



GO DEEPER

## SESSION 1: WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?



### Aim

To explain what 'the gospel' means and explore what its effect on our lives might be.



### Starter

At the centre of what Christians believe is something called 'the gospel', which literally means 'good news'. When we hear news, we must evaluate it to decide if it is true. Can you guess which of the following is fake news?

In 2020, US President Donald Trump, suggested that COVID-19 might be cured by:

**a) Injecting disinfectant into people**

b) Sitting on a special sunbed

c) Eating a diet of cheese pizza

Expand this activity by having pupils share three facts about themselves, one of which is false. The rest of the group should guess which fact is fake news.



### Video

Watch the video [What is the Gospel? \(part 2\)](#) (Running time 3:54)



### Questions

Encourage pupils to write any questions on sticky notes as they occur to them.

Answer questions of understanding about the video straight away unless these will be answered later in the session. If there is not time for a question, confirm you will answer it another time. Consider using the 'car park' so pupils know you will not forget.



### Exploring the Bible

The Bible is made up of 66 books of different genres, including four biographies of Jesus' life on earth. These biographies are called gospels and they help us get to know Jesus and why he is good news.

Mark is the name of one of the gospels, named after its author, and it starts with these words: "The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." (Mark 1:1 NIV)

### Discuss

**If someone said to you, 'The biographies of Jesus are so old they probably cannot be relied on as accurate,' how would you respond?** *This question aims to encourage the young people to be positive about the four gospels being reliable historical documents*

and therefore worthy of being explored.

### **What three things does this verse tell us about the good news?**

1. *It is about Jesus*
2. *Jesus is the Messiah – literally meaning ‘anointed’; the Messiah was someone God’s people had been waiting for many years to appear; his appearance was promised in the Old Testament as the one who would bring people to know God*
3. *Jesus is the Son of God*

In the video Andy Bannister said the good news about Jesus can be summarised in the statement, “Jesus is Lord”.

In Mark 1:17 Jesus invites people to come and follow him. As Andy said in the video, Jesus wanted them to give up control of what they did in their lives and do things his way. If God is only a supremely powerful being, this would be terrifying. Instead, the Bible teaches God is also supremely loving and cares about each person, using his power for good, not evil.

To illustrate this read as many of these sections from Mark’s Gospel as time allows: Mark 1:29-34a; 4:35-41; 5:21-24, 35-43.

#### Discuss

**From what has been read here in Mark’s Gospel and from what you already know, what is the good news in the power that Jesus displays?**

*Jesus had power over illness, evil spirits, nature and has power over death, bringing people back to life.*

### **Who (other than God) would you allow to have a say in how you live, and why?**

*Encourage the pupils to think of both positive and negative examples. Positively, some people may show care for them and so they are glad to listen to their thoughts. Talk about what qualities that person has which means pupils are glad for their influence. Negatively, they may obey teachers or relatives even if they do not agree with them or*



#### **Reflection**

Drawing from these questions, allow a time for quiet reflection and prayer that is most appropriate to your group.

- ◆ What does it mean to you that Jesus is Lord?
- ◆ Are there areas of your life that Jesus is not Lord over?  
Pray now about these and ask him to help you submit them to him.
- ◆ What is it about Jesus that is good news to you that you would be excited to share?  
Pray for God’s help and an opportunity to share this with someone who does not yet know God.

Alternatively, you might choose an active response such as each person writing words on a stone that describe the ‘good news’ Jesus is e.g. ‘he cares’, ‘rescuer’, ‘powerful’, ‘bringer of life’. Group members can take their stones away.



### Further resources

Here are two options to help you share the good news with a friend:

**Uncover** is Mark's biography of Jesus and comes with videos and questions for reflection. You could read through the biography with one or two friends.

The free **Voke App** takes you and one or more friends through a series of videos on faith. The app then helps you to discuss together the issues raised.