

SESSION 1

IN THE BEGINNING

SESSION AIMS

To introduce the concept of the Bible as one big story, written by many human authors but inspired by God.

To explore what the Bible says about God creating the world and humans, and to begin considering the implications of this for our lives today.

BIBLE REFERENCE

GENESIS 1 & 2

GAME: CONSEQUENCES

This game is best played in groups of five or six people, with a leader talking everyone through the steps from the front.

Each player starts with a piece of paper. For step one, ask them to write a boy's name at the top of their paper and then to fold the paper to hide what they have written before passing it to the next player.

Continue in this way with the steps below, getting them to fold over their paper and pass it on after each step. The words in brackets should be replaced by the chosen word or phrase:

- met (girl's name)
- in/at/on (where they met)
- He said (what he said)
- She said (what she said)
- He (what he did)
- She (what she did)
- The consequence was (what happened)

When the players have completed all eight steps, get them to unfold the piece of paper they are holding and to read out the resulting story, either in their small groups or as a whole group, depending on your numbers and time.

You could make the point that in the game you had stories with many authors, and the stories that were produced were sometimes funny, but didn't make much sense.

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Give each person a small piece of plasticine or play dough, and give them a couple of minutes to create something that represents an aspect of themselves. It could be something they like, a skill they have or something relating to their personality. Let each person take a turn to show their model to the rest of the group and let the others guess what they have made and how it relates to them.

Discuss: The Bible starts by stating that God created everything. Do you think it matters whether we believe that? What difference does it make to believe that God created the world and that he created us?

Try to draw out the point that if God created everything, he is the one who understands how it all works. Believing that he created the world, and created us, should make us want to pay attention to what he says about how to live. It should encourage us to get to know him so that we can discover more about who he is and who he has made us to be.

What do you think it means to be made in God's image? In what ways are we like God? In what ways are we different from God?

If you create an image of someone by drawing them or painting them, for example, it is not exactly the same as them, but it reflects something of them. Being made in God's image means that we are created to be like God in some way.

Some ways we are like God: we are made for relationship and community, we can create, we have the ability to reason and to choose. Christians are called to become more like God in character as we get to know him more – being more loving, patient, kind etc.

Some ways we are different from God: he is all-knowing, all-powerful, eternal etc. He is ultimately in charge.

What do you think about the fact that our relationship with God is central to his creation of the world – that he loves us and that he made us to know him and to love him? What do you think this means for how we live our lives?

There isn't a right answer to the first question – this is just to get people thinking and talking about the fact that we are central to his creation. The second question may lead to discussions around the fact that true meaning in life comes from God and following his purposes for us; life separate from him doesn't make sense.

Read Psalm 139:13–16. The Bible teaches that God made the earth and the universe, but he also created each individual. What difference would it make to think about ourselves, and others, in this way?

You could ask the young people to share their answers, or you could leave them to reflect on this by themselves.

PRAY TO CLOSE

SESSION 2

LOSING EDEN

SESSION AIMS

To look at what happens in God's perfect creation when people exert their free will, and what his response to this is.

BIBLE REFERENCE

GENESIS 3–11

GAME: WHAT KIND OF FRIEND ARE YOU?

Either read out the questions on the PowerPoint slides in the additional resources or project them. Ask the pupils to vote, or to move to a corner to display their response to the questions. If you have time you may wish to ask them why they chose their response.

WEEK 1 RECAP

Last time we began our journey through the Bible. We thought about how, although it was written by many human authors, it all ties together as one big story, and Christians believe it is God's Word.

We looked at the very beginning of the Bible where it talks about God creating everything and describing it as "very good," and we thought about the special place human beings have as part of that creation. The Bible teaches that we were made in God's image to know him and to love him, and to be loved by him.

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

This week we'll see what happens to the creation God described as "very good" in the last session and discover that the addition of humans led to heartbreak. What will God do when his beautiful creation is ruined by people with no end to the pain and mess caused?

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Discuss: If you were the creator of the world, would you want people to have choice, including the choice to harm themselves and others? Or would you create people who were forced to do only good? Why?

Allow pupils to express their own opinions freely, thanking each for their contribution. Some may wonder why a good God would allow his creation to have choice if he knew they would use it badly.

What would you have done with Adam and Eve and the messed-up world if you were in God's shoes?

What do God's choices tell us about what he is like?

- He is a relational God, who wants to know his creation and be with them.
- He is a God of love, who creates a perfect world for humans. He meets Adam and Eve in their failure and provides for them. He clothes them in animal skin, pointing forward to the time when he'll clothe them with his own righteousness.
- Justice is part of God's nature, and he cannot allow wrongdoing to go unpunished.
- He is a merciful God, who saves Noah, his family, and animals in order to repopulate the earth and give humans a second chance.

PRAY TO CLOSE

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: WHAT KIND OF FRIEND ARE YOU?

Question 1

Your friend has to go to a boring family gathering and asks you to come too. Do you...

- Go. They're a good friend—they'd do the same for you!
- Go. They'd never do the same for you, but you want to be a good friend.
- Lie, and say you're busy. You can go but it sounds really dull.
- Tell them the truth that you've got better things to do!

Question 2

Someone in your friend group is leaking your secrets, so you decide to tell each person a fake secret and find out who it is! When you find out, how do you feel?

- Great! You've figured out who it is! Now you can confront your friend.
- Mixed. It's good to know who it is, but you're hurt by the betrayal.
- Guilty. Was it right to set them up in this way? Perhaps you should have done nothing.
- Rubbish. You wish you'd never told them anything in the first place. It would be better to have no friends than be hurt like this.

Question 3

Someone has written a nasty message on your friend's locker and everyone's talking about it. Do you...

- Say you agree. It's probably true if someone says so.
- Join in a little bit. If you don't, it'll be you they're talking about next!
- Listen to the gossip, but don't contribute. Maybe you avoid your friend for a bit too?
- Stand up for your friend and say it's not true!

Question 4

You find out your friend has told loads of people who you fancy. What do you do?

- Give them the cold shoulder and never speak to them again.
- Confront them about it, and tell them you don't want to be their friend any more.
- Give them a chance to explain. Perhaps it's not as bad as it sounds.
- Tell them it's ok. Sometimes you also say things you shouldn't!

SESSION 3

THE COVENANT

SESSION AIMS

To introduce Abraham and his family line and to consider the promises given to them by God that would lead to the rescue of all people. God, in his love and mercy reached out to us and set this rescue plan in place, and he wants us to trust him.

BIBLE REFERENCE

GENESIS 12–50

GAME: RESCUE THE JELLY BABIES

You will need: two bowls of jelly containing jelly babies (prepared in advance), newspaper or a cover for the table, baby wipes and paper towels to clean up.

Choose two pupils to take part in the challenge. Give to both pupils a bowl of jelly with some jelly babies in them. Get the pupils to try to “rescue” the jelly babies by picking them out of the jelly with their teeth. See who can be the first to rescue all their jelly babies.

WEEK 2 RECAP

Last week we discovered what happened when people with free will entered God’s perfect creation – and it wasn’t pretty. Everything was messed up: people’s relationships with one another, their relationship with God, their relationship with good and evil. God was faced with an unenviable decision. Should he just start again? In some ways he did, sending so much rain that most of the world was wiped out. But in other ways God chose to keep his relationship with people, promising someone who could pay the price for the evil humans had inflicted.

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

It’s clear that there is a problem. God’s world is in a mess. People, the pinnacle of God’s creation, those he made in his image for relationship with him and to care for this world in which we live, have turned their backs on their Creator, and in pride and disobedience are going it alone. But what does God do? What he always planned to do...because none of this is a surprise to him. In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes this: “Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.” Ephesians 1:4,5

Let’s find out how he sets this plan in motion...

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Discuss: What examples can you think of in this account where God was kind to the people?

- *God came to Abraham and told him that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Nobody on earth had come looking to God to be rescued. Even Abraham hadn't cried out to God. God made the first move.*
- *The brothers were forgiven, and they survived the famine.*
- *Judah, one of the brothers, who had put Joseph down the well, was promised that the Saviour of the world would come from his family line.*

What do we learn about God from this? Are you surprised? Does this differ from your view of God?

He is loving and merciful. He gives us what we don't deserve.

God tested Abraham's faith and obedience. Why was this important to God? What do you think about this?

God wants us to love him more than anything or anyone in the world, not because he is an ego maniac but because he knows that is where we will find true joy and peace. The angel said to Abraham – "Now I know that you truly fear God." To fear God is to absolutely trust God, to love with all of our hearts, soul, mind and strength because he is all he says he is.

Read Genesis 50:20. Which points in the story tell us that God was in control of all that was going on? What are the implications of this on our lives today?

Through all the difficult things that Joseph was experiencing the Bible tells us that God was with Joseph. Joseph told his brothers in Genesis 50:20: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good, to save many lives." Difficult things come our way in life, but we can know that, as his children, God never abandons us. Through difficult things God is at work. God is always in absolute control.

PRAY TO CLOSE

SESSION 4

ESCAPING EGYPT

SESSION AIMS

To present an overview of the story of Moses and look at how it points ahead to Jesus, to reflect on both God's presence with his people and his power to rescue.

BIBLE REFERENCE

EXODUS 1-14

GAME: WHO AM I?

Before the session, prepare post-it notes, one for each person, with the name of a famous person or character written on each one.

To play the game, stick a post-it note on each young person's back. Their task is to identify the name they have been given by asking questions of the other group members. They can only ask questions that can be answered yes or no, for example, "Am I a man?", "Am I a singer?"

To get the group mixing, you could make the rule that they can only ask one question of any group member before moving on to talk to someone else.

You could provide a small prize for the first person to work out their secret identity.

WEEK 3 RECAP

Last week we saw the beginning of God's rescue plan set in motion. God chose one man – Abraham – and told him that he would make him into a great nation, that he would give him the land of Canaan for his descendants to live in, and that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. What a promise! Abraham's descendants now number 70 and they live in Egypt on the best of the land. While the journey through the three generations to this point has been filled with turmoil, sibling rivalry and deceit, God's commitment to his promises never waver.

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

Today we're going to jump forward a few hundred years to the start of the second book in the Bible – the book of Exodus.

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Discuss: What stood out to you from what we've heard today? Was there anything that was new to you, or are there any parts you have questions about?

Read Exodus 3:11-15 – this is part of the account of God's conversation with Moses at the burning bush.

How do you think Moses would have felt when God called him to lead the Israelites to freedom?

Surprised, scared, inadequate... In verse 11 he repeats the words, "Who am I?" He doesn't feel able to do the task.

What does this encounter teach us about God? How is Moses encouraged by this?

Try to draw out points such as God's power, his care for his people, the fact that he chose Moses even though Moses had made mistakes, and God's promise to be with Moses as he took on this task.

Draw attention to v14 where God reveals his name, "I Am," and try to draw out what this means – he is eternal and unchanging. He is the same God who made the covenant with Abraham, and his character is still the same. He will be faithful to do what he promised.

This must have given Moses confidence knowing that this God was with him and that God's power was far greater than Pharaoh's.

How can what we learn about God from the story of Moses encourage us today?

Remind the young people of the different parts of the story – the burning bush, going to Pharaoh, the plagues, the rescue at the Red Sea. Encourage them to think about how knowing God's presence and power to rescue etc. could help them in situations they might face today.

PRAY TO CLOSE

SESSION 5

INTO THE WILD

SESSION AIMS

To explore the abundant life offered to the Israelites by God in the covenant to Moses in Exodus 19–20, and the people's response.

BIBLE REFERENCE

EXODUS 12 – DEUTERONOMY 34

GAME: RULEBREAKER

How do you feel about rules?! Work through the statements below, asking pupils whether they think these are good or bad rules for them to have to keep. They may be able to maturely discuss both the costs and benefits of rules. If they tend to see all the rules as negative, start over and ask them if they were looking after a younger child whether they think they would give out these rules and why?

Statements:

- You have to tell an adult where you are going and who with
- You can't have social media until you are 16
- You can only have 2 hours of screen time each day
- You have to eat 5 portions of fruit and veg each day
- You must be off your phone/gaming by 10pm

WEEK 4 RECAP

Last week we looked at how God brought the Israelites out from a life of slavery under Egyptian power in a spectacular way. The people were stuck building bricks for merciless slave drivers who treated them abysmally. They cried out to God who called Moses to speak up on behalf of his people to the Egyptian leader Pharaoh. Things only got worse for the people, but God revealed his power, sending ten plagues upon Egypt. Yet Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to accept God had greater power than him. Eventually every family in Egypt lost its firstborn son, whilst God ensured death passed over every Israelite family who had painted the blood of a sacrificed lamb on their door.

Pharaoh told the Israelites to go, but then he changed his mind again and sent his army to hunt them down. The Israelites were backed into a corner – the army coming towards them and the Red Sea behind them. It looked like it was all over for the Israelites... until God miraculously saved them by opening a way through the sea – and then closing it on top of the pursuing Egyptian army.

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

Now that God has shown his power and care for the people so dramatically, he sets out the relationship he wants to have with them and how he wants them to live. After being rescued from years of captivity and a harsh existence under brutal rulers, we see how the people respond to God's offer of care and protection.

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Discuss: We talked about rules at the start today and how we can see any restriction on our freedom as negative. What do you think of the commandments God gave his people?

We might naturally tend to think of rules as restrictive and spoiling our fun, but we all know that some rules are good for us. God's rules were not about spoiling things but were designed to ensure the people lived a good and abundant life!

What do you think about the people's reaction to what God asks of them? What about you – do you see God's words as giving life or taking the fun out of life?

The people choose to reject God's rules, believing it's better to have control over what they can and cannot do, and it didn't work out well. We may all be able to identify times when we rejected rules that have been placed on us, only to discover later why they were actually good for us.

PRAY TO CLOSE

SESSION 6

A PROMISED LAND

SESSION AIMS

To cover the account of the Israelites from their arrival in the Promised Land, through the time of the Judges and Kings. The temple has been built by Solomon and the kingdom of Israel has split in two. Kings come and go, but few follow God. Consider God's response to idolatry and evil, and the fact that God is rich in mercy and patient with his people who don't deserve it.

BIBLE REFERENCE

JOSHUA, JUDGES, 1&2 SAMUEL, 1 KINGS AND 2 KINGS 1-14

GAME: KING OR QUEEN FOR A DAY!

Roll a dice. If you land a six you become king or queen for a day. What rules would you come up with? How does everyone feel about keeping those rules? Roll the dice again until someone else gets a six. Repeat a couple of times.

WEEK 5 RECAP

Last week we looked at the covenant God made with his people on Mount Sinai after he rescued them from slavery in Egypt. He brought them out of terrible oppression, and told them how to live in a way which would bring them abundant life. However, the people rejected God's way of life and his laws. They grumbled, even saying they'd rather go back to being slaves in Egypt! God could have washed his hands of them, but he keeps loving them and giving them good things, even when it's painfully clear that his people are completely incapable of keeping his rules...

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

The promises to Abraham are being fulfilled. Ask the group if they can remember what they are: I will bring you into the Promised Land, I will make you into a great nation and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you. They have arrived in the land God promised, and Abraham's descendants – hundreds and thousands of them – are definitely being made into a great nation! You would think it would all settle down now...

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Discuss: We have covered a lot of the Old Testament today. What particularly strikes you from this period of Israel's history?

It may help to have an open conversation at this point just to see what the highlights are for the group. Conversation may lead into the killing of 'innocent' people in the land of Canaan. Always bring it back to the fact that God is just and that this was judgement for their wickedness and idolatry as mentioned at the beginning of the video.

What do we learn about God from what we have heard today?

God is holy and just – he brings judgement on evil and idolatry.

God is merciful – he acts on our behalf in a way that we don't deserve. He sent judges to help his people even though they had turned their backs on him.

God is patient with his people. They kept getting it wrong, but God remained true to his covenant and didn't turn his back on them. Under the leadership of Moses, God established rituals to make them clean, and sacrifices to atone for their sins through priests who could go into the presence of God on their behalf.

Are the Israelites deserving of this mercy? What does this teach us about God's love? What can we learn about God's love towards us from what we have heard today?

Draw out the fact that it is God who comes looking for us as underserving as we are and that he remains faithful to his promises.

PRAY TO CLOSE

SESSION 7

A PROMISED MESSIAH

SESSION AIMS

To consider the judgement of a holy and just God in the face of people's disobedience, and the promise of hope to come because of God's mercy.

BIBLE REFERENCE

2 KINGS 15–25, EZRA, NEHEMIAH,
ISAIAH THROUGH TO MALACHI

ICEBREAKER QUESTION

What has been your most challenging moment? Ask if anyone would like to share this with the rest of the group. If you have a large group, it may work well to have this discussion in smaller groups. Make sure at least one of the leaders has a story to share.

WEEK 6 RECAP

Last week we covered hundreds of years of Israelite history! The big moment arrived when they entered the land promised to their forefather Abraham many hundreds of years previously. Each of the twelve tribes of Israel then settled into the land given to them. But it didn't take long for them to forget all that God had done for them and taught them. Judges were raised up to restore peace and eventually the people cried out for a king to come and rule them. Saul ruled, then King David and then Solomon. It was under Solomon's rule that the Temple was built in Jerusalem to replace the tabernacle, but it was also because Solomon took his eyes from God and allowed the worship of foreign gods, that God took most of the land of Israel (the northern kingdom of Israel) from Solomon's line. His son was left with the Southern Kingdom of Judah to fulfil the promises of God to David that a king would come from his family.

And so, as we heard last week, many kings of both Israel and Judah were raised up over the next few hundred years from 990BC. Elijah and Elisha were prophets during this time, bringing the Word of God to the people. Some kings followed God and "did what was right in his eyes" but most "did evil in the eyes of the Lord."

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

Today we're going to cover about 400 years' worth of history! There are 16 prophets whose writings and prophecies make up about a third of the Old Testament, so let's get going!

Being a prophet wasn't an easy task.

Ask the group: Q. What do you think was the role of a prophet in Bible times? We often think of prophets as people who tell the future. But prophets are people who hear from God and share it, whether past, present or future! Their main role was to call God's people back to him. Today, God can speak to all of us through the Bible and his Spirit but before we had the Bible and before Jesus came, God spoke through just a few chosen people.

We've seen the challenges Moses faced as God's messenger. The people didn't believe him, they ignored him, and they disobeyed God's word. But Moses knew that God wanted to rescue his people and uphold his covenant with them, and so he persevered. As we read the Old Testament, it's clear that the Israelites rarely listen to God's warnings through his prophets. Kings rose and kings fell, generations came and went, prophets brought the message of God's holiness and justice — the message of judgement and destruction if they didn't turn from their evil ways and turn back to God — and yet they still didn't listen. What is going to happen next? How will God respond?

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Discuss: What do you think is the main message of the prophets? Can you spot the themes?

Judgement is on its way God warns because you haven't followed me and obeyed my commands. Destruction comes to the opponents of God's warnings when the people don't repent.

There is hope for those who listen and obey. The Saviour is on his way! Eternal life is promised.

Even though these prophets lived in different places and hundreds of years apart, they all basically have the same message, because all people have the same problem: we disobey God. So, the message was: "You've sinned. Now you're in trouble. Repent, turn from your sins, and turn back to God. And there is hope. A rescuer is coming."

Why did the people oppose God's message through the prophets? What does it look like to oppose God today?

They didn't believe what they heard, and they didn't want to believe what they heard. They didn't listen and obey.

We don't tend to respond well to a message of doom. Is it ever a good thing to tell the hard truth and to deliver a message of judgement? Is it a problem to not share the hard truth about God's judgement and only ever speak of God's love? Why? Why not?

PRAY TO CLOSE

SESSION 8

MEETING JESUS

SESSION AIMS

To think about the coming of Jesus as a baby and reflect on its significance in light of the overview of the Old Testament covered so far.

To understand how the life of Jesus fulfilled the prophecies about the Messiah.

BIBLE REFERENCE

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOHN

GAME: Pictionary

Divide the young people into small groups, and give each group some paper and pens. Members of the group will take it in turns to draw a word you give them while the rest of the group guess what it is.

Get each group to choose one member to come to you to hear the first word. They return to their group and draw it. When someone guesses correctly, they come to you to be told the next word. Continue in this manner until a group has successfully guessed all the words on the list.

List of words: angel, baby, star, scroll, miracle, love, choice

See if any of the young people can spot a common theme in the words. They are all connected with the life of Jesus. Encourage them to watch out for these things being mentioned in today's video.

WEEK 7 RECAP

Last week we heard about the disaster that came upon the people of Israel and the people of Judah. They weren't following God's ways and were warned that if they didn't turn and follow God again, the Assyrians and Babylonians would come and take the people into exile... and that's exactly what happened. They didn't listen and so they were taken into captivity. But yet again, we see that God is patient, merciful, and faithful to his promises. He had promised that a Saviour, the Messiah, would come from the line of David. His name would be called Emmanuel, God with us, just as the prophets said. And so, the people of Judah returned to Jerusalem after 70 years of exile in Babylon and rebuilt the temple and the walls of the city.

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

After the last words from the prophets in the Old Testament, there was silence. For four hundred years there is no record of God speaking or of any messages from the prophets. The people were left waiting, clinging to the hope that God would send the Messiah he had promised – the one who would rescue them and put things right.

Today, we're going to move into the New Testament and think about what happened when the silence was finally broken.

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Discuss: How does the Old Testament help us to understand that there was more to the Christmas story than Jesus being born as a baby?

Encourage the young people to think back to why God promised to send the Messiah – the problem of sin and the need for a Saviour.

Share examples of some of the things you know about the life of Jesus – miracles he did, people he met, his teachings etc.

Read Luke 4:16–21. How do some of the examples you have listed relate to the words Jesus quoted from Isaiah in this passage?

If you have a group that is not familiar with the life of Jesus, you could refer back to some of the examples mentioned in the video.

We've looked into who Jesus is and thought about some of the different responses he received, but a question for each of us to consider is: how do we respond to him today? Do we believe Jesus is the promised Saviour, and if so what impact does that have on how we live our lives?

Depending on your group you may want to discuss this or you may just want to encourage the young people to reflect individually.

PRAY TO CLOSE

SESSION 9

THE EMPTY TOMB

SESSION AIMS

To explore the death and resurrection of Jesus, the historical evidence for these events, and why they were an integral part of his mission.

BIBLE REFERENCE

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOHN

GAME: MURDER MYSTERY

Imagine you are a trainee detective! What can you learn about the murder of Rev V. Goody from the following evidence? Consider the reliability of the source and whether their evidence is backed up by anything else.

Source A

Source A comes from the victim's brother, Mr N.S. Goody, who witnessed his death"

"I saw Mrs B. Body handing him a drink on the night of the party after they'd had a heated disagreement about village gossip. He drank it and clutched at his throat, gasping for air and turning the most awful shade of purple. Within two minutes he was stone cold dead!"

Source B

Source B comes from the forensics expert who examined Rev Goody's glass which was collected by police after his death:

"I found traces of cyanide in the glass. Additionally, the fingerprints on the glass matched Rev Goody, Mrs B. Body and one other unknown person."

Source C

Source C is from Mrs B. Body and was taken one week after Rev Goody's death:

"I didn't have anything to do with it! I hardly knew Rev Goody and I'm no gossip! I wasn't even at the party."

Source D

Source D is from Miss A. Libi, Mrs. Body's sister and was taken two weeks after Rev Goody's death:

"I spent the night of the party with my sister. We had a takeaway round my house and watched a DVD."

WEEK 8 RECAP

Last time we began looking at the New Testament of the Bible. We thought about Jesus coming to earth and explored why the Christmas story is about so much more than just a baby being born. All through the Old Testament, God had promised a Saviour, someone who would deal with the problem of sin, and in Jesus those promises were finally fulfilled.

When Jesus grew up, he began to teach people about God's Kingdom and he did many miracles, showing God's love and power and pointing people to the fact that he was the Messiah who had been promised. Many people believed in him and chose to follow him, but there were also others who opposed him.

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

This week we're going to look at how Jesus' ministry on earth culminated in his death at the hands of Roman soldiers. This was at the request of people who had turned out to worship him only a week earlier. We'll explore why the Son of God did nothing to defend himself from this violent persecution, and how he came back to life again three days later. We'll consider the evidence for this miraculous event and ask ourselves if it is possible to believe in a man coming back to life in an age of great scientific discovery.

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Read John 10:17-18. Discuss: Have you considered why Jesus allowed himself to die when he could have prevented it? What do you think and why?

- *Jesus allowed himself to die to fulfil his Father's command. He chooses to give up his life because of his love for humanity.*
- *The Father loves Jesus for giving up his life for his people.*

Why do you think people believe that other famous events from history are true, but not the events of Jesus' life?

It may be easier to believe in a historical figure whose life has very little impact on your own. If we believe the evidence for Jesus, we are confronted with the need to make a decision about whether it is true, and whether we want to alter our lives in response.

Are you convinced by the evidence for Jesus' death and resurrection? Why/why not? What would it take to convince you?

Allow pupils to express their thoughts about whether the evidence is compelling for them or not, and any doubts they may have.

PRAY TO CLOSE

SESSION 10

NEW HEAVENS, NEW EARTH

SESSION AIMS

To explore the establishment and growth of the church as well as the lives of those who followed the teachings of Jesus. To discover what the Bible teaches about the end of the world.

BIBLE REFERENCE

GENESIS 12–50

GAME: WOULD YOU RATHER...?

Would you rather...

*Ask someone out and risk them saying no
or
say nothing?*

Would you rather...

*Give your answer in class/youth group and risk being wrong
or
sit in silence while nobody speaks?*

Would you rather...

*Give extravagantly and risk running out of things
or
keep everything to yourself?*

Would you rather...

*Stand up for what you think and risk others not liking it
or
keep quiet?*

Would you rather...

*Be nice to someone new and risk them not being nice back
or
leave them on their own with no friends?*

WEEK 9 RECAP

Last week we looked at Jesus' death and resurrection, exploring some of the historical evidence for these events. We considered how Jesus chose to give up his life — since he had the power to prevent his death but did not use it — and the purpose of Jesus' death as a sacrifice for the sins of his people to restore their relationship with the Father. We also looked at how Jesus did not remain in the tomb after death but came back to life three days later and interacted with many witnesses.

WHAT ARE WE COVERING THIS WEEK?

This week we'll consider what happened once Jesus left Earth and returned to heaven. What did his followers do without him? What did their lives look like? How did the message about Jesus spread so that billions of people follow him today? We'll also look at what the Bible says about the end of the world.

WATCH THE EPISODE

GROUP WORK

Discuss: Why do you think Jesus' followers continued spreading the message about him when they faced persecution? Can you imagine anything being worth sacrificing your comfort, or even your life, for?

- *The message was true*
- *They considered it worth dying for*
- *They knew this life was not all they would have, but looked forward to the new creation*

The message of the Bible has been heard by billions of people, and it has been the bestselling book each year for many years, and yet it all started with just a few ordinary people. What does that make you feel about the significance of your life and what you could do with it?

Some young people will be Christians and may express something of wanting to live for God and knowing his help in what they do with their lives. Others may express different sentiments, but all are made in the image of God, so encourage each person of their worth and help them to consider the potential for impact through their lives.

Have you ever considered eternal life? What do you think about what the Bible teaches?

Some pupils may not believe this, others may express they are unsure or do believe. Encourage those who are unsure to consider exploring this further and make up their own minds. Can those who don't believe give reasons why they reject the Bible's message? Encourage them to consider whether they would want to give this any thought.

PRAY TO CLOSE