

BACK TO SCHOOL WITH GOD 2018
ACTS 8:26-39

Read, listen do! – Part 1

What do you do on long journeys in the car? Or on the bus or the train?
You might read books; or listen to music; or watch DVD's? Do you play games?

Here's a game you can play, which is all about reading – it is called the *Number Plate Game*. Number plates on cars are like this: they have two letters and two numbers and then three letters; you can take these three letters and make up silly sentences or phrases; here's my number plate to show you how it's done: YVY are the three letters and the silly sentence I made up is "Young Very Young" because that's how I am! Yes? No? That's how I remember my car registration number.

Here are some more; see what you can come up with

AVP

CDM

PGF

WTE

MRD

SQK

You can read number plates and play a game to pass the time.

There is another word game, which is not so much about reading but is about words and listening to hear what others have said. It is called "The minister's cat..." and you have to work out words to describe the minister's cat using the letters of the alphabet.

"The minister's cat is an awesome cat"; what might the next word be? It would begin with B! And so on.

The man in our Bible story was on a long journey in his chariot; he was reading. He had bought, perhaps, a copy of a book of the Bible and was reading it on his way home. I can't do that; I'd be sick; his chariot would be going up and down over all the bumps in the road; I can't even read on the 44 bus! He was reading his Bible. But he was confused: he was reading about a person who was going to suffer and die, and do that for the sake of other people; he was not sure who this person was and so he was confused and had questions that he wanted to ask.

Sometimes reading the bible is a fantastic thing to do because it tells us some amazing things about God and what God has done and it tells us all about what Jesus is like; but there are other times when we just don't understand it and we have lots of questions. We can read the Bible in all kinds of places, in the car, at home, on your phone, in church; it is such a good thing for us to do. The Bible's message is all about Jesus and how great He is; it tells us that we should live our lives for Jesus everywhere we go!

Read, listen do! – Part 2

You are going to hear 6 sound clips – listen to these and tell me what you hear.

We heard a dog bark, Eddie Murphy's character Donkey from Shrek, a door slam, a duck quack, a drum roll and then beginning of a song from the Lion King.

Listening is good. We listen to other people and what they say:

We listen to teachers in school because they are trying to pass on information that we need for life;

We listen to children and young people because they have a different view on the world that adults need to listen to as well;

We listen to one another and other opinions because that's how we start to care for one another;

We listen to God because He is wise and wants to tell us what He is like and wants to show us how to live in the right kind of way, what He wants us to be like.

Schools need to be places where people listen! We need to listen wherever we meet other people.

Let's go back to our man in his chariot. He has been reading his Bible, but as we said he has questions about what he's reading; Philip is beside the road and he hears the man reading. "Do you understand what you're reading?" "How can I unless someone explains it to me." Philip climbs up into the chariot and begins to explain that this is all about Jesus and then tells him the rest of the story, how Jesus came into the world and lived and died for us and was raised and is the Saviour of the world. Philip listened to the man's questions; the man listened to Philip's explanation and went on to believe in Jesus and live His life by faith.

Our prayers for school have been put together from some of things that you have said & we have listened & now come to pray for schools believing that God will listen to us now.

Do-ers of the Word

Do this! Do that! You're probably "gamed out" but here is a game you can play: if I were to say "do this" you would copy what I do; but if I were to say "do that" you would be out. We could empty the building one person at a time by playing that game, but it might take a while.

"Do not merely listen to the Word...do what it says." (James 1:22) In our story two people did what God wanted. Philip did what God sent him to do; he went to the road where the chariot was passing and he helped the man understand the Bible he was reading; Philip did what God wanted and explained the Bible to someone who didn't understand it. The man in the chariot read his bible, listened to what it meant and then he did three things:

First of all, he believed and put his faith in Jesus; that is obvious from what he did next.

Second, he asked Philip to baptise him; baptism is a way of confessing our faith in Jesus and when the man was baptised he was telling the world that he is a Christian and a follower of Jesus.

Third, he took his bible home with him and we think he began to tell people in his country all about Jesus; maybe he was the first person to do that.

It is good to read the Bible; it is good to listen to God by reading the Bible; but then we have to do what it says. We prayed earlier for people in schools to be kind to each other. Jesus teaches us to be kind, to care for other people, to look after one another and to forgive people who do wrong things to us. That's hard to do at times, but that's what Jesus teaches us to do, to be the right kind of people and to shine from the inside out with His love and grace to other people. The Bible is for Church and Sundays; the bible is also for every day of the week and everywhere we go, so that we learn to put our Christian faith into practice and live for Jesus everywhere – in school, at home, at work, in the shops, everywhere we go, so that Jesus shines through us in all of these places.

We read the Bible: at home, in the car, at the SU group, in church.

We listen to what the Bible says and we listen to one another and there are all kinds of things that we learn as we listen.

We do: we learn to follow Jesus and we try to be the kind of people He wants us to be; the challenge for us is to be "do-ers of the Word", to be the right kind of people in everyday things; that's best we can be, that's the best we can do.