



Bibles For Our Children

A few months back I wrote about my observations that our children and youth were not bringing their bibles to church. Though it may seem like a trivial issue since we have bibles in the pews and in our Sunday school classes, this is a very foundational idea for our young ones to learn.

After numerous discussions with the staff and Sunday school director we have decided that we are going to start giving a bible to kindergarten children entering the K/1st Grade class. This class is also appropriately named the Bible Explorers Class. Since children are learning to read at this age, what is more appropriate than to give them the greatest book they will ever read?

But we realize that will only help those who will be moving up next year. What do we do about our children now who are already in that class or other children's classes? February 17th is going to be "Bible Sunday." On this Sunday the children's lessons will focus on the authority of the bible which is a foundational distinctive to Baptists as a part of our Baptist Vision Month (please read my other article on this event). Not only will they focus on this aspect of Baptist identity but all children currently in kindergarten to 5th grade will receive a new bible in Sunday school.

We are encouraging parents to make a special effort to get their children to Sunday school on this Sunday for

this special occasion. All children who are not in Sunday school that day will receive their bible in the 11:00 am worship service. We will have **all the children** come down to the front of the sanctuary for a time of recognition and dedication. It will be at that time that those not receiving a bible in Sunday school will obtain their bible.

This is going to be an exciting Sunday and the whole service will focus on the bible and the importance that God's Word should have in our lives. I hope that you can be here for this special day and if you have a child in this age group please make sure your child is here for Sunday school.

Instead of my useless fact of the month below I have listed types of bibles and bible translations that I recommend for you to use. Maybe you want to buy a bible for your teen or for your own use; here is a list that can be helpful. I have also written out a brief description of or given information about each particular translation. You may be overwhelmed if you go to Barnes & Noble or the Christian Bookstore and look on your own. I hope this helps.

Michael

Types of Bible Translations

Modern Translations/Paraphrase Bibles

- NIV (New International Version) – This has grown to be one of the most popular translations over the last 30 years. Very readable. The version most 20 and 30 year olds grew up learning and using.
- TNIV (Today's New International Version) – This is a recent publication (2005) which builds upon the NIV but uses clearer language and strives to be gender accurate.

- NLT (New Living Translation) – Again another recent bible to come on the scene (1996) this is an excellent translation to examine scripture through our everyday language. This is a revision of the Living Bible, a paraphrase version, published in 1971 but the NLT is not a paraphrase version but a translation. It simplifies many difficult words and phrases into easy to understand vernacular. Great bible to use as a secondary reference to your other bible.
- CEV and TEV (Contemporary English Version) & (Today's English Version) – CEV was published in 1995 and the TEV was published in 1976. These are the bibles we have in our pews at Tomahawk. Both are attempts of modern English translations that are readable to the average person.

More Traditional Translations

- KJV and NKJV (King James Version and New King James Version) – The KJV (1611) is the most traditional version of the bible that people are familiar with. It is popular among the older generations due to the fact that there were not many other options available. It has not been until the last 40-50 years that other translations began to be published mostly due to the fact that earlier manuscripts of scripture were found. So scholars used these new archaeological findings and more advanced linguistics to publish new translations. Though the KJV is poetic and memorable for some its use of old English language could inhibit people from fully understanding the text. The NKJV (1982) is just as poetic as the KJV but its language is a bit cleaned up for a more modern reader while retaining its traditional sound. These are known as literal translations.
- ASV (American Standard Version) – The original name was the American Standard Revised Version.

This too is a literal translation which was published in 1901. In its day it was seen to be a more “modern” revision of the KJV while still retaining the old English of the KJV. This is also known today as the New American Standard Version.

- RSV & NRSV (Revised Standard Version & New Revised Standard Version) These bibles were published in 1952 and 1990 respectively and made a bold move in translating scripture. Moving away from the literalist movements in bible translations of the early 20th century, this group of scholars attempted to be a bit freer in their translating yet still strict to the original texts. The NRSV is most commonly used in scholarly work but very useful to the average church goer.

What to Recommend for Studying the Bible

- The NIV Study Bible is one in which you cannot go wrong. This has great study helps at the beginning of books, in the footnotes, in the endnotes and reference guides in the columns.
- The Harper Collins Study Bible and the New Interpreter's Study Bible are both printed in the NRSV and has excellent helps and study guides to challenge your thought and personal study.

One Thought of Caution

A recent translation has been published called the Holman Christian Standard Bible. This was commissioned by the fundamentalist run Southern Baptist Convention. I would recommend staying away from this as to the comments made by Southern Seminary President, Al Mohler. He stated, “this is an important thing for Southern Baptists to do -- if for no other reason than that we will have a major translation we can control.” It is my opinion that humans should not “control” the bible, the bible should guide us.