



GO DEEPER

SESSION 10: DO ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD?



Aim

To explore beliefs on whether all religions lead to God and to consider the unique claim of Christianity and whether it is desirable.



Starter

You will need four sheets of A4 paper, two pairs of scissors and the sets of instructions on page 4.

Ask for four volunteers to complete a challenge. Tell them you will explain the aim of the challenge and then give each person a different set of instructions about how to complete it.

The challenge is to make a hole in the A4 paper which is big enough for them to get themselves through. Give each volunteer one of the four sets of instructions and give scissors to those with the third and fourth sets. Set a timer for three minutes and start. (Note: If you think the fourth set of instructions is too complicated, practise and deliver it yourself.)

When the activity is finished, only one set of instructions should have proved successful – even though all four claimed they would work. In this session we will explore whether this is also the case with different religions.



Video

Watch the video **Do All Religions Lead to God?** (Running time 3:40)



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

In the opening activity all four sets of instructions claimed to lead to success, but they did not. We can think that world religions are the same, and that they all claim to bring us to God. However, in the video, Andy Bannister said that not all religions even claim to lead to an eternity with God. Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam do not offer a future with God.

Discuss

How surprising did you find this?

How does this knowledge help you as you share your faith?

It can be a struggle to share that we believe there is only one true God who wants to be with humans, because we think it sounds arrogant. It helps us to know that Christianity's claims are unique. There is only one way to *this* God. As we speak with friends of other faiths, we are not competing, but offering a completely different God.

Read John 14:1-14

In verse 6 Jesus makes it clear that there is only one way to the God of the Bible.

Discuss

What is unique about the relationship the Christian God offers his followers? (v.1-3)

Jesus is preparing a place now for those who believe. This is unique as it is not just a place of material blessing but a place where God will be with us. (It may be useful to note here that Islam differs as it offers a place of material blessing, but Allah will not be there.)

How can we know what this God is like? (v.7, 9-11)

Jesus reveals what God the Father is like – if we know Jesus then we know the Father. 'The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being...' (Hebrews 1:3 NIV)

There is an old story about a group of blindfolded people who encounter an elephant. Each feels a separate part of the animal, and so they all have different perspectives on what they have encountered. One of the key issues as we share our faith with friends is *which* God we are talking about. It is easy to have a long conversation and not know we have been talking about two totally different things. It can be helpful then when someone mentions God to ask, 'Which God?'

Discuss

How would you describe the God of the Bible if someone asked you which God you worshipped?

Some possible words include:

- (1) **Trinity** *The unique point of Christianity is that the God of the Bible is Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Evangelist Glen Scrivener describes God as, 'a community of three persons united in love.' This tells us a huge amount about who God is – he is relational; he is diverse; he is a Father because he has eternally had a Son.*
- (2) **Faithful** *A God of covenant who commits himself to his children and does not give them up no matter what they do.*
- (3) **Gracious** *The relationship God offers is freely given, not earned.*
- (4) **Sovereign** *God is in control of all things, all knowing.*
- (5) **Holy** *God is absolutely perfect.*



Reflection

Allow a time of reflection that is most appropriate to your group.

You may wish to reflect quietly or discuss the following:

- ◆ In John 8:44 Jesus tells us the devil is a liar and the father of lies. Does your belief in God accurately reflect who he says he is in the Bible? Pray for God to show you the truth about who he is, and commit to reading Scripture, trusting what it says about God.
- ◆ Who has God put in your life who needs to hear about him? Pray for opportunities to do that both by your actions and your words.

For an active reflection, give each person a piece of paper and pens. Invite them to draw around their hand, and to write on each finger the name of a friend or family member who they would like to commit to praying for in the coming weeks and months.



Further resources

Is Jesus the Only Way? An article from bethinking.org

Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God? An article from bethinking.org

After God An article about atheism from bethinking.org

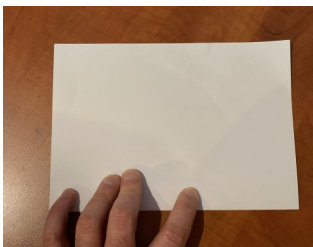
Starter Activity

How to make a hole in A4 paper big enough to walk through

Instruction 1 Place the paper in front of you. Now imagine yourself being able to cut a hole in it which you can walk through. Keep imagining throughout the time! Don't touch the paper. If you imagine hard enough, the hole will appear!

Instruction 2 Place the paper in front of you. Talk to it, demanding that it produce a hole in itself big enough to walk through. If you want to, try waving your hands over the paper. Do not touch it. If you plead with it hard enough, the hole will appear!

Instruction 3 Try anything you can think of to make a hole big enough to walk through. You can rip or cut the paper. You could try suggesting a smaller classmate has to walk through it. If you work hard



Instruction 4 *

Fold a piece of paper in half like a book. Put the paper on the table with folded side closest to you.



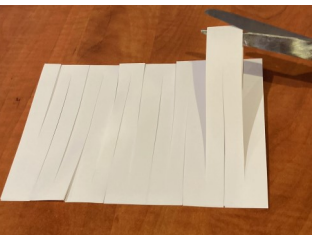
Cut into the folded side, about 1 cm from the left hand edge, and start cutting straight towards the far side of the paper. Stop cutting about 1 cm before the opposite edge, so you don't cut all the way across the paper.



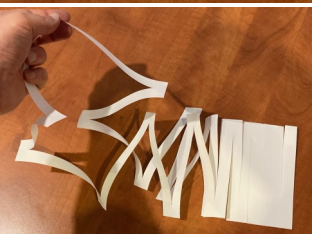
Turn the paper around so the fold is away from you. Cut in around 1 cm from the last cut, and stop about 1 cm before you get to the folded side.



Alternate between cutting from the folded side, and the side opposite. Keep your cuts 1 cm apart, and always stop cutting 1 cm before you get to the far side of the paper. When you have finished, you should have a zig-zag of paper.



Look along the folded side of the paper. You should have a series of loops of paper. Cut along the fold of each of the loops EXCEPT the first loop and the last loop. Leave these intact.



Carefully pull the paper apart, being careful not to tear it. You should have a large loop. Now try to fit yourself through the loop!