

Navigate

Exploring
the Bible



Introduction

This resource pack is written as an accompaniment to a series of animations. These animations and resources are designed to help young people explore key questions about the Bible, increase basic biblical knowledge and understanding, and enable young people to engage with reading the Bible.

Age range

The resource pack provides tools for youth leaders/workers to facilitate group sessions exploring the themes raised by the animations on the DVD; there is one animation for each session. The animations are designed to be used with any age group; although they may look fairly simple the animations draw out relevant issues for a wide range of age groups. The resource pack is aimed more specifically at 11-15 year olds; however the activities in it could very easily be adapted to suit either a younger or older age bracket.

Timings

It is recognised that this resource will be used in a vast range of settings, with different sizes of groups and ages and abilities of young people, with varying amounts of time available. This resource is designed to be flexible. It is suggested that you work through each session in the order it is written. It may be that you don't have enough time to cover everything in one session, so you may want to use the activities/content over a number of weeks, or you may choose to miss out some activities. To help you work out which activities **not** to miss, some are marked with an asterisk (*). This indicates that these are essential activities to prioritise because they touch on the key points for that particular session. There are deliberately no timings against the sessions or the individual activities; this is to keep the resource as flexible as possible to suit the different groups with which it will be used. As leaders you know your group, so you are encouraged you to spend the time on the activities that best suit your young people.

Extras

Within the sessions there are occasional boxes entitled "Information point". These contain snippets of key information to convey to your group. This could be done by simply reading the paragraphs to your group, or you could find a more creative way of doing this.

At the very end of the resource pack there is an "Extra session". This contains five Bible studies which we would encourage you to use with your group. However, how you use this will be dependent on how your group works. It could be used as a stand-alone session as you reach the end of the five sessions, or specifically after Session 3. Alternatively you could explore one of the Bible studies at the end of each group session.

Learning styles

Using a range of learning styles will aid children and young people in their learning. It is for this reason that the activities in this resource use a variety of styles. Some are very specific in their instructions, where others are more flexible. Please use and adapt the activities to suit your particular group, but we encourage you to use the range of learning styles available.

Preparation

To help you in leading and planning each session, there are leaders' notes for each session which outline the resources needed for each activity and any preparation you will need to do. Preparation is limited, but reading about the particular issues for that session will help in leading a discussion and dealing with any questions which might arise. The Bible Society website has some useful resources which you might find helpful: www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/the-bible-style-guide/.

Thank you for using this resource with your group - we pray that you will see God working through its contents and that it enables your children and young people to develop in their discipleship.

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1

SESSION ONE

What do I think about the Bible?



Aims

- To stimulate questions about the Bible which can be discussed and explored in future sessions
- To explore and discuss group members' opinions about the Bible.

This first session allows opportunity for young people to begin thinking about the Bible; what it is, its importance, what it means to them and to other Christians.

Recommended activity*

The **Best word?** activity enables young people to begin thinking and talking about their views of the Bible; the other activities allow young people to begin engaging with the Bible in a number of different ways.

The following four main sessions will provide opportunities to explore many of the questions raised here in more detail, so encourage your children and young people to remember their questions for later sessions.

Leaders' notes

Activity	Preparation and resources
General research	Read basic information about the Bible from Bible Society website if appropriate: www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/the-bible-style-guide/ .
DVD clip	Chapter 1 of the DVD and the means to play it
Best word?*	Photocopy and cut up a set of cards for each person. Photocopy target board sheet, one per person.
Banned Bible	If there is no internet access where your group meets, it might be helpful to find some facts from the website listed. Gather appropriate resources for the group to create a newspaper article – paper, pens etc.
Bible quiz	Quiz from the DVD and the means to play it
Judging a book by its cover	Show PowerPoint of Bible front covers from the DVD or collect images to show of Bible front covers. Gather appropriate art resources for creating Bible front covers.
I didn't know that	Photocopy and cut up sheet – enough for one per pair.

Activities

DVD clip

Begin the session by watching chapter 1 of the DVD.

Best word?*

Photocopy and cut up the 'Best word?' cards to separate them.

Provide a set of cards for each young person. If you are working with younger children you may find it helpful to choose just a selection of words.

Ask the young people to choose ten words from the cards that they think best describe the Bible. Then ask the young people to choose three words (or more if they wish) that they would strongly disagree with to describe the Bible.

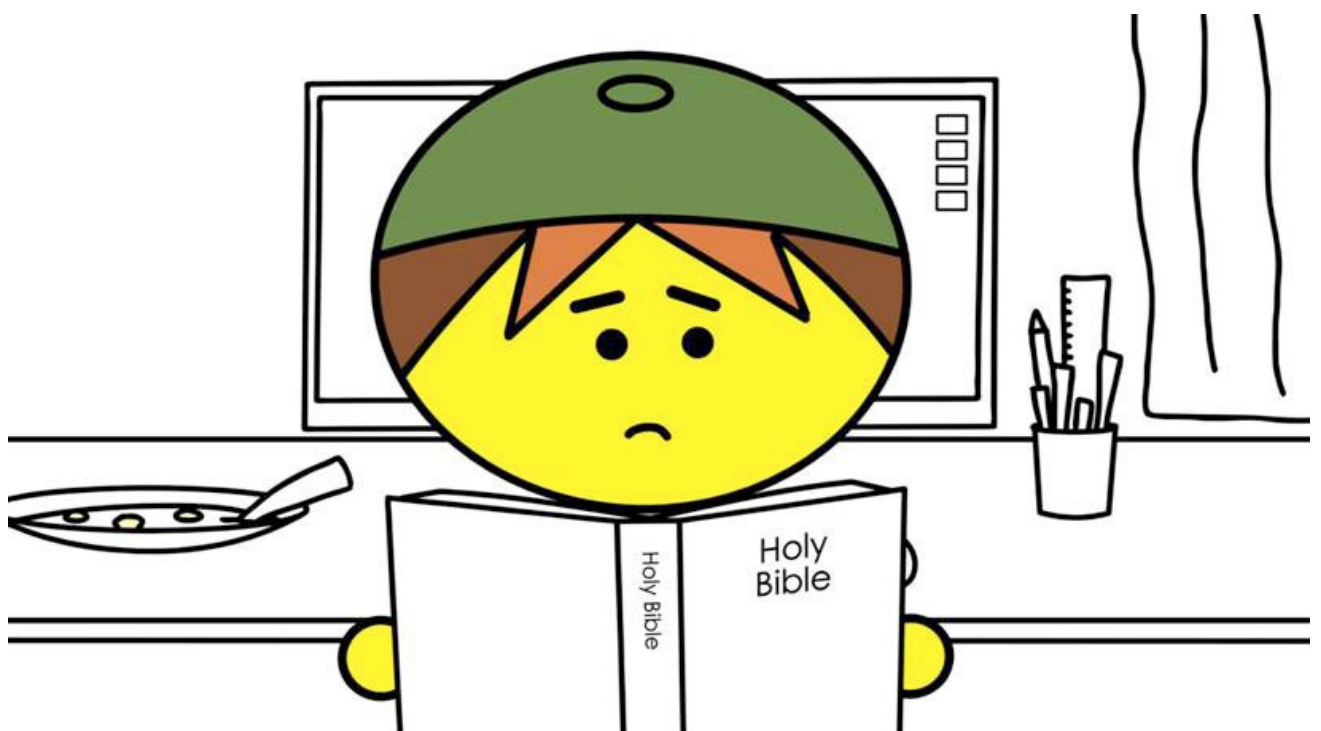
For the next stage, photocopy the target board on the following page. Ask the young people to write the ten words they have chosen onto the target board, the stronger they agree with the word the nearer the centre they should write it, the words they feel less strongly about will be further away

from the centre. It will be helpful to keep these target boards for the final session, where there is an exercise to see if their opinions have changed in any way by the end of the five sessions.

Ask the young people to choose just one of their ten words and explain to the rest of the group why they have chosen it. If your group like debating, ask the young people to put together a 30-second defence for their choice of word, and allow others to put forward arguments in opposition.

As a group decide which ten words best sum up what the group thinks about the Bible. This could cause some interesting discussions as a decision is reached. Find appropriate ways to make sure everyone gets the opportunity to voice their opinion.

If these discussions raise questions about the Bible, take some time to talk about these with your group, or it may be that some of their questions will be discussed in more depth in the following sessions. It does not matter if you don't have all the answers but having the space to ask questions is important.



Best Word?

Which words best describe the Bible?

Confusing	Trustworthy	Weird
Exciting	Life changing	Healing
Boring	Relevant	Heroic
Out of date	Irrelevant	Untrue
Guidance	Jesus	Fake
Rules	God	Mad
Inspiring	About ordinary people	Misunderstood
Challenging	Supernatural	Controversial
Sexy	Promise	Contradictions
Shocking	Encouraging	Exclusive
Transformative	Violent	Inclusive



Further activities

You may choose to do one or more of the following activities. Choose activities that would best suit the age and style of the group.

Banned Bible

Imagine a new government came to power and they decided to ban the Bible! No more Bibles were to be produced, bought or sold.

- What would you do if the Bible was banned?
- How would you feel?
- How would the people around you react/feel?
Your family? Friends? Neighbours?
- What impact do you think it would have on you?
Your friends? Society?

Create a newspaper front cover reporting on the banning of the Bible.

What's your angle? Do you agree/disagree? Why? Try to include a quote from someone highlighting their opinion. Would it help your report to put in some historical context about the history of published Bibles in this country? What about some statistics?

Let your imagination go wild and create a headline and story that you think captures the magnitude of what would happen if the Bible was banned! (If you have a group that like drama you may prefer to act out the news coverage of this story.)

Some useful links...

www.aloha.net/~mikesch/banned.htm

This is a list of facts, statistics and items documenting the restrictions placed by the Catholic Church on the reading and distribution of certain books; including restrictions on the Bible.

www.presentationmagazine.com/editable-powerpoint-newspapers-407.htm

This link takes you to a page that allows you to download PowerPoint templates for making your own newspaper cover stories!

Bible quiz

On the DVD is an electronic version of this quiz, where the four possible answers are revealed for one to be chosen. The correct answer is then revealed at the click of a button! If you prefer not to use the electronic version, the script of the quiz is below with the correct answer highlighted.

1. How many books are there in the Bible we use?
74, 76, **66**, 64
2. Which of these languages was the Bible not originally written in?
Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, **Latin**
3. Which of these is not a book in the Bible?
Hezekiah, Malachi, 3 John, Jude
4. The Bible was not originally written in which of these continents?
Africa, **America**, Asia, Europe
5. Which of these people was Jesus directly related to?
Mary Magdalene, Peter, **John the Baptist**, Matthew
6. Roughly how many people wrote the Bible?
Around 300, **around 40**, around 10, around 6
7. Which of these books in the Bible doesn't mention the word God?
Esther, Ruth, Numbers, Job
8. Roughly how many of the over 7,000 languages in the world has the Bible been translated into?
Around 3,000, around 6,000, around 1,000, around 5,000
9. Which books of the Bible are written by Jesus?
All of them, **none of them**, all the New Testament, the Gospels
10. Who led Israel out of Egypt?
Joshua, Abraham, **Moses**, Paul

Judging a book by its cover

Show the selection of front covers taken from a variety of Bibles. These are available as a PowerPoint on the DVD. (You may choose to show extra Bible covers from Bibles you own or examples you find on the internet - make sure you choose a good selection with a range of titles and different imagery.)

Pick out two or three covers and discuss why they think the front cover was designed in that way - what message is it trying to put across? Who is it trying to appeal to? Why have particular symbols/colours been used?

Ask the young people to choose which design they prefer and why, and then which design they dislike and their reasons why. This could be discussed in twos or threes first and then fed back to the whole group.

If your group is creative ask the young people to design their own front cover for a Bible, thinking carefully about the title they use and the colours and symbols/images chosen. After they have designed it they could say why they have chosen that design. If you felt it appropriate these designs and explanations could then be displayed somewhere in your church/community for others to read.

I didn't know that!

Photocopy the page "I didn't know that!" so that you have enough for one sheet between two people, and then cut it up so the facts are on separate pieces of paper/card. Ask the young people to look at the facts and then ask them to move the cards into various lists and piles; each exercise can be discussed as a group.

For example:

- arrange the cards from the most interesting to the least interesting facts;
- pick out three facts which really surprised you;
- pick out one fact that you would like to know more about;
- put the facts that raise questions for you into one pile (and then explain the questions);
- pick out any facts that challenge you.

Take some time to discuss the outcomes of the activity; it may be that you want to further explore some of these topics in a later session. If you need more factual details look at the Bible Society website for more information.

I didn't know that!

<p>The Old Testament books were written by a range of authors over hundreds of years.</p>	<p>Jewish people don't use the phrase Old Testament, but those same books are their Jewish Scriptures.</p>	<p>The word 'Testament' means covenant. A covenant is an agreement and refers to the agreement that God made with humans.</p>
<p>The stories of Jesus initially were passed on by word of mouth and weren't written down as books until years later.</p>	<p>Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the Gospels. The Gospels were not written until at least 30 years after the death of Jesus.</p>	<p>The New Testament would have been written in Greek.</p>
<p>There were other gospels and writings about Jesus which are not included in the New Testament. Many of these, such as the Gospel of Thomas, were thought to be heretical (as they went against the beliefs of the Church).</p>	<p>The books which were to be included in the New Testament were not decided immediately. It was not until approx 350 years after the death of Jesus that the books of the New Testament were officially fixed.</p>	<p>The Apocrypha is a collection of extra books that are in a separate volume to the Old Testament. The Protestant Churches do not have the Apocrypha as part of the Bible.</p>
<p>The Bible would originally have appeared as a scroll. It did not appear as a book in its complete form until the 16th Century.</p>	<p>William Tyndale made the first printed translation of the Bible into English, but was burned at the stake for doing so in 1536 because it was against the law.</p>	<p>The first legal Bible in English was allowed in England in 1539.</p>

2

SESSION Two

Why should I read it?



Aims

- To think about the importance of the Bible and why Christians should read it
- To develop knowledge about the Bible
- To discover our place in God's bigger story as Christians today

Recommended activities*

The **Timeline** activity encourages the group to map out the overall picture which the Bible paints, and then pinpoints the place of Christians today within that.

The **Book of you** activity allows space for prayerful reflection on the idea that they are part of the Bible; to think about how this impacts their understanding of the Bible and the emphasis they place on it as part of their discipleship.

Leaders' notes

Activity	Preparation and resources
General research	Be familiar with the stories mentioned in the timeline.
DVD clip	Chapter 2 of the DVD and the means to play it.
What happened?	Photocopy story sheet – enough for one per pair. Ensure you have read and understand the information point.
Why should I?	Five blank pieces of card/paper per small group of two or three.
Timeline*	Photocopy and cut up Timeline: headings and Timeline: stories.
Multi-Stories	Choose the passage for your group ensuring that you have read it in advance. Prepare to be able to share your own testimony with the group, or ask another church member to come and share theirs. Pens and paper Video camera Other creative resources to help the group write their stories.
Book of you*	Photocopy “Book of you” – one each.
Design an advert	Look at examples on <i>YouTube</i> and make available as inspiration if possible. Video camera
Bible in a minute	Look at examples on <i>YouTube</i> and make available as inspiration if possible. Video camera Musical instruments (if appropriate)

Activities

DVD clip

Start the session by watching Chapter 2 of the DVD.

Note on the clip:

In order to emphasise that God's story continues and that we all have a part to play, the film clip indicates that we come in the Bible between Jude and Revelation. Please be aware that this could be misunderstood. The books of the Bible are not arranged chronologically, and it should not be read as a piece of history which starts at the beginning of Genesis and finishes at the end of Revelation. The Bible contains many different kinds of writing from different times, which all contribute to our understanding of God's story, more like a patchwork quilt than a series of books which chronologically follow on from each other. The book of Revelation, for example, can be interpreted in different ways and it is not only about events in a distant future.

What happened?

In this activity there are six parts to a story but the fifth part is missing. The young people need to come up with what they think happened in the fifth part. This could be done in twos or threes and can be as serious or as amusing as they want it to be! If your group is active they could act out the whole story including the missing part, or they could just tell the rest of the group their ideas. You can use the story overleaf or make up your own if you prefer.

Information point

The Bible tells the story from the creation of the world through to the time of the first Christians and the early Church. There is a final 'chapter' to the story which can be read about in the book of Revelation. It could be said that there is a 'missing' part to the story: this is the part between the time of the first Christians in the early Church and the end of time. This is the part of the story that isn't written down but is the story of the people who have lived on earth for thousands and thousands of years, and still do today. Although these stories are not *written* in the Bible they are part of God's story.

If you don't know the story so far, how it started and what will happen at the end, how can you possibly make sense of what happens in between. Reading the Bible is the way Christians understand God's story and help to make sense of what happens today, how they live their lives and their part in God's story.

The story...

1. In an ordinary school in the middle of a big city there was a class of 28 excitable pupils. The range of children was huge. Some were short, some were tall, some were outgoing and some wouldn't say boo to a goose. Some thought they were the smartest and coolest of the lot. Some thought the opposite. Yet, even though they had such a range of traits, looks and attributes they all shared one thing: their love of misbehaving wherever they seemed to go.
2. In school they were studying animals and nature so they were told that there was going to be a trip to the zoo to go and see some animals for themselves. Going to a zoo could only be a recipe for disaster with this class.
3. On the day of the trip the pupils were very excited and their teacher slightly concerned. When they got on the coach, the children were told all the rules of what to do and how to behave and how to remain safe.
4. On arrival at the zoo, they went into the visitor centre where they were met by one of the zoo-keepers there. She began to explain the different areas that they would see on their tour. She then led them out to the first area - the reptile park. This was what they were to see first before moving over to the lion enclosure. The pupils were all very exciting. Two of them just couldn't wait and as soon as the teacher wasn't looking they sneaked off to see things for themselves!
- 5.
6. Everything had escalated very quickly. One girl was screaming very loudly, the old lady that fainted was being helped up from the floor and the teacher was looking very cross. Eventually the fire brigade arrived with a ladder.

Why should I?

Divide your group into twos or threes and give each small group five blank pieces of card/paper. Invite the young people to write five reasons why people should read the Bible onto each of their pieces of paper. Collect all the pieces in and spread them out across the floor/table. Ask the young people to arrange these reasons into an order of importance, and discuss each one as you go along. Are there any other reasons that haven't been included? Depending on the nature and type of group it may be appropriate to share personal reasons why individuals in the group read the Bible.

Timeline*

Cut up "Timeline: headings" sheet and spread out in the right order (this table contains the headings you will have seen in the DVD clip). Then cut up "Timeline: stories" and ask the young people to place the stories under the correct headings; you might want to make this into a game/competition for your group if appropriate. (See page 16 for correct order if you need help!)

If you are working with a younger group, you may choose to have less cards and select only a few of the stories.

If you meet in a regular room with your group you may find it helpful to put up the timeline onto the wall so that you can refer to it in future sessions. You could also add personal stories to the NOW section of the timeline over the following weeks and make it a journal of your group's journey.

Once the timeline has been completed spend some time discussing the following questions with your group:

- Which of the stories do you already know about?
- Which story (stories) would you like to know more about?
- Did any information in the timeline surprise you? Which ones?

If the young people in your group are interested in a particular story (or stories) then you may choose to spend some time exploring those stories in this session or in a future one.

**Things
start off**

**Things
go wrong**

**Story of
the Jews**

Hero

**Story
of the
Church**

Now

**All things
made new**

Timeline : stories

<p>Creation story Genesis 1</p>	<p>Adam and Eve – The Garden of Eden Genesis 2</p>	<p>The Fall Genesis 3</p>
<p>Noah – the flood Genesis 6-8</p>	<p>Abraham – God's promise to Abraham Genesis 15</p>	<p>Isaac – Abraham and Isaac Genesis 22:1-18</p>
<p>Joseph – Joseph's coat, dreams and life in Egypt Genesis 37-45</p>	<p>Israel slaves in Egypt Exodus 1</p>	<p>Moses – Moses frees Israel Exodus 8-14</p>
<p>Joshua – God sends Joshua to claim the Promised Land Joshua 1:1-9</p>	<p>Gideon – the fleeces before God Judges 6:36-40</p>	<p>Samson – Samson and Delilah Judges 16:1-22</p>
<p>Samuel – called by God 1 Samuel 3</p>	<p>David – David and Goliath 1 Samuel 17</p>	<p>Solomon – Solomon dedicates the temple 2 Chronicles 7:1-10</p>
<p>Elijah – Elijah on Mount Carmel 1 Kings 18:16-39</p>	<p>Jonah – the big fish Jonah 1-2</p>	<p>Isaiah – Isaiah prophecies about Jesus Isaiah 53</p>
<p>Nehemiah – Nehemiah decides to rebuild Jerusalem Nehemiah 1</p>	<p>John the Baptist Mark 1:1-2</p>	<p>Jesus' birth Luke 2:1-20</p>
<p>Jesus' Baptism Luke 3:21-22</p>	<p>Jesus' death Matthew 27:32-56</p>	<p>Jesus' resurrection John 20:1-23</p>
<p>Jesus' ascension Acts 1:1-11</p>	<p>Peter – Peter denies Jesus Matthew 26:69-75</p>	<p>Peter – Peter reinstated by Jesus John 21:15-19</p>
<p>Pentecost Acts 2</p>	<p>Saul's conversion to Paul Acts 9:1-31</p>	<p>Death of Stephen Acts 7</p>
<p>NOW Between Jude and Revelation</p>	<p>Jesus coming back Revelation 19:11-16, Revelation 21-22</p>	

Order for the timeline

Things start off

1. Creation story – Genesis 1
2. Adam and Eve – The Garden of Eden
– Genesis 2

Things go wrong

3. The Fall – Genesis 3
4. Noah – the flood – Genesis 6-8

Story of the Jews

5. Abraham – God’s promise to Abraham
– Genesis 15
6. Isaac – Abraham and Isaac – Genesis 22:1-18
7. Joseph – Joseph’s coat, dreams and life in
Egypt – Genesis 37-45
8. Israel slaves in Egypt – Exodus 1
9. Moses – Moses frees Israel – Exodus 8-14
10. Joshua – God sends Joshua to claim the
Promised Land – Joshua 1:1-9
11. Gideon – the fleeces before God
– Judges 6:36-40
12. Samson – Samson and Delilah – Judges 16:1-22
13. Samuel – called by God – 1 Samuel 3
14. David – David and Goliath – 1 Samuel 17
15. Solomon – Solomon dedicates the temple
– 2 Chronicles 7:1-10
16. Elijah – Elijah on Mount Carmel
– 1 Kings 18:16-39

17. Jonah – The big fish – Jonah 1 and 2
18. Isaiah – Isaiah prophecies about Jesus
– Isaiah 53
19. Nehemiah – Nehemiah decides to rebuild
Jerusalem – Nehemiah 1

Hero

20. John the Baptist – Mark 1:1-2
21. Jesus’ birth – Luke 2:1-20
22. Jesus’ baptism – Luke 3:21-22
23. Jesus’ death – Matthew 27:32-56
24. Jesus’ resurrection – John 20:1-23
25. Peter – Peter denies Jesus – Matthew 26:69-75
26. Peter – Peter reinstated by Jesus –
John 21:15-19
27. Jesus’ ascension – Acts 1:1-11

Story of the Church

28. Pentecost – Acts 2
29. Death of Steven – Acts 7
30. Saul’s conversion to Paul – Acts 9:1-31

Now

31. NOW – Between Jude and Revelation

All things made new

32. Jesus coming back – Revelation 19:11-16,
Revelation 21 and 22

Multi-stories

Ask your group to read one of the following stories, asking them to think about how the lives of these people changed after their encounters with God.

- Mary – Luke 1:26-38, 46-56
- Zacchaeus – Luke 19:1-10
- Saul – Acts 9:1-19

Challenge your group with what would be in their story if they wrote it now.

If appropriate, you might want to ask your group to write their stories to add to the NOW section of the Timeline. There are a range of ways that you could do this; one would be to write it down (sometimes it's helpful to set a number of words), or you could encourage your group to write and perform a drama, or create a video. Alternatively you could share your story with them, or ask other members of the church to come into the group and share theirs.

The book of you?*

Imagine our individual story written down as a book of the Bible. First ask the young people

to think of a suitable name for their book – it could be plain and simple and be their name or they may have other more imaginative ideas!

What follows is a personal, reflective prayer. You may find it useful to photocopy “The book of...” prayer card (*on the next page*) for each young person to have a copy. It may be appropriate to encourage your group to use the prayer card on a regular basis. Alternatively you may choose to just read the words out loud to the group rather than use the sheet.

Set the mood by asking the young people to be still and comfortable as you begin a time of reflection, you may like to light a candle or have some appropriate music playing in the background. Read out the words from the prayer card leaving long enough pauses between each sentence for the young people to pray privately.

This is designed to be a more reflective and personal activity, and it might be most appropriately used as an activity with which to end the session.

Additional activities

Design an advert

Design an advert for TV or radio or a magazine. The advert has to explain to people what the Bible is and why they should read the Bible. This can be imaginative, creative and entertaining! You may also like to record the adverts on a camera. There are a number of examples on *YouTube* www.youtube.com/watch?v=9twAoFCqRVs.

Bible in a minute

Write a song or rap that tells the whole story of the Bible. To make it more fun set a time limit of one minute (or a longer if you are feeling generous!) for the song/rap. When the young people have written it they could perform it to the rest of the group.

If you're looking for inspiration, look at this clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar_k8JjVWQA.

The Book of _____

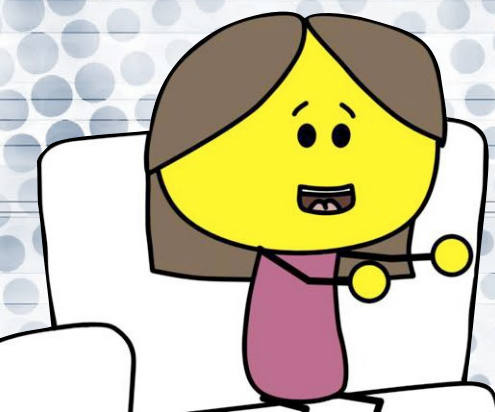
YOUR STORY IS PART OF GOD'S STORY. IMAGINE YOUR STORY AS AN UNWRITTEN PART OF THE BIBLE - THE BOOK OF YOU!

Which parts of your story do you want to thank God for? Say thanks to God.

Which parts of your story are you struggling with? Ask for God's help.

Which parts of your story, now or in the future, are you worrying about? Ask for God's peace.

What are your hopes and dreams for your story? Share them with God and ask for guidance.



May your word be a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

(Psalm 119:105)

3

SESSION Three

How do I read it?



Aims

- To explore different ways to engage with the Bible and reflect upon which are most helpful
- To gain greater awareness of Bible translations and interpretation

Recommended activities*

The **I read the Bible...** activity starts with a clip from the DVD with people explaining how they read the Bible. This creates an opportunity for the young people to express how they read the Bible, or indeed difficulties they may have in reading the Bible. Following that is an opportunity to try a different approach to reading the Bible.

Leaders' notes

Activity	Preparation and resources
General research	If needed research other world faiths' holy books.
DVD clip	Chapter 3 of the DVD and the means to play it.
In or out?	Look up the different Bible passages in preparation if you need to.
Different translations	Gather different translations of the Bible. Choose one passage that can be looked at in different translations.
Which language?	Ensure you have read and understand the information point, and do any further reading you think is necessary. Familiarise yourself with the stories mentioned. Have copies of the stories if you need them.
My translation	Creative resources for the group to write/draw their own Psalm eg pens, paper, felt tips.
I read the Bible...*	Second clip from chapter 3 on the DVD entitled "I read the Bible" Prepare to talk about the ways you read the Bible. Gather the appropriate resources to enable the different methods of reading the Bible as listed in the activity.
Challenge	Photocopy the "Don't know where to start?" sheet, enough for one per person.

Activities

DVD clip

Start the session by showing chapter 3 of the DVD.

In or out?

Read out the stories below. The young people have to decide which ones are in the Bible and which ones aren't. You could vary this activity by splitting the group into two teams. One team reads out a story and the other team has to guess if it is in the Bible or not. Continue taking turns until all the stories have been read out. Reveal all the answers at the end. You may choose to look up the references and read the stories in more detail.

1. God made a donkey talk to get him to speak to a man called Balaam.

IN (Numbers 22:28-30)

2. Zerubbabel was running away from the opposing army and hid in a cave. God sent a spider to spin a web over the entrance of the cave to hide the man, and the soldiers were fooled into thinking no one had been in the cave for days and ran straight past.

OUT

3. A man called Eutychus fell out of a third floor window because he fell asleep at Paul's preaching.

IN (Acts 20:8-10)

4. God turned the wife of a man called Lot into a pillar of salt.

IN (Genesis 19:23-26)

5. Jesus stepped out of the boat to walk on water; Peter followed but fell in and got swallowed by a whale.

OUT

6. Peter cut off a Roman soldier's ear when he was fighting with them in the Garden of Gethsemane.

IN (John 18:10)

7. God was so angry that he decided to make a volcano erupt, but Abraham raised his staff and stopped the volcano from erupting and wiping out a generation.

OUT

8. A whole herd of pigs drowned because they were demon possessed and the demons made them run into the water.

IN (Matthew 8:32)

Different translations

Have available copies of the same passage from a number of different translations and versions. The following is a list which provides a good range, some of which are available from websites such as www.biblegateway.com.

- King James Version
- New International Version
- The Message
- Action Bible
- Word on the Street
- Good News Bible
- Tabloid Bible
- New Revised Standard Version

If possible spread these translations around the room to allow the young people space to walk around and read the translations. If you want you could give each young person coloured stickers and they can put a yellow sticker on the translation that they liked the best and a red sticker on the translation they liked the least.

Gather the group back together and discuss:

- Which one appealed to them the most and why?
- If they didn't like any, why not?
- What is the difference between translation and interpretation?

Which language?

As a group, discuss what you know about the holy books of the different world faiths, and what some of the differences are between the Bible and the other holy books. (The young people may have a wealth of knowledge gained from RE lessons at school.) For a brief, simple overview of the different holy books see www.reonline.org.uk/specials/ks3_holybooks/.

Information point

One of the differences between the Bible and the holy books for other world faiths is that the Bible has been translated into over 2,000 different languages and dialects. The Qur'an, the holy book of the Islamic faith, is never translated but the text is kept in the original language, meaning that anyone who wants to read it has to learn Arabic. The Jewish Scriptures are hand written by scribes onto scrolls in the original Hebrew language and are read out loud in the synagogue each week.

Discuss...

- Why do you think it is important for some faiths to keep their holy book in the original language?
- Why do you think the Bible gets translated into a number of different languages?
- Do you think it is important to have the Bible in different languages for everyone? Why?

Look at these stories...

- William Tyndale www.bbc.co.uk/history/people/william_tyndale
- Mary Jones www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/mary-jones
- There are many modern stories of the importance of Bible translations to different communities available on the Bible Society website, for example: www.biblesociety.org.uk/uploads/content/wia/files/WiA_2013_Summer.pdf
www.biblesociety.org.uk/uploads/content/appeal/files/middle_east_note.pdf
www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/appeals/help-take-this-bible-past-the-finish-line

What difference, if any, does looking at these stories make to your answers to the previous questions?

My translation

Choose a passage from the Bible, maybe a Psalm (eg Psalm 23). Spend some time reading it through together as a group and discussing what it means. Then ask the young people to put this Psalm into their own words – the style is up to them. They don't necessarily have to write it – they could represent it as a picture or a song, or they could record themselves/make a short film about it. Ask them whether they prefer the original version or their own version.

I read the Bible...?*

Watch the clip on the DVD entitled "I read the Bible..." This shows a number of people briefly saying how and when they read the Bible.

Discuss with the young people whether they think it matters how and when the Bible is read. Did any of the ways mentioned in the clip appeal to them?

If appropriate, ask the young people to share how and when they read their Bibles. You may choose to share how and when you read your Bible.

Ask each member of the group to spend 15-20 minutes reading their Bible. This may seem like a long time to focus for some; however it will give enough time to engage in different and deeper ways. It will be useful if the young people can find a quiet space where they will not be disturbed by others in the group. Each person will read the story of Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41) but they can choose one of the following methods to do so:

- Read the passage in the style of *Lectio Divina* – an ancient way of meditating on the scriptures (see *the Bible Study in the Extra Session for instructions on this*)
- Read the passage through and then use coloured pens/pencils to highlight words, or draw images/doodles about thoughts raised by the passage

- Listen to the passage and think about what images this forms in your mind (*There is a version of Mark read by DJ Chip K available to download from the Bible Society www.biblesociety.org.uk/search/chip+k or you could record your own version of the passage.*)
- Use a picture to reflect on the passage. (*There are many paintings of this story available on the internet. There is one available within the Methodist Art Collection www.methodist.org.uk/static/artcollection/image6.htm*)

After the 20 minutes has finished, ask the group for feedback on the experience:

- what did they learn?
- What did they struggle with?

- How might they do it differently another time?

Challenge!

Set the young people a challenge to read the Bible in a different way for a week. It may be one of the ways spoken about in the DVD clip, one from the following list, or another way they have thought of. Ask them to feedback their thoughts after completing the challenge the following week. You may find it helpful to photocopy the sheet entitled “Don’t know where to start?!” on the following page to give to the young people in your group.

Don't know where to start?!

Ways to read the Bible:

1

Sign up to a blog: this can help guide your reading of the Bible, but some also give you the opportunity to post comments, allowing you to share your thoughts and ask questions. Good examples include:

- Heartlight, a daily devotionals page www.heartlight.org
- Soul Survivor run a Bible in a year scheme. They suggest three short passage to read from the Bible each day, then in a year you have read the whole Bible! Plus they have a Bible study online for each day! thebibleinoneyear.wordpress.com



2

Speak to your youth worker, can they help you set up a weekly Bible study group?



3

Work your way through the Gospels. Choose key moments in Jesus' ministry that is reported in more than one Gospel, what are the similarities and differences? What do you learn from each account?

4

There are many good Bible commentaries available, these are books which you read with your Bible which help explain the meaning, and historical context of the Bible.

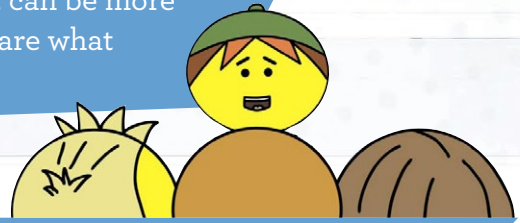
Good commentaries to use include:

- Commentaries by authors such as Tom Wright
- *The Lion Handbook to the Bible*
- Good News Bible App



5

Try meeting with your friends. You can use any of the forms of Bible study listed above, but meeting as a group can make sure you do it! Plus it can be more fun! And there is a chance to talk about and share what you have just read.



6

In a group or by yourself try the E100 Challenge. The E100 challenge is a list of 100 short passages from the Bible, 50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. They should only take you about ten minutes to read and will really help you get an understanding of the Bible! www.e100challenge.org.uk



7

The best advice is just to sit down and try. Make time in your week to sit and read the Bible. Reading the Bible is something you have to make a habit. But like with anything new you have to learn how to do it, so start off by picking up your Bible and reading it once a week, and increase this by a day each week. Before you know it you will be looking forward to the time of the day, every day you get to read God's word!

- Begin by sitting down closing your eyes and praying.
- Ask God to reveal God's message to you through what you are about to read.
- Choose a section to the Bible to read. Try not to just choose random sections; pick a book of the Bible to work through. Maybe start with the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John (Mark is the shortest!) and read a bit every day.
- Then use a commentary book, or a website to look at what that passage you have read might mean. Finish by spending a moment in prayer giving thanks for guidance and asking that God will help you to understand what you have learnt as you continue with your day.

4

SESSION Four

Do I trust it?



Aim

- To explore whether the Bible is reliable and trustworthy

This session focuses on the Bible as something to be trusted. There are activities to explore the meanings of trust and truth, and to reflect upon what people put their trust in today. There are opportunities to look at why there might appear to be discrepancies and contradictions throughout Scripture, particularly looking at the four Gospels.

Recommended activities*

Four Gospels: one story and **Same difference** begin to explore some of the reasons for textual differences between the Gospels.

The **Why do you trust?** activity opens a discussion as to the reasons why anything is trusted, including the Bible.

Leaders' notes

Activity	Preparation and resources
General research	Background research on the four Gospel writers if appropriate.
DVD clip	Chapter 4 of the DVD and the means to play it.
Trust games	Blindfold Things for an obstacle course
Why/why not?	Flipchart paper and pens
Four Gospels: one story*	Photocopy two copies of the script. Props for the script: distinctive clothing for the two parts, mobile phone Have read the Information point.
Same difference?*	Ensure you are familiar with the Bible stories and have copies available. Have read the Information point.
Why do you trust?*	Photocopy and cut up the question and answer sheets – enough for one between two people. Ensure you understand the Information point.
Faith, belief & truth	Ensure you are prepared to lead a discussion on the difference between the three concepts.

Activities

DVD clip

Watch chapter 4 on the DVD.

Trust games

There are many trust games that can be played with a group. Here are a few suggestions. Explore with the group at the end of the game what it feels like to trust someone and the difficulties of that.

■ Fall back

Split the group into pairs. Pairs must take it in turns to fall back on each other. The test is whether the person falling back trusts the person behind to catch them!

■ Two truths, one lie

Sit in a circle, and ask each member of the group to come up with two truths and one lie about themselves. As each person shares their three statements, the rest of the group have to try and work out which is the lie.

■ Obstacle course

Ask for a volunteer, and ask them to leave the room. While the volunteer is out of the room, set up an obstacle course. Before the person comes back into the room, blindfold them so they can't see the course.

Ask two members of the group to shout directions at the person blindfolded; one giving the right directions, one giving the wrong directions.

Why?/Why not?

Use two pieces of flip chart paper. Draw an outline of a body in the middle of both pieces of paper. Label one 'Why?' and the other 'Why not?' Ask the young people to write reasons why people trust the Bible around the body on the sheet labelled 'Why?' and on the other sheet write down reasons why people do not trust the Bible.

If appropriate, ask the group whether they personally agree with any of the reasons written.

This exercise may spark discussion which you may like to continue at this point or return to at different parts of the session.

Four Gospels: one story?*

Have prepared a couple of members/leaders of the group to act out a mugging scene, use a variety of props/costumes. Make sure that the young people are seated in a circle with the action happening in the middle.

If possible try to wear something distinctive for each character, that way, when the young people are asked to feed back what happened they can pick up on details. For example, "the mugger was wearing a red cap" etc.

Please make sure you follow the stage directions as this also adds details for the young people to pick up on. The script can be done as seriously or as theatrically as you feel is appropriate to your own youth group. A suitable script is included (page 28).

At the end of the scene the 'actors' leave the room and remove any props before returning. The group are asked to write down what they have witnessed (don't tell them this is what they are doing until after the drama has finished). Allow a few minutes for this.

As people feed back draw out that people may have remembered different aspects of the event they witnessed, some may have remembered specific props, some may have remembered what was said, and some may have talked about emotions and feelings of the people involved. Was there anything that everyone agreed on?

Information point

One of the reasons that people may give as to why they don't trust the Bible is that there appears to be discrepancies in the stories, particularly the four Gospels. However, it is not as simple as saying the story is not true because there are differences; the four Gospel writers were telling the story from their own perspectives which may account for the variations or omissions. In the same way that all witnesses to an event (eg a mugging as in the above activity) will want to put emphasis on certain aspects more than others, or will remember something specific, or may be influenced by their background, beliefs or culture, so it was for the Gospel writers too.

Information point

Each of the four Gospel authors lived in different places, had different occupations and come with different perspectives on life.

Matthew was a tax collector (Matthew 9:9) and came from a Jewish tradition. This meant that his Gospel was written for a Jewish audience and more in keeping with the society of the time. For example, men were more prominent in that society than women; therefore it would have been more appropriate to depict the angel appearing to Joseph than Mary because the story would carry more credibility within the Jewish society.

In contrast, Luke was thought to be a doctor (Colossians 4:14) and his Gospel is written for a non-Jewish audience and puts emphasis on people who were seen as less important in society, including women, the poor and the sick. This could explain why it is Mary to whom the angel appears rather than Joseph, and the shepherds were the first to see Jesus, as less value was placed on shepherds as members of society at that time.

You might want to encourage your group to read more about this in a commentary, or other appropriate resource.

Same difference?*

The Nativity story is one of the most famous Bible stories, but there are also a huge number of differences in the way it is portrayed by the different authors of the Gospels.

As a group, make a list of the key events in the story in the right order; who was there and what happened.

Then, split your group in half and ask one half to read Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38, and the other to read Matthew 2:1-12 and Luke 2:8-20.

Ask the two groups to point out the similarities and differences in the two accounts, and how the two Gospels deviate from the way the group have just outlined the story.

Once they have done this, bring the two groups back together and feedback.

As a whole group, discuss why you think these differences might be there.

Script for mugging drama

PERSON A – Victim PERSON B – Mugger

PERSON A stands/leans/sits as if at a bus stop.

Occasionally, they check their watch and then look to the left as if waiting for a bus.

PERSON A is playing on their phone.

PERSON B enters the from the right.

As **PERSON B** enters, **PERSON A** steps forward to check if the bus is coming again,

As **PERSON A** does this, **PERSON B** taps **PERSON A** on the right shoulder so that **PERSON A** spins round.

PERSON A: YES?!

PERSON B: Give us ya phone!

PERSON A: *(confused)* What? No! What?

PERSON B: I said GIVE ME YOUR PHONE! *(gives PERSON A a small shove using left hand)*

PERSON A: *(Stuttering)* I can't ... I mean ... it's not mine ... it's my brothers ... he'll kill me if I lose it!

PERSON B: Do I look like I care? *(gives PERSON A a small shove using right hand)*
GIVE ME YOUR PHONE! *(holds his right hand, with attitude(!) out ready to receive the phone)*

PERSON A: BUT PLEASE! *(begging, as PERSON A does this they hold out their hands palms up with their phone on their hands)*

PERSON B grabs the phone and laughs! Shoves **PERSON A** to the floor and runs off

PERSON A: *(looks dazed and confused, turns to the audience)* Can anyone lend me a phone to call the police?!

Why do you trust?*

Photocopy the sheet “Why do you trust?” and cut up the cards, making sure that there are enough for one set of cards between two people. Ask the young people to match the card asking why do you trust (set 1) with an answer from the set of cards (set 2). There is a blank card for them to add an answer that is not already mentioned if they

wish to. It is important to mention to the group that there is no right or wrong answer with this exercise and there may be several answers for each question. Feed back and discuss responses from the group, in particular the reasons why people trust the Bible.

Information point

In the DVD clip, Bob’s auntie talked about how her trust in the Bible is more than being able to prove it to be true.

Christians believe in the Bible for a number of different reasons; some because they can prove it with hard evidence, some trust it because it has authority as it is the word of God, some trust it because they have a relationship with God, some because it has helped them during difficult times.

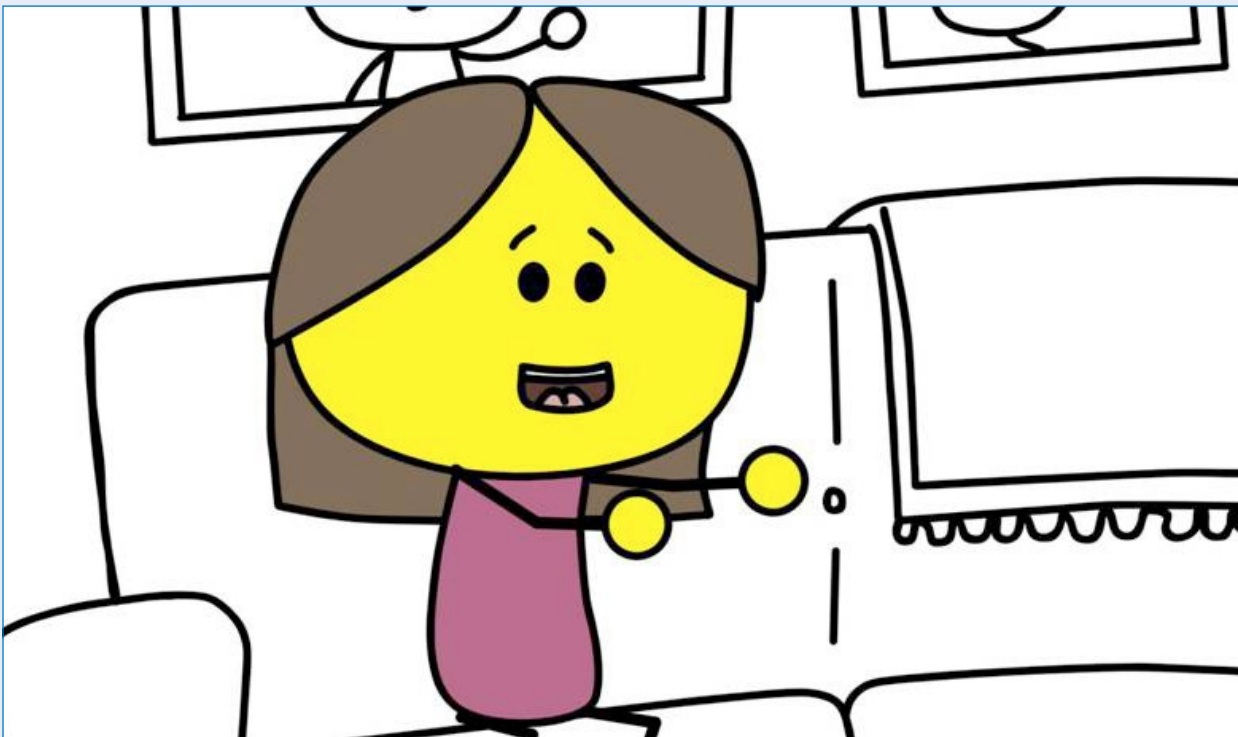
At different times in a Christian’s life some of these reasons to trust it become more important than others; being a Christian

doesn’t mean that you will have all the answers, and doubting and questioning is a part of faith.

The Bible says that it is the Holy Spirit that brings truth – ‘the spirit is truth’ (1 John 5:6).

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 says that the good news from God doesn’t just come with words but with the power of the Spirit and with sure knowledge that it is true.

Not all Christians will believe every single word of the Bible and there may be passages with which they struggle, but it is the Holy Spirit that enables them to trust in the truth of the Bible.



Why do you trust?

Set 1 - Questions

<p><i>Why do you trust...</i> that the chair won't break when I sit on it?</p>	<p><i>Why do you trust...</i> the aeroplane you travel on to fly through the air?</p>	
<p><i>Why do you trust...</i> that the world is round?</p>	<p><i>Why do you trust...</i> your friends?</p>	<p><i>Why do you trust...</i> the Bible?</p>
<p><i>Why do you trust...</i> your parents?</p>	<p><i>Why do you trust...</i> a text book?</p>	<p><i>Why do you trust...</i> your sense of smell?</p>

Why do you trust?

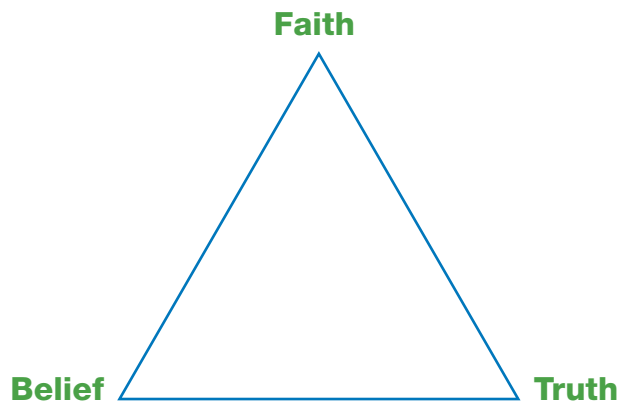
Set 2 - answers

Relationship	Evidence	Has helped me before
Previous positive experience	Facts can be checked	Has authority
Statistics	Investigation	Faith

Faith, belief & truth

Using the list below, your group will attempt to work out whether the statements are seen as correct, based on faith, belief or truth.

To do this, use a value continuum. Mark out three corners of a triangle in the room; this could be done with chairs or something similar, or alternatively just use three corners of the room.



To answer the questions ask the members of your group to move to the part of the triangle corresponding to their opinion. This might mean standing on one of the three corners, or maybe half way between two, or right in the middle if they think it's connected to all three!

Ask a few members of the group to explain at least one of their choices, making sure a wide range of people have the opportunity to speak.

Is the correctness of the following statements based on truth, belief or faith?

Stand in the triangle where you think most appropriate.

- Water boils at 100 degrees centigrade.
- There is life on other planets.

- The Loch Ness Monster is real.
- Henry VIII had six wives.
- Robin Hood gave money to the poor.
- Guy Fawkes tried to blow up parliament.
- King Arthur existed.
- Man landed on the moon in 1969.
- Elvis is dead.
- Life has a purpose.
- When you die you come back as someone else.
- God exists.
- There is a beginning to everything.
- Eating meat is wrong.
- The day after Tuesday is Wednesday.
- Time exists.
- Rain is wet.
- The sea is blue.
- Grass is green.
- There is a reason for everything.
- There is a place called hell.
- Jesus existed.
- Ghosts are real.

Once the group has done this and had some discussion about the answers, split them into pairs and ask them to come up with a definition for faith, belief and truth.

Discuss as a group...

- What are the differences between the three words?
- What is it that makes something 'true'?
- What would their response be to the question 'Is the Bible true'?

If you are working with an older group then you might want to encourage a more philosophical debate about the three concepts at this point.

5

SESSION Five

What difference does the Bible make?



Aims

- To explore and reflect upon the impact of the Bible on themselves and others
- Evaluate and reflect upon their personal journey as they have worked through the previous sessions

Recommended activity*

The DVD clip from chapter 5 begins to explore the difference that the Bible has made to the lives of individuals. The discussion that follows will enable members of the group to reflect more personally.

It is important to allow appropriate space for evaluation, personal reflection and prayer as the sessions in this resource may have raised questions and challenges for the young people's discipleship journey.

Leaders' notes

Activity	Preparation and resources
Different Dragon's Den	Pens, paper
Making the difference?	Photocopy and cut up sheet – enough for one between two or three.
DVD clip*	Clip from chapter 5 of the DVD and the means to play it Prepare to talk about Bible stories that have made a difference to you (if appropriate).
Target board*	If you have kept this activity from session 1, then use it again. If not, you will need to photocopy the target board sheet again from session 1.
Cardboard testimonies	Cardboard and pens Video camera/digital camera if appropriate
Salt and light	Provide a range of different foods for the group to taste but make sure they are covered with a cloth. Blindfold Copy of the Bible passage
Where next?	Gather appropriate resources for evaluation (if necessary).

Different Dragon's Den

Ask the young people (in pairs) to invent something that will make a difference to people's lives. The difference can be small or massive. The ideas can be as silly or as sensible as they want. Encourage the young people to present their ideas to an imaginary (or real!) Dragon's Den panel, who will decide on who has the best difference-making invention!

Making the difference

Cut out the cards on the sheet entitled "Making the difference". Have enough sets of these cards so that the young people can use them in small groups of two or three. (Or if you prefer you could simply read them out to your group and you could discuss it together.) Ask each group to arrange the cards into a list with what they think would make the most difference to a person's life at the top and then working down to which one they think would make the least difference to a person's life.

Gain feedback from the groups, in particular discussing what difference they think the Bible would make to people and whether they had any difficulty in placing the 'Bible' card.

To develop this further the leader chooses two or three cards which the young people then, in turn, have to argue should be at the top of the list, and they have to be as convincing as possible! Make sure that the 'Bible' card is included in the choice and afterwards discuss the arguments that were used.

DVD clip*

Watch chapter 5 of the DVD.

After watching the DVD clip, discuss the following questions with the group:

(Use appropriate methods for your group to enable the young people to answer as honestly as possible.)

- How did you feel watching that clip?
- Do you have any comments or questions about the clip? What are they?

- Has the Bible made a difference to any one that you know? How?
- Has the Bible made a difference to you? How?
- Would you like the Bible to make a difference to you?
- Are there any particular stories or verses in the Bible that have made a difference to you? What are they?

(It might be appropriate here for the leader to share a verse/story that has made a difference to them.)

You may find it useful to find some more stories of how the Bible has made a difference to people. You could do this by asking one or two people from your local church to speak to your group about the difference the Bible has made to them. Alternatively you could download stories from the internet and read/share these with the young people. There are some available on the Bible Society website (particularly in the Bible Sunday and appeals resources) and on the Gideons' website. www.biblesociety.org.uk/news

Target board – where are you now?*

During session 1 members of the group wrote words that described how they felt about the Bible onto a 'target board' to show how strongly they felt. If you have kept these target board sheets then show them again to your young people and discuss whether any of their views have changed. Discuss the reasons for the changes, or lack of change. (If you have not kept the original sheets, you could simply repeat the target board exercise from session 1.)

Making the difference

The wheel	The Bible	Equal rights
The car	The internet	Having employment
Air-conditioning	Mobile phone	Penicillin
Clean water	Having a family	Free education
The light bulb	The sewing machine	Space travel

Cardboard testimonies

Cardboard testimonies are a great way for children and young people to share their stories in a non-threatening and really simple way. Encourage your group to think about the five sessions, think about where each of them started and the journey they've been on to this point. For some of them, it might be a small change, but for others it might be a bigger transformation.

The idea behind a cardboard testimony is to think about how you once were and what God has done to change you. Take a piece of cardboard (a ripped piece from an old cardboard box would be fine, or if you prefer a piece of large paper or card). Ask the young people to write the start of the sentence "I once was like this..." and then the young people fill in the end of the sentence. Then write "BUT GOD..." and then the young people write how they have been changed.

For those who struggle to do this, it might be that they write about what they want God to do, or what they're hoping for. There is no right or wrong way to do this, it's just about sharing stories in a really simple and easy way. Share your testimonies with your group. We would love to see your group's testimonies, why not take some photos and email them to childrenandyouth@methodistchurch.org.uk (making sure you have parental permission before).

For a very simple example:

I once ... thought the Bible was boring

BUT GOD has changed me and now I want to read it!

I was once ... lonely

BUT GOD has changed me... He says that I am loved and not alone.

You can see more examples at vimeo.com/68283914

Salt and light

Cover up a number of small samples of food on a tray, making sure they are numbered (there needs to be a good range including some salty tastes). Blindfold each person and ask them to pick one to guess what the food is. To make it more fun, you might like to put in some really spicy foods, or some more unpleasant tastes – but make sure this is appropriate to your group (such as checking for food allergies or whether anyone is vegetarian).

Once you have finished the game, read out Matthew 5:13-16.

Reflection point

Salt makes such a difference to food, and you can really tell when there is salt in food because it changes the taste and enhances the flavour. On cookery programmes on television, you will regularly see the chef put salt in because it brings out the flavour of the food.

Jesus challenges us to be the salt of the earth; to make a real difference in the world in which we live. You have thought about the difference the Bible makes to you, and it's important to share that with others.

In your group talk about the good ways, and the difficulties, of sharing the Bible with your friends and family, or people at school, college or work.

Where next?

It is helpful to evaluate the sessions – this could be done in a variety of creative ways, but draw out what topics/ideas the group found interesting, what they didn't like, which activities they found the most helpful/engaging and why.

Discuss with the group whether they would like to take further any issues/topics covered in these five sessions. Together make a plan for what the group, and individuals, might do in the following weeks.

E

EXTRA SESSIONS

Ways to explore the Bible



Aim

- to equip young people with the tools to engage with different Bible stories using a variety of methods

In this session there are examples of five Bible studies, each one using a different approach which is outlined below. The material in this session could be used in a variety of ways. For example, if there is space in your programme, you could designate a whole session to this material and set up each Bible study as a station around the room, inviting your group to move around the stations and engage individually. This could be done after completing all five sessions or would also be appropriate following session 3: How do I read it? You may find it helpful to gather the group together at the end of the session to briefly discuss and reflect upon which station helped them engage most with the Bible. You may choose not to discuss this but rather to gather together and end with a prayer. Alternatively, a Bible study (from the examples given) could be used at any point as you work through all five sessions. The material is designed to be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of your group and the time available, and can be used as a whole group Bible study or by individuals.

Methods for engaging with the Bible

Art

Using a piece of art that links with a Bible passage can help to focus attention on the story in a different way. For some people who struggle with reading, or for those who prefer to learn visually,

this can be an alternative way than simply reading the text. You can use this technique for any Bible passage as long as you can find a painting/ photograph that is in some way related to the passage. Questions to help the young people reflect on the image can be given for individual use or group discussion. Young people may want to respond to the Bible passage through creating art themselves.

Using the example

An example of using art to engage with the Bible can be seen on page 39 entitled “Where is God?” This sheet could be used on a station for individual use, or for the young people to use at home. Alternatively you could simply adapt this for use in a group setting. You may want to show the artwork on a projector or have copies available. There is a copy of the artwork on the DVD.

Video

Using a video that is related to a biblical passage or theme can help to focus thoughts in a different way and may bring a passage or theme to life. There are many short videos available on the internet which relate to biblical stories. These may stimulate questions and responses from young people in a way that reading the text alone may not. Make sure the connection between the video and the Bible passage is clear.

Using the example

An example of using video to engage with the Bible can be found on page 41 entitled “Follow”.

You will need to have the means to play this clip whether you set it up as an individual station or for the whole group. The sheet with reflective questions could be used on a station for individual

use, for the young people to use at home or adapted for whole group discussion. If you don't have the equipment or time for the young people to make their own video then this can be missed out or set as a challenge for the young people to do at home.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient four-fold approach to reading scripture. It follows a pattern of reading, reflecting, expressing and resting. It is a slow meditative approach and one done individually. This can be used with any Bible passage.

Using the example

An example of using *Lectio Divina* can be seen on page 42. This could be printed for individual use or the leaders could read from the sheet to lead and direct the stages.

Bible Commentaries

For some, gaining more information about a Bible passage can help to deepen their understanding and aid their reflection. More detail about Bible passages, such as the historical context, background information about the author or explanations of language, can be found in Bible commentaries. There are numerous series of commentaries written, of varying ease of reading and depth of comments. Some commentaries can be quite daunting to a young person. Finding ways to help young people use the information found in these sources can help inform a deeper exploration of the Bible. One way could be for the leader to read the commentaries in advance and share key information with the group in creative ways. Alternatively, short sections of an easily-read commentary could be given to members of the group to read, discover for themselves and share amongst the group. This will of course depend on the nature and age of the group. Not all background information needs to be gained from books, you may choose to use video clips or suitable apps (for phones or tablets) or you may have someone at your church with appropriate knowledge who would be willing to speak to your group. Helping young people to see the benefits of gaining information about a Bible passage is a useful skill for their long-term discipleship journey.

Using the example

There is an example of one way to use commentaries to gain insight into a Bible passage on page 43-45. This is very simple in structure and could be used for different passages if the relevant background information was sourced appropriately. In the example the extra information about the passage is written onto a sheet. However this could be delivered in more creative ways. This example is best used in a group setting where questions can be discussed, but with adaptation could be used for individuals. The key to this Bible study is enabling young people to see that having more information about a passage can aid understanding.

Music

For centuries the Bible has been used as inspiration for hymns and songs. Listening to lyrics put to music can help some people to engage with the words in a way that reading the words alone may not. There are many examples of music that could be used ranging from modern worship songs to the most ancient of hymns. You may find it helpful to highlight the specific Bible passage that the song refers to and to have copies of the lyrics available. It may be helpful to use reflective questions to help draw out learning or insight gained from the experience of listening to the music. This way of engaging with the Bible is ideal to do individually but will also be a useful method for a group to use.

Using the example

There is an example of engaging with a Bible passage through music on page 46. You may choose to play the music in this example as an internet clip with images or simply just as music. It may be useful to have the lyrics available. You may, of course, choose to use other examples of music which relate to the theme of kingship. If you wanted to have this Bible study available as a station for individuals to engage with you will need to have some mp3 players available with these songs. If you are doing this Bible study as a group you may find it helpful to sing one of these songs to finish the session.

Where is God? – 1 Kings 19:9-13

Look at this image...



There is also a copy of this image available on the DVD.

What are your first impressions?

What strikes you the most?

What do you like/dislike about it?

Read 1 Kings 19:9-13

- What strikes you the most from the reading?
- Have there been times in your life where you've found God in places you didn't expect? What were they? And where did you find God?
- What similarities/differences are there between the passage and the image?
- What does the reading teach you?

Reflecting on the image and the passage, either create your own piece of art around the question, 'Where is God?' or find a picture/painting that expresses how you feel about where God is.

How has God spoken to you?

Reflect on some of the ways God speaks to people in...

- Luke 5:1-11
- Acts 9
- Exodus 3:1-6

WHERE IS GOD?

here?



here?



Or here?

HOPE

here?

here?

WWII



Follow? – John 20:10-18

Watch the video...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-hW68opCLs

- Which bit stood out to you?
- What stories mentioned did you recognise? What were they?
- Were there any that you didn't recognise?
- Find some of the stories mentioned: what do they say about Jesus?

Read John 20:10-18

- How do you feel about the concept of resurrection?
- What was the significance of Jesus seeing Mary Magdalene before the rest of the disciples?
- What effect does the resurrection have on you today?

Create your own video!

Use your video to reflect on the following questions:

- What does it mean to follow Jesus?
- What do the disciples tell us about what it means to follow Jesus?
- How has following Jesus had an impact on your life?

Servant King – John 13:1-17

LECTIO DIVINA MEANS SACRED READING AND IS AN ANCIENT WAY OF ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE. IT IS A PROCESS THAT ENABLES THE READER TO HAVE A DEEPER CONNECTION WITH THE PASSAGE. IT HAS A FOURFOLD APPROACH: **READ, REFLECT, EXPRESS, REST.**

Find a space in the room, make yourself comfortable, and focus on your breathing as you settle down. Reading Scripture this way is not rushed but a slow process. Take your time with each stage. Make sure you have a copy of the passage.



READ

Read the passage through slowly and carefully. Read it a few times and focus on a word or phrase that really sticks out for you.



REFLECT

As you find that word/phrase, repeat it to yourself slowly. Reflect on what that word/phrase might have to say to you in the context of your life, thoughts, memories, concerns, ideas.



EXPRESS

Start to have a chat with God, in whatever way feels the most comfortable. It may just be odd words, it may be just through pictures and images that come into your head, it may be in full sentences as if you were having a conversation with another person. Talk about the thoughts that the Bible passage has raised for you. Ask God to help you to reflect and ponder on it further and deeper.



REST

As the time draws to a close, just be still, enjoy the peace and tranquillity of simply being with God. Take yourself away from whatever else is going on, relax, and be thankful for the time you've just spent. You don't need to have a conversation with God or force any feelings, just rest knowing that God is with you.

Last Supper – Luke 22:14-23



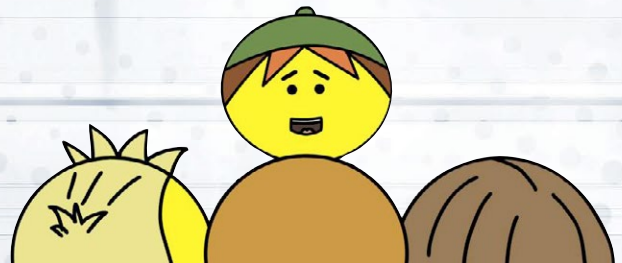
READ THE PASSAGE ONCE.

What words or phrases stand out?

READ THE PASSAGE AGAIN.

It may be interesting to look at the same passage in different versions/translations.

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE about the passage? You may find it helpful to discuss your questions in small groups if possible. (You don't need to have the answers!)



NOW READ THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET.

This gives more detail about the passage. Read this in small groups and discuss the questions.

READ THE PASSAGE AGAIN.

Spend a short time quietly reflecting on what you have learned and discussed about the passage and what challenges it may have raised.

The process used here may be helpful in any further personal Bible study.

- Reading
- Listening/thinking about/questioning the passage
- Finding out more about the passage
- Discussing with others
- Personal reflection

Background Information – Luke 22:14-23

PASSOVER

Passover is a Jewish festival and at the time of Jesus was a particularly important festival when pilgrims would travel to Jerusalem for the duration of the festival.

Passover remembered the story of when the Israelites were held as slaves in Egypt. God sent ten plagues onto Egypt; the last was the plague of the death to the first born. To avoid this plague the Israelites had to sacrifice a lamb and smear the blood on the doorposts of their houses. Moses eventually led the people to freedom across the Red Sea.

The celebrations at Passover remember this story. On the Passover table there would have been food and drink as symbols to remember different parts of the story. The table would have had bread and wine on it as part of the meal. During the Passover meal, wine would be drunk altogether to remember key events in the story. Also unleavened bread would be broken apart and shared and then eaten by everyone together to remember the escape from Egypt.

SYMBOLS

Jesus uses the symbols of the bread and the wine from the Passover table and made them about himself. The implication is that God set the people free through Moses, and now people will be free through Jesus, but in a different way.

Just as the lamb was sacrificed to save the Israelites on the night of the last plague, so Jesus will be sacrificed to save the people – the wine now represents his blood.

There was a glass of wine for Elijah at the Passover meal that remained untouched, as it was a symbol that the Jews were still waiting for the Messiah. It would not be drunk until the Messiah came. After the supper Jesus ‘took the cup’: this was a powerful symbol that he was the Messiah.



THE OLD COVENANT

The old covenant was that the Jewish people promised to obey God and keep God’s commandments. Jesus brought in a new relationship, where it wasn’t just about showing that you could keep the commandments, but instead it was about what was inside people’s hearts. This is the new covenant. Whenever a covenant was agreed upon it was sealed by blood being spilt. Jesus uses wine to symbolise his blood which seals the new covenant.

OTHER THINGS ...

Jesus didn't try and give the disciples a theory about his death, but by what he did he was telling them that he would die but that it would be for a purpose.

Judas (who went on to betray Jesus) was there throughout the whole meal.

The Passover meal happened in an upper room. It was common for an upper room to be used as a place where a rabbi could meet and talk with his disciples.

Luke was a Gentile (non-Jew) and probably a doctor. He also is believed to have written the book of Acts. He is the only New Testament writer who was not a Jew. He was writing for a non-Jewish audience.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What piece(s) of information did you not know before?
2. Which piece of information (if any) has made you think about this story differently?
3. How do you think the disciples would have been feeling? Would they have understood what was happening?
4. Did Judas and Jesus both know what Judas would do? How might Judas have been feeling?

God as King – Matthew 21:1-11



What does the concept of 'King' mean to you?



What does it make you think about?



Read the passage through, and compare Jesus' entry to Jerusalem with the celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee or other royal event.

1. How are they different?
2. How are they the same?
3. What are the differences between our attitude to someone being a king, and what Jesus thought being a king was all about?

As you ponder these questions, use the following songs as a focus for your thoughts; reflect on the lyrics and what they have to say about the idea of being a king.

- Here is our king www.youtube.com/watch?v=F45o6Fx9EtE
- The servant king www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrQiLEO4D5s
- Build your kingdom here www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbdJXKqVgtg
- King of wonders www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghmvEPVLOPs

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