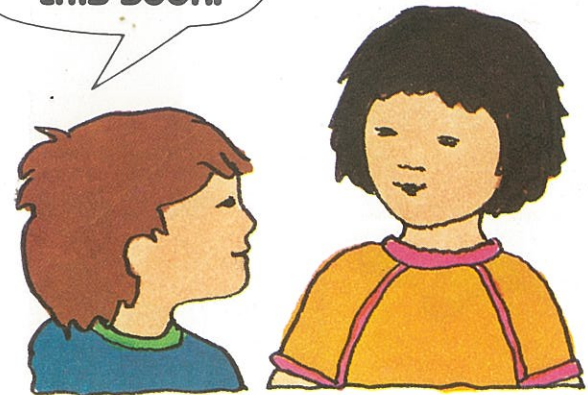


Look, I've just borrowed this book.

That's not a book, it's a whole library!



The first surprising thing about the Bible is that it is not one book. It was not written by one person. It's a whole library of books!

The Bible we use today contains sixty-six books, written by very different people over a period of some 2,000 years. They include true stories and parables, songs and poetry, laws and rules, sermons and letters, events in history and predictions about the future.

In fact, there is so much in the Bible that you need some help to find your way around. Here is a picture of the Bible-library, with some notes on the books.

It is divided into two parts, the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament is nearly twice as long as the New. It is about God's chosen people, the people of Israel, and takes us from the beginning of time, through the sad day, centuries later, when they were conquered and taken as prisoners to Babylon, to the time when the exiles returned home.

Then there is a break of several hundred years in the story. The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus. It is about his life and the spread of the Christian church after his death and resurrection.



The Book of the Law

The first five books are called the Pentateuch, which means 'five scrolls'. It is really one book divided into five parts. It contains the history of God's people from Abraham to Joseph, with an introduction about the very earliest history of all — the creation of the world and the growth of civilization on earth. It also includes God's 'rules', called the Ten Commandments, and detailed instructions about daily living. The Jews call it 'The Book of the Law' or 'The Torah'.



Old Testament History

The next twelve books are history. They take the story on from Joshua and his famous battle of Jericho to the invasion and defeat of God's people by the Babylonians and Persians, and their return from exile.



Poetry and Wisdom

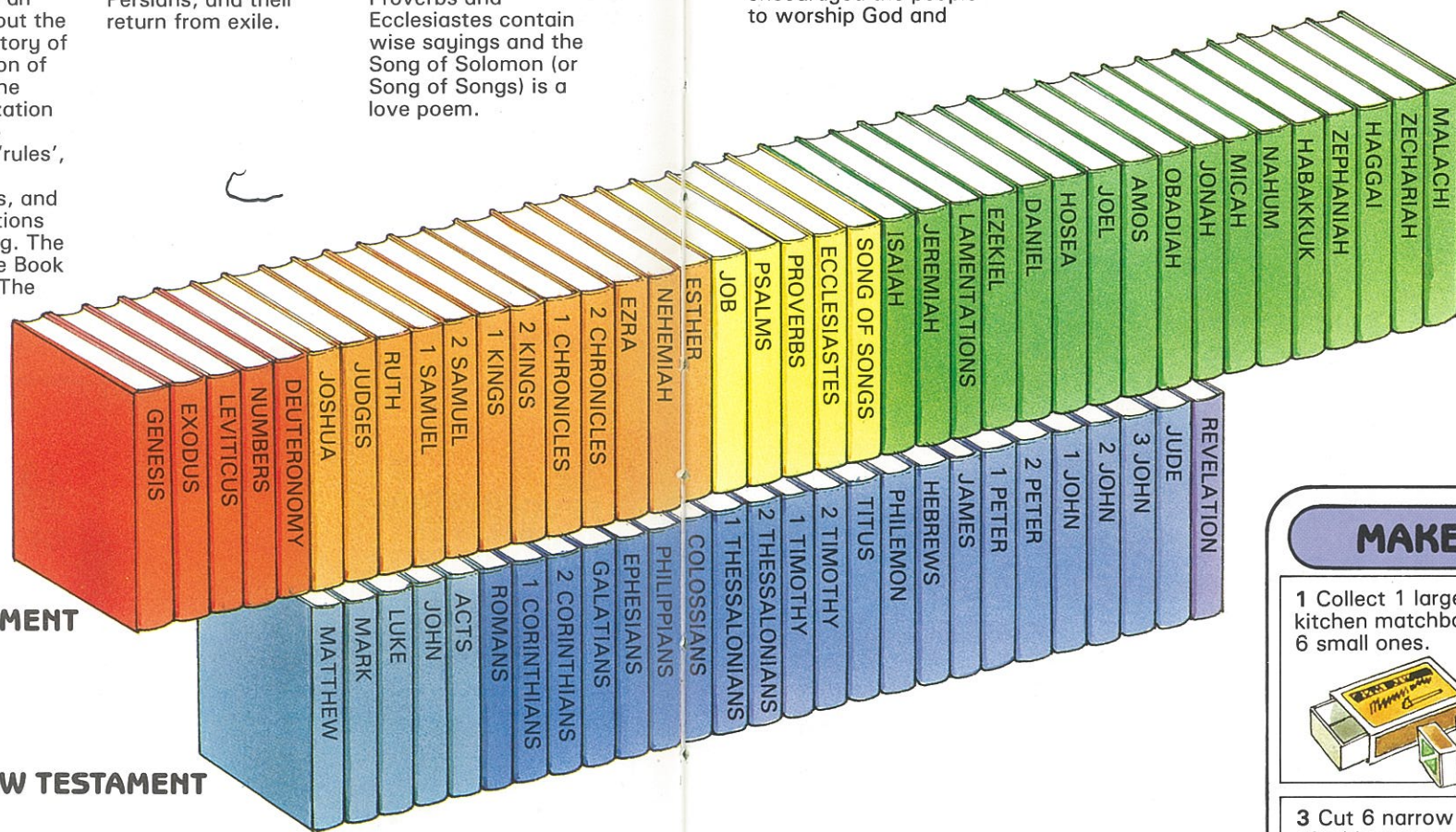
Next come five books of poetry and wisdom, which contain some of the best-known writings in the world. Job is a drama, the Psalms are poetry and songs for worship. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes contain wise sayings and the Song of Solomon (or Song of Songs) is a love poem.



The Prophets

The last seventeen Old Testament books are called the Prophets. They record the important messages preached by some of the special leaders God called to speak to his people. The prophets encouraged the people to worship God and

warned of his punishment when they disobeyed and turned to idols. God enabled some of these men to look into the future and predict what would happen.



OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT



New Testament History

The first four books of the New Testament are called 'gospels', which means 'good news'.

The aim of all four writers was to tell the story of Jesus before all those who had actually seen and known him died, so that people could have

an accurate record based on evidence from eye-witnesses.

Luke (the Greek doctor who went with Paul on his journeys) also wrote the story of how the church grew, called The Acts of the Apostles.



The Letters

A collection of twenty-one letters make up the rest of the New Testament. They were written by Christian leaders (thirteen of them by Paul) to the churches springing up all over the

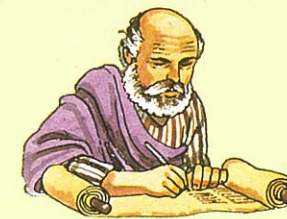
Middle East. They contain teaching, encouragement and warm personal greetings, as well as some sharp criticism where the Christians were getting things wrong.



Revelation

The last book is unique. Written in poetry and picture language, it is a series of visions of the future, designed to encourage and inspire the early Christians, against the background of Roman persecution.

GOD'S WORD

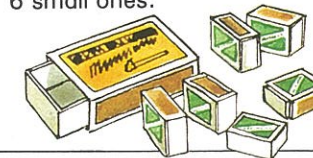


The Bible is different from any other book in the world for one very important reason. It is the work both of many different people and of God himself. The Bible says it is 'God-breathed'. We use the word inspired. This does not mean that God dictated his words to the writers, but that he inspired them or caused them to write the truth.

The Bible's words can therefore be trusted and its message has a special power to speak to people of every age and outlook. That is why the Bible is often called 'God's Word'.

MAKE YOUR OWN BIBLE LIBRARY

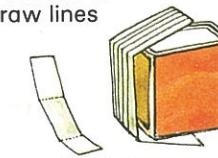
1 Collect 1 large kitchen matchbox and 6 small ones.



2 Cover each small box on 3 sides with coloured sticky paper, like a book jacket.



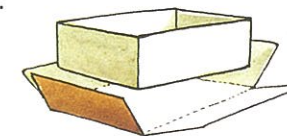
3 Cut 6 narrow strips of white paper and glue around 3 sides of each box. Draw lines for pages.



4 Write the different kinds of Bible books on the outsides: The Book of the Law, History, Poetry and Wisdom, The Prophets, Gospels and Acts, Letters and Revelation.



5 Cover the tray part of the large matchbox with brown sticky paper.



6 Label it 'Bible Library' and put in the books.

