

Building blocks

You will need

- A Bible
- A building block game such as Jenga
- A table
- 6 cardboard boxes labelled: 1. Erasmus
2. William Tyndale 3. Miles Coverdale 4.
Queen Elizabeth's Bishops 5. King
James' translators 6. Modern Bibles

Note: you could show some of the presentation
A gallery of manuscripts if you want to illustrate
any of the material below.

Introduction

Play the building block game on the table so that
all can see. Demonstrate how each layer is
dependent on the one below. Explain that we are
going to look at the story of how the Bible was
translated into English. How each person
depended on the person before them. This
assembly contains some difficult words and
ideas. It does not matter if pupils do not
understand everything, as long as they
understand that each person depended on the
work of the one that went before.

Core material

Translating the Bible into English was not the
work of one or two people, it happened over a
long period of time and each person needed the
work of others (refer back to the building game).

Select from the material below according to the
age of your pupils.

1. Place the first box on the table. From
old Bibles, a man called Erasmus put
together all the stories of Jesus and
the first Christians. This was much
easier to use, but it was not in
English. It was in Greek, the original
language of the New Testament.
(There were lots of complete Bibles
but the very earliest ones were
incomplete and Erasmus put seven
together to create a complete New
Testament in Greek.)
2. Place the second box on top. In the
16th century William Tyndale used
Erasmus' work to put a lot of the Bible
into English. He could read Greek.
3. Place the third box on top. Miles
Coverdale used the work of Tyndale
and others to create a whole Bible in
English. This meant people had the
stories of Jesus and the stories of the
Old Testament such as Noah.
4. Place the fourth box on top. Queen
Elizabeth I asked her Bishops to
create a Bible in English called the
Bishops' Bible. They used
Coverdale's Bible and Tyndale's
work, who used Erasmus' work.

5. Place the fifth box on top. King James I (VI of Scotland) asked his translators to create a Bible in English. We call this the King James Bible (1611). They used the Bishops' Bible, Coverdale's Bible, Tyndale's work and Tyndale used Erasmus' work.
6. Place final box on top. All the translators used very old copies of the Bible (see presentation) in their original languages but they also used the work of other people. Without the work of all these people we would not have modern Bibles.

Prayer/Reflection

The translators who worked on the King James Bible recorded the fact that they were helped by people who had gone before. They did not take other people's work for granted. We depend on the work of others all the time. We too can express our thanks for that.

Give us thankful hearts Lord, that are grateful for the work of others and the difference it makes to us, just as the Bible translators were grateful for the work done by others. Amen.

