**R.E- Friday 15th January.**

**Read through the information below and complete the activity at the bottom of page 2!**

**OLI: To find out more about the Bible.**

The Bible is by far the best-selling book of all time.

The word Bible means book, although actually it is a collection of different kinds of books or writings, which we call Holy Scripture. It tells of God’s love and how people responded to that love. The books of the Old Testament tell of the events before the coming of Jesus. The New Testament tells of the birth, life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus and of how the Church began and grew as it spread the Good News.

Much of what is in the Bible started with telling a story orally and passing it on from one generation to the next. Gradually, over a very long period of time the stories were collated and written down. There are seventy-three books in the Bible, forty-six in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. Nobody knows exactly when each book was written. We do know that it took a thousand years or more for all the books to be completed. The last book was written at the end of the first century AD.

Over many years, many different authors have contributed writings, so there are poetry, letters, prayers, history, documentaries, drama, legend, biography in fact any kind of writing or genre that you would find in a good library. All these authors, regardless of the style in which they wrote, wanted to tell one thing – the truth about God and his love for his people.

The Holy Spirit inspired the authors in their writing. This is why the Church family believes that the Holy Spirit is also the author of the Bible. When Christians read the Bible or listen to the Readings during the Liturgy of Word at Mass, God is truly present and those who hear the Word come, through the power of Holy Spirit, to know and love God the Father and Jesus who was sent by God, to show God’s love for everyone. It was written in three different languages and on three different continents. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, with a few chapters in the prophecies of Ezra and Daniel written in Aramaic. Whilst the New Testament was written in different languages, mainly Greek. Its many authors include fishermen, kings, prophets, poets and musicians. The Bible has been translated into countless different languages and versions.

The Bible is divided into two sections:

**The Old Testament** – texts written before Jesus Christ was born and covering God’s dealings with the ancient Hebrew world and its people.

**The New Testament** – writings following the death of Jesus and covering his life and teaching, the establishment of the Christian church, and letters from church leaders.

We share the Old Testament with the Jewish people. They call it the ‘Hebrew Scriptures’. However, the order and number of the books is slightly different. All Christians share the Bible, Old and New Testaments, but the number and order of the books is often different.

Both Jewish people and Christians treat Holy Scripture, with great reverence and respect, because they believe it is the Word of God. At Mass, the Scriptures are placed on a special reading desk called a ‘lectern’ and are read with care and reverence. At the end of the reading, the priest kisses the Scriptures.

Paul, in his letter to the people of Rome, who were suffering persecution for their faith, explains how Scripture helps us:

*Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures give us. And may God, the source of patience and encouragement, enable you to have the same point of view among yourselves by following the example of Christ Jesus, so that all of you together may praise with one voice the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Romans 15: 4-6

(Note that Catholics have 73 books in their Bible not 66, because some Christian Churches do not include some of the books that Catholics do.)

Here are some key questions for you to think about:

* What kinds of stories are passed on in your family? What do they tell you about your family?
* What do you think the people of God might have thought was important to remember and pass on?
* Why is the Bible important to Christians?
* When do you hear the Bible being read?
* How is the Holy Spirit the *author* of the Bible?
* What do you think is the hope that Paul is referring to in his letter to the Romans? (Hint: it could be the hope for Salvation, for Eternal life.)

Activity:

Choose your favourite story from the Bible. Rewrite the story in modern day language and in a separate paragraph, explain what this story teaches us. You can draw a pictures to go with this if you would like to!