

## Open The Book

Due to the Covid Pandemic the Open the Book Team were unable to perform assemblies at Whetstone Field Primary School from March 2021 until December 2023. Once the schools were open as usual, they stopped assemblies until they had helped pupils to catch up with their reading and maths.



We determined to keep contact with the school and therefore continued to present each pupil leaving to move onto Secondary school with a Teenage Bible with a message inserted from APC and the OTB Team. This happened at the end of each academic year in July, the most recent one was done in memory of Jane Young who taught at Whetstone Fields. Also, in 2021 and 2022 we purchased from The Bible Society, booklets written by Bob Hartman telling the Christmas Story and the Easter Story and illustrated with primary school children in mind. Every child in school received these booklets, approx 230.

In December 2023 we offered to perform the Christmas story and were delighted when our offer was accepted. However, during Covid we had lost several of our team. Kate Mason at St. Thomas Church did a great recruiting job and we gained 2 new members from St. Thomas, Ann Bakewell and Debbie Doyle, we also re-recruited 2 of the original OTB Team, Joyce Peel and Andrew Dickson. Sadly, we have had no luck recruiting from APC, which is disappointing. We currently have 10 team members only 2 of which are men.

At the Christmas assembly we talked to the headmaster Stuart Cox and he was very happy to restart regular assemblies. We are now going into Whetstone Fields every other Friday morning and the response from the children is wonderful, we also have all of the school staff at these assemblies, which did not happen before and we feel this is a benefit as we know children ask questions after we have left and the teachers are more likely to discuss this with them as they have seen and heard the bible stories themselves. Another positive is that the headmaster would just introduce us before and then thank us after but now he discusses the meaning behind the story we have just acted out.

Since Sue Coyne, started Open the Book at APC, members of the team have purchased, donated and made props and costumes which enable us to perform all of the stories in the Lion Bible. We are grateful for the storage cupboard in the Church Centre and have been pleased to help out other groups within the church who need to borrow props or costume.  
Lynn Turley

