



# FACETO FACE



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# FACE TO FACE



## **Face to Face**

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# PREFACE

## FACE TO FACE

Face to Face is a resource for opening the Bible in fun and creative ways with primary school aged children, teenagers and their families. It was written for use in Scripture Union Family Missions and Camps. It is easily adaptable for use in many other contexts: holiday programs, multi-age Bible activities and church.

Face to Face takes ten stories from The Bible and invites the participants to turn their face towards God through exploring the stories of those who have.

Face to Face provides resources for small groups: pre-schoolers, primary schoolers and teens and conversation starters for connecting with parents. A USB and gateway includes reproducible resources to support the age group material.

Face To Face also resources large multi-age family gatherings with Bible drama scripts; Bible Bits and ideas for integrating the good news into family events.

Team Studies for leaders provide spiritual nurture for your team as they serve.

### **Scripture Union Victoria**

Scripture Union Victoria is part of an international organization which is committed to partnering with churches in mission, making God's good news known to children, their families and young people through missions, camps and schools.

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# INTRODUCTION TO

## FACE TO FACE

Welcome to mission in twenty-first century Australia.  
It's a wonderful time to be alive.

God is good.  
Jesus is Lord  
We are the body of Christ  
His Spirit is with us.

Same as always. Same as ever.

So right here and now, in ever-changing Australia, we are called to be witnesses to a properly and powerfully alive Jesus – always and only Lord of the cosmos. Jesus - historically traceable and verifiable, living Jesus, still showing up, showing us what being and being alive is all about.

What does this witnessing look like? And what does it look like with families?  
With people from all kinds of different households?  
What does it mean for us to be witnesses to a living, alive, risen Jesus?

First of all, the living Risen Jesus of today is the living human Jesus of the first century, who is the eternal God of the cosmos breathing all across the Old Testament. Jesus is the God who always was and is and will be.

Jesus is alive. Jesus is here – better face up to that. He's not going away. Ever. This is Jesus, the face of God in human sweat and wrinkles and scars. He's here so we can know him face to face. Be friends.

But no surprises there! Because right through the Old Testament, we've been meeting this God. He's not shy. And God's not into some sick game of making humans for relationship, breathing his own very life and spirit into them, and then abandoning them or hiding out somewhere just to watch.

No. God is turning up constantly, face to face with humans. If anyone is hiding it's the humans.

When we sin like Adam, when we fight like Jacob, when we're stuck like Moses, when we're defeated like Nehemiah, when we're doing day in day out, when we're down and out like Bartimeaus, when we're down to our last shred like the widow, when we're out and about like the seventy, when we're on top of the world like Peter, James and John, when we're at death's door.

God comes looking for us, face to face.

So this is God's way with the cosmos – face to face.

So it's also our way in mission- face to face.

We turn up with our faces, not anonymously, or just playing a role.

We turn up as ourselves, to be friends.

There's no dump and run here. We face up to people, to their questions. We face up to listening, really listening.

In mission we do with others as God has done with us. Face to face.

# THEMATIC SCOPE

Session Title	Bible	Bible link	Gospel	Parent Conversation Starters
<p><b>1. ORIGINS</b></p> <p>God the life-maker face to face with humans the life-breakers</p>	<p>God makes earth-beings and breathes life into them face to face. The earth beings choose evil as well as good, but God continues to want to be face to face with them.</p>	<p><b>Gen 2:</b> 4-9, 15-17</p> <p><b>Gen:</b> 3:1-13</p> <p><b>Bonus Bible John:</b> 9</p>	<p>God gets his hands dirty making us, and doesn't mind if he needs to get his hands dirty to heal us when we need it.</p> <p>Creation &amp; Fall</p>	<p>Loving and facing the best and the worst of our kids</p>
<p><b>2. JACOB</b></p> <p>God meets a family of Fighters</p>	<p>Jacob fights with his brother, wrestles with God and reconciles with his brother</p>	<p><b>Gen:</b> 27:41-45; <b>Gen:</b> 28:10-16; <b>Gen:</b> 32:3-7, 13-15, 21, 24-30</p> <p><b>Gen:</b> 33:1-4, 8-11</p> <p><b>Bonus Bible Matthew:</b> 18:21-35</p>	<p>We wrestle with knowing God and knowing ourselves. God's forgiveness leads us to forgive one-another.</p> <p>Forgiveness</p>	<p>. Family Fights and finding forgiveness</p>
<p><b>3. EXODUS</b></p> <p>God and a race of rescued runaway slaves</p>	<p>Moses is a face to face friend of God and leads God's people to freedom and gives them God's good words.</p>	<p><b>Ex:</b> 19:1-6; <b>Deut:</b> 6:4-7; <b>Ex</b> 33:7-11</p>	<p>God wants face to face friendship with us. He gives us relationships and responsibilities, not just rigid rules.</p> <p>Rescue Relationship, Responsibility (not rules)</p>	<p>. Rules, Relationships and Responsibilities.</p>
<p><b>4. NEHEMIAH</b></p> <p>God reaching out and rebuilding the wrecked and returned</p>	<p>Nehemiah and the ruined people return, rebuild and party with the poor.</p>	<p><b>Nehemiah:</b> 2:1-5, 8-11; <b>Nehemiah:</b> 4:1-3, 6-9; <b>Nehemiah:</b> 6:15; <b>Nehemiah:</b> 8:1-12</p>	<p>Even when everything has fallen apart God brings us home to himself, repairs our relationships and calls everyone to celebrate</p> <p>Restoring Covenant</p>	<p>Backing, Bully-breaking and Building</p>
<p><b>5. JESUS</b></p> <p>God in Jesus turns up, speaks up, mixes up, lifts up.</p>	<p>A day in the life of Jesus good news living. Healing, gathering, speaking, restoring</p>	<p><b>Mark:</b> 1:21-35</p>	<p>-</p> <p>Incarnation</p>	<p>Just an ordinary day</p>
<p><b>6. BARTIMEAUS</b></p> <p>God looks for mercy, God looks with mercy</p>	<p>Bartimeaus is healed when he calls out to Jesus 'Son of David have mercy.'</p>	<p><b>Mark:</b> 10:46-52</p> <p><b>Ps:</b> 51:1</p>	<p>Whether you are the lowest beggar on the street or the greatest King of the realm, God's mercy is for you.</p> <p>Mercy</p>	<p>Them's the breaks</p>



Session Title	Bible	Bible link	Gospel	Parent Conversation Starters
<p><b>7. WIDOW IN TEMPLE</b></p> <p>God's generous goodness glues us together</p>	<p>Jesus A poor widow who is faithful, yet exploited in the temple catches Jesus' attention, and he points out how God's ways are being twisted.</p>	<p><b>Mark:</b> 12:38—13:2</p>	<p>God's ways are to make communities of love and justice which provide for and protect the vulnerable.</p>	<p>Justice and Community</p> <p>A little bit of real v.s. a whole lot of fake.</p>
<p><b>8. JESUS SENDS HIS DISCIPLES ON MISSION.</b></p> <p>God plans peace seeking adventures in neighbourhoods near and far.</p>	<p>Jesus followers go out to villages and towns to homes, looking for peace, bringing good news wherever they go</p>	<p><b>Luke:</b> 10:1-10 <b>Bonus Bible Jeremiah:</b> 29:4-7</p>	<p>Whether you choose to go freely with friends on adventures or you are forced to move in he midst of suffering and conflict God goes with you, providing what you will need and giving you peace.</p>	<p>Mission and discipleship</p> <p>Neighbours of Peace</p>
<p><b>9. TRANSFIGURATION</b></p> <p>God crosses cosmic time and space and comes camping</p>	<p>Jesus appears as a human, but shows us that he is fully God. We recognize and know God in Jesus.</p>	<p><b>Mark:</b> 9:2-9 <b>Bonus Bible 1 Kings:</b> 19:8-13</p>	<p>God turns up face to face in unexpected ways showing he understands and cares for our humanness</p>	<p>Revelation and Glory</p> <p>Being human - and loving it</p>
<p><b>10. CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION</b></p> <p>God goes face to face with death and so we can face Life</p>	<p>Jesus experiences the worst of human injustice, full in the face. His followers discover that Jesus alive and meet him face to face.</p>	<p><b>Mark:</b> 14:1-2; 10-11 <b>Luke:</b> 22:14 <b>Matthew:</b> 26:26-30; 36-46; 52-55 (redacted) 26:67-68 <b>Mark:</b> 15:1-5 <b>John:</b> 19:1-6 <b>John:</b> 19:16-19 <b>Luke:</b> 23:44-47 <b>Matt:</b> 27:57-61 <b>John:</b> 20:1-16</p>	<p>From many sides, Jesus death and resurrection tells of a God who can and will and does face anything for the sake of the world he loves and gives himself for.</p>	<p>Death and Resurrection</p> <p>Facing life, Facing death, Facing life</p>
<p><b>11. BONUS SESSION FOR INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP</b></p> <p>New faces and really recognizing</p>	<p>Paul 'meets' Jesus in a vision Paul looks forward to meeting Jesus face to face.</p>	<p><b>Acts:</b> 9:1-21 <b>1 Cor:</b> 13:12-13 <b>Rev:</b> 22</p>	<p>We see and know God in many ways. All of these are wonderful ways, but none of them are complete. Sometimes we have doubts. There is always more of God to know. One day we will all know God completely for sure.</p>	<p>Eschaton; Kingdom Fulfilled</p>

# MAKING MISSION

## VISUAL AND VISIBLE

Many of us engaging in holiday mission teams have a strong sense of the contrast between the indoors, walled up context of our weekly church gathering, and the outdoors un-walled exposure to the public of our mission program.

Our weekly church things are typically held in properties that the church owns and has exclusive use of, and a high level of power in. But we pay the price of that ownership and predictability and power with the struggle that it is to get the public to set foot on the property, let alone walk through the doors.

By contrast, our mission programs are typically held in public parks, beach foreshores, footy ovals, playgrounds and picnic spots.

We often feel highly exposed and are mindful that we are not on our own turf and work without the home ground advantage. Our theology (see Luke 10; Jeremiah 29) tells us this is an excellent kingdom condition and to be pleased - even to seek this, more than to try and build our own space.

So we celebrate the openness of our activities, that those passing by can see what we are doing, and join in easily. We like our edges being ragged and porous so that those around can be easily absorbed into the gospel-centred community we are hosting and facilitating.

Well...that's the theory.

But over the past couple of decades of watching our mission summer by summer I've been noticing that this isn't always as straightforward as it sounds.

### A LITTLE CASE STUDY

Even though our mission operated in a public park in the middle of a camping ground with a high volume of through traffic to the beach, we found that there seemed to be invisible Perspex walls around us that somehow prevented passers-by from stopping to join in - even just a little bit.

We discovered that we were seeing a good core of families every day - we knew their names, they knew us - they were cheerful and supportive and enthusiastic and loyal. And we loved them and listened to them. This was relational mission working well.

But it was rare to have someone just pass by and join in. We had lost our knack for picking up strays and randoms.

We had somehow become an in-group - the very thing we were not meant to be - the thing we were meant to be the opposite of.

What had happened?

Perhaps this happens at your mission site too?

There are many factors that contribute to this trend, and some of it has to do with our safe-practices with children - signing in and permission forms - and we don't want to undo that good progress.

But here are two other factors worth thinking about:

Firstly, We had made ourselves invisible.

We'd made ourselves visible to ourselves, but nothing was turned outwards to the world. The line of our eyesight, our gaze was towards each other- not out beyond the rim.

Secondly, we lacked a layered approach to inclusion. Options were: in or out. We needed ways for people to join us at the outer rim by just stepping in an inch, and then after that, another way of engaging that meant just stepping in another few inches. And then something else...and so on.

Offering people a coffee or a cordial, saying hi and getting into conversation - these are good basic personal ways of connecting, but sometimes people don't slow down enough even for that. Because there is no reason to stop and watch. Let's be honest, an adult who hangs around the fringes of children's activities and just watches can draw suspicion - so who would want to open themselves to that kind of innuendo?

We need reasons and ways for people to stop and look and be around the edges of our community in order to be engaged and drawn in further.

And so here we arrive at the importance of art. If we want people to stop and look, they need something visually engaging to stop and look at!

How can we create easy invitations and interactions for those who are passing by?

*Here are a couple of easy suggestions, which you'll find are pointed to throughout the small group material.*

## **PUBLIC ART EXHIBITIONS**

Be prepared to display the pieces of art that your groups produce in the program. Set up a clothesline, or a freestanding board to display the art on - and place it in an easily accessible space. Label the work attractively and clearly.

Some of the ideas in the small group sessions will translate well into an art installations: e.g. a whole lot of rock prayers and resources for passers-by to add their own.

## WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

Keep honour boards of champions for the games you play.  
e.g. The record for highest Giant Jenga tower.

The Bocce championship pair. Record for longest tennis ball throw and catch.

Use first names only for security. Occasionally in your program highlight these boards, with a little bit of 'We are the Champions' soundtrack and some applause as you read out the names.

Displaying these art galleries and honour boards firstly communicates the flavour of fun and creativity of our program to those who pass by.

Secondly it demonstrates that we are a community - we know each other's names, we honour each other's efforts and expressions.

Thirdly it creates an invitation to join - by publicly displaying our art and achievements, we show that we are face forward open to others, not just an in-house clique.

Fourthly, particularly in the artwork we have the chance to signal a little bit of our message in the way we label the art.

e.g. 'Fabulous Feast for all - poor especially welcome' by Mandi, Nat, Keira, Jordan, Taylor and Emma.

Work out a pithy succinct little message to attach to your art exhibition and honour boards that clearly communicate that your program is open to the public for all ages to join and enjoy at any time, and a brief statement linking your program to the oversight of Scripture Union.

### Making it happen

These displays will take some time and care, but working out some good display options before mission and designating a couple of team members to keep this aspect of the mission running well and looking wonderful is a great investment of team time.

Finally - truly open edges to the community means that you won't limit your exhibition to only your program's artwork, but invite and welcome the art of others.

Make a space for campers/holidaymakers/towners art or the art of your team members that is an expression of their wider spiritual life.

Develop your mission's reputation as a place of hospitality to children, young people and families, and the arts.

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

## CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

There are 10 sessions in this book. If you are running a shorter program you can select whichever sessions and activities you like. If you are shortening the program think carefully about which sessions you select. This resource builds a narrative through the Old Testament into the New Testament, be sure to select material that will introduce people to the characters you most wish to, and most importantly Jesus and his life, death and resurrection.

Each session has multiple options for activities. Select which activities best suit your small group and personal style. Where there are resources available for this activity you can find them online at:

[www.suVIC.org.au/facetoface](http://www.suVIC.org.au/facetoface)

and on the USB stick provided.

Every age group session has a checklist so you can easily remember the activities you choose.

## BIBLE BITS

To run the Content Bible activities in each small group session, you will need copies of the Face to Face Bible Bits, from provided USB or online gateway.

Print out plenty of copies of this – everyone will need one of these for every child in their group, every day.

Face to Face uses texts that cross some big stories of the Bible – stories that go on for chapters and chapters before we see what God is doing, like the story of Jacob, Moses, Nehemiah, Jesus' Death and Resurrection. So to make this accessible to Australian children and families connecting with our missions and camps, we've selected verses from across the text, mostly from the CEV, but occasionally using another translation that reads more easily for a particular verse.

The activities work directly with these specifically crafted versions and depend on the exact wording being used.

Make sure you keep a set handy for every group to use during the program, and have extras that kids and families can take away with them to follow up and keep reading at home.

## TEAM STUDIES

It is important for the team to spend time in the Bible together. Each day there is a Bible engagement activity for the mission team. This is designed to have the team gain a deeper understanding of the Bible passages they will be leading the children in and conversing with parents about. Like the age group sessions there are activities and talk triggers.

## AGE GROUP SESSIONS

Each of the following sessions offers several options for each part (Connect – Context – Content – Consider – Consequence) of your small group time. Choose one activity for each of the 5 Cs, based on your own skills and the vibe of your small group; for example a bunch of grade 6 girls or grade 2 boys will need a different balance of activities.

You will find these activities tougher to run if you try and do them in larger groups – kids will miss out, and you will find yourself managing too much ‘stuff’ rather than having a great time with a little bunch of kids cracking open the Bible and discovering the kingdom of God together.

Keeping the leader : child ratio small is not simply a safety and care issue. We work in small groups because it facilitates and protects all of the things we value in the kingdom of God: Relationships, authenticity, justice, respect for our uniqueness. It is easier to offer grace in small groups, it is easier to accept difference. Large groups need a certain degree of homogeneity and conformity to work, so they are a ‘sometimes’ mode for missional contexts.

### ***A couple of logistical things will help:***

- Each small group sits on their own small picnic rug or tarp, defining their little tribe’s space
- Each small group leader should have their own box with the day’s resources in it
- Each small group leader keeps a ‘mini’ roll of the names of the children in their group
- If a small group leader hits a rough spot in their group, help can be offered by age group co-ordinators, team parents or other ‘support people’.

The thinking in these pages, all of the concrete resources and the ‘stuff’ are offered so that you may be released to be well prepared, prayerful and people oriented in mission.

## PARENT CONVERSATION STARTERS

Engaging Parents and Carers in conversation is a scary thought for some people. Parents on many occasions are keen to talk and inquisitive about what their children are exploring and learning. With each daily session we include some ideas for starting conversations about the content with parents.

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# THE 5 Cs

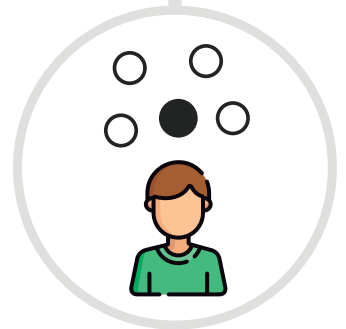
## CONNECT



The first part of any time that we spend together is given to just being together, getting to know each other, valuing each person... listening, laughing and belonging. Jesus' first commandment is always to Love. That is the beginning of all things. On a practical level though it's well worth investing the time to learn people's names thoroughly and get a sense of who they are and where they're coming from – it will make facilitating the group much easier later on. If you want to be listened to on any level, you must first listen. If children/young people feel heard, they are more likely to listen to you. You never know, you might learn something too!

## CONTEXT

The world of the Bible can seem like a whole other planet, inhabited by some freaky aliens. However, by putting a bit of time into some orientation activities, your group might find that the situations in the Bible are intriguing and possibly very familiar as we encounter the same old same old of human beings.



## CONTENT

If we want to get to know God, nothing can replace the centrality of engaging with the Bible (led by the Spirit). If opening the Bible is a hands-on, read-the-text-heaps, experiential, open event, there will be plenty of room for the whole person to be engaged – cognitively, physically, emotionally and spiritually: There is time and space for kids' questions, for processing time, for imagining ourselves in the text and for God to work.





## CONSIDER

We all have opinions on things. As we hear and experience God's living word, it's a healthy thing for us to wonder and to question, look at it from a few different angles, express our emotions and contemplate the possible meanings and possibilities for action.

A huge variety of media can provide the opportunity for us to work through in our own ways what is going on for us with God, and with what God's saying, and to share our ideas, ponderings and wonderings with one another. Some really fruitful ideas for consideration emerge from the questions beginning "Has anything like this ever happened to you?"



## CONSEQUENCE

You can't hear that someone loves you to bits and is never ever going to stop - and just walk away. Because God is God, when he addresses us it demands a response. There are a range of different ways we might respond: With a big 'Get out of my Face' or 'I need more info on this one' or 'There you go again being the same awesome God' or 'Wow, I've got to change something and get on board with you, God'... The thing is, God takes our response to him seriously...so it's pretty important that we allow freedom for kids and grown-ups to figure out what their response really is, and to own it.



# AGE GROUP SESSIONS METHODOLOGY

## 5 TOP TIPS FOR USING FACE TO FACE SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

1. *Know the Bible stories really, really, really well*
2. *Don't try to 'teach' anything*
3. *The more the group does, organizes, sets up, cleans up, the better.*
4. *Make it all about being together in community*
5. *Do it all in the Spirit of Jesus – one ear open to God, one ear open to the children.*

## WHAT'S THE POINT? WHERE'S THE POINT? HOW IS THE POINT MADE?

If you are coming to this material for the first time, you might find yourself looking for the bit in the session where you 'get to the point'. You will be frustrated. This material doesn't have a 'point' so to speak. Because we are not wanting to define how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. We are praying for the kingdom to come. And that is not a small point concern. It's deeper and wider and longer and higher than our imaginations can possibly reach.

If you are accustomed to evangelism that is about convincing a person of certain 'points' of doctrine, you will need to suspend that aim as you use this material. Feel free to use it in other contexts; apologetic debate has its place. But not here.

This material has been prepared recognising that while we are engaging with them people live in communities and do life. It doesn't stop. They are experiencing wins and fails, and celebrations and tragedies, questions and new info from lots of sources. We are part of a larger conversation, including the larger conversation God is having with people.

In the context of all of this, our method is not to try and make a few points. Our method is to embody the Kingdom of God, and richly share its stories – lots of them, in multi-sensory, multi-dimensional, multi-faceted ways.

This is, firmly evangelical material: meaning, the power of the Word is given first priority. We invest in the idea that as people are given access to the Bible, God's revelation and communication is strongest in that medium. And we invest in the idea that the way the Bible speaks, phrases and contextualises, is better than any reduction or summary we can make.

A 3 point tract is not a clearer revelation of God than reading John 19. Or John 13. Or John 9.

As evangelical material we trust in the quality of Scripture. We make it accessible, but we don't replace it with our own 'points'.

## SO MUCH BIBLE!

Flicking through each session, you might be thinking – So much Bible! Yes. Isn't it great? What could be better?

Here's the thing – If the Bible is what changes people's lives, if it is where truth and words of eternal life are found, why would we just do a little bit of it?

The main reasons I hear for NOT using more of the Bible are

It's inaccessible

It's boring

It's overwhelming

People are not into reading

So let me address each of these areas, and point to the ways Face To Face works which side-lines these claims.

### IT'S INACCESSIBLE

The Bible is largely inaccessible to many people, because it is kept out of their hands. We mostly tell people what is in the Bible, or talk about it, rather than trust them to read it and see it for themselves. No wonder they feel confused or that it is something obscure. There is something obscuring the Bible a lot of the time – it's us! When something is mediated second hand like this, it is always a little distant – at arm's length. Using more of the Bible, brings it into accessibility.

Christians who have grown up with a lot of talk about the Bible, come to the test in a complicated way. Reading the Bible plainly without all of the interpretation of a hundred sermons is a rather less daunting task.

No one thought Harry Potter was inaccessible, just because they hadn't read it before. A bit of - "here, give it a go" (trusting the Holy Spirit's presence to guide) seems a faith-filled approach that a follower of Jesus can afford to invest in.

We also can have confidence in the idea that the more of the Bible you have exposure to, the more it hangs together. If all you know is Christmas, Easter and Noah's Ark, it's hard to get a sense of what God is about. So making more of the text accessible (in a literal physical sense), makes more of the text accessible (in a cognitive and cultural sense)

### IT'S BORING

Really? You've got to be kidding! What Bible have you been reading? The one I've been reading for 40 years and still can't get enough of has adventure, violence, sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, political intrigue, espionage, multi-cultural debate, children, animals, side show freaks, plot thickeners and twistors, revolutionaries and celebrity embarrassments, heart-warming wisdom, dead-hot sealed section poetry, scandals, comedies and tragedies. So how did we possibly get to boring? Well, I have to say, I don't really know, because it has never has been like that for me. Here are a couple of clues, perhaps to why.

Firstly, I have mostly read the Bible out loud. Even when I'm doing it in my head – I do it in an 'out loud' kind of way. I can't help reading like this – it's probably an undiagnosed learning disability of sort, but it means everything I read sounds in my head, or actually to my ears like I am being a read a story. And that's not boring.

Secondly, this out-loud reading – even in my head slows down the text, to something more like 'real time' so I have time to 'see' the action happening in my imagination. I notice the details and subtle hints, the quiriness of the setting, the raised eyebrow, the character lurking in the background, pulling a face. Racing through life, racing through the text gets boring because the blur makes it same-same-same. Slow down and let the imaginations and the wonderings out for a play, and the text is anything but boring.

Thirdly, I had parents who were always linking the Bible to concrete items in our lives; bacon, grapes, thorns, knives, earrings, sandals, boats. As we read the Bible or heard the Bible read these things were in our hands, or on the table or being cleared off the table so we could finally have dinner. So as well as my imagination being engaged, the Bible was connected to my actual embodied existence. As a kid my little hands grasped the grapes and stuffed them into y mouth as I heard 'bear fruit' – and as a grown up, that sweet sticky taste still inspires me. "Let me bear fruit so tasty and refreshing for people like that, please Jesus."

### **IT'S OVERWHELMING**

Yes, it is. The Bible is overwhelming. It is way beyond our capacity to ever understand it – to ever know it – and we are never going to get a grip on it, or get it under our belt, or get it 'nailed down'.

These sayings themselves point to our greed, our possessiveness. But this is not an option for us to possess or contain the Word of God. We do well not to try and control it, to be overwhelmed, to experience its power – and to allow that encounter to be shared with others. For a while, it became fashionable to produce little 'evangelistic' drawings, models that succinctly and clearly set out the 'Truth' in 4 steps, or but outlining a problem and explaining the solution. Or drawing a diagram.

But this is not how God has revealed himself to us. God has given us messy, complex, nuanced, and intricately woven stories, within stories, with in stories.

Part of faithfully bearing witness to the truth of God means telling it like it is. Not trying to make it less overwhelming, less powerful, but allowing the strength of the Word to be among us without editing it into something simpler.

Many people in the Twenty first century think that faith is 'simplistic'. Our evangelistic trends have tried so hard to convince them that faith is a case of simple logic – and we have succeeded, and now they believe that all there is to know about God is a paper thin idea.

So let us be open to the Bible overwhelming us. Overwhelming is good! We live in an age of 4D movies with surround sound and IMAX giant screens.

And we have 4+ to the power of infinity dimensional God. Let's not dull or dumb it down.

## PEOPLE ARE NOT INTO READING

On the one hand, we live in the most over-educated society on record. We have a national goal of 100% literacy. Which given the history of the planet is insane. Who needs a society in which everyone can read? What about a world in which everyone is safe or loved or has access to clean drinking water?

So we do, in Australia mostly read, by world standards.

On the other hand. Our culture is moving more and more to visual and interactive communication.

Whichever way you take this, though The Bible is a winner. Because it can be read, but it began as oral traditions – stories that were lived and then told. So it works as a non-readable form as well.

The 'Content' Opening the Bible sections of this material are designed to create opportunities for confident interactions with the text – so the Bible is open to everyone, but without depending on reading only for the success of the engagement. Reading is not the primary task in relation to God's Word – encountering is.

Tell it! Model it! Build it! Demonstrate it! Art it!

## STILL SO MUCH BIBLE!

Face to Face has been developed to immerse groups in the stories of people's encounters with God. To allow time for the stories to have their own impact. There are 'linking lines' throughout the material to help you develop an ongoing, open conversation in your group around the stories of the Bible. These linking lines are not substitute 'teaching points' for you to get across. They may be used to invite conversation, questioning, wondering, imagining in your group. Knowledge doesn't necessarily move from the 'head' to the 'heart'. Our aim is not to give children and families 'knowledge about God' so they can make a 'heart response'. Our call is to make disciples...meaning to live together with people in ways that involve them in following Jesus. And that will probably lead to a change in their thinking and responding in complex, but authentic and integrated ways.

As we live the Bible, and chew it over and are shaped by it, we will come to know the truth and I will set us free, Jesus promises. Let's see if he's going to come through on that...

SU Missions/Camps use only

SU Missions Camps use only

# DAY 1 ORIGINS

SU Missions/Camps use only



# TEAM STUDY 1

## ORIGINS

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
  - *Use these questions to explore further*



Here in Genesis 2, we have a second creation story, told from a completely different perspective - offering a different sequence and focus. Compare Genesis 1:1 with Genesis 2:4b.

Sketch these two phrases in a way that shows the point being made by the different wording.

What is the difference in orientation in this second story?

Reading the passage mark each time God takes initiative or positive action.

Scan the whole of Chapter 3 in your Bible - Find all the times the word 'sin' or 'sinful' appears.

How practiced are we at being able to explain the spiritual reality of this story without using the word sin?

# AGE GROUP SESSION 1

## ORIGINS

God the life-maker face to face with humans the life-breakers

### GEN 2 & 3

God makes earth-beings and breathes life into them face to face.  
The earth beings choose evil as well as good, but God continues to want to be face to face with them.

### EXTRA JOHN 9

Jesus shows his connection to creator God as, just in Genesis 2 he makes mud and brings life to a man's eyes.  
The reality of sin is seen, but hands on and face to face restoration is Jesus concern, not blame.

### BIBLE LINK

God gets His hands dirty making us, and doesn't mind if He needs to get His hands dirty to heal us when we need it.

### INTRODUCTION

We meet God face to face in the second story of the Bible – actually more like nose to nose or mouth to mouth. We meet God with his sleeves rolled up, making humans from mud, and breathing life into their nostrils with God's own breath.

Our first face to face with God is the face to face that gives us our very life. This story has God up close and personal as humans are formed. There's no remote control here, no distant, disembodied voice calling 'let there be humans'. No - God is embodied - God has hands and face and nostrils and breath, and God face to faces us into existence.

And then, when the humans find themselves struggling with shame, and the knowledge of evil alongside all that is good, God is there again walking, but the humans hide themselves from the face of God. But strangely, though the humans are fearful and ashamed, God is not put off. God turns up for a face to face - whether we feel like it or not; whether we are covered in shame or not.

This way of God is with his world, and with us, this face to face way, is not conditional, is not dependent on our obedience, our success, our goodness. While sin definitely messes things up for us, it doesn't change anything for God. God - completely sin-less, unstained, uncorrupted, unassailably holy - still seeks to be in relationship with us.

This unrelenting love of God that seeks relationship with us

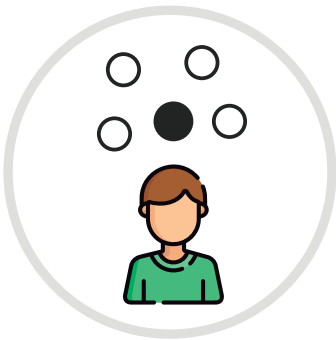
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Making faces
- Whose face?
- What comes first?
- Top Ten facts about mud and dirt



## CONTEXT

- Design your own planet
- Baby stories and Beginnings Stories
- Power of Breath relay



## CONTENT

- Mud art
- Nature reading
- God at work



## CONSIDER

- Henna hand stories
- Terracotta Earth story discs
- Breath Art



## CONSEQUENCE

- Squashed Tomatoes
- Eating Prayers



# CONNECT

- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.



## MAKING FACES

Challenge your group to have 'funny faces' competition. Give some time for people to practice pulling their funniest face, then go around the circle and watch each person's funny face in turn. Affirm and encourage each contribution. With the group's permission, go around a second time and take a photo of each person. Review the photos together and have a good laugh. Make sure you are clear that you are deleting the photos from your device, and that you actually do so.

### Linking Lines:

In the Bible we find a story in which God makes humans – not by remote control from far off, but face to face.



## WHOSE FACE?

Give each person in your group a piece of brown plasticine. Invite each person to make a face from the plasticine 'in their own image', in other words, like themselves. Explain that after making the faces, the group will try to guess which face belongs to which person on the basis of their 'likeness'. Give 5 minutes for making then a minute warning for finishing. Line up the faces and invite your group to guess the identity/maker of each plasticine face.

### Linking Lines:

Our faces are unique and special to each of us – there's no one else just like us. In the Bible we find God saying that humans are made to show what God is like...but if we're all so unique, I wonder what that says about God?





## WHAT COMES FIRST?

*You will need:*

*10-12 small miscellaneous items e.g. Matchbox-car, teaspoon, old watch, clothes peg, plastic dinosaur, paintbrush, piece of string, earbud headphones, USB stick, plastic straw, coin, lump of bluetac, walnut,*

Assemble an assortment of miscellaneous items on a tray or a piece of cloth. Explain to your group that together you are going to place the things in order, racing against the clock to see how long it takes.

Challenge 1 is to put things in order of size - large to small. This is a fairly easy challenge - some of the others are more subjective.

Choose one or two volunteers to do each challenge.

Keep a record of how long it takes to do each challenge.

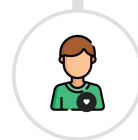
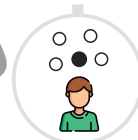
Other challenges:

- Put things in the order they were made; how old they are.
- Put things in order of importance
- Put things in order of how often you use them
- Put things in colour order
- Put things in alphabetical order

### Linking Lines:

In the Bible there are a few different stories about how the world was made.

All of them have God doing something amazing, but the stories aren't the same and each story tells things in a different order, being made in different ways. As we hear some of the stories, we might keep wondering about what the order things are in might mean.





## TOP 10 FACTS ABOUT MUD/DIRT (TRUE OR FALSE?)

*You will need:*

*10 cards printed from **Day1Connect1.pdf***

*Jelly babies*

Place the pile of Cards in the middle of your group.

Tell your group that you will each take turns in choosing a card.

The person that chooses the card also chooses a person in the group to answer the question.

The person that chooses the card can also choose whether they want to read the question on the card themselves, or ask a leader to read it.

If the person chosen to answer answers correctly they are given a Jelly Baby.

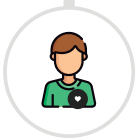
If not, they choose someone else to try to answer.

Summary of questions on cards:

1. Mud is usually poisonous (F)
2. In the first book of the Bible there is a story in which God makes a human person from mud (T)
3. Tigers love to play in mud (F)
4. Rhinos use mud as sunscreen. (T)
5. In the Bible there is a story in which Jesus heals a blind man by spitting in the dirt to make mud and putting it on a man's eyes. (T)
6. NASA has put a Satellite in space to map all of the earth's mud (T)
7. From ancient times, people have used mud as a beauty product, putting mud on their faces to improve their skin. (T)
8. Russia has a season called 'Rasputitsa' or 'Mud season' (T)
9. Mud bricks with straw in them are not as strong as pure mud bricks. (F)
10. Belgium is the muddiest country in the world (T)

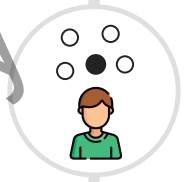
### Linking Lines:

Mud is pretty amazing – we are going to explore those muddy stories from the Bible – God creating the world gets muddy hands, and Jesus healing and helping gets muddy hands too...let's listen out for what that's about!



# CONTEXT

- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.



## DESIGN YOUR OWN PLANET

### You will need:

- *Large card disc for each person*
- *Craft bits and pieces*
- *Plasticine (just one basic colour is fine)*
- *Coloured markers*

Invite your group to each design and make their own 'planet', sticking objects and drawing on their card, to create a world from their own imagination.

As this takes place, ask members of your group to explain how their planet will work.

Are there living creatures?

What are they like?

Are there cities and machines or only 'natural' things?

What is fun or scary or awesome about the planet?

Where did the ideas for your planet come from?

### Linking Lines:

I've loved watching you each create your own worlds. We can see how your own planet reflects a bit of who you are, your personality. Stories from the Bible help us think about how the world shows us what God is like, and that human beings especially show us something about God.

## POWER OF BREATH RELAY

*You will need:*

- *Balloons*
- *Sharpie markers*
- *Bubble-mix and Bubble-blowers*
- *2 plastic plates*
- *Cardboard Roll (from cling wrap or alfoil)*

Divide your group into 2 teams.

Explain that you are going to have a 'power of breath' relay.

There are 4 events or challenges to the relay.

1. Using a marker, draw a face on a balloon, and then blow it up (give the balloon to a leader to tie up)
2. Blow some bubbles. Leader will measure the distance the furthest bubble travels.
3. 'Huff' your breath on a plastic plate and write your name.
4. Use your breath to play for 15 seconds on the cardboard roll like a didgeridoo

### Linking Lines:

We've seen how awesome and powerful your breath is – blowing balloons and bubbles and mist and music. In the Bible we find some stories that explore ideas of God's powerful breath - giving life to all things, not by remote control from far away, but up close and face to face. Some stories tell of God breathing life into human – God's powerful breath.

## BABY STORIES AND BEGINNING STORIES

*You will need:*

- *A collection of Baby photos (either of the leaders or famous babies or random baby pictures) - make sure if you choose this option that you include a range of cultures and context, not all studio stock photos.*

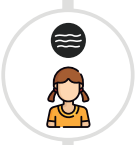
Invite your group to look at the baby photos and ask them if they know any stories about their own birth or baby-life. Keep track of these with a sketch book or flip-chart, making impromptu comic drawings of the main feature of the stories.

When everyone who wants to has shared their story, review the comics. Affirm the important meanings in the stories - most likely it will be about family and love and celebration, or things not going to plan. (There won't be much about how the birth happened or even how it got started.) The important parts of our beginning stories are about the feelings, the people who were there, who loved us, who helped.

### Linking Lines:

The Bible has some interesting stories about the beginnings of the world. They are told in the same way that we tell our baby stories - lots of details are left out, but there is lots of emotion and drama and we hear more about who was involved than how things actually happened.

As we read these stories about the beginnings of things not all of our 'what happened?' and 'how did it happen?' questions will be answered, and the stories might leave us with more questions than we started with.





# CONTENT

- Use one of these to give your group a hands on experience of the Bible text
- Use the Face to Face Bible Bits **Day1BibleBits1.pdf** collection of texts to make finding the right part of the passage easy – but at some point show your group a complete (paper-print) Bible and an online Bible to help them see where the stories have come from.
- Be confident that experiencing the text in engaging, active and tactile ways is more important than reading and following and understanding every single word for helping people get comfortable with the Bible.
- Repeat the reading activities more than once to increase your group's familiarity with the text, and give people a chance to take different roles or respond differently – or just because it's fun to do again.
- These readings can be a bit chaotic – intentionally. Make the most of the people in your group to help set things up and pack things up afterwards – enjoy doing this together, building community as you do.

## GENESIS CHAPTER 2: 4-9, 15-17, CHAPTER 3:1-13

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, no grass or plants were growing anywhere. God had not yet sent any rain, and there was no one to work the land. But streams came up from the ground and watered the earth.

The LORD God took some dirt from the ground and made a human. God breathed life into the nostrils of the human, and the human started breathing. The LORD made a garden in a place called Eden, which was in the east, and he put the man there.

The LORD God filled the garden with all kinds of beautiful trees and fruit trees. Two other trees were in the middle of the garden. One of these gave life—the other gave knowledge of good and evil

The LORD God put the human in the garden to take care of it and to look after it. But the LORD told him, “You may eat fruit from any tree in the garden, except the one that has the power to let you know the difference between good and evil. If you eat any fruit from that tree, you will die.”

*Some time later...*

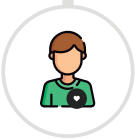
The snake was sneakier than any of the other wild animals that the LORD God had made. One day it came to the woman and asked, “Did God tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?”

The woman answered, “God said we could eat fruit from any tree in the garden, except the one in the middle. He told us not to eat fruit from that tree or even to touch it. If we do, we will die.”

“No, you won't!” the snake replied. “God understands what will happen on the day you eat fruit from that tree. You will see what you have done, and you will know the difference between right and wrong, just as God does.” The woman stared at the fruit. It looked beautiful and tasty.

*Continued on next page...*





She wanted the wisdom that it would give her, and she ate some of the **fruit**. The **man** was there with her, so she gave some to him, and he ate it too. At once they saw what they had done, and they realized they were naked. Then they sewed **fig leaves** together to cover themselves.

Late in the afternoon, when the breeze began to blow, the **man and woman** heard the **LORD God** walking in the **garden**. So they hid from the face of **God** behind some **trees**.

The **LORD God** called out to the **man** and asked, "Where are you?"

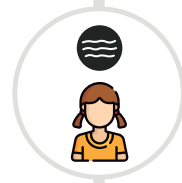
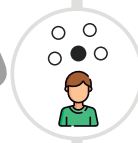
The **man** answered, "I was naked, and when I heard you walking through the **garden**, I was frightened and hid!"

"How did you know you were naked?" **God** asked. "Did you eat any **fruit** from that tree in the middle of the **garden**?"

12 "It was the **woman** you put here with me," the **man** said. "She gave me some of the **fruit**, and I ate it."

13 The **LORD God** then asked the **woman**, "What have you done?"

"The **snake** tricked me," she answered, "and I ate some of that **fruit**."



## MUD ART

*You will need:*

- *Freshly made dark brown 'mud' paint*
- *Laminated blank pages for each person as a 'whiteboard'*
- *Extra dry dirt/dust*
- *Plain A3 white paper*
- *Optional string and pegs for display*
- *Water tub, soap, handtowels for washing participant's hands*

*\*note: some children with high sensory processing sensitivity won't enjoy having 'muddy' hands. Give the option of using a stick to draw in the mud paint, and ask a neighbour who doesn't mind their hands being messy to smooth out the mud paint for them between pictures.*

Give each person a piece of plastic laminate sheet and a small smear of mud paint.

Explain that you are reading a story in the Bible that begins with just plain earth, ground, mud. The story is not meant to tell us exactly how the whole universe was created but to remind us of God's creativity, God's closeness in nature, and, God's face to face love for human beings.

Tell the group that the muddy painty laminated sheets are for a messy kind of pictorial. That you will read the story from the Bible which they can follow along in the Face to Face Bible Bits **Day1BibleBits1.pdf** and stop on certain words and call "quick draw!" and repeat the word a few times.

Each person quickly sketches the thing you have called, finger painting in the muddy paint on their laminated sheet. When they are finished, they put their hand up and call 'quick draw!' back to you. Enjoy and affirm all of the art, before smearing over and continuing.

After reading this way, read again, but this time pause at main plot points and ask for a volunteer to create a picture of that part of the story in their muddy finger painting.

At the end of the reading put all of the art in order and review the story, letting the artists explain their part of the story in their own words.

While the paint is still wet, help each person take a print from their laminate sheet by carefully placing a piece of A3 paper over the paint and pressing gently, before peeling the paper back and hanging it to dry.

Take a second print so there is one for the artist to take home, and a full set for you to display in your community. If you do this, remember to add the artist information (first name and age) and caption each piece with a title.



## NATURE READING

### *You will need:*

- *You will need:*
- *Tray of sand/dirt,*
- *Brown plasticine or clay,*
- *Plenty of small leafy twigs of various plants (to be mini trees)*
- *Water in a spray bottle on 'mist' setting*
- *Small signs on skewers saying 'God at work' (see Day1Content1.pdf)*

Before beginning the reading ask each person in your group to make a few small plasticine people, a snake and some wild animals.

- Tell your group that you are going to read a story from the Bible - one of stories that helps us think about God's creativity, how close God is to us in nature, in the beautiful world God made, and how close God especially is to people.
- Give each person some clay or plasticine to make some humans and wild animals
- As well as their plasticine/clay figures, give each person a supply of leafy twigs.
- When the group is ready, begin with just a plain dirt tray in the middle of your group.

Say something like: As you read the story following along in the Face to Face Bible Bits **Day1BibleBits1.pdf**, you will notice that there are coloured words that remind us about the different parts of nature in the story. Each time we get to a green word - which are about plants and trees, the next person around the circle adds a 'tree' (leafy twig, in plasticine/clay base to help it stand up) to the tray. Each time there is a brown word - about the earth or ground, the next person adds a handful of dirt to the tray. Pink words are for living beings - humans or animals and blue is for water - someone gets a turn at spraying the garden with mist.

- Read through the text slowly and expressively stopping on each coloured word and inviting a group member each time to contribute to the tray.
- Work through the story in this way, picking up the story after each thing is added, backtracking a little bit to make sure you are all holding the thread of the story together. The point is not to rush through, but to experience the deep symbols of the text as you go.
- Extra comments and questions should be welcomed and affirmed.

After reading once with your group you might like to take all of the extras off and repeat the process but starting with a different person in the circle so people contribute different things.

*Continued on next page...*





You might also want to stop and take photos on your device along the way showing the progress of the story

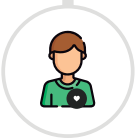
1. Empty earth
  2. Earth and human
  3. Earth and human and trees
  4. Earth and human and trees and animals
- etc...

You can use these to look back on the story with your group or post on your social media page.

With the garden fully made, do a final reading, this time inviting your group to follow along and join in every time God or the Lord is mentioned and take it in turns around the circle to add a 'God at Work' sign on a skewer somewhere in the garden.

### Linking Lines:

In this story we have been hands on with nature - because the story itself shows God as creative creator, really hands on and face to face with all of nature, but especially with humans. We see God at work all through the story. I wonder if it makes you think about how God is still hands on in nature or at work in the world today.



## GOD AT WORK

*You will need:*

- **Large poster (A1) print out of the text Genesis Chapter 2: 4-9, 15-17, Chapter 3:1-13** (Do this ahead of time on a photocopier 283% enlargement- 8 A4 pages) (See **Day1BibleBits1.pdf**)
- **Striped hazard tape**
- **'God at work' signs printed on fluoro paper, cut out**
- **Bluetac**
- **Optional - hard hat and Hi-Viz vest**

Gather your group around the poster. Explain that this is one of the stories from the Bible that help us think about who God is, and what God thinks of humans. It is one of the stories (but not the only one) in the Bible that tells us about God as the creator of the world.

In this story God is like a worker, sleeves rolled up, working hands on in the dirt.

Give each person in your group a stack of 'God at work' signs and some bluetac.

As we read the story we are going to look and listen out for each time God is there, working away. When we hear the name of God - either The Lord, or the Lord God or God, the whole group is to call out 'God at Work' and choose one person to stick their 'God at Work' sign on the text at the place you were up to.

If you have confident readers in your group, invite them to read some of the text - wearing the hard hat and hi-viz vest to mark their status as they do, and passing on the gear to the next person when they've read enough. It may be more appropriate for you to read the text.

When you have finished reading - review all the places you have identified God at work in the story.

### Linking Lines:

There are other stories about God as Creator that show God more like a director - calling out instructions and things happening at his command. Or like a mother making her household. But this story gives us a picture of God as a workman, feet on the ground, face to face giving life to human beings with his own breath.

# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- You have made something with your hands that you were really proud of.
- You have seen someone given mouth to mouth resuscitation
- You have had to make a difficult decision
- Someone has tried to trick you into doing something that wasn't a good idea.

- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
- Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.
- Use these activities to give your group time to think about the Bible story and to process what they have encountered
- Make the most of the easy relaxed creativity of these spaces to get to know your group better and listen to their thoughts

## HENNA HAND ART

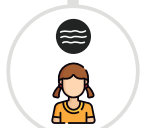
### *You will need:*

*Henna, water, paper towels for clean-up, Signage for parents to be aware of activity and able for child to opt out. Pictures of suggested story symbols*

Have leader hands already painted with story symbols as samples to look at. Invite your group to each think about which parts of the story are most important to them -

- The hands of God playing in mud making a person;
- The breath of God breathing his life into the humans,
- The tree of life in the garden;
- The snake trying his tricks

*(Samples at **Day1Consider1.pdf** - note that body art works well when using symbols and patterns rather than illustrations.)*





## TERRACOTTA EARTH STORY DISCS

**You will need:**

*Terracotta clay, paper plates, wire, skewers, plastic forks, sample of a story disk you have already made.*

- Give each person a fist sized lump of terracotta clay on a paper plate.
- Show them the sample you have made.
- First, get your group started on working their clay into round disk, rolling the clay as a ball and then flattening it out to be about 1cm thick. Keep some water in a tub handy for keeping hands wet and the clay moist and workable, especially if it's warm weather.
- As this is going on, invite your group to think about the story of God making people from the earth, the choices they made and how God still wanted to be face to face friends with them,
- Once their clay disk is smooth and flat, invite each person to represent the story as they imagine it on the disk - using various techniques including using a skewer to draw lines into the clay; scooping out shapes from the clay in some areas and building it up in others, adding extra shapes of clay in relief on top of the disk.
- Pierce two holes in the top of the disk with skewers so it can be hung with string when dried.



## BREATH ART

**You will need:**

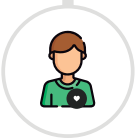
- *Diluted food dye or fairly runny paint (practice to check that the paint moves easily across the paper).*
- *Blank card (this activity needs a steady surface underneath).*
- *Straws cut in half (if the straws are too long, it makes it too hard to blow and hard to control for kids!)*

Show your group how to place a few splodges of dye or paint on the page and then blow the paint in different directions. Using just primary colours, experiment with blowing the different colours towards each other, making new colours as they combine.

This kind of art is hard to achieve precision results. One option would be to set the painted card aside to dry (this will happen quickly if it's a warm day and you use food dye) and then come back to it with a black sharpie markers and draw some images over the top of the creative background. Pierce two holes in the top of the disk with skewers so it can be hung with string when dried.

### Linking Lines:

You have used your breath as a powerful creative force in your art today, getting face to face with the page. In the story of creation we read in the Bible God's breath is the powerful creative force that gives life to humans.





# CONSEQUENCE



- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation

## SQUASHED TOMATOES



The purpose of this game is to stay resolute keeping to the same answer no matter what is being said.

Choose a volunteer or demonstrate yourself first, answering all questions with 'Squashed tomatoes' - WITHOUT LAUGHING!

For example:

'What do you use to wash your hair?'

'What's that stuck to the bottom of your shoe?'

'What do you think they should put in Easter eggs next year?'

'What gives Donald Trump's hair its colour?'

Encourage creativity with the questions from the group but make sure you keep it clean and kind. Any questions that are off-course, simply make a BARHM-BARHM sound and call next. Don't make a big thing of it; move on.

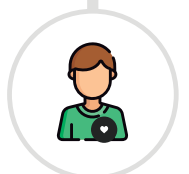
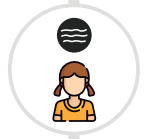
Let a number of volunteers have a go. If a person laughs they are immediate 'out' and replaced by someone else. Allow someone to 'retire' if they have successfully answered lots of times.

After lots of laughs and turns, shift the tone:

Say something like "This is a silly game, but it can really be hard to keep our ground and choose what's best when there are lots of voices telling us to do something else."

In the story we have heard the snake represented all kinds of voices telling the humans to choose something that wasn't good - choosing to deliberately choose evil.

When we are trying to decide what to do, we can repeat this prayer 'God's ways are good ways. Help our choosing'.





## EATING PRAYERS

*You will need:*

- *Jelly babies*
- *Fairy floss*
- *Lolly snakes*
- *Fruit lollies, e.g. banana or raspberry (any lolly that looks like a fruit.)*
- *Black liquorice pieces*
- *Paper squares - see template in **Day1Consequence1.pdf**.*
- *Coloured markers*

Show your group how to fold the paper into a 'chooser'.

Let pairs practice playing with the chooser, making choices and finding their way to the prayers inside. These can be coloured in now, or later or not at all.

When everyone has successfully made a chooser re-focus the attention of your group and explain that each of the prayers in the chooser has a lolly to go with it.

Give each person one lolly at a time - and say the prayer that goes with it. Eat the lollies that go with each prayer or save them for later, holding them in the chooser.

If participants have eaten some or all of the lollies, give them a fresh supply - one of each kind to take home.

- Jelly babies - (Humans) Thank you God for making people. Thank you that you have made people to be able to live and breathe and move and be friends and choose and know you our God.
- Fairy floss - (Breath) Thank you God for being closer to us than the air we breathe, that you know us and love us face to face.
- Lolly snakes - (Snake) Help us Lord God when we are surrounded by those who are suggesting that we try things that are against your good ways. Help us to be wise and hold on to your good words of life.
- Fruit lolly - (Fruit that is Good) Dear God, you have filled the world with wonderful amazing things for us to discover, which are good for us and bring us life and happiness and strength.
- Black liquorice pieces - (Knowing Evil) Loving God, please help us not to choose what is wrong and brings trouble on others or on ourselves. Sorry that sometimes we find it easy to choose wrong. Thank you for not giving up on us even when we do that. Thank you for forgiving us and helping us out of our trouble.



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# FACE TO FACE PARENTS 1

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

Loving and facing the best and the worst of our kids



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

Remember when your kid was a brand new baby - and you wanted to make sure nothing bad ever happened to them because you loved them so much? Remember some of the rules you tried to keep so that they would be protected. For most of us as parents, we've had to learn to let go a bit. We've had to learn that if our kids are going to live, we aren't going to be able to control their worlds so absolutely that there'll never be mistakes or misfortunes. It's just not possible. And it's not really how to love someone either - to control everything for them isn't loving.

So we've had to cop our kids making mistakes, making a mess, making mayhem, even making bad choices sometimes.

That really stretches us as parents, hey? Because we know that the freedom to make mistakes is part of living and loving and growing and learning. But how do we lovingly help discipline or correct them - or see that they know the consequences of what they've done?

It's a tough gig making those calls, and finding a way to love our kids, as well as keep them from harm, as well as letting them learn from their mistakes. And it's tough work facing our own emotions in the midst of it. How can someone not even a metre tall press all my buttons!!!!

## SHARE YOUR STORY

What are some of the funniest things your kids have done that really should have got them in trouble but were just too hilarious?

How does thinking about the mischief you got up to as a kid help you empathise and understand your own kid's behaviours?

Do you find it hard work emotionally to discipline your kids - does it take it out of you?

## GOD'S STORY

Right up the beginning of the Bible is a beautiful story about two young humans who live close to God in a garden where everything they need is right there. God is a face to face friend to them. But - because this is a world of love, not a world of robots or remote control, their choices are real. God has made these humans with true freedom - because that's how love works.

But of course, you saw it coming a mile off, didn't you? They choose poorly. They choose to know more than just all that is good and healthy and life-giving. They choose to know evil, to know hurt and darkness, to know shame, to know that relationships can be broken.

In this story, it's pretty amazing to watch how God handles the situation. Firstly they've chosen badly, ignored the warnings, been disobedient. They've got themselves up to their eyeballs in grief. But none of this is a problem for God. God doesn't take it personally. God still turns up, wants to talk, still loving them, and sets about helping them with the mess they've gotten themselves in. They are ashamed of their bodies, so God gives them clothes. They now know that life can be awful, so God sends them out of the place where they could eat the fruit that keeps them alive forever. No one wants this life to go on forever. You might have thought this part of the story was a punishment, but it's clear that it is actually about loving these two vulnerable humans.

There's lots of good news for us here, as people and as parents. Firstly it's a great reminder to us as parents that no matter what our kids do, to keep loving them, stay engaged and in relationship with them, not to make it all about us, taking it personally but to keep our focus on what is going on in their world, supporting their learning and reassuring them that we are still for them, not against them. We want our kids to be able to face us without fear.

But secondly, it also pokes us in the right direction with God. Myths and Movies and Music often paint God as angry and vengeful, who loses his temper at disobedience, and punishes people. That's maybe the god that we try to be when we wish we could control other people's lives.

But it's nothing like the behaviour and character of the God of the Bible. Right from these oldest stories God is the face to face God who keeps loving no matter what.

Read more in Genesis chapters 2 and 3

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# DAY 2

# JACOB

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# TEAM STUDY 2

## JACOB

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
  - *Use these questions to explore further*



Jacob's name is changed to Israel, and then this becomes the name that the people of God are known as, meaning God-Wrestlers.

In what ways do you have a God-wrestling faith?

How does the idea of God's people being God wrestlers shape how we think of mission?

**Activity:**

As a team, line up in order of how many years you have been a Christian.  
Line up according to how many hours a week on average you'd spend doing church activities.

Line up according to how many hours you have consecutively sat on a pole for the sake of the kingdom (like Simeon Stylites, the early church father did).

Note that none of these 'rating' systems are of any importance.

Do you think there are ways in which we subtly assume there is some kind of spiritual ladder?

If, as in this story, God is at the bottom of the ladder, on ground level, how does that shape our mission?

# AGE GROUP SESSION 2

## JACOB

God meets a Family of Fighters

**GEN 27:41 -45**

**GEN 28:10-16**

**GEN 32:3-7, 13-15, 21, 24-30**

**GEN 33:1-4, 8-11**

Jacob fights with his brother, wrestles with God and reconciles with his brother.

### BIBLE LINK

We wrestle with knowing God and knowing ourselves. God's forgiveness leads us to forgive one-another.

### INTRODUCTION

If there's one way to get right into the thorniest issues of being human its family life. The Book of Genesis picks up the story of one family. In some ways, following the family of Abraham, down through the generations of Isaac and Jacob and his large family, is a bit random. We are given no reason for why God starts a conversation with Abraham. Eventually if we hang on for several millennia, we can draw a very squiggly and sometimes a bit broken line between Abraham and Jesus. But even Jesus doesn't make a big deal of that heritage.

God can make children of Abraham out of stones if he wants to.

So there's good reason to dig into the stories of this family on their own terms. What does God make of fighting families? How does God get written into their wheeling and dealing world? What does God do in the middle of their swindling, stealing, avenging, avoiding, loving, labouring?

In the story of Jacob - from youth to old age - we find Jacob ever the trickster and God face to face with him. As a youngster, kicked out of home, the centre of a domestic violence situation with his brother, out on the road, sleeping rough, God turns up in his dream. Not on a throne up in heaven above the clouds, but right alongside him, on the earth, where Jacob is curled up below the bottom rung of the ladder. Maybe we all get sucked into the mirage that there's a stairway to heaven - but even when we do, we discover God is at the bottom of it, not the top. Face to face with us on the level ground he made, and that he made us from. As an old codger, Jacob is still encountering God like this. He discovers that you can fight that idea if you like, but be prepared to walk away blessed, wounded, and wondering if you lost or won.

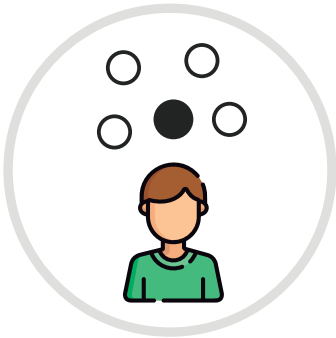
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Thumb wrestling, knee wrestling
- Camping-Tents
- Runaway tag
- Famous brothers and sisters



## CONTEXT

- Complicated families
- Making up the rules
- Ladder race
- Animals = wealth



## CONTENT

- Good, old fashioned story telling and listening
- Pass the Parcel



## CONSIDER

- Face of God Stones
- Ladders
- Chenille Stem figures



## CONSEQUENCE

- Stand on the Line
- Pick a prayer

# CONNECT



- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.



## THUMB WRESTLING

Invite your group to pair up and 'Thumb wrestle' one another. Each pair hook right hand fists using their four fingers to hold on. With the words

"1234, I declare a thumb war!"

They move their thumbs from side to side past each other in rhythm.

On the word 'War' each person tries to get their thumb on top of the other person's thumb and hold it down, whilst dodging the other person's thumb trying to do the same.

Change pairs – and change to using left hands.

### Linking Lines:

The main character in the story from the Bible today, Jacob, gets into fights with almost everyone he meets. He fights with his brother, his uncle, with other workers, and finally we find him even wrestling with God - in fact God changes his name to 'God Wrestler'.





## CAMPING TENTS

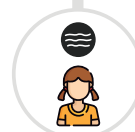
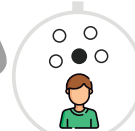
*You will need:*

- *Simple tents appropriate to the skills of your age group.  
(Beach pop up tents, small dome tents or DIY creative cubby making are all options)*

Work together to set up your tent - see if you can all squeeze inside it - then take it down again and pack it away.  
Set it up a second time and use it as a space for your group to gather during the rest of the session.

### Linking Lines:

In our story today we hear about Jacob who is on the run from his brother who he has made very mad. He runs away from home and sleeps under the stars.



## RUNAWAY TAG

*You will need:*

- *Boundary markers*

Play a simple game of tag. Set boundaries and create a 'safe' home or 'barley'.

### Linking Lines:

In our Bible story today, Jacob is in so much trouble, he has to run away. But we'll see that wherever he runs to, he keeps running into God.



## FAMOUS BROTHERS AND SISTERS BINGO

*You will need:*

- *Large Bingo 9 square*
- *Each of the 9 Squares has a name stuck over an instruction hidden on the square below.*

Jackson 5 (Music) -Do a moonwalk

William and Orville Wright (aeroplane inventors) - Your best imitation of an aeroplane taking off

Ron and Ginny Weasley (Harry Potter) - Choose a stick for a wand and call out "Expelliarmus"

Elsa and Anna (Frozen) - Sing a line from the song 'Let it Go' or 'Do you want to build a snowman'

Joel and Scott Selwood (AFL footy) - Catch a footy and handball it back

Serena and Venus Williams (Tennis) - Mime a tennis serve

Bart, Lisa and Maggie Simpson (Fictional Cartoon) - Hum a little bit of the Simpson's theme tune

Ned and Dan Kelly (Bushrangers) - make your best gunshot sounds

Princes William and Harry - bow and say 'Your Royal Majesty'

Introduce this activity to your group, announcing that we are going to think about some Bible brothers. But first, this is a game of brother and sister Bingo in which we get to try and guess what these brothers and sisters are famous for. If we can't guess - there are some clues to help as well.

Ask a volunteer to choose a name from the squares. Find out if they know what the names they chose are famous for. If they know, or guess correctly, they remove the name from the board and the whole group does whatever the activity is behind the name. IF they don't know or can't guess what the siblings are famous for, they remove the name and do the activity by themselves.

Keep asking for volunteers, until everyone has had a turn, then choose people to have second turns, is there are still names left over.

Keep it fun and encouraging - don't let anyone become embarrassed or pressured into anything uncomfortable. If an activity is too daunting for the volunteer that chose it, offer to do it with them, or for them - and ask them to count you in, so they still contribute in some way, but with low embarrassment factor.

### Linking Lines:

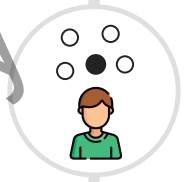
Brothers and Sisters can be best friends and can sometimes fight. In our story from the Bible today we will find two brothers - twin brothers - who fight fiercely but finally face up to each other and find forgiveness and friendship.



# CONTEXT



- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.



## MAKING UP THE RULES

### *You will need*

- *Jelly babies*
- *Paper and marker to record rules.*

Explain to your group that you have a packet of Jelly babies, which you thought the group could use to play a game. But - so far, the game doesn't have any rules! So it's up to the group to decide what the rules are. Invite suggestions from your group for the rules of the game. Write them down - to keep track. There will inevitably be conflicting rules - let the conflict rise, but don't let it get personally upsetting for anyone - remind the group that these are still just suggestions and nothing has been decided yet.

After a bit of discussion and pointing out how hard it is to decide on rules that everyone is happy with, announce that the rule will be everyone gets three jelly babies of any colour they like.

As you give out the Jelly babies, say the linking lines.

### **Linking Lines:**

Today's story comes from thousands of years ago. The family of people in this story are a wandering tribe, they don't belong to a particular country, they don't have a king or a ruler, they don't have any agreed laws or police, or courts or jail, they don't have laws about what to do if someone does something you think is wrong, they don't have laws about getting married, they don't have laws about how much a person should be paid. They don't have money, and they don't have a set way of following God or a particular religion. They are just kind of making up the rules as they go along.





## LADDER RACE

### *You will need*

- *Clear running space*

Pair up your group and have them sit opposite each other on the ground, with legs out straight, feet to feet (as for fruit salad)

Give each pair a different name and attribute of a character in the story.

Blind Old Isaac  
Tricky brother Jacob  
Wild brother Esau  
Cunning mother Rebecca  
Greedy Uncle Laban  
Older sister Leah  
Beautiful looking Rachel  
Baby Reuben  
God's angel messengers  
Faithful God face to face

When you call their name or their character, the pair jump up and run down the 'ladder' stepping between the legs of the other players, still sitting on the ground, run up around the outside, then down the 'ladder' back to their original place.

You can call two names in close succession, creating more havoc.

When you call 'Faithful God face to face' everyone runs at once.

### **Linking Lines:**

What a family this was - they all had their worries and problems and their not so good ways. But God's face to face presence is threaded all the way through their story. God can see that they are not all perfect, but God loves them and helps them find their way through the fighting to forgiveness. And strangely enough when Jacob dreams of a ladder going up to heaven, he finds that God isn't at the top of it, but is right at the bottom of it with him.

## COMPLICATED FAMILIES

### *You will need*

- *Chart of Jacob's family tree with yarn connecting names*
- *Card*
- *Yarn*
- *Markers*

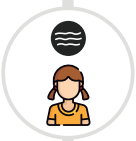
Show your group the chart of Jacob's family tree. Point out that it has twins, many children, many wives, Uncles, half-sisters and half-brothers.

Invite participants to chart who is in their family tree. In this exercise, the child can include anyone who is significant to them.

Affirm and show interest in all aspects of their family.

### **Linking Lines:**

Families can be wonderfully fun and can have tough times too. In our Bible Story today, Jacob's family had its share of fights, complications and in the end some forgiveness too







## ANIMALS = WEALTH

### You will need

- *Plasticine in brown, grey, yellow white, black*
- *Wool scraps in the same colours - or any animal skin colours, shredded into short tufts*
- *Small goggle eyes or small white beads*
- *A4 pieces of green and/or brown paper*

Challenge your group to see how many plasticine farm animals you can make. They can choose whether to make sheep, goats, camels, donkeys or cows - these were the important animals people in the ancient world used to stay alive and to count their wealth.

Show your group how to form a basic animal shape from a 'sausage' shape of plasticine, pulling down the legs and pulling forward the head from the body, keeping it all in one piece. Demonstrate adding ears and horns sticking on eyes and covering the body with little bits of wool.

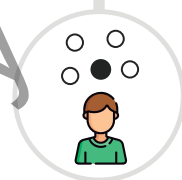
When an animal is made, set it on a piece of green or brown paper 'pasture'. Keep adding to the flock. Set a timer of 5-7 minutes, then count up your flocks.

### Linking Lines:

In the time of today's story from the very early part of the Bible, people didn't use money. Their way of knowing and counting their wealth was by how many animals they had - because they used animals for food and the hair for clothing, and the skins for containers and tents, and made tools from their bones and used their dung for fuel. At the end of the story today the hero of the story Jacob sends a 'sorry' gift to his brother of

- 220 goats
- 220 sheep
- 60 camels
- 50 cows
- 30 donkeys

Jacob was either really rich, really scared, really sorry or all of the above!



# CONTENT

## GOOD, OLD FASHIONED STORY TELLING AND LISTENING

### *You will need*

- *Copy of the text that you have practiced reading well*

Sometimes, less visual help is more - and just hearing a story read and being caught up in its world is the best. This story is full of drama, and has lots of emotion and suspense and wonder in it.

Settle your group and tell them that you are going to read them a story from the Bible that covers many years in the life of a family - from when Jacob and his brother Esau are youngsters - to when they are grown up with wives and children and grandchildren.

Read the story slowly and expressively - use plenty of eye contact and facial expression with your group to draw them into the drama and innuendo of the text. Make sure you have practiced reading really well.

### **Linking Lines:**

This is a very, very old story that has been told to generation after generation. Because families have always had fighting, and God has always been faithful.

### **BIBLE BIT**

Esau hated his brother Jacob because he had stolen the blessing that was supposed to be his. So he said to himself, "Just as soon as my father dies, I'll kill Jacob."

When their mother Rebekah found out what Esau planned to do, she sent for Jacob and told him, "Son, your brother Esau is just waiting for the time when he can kill you. Now listen carefully and do what I say. Go to the home of my brother Laban in Haran and stay with him for a while. When Esau stops being angry and forgets what you have done to him, I'll send for you to come home."

Jacob left his home in Beersheba and started out for Haran.

At sunset he stopped for the night and went to sleep, resting his head on a large rock. In a dream he saw a ladder that reached from earth to heaven, and God's angels were going up and down on it.

The LORD was standing beside the ladder and said:

"I am the LORD God who was worshiped by Abraham and Isaac. Wherever you go, I will watch over you, then later I will bring you back to this land. I won't leave you—I promise."

Jacob woke up suddenly and thought, "The LORD is in this place, and I didn't even know it."

*~Twenty years, four wives and over a dozen children later...Jacob decides to go home and face his brother.~*

*Continued on next page...*



Jacob sent messengers on ahead to Esau, who lived in the land of Seir, also known as Edom. Jacob told them to say to Esau, “Master, I am your servant! I have lived with Uncle Laban all this time, and now I own cattle, donkeys, and sheep, as well as many slaves. Master, I am sending these messengers in the hope that you will be kind to me.”

When the messengers returned, they told Jacob, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is heading this way with four hundred men.”

Jacob was so frightened that he divided his people, sheep, cattle, and camels into two groups. He thought, “If Esau attacks one group, perhaps the other can escape.”

\*

After Jacob had spent the night there, he chose some animals as gifts for Esau: goats, sheep, camels with their young, cows and bulls, and donkeys. Jacob hoped the gifts would make Esau friendly, so Esau would be glad to see him when they met. Jacob’s men took the gifts on ahead of him, but Jacob spent the night in camp alone.

A man came and fought with Jacob until just before daybreak. When the man saw that he could not win, he struck Jacob on the hip and threw it out of joint. They kept on wrestling until the man said, “Let go of me! It’s almost daylight.”

“You can’t go until you bless me,” Jacob replied.

Then he asked, “What is your name?”

“Jacob,” he answered.

Then he said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob. You have been able to wrestle with God and with humans. That’s why your name will be Israel – meaning God-wrestler.”

Jacob said, “Now tell me your name.”

“Why do you ask my name?” he asked. And he blessed Jacob.

Jacob said, “I have seen God face to face, and I am still alive.” So he named the place Peniel.

\*

Later that day Jacob met Esau coming with his four hundred men. So Jacob had his children walk with their mothers. Jacob himself walked in front of them all, bowing his face to the ground seven times as he came near his brother.

But Esau ran toward Jacob and hugged and kissed him. Then the two brothers started crying.

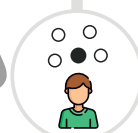
Esau asked Jacob, “What did you mean by these herds of animals I met along the road?”

Jacob answered, “I sent them so that you would be friendly to me.”

“But, brother, I already have plenty,” Esau replied. “Keep them for yourself.”

“No!” Jacob said. “Please accept these gifts as a sign of your friendship for me. When you welcomed me and I saw your face, it was like seeing the face of God. Please accept these gifts I brought to you. God has been good to me, and I have everything I need.”

Jacob kept insisting until Esau accepted the gifts.



## PASS THE PARCEL

### *You will need*

- A 'Pass the Parcel' package wrapped with the following layers- in each layer the item and the piece of the text to read. **NB: these instructions give you the inside layer first - but you will be opening and reading in the reverse order!**

### *Layers:*

1. "No!" Jacob said. "Please accept these gifts as a sign of your friendship for me. When you welcomed me and I saw your face, it was like seeing the face of God. Please accept these gifts I brought to you. God has been good to me, and I have everything I need."

Jacob kept insisting until Esau accepted the gifts.

**ITEM - little gift box wrapped up - inside the word 'forgiven'**

2. But Esau ran toward Jacob and hugged and kissed him. Then the two brothers started crying.

Esau asked Jacob, "What did you mean by these herds of animals I met along the road?"

Jacob answered, "I sent them so that you would be friendly to me."

"But, brother, I already have plenty," Esau replied. "Keep them for yourself."

**ITEM - tissues with word 'sorry' written on it**

3. Later that day Jacob met Esau coming with his four hundred men. So Jacob had his children walk with their mothers. Jacob himself walked in front of them all, bowing his face to the ground seven times as he came near his brother.

**ITEM - strip of sandpaper road**

4. A man came and fought with Jacob until just before daybreak. When the man saw that he could not win, he struck Jacob on the hip and threw it out of joint. They kept on wrestling until the man said, "Let go of me! It's almost daylight."

"You can't go until you bless me," Jacob replied.

Then he asked, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

Then he said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob. You have been able to wrestle with God and with humans. That's why your name will be Israel – meaning God-wrestler."

Jacob said, "Now tell me your name."

"Why do you ask my name?" he asked. And he blessed Jacob.

Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face, and I am still alive." So he named the place Peniel.

**ITEM - Black cloth with glitter stars**

5. After Jacob had spent the night there, he chose some animals as gifts for Esau: goats, sheep, camels with their young, cows and bulls, and donkeys. Jacob hoped the gifts would make Esau friendly, so Esau would be glad to see him when they met. Jacob's men took the gifts on ahead of him, but Jacob spent the night in camp alone.

**ITEM - lots of plastic farm animals**

*Continued on next page...*

6. When the messengers returned, they told Jacob, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is heading this way with four hundred men.” Jacob was so frightened that he divided his people, sheep, cattle, and camels into two groups. He thought, “If Esau attacks one group, perhaps the other can escape.”

**ITEM - plastic toy soldiers (bows and arrow/spears) or rows of small concertina people**

7. ~Twenty years, four wives and over a dozen children later...Jacob decides to go home and face his brother.~

Jacob sent messengers on ahead to Esau, who lived in the land of Seir, also known as Edom. Jacob told them to say to Esau, “Master, I am your servant! I have lived with Uncle Laban all this time, and now I own cattle, donkeys, and sheep, as well as many slaves. Master, I am sending these messengers in the hope that you will be kind to me.”

**ITEM - Envelope with stamp, addressed to ‘Brother Esau’ - on the back ‘Sender: Brother Jacob: see you soon!’**

9. Jacob left his home in Beersheba and started out for Haran.

At sunset he stopped for the night and went to sleep, resting his head on a large rock. In a dream he saw a ladder that reached from earth to heaven, and God’s angels were going up and down on it.

The LORD was standing beside the ladder and said:

“I am the LORD God who was worshiped by Abraham and Isaac. Wherever you go, I will watch over you, then later I will bring you back to this land. I won’t leave you—I promise.”

Jacob woke up suddenly and thought, “The LORD is in this place, and I didn’t even know it.”

**ITEM - stone**

9. Esau hated his brother Jacob because he had stolen the blessing that was supposed to be his. So he said to himself, “Just as soon as my father dies, I’ll kill Jacob.”

When their mother Rebekah found out what Esau planned to do, she sent for Jacob and told him, “Son, your brother Esau is just waiting for the time when he can kill you. Now listen carefully and do what I say. Go to the home of my brother Laban in Haran and stay with him for a while. When Esau stops being angry and forgets what you have done to him, I’ll send for you to come home.”

**ITEM - (toy) dagger/knife/spear (can be made from a bamboo skewer)**

10 - Outside layer - “The story of the brothers, Jacob and Esau’

Sit your group in a circle and show them the parcel. Explain that there is story from the Bible, the story of Jacob in every layer.

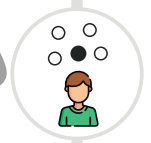
Pass the parcel around the circle with a little bit of music playing (but don’t let it go for too long - just a few passes - as there are 10 layers to get through!)

When the music stops, the person holding the package opens it and reveals the item inside and finds the piece of text to read.

They can read it or give it to you to read.

Engage the group in working out how the item relates to the part of the story just read. Each person keeps the item in front of them, and the piece of text with it, for review at the end.

**Continue each layer with music until finished!**



# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- Someone in your family has been really mad with you?
- You've slept outside and felt God really close?
- You've been really scared of someone?
- You've gone back to say sorry to someone?

- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
- Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.

## FACE OF GOD STONES

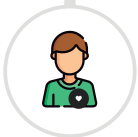
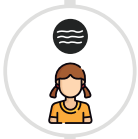
### *You will need*

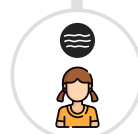
- *Large unpolished river stones*
- *Black paint, brushes*
- *Black permanent markers*
- *Here's one I made earlier sample - stone with 'God is here' written in permanent marker on one side, and black silhouette of face painted on the other*

Show your group the sample stone, reminding them of how Jacob's life had a rough time, running away from home, how he slept on a stone as a pillow. And how God had been so close to him in his dream. Invite participants to write 'God is here' on the base of their stone in permanent marker, and on the reverse side to draw the outline of a face in permanent marker, and then paint it in with black paint.

### **Linking Lines:**

Even though Jacob didn't seem to know God very well, when he was in a rough time, and God appeared he knew that it was God. God has a way of helping us know him, even if we're not too sure about it ourselves.





## LADDERS



### *You will need*

- *Sticks of roughly the same diameter (can be different lengths)*
- *Chenille stems, cut into 5cm lengths.*

Help your group find two sticks of a similar length (roughly 30cm is ideal). If one stick is longer than the other, break it off to be even.

These two sticks form the sides of the ladder. Now help each person find 5 or 6 shorter lengths to use as the steps up the ladder.

Show your group how wrap a chenille stem piece diagonally around the cross beam and the side of the ladder and bring it around across the other side to hold the cross beam secure. Attach all the cross beams to one side of the ladder first, then attach the other long side.

### **Linking Lines:**

Jacob's life had lots of ups and downs – when he was at his lowest point, sleeping rough, having nothing, running away from home, his brother wanting to kill him, unsure of his future, when he was really, really down, that's when he found that God was right with him.

Although he dreamt of a ladder reaching up into the heavens, God was at the bottom with him.

## CHENILLE STEM FIGURES

### *You will need*

- *Plenty of chenille stems*
- *Scissors*
- *Plasticine*

There is plenty of action that goes on in the story of Jacob: threats of murder, running away, sleeping under the stars, getting very rich, wrestling with God, limping home, reuniting with his brother.

Invite your group to choose any part of the story and make an action figure (or action figures). Use plasticine to help your figures stand up.

Encourage making more than one scene. When the action scenes are finished, put them in order and challenge the group to narrate their way through the sequence.

Don't worry if more than one person chooses the same scene - include them all.

# CONSEQUENCE

- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation

## STAND ON THE LINE

### *You will need*

- *Rope or very thick yarn ~4 metres long*

Explain to your group that you are interested in finding out what they think about some of the things that have happened in the story.

To help find out what they think you will ask them to stand somewhere on the line that shows their opinion - for example if you were to ask if they agree that Jelly beans are better to stand down one end of the rope or smarties are better - to stand down the other end of the rope - or somewhere in between, depending on how strongly they feel about it.

Invite the group to stand somewhere on the line in relation to their enjoyment of Jelly beans and smarties - to warm up, and so that everyone is already standing on the line to start with.

Once people have taken their place along the line, invite anyone who would like to explain why they are standing where they are, and give their reasons to do so.

Accept and affirm and show appreciation for all contributions and opinions.

Continue with the following statement relating to the story of Jacob and Esau.

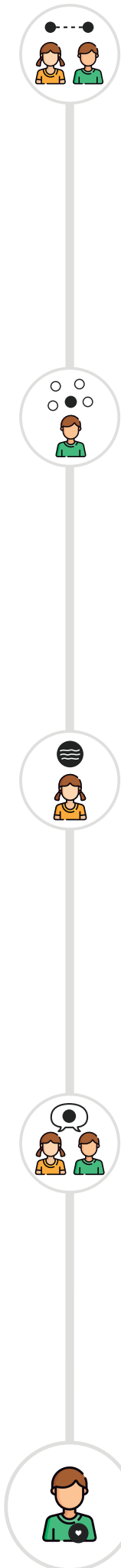
Who do you feel sorriest for Jacob? ----- Esau?

What do you think would be scarier -  
Wrestling with God in the night? ----- facing the brother who  
wanted to murder you?

Do you think Jacob should have -  
Stayed at home and fought his brother  
to keep his inheritance (land and animals)? ----- run away to stay safe  
but given up everything?

Does God seem to favour Esau?-----Jacob?

Would you prefer to meet God - In a dream in your sleep? ----- awake and  
wrestling?







## PICK A PRAYER

### You will need

- *Template of prayer page (see **Day2Consequence1.pdf**)*
- *Stone, plasticine animal, pipe cleaner person, cellophane 'stream' for each person*

Give each person a Prayer Page and explain:

From the story of Jacob we are going to borrow some of his prayers.

On the prayer page you'll see 4 different kinds of prayers that Jacob prayed at different times in his story:

A Wonder prayer, a Help prayer, a Thanks prayer and a Wow prayer.

Perhaps one of these prayers is what you'd like to pray today - maybe more than one - that's up to you.

Go through the Prayer Page with the group and together be reminded of the different parts of Jacob's journey. Give the group plenty of opportunity to recall parts of the story. Hand out the small items that represent each part of the story and match the particular prayers.

**WONDER** - "The LORD is in this place, and I didn't even know it." (Stone pillow)

*Jacob is running away from home, sleeping rough, and God appears to him in the night, even when he's not expecting it*

**HELP** - "Please bless me" (pipe cleaner person)

*Jacob is frightened of his brother and ready for attack - when God meets him he begs for God's help*

**WOW** - "I have seen God face to face" (cellophane stream)

*Although he has struggled through a difficult time, he realises God was with him, close up, face to face*

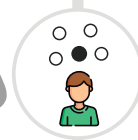
**THANKS** - "God has been good to me, and I have everything I need." (plasticine animal)

*Jacob ran away from home with nothing, but returns many years later with plenty of wealth - and he is thankful to God for all that he has*

Finally, point out that in the middle of the Prayer Page is a spiral. This is a space for any kind of prayer you want to say to God of your own.

Give some quiet time to finish.

Encourage sharing the prayer page with their family as they take it home.



# FACE TO FACE PARENTS 2

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

Family Fights and finding forgiveness



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

Families - they are full of 100% human realness. Living together under one roof is challenging. It can be so that living under two roofs can be necessary - and still challenging.

Sibling fights are no big news - every family has them to some degree, and sometimes it's not just the kids who fight.

Our news media outlets make a big deal about domestic violence. One thing is for sure: It's real, it's serious. It's not easily or simply solved. We need to understand and help each other without blame and sides and judgement. We need to face up to the truth that humans - even those who are close, brothers and sisters, partners and parents all have their share of struggles.

Our kids need our help in working out how not to sweat the small stuff and let go of the niggles - and how to stand up for what is important in the big stuff. They are going to need to learn how to name what is not ok and give the other person a chance to put things right - and to hear when they are not treating someone right, and be given a chance to set that back on track.

What a job we have helping our kids find the tools of forgiveness - and of finding it for ourselves, 100% humans that we are!

## SHARE YOUR STORY

What are the hot button things that your kids fight over?

How do you help your kids sort things out before it escalates?

Do you find one of your kids easier to relate to and understand than others - how do you deal with your kids perceptions of favouritism?

How about with your own brothers and sisters - what is there to learn from seeing brothers and sisters grown up and getting past their childhood fighting, of carrying them forward with them?

## GOD'S STORY

The first book of the Bible follows the adventures of this one family - the family of Abraham - and in every single generation there is the most extreme family fighting you can imagine. People get thrown out of home, there's merciless bullying, favourites, traps and tricks and tussles. And sometimes, years later, after big regrets and lives apart, there is forgiveness and reconciliation. Not always. But sometimes. It's possible; not easy, but possible...sometimes.

In the story of Jacob and Esau - twin boys - one the outdoorsy macho guy, the other the smooth trickster - life at home falls apart with favouritism from the folks, and arguments over inheritance. It gets deadly violent. Jacob runs away from home - runs for his life. He runs into plenty more trouble when he hooks up with his in-laws too. He's just one of those guys. He's a fighter, a wrestler, a struggler. With his brother, his uncle, his brothers-in-law, and - here's the thing - with God. He's on for a fight with God too - but from his youth as a runaway to his return as an old man, God keeps turning up for the fight - blessing, promising to be with him, keeping him from falling off the tree completely. In the end, God names Jacob 'God-wrestler' (Israel) - and from that time on God's people have been called this name 'God Wrestlers'.

God's story doesn't paint a picket fence picture perfect family. God tracks along with real families. If we can serve it up, God can face it.

SU Missions/Camps use only

SU Mission: Camps use only

# DAY 3

# EXODUS

SU Missions/Camps use only

# TEAM STUDY 3

## EXODUS

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
- *Use these questions to explore further*



Reading the texts from Exodus and Deuteronomy for today, underline all of the instances that you see God centering on relationship.

In pairs look specifically for the parts of the text that are about relationships between people, and for the parts that are specifically for relationship with God. Notice anything?

Imagine that you are a slave and your family have been slaves for hundreds of years. Read the texts again - how does hearing them as a runaway rescued slave change their meaning?

How do the expectations that God has of the freed Israelites shape the way we do mission?

# AGE GROUP SESSION 3

## EXODUS

God and a race of rescued runaway slaves

### EXODUS 19:1-6

Then two months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived at the desert near Mount Sinai, where they set up camp at the foot of the mountain.

Moses went up the mountain to meet with the LORD God, who told him to say to the people: You saw what I did in Egypt, and you know how I brought you here to me, just as a mighty eagle carries its young. Now if you will faithfully obey me, you will be my very own people. The whole world is mine, but you will be my holy nation and serve me as priests.

### DEUTERONOMY 6:4-7

Listen, Israel! The LORD our God is the only true God! So love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Tell them to your children over and over again.

Talk about them all the time, whether you're at home or walking along the road or going to bed at night, or getting up in the morning. Write down copies and tie them to your wrists and foreheads to help you obey them. Write these laws on the door frames of your homes and on your town gates.

### EXODUS 33:7-11?

Moses used to set up a tent far from camp. He called it the "meeting tent," and whoever needed some message from the LORD would go there. Each time Moses went out to the tent, everyone would stand at the entrance to their own tents and watch him enter. Then they would bow down because a thick cloud would come down in front of the tent, and the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, just like a friend.

### BIBLE LINK

Moses is a face to face friend of God who leads God's enslaved people to freedom and gives them God's good words for living well and justly.



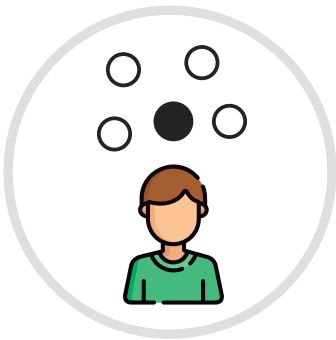
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Crazy Uno
- Face to Face
- Run and Rescue



## CONTEXT

- Egyptian gods
- Journey through the desert
- Egyptians and Israelites Runnings



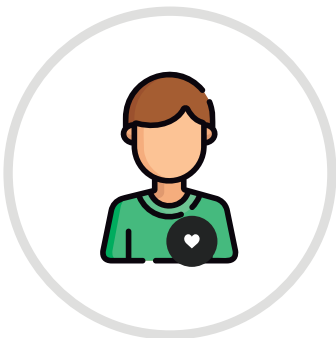
## CONTENT

- Mime-o-rama-Bible-drama
- Where's the message? Mountain, House, Tent.



## CONSIDER

- Sandpaper art
- Plasticine art installation charting move of people of God.
- Wristbands and headbands



## CONSEQUENCE

- Meeting tent prayers - questions for God
- Symbols for God - Eagle, Word, Cloud, Friend.
- Pick one word...rock writing

## INTRODUCTION

If you pay attention reading in Exodus, you might be a bit confused about whether it's ok to talk to God or not. Sometimes God seems hidden in cloud and fire; sometimes you have to take your shoes off, sometimes you don't. Sometimes you can hear his voice; sometimes it's too terrible to listen to. Sometimes you can talk to God face to face, and sometimes that way is not ok, and God will only let you see his...backside?

What should we make of this? Should we fear God or friend God? Should we tremble in silence or talk confidently?

And why is it so confusing – why can't the Bible just say one thing?

As we read the way God relates to Moses, to Pharaoh and to the people of Israel we find ourselves right in the middle of this question – who is God?

Of course, this question is going on in the middle of lots of other talk. The People of Israel have been living among the Egyptian for several centuries and they know the Egyptian's gods. These are gods that are mostly interested in each other, not in humans. Humans need to do all kinds of things to get the attention of these gods – sacrifice and appease them. And these gods can be manipulated by priests and magicians.

So the stories of Exodus are throwing all of these ideas around – testing them. Is the God of the Hebrew slaves like the gods of the Egyptians? Does he have a crocodile face? A bird face? How do you communicate with such a god? With spells and incantations like the Egyptian Gods?

So there are stories that try that idea out – and we notice that those stories come unstuck and other stories take over – stories in which God turns out to be not interested in spells and incantation and sacrifices, but speaks to Moses face to face as a friend.

And God's number one policy is....ready for it?...can you guess?

Fear God? No.

Sacrifice your children to God? No! He saves children.

Create special language and spells for the elite priests? No.

Love the Lord your God. Yes! God is your God – every one of you. Every Israelite – God is your God. Each household holds God's Loving Ways (or Law) close – on the door posts, they are part of getting up in the morning and playing with your children and going to bed at night. Loving God. That's it.

The people of Israel have cried out to God – not the Egyptian God, but the God they know through their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And this God shows up to rescue them. He hears their cries – he takes their side - he responds – but he's not a God to be manipulated or bought off with sacrifices. The Lord God is a God of Love. That's the beginning and end of the deal.

Love God. Live the Love of God every day, in your families, with your parents, partner, slaves, neighbours, animals.

# CONNECT



- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.



## CRAZY UNO

### *You will need:*

- *Regular Pack of Uno Cards*
- *Note pad and pen*

Deal each player 7 cards, place one card from the remaining pack face up in the centre of the group and begin playing normal Uno rules, in which each player can place a card of matching colour or number on the card facing up or use their skips or reverse or wild cards as usual until someone calls Uno and puts down their last card. The pack is shuffled, a fresh round is dealt, and the winner of the round makes up one extra 'crazy' rule - for example "If you play the card of your own age you must sing happy birthday to yourself" or "If you pick up a yellow 3, you must turn around three times" or red cards can't be placed on top of green cards" or "if you play a skip you must cluck like a chicken".

With each round that is won, the winner adds a new rule. Keep a list of all the new rules to help with disputes.

### **Linking Lines:**

We're going to hear a story about some slaves who have had to obey all kinds of crazy terrible rules - and then they are rescued by God. Now they don't have to live by the terrible crazy rules - I wonder what rules they will have?





## FACE TO FACE

Divide your group into pairs. Challenge the pairs to stand half a metre apart and stare into each other's face, trying not to blink. The person that is able to resist blinking the longest in each pair goes on to challenge another winner. Repeat until you have the "face to face champion".

Another alternative round is to help your group feel what its like to not be face to face.

In pairs, one person tells the other person what they had for breakfast, while that person stares at their shoes.

Or one person tells the other person about their favourite sport or music.

Swap roles; now one person sits on the ground while the other person stands up and tells them about the oldest person they know.

### Linking Lines:

Being face to face with someone can be a bit awkward, or scary, or it can be really friendly talking with someone face to face. Not being face to face makes sharing in conversation really hard. Our story today will help us think about what it would be like to be face to face friends with God.



## RUN AND RESCUE

*You will need:*

*3 cones/markers for bases.*

*One hoop for the centre.*

*Large supply of blocks.*

Divide your group into three teams. You might like to join with another group nearby for this activity. The aim of the game is to take blocks from the centre hoop, bring them back to your base and build them into a tower. If someone gets tagged they must stand at the base of the team who tagged them, and wait for one of their team members to come and 'tag' them to rescue them, so they can leave the base and join their own team again.

### Linking Lines:

We will hear a story from the Bible today about slaves in Ancient Egypt who were forced to make bricks and build for the Pharaoh. Their lives are hard; an endless cycle of being trapped, having to work for someone else, treated as a nobody. And we hear how in the face of this suffering, God rescues them.



# CONTEXT

- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.



## EGYPTIAN GODS

### You will need

- Prepared copies of Egyptian god-masks from [Day3Context1.pdf](#).
- Paint in bold colours, brushes and water
- Gold wrapping paper cut in small mosaic pieces,
- Black permanent markers
- Craft sticks
- Sticky tape and glue sticks

Invite your group to choose a mask to paint and decorate with gold mosaic pieces. Set these aside to dry - and between later activities come back to trace over the lines in permanent black marker. Sticky tape a craft stick to the back of the mask to hold it up in front of the face.

### Linking Lines:

The ancient Egyptians had a very interesting and complex religion with many gods with many faces - the face of a crocodile, the face of a bird, the face of lion, the face of a jackal. Their slaves, the ancient Israelite people, knew and cried out to one God. A God who spoke with humans face to face. The God of the Israelite slaves had the face of a friend.



## JOURNEY THROUGH THE DESERT HISTORY OF THE ISRAELITES BOARD GAME

### You will need

- Large double A3 print out of board game from [Day3Context2.pdf](#).
- Extra pick up cards printed out and cut up from [Day3Context2.pdf](#).
- Dice, buttons or bottle tops to use as markers.

Let each person choose a marker and take it in turns to roll the dice and play the game. Maximum players per board game is 5 - make sure you have a second game if you think you will have a larger group.

### Linking Lines:

This board game shows some of the adventures the Israelites faced in their journey to freedom as God's rescued runaway slaves. Once they are safely out of Egypt, the slaves still have lots to learn about God and his good ways of living and law of love.





## EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELITES RUNNINGS

### *You will need*

- *Two ropes or lines of cones to mark out the boundaries of your playing space*

Divide your group into two lines. Pair up the lines standing next to each other. Designate one group as Egyptians and the other as Israelites. Explain that in this game you will tell part of the background story of the Egyptians and the Israelites. When you say 'Egyptians' the Egyptians must run to safety on the other side of their boundary being chased by the Israelites who must try and tag the Egyptians before they reach safety.

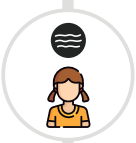
If you call 'Israelites' the Egyptians chase the Israelites, trying to tag them before they reach their boundary line of safety.

To begin with, the lines of Egyptians and Israelites should stand back to back.

Sample story line.

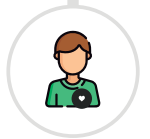
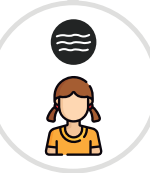
Thousands of years ago along the River Nile in the north of Africa, lived the mighty nation of Egypt. They built Pyramids, Egyptian Pyramids, invented picture writing, Egyptian Writing, and they had a whole lot of slaves Israelite slaves. Hundreds of years earlier the Israelites had lived in Israel, but came to live with the Egyptians in the middle of a terrible drought. Although the Israelites and the Egyptians were friends at first, after a while the Egyptians made the Israelites into slaves.

The Israelites worked hard, building and farming, but the Egyptians treated them more and more and more harshly. The Israelites cried out to God, and God heard them and rescued them. The Israelites escaped from Egypt with their leader Moses. All their lives and for hundreds of years their families had been bossed around by the Egyptians. Now they were free, they were following God and learning to live God's good ways. God's rules were really different to the Egyptians. God's number one rule was Love.



# CONTENT

- Use one of these to give your group a hands on experience of the Bible text
- Use the collection of texts in the Face to Face Bible Bits at **Day3BibleBits1.pdf** to make finding the right part of the passage easy – but at some point show your group a complete (paper-print) Bible and an online Bible to help them see where the stories have come from.
- Be confident that experiencing the text in engaging, active and tactile ways is more important than reading and following and understanding every single word for helping people get comfortable with the Bible.
- Repeat the reading-activities more than once to increase your group’s familiarity with The text, and give people a chance to take different roles or respond differently – or just because it’s fun to do again.
- These readings can be a bit chaotic – intentionally. Make the most of the people in your group to help set things up and pack things up afterwards – enjoy doing this together, building community as you do.



## MIME-O-RAMA-BIBLE-DRAMA

### You will need:

- **Copies of Face to Face Bible Bits Day3BibleBits1.pdf for each person.**
- **A pile of random props - metre+ long stick, large piece of material, bucket, length of rope, small leafy branch.**

Explain to your group that you are going to play ‘Mime-o-rama-Bible-drama’. Mime is a kind of drama that is big action and no words.

Explain that you will read the story from Face to Face Bible Bits - it takes place in the desert, after the Israelite slaves have escaped from Egypt, being led by Moses.

As you read the text, you will stop at the asterisks and call ‘Mime-o-rama-Bible-drama’ and one person’s name.

This person moves into the middle of the circle can choose any props they like to help, and acts out the bit of the story you have just read. You will need to support and encourage participation by repeating the main action phrase (marked in bold). If they are stuck for ideas, you can ask the group ‘Does anyone have an idea and want to join in and help them?’

If this happens, affirm their teamwork. Be generous in your affirmation and praise for every dramatic effort: ‘Great job!’, ‘Awesome creativity!’, ‘Wow, you nailed it!’, ‘You rose to the challenge wonderfully!’, etc.

### Linking Lines:

Moses found himself called into the centre of God’s big plans for rescuing the runaway slaves. He wasn’t always sure about whether he knew what to do, or if he was up to the task.

But he wasn’t stuck figuring it out alone. God called him to talk as a friend, face to face and showed him the ways his people could live well. Moses found himself part of the plans of the face to face God.



## WHERE'S THE MESSAGE? MOUNTAIN, HOUSE, TENT

### *You will need*

- *A large cardboard box, approximately 1 m<sup>2</sup>.*
- *Prepare the box so that one side is painted to look like a mountain, with a large cloud overhead and an eagle flying in the sky.*
- *The opposite side should be painted to look like a tent, with a cloud over head and group of people gathered either side in the distance. Attach a triangular piece of calico on one half to look like the opening flap of the tent. Add twine ropes for effect.*
- *Paint the other two sides to look like ordinary houses- one an inside view and one an outside view.*
- *Write the text of Ex 19:1-6 on the mountain stick pieces.*
- *Write the text of Deut 6:4-9 on either side of the houses*
- *Write the text of Ex 33:7-11 in the tent under the cloth flap.*

Gather your group and explain that today's story takes place in three different places - but they are all places where God connects closely with the people he cares for - the runaway slaves he rescues from Egypt.

The box shows us the three different places. Ask for a volunteer to read the message on the mountain. Invite the group to repeat all of the words they hear that begin with the letter M.

At the end see how many of the M words the group can remember.

Ex 19:1-6

Then two months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived at the desert near Mount Sinai, where they set up camp at the foot of the mountain.

Moses went up the mountain to meet with the LORD God, who told him to say to the people:

You saw what I did in Egypt, and you know how I brought you here to me, just as a mighty eagle carries its young. Now if you will faithfully obey me, you will be my very own people. The whole world is mine, but you will be my holy nation and serve me as priests.

And a second volunteer to read the message on the houses. Invite the group to repeat all of the words that begin with the letter T.

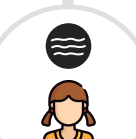
At the end see how many of the T words the group can remember.

Deut 6:4-7

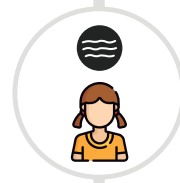
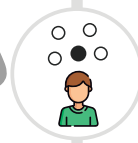
Listen, Israel! The LORD our God is the only true God! So love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.

Tell them to your children over and over again. Talk about them all the time, whether you're at home or walking along the road or going to bed at night, or getting up in the morning. Write down copies and tie them to your wrists and foreheads to help you obey them. Write these laws on the door frames of your homes and on your town gates.

*Continued on next page...*







Ask for a third volunteer to read the message in the tent. Invite the group to repeat all of the words that begin with the letter M AND the letter T. At the end see how many of the M and T words the group can remember.

Ex 33:7-11

Moses used to set up a tent far from camp. He called it the “meeting tent,” and whoever needed some message from the LORD would go there. Each time Moses went out to the tent, everyone would stand at the entrance to their own tents and watch him enter. Then they would bow down because a thick cloud would come down in front of the tent, and the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, just like a friend.

### Linking Lines:

The Hebrew people in the Bible were just beginning to get to know God and learning what kind of God this God was. They were used to hearing about God’s who were interested in themselves, who were far away, who were mean, who were hard to understand and predict.

What kind of God are they discovering this God of the Bible is?

# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- You've had a lot of questions about God?
- You've been camping in a very deserted place?
- You have reminders of your family rules or values written around your house?
- You've had to leave where you were living and move somewhere else?

- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
- Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.

## PLASTICINE ART INSTALLATION CHARTING THE MOVES OF THE ISRAELITES

### *You will need*

- *Printouts of background scenes of story from **Day3Consider1.pdf***
- *A few different colours of plasticine*
- *Sturdy container cardboard in approximately A2 sized pieces bent in half to form a base and backdrop*
- *Random 'found objects' from your natural environment*

Show your group the different scenes from the journey of the Israelites: Their children being thrown into the Nile; Escaping through the sea; Being hungry and Thirsty in the Desert; Hearing God's words from the mountain through Moses.

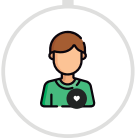
Invite your group to use these pictures as 'backdrops' and to make people and items that make the scenes 3D in front of the backdrops.

Simple head and conical body people are very effective and blend in with the artwork and the backdrops. Add found objects to make the scene more interesting and detailed.

Take photos of the completed scenes to add to your group Social Media page.

### **Linking Lines:**

The stories of the ancient Hebrew or Israelite people remained very vivid and strong and real in the imaginations of the people for centuries. They kept coming back to these stories as times when they knew God was a face to face friend with Moses and a powerful loving rescuer and provider for the people.





## SANDPAPER ART



### *You will need*

- *Several different colours/types of sandpaper - some already torn into strips or smaller shapes*
- *Scissors, strong glue (e.g. PVA or craft glue), craft sticks to apply the glue*
- *A4 card or A4 sized piece of brown packing box card*
- *Sample collage picture of wilderness or face to inspire creativity.*

Invite your group to make collages using the sandpaper - either of how they picture some part of the story of the Israelites in the desert wilderness OR what they might imagine the face of God to be like.



## WRISTBANDS AND HEADBANDS



### *You will need*

- *Fabric scraps*
- *Wide braid*
- *Large beads*
- *Fishing line*
- *Small beads*
- *Metal key ring*
- *Wooden board with nails for holding work steady.*

Choose to offer one or more of these ways to make wrist or head bands

Strips of fabric scraps can be plaited (three strands) or woven (four of five or six strands)

Wide braid can also be woven and beads added as wanted.

With smaller beads and fishing line, Indian bead weaving is trickier and takes longer but you can easily write lettering or design patterns and is very rewarding.

Whatever technique you use, anchor your work with a metal key ring around a nail knocked into wood.

Take care to demonstrate and display designs that are not over cutesy, or alienating for different tastes. Provide patterns for incorporating words in the bead weaving. These are very simple and effective.



### **Linking Lines:**

The ancient Israelites took God's advice very literally about keeping his ways close to their heads and hands. They made head and wrist bands with little boxes that contained the words of God. Whether or not God really meant for them to keep God's words on their heads and wrists in little boxes, God did want them to always remember his good ways, and be reminded that God was always with them.



# CONSEQUENCE

- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation

## SYMBOLS FOR GOD - EAGLE, WORDS, CLOUD, FRIEND

### *You will need*

- *Premade examples of each of the symbols*
- *Eagle: Cork, small craft feathers, card wings (See **Day3Consequence1.pdf**), pompoms (white or brown), goggle eyes, skewers*
- *Words: Words of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 printed, double-spaced (see **Day3Consequence2.pdf**), highlighters scissors, skewers*
- *Cloud: cotton wool, card, glue, sticky tape, skewers*
- *Friend: concertina people, cork, markers, skewers*

Give participants a choice of which symbol they would like to make from the ways that the ancient Hebrews and Moses had in their stories for understanding who God was. (They may have time to make more than one, and some symbols will take more time than others)

### **Eagle**

Cover the card wings with feathers facing the same direction. Glue the wings to the top of the cork and a pompom to the front end of the cork. Glue goggle eyes to the side of the pompom. Stick a skewer through the centre of the cork from back to front, through the pompom and let the tip of the skewer poke out as the beak at the front of the face. Add extra feathers to the cork including some tail feathers at the back.

### **Words**

Using the highlighters, lightly colour the page of words in any way you like. Cut along the lines between the lines of words of Deut 6, to make a continuous length of words. Skewer through the end of the writing. Loop the strip of paper several inches out and back and skewer through at this point. Loop the next section out and back and skewer through. Continue this process until all of the strip of paper is looped and skewered on

### **Cloud**

Using the scissors cut your card into a general cloud shape. Sticky-tape the cloud card to the end of the skewer. Glue tufts of cotton wool to both sides of the card in generous amounts until the card is no longer visible.



## Friend

Fold a 6cm x 4cm piece of paper in 1cm concertina folds 5 times back and forth on itself. Draw half a person on the fold and cut around, making sure the people stay connected at the arms and feet. Unfold the concertina - you should have 3 people joined together. Using the markers colour in features of faces, hands, hair, clothes, front and back of the three people. Wrap the bottom (feet) edge of the paper around the top of the cork, with people facing inwards. Sticky tape securely in place. Tape hands of end two people together.

### Linking Lines:

In the stories we have heard in which God is helping people get to know him. God uses pictures of things to help them understand how he's helped them - God's like a strong soaring eagle giving them a ride to freedom. God's like lots of words of wisdom so they aren't stuck being stupid. God's like a cloud that can be seen from all directions equally by everyone and covering them with cooling shade in the intense heat of the desert. God's like a friend who knows you, familiar with the expressions of your face and can look you straight in the face and tell you how it is, hear your hurts, help and understand.

## PARACHUTE MEETING TENT - QUESTIONS FOR GOD

### You will need

- Parachute

Gather your group around a parachute, with everyone holding an edge firmly in an even circle. Do a few practice turns, lifting and lowering the parachute together. As you lift the parachute high over your heads, call a name to let their edge go and cross under the canopy of the parachute to the opposite edge.

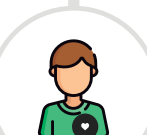
Practice lifting the parachute up and everyone stepping in under the canopy, holding the edge behind, and sitting down underneath it.

After some time practicing the various ways of enjoying the parachute, explain to your group that the parachute is going to be like Moses' question tent. Sitting for a moment around the edges, invite your group to think of their questions for God. Any type of question is ok.

After a minute or so of thinking time, Invite the group to stand up again around the parachute. This time with each lift of the parachute above your heads call one person's name to step in under the middle of the parachute and as the whole group waves the parachute gently over them, they ask their question for God, then finish crossing to the other side. Make sure you call your own name too - showing that everyone can have questions for God. Once everyone has had a turn, give opportunity for second or third turns of questions.

### Linking Lines:

God listened to the questions of Moses and the Israelite People. We heard in the story that there were so many questions that Moses set up as special 'questions for God tent'. God loves our questions and has lots of ways of answering - in the words of others, by things that happen in nature around us and just in the quiet of our own minds.





## PICK ONE WORD...ROCK WRITING

### *You will need*

- *Unpolished river stones - a reasonable size*
- *Coloured Markers.*
- *Cotton buds*
- *Paint*

Invite your group to each choose a stone. Show them a sample that you have prepared beforehand, with the word 'Love' written clearly in marker, and decorated with paint applied with cotton bud, on one side and smiley face on the other. Invite them to decorate their stones, using marker to do both sides first, then adding the paint.

Set the stones aside to dry - but while you wait, as a group sit in a circle. Show the group your stone again. Explain that you are going to use this as a prayer stone - that you will pass the stone slowly around the group and as each person takes the stone in their hands, they should think about the command of God to love, the promise of God to be with us in hard times and, how God wants us to know us like a face to face friend. When it is each person's turn to hold the stone, they might just think these thoughts as quiet prayer thoughts, OR say one of the words - Hard - Friend . Love - out loud as a prayer.

### **Linking Lines:**

The Israelites had escaped into the desert wilderness, and they were just getting to know God and God's good ways. God gave them rules called the ten words or the 10 Commandments, but it all boiled down to one main word - Love. Our stones remind us that the Israelites lived in tough times and places but God was with them. And our stones remind us that God loves us, that he hears us and helps in tough times and wants us to know him face to face. Take your stone home and keep it for when you need one or all of these prayers.

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# FACE TO FACE PARENTS 3

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

Rules, Relationships and Responsibilities.



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

As we develop our household patterns we find ourselves sometimes making up rules on the fly. Sometimes we take the rules and policies we were raised on and reload them into our lives as parents. Other times we vowed never to do whatever it was that our parents did that we hated - and we parent in reaction to our own childhood experience. We know that feeling when we catch ourselves sounding just like our mum or dad, saying the thing they would say.

Rules can be delivered as an ultimatum - a heavy-handed power move that treats people as irresponsible and untrustworthy. Or they can be shared as a way of making things fair, and inviting responsibility, creating the expectation that you think your kids are capable of doing life well.

The kinds of rules we want (and usually less is more in the making of rules) are the rules that are about protecting and growing good relationships,



## SHARE YOUR STORY

What were some of the things you heard your parents say over and over?

How is your approach to rules and responsibilities in raising your kids different or similar to the way your own parents approached it?

How have you handled rule making and breaking in your household?

## GOD'S STORY

One of the most famous stories of the Bible is the rescue of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt - their runaway adventures in the wilderness, under the troubled leadership of Moses, made rather famous by Hollywood and the epic movie-making of Cecil B. De Mille's *The Ten Commandments* and Dreamworks' *Prince of Egypt*.

The *Ten Commandments* comes across as a heavy handed religious moment in Cecil B. De Mille's imagination - but if you know the back story, you realise that Moses is out in the desert with a bunch of runaway slaves, who have suffered generations of oppression - they've never been allowed to make a decision for themselves - and now suddenly they have freedom - but what are they going to do with it. We've already seen that they are prone to panic about things like food and water.

It's like leaving your kids and ten of their friends unsupervised in your house for the weekend.

No rules means chaos, and probably damage and danger. And there'll be tears and not many friends left.

God's 'Ten Words' or 'Ten Commandments' as they are more grandly called in the movies, are to help these people live well, and not just let the violence and greed and desperation win the day.

That's not God's way, and I reckon it's not your ideal way either.

The rules God has are to help them have good life, and good relationships with one another - and as God has always wanted - friendship with him. God wants people to be able to look one another in the face fairly, and God in the face too.

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# DAY 4

# NEHEMIAH

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# TEAM STUDY 4

## NEHEMIAH

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
- *Use these questions to explore further*



Nehemiah integrates political activism, tax relief, practical welfare, community building, resisting enemies, hearing and responding to the word of God, worship, repentance, celebration, justice and feeding the poor.

This is a holistic restoration.

How is our mission holistic? How many of these categories do we cover? Nehemiah was both a slave and in a position of privilege. Most people we come across are not just one thing or the other, but have a mixed bag of assets and weaknesses.

Pray for the people you'll connect with today, and look out for both their strengths to encourage, and the ways in which they need compassion.

## AGE GROUP SESSION 4

# NEHEMIAH - RESTORING COVENANT

God reaching out and rebuilding the wrecked and returned

**NEHEMIAH 2:1-5, 8-11**

**NEHEMIAH 4:1-3, 6-9;**

**NEHEMIAH 6:15;**

**NEHEMIAH 8:1-12**

Nehemiah and the ruined people return, rebuild and party with the poor.

### BIBLE LINK

Even when everything has fallen apart God brings us home to himself, repairs our relationships and calls everyone to celebrate.

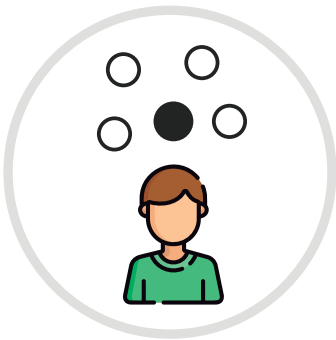
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Putting things back together
- Giant jenga
- Sad face competition
- Captain's coming adaptation



## CONTEXT

- Take the best; forget the rest
- Rubble and ruins archeology dig
- Build a wall - teams and protect your base
- Character cards



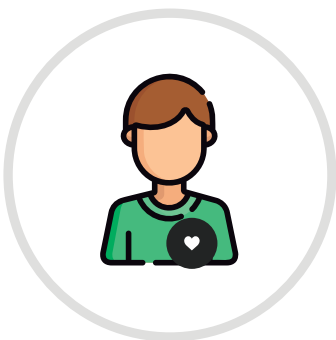
## CONTENT

- Story blocks - able-readers version
- Story blocks - young-readers version
- Action Response Story
- Wall Puzzle Reading



## CONSIDER

- Battered, city ruins box
- Life sized character mosaics
- Plasticine feasts
- Wall mosaics



## CONSEQUENCE

- Blackboard prayers
- Emoji Prayers
- Pick a brick

## INTRODUCTION

Sometimes life goes very badly. Very badly indeed. And not just for grownups. When families fragment, when communities break, when cities are assailed, when injustice is unleashed and corruption unrestrained, children live in the midst of the violence, trauma and ruins of these realities as much as anyone.

We read the story of Nehemiah and hear that it is a story of adults and children who suffer. We read the story of Nehemiah with adults and children who have their own stories of suffering.

The story of God's people has hit rock bottom. Most of the tribes of Israel have been obliterated. Judah held on under siege to the bitter end, suffered the decimation of its very soul as the city starved, unthinkable things were done to children, and was eventually overrun by the powerful Babylonian army. The city was left in ruins from military strikes and slaughter, its best and brightest taken as slaves for the Babylonian empire. Its lowest labourers left to farm their own land now as slaves to feed the elite, coughing up taxes for the coffers of the conqueror, open to the exploitation of their enemy overseers and the vulnerable to the neighbouring nations looking to cash in on a share of the carnage.

This Class A Jewish slave, serving wine in the court of the Persian king, might better keep his head down, make the best of his luck ending up at the elite end of the slavery spectrum, but Nehemiah is not content with this. When he hears the report of those left in Judah, caught and crushed by other nations, Nehemiah dares to use his precarious position of privilege face to face with the King to ask for time and resources to rebuild Jerusalem that lies in ruins.

Nehemiah engages emotionally in the plight of those who suffer. He mourns.

Nehemiah engages spiritually in the plight of those who suffer. He prays.

Nehemiah engages concretely in the plight of those who suffer. He acts, he advocates.

How Nehemiah tells it though, is that this was God's thing. Taking his family from the comfort-bubble of Babylon, returning to the ruins, rebuilding and restoring the city, calling the community together to work for each other's protection, resisting the thwarting of his opponents, rising to position of governor and relieving the tax burden on the people: All of this was God's good work.

So the story doesn't end with the bricks and mortar. Spiritual reconciliation and restoration is needed too. They gather as one community, and they listen to the law of God. Initially as the families hear the law read for the first time in their generation, they burst into tears, as they realise how far from God's ways they had gone. But Nehemiah leads these broken people out of their despairing guilt into new faithfulness - beginning with yes! - celebration and compassion. Rebooting faith looks like this: a feast to which everyone is invited and the poor are especially provided for. Nehemiah's story demonstrates for us that the essence of life face to face with God amidst our ruins results in revelling in God's goodness and reaching beyond ourselves to those around us.

Centuries later, God was still on this same game, as Jesus told a story or two about this kind of celebration and compassion combo, while he ate and drank his way through Israel with all kinds of ruined people of ragged-reputation.



# CONNECT



- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.

## PUTTING THINGS BACK TOGETHER

*You will need:*

- *Supply of Lego, Mechano, Kinnex or other kind of construction with many parts and possibilities for putting together.*

Place your Lego (or alternative) in a central space where it is accessible to your group. Invite them to make anything they would like to. Encourage plenty of conversation about what people are making.

### Linking Lines:

It's amazing what can be made from just a collection of little pieces - bricks and other bits and pieces. In the story we will hear today, a bunch of people rise to the challenge of putting things back together after their city has been ruined.

## SAD FACE COMPETITION

*You will need:*

- *Digital device with a camera - and permission forms for keeping and using the photos*
- *A couple of small hand mirrors*
- *Optional novelty face props e.g. moustache, eyebrows, fake nose, teeth*
- *Optional washable face paint for tears*

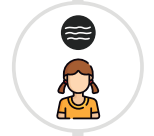
Announce to your group that you are going to have a 'sad faces' competition. Give your group some time to experiment and practice their sad faces - checking themselves in the mirror.

When they think they have perfected their sad face, offer to photograph it so they can see themselves. Collect as many sad faces as you can (some people might want to make more than one sad face). Then gather and look through the photos affirming the efforts and expressions of each person in the group.

If you have parent permission, you might add these to an album on your group social media site.

### Linking Lines:

Sometimes life goes really badly and we need our sad faces. There are stacks of stories in the Bible in which people are really, really sad, and need their sad faces.





## GIANT JENGA

*You will need:*

- *Giant Jenga blocks*
- *Solid flat base for building on*
- *Public scoreboard for recording the highest number of layers achieved before the tower tumbles*

Play a group game of Giant Jenga - keeping count of how many layers higher than the original you can build before it tumbles.

### Linking Lines:

The family that had begun with Jacob and grown bigger and bigger, and been slaves in Egypt and then rescued by Moses, had settled in the land of Israel, and built a large strong city with a magnificent temple - and then been completely destroyed by the Babylonian Army, who smashed their city wall, buildings and temple to pieces, and left it in ruins.



## CAPTAIN'S COMING ADAPTATION

*You will need*

- *Wide open space with boundary markers so you don't run into others people*
- *Leader with a strong loud voice*

Gather your group in the centre of a large open space. Explain that you will call out commands which have actions. The actions show us what life was like in the Bronze Age, 2500 years ago.

North - run to the Northern boundary. Make sure you know which direction is which, and that this is clear to the group.

South - (as for North...)

East -

West -

Defend the city - all stand in a circle facing out, arms linked

Fight the foe - in pairs mime sword fighting

Pay your taxes - find a stick or a stone on the ground and take it and put it in a pile at the leader's feet

Lay down dead - all lie down on the ground

Captain's coming - stand to attention and salute

### Linking Lines:

The stories of God's people in the Bible are often full of war and fighting, just like in some places in the world today. Even though they were people who knew God face to face, and tried to live his ways, it didn't make them a super-country, where nothing terrible ever happened. And it didn't mean other countries didn't try to attack them and get their land and take their people as slaves. But they did find hope in the midst of all the ruin of their sad lives. God stayed face to face with them and didn't turn away- which we'll see in today's story.



# CONTEXT

- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.

## BUILD A WALL AND PROTECT YOUR BASE

### *You will need*

- *A large supply of wooden or plastic blocks*
- *3 bases marked with cones*

Divide your group into 3 teams (if your group is too small for this, combine with another group).

Place the blocks in the centre of your space, equal distance from every base.

Explain to the group that the challenge for each team is to gather blocks from the centre and to build a wall on their base. Once the bricks have run out from the centre they will need to also defend their base from the other teams who will try to get more bricks from the other team's base.

To end the game, blow a whistle and stop play. The team with the most bricks actually built into a wall are the winners - and get to pack up all of the bricks!

### **Linking Lines:**

Our story today takes place long after the city of Jerusalem has been attacked and conquered by the Babylonians. The city has been a ruin for 70 years. Nehemiah, a Jew whose family were taken from Jerusalem, and who is a slave to the king, convinces the king to rebuild the city, its walls and its buildings. The king sends Nehemiah back to Jerusalem to lead the rebuilding - and like you did, he finds it hard to both defend the city and rebuild the walls at the same time.





## RUBBLE AND RUINS ARCHAEOLOGY DIG

### You will need

- Large 3 litre clear plastic Juice bottle, top cut off
- Use the following items to make 13 layers, each about a centimetre deep so that the items can be identified. With a fine line marker, write the explanation of each layer on the back of the jar where that layer is.

Layer one is at the bottom of the jar.

1. Grey Lego bricks	Abraham comes from the city of Ur in the east
2. Sand	Abraham's family are desert nomads
3. Green felt/towelling	Abraham's family settle in the green valley and plains
4. Sand	Now known as Hebrews, they move to Egypt because of famine
5. Chains	The Hebrews are made into slaves in Egypt
6. Bubble wrap	The Hebrews escape Egypt and make it through the sea to safety
7. Small stones	They live in the desert as nomads for a generation
8. Green felt/towelling	They return to the green valley and plains
9. Grey Lego bricks	They build cities
10. Gold paper/jewels	They choose kings - some become very rich and powerful
11. Tooth picks	Other nations attack them and there are many wars
12. Strips of red cellophane	They lose more and more wars until nearly all the people are gone
13. Grey Lego bricks, chains, small stones	The last safe city is attacked and destroyed and almost everyone is taken away as slaves, leaving only the poorest farmers as slaves to work the land around the city.

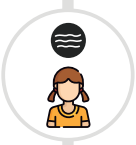
Explain to your group that one of the ways archaeologists know what happened in the past, is that they dig down through the ground and find layers of ruins of things that have been built and fallen down and had other things built on top of them. Over hundreds of years, this builds up lots of layers of the ruins of buildings and the things people used in their everyday lives.

The Jar tells the story of the Hebrew people of the Bible, and the things that happened to them.

Pass the jar around your group (taking care not to unsettle and mix up the layers). Let people guess what they think the layer means, then read the writing on the back of that layer.

### Linking Lines:

The history of the Hebrew or Israelite or Jewish people is full of adventure and trouble. Life is like that. But they lived knowing God, and even when their history was full of sadness and trouble, violence and disaster, God didn't turn his face away from them - their story wasn't over.





## TAKE THE BEST; FORGET THE REST

*You will need:*

- *Bag of Mixed Party lollies*
- *Container of old textas many of which don't work well, or at all (Most Churches have boxes of mixed ability textas lurking in their cupboards)*
- *Scribble paper for testing*
- *Empty container to put the 'best' in; rubbish box to put the 'rest' in*

Place the texta container in the middle of your group. Announce that some of these textas are still good and others barely work at all. The challenge is to 'take the best and leave the rest.' When you say 'go' the group races to test as many textas as they can and take the best which still work and throw the 'rest' into the rubbish box. When this process is finished, each person counts up how many 'good' textas they have and puts them into the empty container.

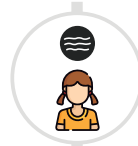
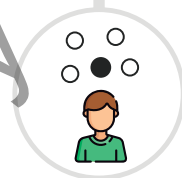
Bring out the mixed lollies.

The person who collected the most well-working textas, now is rewarded with first chance to choose some lollies. Watch as they 'take the best and leave the rest' as well.

After they have chosen their lollies share the rest among your group. Note if there are any lollies that no one likes that get left behind.

### Linking Lines:

In the background to the Bible story we will hear today, a rich powerful country has attacked and conquered and captured the city of Jerusalem. In ancient times, the conquering country had a 'take the best and leave the rest' policy. They would take the healthiest and strongest, best educated and skilled people and make them work in the conquering country. And they would leave the poor or those too wounded or sick behind. In the story we hear, Nehemiah was one the 'best' whose family had been taken away to Babylon. He was a waiter to the king, serving his wine.



## CHARACTER CARDS

*You will need:*

- A set of the 48 character cards from **Day4Context1.pdf**, printed onto card and cut out.

10pts	King of Persia - Leader of Persia the super power and conqueror of the known world	x1
9pts	Army officers - guards protecting Nehemiah's travels by King's authority	x5
8pts	Cavalry troops - guards protecting Nehemiah's travels by King's authority	x5
7pts	Nehemiah, wine waiter to the King, later becomes Governor of Jerusalem	x1
6pts	Sanballat- Governor of Samaria - powerful and greedy neighbour to Jerusalem	x2
5pts	Tobiah - Ammonite official - powerful and greedy neighbour to Jerusalem	x2
4pts	Arabs - Neighbours to Jerusalem	x8
3pts	Ezra - Jewish priest, able to read God's words	x2
2pts	Levites - ancient families given the job of helping people worship and know God.	x10
1pts	The People - left behind after Jerusalem was destroyed in war, not worth capturing. Poor farm labour slaves or homeless scavengers.	x20

Deal out 4 cards to every person.

The aim of the game is to have the highest number of points when you add up the points on each of the cards you are holding.

Go around the circle and give each person the chance to put down two cards and pick up two from the pile, to try and improve their points. Players can choose not to put down or pick up any cards

If you are holding the King of Persia, you are allowed to ask for one card from each person.

Go around the circle a second time and give each person the chance to put down two cards and pick up two from the pile, to try and improve their points. Players can choose not to put down or pick up any cards.

Now each person lays down their cards and shows the total number of points they have. The winner is the person with the highest number of points.

Collect the cards, shuffle and re-deal. Play as many rounds as you have enthusiasm or time for.

### Linking Lines:

In the story we will hear from the Bible today, all of these characters appear, and as you can see that some were worth more points in the game, some were more powerful than others. However in the story, the people worth the least number of points, those who were poorest and treated as worthless, turn out to celebrate that they are still known and loved and worth much to God. They turn back to God, and discover that God always had his face turned towards them.



# CONTENT

- Use one of these to give your group a hands on experience of the Bible text
- Use the collection of texts from Face to Face Bible Bits **Day4BibleBits1.pdf** to make finding the right part of the passage easy – but at some point show your group a complete paper-print Bible and an online Bible to help them see where the stories have come from.
- Be confident that experiencing the text in engaging, active and tactile ways is more important than reading and following and understanding every single word for helping people get comfortable with the Bible.
- Repeat the reading-activities more than once to increase your group’s familiarity with The text, and give people a chance to take different roles or respond differently – or just because it’s fun to do again.
- These readings can be a bit chaotic – intentionally. Make the most of the people in your group to help set things up and pack things up afterwards – enjoy doing this together, building community as you do.

## BIBLE LINK

During the month of Nisan in the twentieth year that Artaxerxes was king of Persia, I served him his wine, as I had done before. I had never been sad to the face of the King before. So the king said, “Why is your face sad? You’re not sick. Something must be bothering you.”

Even though I was frightened, I answered, “May the King live forever! Why shouldn’t my face be sad when the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins, and its gates have been burned down.”

The king asked, “What do you want me to do?”

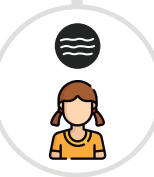
I prayed to the God who rules from heaven. Then I told the king, “Sir, if it’s all right with you, and I have pleased the face of the King, please send me back to Judah, so that I can rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried.”

God was good to me, and the king did everything I asked.

The king sent some army officers and cavalry troops along with me, and as I travelled through the Western Provinces, I gave letters to the governors. But when Sanballat from Horon and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about what had happened, they became very angry, because they didn’t want anyone to help the people of Israel.

When Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, heard that we were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he became angry and started insulting our people. To the faces of his friends and the Samaritan army he said, “What is this feeble bunch of Jews trying to do? Are they going to rebuild the wall and offer sacrifices all in one day? Do they think they can make something out of this pile of scorched stones?”

*Continued on next page...*





Tobiah from Ammon was standing beside Sanballat and said, “Look at the wall they are **building**! Why, even a fox could knock over this pile of stones.”

The people worked hard, and we **built** the walls of Jerusalem halfway up again. But **Sanballat, Tobiah**, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the people from the city of Ashdod saw the walls going up and the holes being repaired. So they became **angry** and decided to stir up trouble, and to fight against the people of Jerusalem. But we kept on praying to our God, and we also stationed **guards** day and night.

Every day from dawn to dark, half of the workers **rebuilt** the walls, while the rest stood **guard** with their spears.

On the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, the wall was completely **rebuilt**. It had taken fifty-two days. When our enemies in the surrounding nations learned that the work was finished, they felt helpless, because they knew that our God had helped us **rebuild** the wall.

On the first day of the seventh month, the people came together in the open area in front of the **Water Gate**.

Ezra was up on a high platform, where he could be seen by everyone, and when he opened the **book**, they all stood up. Ezra praised the great LORD God, and the people shouted, “Amen! Amen!” Then they bowed with their faces to the ground and worshiped the LORD.

After this, the Levites went among the people, explaining the meaning of what Ezra had **read**.

The people started **crying** when **God’s Law was read** to them. Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher, and the Levites who had been teaching the people all said, “This is a special day for the LORD your God. So don’t be **sad** and don’t **cry**! Enjoy your good food and wine and share some with those who didn’t have anything to bring. Don’t be **sad**! This is a special day. The Joy of the Lord is your strength.”

When the people returned to their homes, they celebrated by eating and drinking and by sharing their food with those in need, because they had understood what had been **read** to them.





## STORY BLOCKS - ABLE-READERS VERSION

*You will need:*

- *Copies of Face to Face Bible Bits **Day4BibleBits1.pdf**.*
- *20 wooden blocks with parts of the text of Nehemiah from Face to Face Bible Bits taped to each block, and another 20 plain blocks.*

*\*communicate with other groups who may be using this activity to share a set of blocks.*

Place the pile of blocks with text and no text in the middle of your group. Explain that the people whose story we follow in the Bible, have lots of ups and downs, in fact a lot of downs in their story. And today's story comes at a time when their city has been smashed by their enemies and for 70 years has laid in ruins.

Just a pile of rubble and rocks, like this pile of blocks.

Say something like

In the story we're about to read, the city is rebuilt, so we are going to rebuild these blocks into a city with a wall around it as we read the story.

Invite each person to take a couple of blocks with writing and a couple of blocks without.

Give some time for participants to look at their blocks and have a practice of reading what it is on them, and to note the number on their block.

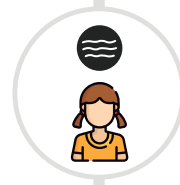
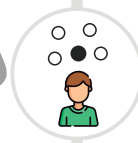
\*nb the number on the blocks is not the same as verse numbers in the Bible, When the group is familiar with their blocks, start with the person with Block 1 - ask them to read the sentence, and then place their block as the first part of the building, and add their block without text as well.

Continue calling for the next block in order, reading the next part of the story, and adding the block with text and a block without text, until the entire text has been read and all the blocks have been added to build the city and its wall.

Congratulate the group on rebuilding the wall - highlighting the difficulties in keeping the wall from falling down while building it, the value of working together to do it, and the way this was shown in the story of the Jews also.

### Linking Lines:

In this story, Nehemiah faced the sadness of his own people, he was brave faced before the king in trying to help, he often faced up to God with prayers for the things that troubled him, he faced his enemies and didn't give up when they threatened him, and when the job was done, he was face to face with God in thankfulness.





## STORY BLOCKS - YOUNG-READERS VERSION



*You will need:*

- **Copies of Face to Face Bible Bits *Day4BibleBits1.pdf*.**
- **20 wooden blocks with individual words selected from the text of Nehemiah from Face to Face Bible Bits printed and taped to each block, and another 20 plain blocks. See *Day4BibleBits1.pdf* for selected words.**

Place the pile of blocks with words and no words in the middle of your group.

Explain that the people whose story we follow in the Bible, from being one small family, to being a whole nation, have lots of ups and downs, in fact a lot of downs in their story. And today's story comes at a time when their city has been smashed by their enemies and for 70 years has laid in ruins. Just a pile of rubble and rocks, like this pile of blocks.

Say something like

In the story we're about to read, the city is rebuilt, so we are going to rebuild these blocks into a city with a wall around it as we read the story.

Invite each person to take a couple of blocks with words and a couple of blocks without.

Give some time for participants to look at their blocks and work out what the word is on their block. Offer help and check that everyone has done this.

When the group is familiar with their blocks, explain that you will read the story from the Bible in the Face to Face Bible Bits. When it gets to a word that someone has on their block - they call it out - and add their block and another block with no word on it, to the building.

Continue calling for the next block in order, hearing the next part of the story read, and the block with the word and a block without text added by each person, until the entire text has been read and all the blocks have been added to build the city and its wall.

Congratulate the group on rebuilding the wall - highlighting the difficulties in keeping the wall from falling down while building it, the value of working together to do it, and the way this was shown in the story of the Jews also.

### Linking Lines:

In this story, Nehemiah faced the sadness of his own people, he was brave faced before the king in trying to help, he often faced up to God with prayers for the things that troubled him, he faced his enemies and didn't give up when they threatened him, and when the job was done, he was face to face with God in thankfulness.



## ACTION RESPONSE STORY

*You will need:*

- *Copies of Face to Face Bible Bits **Day4BibleBits1.pdf** with coloured highlighted words for each person*
- *And/Or an A1 sized poster of the same*
- *A3 sheet with list of words and corresponding actions*

Explain to your group that the story you are about to hear is an action packed adventure. It is a story that had already been told for centuries among the Jewish people, and it still is, because it tells of their determination and bravery, the wickedness of their enemies, the generosity of a foreign king, the wisdom of their leader, and the faithfulness of God.

So to make sure that we get all of the action and adventure and emotion we are going to add some drama. The colour coded words have theatrical actions to respond with. Show the poster of these words and the corresponding actions to your group - going through each of them, and then taking volunteers who will do each action. More than one person might volunteer for a word/action, and people can volunteer as many times as they like. Practices each of the words to warm up the theatrical vibes of the group.

Words and Actions

King - gold "Oh your majesty!"

Sad/Crying - blue \*weeping\*

Gates/Walls - brown \*open sesame\*

(Re)Building - red \*hammering sounds\* (use a wooden spoon on a block of wood

Enemies - green "Boooo!, Hissss!"

Army/Guards - navy blue "Yes sir!"

Angry - pink "arrrrrrghhhh"

Letter/Reading - purple "blah blah blah, blah blah blah."

When the group is ready, begin reading, slowly and expressively, emphasising the words that have actions with great anticipation to encourage the participants to enthusiastically play their part. Keep the sense of the drama and tension in the story high. Be encouraging and affirming of all of the contributions of your group. When you finish the story acknowledge the performances generously.

Repeat the whole story - on the justification that it was such a great telling of the story together, it is worth doing again.

### Linking Lines:

We have enjoyed putting lots of drama and emotion into telling this story. The fears and sadness and struggles and joy of the people - and their sense that God was with them, caring for them, restoring their community, and their faith was very strong.





## WALL PUZZLE READING

### *You will need*

- *Large white-goods container e.g. fridge box or plasma TV box - the larger the better, ideally 3m x 1.6m (this is the size of 20 A4 sheets)*
- *Print out a copy of the text in large font (If you use Arial 76 pt font it should take 19-20 sheets). Use the version in Face to Face Bible Bits #4 (see **Day4BibleBits1.pdf**)*
- *Glue these pages in order reading downwards in columns covering the large carton.*
- *Paint lightly around the text to give the impression of a brick wall.*

\*This process can be used as an arrival/connecting activity and set aside for later.

Using an electric bread knife or stanley knife, cut up the 'wall' into pieces that can be put back together again as a jigsaw puzzle, but not using usual puzzle piece shapes - but rather giving the impression of a broken wall of ruins.

With your group show them the pile of broken apart pieces and challenge them to work together as a group to put the pieces back together again. They can use copies of Face to Face Bible Bits **Day4BibleBits1.pdf** to help work out where the pieces go, by following the story. As the group work on the puzzle, take the opportunity to read the parts of the story out loud to them, as the pieces emerge. It doesn't matter if you don't start at the beginning - by the end, you have read all the pieces enough times together for the story to be coming clear.

### **Linking Lines:**

It was a major achievement for the Jewish people, the people of God, to put their city back together, to rebuild their wall, but also to put their community back together after being apart, losing hope, being treated as worthless by their enemies. Nehemiah worked hard to help this, but he reckoned it was God that was really behind rebuilding the city, rebuilding the community, rebuilding the hope and joy of the people, and rebuilding their faith.

# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- Your family moved a long way from home
- You felt really sad about something you heard
- You worked together with some other people to do something you couldn't do alone
- You had a party to celebrate after finishing something
- You saw the hugest amount of delicious food and it was for everyone to share.

- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
- Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.

## BATTERED, CITY RUINS BOX

### You will need

- *Grocery boxes or photocopy paper boxes*
- *Extra pieces of strong card - any size*
- *Smaller cardboard boxes or tubes*
- *Paint*
- *Sand, dirt, rolled oats (to mix into the paint for texture)*
- *Scrap paper and craft bits and pieces*
- *Scissors*
- *'Here's one I made earlier' model or picture of a model*

Give each person in your group a cardboard box. Explain that you can each turn your box into a model of the ruined city. The bottom of the box is the ground, and the sides of the box are the walls of the city. With your box, show the group how to tear away part of the walls to show them broken down. The boxes can be painted with various textured paint by adding sand or dirt or grains to the paint to roughen the surface. Help your group think about adding houses and wells and shops within the walls, all affected by the walls being broken. Perhaps make some plasticine animals - foxes, vultures, hyenas, rabbits. In the story Tobiah teases the Jews that even a fox could get through into the city - this refers to the reality that wild animals were known to overrun cities in disrepair - another way the city was unsafe.

### Linking Lines:

There are still some places in the world today where cities are attacked and left in ruins and their people are forced out or run for safety. Our models of the ancient city of Jerusalem that needed repairs and rebuilding can remind us to have compassion in remembering places like that in the world today.





## LARGE FACE CHARACTER MOSAICS (KING, NEHEMIAH, BUILDERS, ENEMIES)

### *You will need*

- 4 poster sized pieces of card, each with the outline of one of the four faces from the template **Day4Consider1.pdf**
- Various textured items of craft that can be used for mosaic pieces (not too small)
  - e.g. coloured paper, pieces of coloured sponge, feathers, cellophane, crepe paper, magazines, fabric scraps, wool scraps, wrapping paper scraps, egg shells, vinyl book covering scraps.
- Strong craft glue

Show your group the four large faces of characters in the story - the King, Nehemiah, Builder, Samballat. Explain that together you are going to cover the faces with mosaic pieces to bring out the features of the faces. Any kind of textured pieces can be used. Invite each person to decide which face they'd like to work on and discuss their ideas. Some children will have strong creative ideas straight away and others might need some suggestions to get started. Suggestions for those needing a jump start:

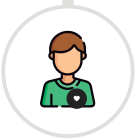
- fill in the coloured part of the eyes with glitter.
- glue pieces of wool across the eye brows
- Fill in the lips with orange or pink sponge pieces
- collect lots of shades of the same colour to use for skin - the enemy Samballat might have green face, the worker a purple face because she's been in the sun.

When the mosaic work is finishes attach the faces to tall poles and drape cloth over the poles to suggest a body.

Show your group how to stand behind the pole under the cloth, sticking your arms out to animate the character.

### **Linking Lines:**

Linking Lines: The wall wasn't the only thing that had broken in the war against Jerusalem. The spirit and confidence of the people had been shattered, and their freedom lost. In the rebuilding of the wall, the people were also put back together. Some of the characters in the story wanted peace and freedom to come - but others, like Samballat and Tobiah liked things broken for the poor so that they could exploit them and stay powerful themselves. In the end we all find ourselves facing up to God's ways.





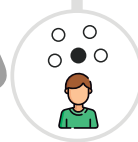
## PLASTICINE FEASTS

### You will need

- *Brightly coloured (food colours) plasticine (greens, red, yellow, orange, pink, purple, white)*
- *Plastic plates*
- *Tray*

Invite your group to make plasticine models of the yummiest food possible. They can take the pieces that they made home, but first spread all of the food out on a tray, arranged like a fabulous feast.

Take a photo for your social media group page, or to share on a 'remember when we did this...' postcard later in the year.



### Linking Lines:

It wasn't enough for the people of Jerusalem just to finish their work on the wall, or to hear the story of God and his ways read to them - When God puts things right, everything is included - so Nehemiah made sure that everyone celebrated, and was fed, and that the poor were welcomed and included and fed as well as the rest. That's God's way.



## WALL MOSAICS

### You will need

- *A5 sized pieces of strong card*
- *Small unpolished stones (cheaply bought in bulk from garden supplies)*
- *Craft glue (test it with the stones!)*
- *Sandpaper*
- *Sets of unpolished stones (enough for everyone in your group and some extras so there can be choice) with one word written on each stone to form the following verses*
- *'God was good to me'*
- *'We kept on praying to our God'*
- *'We knew that God had helped us'*
- *'The Joy of the Lord is your strength'*

Bend the sides of the card back about 2cm in from each end. This will make the card stand vertically.

Cover the card with torn pieces of sand paper 2-3cm in diameter. Not all of the card has to be covered.

Stick the stones with one set of words on to the card leaving random spaces between them, and not in straight lines.

Stick other stones in between these to look like a stone wall.





# CONSEQUENCE

- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation



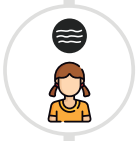
## BLACKBOARD PRAYERS

*You will need:*

- *Blackboard (can be made by painting a piece of card with blackboard paint or using a sheet of black pp sign board)*
- *Chalk and duster*

Draw lines on the blackboard to make it look like a brick wall.

Say something like: 'in the story today, the wall of the city made some people sad, others angry, some afraid, some concerned, and later, it made people happy, secure, peaceful and trusting in God. We are going to have a short time of quiet to think about the story we've heard. When you're ready come and draw your face showing how you feel on one brick in the wall. You don't need to tell anyone why or explain it, though you are welcome to tell us about it if you want to. As we do this we remember that God sees our faces, knows our feelings and understands our thoughts.'



## EMOJI PRAYERS

*You will need*

- *Emoji stickers - either purchase from \$2 shop or print your own collection of emoticons on sticky label paper.*
- *Prayer pages*

Hand out copies of the Prayer Page (see **Day4Consequence1.pdf**) to each person. Invite them to choose as many emoji stickers as they want to show how they feel about any or all of the prayers.

### Linking Lines:

Our prayers can be for ourselves or for others - God knows and understands the look on our faces, and the story behind our faces. We can trust God with our trouble and our excitement.







## PICK A BRICK

### *You will need*

- **6 bricks** - either real bricks or made from cardboard boxes, covered and painted to look like bricks.
- **On each brick is one of the following responses.**
  - We pray for the leaders of nations - Kings and Queens, Presidents, Prime-Ministers to be generous and fair
  - We pray for poor people - to find freedom and justice and help
  - We pray for enemies - to choose peace and understanding and safety for all
  - We pray for communities to work together to make their spaces strong in joy and justice
  - We pray for those who are sad - to have comfort and understanding from those around them
  - We pray to know God better

Place the bricks in a pyramid (3 on the bottom, two on top of those and one at the very top) and ensure that the words are not visible.

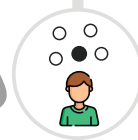
Remind your group of the part in the story where the people called out 'Amen! Amen!' which means 'we agree!', 'same goes for us!', 'bring it on!'. Tell the group that there are some prayers written on the bricks - and if they hear something that they agree with, they can call out 'Amen! Amen!' Have a few practices - with simple, everyday statements like

'Summer holidays are a great time of the year'  
'Eating fish and chips on the beach is awesome'  
'Australia should win the cricket'

One by one, invite a member of your group to pick a brick. Having chosen their brick, they carefully lift that brick from the pyramid (moving the others if they need to) and find the writing on it. They read what is on the brick out loud (help them if needed) and encourage response from the group.

### **Linking Lines:**

Prayers can be something we pray quietly ourselves, or something we join together in supporting each other.



# FACE TO FACE PARENTS 4

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

Backing, Bully-breaking and Building



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

Bullying. We hate it. We hate what it does to our kids. We hate how it makes a kid shrink themselves, feeling powerless, anxious, avoidant.

We hate it because we know that bullies themselves are just kids who've been shown a poor set of ways of dealing with their feelings, kids who haven't had the backing and building they have needed. We know that bullies are victims too, but all the sympathy we have for bullies doesn't change the importance of challenging them and calling out their behaviour - which is not ok - not for their targets, nor for themselves.

We have a great role in backing our kids - saying 'you can do this, you're ok for this challenge'. Right from the start that's a great message to give our kids. It helps them not need to bully others to feel powerful. And if they have bullies coming at them, it gives them a sense of having what it takes to stand their ground.

We can look for strengths in our kids that we can back and build on. The strengths our kids have naturally are the ones to back and build, not trying to make them into something they aren't, but being their best self.

I reckon this applies to our parenting as well - lets back and build one another as parents - not trying to be some super parent - but our best and truest selves.

## SHARE YOUR STORY

What strengths do you see in your kids that you can back and build?

Have you had to deal with bullying?

What have you found helpful?

What are your strengths as a parent?

## GOD'S STORY

Time and time again, the Bible tells stories that back the underdog. The smallest tribe or the youngest kid in the family that everyone had even forgotten they had, or the illegitimate bastard that no one rates, or the roughest poorest group of rabble - these characters become the centre of stories. And while there are no Disney endings for everyone's happily ever after - God clearly takes the side of the underdog. If you're throwing your weight around, bullying and power mongering, God's just not into it. Stories of the tough guys, like Samson, are there to show us how ridiculous that kind of thumping up other people is - and how it just escalates issues and violence, solving nothing.

Across the stories of the Bible God backs and builds the people who are up against it. He rescues slaves and gives them freedom and good ways to live. When they want a king he chooses someone from the smallest of their tribes, he goes for the youngest son. And when this little nation caves in under the military might of the super powers around them, God keeps sending them his assurances that there is hope, that he's still the face to face God who know sand loves them. God backs their campaign to rebuild their city and thwarts the bullies who stand around throwing insults and injuries at them.

There are plenty of times people claim God is on their side. If they're bullying, you can be sure they've got it wrong. If we are using our strengths to work together to build, and not tear others down, to build peace and welcome - that's the stuff that has God's backing.

Read some more in the Bible in Nehemiah.

SU Missions/Camps use only

SU Missionary Camps use only

# DAY 5

# JESUS

SU Missions/Camps use only

# TEAM STUDY 5

## JESUS

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
  - *Use these questions to explore further*



How are you going with the pattern of community time and alone time on mission? Examine the text for instances of the significance of Jesus' human body and its role in his ministry, as more than just a carrier of his spirit/mind/teaching mouth. Mark loves using the Greek word 'euthus' which means 'straight away' or 'suddenly'. What do you think that's about? Is there something theological behind it that we are supposed to catch?

# AGE GROUP SESSION 5

## JESUS

God in Jesus turns up, speaks up, mixes up, lifts up

### MARK 1: 21 -35

A day in the life of Jesus good news living. Healing, gathering, speaking, restoring

### INTRODUCTION

We've turned the page again and leapt forward several centuries. What is God up to now, in the New Testament, as Jesus bursts on to the scene?

Well, funnily enough, there are no surprises here. God is doing what God has always been doing. Jesus life is fully God's life, just done in the constraints of human skin, rather than God's otherwise cosmically limitless capacity.

The alignment between Jesus' life and the life of God that has been revealed to the Hebrew people in the Old Testament is really clear and as we track through a day in the life of Jesus we can hear the echoes of the God we already know.

God of the Old Testament was a face to face God. A God who had one law that worked its way out in many ways of everyday family and national life - Love. Love God. Love your neighbour. Love your wife. Love your slaves. Love the aliens among you. Love your enemies. God of the Old Testament was no cardboard cut-out or metal model trophy god. God is emotionally dynamic, powerfully passionate, furious at injustice, infamously forgiving and gracious, extreme in expecting that his dearly loved humans bearing his image should, in partnership with him, act justly and love mercy and walk humbly.

And so, we see a day in the life of Jesus: he gathers with others to pray and reflect on Scripture, he practices Sabbath rest and enjoys the goodness of creation, he deals with destructive powers and restores dignity to the demonised, embraces and lifts and heals the physically afflicted - both men and women come under his authority to heal and call to serve. He enjoys family life, extends himself to welcome many. He lives the life of the Spirit in solitude and prayer. Jesus practices the life of the Trinity.

God locked in space and time - doing 24 hour days on location in the middle east, eating, working, resting, learning, travelling, friending, feeling in the same way as God Eternal - God always, then and now and forever face to face with us if we'll face up to the invitation.



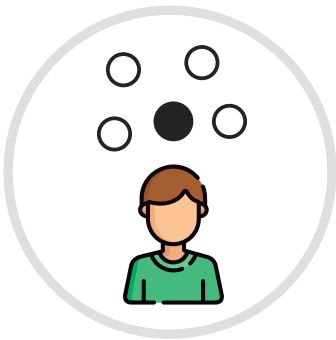
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Your most amazing day...imagining
- What's the time Mr. Wolf.
- Making something out of a mess
- Streets and Lanes meet face to face



## CONTEXT

- Microphones
- Shadows
- Scarecrow Jesus



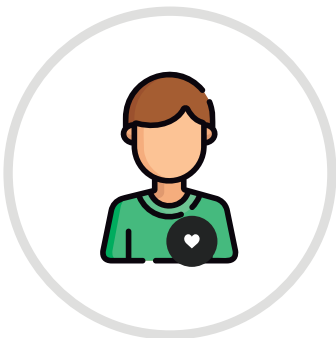
## CONTENT

- TV News
- S words
- Maze



## CONSIDER

- Hour Glasses
- Cardbord Box Town
- Folded Printing



## CONSEQUENCE

- Quiet Time
- Shoes
- Time of Day Poem and Pictures
- Faces of Jesus Gallery

# CONNECT



- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.



## STREETS AND LANES MEET FACE TO FACE

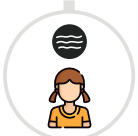
Join with some other groups so you have enough people to set lines of 5 by 5 or more, and stand with their arms out sideways and fingers just touching. Explain that the lines facing you are 'Streets' and that when you call 'lanes' everyone turns 90 degrees to the left.

Invite 2 volunteers to start at opposite corners of the 'town'. The aim is for them to meet, but as they are running, you call 'Streets' or 'Lanes' randomly, causing the group to change direction. This will sometimes help and sometimes hinder the two runners meeting up.

Play several rounds with as many pairs of volunteers as would like to have a turn.

### Linking Lines:

Jesus spent his days in the towns and villages of ancient Israel, bringing the good news that God is near, meeting people in the streets or their houses or their meeting places. Some people found it easy to meet Jesus face to face, and others found it harder. Sometimes Jesus left the streets and lanes and people of the town, to be alone in the desert to pray.



## MAKING SOMETHING OUT OF A MESS

### You will need

- *Collection of random craft 'junk' and small everyday items (e.g. matches, teaspoons keys, defunct headphones, seeds, pen lids, buttons, bottle tops, bread clips, straws, toothpicks, )*
- *Plasticine*
- *Sticky tape*
- *Carton/corrugated card*

Invite your group to each make a collage of something creative out the mess of everyday item junk.

### Linking Lines:

In the midst of everyday life, Jesus met people who had messy lives - one guy had a messed up spirit - he yelled out weird things in



## WHAT'S THE TIME MR WOLF?

*You will need*

- *Rope or cones to mark the 'home' or 'safe'.*

Ask all your group to stand behind the marker in 'home' or 'safe space'. Choose one person to be 'Mr. Wolf' (or have a leader be Mr. Wolf with younger ages) who stands several metres away from the home space, with their back to the group. .

Explain that as a group you will all call out and ask 'What's the time Mr. Wolf?'. Mr. Wolf calls back '4 o'clock' (or whatever time they choose.) The group take that number of steps forward, counting together as they go. This continues asking 'What's the time Mr. Wolf?', with Mr. Wolf responding with a 'time' and the group taking steps getting closer to Mr. Wolf. Eventually Mr. Wolf calls 'Dinnertime!', turns around and begins to chase everyone trying to catch whoever they can before they get safe home. The person tagged becomes the new 'Mr. Wolf'. And the game starts again.

### Linking Lines:

In this game we all look forward to dinner time! Everyone loves dinner time. In the story today we hear about what Jesus did at lots of different times of the day - including dinner time!



## YOUR MOST AMAZING DAY...

*You will need:*

- *'Most Amazing Day' poster template.*
- *Completed sample poster*
- *Pictures of food from magazines*
- *Stickers of activities (like sports)*
- *Glitter/sequins*
- *Coloured markers*
- *Glue sticks*

Show your group a completed sample poster of your 'Most Amazing Day', filled in with drawn pictures, words, cut out pictures, stickers and decorations of glitter or sequins. The sample should be bright and creative.

Invite your group to fill in their own ideas for what would make their 'most amazing day' on a poster of their own. Encourage lots of creativity in presentation, and lots of imagination.

e.g. Eating 50 flavours of ice-cream; travelling by Hot Air Balloon. Meeting a celebrity.

### Linking Lines:

We've had a great time imagining our most amazing days. We might not ever get to live our most amazing day, but our days can still be pretty amazing. Jesus lived a long time ago, but lived some really amazing days, and we are going to hear about one of those days in our story today.

# CONTEXT

- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.

## MICROPHONES

### *You will need*

- **Cardboard rolls**
- **Black paint or paper and glue**
- **5cm diameter foam balls**
- **Aluminium foil**
- **Black duct tape**

Cover the cardboard roll in black paper and stick securely, or paint black and set aside to dry.

Cover the foam ball with aluminium foil, crinkling the texture to resemble microphone mesh.

Using duct tape, stick the aluminium covered foam ball to the end of the cardboard roll.

Add a couple of red and green buttons to the foam ball.

### **Linking Lines:**

Microphones are used for making a message louder and clearer, for helping people hear and spreading a message further. The purpose of Jesus' life - his actions and the way he treated people - was to help people hear and know God's message, and to make God's message clearer and spread God's message further. The message Jesus spread was 'God wants us to know him face to face'.

## SHADOWS

If it's a sunny day and you are outside, use the sun's position and find a wall or set up a piece of card to form the background to throw your shadows on to. If it's close to the middle of the day, lay a piece of poster card on the ground for the best shadows.

Have some fun together in your group making shadows. Challenge your group to make up some stories to go with their shadow figures.

### **Linking Lines:**

Shadows happen because something gets in the way of the light. Because the position of the sun changes throughout the day, things can look different at different times of the day. In the ancient world, people used the position of the sun and the shadows it made to tell the time, matching their activities to the sun. In the story of Jesus today, we see things he did at different times of the day. Although Jesus was God, he lived in the same limits of time and space that all humans do - he got hungry and tired and had time for friends and time for being alone.



## SCARECROW JESUS

### You will need

- *Tent pole (and a way of steadying it - either hammered into the ground, or wedged in a bucket between bricks and filled with sand.*
- *Old clothes - a long sleeved t-shirt, button shirt, trousers, boots (better than shoes) hat, gloves (rubber/latex is ok)*
- *Newspaper for stuffing*
- *Several pairs of old stockings*
- *2 old pillow cases*
- *Paint*
- *Strong string*
- *Labels (like clothing labels in the shop): 'country kid', 'worked a trade', 'lived in small communities', 'friends were other trade workers - fisherman', 'country conquered and run by the Roman Empire', 'walked most places', etc.*

Together with your group make a scarecrow, stuffing with newspaper one pillow case for the body and half a pillow case for the head. Paint a face on the head and set aside to dry.

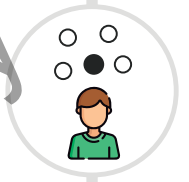
Stuff scrunched up newspaper into stockings to make legs and arms, then fitting the clothes over them. Tie the clothes securely to the body at points where there are natural joints. Place the scarecrow on the pole, with the pole threading up through under the clothes. Tie on the head securely, with ropes reaching under the arms of the body. Add boots and gloves.

As you form different parts of the body, add on the labels and discuss these different aspects of Jesus' life.

If you are doing the 'Maze' idea for Content (see below), add the finished Scarecrow Jesus to the maze.

### Linking Lines:

Our scarecrow Jesus reminds us that Jesus was an ordinary country boy, probably a bit scruffy, living under the same conditions, sun and rain, poverty and suffering and community as everyone else. When people see the amazing things Jesus did, and heard his amazing words they were gobsmacked because he looked so ordinary, yet he was God right among them.



# CONTENT

- Use one of these to give your group a hands on experience of the Bible text
- Use the collection of texts from Face to Face Bible Bits **Day5BibleBits1.pdf** to make finding the right part of the passage easy – but at some point show your group a complete (paper-print) Bible and an online Bible to help them see where the stories have come from.
- Be confident that experiencing the text in engaging, active and tactile ways is more important than reading and following and understanding every single word for helping people get comfortable with the Bible.
- Repeat the reading-activities more than once to increase your group's familiarity with The text, and give people a chance to take different roles or respond differently – or just because it's fun to do again.
- These readings can be a bit chaotic – intentionally. Make the most of the people in your group to help set things up and pack things up afterwards – enjoy doing this together, building community as you do.

## MARK 1: 21-35

Jesus and his disciples went to the town of Capernaum. And straight away on the Sabbath he went into the meeting place and started teaching. Everyone was amazed at his teaching. He taught with authority, and not like the scribes.

Suddenly a man with a messed-up spirit in him entered the meeting place and yelled, "Jesus from Nazareth, what do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are! You are God's Holy One."

Jesus told the messed-up spirit, "Be quiet and come out of the man!" The messed-up spirit shook him. Then it gave a loud shout and left.

Everyone was completely surprised and kept questioning each other, "What is this? New teaching with authority! Even the messed-up spirits obey him."

News about Jesus straight away spread all over Galilee.

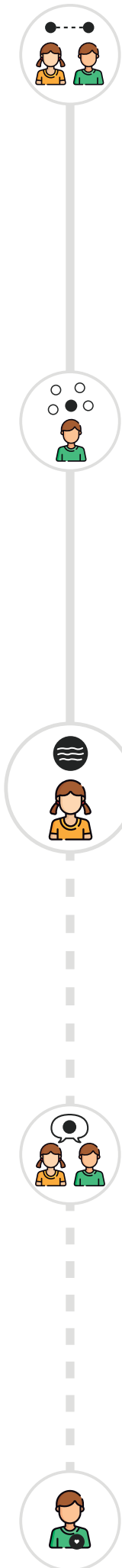
Jesus left the meeting place with James and John, and straight away they went home with Simon and Andrew.

When they got there, Jesus was told that Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with fever. Jesus went to her. He took hold of her hand and helped her up. The fever left her, and she served them.

That evening after sunset, all who were sick or had demons in them were brought to Jesus. The whole town gathered around the door of the house. Jesus healed all kinds of terrible diseases and threw out a lot of demons.

But the demons knew who he was, so he did not let them speak.

Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray.



## TV NEWS

### You will need

- Multiple print outs of different sections of the passage
- News reader costumes
- Pretend microphones (see context)

Use the Linking Lines to introduce this Bible reading. Explain to your group that you are going to turn the reading into TV news, and they get to be the reporters. Brainstorm how you will present the different parts of the text, using 'anchormen' news readers and live crossings to other reporters.

### Linking Lines:

In just one day in the life of Jesus, he came face to face with lots of people who wanted to know God, who were in trouble or messed up or sick. Everywhere he went, he spread the news that God is near and wants to know us face to face.

## MAZE

### You will need

Rope, black plastic, boxes, hoops, chairs, benches, tarps, blankets - anything you can find to create a maze.

Text of Mark 1:21-35 (use the version in Face to Face Bible Bits

**Day5BibleBits1.pdf**) divided into 11 sections and printed on separate paper. (Optional) Scarecrow Jesus (if you have made one in your 'Context' time.

Introduce the maze to your group - if you have an older group, you might like to get them to make the maze themselves - thinking through what some small villages in the hill country of the Middle East might be like.

Attach the pieces of the passage to various items in the maze. It doesn't matter what order they are in.

Invite members of your group one by one to walk through the maze - picking up one piece of the passage as they do.

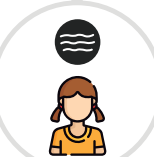
When they have made it through the maze, and return to the group invite them to read (or they can give it to you to read) the part of the story they have found.

Do this one by one until you have gathered all the parts of the story. While the group is waiting they can begin to suggest the order the pieces of story might go in. This can result in lots of partial readings of the story - excellent! When all the pieces of the story have been gathered, and sorted into the group's best guess at the correct order - check this against the version printed in Face to Face Bible Bits.

Do a complete reading of the text together - with those who are comfortable, reading the parts they gathered from the maze.

### Linking Lines:

Jesus' day was made up of lots of different things, sometimes in lots of different places. Like you and me and everyone else, Jesus was limited to time and space. But wherever he went, Jesus really was God, doing all the things God has always done - creating, loving, healing, helping, making things right, looking for justice, showing compassion.





## S WORDS

### *You will need*

- *Copies of Face to Face Bible Bits Day5BibleBits1.pdf for each person with words beginning with S highlighted*
- *Clipboard/blackboard/flipchart*

Brainstorm together some words that might be expected to turn up in a story about God. Make a list of these on a clipboard (or similar). Next brainstorm a list of words beginning with the letter S you might expect in a story about Jesus. Accept and affirm all answers - no matter how unlikely they seem to you. In the midst of everyday life, Jesus met people who had messy lives - one guy had a messed up spirit - he yelled out weird things in the meeting place, his friend's mum was out of action with illness (and we know how that messes with the household), the end of the day it got messy in kinds of ways - and Jesus rolls with it, and settles things out. He's ok with mess, but he's got a way of making good things come out of the mess.

\*Check first, asking if those in your group have heard about Jesus, or know who you mean. If there are blanks, suggest the Christmas/Easter story might be something they have heard about Jesus. Even if those in your group don't know who Jesus is - that's ok (and how brilliant that they are about to get to know Jesus now!). Fill in the framework that Jesus lived 2000 years ago in the Middle East, in Israel, when the Roman Empire was in power. He came from the back blocks of the country hills and didn't spend much time in the cities at all.

Once you have your two lists, set them where they can be seen. Announce that you are going to read from the Bible a day in the life of Jesus. This story has lots of words beginning with the letter S - which you will pause on and everyone can join in and call out.

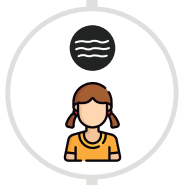
When you have finished reading see how many of the 'S' words the group can remember.

Read again a second time, again with all the group calling out the S- words, but asking for volunteers to mime/act out the S words (not every word needs to be acted, play this by ear).

Refer back to the brainstorm lists of words that might have been expected in stories about God and stories about Jesus - see if there are any matches.

### **Linking Lines:**

Sometimes people expect stories of God to be scary - or sensational. Jesus stories are sometimes scary, sometimes sensational but sometimes really ordinary. Some people found that Jesus wasn't how they expected a person who shows us God face to face to be. They expected God to be something different. Whether Jesus is what we expect or not - he shows us what God is like and that he wants to be face to face friends with us all.





# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- You felt like being alone and quiet for a while
  - You had lots of people come to your house
  - You met someone who acted very strangely and didn't seem quite themselves?
- 
- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
  - Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.

## HOUR GLASS

### *You will need*

- *Two clear plastic bottles per person*
- *Paper funnels*
- *Plastic cups*
- *Rice or dry sand*
- *Duct tape*
- *Permanent marker*

Help your group make paper funnel, and tip a cup or two of rice or dry sand into one of the plastic bottles.

Use the duct tape to securely connect the tops of the two bottles together to form an hourglass shape. Turn the bottle and watch the sand/rice flow through from the top bottle to the bottom.

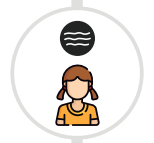
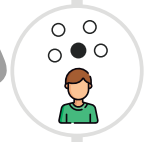
When all the contents is in the bottom, turn it over again, and time how long it takes for all the sand/rice to pass through.

Mark a line on the bottle where the sand/rice reaches to when complete - and write the time it takes to fill to that level.

Turn your 'hourglass' again and mark the times the contents reach half and quarter and three quarters full in marker on the bottles.

### **Linking Lines:**

Every hour of Jesus' day was a time for meeting people face to face and helping them see and know that God is with us. Every time in our day is also a time that God is with us.





## CARDBOARD BOX TOWN

### *You will need*

- *Supply of different sized cardboard boxes*
- *Coloured paper*
- *Glue sticks*
- *Scissors*
- *Markers*
- *Extra random found natural objects (twigs, stones, pods)*
- *Craft sticks or natural sticks*
- *Signs saying 'God: this way' 'Meeting God: next 20 metres' 'Kingdom of God ahead' 'healings ahead' 'justice zone'*

Together as a group set up a 'town' or village of boxes.

Discuss together what the various buildings might be: houses, shops, market place, meeting house, workshop, barn, grain store, well.

Once you have mapped out the village or town, together invite each person to choose a building to work on making more detailed, by cutting doors/windows, adding brick work, or steps, signs as appropriate to the kind of building it is. Use bits of natural objects to create more of the landscape around your village.

Add the signs around every building and space on sticks or attached to buildings.

### **Linking Lines:**

When Jesus visited a village or town his words and actions, the things that happened and the way he treated people he met, showed that God is not far away, and wants us to know him face to face. Everywhere Jesus went he let people know in his words and his kind and powerful actions that God was near.



## FOLDED PRINTING

### *You will need*

- *Paper (A3 or A4) folded in half- lengthways or widthways (prepare a few of each)*
- *Various colours of acrylic/tempera paints*
- *Brushes or other applicators for paint (e.g. sponge shapes, old toothbrushes, cotton buds)*

Demonstrate applying some colours in patterns or blobs on one half of a piece of paper, then folding (length, width or diagonally) gently smoothing the sides of the page together, then opening up to reveal the same-same on both sides of the paper.

### **Linking Lines:**

The shape and colour of the blob on the left hand side was the same as the blob the right-hand side. In the Bible we have ancient stories about God, too wonderful to be seen all at once, and we have newer stories of Jesus - the person in which we see God visible as a human - but still wonderful. The God in the old stories and Jesus - who is God - in the newer stories are the same. Creating, setting things right, healing, lifting people from their struggles, bringing communities back together, knowing and loving us all - face to face.



# CONSEQUENCE

- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation



## QUIET TIME



### You will need

- *Space*
- *Sandpaper*
- *Chalk*

Invite your group to find a quiet space a little bit away from others, but still all able to be seen. Give each person a piece of sand paper and some chalk. This is their mini-desert. Announce that you are going to have 3 minutes of quiet alone time - either to lie still and rest, sit quietly and pray, spend time quietly thinking and doodling on the sandpaper with chalk.

After this time call the group back together. And affirm their quiet space. Invite anyone who wants to tell the group about their desert drawing/ doodling or something they thought about or something they felt in the quiet, to share, but no one should feel pressure.

### Linking Lines:

Sometimes it is great just to have some quiet space. Jesus did this too. Although he loved being with people and helping them, Jesus also like being alone to think and pray. We are going to have a go at being quiet and still. This is something that you can do whenever you like at home.



## SHOES



### You will need

- *A supply of light coloured runners or canvas shoes from the op shop - one shoe per person.*
- *Markers, paints/brushes, crayons*

Challenge your group to each choose a shoe, and develop way of showing all the places we might find Jesus - meeting places, with people who are struggling or messed up, in homes with families, with those who are sick, with a crowd, out by himself. Encourage your group to write and draw on their shoe, the places in their neighbourhood they think Jesus might go to. Take a photo of each of the shoes on a similar background to add to a gallery of 'Walking Jesus Way'

### Linking Lines:

Jesus spent lots of time walking and going to different people, but his message was the same wherever he went - God is with us, God is near and not far away. Wherever we go, God is with us too.





## TIME OF DAY POEM AND PICTURES

### *You will need*

- *Words to 'Jesus at Morning' poem*
- *Watercolour paints and brushes*
- *White paper for painting*
- *Black paper (for backing)*
- *Some pictures of the sky at different times of day and night (e.g. sunrise, sunset, sunshine, night) for inspiration/copying.*



Show your group the pictures of the sky at different times of the day. Invite them to guess which pictures are morning and evening and night and day (some are easier than others!)

Remind your group that our story tracks with Jesus across all the times of the day and night.

Teach them the poem 'Jesus at Morning' by saying a couplet and asking them to repeat it back to you. Next time through say the first line and see if they can remember the second line (perhaps with a bit of prompting).

Invite the group to each choose a different time of day mentioned in the poem and try painting the colours of the sky at that time.

Explain to the group that you will collect the pictures together to form illustrations of the poem.



You might add some black paper cut out silhouettes of people - Jesus and them. Have pages with the lines of the poem ready to intersperse between the paintings to form a book or an exhibition.

Ask permission to take photos of the paintings, so you can put them on a group page on social media or print them out as gift for families.

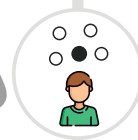


*Jesus at morning  
loves our yawning  
Jesus at Sunrise  
opens our eyes  
Jesus in the day  
shows us the way  
Jesus at sundown  
loves our smiles or frowns  
Jesus in dark sky  
still is close by  
Jesus at night  
things are alright*

### **Linking Lines:**

Jesus spent lots of time walking and going to different people, but his message was the same wherever he went - God is with us, God is near and not far away. Wherever we go, God is with us too.





## FACES OF JESUS GALLERY

### *You will need:*

- *Print out Posters of the 'Faces of Jesus' from [http://www.rejesus.co.uk/site/module/faces\\_of\\_jesus/index.html](http://www.rejesus.co.uk/site/module/faces_of_jesus/index.html)*
- *Rope and something to support a 'washing line' (trees or tent poles or team member's truck)*
- *Note paper, pegs/paperclips*

Set up a gallery of the Faces of Jesus Posters. (Communicate as a team to co-ordinate which groups might be using this activity - as one gallery will work well for all groups, as well as creating a space that others/public/parents/passers by can interact with too,)

Invite your group to look through the pictures of Jesus and choose one picture that they really like and one picture that they think is nothing like how they imagine Jesus.

Make it clear that no one actually knows what Jesus looked like, because there was no Instagram and no selfies in the first century, so there are no wrong answers.

Once everyone has had some time to look through the gallery, re-gather as a group and let each person take the group to either the picture they most like or the picture they found dissonant. Let them explain their thoughts. Write one short quote from what they say on a piece of note paper and attach it to the line next to the poster, or to the poster, so that across the gallery you build up a commentary of responses.

### **Linking Lines:**

No one knows what Jesus actual face looked like, but we can know Jesus through the stories of his words and actions. With a little bit of faith, we can know Jesus in our own lives because he is alive and with us throughout the whole of the world and the whole of time.

# FACE TO FACE PARENTS 5

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

Just an ordinary day



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

A lot of life is pretty mundane. Just getting through each day. We need to keep our heads down and concentrate on making ends meet, keeping our kids on track, fitting everyone's routines in. It can take all our energy and all our brain space. But in the midst of it all - we look up for a moment and look around and we realise that we are doing this awesome thing called life. Life - lots of little bits of ordinary that get squished together and the end result is lots of life - awesome, wonderful, extraordinary life. Breathing in and out and putting one foot in front of the other, and smiling and crying and loving and losing and daring and trying and learning. It is - when you step back - amazing what we achieve in our lives.

And our kids' lives - how awesome are they?! Our kids help us stop and see how amazing it is that we even breathe - that our heart keeps beating. When we see our kids take their first steps, or hear them sing for the first time, or smash the ball for a 4 or stand on the platform graduating year 12. These are moments where we realise every part of life is precious and important, because the whole of life is.

## SHARE YOUR STORY

How do you help your kids get through the day?

What routines and strategies do you have just for surviving?

How do you help your kids find the fun factor and the meaning making in the everyday?

When have you found yourself stopping and reflecting on life in the midst of your everyday?

## GOD'S STORY

Every day, ordinary humans. God loves them.

When Jesus turns up in the First Century in Palestine, God is throwing down all his cards at once and placing his bets on humanity. The Christian story, which hold on to the faith that Jesus - 100% human - is also God has been doing people's heads in for a long time. Most of the struggle is because we sometimes carry around an idea that God should be something grand and lofty and above humanness. We have filled our heads with God being Super something, and we've used words like 'King' so much that we've lost touch with the way God chose to identify - as a basic common everyday ordinary peasant worker.

Jesus humanness connects with ours. If God can live in a human body, with all its frustrations and limitations, as well as all its sensations - and let's be real about all of them from the deepest suffering and pain to the dizziest ecstasy - it tells us that all our humanness is not godforsaken.

The human life of Jesus-God says that spiritual life isn't found somewhere high above the clouds in another dimension or esoteric transcendence.

The spiritual is woven into our everyday, in our bodies and our being. It's in the newborn baby and the creaking adult. We don't learn it or earn it. We just live it. Jesus shows up 100% human face and invites us 100% humans to recognise this awesome human existence is life face to face with God.

Read more in the Bible in the Gospel of Mark.

SU Missions/Camps use only



SU Missionary Camps use only

# DAY 6

# MERCY

SU Missions/Camps use only

# TEAM STUDY 6

## MERCY

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
- *Use these questions to explore further*



List what you know of David's life. Looking at that, is he someone you'd want to be named after?

Like Peter, James and John by the shore, this is a disciple-calling story. What are the elements that tell us that?

If Bartimaeus is leaving his cloak and thus throwing away all his takings from begging for the day, he is really placing all his bets on Jesus.

In what ways have you placed your bets on Jesus?

# AGE GROUP SESSION 6

## MERCY

God looks for mercy, God looks with mercy

### MARK 10:46-52

Bartimeus is healed when he calls out to Jesus 'Son of David have mercy.'

### PSALM 51:1

David the Great King, calls out to God 'have mercy'

### BIBLE LINK

Whether you are the lowest beggar on the street or the greatest King of the realm, God's mercy is for you.

### INTRODUCTION

Jesus doesn't spend much time in the big cities in Mark. Perhaps he prefers the face to face of the villages and country people. He is on his way out of the city of Jericho when a blind beggar cries out.

The beggar knows a thing or two about Jesus it seems, because he calls Jesus something unusual. He calls Jesus 'Son of David' – referring to King David – star of Jewish history for his mighty deeds, giant slaying, passionate worship of God, quick thinking and shrewd strategy in besting his enemies. He is also known for taking another man's wife, and ordering the murder of the man. He is known as both the best and the worst of humanness. It's a good nickname for Jesus - who is both the best of humanness and takes on the worst of humanness.

Bartimaeus doesn't just call Jesus the son of David, he quotes David's most humble and heartfelt prayer 'Have mercy on me' (Psalm 51 – following his rape of Bathsheba and murder of Uriah).

Jesus stops. He calls Bartimaeus for a face to face. He sees that Bartimaeus has leapt up from his begging, left behind his cloak with what he has gathered so far that day. If he isn't healed, if Jesus isn't who Bartimaeus thinks he is, Bartimaeus has just lost everything – which for a blind beggar is not good news. No wonder when he's face to face with Jesus, though he is blind, Jesus can plainly see his faith. And though Bartimaeus is blind, face to face with Jesus he can plainly see that Jesus shows exactly the same kind of mercy to a beggar in the street, as God showed centuries before to a king. Jesus is full of mercy, helping those who can't help themselves, because God has always been like that. Same, same.

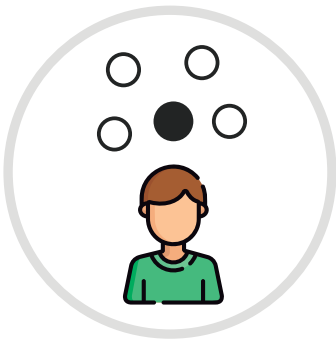
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Playing Cards
- Shout even louder competition
- If I were King
- Royals and Beggars Puppets



## CONTEXT

- Blind beggars
- What's your nickname
- You Choose



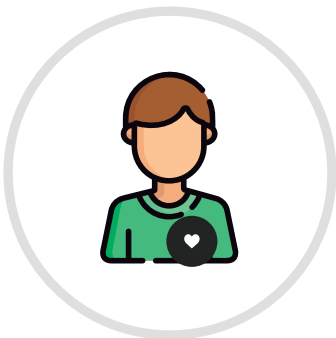
## CONTENT

- Crime Scene Investigation.
- B words
- Whispers and shouting.



## CONSIDER

- Royals and Beggars Puppets
- Mercy Bowls
- Show mercy/Need mercy crowns
- When we can't help ourselves mercy challenges



## CONSEQUENCE

- Plasticine Responses
- Prayer Eyeballs

# CONNECT



- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.



## PLAYING CARDS

### *You will need:*

- *Deck of playing cards*

Play some simple card games that use a regular deck of 52 cards. Start with 52 Pickup, to get the group working together and becoming familiar with how the picture cards work, making sure everyone knows the different 'suits' symbols, and the royal family pictures.

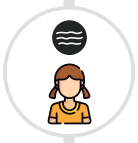
When you have sorted the cards in order, in their suits, bring them into one deck and shuffle them.

Play a game of Go fish or Pontoon (21).

### **Linking Lines:**

These playing cards were designed to show how to rank people in order of importance from the King at the top down to the smallest number at the bottom. Some countries don't have kings and queens any more, they have presidents – but sometimes the presidents think they are more important than anyone else.

God's stories in the Bible show that whether you are the greatest king or the lowest beggar, we all need God's love and mercy.





## IF I WERE KING

*You will need:*

- *'If I were King' activity cards, printed from **Day6Connect1.pdf***

Stand in a circle. Leader holds a set of cards with 'If I were King...' activities.

Appoint one person as King.

This person begins as you turn over the first card which tells them what they would do if they were king.

This person says 'I'm the King and I... [ride a horse]' and they mime riding a horse.

The person clockwise next to them repeats "If I were king I'd ride a horse" and also mimes riding a horse. Keep going around the circle with each person repeating and miming until it gets back to the King.

Turn over the next card. [eg. live in a huge castle]

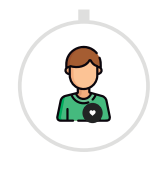
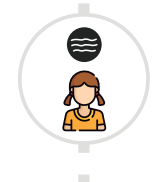
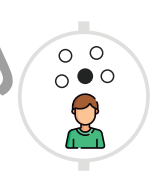
The King says "I'm the king and I ride a horse [mimes riding a horse] and I live in a huge castle [mimes a large castle wall].

The person clockwise next to them repeats "If I were king I'd ride a horse" [mimes riding a horse] and I'd live in a huge castle [mimes large castle wall]. Keep going around the circle with each person repeating and miming until it gets back to the King.

Keep turning over cards and adding these to what the king has to say, and the rest of the circle has to repeat, obviously getting more and more difficult to remember.

If someone makes a mistake they move to the 'last' position, and everyone else moves up. If the King makes a mistake, they move to the 'last position' - the cards are reshuffled and you start again with a new set/order of activities, and a new King.

King Activities: ride a horse, live in a huge castle, fight with a sword, marry a princess, fly my flag, wear a crown, command my servants, wave at the people, sit on a throne, write my own rules, feast like a king, help the poor,



### Linking Lines:

In our game it got harder and harder for the king to do all the things a king is supposed to do, and eventually, even our mighty king made a mistake. In the history of the world, and in the stories of the Bible there are lots of Kings and Leaders who found it very hard to do all the things a king is meant to do and they messed up.

In the Bible there is one king whose name was David who was thought to be the best king ever...and even he found being king too hard sometimes and messed up. He called out to God for mercy and help - like we all can.



## SHOUT EVEN LOUDER COMPETITION

Find out who in your group can shout the loudest. Invite everyone to warm up together shouting 'Have Mercy'. When there is a bit of energy going, ask for volunteer who think they can shout the loudest. (Don't force anyone to do the shouting individually if they don't want to. Shyness is a thing.) You might like to use the decibel metre app on your phone to measure the shouting of each volunteer. If there are other groups nearby doing this activity you might like to do some "shout offs" against them.

### Linking Lines:

Remind your group of the way that, when someone tells you to do something, it can make you sometimes want to do the opposite. Or if someone tells you not to do something it can make you really want to do it! In the Bible story, when the beggar Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus, people tell him to be quiet. What do you think he does? Shouts even louder!! Perhaps some of you have stories of a time they were told to do/not to do something and it made them want to do the opposite.



## ROYALS AND BEGGARS PUPPETS

*\*for best results with this activity, begin the process in your Connect time, doing the newspaper papier-mâché in that time, and setting the puppets aside to dry during your Context and Content activities. Complete the tissue paper, painting and other features in your Consider time.*

Create a two-faced puppet using a cardboard roll, layering first papier-mâché newspaper, and then tissue paper over the top to create a head, painting the final layer with a beggar face on one side and a royal king/queen on the other. Add wool or cotton wool for hair, fabric clothes and buttons/jewels to complete the effect.

Encourage storytelling switching - create stories in which both the beggar and the king are in need of mercy and receive kindness.

### Linking Lines:

We are making two puppets in one. Even though they seems very different characters , our stories from the Bible show how we are all very much the same in needing mercy and kindness – and that God shows kindness and mercy to all.





# CONTEXT

- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.

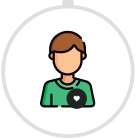
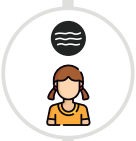
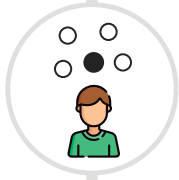


## WHAT'S YOUR NICKNAME

Invite your group to share what their nicknames are. Perhaps they have a few nicknames. What does their mum or dad call them? What do their friends call them? Do they like their nicknames?

### Linking Lines:

Linking Lines - Nicknames are very common. Sometimes they are friendly and say something nice about a person, sometimes they are cruel, and the person doesn't like being known by their nickname. In the story today, there is a blind man, who is known by his dad's name 'Bar Timaeus'.



## BLIND BEGGARS

*You will need:*

- *6 meter stretch of black plastic or paper*
- *Several blind folds*
- *Several tea towels or other pieces of cloth*
- *A supply of largish buttons or plastic lids from milk/juice bottles.*

Use this activity to help your group picture the setting of the Bible story, and to empathise with Bartimaeus.

Set out a piece of black plastic or paper approximately 6m long.

Explain that half the group are going to wear blind folds and be blind beggars and the other half of the group passers-by – and that you will swap over so everyone gets a chance to play both roles. You will start and finish the role play by calling out ‘Jericho road’ (which is the place this story happens in the Bible).

Blind fold half your group and escort them to sit along the road. Give them a piece of cloth (a tea towel would do) as their cloak, and explain that if they put it out in front of them, and call out passers-by might give them money. Give the passers-by each about 10 large buttons as coins. Explain to the passers-by that this is the money they have earned from their work and have to buy food for their families with. The Blind beggars will probably ask for money – it’s up to the passers-by to decide what to do.

Check that everyone is ready and call ‘Jericho road’ – try not to intervene and let the passers-by make their own decisions. After a minute or so, call ‘Jericho road’ again to stop the activity. Sit down and debrief a little, letting the blind beggars take their blind folds off. Look at how generous the passers-by have been, ask the blind beggars how easy they found it to get money.

Redistribute the buttons, blindfolds and cloths now to the opposite group and repeat the activity.

*\*You can use this road activity to segue into Content - Opening the Bible -Whispers and Shouting which uses the same stretch of road prop.*

### Linking Lines:

It’s easy to understand why Bartimaeus was willing to shout out so loudly to Jesus. Competition was fierce. A blind beggar is easily ignored.



## WHAT'S YOUR NICKNAME

### *You will need*

- *A series of large cards with the questions for each round written on them. Items for each round: Shield, cloak, sword, crown, bowl, matches, net, 'hand' (fill a runner glove with sand or flour and seal securely with a rubber band and duct-tape)*

Run this activity a bit like a game-show with several rounds so that different people can participate. With each 'round' set out the three items. One or Two of your group may be assistants in setting up and replacing the items while you facilitate the activity.

With each round give the contestant 10 seconds to make their choice.

Then give them a chance to explain why they chose that item. Be positive and affirming for all choices! There are no wrong answers here.

Use phrases like

'I like your thinking'

'I can see how that appeals to you'

'You're a person who knows their own mind'

'You did well under pressure there!'

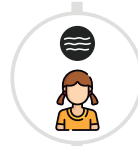
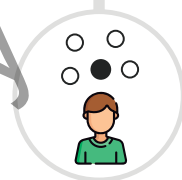
'That's a popular choice with the crowd'

### **Situations and Choices**

- You are an officer in the Roman army you can choose one item to protect you  
Shield, Cloak, Sword
- You are a King – you can choose one item to show your power as a king  
Cloak, Crown, Sword
- You are homeless – choose one thing  
Cloak, Bowl, Matches
- You are a Fisherman – choose one item you always have with you when you work  
Cloak, Sword, Net
- You are Blind beggar – choose one item to collect your donations  
Bowl, Your own hand, Cloak

### **Linking Lines:**

In the ancient world, a disabled person didn't have many choices. Everyone was busy working to survive. No one could look after a disabled person. They might stay at home inside all day – but more often they would be placed by the side of the road near a gate, or in a place where many people passed by, and they would beg for money. Their cloak was the safest thing to collect money in as it could be quickly wrapped up to protect the money if someone tried to steal it. Listen out for what happens when Jesus calls the blind beggar over...



# CONTENT

- Use one of these to give your group a hands on experience of the Bible text
- Use the Face To Face Bible Bits **Day6BibleBits1.pdf** collection of texts to make finding the right part of the passage easy – but at some point show your group a complete (paper-print) Bible and an online Bible to help them see where the stories have come from.
- Be confident that experiencing the text in engaging, active and tactile ways is more important than reading and following and understanding every single word for helping people get comfortable with the Bible.
- Repeat the reading-activities more than once to increase your group’s familiarity with The text, and give people a chance to take different roles or respond differently – or just because it’s fun to do again.
- These readings can be a bit chaotic – intentionally. Make the most of the people in your group to help set things up and pack things up afterwards – enjoy doing this together, building community as you do.

## CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

### *You will need*

1. *Sign post to Jericho/not to Jericho*
2. *Bag of Jelly Babies*
3. *Cloak, begging bowl, stick*
4. *Crown with Jewels, sword (+optional chocolate coins)*
5. *Stop sign*
6. *Voice recording on phone “Don’t be afraid! Come on! He is calling for you!”*  
*(leave a note in an envelope with a clue to this; don’t leave your phone lying around!)*
7. *Two sets of footprints walking away.*

Number these items clearly from 1 to 7 and attach the corresponding part of the Bible (see text divided into sections over page).

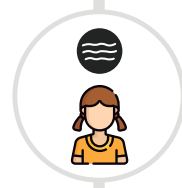
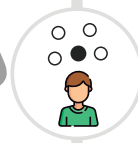
Explain to your group that a story from the Bible is found in a bunch of clues that have been left around a defined area. Set clear boundaries that will keep your group clear of roads and water and other hazards.

Send your group off in pairs or threes to find a clue and bring them back, then examine each clue – wondering about what it might mean, before treading the pieces of text that goes with each.

After you have read the text, invite each person to tell the group in their own words how their clue fits into the story, then check back with the Bible text, affirming their explanation. \*There is no need to ‘correct’ the child in this process – let them guess, let the Bible speak for itself and affirm their contribution.

Finish with showing the whole group the whole story in context in a Bible and let them search for their own part.

*Continued on next page...*



Mark chapter 10 verses 42-56

1. Jesus and his disciples went to Jericho.
2. And as they were leaving, they were followed by a large crowd.
3. A blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus son of Timaeus was sitting beside the road.
4. When he heard that it was Jesus from Nazareth, he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"
5. Many people told the man to stop, but he shouted even louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and said, "Call him over!"
6. They called out to the blind man and said, "Don't be afraid! Come on! He is calling for you." The man threw off his coat as he jumped up and ran to Jesus. Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man answered, "Master, I want to see!"
7. Jesus told him, "You may go. Your eyes are healed because of your faith." Right away the man could see, and followed him on the road.



## B WORDS

Mark chapter 10 verses 42-56

Jesus and his disciples went to Jericho.

And as they were leaving, they were followed by a large crowd.

A blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus son of Timaeus was sitting beside the road.

When he heard that it was Jesus from Nazareth, he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Many people told the man to stop, but he shouted even louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and said, "Call him over!"

They called out to the blind man and said, "Don't be afraid! Come on! He is calling for you." The man threw off his coat as he jumped up and ran to Jesus. Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man answered, "Master, I want to see!"

Jesus told him, "You may go. Your eyes are healed because of your faith." Right away the man could see, and followed him on the road

Display a poster with the text of Mark 10:42-56 printed with the B words enlarged.

Explain to your group that some of the words were easier to see than others. Let the group practice the B words - finding them themselves and making sure everyone can read the words.

When everyone is ready, read the passage together, with a leader reading and the group joining in on the words beginning with B. You can repeat it a second time, perhaps inviting one confident reader from your group to read the whole passage, as others join in on the B words.

Jesus and his disciples went to Jericho.

And as they were leaving, they were followed **by** a large crowd.

A **blind beggar by** the name of **Bartimaeus** son of

Timaeus was sitting **beside** the road.

When he heard that it was Jesus from Nazareth, he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Many people told the man to stop, **but** he shouted even louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and said, "Call him over!"

They called out to the **blind** man and said, "Don't **be** afraid! Come on! He is calling for you." The man threw off his coat as he jumped up and ran to Jesus. Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The **blind** man answered, "Master, I want to see!"

Jesus told him, "You may go. Your eyes are healed **because** of your faith."

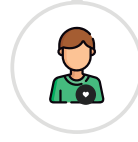
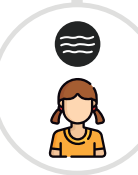
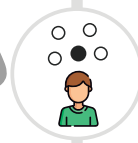
Right away the man could see, and followed him on the road.

### Linking Lines:

Here is a story from the Bible - which means it takes place thousands of years ago.

There is a blind man in this story, and in those days, if a person was blind, there was no eye surgery, no glasses even, and there weren't jobs for them to do. They sat outside and begged for money from the people going past.





## WHISPERS AND SHOUTING

*You will need: a length of black plastic or paper ~ 6 metres long, representing the road. Print out 8 copies of the text in large font from **Day6Content1.pdf** and cut it into random rock shapes. Stick these along the road, higgledy-piggledy. Add some other blank rock shapes to fill in the road a little more. Blindfolds for everyone.*

*Introduce the idea that the Bible story today includes some very loud shouting. It happens outdoors, along the road where people are sitting, perhaps some of them selling things and others who are unable to work, begging.*

*It's a very noisy place - like a market place. If members of your group are excited to tell you about an experience of a noisy market place with lots of people yelling, encourage everyone to listen in.*

*Explain that you are going to do a shouting Bible story. Invite your group to sit or stand along the 'road' - they can choose whether they want to be market sellers (standing) or beggars (sitting). All of them are going to join in the shouting either way.*

*Explain that you will read the story bit by bit...shouting it, and the group will shout it back to you.*

*Have a couple of practices with random phrases, shouting each phrase and having the group shout back to you. Remember to keep the smile in your voice as you shout, so it doesn't angry or aggressive - just enthusiastic.*

*When you are all warmed up, shout the whole story bit by bit pausing for the group to shout back.*

*Repeat the story-shouting process, but invite the whole group to become 'blind beggars' like Bartimaeus and wear blindfolds. If any children are uncomfortable about wearing the blindfold, don't force the issue or make a fuss, simply invite them to think of a different reason they might be begging beside the road.*

*Repeat the story a third time, taking the blindfolds off, and this time not shouting but whispering the story to one another along the line.*

### Linking Lines:

What a noisy story we find Jesus in. There was lots of competition, lots of shouting. The Blind beggar Bartimaeus called to Jesus using the special prayer of the ancient King David, 'Have mercy on me'. Although this famous king could shout orders at a whole army, he whispered this quiet prayer to God when he needed kindness and mercy and help, when he had made terrible mistakes. 'Have mercy on me.' Whether we are a mighty king who has done wrong or a Blind Beggar who doesn't deserve the troubles he faces, God's kindness and mercy is for all of us.

# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- You met someone famous
- Someone has helped you when you were really down
- You had trouble seeing
- Been picked out of a crowd
- Been sorry for something you did

- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
- Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.

## ROYALS AND BEGGARS PUPPETS

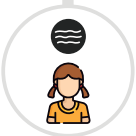
*\*for best results with this activity, begin the process in your Connect time, doing the newspaper papier-mâché in that time, and setting the puppets aside to dry during your Context and Content activities.*

Create a two-faced puppet using a cardboard roll, layering first papier-mâché newspaper, and then tissue paper over the top to create a head, painting the final layer with a beggar face on one side and a royal king/queen on the other. Add wool or cotton wool for hair, fabric clothes and buttons/jewels to complete the effect.

Encourage storytelling switching - create stories in which both the beggar and the king are in need of mercy and receive kindness.

### Linking Lines:

We are making two puppets in one. Even though they seem very different characters, our stories from the Bible show how we are all very much the same in needing mercy (kindness and help when we can't help ourselves) – and that God shows kindness and mercy to all.





## MERCY BOWLS

*You will need:*

- *Prepared cardboard cut-out 'bowl' from template at **Day6Consider1.pdf** for each person in your group*
- *Assortment of strips of cloth, raffia, ribbon, yarn, cane, small twigs.*

Show your group how to fold the spines of the bowl sides up from the base. Demonstrate weaving a piece of yarn or cloth in and out of the spines close to the base, continuing around as many layers as the length of yarn allows. Demonstrate continuing on (no need for a knot) with a new strand. Show the group how to do this with sticks as well. Each bowl should look completely unique, a bit fragile and beautiful in its own way.

### Linking Lines:

In the time of the Bible when people lived mostly in small villages, it was realistic for someone who was unable to work to beg to survive. People knew them, they knew who their family was - the man in the story today is known as 'The Son of Timaeus'. Today people whose lives have gone a difficult way - whether because of physical disability or some tragedy, can be shown mercy in lots of ways. Perhaps you know a way of showing kindness and mercy to people?

## MERCY MERCY MERCY CROWNS

*You will need:*

- *A cut out 'Mercy' crown from template **Day6Consider2.pdf** for each person in your group; stapler, sticky tape, bluetac, glue sticks, coloured and shiny metal buttons, large sequins, scraps of satin or velvet material, metallic paper scraps cut into small shapes.*

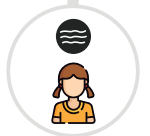
With your group make sure each person gets a crown, and highlight the words that form the shape and points of the crown, reading 'Mercy Mercy Mercy'. Remind the group that mercy means kindness and help when a person can't help themselves.

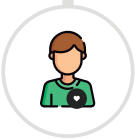
Set out the bits of craft decorations – sequins, buttons, paper and cloth and invite them to decorate their crown. Use glue sticks for the paper and cloth, and bluetac for the buttons and sequins.

Help each person measure to fit their crown on their head and stick or staple the ends together.

### Linking Lines:

Although our main story today was about a blind beggar, we have made king's crowns – they say mercy mercy mercy – which means kindness and help when we can't help ourselves – because even kings need mercy. God gives mercy – the help we need when we can't help ourselves – to all.





## WHEN WE CAN'T HELP OURSELVES MERCY CHALLENGES

### *You will need:*

- *Jars of lollies with screw top lids (not done up too tightly)*
- *Sticky dots*
- *Spoons attached to 1m long sticks (e.g. bamboo garden stakes)*
- *Large bowl (mixing bowl or fruit bowl) of fruit loops*

In this activity you will need to show one another mercy - that is to show kindness and help, when someone can't help themselves.

There are three tasks for everyone to do:

- 1) Get a lolly from the jar
- 2) Eat some fruit loops from the super long spoon
- 3) Remove a sticky dot from their back

All of this must be done using only one hand.

In order to complete any of the tasks, they will have to show mercy to each other, helping each other, as they can't help themselves. Be prepared to coach a little to get the helping going.

Participants will need to have a friend hold the jar while they loosen the lid; use the long spoons to feed each other, not themselves, and remove the sticky dot from each other's back.

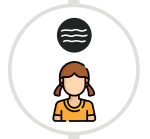
### **Linking Lines:**

Great job showing mercy to each other, helping someone when they couldn't help themselves. There are lots of times we need help, when things are too tough for us. In those times, whether we are as rich and important as a king or struggling and vulnerable as a beggar, God shows mercy to all.

# CONSEQUENCE



- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation



## PRAYER EYEBALLS

Use ping pong balls and permanent markers make 'eyeballs'.  
When each person has made two eyes, set up four buckets.  
Write one of these prayers on the outside each of the buckets.

- Have mercy on me
- Have mercy on [name someone else]
- Help me to follow you Jesus
- Dear God, Thanks for everything that my eyes see in your world around me

Invite each person to stand a few metres away from the buckets [age appropriately set distances] to toss their eyeball into the prayer bucket of the prayer they would like to say. Invite them to say the prayer out loud or silently in their mind. Encourage the whole group to say "Have mercy, Amen." After each prayer.



## PLASTICINE RESPONSES

*You will need*

*Tray, plasticine in various colours, pre-made models (see pictures in **Day6Consequence1.pdf**), sample prayers.*

Provide a tray of some different colours of plasticine rolled into small balls. Pre-make one model of each of the following -

- Crowd - I want to help people who are suffering
- Little person with one hand up – I'm only just finding out about Jesus for the first time but I'm up for an adventure
- Two faces of different colours - I'd like to get to know Jesus face to face
- Person bent over head in hands - I could use some mercy: things have gone wrong
- Footprints – I want to follow Jesus and learn God's good ways

Invite each person to choose some plasticine and make one of the models that represents their response to the stories of Bartimaeus and David.

Say something like:

Here are some plasticine models of some parts of the story.

Allow for a fifth 'whatever' for those who don't want to identify with any of the other responses. Respect and engage with alternate responses.

### **Linking Lines:**

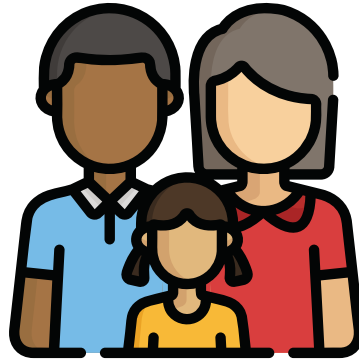
Linking Lines in the Stories of the Beggar Bartimaeus and King David, we see lots of different ways that people responded to God. (Responding to Jesus is the same as responding to God). Sometimes when we hear a story, we feel like one of the characters is just like us in some way. Perhaps that's happened to you with the story of Jesus and the Beggar Bartimaeus, or the King David who called out to God for help. Choose some plasticine and make a model that shows which of these responses you have to the story, or make up a response of your own.

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# FACE TO FACE PARENTS

## CONVERSATION STARTERS 6

Them's the breaks



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

Our kids take a rollercoaster ride in learning to deal with the random tough breaks that life throws at them, and their own mistakes. And here we are, alongside them as they take the thrills and spills of learning the skills.

When our kids are toddlers they are almost oblivious to things being 'wrong'. Their world is 24/7 adventure of discovery through trial and error. Smearing sunscreen over the entire bathroom floor is essentially a science lesson to them, not an act of rebellion. Although it drives us crazy, they aren't being naughty - just inconvenient to us.

But toddlers also begin to learn about their own ability to say no - and this is so important - but it leads to plenty of tears and tantrums.

As our kids grow, life opens up all these great opportunities to them that require risk and daring, and they need to try and fail and try again to learn the many skills of life. And they also learn that the universe isn't always tilted with the odds in their favour. Sometimes there are just really tough breaks that aren't about 'learning lessons' - life just sucks for no apparent reason. And they learn that there are others in the world who have it way tougher - and others who seem to be getting a way easier ride. Both of these are hard to understand.

Our kids look to us to see if life is ok. If the tough breaks are something to panic about or something to roll with or rise to. If their mistakes are deal breakers for us, or if we can offer a different story, full of compassion, but that helps them hold on to hope in who they have around them and in themselves as robust human beings, not little snowflakes.

## SHARE YOUR STORY

How do you respond to your kid's mistakes and 'failures'?

How do you handle sharing bad news with your kids?

How do you go working out when it's time to cut your kids some slack and when it's time to ask them to step up and brave face?

## GOD'S STORY

The Bible is over-stocked with stories of failures, sufferings, mistakes and misfortunes. It looks at life head on and tells it like it is. If you're looking for happy endings, stick to Disney. If you want stories that have real humans on the rough ride and real endings, the Bible is your go-to place.

Blind beggars and murderous kings. Whores and business women. Sick children and heartbroken adults. None of these characters are complete heroes or villains. We're all a bit brilliant and a bit broken. Or to use religious language, each of us is both sacred and sinful, all wrapped up in the one messy package.

The way the Bible tells it, life is both wonderful and woeful. Lots of life is just plain non-ideal.

Who is God in the middle of these stories? Is God the big fat-controller who is pulling the levers?

No - the way the Bible tells it, God's universe runs on love - which is always a choice, not coerced or controlled.

Is God the fixer-upper? Well, yes and no. Yes God acts in these stories, but never without us. God doesn't take over and fix things for us. But as God is with us, working with our reality, not taking a chainsaw to it, things work through to a new way.

That's a good pattern for us to follow in our parenting - not taking over, not controlling, not having to have everything perfect, but letting things run on choosing to love, and being alongside, taking the tight corners and potholes together with our kids who are, like us a bit brilliant and a bit broken.

Read more in the Bible in Mark 10

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**DAY 7**  
**JUSTICE &**  
**COMMUNITY**

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# TEAM STUDY 7

## JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
- *Use these questions to explore further*



Jesus looks on at the religious carrying on in the temple and he is unimpressed, apart from the authenticity of the widow. What do you think Jesus would like about how we do faith and mission? What do you think would distress or anger him?

Jesus directly criticises fake long prayers - what if you had a day in which you limited your prayers to three words only, keeping it simple and direct? - Give it a try!

Money. Gender. Exploitation. Fake facades. How does faith end up in such a mess? How can we keep ourselves from falling into the same traps that the scribes and religious temple system of Jesus' time fell into, and many other faith communities have since?

# AGE GROUP SESSION 7

## JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

God's generous goodness glues us together

### MARK 12:38 - 13:2

A poor widow who is faithful, yet exploited in the temple catches Jesus' attention, and he points out how God's ways are being twisted

### BIBLE LINK

God's ways are to make communities of love and justice which provide for and protect the vulnerable.

### INTRODUCTION

Ever imagine Jesus turning up at your church and wondering what he'd think about what he saw going on?

Mostly in the gospels Jesus stays away from the big cities in general and so we don't see him in the Temple much.

But when he does, there's rarely a thumbs up - either from Jesus for what's going on there, or from the Temple leadership for Jesus.

In this story Jesus compares the scribes - a class of citizen with a steady income, and the prestige of association with the law - and the widow - a class of citizen known for their vulnerability and statelessness.

Jesus has something to say about what he sees. He watches well, and he can see through the religious behaviour that is counterfeit, fuelled by the desire for human recognition not loving God with heart, mind, soul and strength. More than this, Jesus knows that the fake facade over an empty religion is covering something more destructive. Behind all the over the top robes, rituals, behaviour and buildings, is the things God won't stand for - ripping off the poor, taking advantage of a woman, amassing property wealth at the expense of the marginalised having access to secure housing. The greedy gobbling up the houses of the widows appals Jesus, the same as it has always appalled God and been consistently called out from the law to the prophets through Israel's history.

Jesus doesn't see anything to affirm in the temple - he rails against the empty pretentious theatrics of the scribes, and grieves at the widow giving her very last for living to meet the demands of a religion bent completely out of shape - a religion that is meant to be protecting and providing for her, not screwing out the last drops of her very life. Jesus leaves the temple, and he doesn't care if it all crashes and crumbles behind him.

The kingdom of God isn't held together with stones and mortar. It is God's generous goodness that glues us together, giving us faith and grace and love to share with one another and calling us to justice.

There are people today who are anxious that the church remains solid and prominent in Australian society. But there are signs of it crumbling, and there are plenty of stories of corruption from within its walls. I wonder what Jesus would say, looking around our churches, and casting an eye over our budgets? What fuels our behaviour? What holds us together?

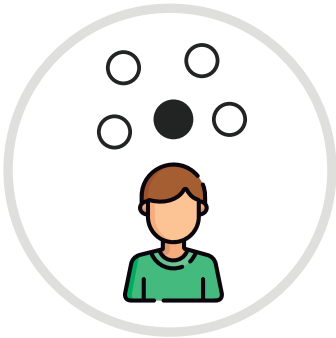
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Musical chairs
- Most impressive fancy handshake/greeting competition
- Trouble
- Circle of Sitting support



## CONTEXT

- Show-offs
- Guess how much money is in the jar
- Scribing - calligraphy
- Widow, Scribe, Temple



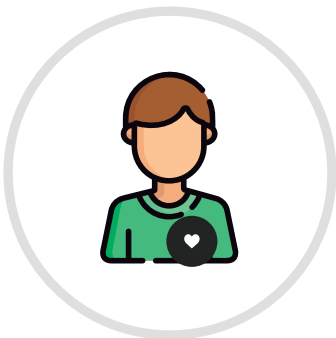
## CONTENT

- Sort the copper coins
- Quick draw
- Cheering Luck of the draw - letters



## CONSIDER

- Money collages
- Justice jewellery
- Treasure boxes
- Song Choreography - Let Justice Roll



## CONSEQUENCE

- 100% humans
- Coin Toss Prayers
- Thumbs up; thumbs down;

# CONNECT



- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.



## MUSICAL CHAIRS

### *You will need*

- ***One chair for everyone in your group. If chairs aren't available small carpet squares or heavy fabric circles or cushions can be used. Anything that is easily recognised as a seat.***
- ***Music and speaker.***

Place chairs or seat markers in a circle with a half metre distance between each place.

Participants circle around the outside of the circle while music plays. While this is happening, remove on seat. When the music stops, everyone races to the nearest chair. One person will be left standing without a place to sit. They are 'out'. Begin the music again, as everyone begins circling again. The person who just went out chooses a seat to take away. Stop the music again suddenly, one person will be left without a seat. Keep repeating this process, with those who have just gone out taking away the seats, and deciding when to stop the music. The game finishes when there is one seat left and two players - the person who gets the last seat when the music stops, being the winner.

### **Linking Lines:**

Musical chairs is a great game for us to play as friends, but we know that after the game is over, everyone is really included, and no one is left out of our group. We'll all sit in a circle where there's room for everyone, and everyone can have a fair share of things. That's the way Jesus thinks things should be too. Jesus got angry when he saw some people cutting in ahead of others, trying to get the best seat for themselves.





## MOST IMPRESSIVE FANCY HANDSHAKE COMPETITION

Challenge your group to pair up and invent an impressive fancy handshake. Give pairs some time to practice, then watch each pair present their handshake.

Have a go at working out a handshake together as a whole group, with each person contribution an idea, putting it all together and practicing it as a group. Don't forget to try and use the hand shake when you next see them!

If you are lacking inspiration - check out these guys!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xztwQeZoBKs>

### Linking Lines:

What great fun handshakes we've done today! But imagine if there was a grown-up, who insisted on using a fancy elaborate handshake like that to get attention and make themselves seem important. Ridiculous. We'll see in today's story how Jesus wasn't into that at all, and wasn't impressed by people who thought themselves important - usually underneath it all, making someone else feel small.

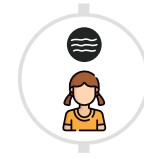
## TROUBLE

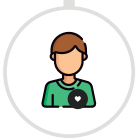
*You will need*  
*Game of 'Trouble'*

Work in pairs if you need to. Set a time limit for the game before you start and set an alarm so that it increases the sense of tension, excitement and immediacy of the game. Play until the alarm goes.

### Linking Lines:

Lucky for us 'Trouble' is just a game, but we saw how things can go from trouble to terrible trouble to even worse trouble very quickly for one person. And it wasn't really their fault. It just happened. Those were the rules of the game. Tough luck. In the Bible story today Jesus watches someone who's life has gone from trouble to terrible trouble to even worse trouble. Jesus knows that God's good living ways and rules mean when someone is in trouble that's not ok - God's rules say let's help. Not tough luck. Love and Justice.





## SITTING CIRCLE

The aim of this activity is to work together to get everyone sitting, supported by someone else - but be warned that it is harder than it looks. Some people might be uncomfortable about this activity because of the physical contact in it. This is to be absolutely respected and not made an issue. Always frame activities like this with the language of invitation and choice. For example: 'everyone who wants to can join in this and give it a go.' 'it's ok to wait and watch and cheer the first time round and decide if you'd like to give it a go next time'. 'Now you've heard the instructions, who's in?' 'Anyone want to help this activity happen by being the time keeper for us?'

Invite your group to stand in a circle, front to back and place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them.

On the count of three, everyone gently sits on the knees of the person behind them.

Challenge the group to stay sitting while you count to 5, then slowly all stand up again, still holding the shoulders of the person in front of them to stand up.

Have another go - allowing people to opt in or out. This time try and stay seated for 10 seconds. Ask permission to take a photo of the group before you start.

### Linking Lines:

In our sitting circle - everyone was supported by everyone else. If one person had stood up by themselves - others would have taken a tumble. Jesus saw something like this happening in his community - but it wasn't a game. Poor people for real were taking a tumble -and religious leaders were benefiting from it. Does that sound ok to you? Maybe you can guess what Jesus thought about this...



# CONTEXT

- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.



## WIDOW, SCRIBE, TEMPLE

Widow - "Please help me" - hands cupped together begging  
Scribe - "I'm so fabulous" - arms out sideways and upwards, show time style!  
Temple - "Ka-ching!" - hands together over head making a pointed roof

Demonstrate the three different options with their action and one-liner to your group. Invite the group to practice imitating you. Practice each action several times, and then mix them around until everyone is really familiar with them.

Explain that in this game, you all pair up, standing back to back. On the count of three, each person will choose one of the three combinations - and they win or lose, depending on what their partner has chosen.

Widow beats scribe - because Jesus affirmed the widow and criticised the scribe's fakeness.  
Scribes beat Temple - because the scribes acted like they owned the temple  
Temple beats widow - because widows were taken advantage of and made poorer by the temple.

Now pair up everyone in your group, standing back to back. On the count of three, the pairs turn and face each other, choosing which ever action and oneliner they like. After a few turns, begin eliminating the one of the pair who 'lost' and pair up the winners to play off until there is only one person left.

### Linking Lines:

How weird is it to have the temple - a place that was meant to be for showing God's good ways - being used to make some people winners and others losers. That's not God's way. Widows were meant to be looked after by the temple, not taken advantage of there.



## GUESS HOW MUCH MONEY IN THE JAR

### *You will need*

- *Three Jars of different sizes - one small, one medium sized jam jar, and one large, wrapped in opaque paper.*
- *Enough 'play' money - notes and coins, to fill the largest jar. Use monopoly money or print fake money from templates.*  
<http://goldium.net/2013update/AUDBANKNOTES%20FB.jpg>
- *Enough chocolate Gold coin pieces for each person in your group to have one, placed in middle sized jar.*
- *Ten 5 cent coins in the smallest jar.*

Announce to your group that you have three jars of money. Each jar has a different amount of money in it. The challenge is to guess which jar has the most!

There will be two stages of guessing.

Firstly, leaving the jars wrapped, rattle the jars one by one and let your group listen to the sound.

After listening ask each person to say which jar they think has the most money.

Next invite someone to unwrap each jar, so that the contents can be seen. Invite each person to again say - which jar has the most money.

Allow, accept and affirm all suggestions:

'That's a great guess!' 'It's possible you're right' 'You've given it a good shot'

Finally - tell your group that it's time to find the answer. Open the largest jar and invite the group to count the money as it is taken out of the jar (ask for a volunteer to do this).

As the money is taken out of the jar, start the counting together. Let this continue for a little while, then interrupt - reminding your group that - however much money is in the jar, it is all fake.

Count out the money in the smallest jar - 50 cents. Only a small amount, but still more than all the fake money in the Jar.

Open the last middle sized jar and share the chocolate with your group.

### **Linking Lines:**

In the story today Jesus watches some people who are big givers - but they are fakes - doing it to get attention. And Jesus sees a very poor woman give a little bit - more than anyone realised. A little bit of something real is better than a whole lot of something fake.





## SCRIBING WRITING

### You will need

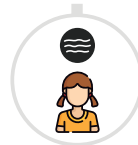
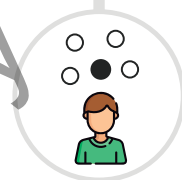
- Paper
- Food dye
- Straws, cut on an angle and sliced vertically to form a pen in the
- Chart of Greek letters and words and 'widow' verses from the Old Testament

Invite your group to practice using a straw pen and food dye to write like ancient scribes.

Provide some samples of the Greek alphabet and some writing for them to copy, or just encourage writing their name.

### Linking Lines:

In Jesus' time scribes worked to write out copies of the God's law in the common Greek language. Not many people were able to read or write, so some scribes thought of themselves as extra special, proud of themselves for being closely associated with God's law. When we were practicing our scribing, we didn't understand what we're writing - the scribes of Jesus' time didn't show that they understood what God's law said either.



## SHOW-OFFS

### You will need

- Outlandish props and costumes
- Bright sign saying 'The Show Off Show'
- Prizes (optional)

Challenge your group to see who can be the biggest 'show-off' - of course this is just role play - none of them would really be showing off!

Give people the option of being a judge or a contestant. Either way everyone who wants to can dress up.

Together brainstorm ways that people might be show-offs - doing handstands, speaking loudly, pulling faces, singing, bragging about how good they are or how much money they have. The more over the top the better.

Let the judge's award points for the showing off, and give prizes (optional).

### Linking Lines:

In the Bible story we are going to hear today there are some really, really terrible show-offs. The Scribes are trying to get everyone's attention, pretending to be important. But God isn't interested in their showing off. God loves us as we really are. No need to try and show off or be fake.

# CONTENT

- Use one of these to give your group a hands on experience of the Bible text
- Use the collection of texts from Face to Face Bible Bits **Day7BibleBits.pdf** to make finding the right part of the passage easy – but at some point show your group a complete (paper-print) Bible and an online Bible to help them see where the stories have come from.
- Be confident that experiencing the text in engaging, active and tactile ways is more important than reading and following and understanding every single word for helping people get comfortable with the Bible.
- Repeat the reading-activities more than once to increase your group's familiarity with The text, and give people a chance to take different roles or respond differently – or just because it's fun to do again.
- These readings can be a bit chaotic – intentionally. Make the most of the people in your group to help set things up and pack things up afterwards – enjoy doing this together, building community as you do.

## SORT THE COPPER COINS

### *You will need*

- *~30 cardboard discs approximately 10cm diameter. Write the entire passage, 6-8 words on each coin around the edges of each disc. 10 extra discs with pictures from **Day7Content1.pdf** (whether print out and stick on or copy by hand)*
- *Black/brown crayons*
- *Face to Face Bible Bits for each person*
- *For extra effect, spray paint the discs bronze/copper/silver before writing*

Announce to your group that the Bible story has been written on these supersized coins.

Explain that in the time of Jesus the Romans had conquered many countries including Jesus' country. One of the ways that the Roman Emperor's liked to make themselves popular and powerful was to put their faces on the coins which everyone in the entire Empire had to use.

Invite your group to draw their own faces on the coins.

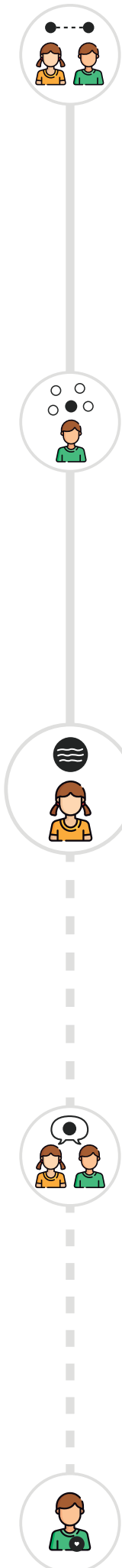
Next challenge the group to work together to put the whole set of coins in order so that you can read the story continuously following from one coin to another, around in a large circle

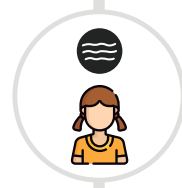
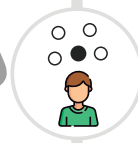
When you have the coins in order, read the story. And add in the coins with story pictures where you think they belong.

Next suggest to the group that they keep the coins in order, but rearrange them to form a picture of the widow, or the temple. For older groups, try arranging the coins to spell the word 'FAKE' then change it to spell FAIR.

### **Linking Lines:**

Jesus wasn't impressed by the fake goodness of the scribes. Jesus wasn't impressed to see a poor widow being cheated out of her last coins by the temple tax. Jesus was impressed by the real faith of the widow, even though what she gave was small. Jesus looks for a little bit of real over a whole lot of faith.





## QUICK DRAW

### You will need

- *Face to Face Bible Bits* **Day7BibleBits.pdf** Mark 12:38-13:2 for each person
- *Supply of scrap A5 paper and markers*
- *Options - stapler, hole punch, string, sticky tape. A5 coloured frames*

Explain to your group that you are going to read story from part of the Bible, and play a game called 'Quick Draw' that is a little like 'Pictionary.'

Each person has a pile of paper and a marker,

Tell the group that you will read from *Face to Face Bible Bits*; Mark 12:38-13:2, pausing on key words (see suggestions in bold over page) and calling 'Quick Draw' and repeating the word you stopped on several times.

Everyone races to draw a quick sketch of whatever that word was. Speed, not artistic skill or detail is the main aim here. As they finish their sketch, they hold it up and call back to you 'Quick draw!'

Give lots of affirmation for every picture, and keep it moving on quickly.

Each new word should be drawn on a new piece of paper. By the end of the reading each person will have a collection of pictures that can prompt them in re-telling the story.

Let the group tell each other the story from their pictures in pairs.

### Further Options:

- Each person assembles their 'quick draw' pages in order, adds a 'Title page' and binds them together as a book using stapler or hole punch and string.

- Each person sticks their pages together side to side forming a long line. Glue coloured A5 frames to each picture to improve the presentation. The pages can be concertina folded into a book, or displayed stretched out.



## CHEERING LUCK OF THE DRAW

Letters:

W=14, P=12, S=14, M=6, B=12, J=6, L=10, O=9, E=3, F=3, G=5

### You will need

- *Face to Face Bible Bits Day7BibleBits1.pdf for each person*
- *Scrabble tiles (or make your own) for the letters  
W P S M B J L C O E F G*
- *Optional party blowers, clapper hands*

Each person takes letter tile at random from a container.

Help your group as they look in the Face to Face Bible Bits for all the words in the text that begin with the letter that they have been allocated.

Check that they know what the words are, even if they can't read them easily.

Tell the group that you will read the Bible story - but each time you get to a word that begins with the letters they have been given, then are to repeat that word boldly and arrogantly in an attention seeking way - and the rest of the group will cheer and applaud.

This will make for a noisy, disrupted and chaotic reading.

At the end of the reading help your group count up how many times they were cheered for.

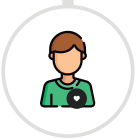
Put all the letter tiles back into the container and let each person pick again, and repeat the same process as above.

### Linking Lines:

This noisy, disrupted, chaotic reading is exactly the problem Jesus was pointing out to people who were trying to be religious, but were making such a big show of themselves and wanting others to cheer for them all the time, they were getting in the way of God's message.

And it was fun, but really ridiculous for us to cheer one another so much for getting a W or an S - when it was just luck.

Jesus pointed out how silly the people who tried to impress others all the time were, and got angry at the way their selfishness made life hard for those who were poor.



# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- You met someone famous
- Someone has helped you when you were really down
- You had trouble seeing
- Been picked out of a crowd
- Been sorry for something you did

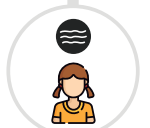
- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
- Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.

## MONEY COLLAGES

### *You will need*

- *Print outs of fake money*
- *Silver and gold paper*
- *Coins, crayons/pencils and paper for rubbings*
- *Glue sticks*
- *Card*
- *Markers*
- *Scissors*

Invite your group to use different 'money' materials (all fake!) to make a collage. They might choose to make a random abstract collage, a pattern or even a picture using the different colours of notes and coins like mosaic pieces.





## JUSTICE JEWELLERY

### *You will need*

- *Easily bendable wire*
- *Printouts of word patterns to follow*
- *Premade samples*
- *(Easier option) alphabet beads*

Show your group the samples of wire jewellery twisted into the shape of words 'justice', 'hope', 'fair-go'. Invite them to choose a word to make. These take a bit of patience to do, working along the loops of the letters slowly. Be on hand to help. Some bits (like the 't' of 'justice') are extra challenging.

As an easier option, wristbands can be made by threading alphabet beads onto thread or this wire, and joining the ends.

For those who finish more quickly, invite them to make a second one to give away.



## TREASURE BOXES

### *You will need*

- *Boxes cut from template at [Day7Consider1.pdf](#)*
- *Sticky*
- *Gold wrapping paper*
- *Sequins*
- *Glue*
- *Markers*
- *(Optional Chocolate Gold coins)*

Demonstrate to your group how to assemble the boxes and stick sides together.

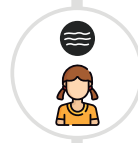
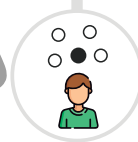
Invite them to use as much creativity as they can in decorating the boxes to look like treasure boxes. If you are using chocolate gold coins, wait until the boxes are finished before distributing the chocolate.

### **Linking Lines:**

We are making treasure boxes - in the story we heard about Jesus, scribes treasured being popular and getting a lot of attention. The poor widow treasured quietly giving to God. Jesus treasured the small faith of the poor woman. I wonder what we treasure or value most? What kinds of things are really important to you?







## SONG CHOREOGRAPHY - LET JUSTICE ROLL

### You will need

- *Soundtrack to Let Justice Roll (can be sourced from YouTube)*
- *Choreography suggestions*
- *'Protest placards' with selected phrases from the lyrics of 'Let Justice Roll' written in pencil, paints, brushes, markers.*

Play the song 'Let Justice Roll' to your group.

Explain that as a group you are going to work on presenting this song - and there are a number of ways to choose to be involved.

Options include - Singing; Dancing; Creating Placards, running technology for sound, announcing/introducing the song.

Let each person decide how they'd like to be involved, set the tasks and get going. After 5-7 minutes stop and check in with how progress is being made - watch the singing and dancing and affirm it - whatever it looks and sounds like! Admire the placards and encourage further work.

When your production comes together decide on a way to present it to others - perhaps calling another group over to watch; if you have a parent coffee space take your presentation there to the captive audience; if you have large group gathering, negotiate with the person who plans that to have some time to present.

*Let Justice roll*

*This is how we pray*

*Let Justice roll like a river*

*And don't get in its way*

*Let Justice Roll*

*Let God's kingdom come*

*Pray and Give and Go for Justice*

*'Til we see it done.*

# CONSEQUENCE

- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation

## 100% HUMANS

### *You will need*

- *White plasticine*
- *Pre-printed tags saying "100% human: Handle with care"*
- *A few ready-made sample figures, approximately 5cm tall in different postures*
- *Surface for displaying models*

### **Linking Lines:**

Jesus loves and cares for people just as themselves, 100% real humans, not because he impressed by anything they've done.



## COIN TOSS PRAYERS

### *You will need*

- *Supply of 5c coins*
- *3-4 glass jars of different sizes with one word written on each Loving Justice Generous*
- *Plastic table cloth with prayers (see **Day7Consequence1.pdf**) written and prayer symbols drawn on it.*
- *Copies of prayers from **Day7Consequence2.pdf***
- *Pieces of A6 sized paper in a few different colours*
- *Pieces of grey or brown torn fabric*
- *Skewers*
- *Silver/bronze paper circles the size of 5 or 10c coins*
- *Glue*
- *Sticky tape*

Set up the plastic table cloth on as flat and steady a surface as you can find. (You might want to place a large piece of packaging carton underneath it if your ground is particularly uneven.)

Place the glass jars on the table cloth with a little distance between each of them.

Explain to your group that there are a couple of ways they can choose to pray.

Firstly try to toss a five cent coin into one of the jars - This is a way of praying:

'Dear God help us to be Loving like you'

'Dear God, help us to be Generous like you'

'Dear God, help us to work for justice with you'

But as you do this, it can be hard to get the coin into the jar. And sometimes, being loving generous and working for justice can be hard - and we don't always manage to do it.

That's ok, we still pray and ask God to help us.

However, if your coin didn't make it into one of the glass jars, perhaps it fell on a different prayer...Look where your coin landed and let that be your prayer - maybe making up a sentence and saying out loud if you want to.

While some people are doing this, others can make prayers on sticks.

Glue a prayer to a piece of A6 coloured paper.

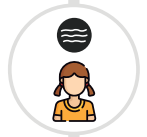
Add some shreds of torn fabric around the edges

Stick some silver or bronze 'coins' to the prayer also.

Attach the A6 paper to a skewer.

Stick the skewers in the ground in a patch not too far from the Table cloth and jars.

Once everyone has made a skewer and had a chance to throw a coin, invite them to choose a skewer prayer to take home. If other family members come to pick up someone from your group, you can invite them to take a prayer too.





## THUMBS UP; THUMBS DOWN

Practice giving the group the chance to respond with 'thumbs up/down/wobbly' with some flippant statements to start with, for example:

Hungry Jacks chips are better than Maccas  
Riding an elephant would be more fun than swimming with Dolphins  
Soccer is better than footy  
Being a kid is more fun than being a grown up.

(add or substitute your own)

Let the group get well into the groove of expressing their opinions and allow a bit of banter and discussion among those who disagree, but continually affirm that everyone gets the chance to make up their own mind.

Then move to the thumbs up/down/wobbly responses to the story.

Jesus didn't seem to enjoy going to the temple very much.  
Being a scribe would be fun  
The widow shouldn't have given her money to the temple  
If God won't help poor people why should we?  
Scribes were embarrassing show offs  
God would be angry with the scribes  
Being generous is better than being popular  
Jesus should have given some money to help the widow.  
Short prayers are good prayers  
A little bit of real is better than a whole lot of fake.

### Linking Lines:

I'm wondering what you think of the different parts of our story today. I wonder who you'd give a thumbs up to and who you'd give a thumbs down to. Maybe you're not sure what you think - and that's ok too. So you can do 'Thumbs up', 'Thumbs down' or 'A bit wobbly' (hold hand level but wobble from side to side).

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# FACE TO FACE PARENTS

## CONVERSATION STARTERS 7

A little bit of real vs a whole lot of fake.



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

If there's one thing that leaves a bad taste in our mouths, it's a fake, a phony. We've become more sceptical than ever now with the vast potential of the internet for passing around fake news and scams.

We are surrounded by images that are so commonly manipulated and doctored that it's hard to remember what 'normal' is. That 'normal' can actually look like lots of different things.

And what about our kids growing up in this culture of hyper-reality?

We rightly question the models of body and lifestyle and relationship that are plastered across every billboard, bus and screen surface our kids encounter.

But before we panic that our kids will be completely screwed up by all this fake around them, we've got something that is a powerful shield against it.

It's a great gift that we give to one another as families, in making life as real as it can be. Our kids are actually great at this. They know what real love and attention, real listening, real time together feels like.

There are plenty of studies that point to kids simply wanting to have dinner with their families, or go out and throw a ball around with their mum or weed the garden with grandad. Just ordinary real. Not flashy gizmos.

This generation frankly have seen everything that flashes and pings before their third birthday.

But there's no substitute for the real face to face way of being together.

## SHARE YOUR STORY

How do you help your kids discern what's real and fake?

How do you see the images around your kids shaping them?

What habits or traditions does your household have for keeping it real, keeping it face to face and celebrating real life together?

## GOD'S STORY

Every now and again in the Bible you get a story where God is seething with anger. And it happens in the stories of Jesus too - in fact God of the ancient stories in the Old Testament and Jesus of the first century New Testament, get angry about the same thing. Humans faking it. Especially humans faking it in ways that exploit others, that cut against justice. And then there's humans treating others as if they are fake - not honouring their 100% real human dignity and vulnerability. God goes ballistic about that. "How dare you carry on with fake importance, just because you're rich! How dare you treat another human like they aren't the real deal and somehow less than you!"

God gets really angry about this. It's scary, but I kind of like that God doesn't let the BS just go like it's not important. I like that God sticks up for real.

Jesus is the same. One of the few times he went to the temple he saw people swanning around in fancy clothes and praying fake long prayers - but he knew that they were ripping off the poor, taking advantage of vulnerable women and single mums. He called out their fake. And he pointed to those who didn't have much to boast of, but had a little bit of real. Thumbs up to that - says Jesus. A little bit of real is worth a whole lot of fake.

Get real!

This is God's invitation to us: Get Real!

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DAY 8  
**JESUS SENDS HIS  
DISCIPLES ON  
MISSION**

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## TEAM STUDY 8

# JESUS SENDS HIS DISCIPLES ON MISSION

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
- *Use these questions to explore further*



The advice Jesus gives his disciples is very pertinent and confronting to a short term missional community like ours. Draw up a checklist of the things Jesus advises. Stretch out a rope on the ground and use it as a line scaling 1-10. Go through each of the items on the checklist - everyone stands on the line between 1 and 10 to rate how well your mission follows Jesus advice. Chat with the person next to you on the line and find out why they rated where they did and what action you might need to take as a mission to more faithfully follow Jesus' missioning ways.

The vision of Jesus in Luke 10 is that his disciples don't bring their own resources, but rely on the community they enter. How can we rely more on the resources of the community and be less self-sufficient? How is this a reflection of relying on God?

The gospel Jesus gave his disciples to share was this: 'The kingdom of God is near'. Is this still the gospel we share today? Why or why not is that the case? In what ways do you think proclaiming that the kingdom of God is near is good news to Australian families in your community? What difference does that gospel make?

## AGE GROUP SESSION 8

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# JESUS SENDS HIS DISCIPLES ON MISSION

God plans peace seeking adventures in neighbourhoods near and far.

**LUKE 10:1-11**

Jesus' followers go out to villages and towns to homes, looking for peace, bringing good news wherever they go

**BIBLE LINK**

Whether you choose to go freely with friends on adventures or you are forced to move in the midst of suffering and conflict God goes with you, providing what you will need and giving you peace

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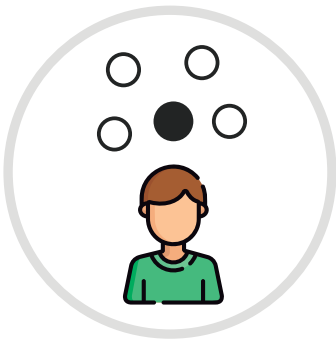
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Streets and Lanes
- Neighbourhood maps
- Near and far



## CONTEXT

- Group and Partner Racing
- Partner feeding
- Feral feet and smelly sandals



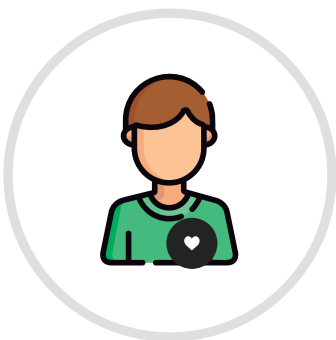
## CONTENT

- Grab it
- Painting Story



## CONSIDER

- God's kingdom has come near Bocce
- Peace Welcome mats
- Work 4 Peace nail boards
- Biscuits



## CONSEQUENCE

- 'How to be a follower of Jesus' Quiz
- Spiral response

## INTRODUCTION

What does being a follower of Jesus look like? Are we meant to live a certain way? Dress a certain way? Eat certain food and avoid certain food? Avoid certain people? If we've discovered the good news that God is near, how should we share it with others? Should we hold a public meeting, make an announcement, get a bullhorn and shout it on the street corner, try and take on positions of power and implement it as law?

Should we all bunch together and hang out all the time? What do we do about those who don't agree or don't care or don't want good news? And what about our outright enemies? What if we are not allowed any influence at all?

Jesus gave his followers some big clues for all of this:

Split up, don't all hang about in a bunch, or try and have safety in numbers. You don't need that - God is with you! So go in little groups; twos or threes. Move into a neighbourhood where you can stay. Don't flit about trying to be everywhere. Don't go too far afield - if you need to wear hiking boots, you're going too far. And don't try being a street preacher, a random on the road, fast tracking an instant message that has no depth to it. Don't just stay in a temporary hotel room. Settle into a neighbourhood. Make friends and do life together - eating together, chatting together peacefully, Live with other people, not just other followers of Jesus. Be a regular human, don't try and stick out and make yourself different from others in your clothing or your diet. Just eat what everyone else eats.

If people really object to your Jesus-following or your good-news sharing - no sweat, no worries. Don't press the issue, don't stick around where you're not welcome, don't make a fight of it. Shake it off like a dog getting out of the salty water and be on your way somewhere there is a welcome. And there's no need to try and have a parting shot telling opponents they are wrong. The message is the same for friends or enemies - God is near.

Jesus freshly spelled out this advice to his followers in the Gospels, but it will have a familiar ring. The Jews were defeated and hauled away from home as prisoners of war and resettled in the land of their enemies, Jeremiah encourages them not to give up their faith in being God's people - get on with life - with God's good living ways - even in the midst of their enemies. Marry, settle in for the long term. Plant trees and vineyards. Don't try for the quick fix. Live the peace of God and pray the peace of God for those around you, those different to you, those enemies.

These ways of peaceful neighbourhood adventures are also our template for mission. Move in, be at peace, connect with others genuinely, do life together, face to face, make good friends who you share equally with, don't try and control things, don't force yourself where you're not welcome, and whatever the response be sure that the kingdom of God is near. All you need to say is this: God is with us all.

# CONNECT



- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD MAPS

### *You will need*

- *A4 blank pages*
- *Pencils*
- *Rulers*
- *Coloured markers*
- *Sticky tape*
- *Example of your neighbourhood streets, shops, parks, school, church, factories etc.*
- *Clear plastic cellophane, cut into A4 sized pieces labelled 'God's peace' with permanent marker*
- *Yellow cellophane, cut into A4 sized pieces labelled with 'God is near' with permanent marker*

Show your group the map of your neighbourhood - pointing out some of your favourite places. Invite them to draw a map (like a google maps view) of their neighbourhood.

As they begin to finish, introduce the pieces of cellophane, one of each colour for each person. Explain that these pieces of cellophane are to remind us that God is near and brings peace everywhere in our neighbourhoods.

Sticky tape one short side of each of the pieces of cellophane to the neighbourhood map.

### **Linking Lines:**

Jesus really wasn't much of a traveller. He visited a few of the little towns and villages in his country, crossed the local lake a couple of times, and rarely went to the city. Jesus stayed in little neighbourhoods, and cared for people he met there, getting to know them, having meals and helping them live well together. There was plenty to fight about, plenty of hurt and wrong going around then, just as there is now. Jesus shows God's concern for peace in our world, starting in our own neighbourhoods.





## STREETS AND LANES

### *You will need*

- *Large clear running area*
- *Enthusiastic and loud leadership*

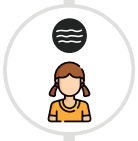
Join with another group to play this game. Set the group in lines of at least 5 by 5. Standing arm's length apart, so that there are unbroken lines when they face forwards 'Streets' and unbroken lines when everyone turns sideways 'Lanes'.

Choose two people - one to be a runner and the other to be the chaser. Explain that the chaser is to try and catch the runner, who must run within the streets and lanes. A leader will call sudden changes of 'Streets' to 'Lanes' and back again at which the group must turn to face forwards or sideways - keeping their arms out.

Every now and again call 'traffic lights' at which the Runner and the Chaser must stop, and the whole group puts their arms down by their sides. (This gives a necessary rest to the arms of the group).

Give the runner a few seconds head start to begin with, then let the Chaser begin.

When the Runner is caught, start the game again with a new chaser and runner.



## NEAR AND FAR

### *You will need*

- *Supply of tennis balls (or larger balls for younger groups).*
- *Tape measure*

Divide your group into pairs and give each pair a tennis ball. The pair stands arm's length apart, face to face, and throws the tennis ball back and forth between them. They each take a step backwards, and repeat throwing the tennis ball back and forth. If the ball is dropped, they try again until they have successfully thrown in back and forth.

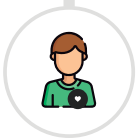
They each take another step backwards and again throw the tennis ball back and forth between them.

Each pair keeps repeating this process getting further and further apart until they can no longer manage to throw and catch the ball from the distance.

When this happens, they call the leader who measures the distance between them. Keep a record of these distances - at a spare moment another time they might like to try and break their record, perhaps with different partner.

### **Linking Lines:**

In the time of Jesus, lots of troubles had come on the land Israel - conquered by the Persians, then the Greeks, then the Romans. They'd been taxed and had their land taken from them. Many people were feeling like God was far away, that God was no longer face to face with his people because of all these troubles. Jesus reminded people that God was never too far away - and wants his followers to keep reminding people of that message too.





# CONTEXT

- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.



## GROUP AND PARTNER RACING

### *You will need*

- *A4 sized signs on sticks reading 'God is with us' and the Peace symbol - enough for one of each sign for each person in your group (at least 6)*
- *6 cones*
- *Timer*

Tell your group that the aim of this game is to get all of the signs out to all six places where the cones are - racing against the clock to see how fast you can get it done.

The first way to run the game, is to state that every person must carry at least one sign, and that the group must stay together at all times, arms linked. Take care not to pull anyone down as you do. No one can run ahead of the group, and no one must be left behind.

Hand out the signs, set the group with linked arms, help the group decide which order they are going to visit the cones in so everyone runs the same direction, ready the timer and call 'go'.

Record the time it takes for this.

Give plenty of praise and affirmation to the group for their efforts - for getting the job done in difficult conditions.

Collect the signs, and run the game a second time, again racing against the clock. This time tell the group that instead of all carrying the signs to all of the cones, they are to race in pairs (still with arms linked). The task is still to get the signs to all of the cones, but the group can decide which pair will take signs to which cones.

Ready the timer, and call 'go'. Stop the timer when all of the pairs are back at the start.

### **Linking Lines:**

In this game it's clear that breaking up into pairs made it much easier to get the signs out to different places. Although Jesus called his followers together at times, he didn't mean for them always to only hang around together - he also sent them out in pairs to show people the peace and good news that God is near.





## PARTNER FEEDING

### *You will need*

- *Garbage bags, with a hole cut in top (for clothing protection)*
- *Blindfolds*
- *Chair*
- *Bowls and spoons*
- *Box of cereal (home brand coco pops or fruit loops are ideal)*
- *Juice (optional -additional mess/gross out)*

*\*Use Juice not milk as it keeps better out of the fridge, and there is less chance of allergies*

Call for a volunteer who is willing to be fed anything and does not have food allergies!

A volunteer sits down on a chair, wearing a garbage over their body, holding their arms in, and is blind folded.

A second volunteer kneels behind them. They put their arms either side of seated, blind folded volunteer. Their head will be behind the seated volunteer and so not able to see what they are doing.

Ask this person to give a wave, to clap their hands, to do the mashed potato.

Have another volunteer pass them a bowl of (dry cereal) and a spoon. Keep up a commentary of what's happening so that the person in the blindfold knows what's going on.

Have the person on their knees try to feed the blindfolded volunteer the cereal.

If its all going well, and everyone is comfortable and enjoying the mess, offer to put some juice on the cereal.

Repeat with other volunteers who want a turn at either roll if someone wants to have a turn feeding but no one wants to be fed, a leader should step in and take one for the team!

This activity can be fun, hilarious, but also a bit gross and, for some people, a bit too confronting or invasive of their personal space. Make sure you keep this optional - create opportunities for people to assist, rather than be directly fed or a feeder. A good option is to have a leader be fed first, to cop the first round of being laughed at.

Some children love the humour and fun of this, and others find it terrible to feel that others are laughing at them. We don't want anyone to feel that!

### **Linking Lines:**

Jesus was always visiting people's houses for meals - sharing food with others was a way of being friends. He told his followers to do the same, to gladly accept whatever food people were willing to share with them.





## FERAL FEET AND SMELLY SANDALS

### You will need

- Tub of dirt and mud
- Several pieces of brown plasticine that looks like dung (also in the tub)
- Tub of soapy water and towel
- Paper towel

Invite your group to one by one remove their footwear and invite them to walk through the tub and sit with their dirty feet face into the centre of your circle.

### Explain to your group:

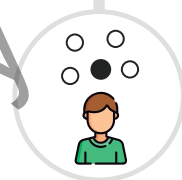
In the ancient world, when Jesus lived, people went with bare feet most of the time. Sandals were saved as a fashion item for the very rich - especially women, or for soldiers who were on the march covering long distances, or saved for long journeys. In fact sandals were a symbol for long journeys.

So most of the time, ordinary people walked in bare feet, and their feet got very dusty and dirty, and they shared the roads with a lot of animals...so they had to watch where they stepped. When anyone arrives anywhere the first basic 'hello - welcome!' was to wash their feet. You wouldn't want someone to walk in your house with filthy feet anyway.

In the story we hear today Jesus tells his followers to go to the nearby villages, but not to take sandals. He's not sending them away on a long journey. And he gives them the advice, that if no one welcomes them, which means no one lets them wash their feet, just to shake the dust off their feet and go somewhere else. No worries.

Everyone is welcome here, so let's wash our feet and get ready to hear the Bible story.

Give each person a piece of paper towel to brush the largest bits of dirt from their feet, then invite them to wash their feet in the tub of soapy water and dry them on the towel.



# CONTENT

- Use one of these to give your group a hands on experience of the Bible text
- Use the collection of texts from Face to Face Bible Bits **Day8BibleBits1.pdf** to make finding the right part of the passage easy – but at some point show your group a complete (paper-print) Bible and an online Bible to help them see where the stories have come from.
- Be confident that experiencing the text in engaging, active and tactile ways is more important than reading and following and understanding every single word for helping people get comfortable with the Bible.
- Repeat the reading-activities more than once to increase your group's familiarity with The text, and give people a chance to take different roles or respond differently – or just because it's fun to do again.
- These readings can be a bit chaotic – intentionally. Make the most of the people in your group to help set things up and pack things up afterwards – enjoy doing this together, building community as you do.

## LUKE 10: 1 - 11

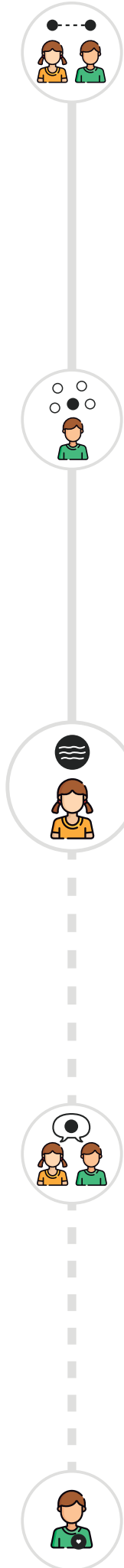
Later the Lord chose seventy other followers and sent them out two by two to every town and village where he was about to go.

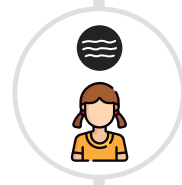
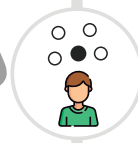
He said to them:

Now go, but remember, I am sending you like lambs into a pack of wolves. Don't take along a moneybag or a traveling bag or sandals. And don't greet people on the road (making a fuss like show offs). As soon as you enter a home, say, "God bless this home with peace." If the people living there are peace-loving, your prayer for peace will bless them. But if they are not peace-loving, your prayer will return to you. Stay with the same family, eating and drinking whatever they give you, because workers are worth what they earn. Don't move around from house to house.

If the people of a town welcome you, eat whatever they offer. Heal their sick and say, "God's kingdom has come near!"

But if the people of a town refuse to welcome you, go out into the street and say, "We are shaking the dust glued to our feet. And yet you know that God's kingdom has come near!"





## GRAB IT



### You will need

- Copies of *Face to Face Bible Bits Day8BibleBits1.pdf* for each person
- Plastic sheep (from farm animal set)
- Bag with a few coins in it
- Sandal
- Strip of black paper/card with white dotted lines (road)
- Small cardboard door with split pin handle
- Concertina fold and cut 'family'
- Fork
- Cup
- Zip lock bag of dust
- Cardboard foot print
- Jellybeans

Ask your group to sit in a circle. Place all of the items in the middle. Invite each person, one at a time to reach on and choose one item that interests them. Invite each person to say something about their item, or turn their item into something in a story.

When everyone has had a turn, ask the group to replace all of the items in a pile in the middle again.

Explain that you are going to read a story from the Bible, about Jesus and all of these items are part of the story in some way.

As the story is read, if something is mentioned that is like an object in the pile, anyone who wants to can jump in and grab that item. If they can explain how it fits with what was just read, they earn a jelly bean and keep the object with them until the end of the story.

When the story is finished go back through the objects and see if the group can reconstruct the story from the objects.



## PAINTING STORY

### *You will need*

- *6-8 sturdy jars or tall glasses (don't use plastic as they will fall over too easily)*
- *6-8 brushes*
- *A small amount (about a teaspoon) of one colour of paint in each jar - blue, green, brown, grey, yellow, red, orange, black. This is an excellent way of containing the paint and avoiding spills, as well as facilitating everyone in the group taking turns and participating.*
- *Sturdy flipchart or A1 paper bulldog clipped to backing board. Lean this against a tree or chair to keep vertical.*
- *Tub of soapy water and towel for washing hands*
- *Copies of Face to Face Bible Bits **Day8BibleBits1.pdf** for each person.*

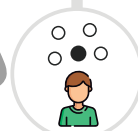
Explain that to help read the Bible story today you are all going to help paint the things that are happening in the story. Distribute the jars of paint - one to each person in your group.

Explain that as you read the story you will call for different colours of paint to be used to paint things in the story. The person with that paint colour, gets to paint that thing. Remind the painters that there are lots of things to fit on the page, so to leave room for others.

Begin reading and pause at the points marked in the annotated text below.

As you read and paint, keep it relaxed, don't rush, give plenty of time for affirming the painting as it is happening. Use the pauses as the painting is done to reflect on what is going on in the story, and a

*Continued on next page...*



Later the Lord chose seventy other followers and sent them out two by two  
*orange paint - faces and bodies of Jesus' followers in pairs*  
 to every town and village where he was about to go.

*black paint - roads*

*brown paint - villages with houses*

He said to them:

Now go, but remember, I am sending you like lambs into a pack of wolves.

*grey paint - wolves;*

*green paint - grass*

*yellow paint - sheep*

Don't take along a moneybag or a traveling bag or sandals.

*brown paint- money bag*

*orange paint - sandals*

*red paint - crosses over the money bag and sandals*

And don't greet people on the road (making a fuss like show offs).

As soon as you enter a home, say, "God bless this home with peace."

*grey paint - larger house (than little villages)*

*blue paint peace sign, swirls (of God's presence)*

If the people living there are peace-loving, your prayer for peace will bless them.

*Yellow paint - happy faces*

But if they are not peace-loving, your prayer will return to you.

*red paint - grumpy faces*

Stay with the same family, eating and drinking whatever they give you,

*yellow paint - lots of people in a family*

*orange paint - Two Jesus-followers with yellow family*

*brown paint - table*

*green/red/brown/orange paint - food*

because workers are worth what they earn. Don't move around from house to house.

If the people of a town welcome you, eat whatever they offer.

Heal their sick

*green paint - person lying on the floor sick*

and say, "God's kingdom has come near!"

*blue paint - Big 'God' face over village of yellow people*

But if the people of a town refuse to welcome you,

*red paint - grumpy faces*

go out into the street and say, "We are shaking the dust glued to our feet.

*brown paint - spots of dust.*

And yet you know that God's kingdom has come near!"

*blue paint - Big 'God' face over village of red grumpy people.*

### Linking Lines:

Jesus was always visiting people's houses for meals - sharing food with others was a way of being friends. He told his followers to do the same, to gladly accept whatever food people were willing to share with them.



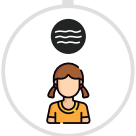
# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- You had to ask a stranger for help?
- You shared your food with someone?
- You moved into a new neighbourhood?
- You found people weren't welcoming?



- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
- Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.



## GOD'S KINGDOM HAS COME NEAR BOCCE

### *You will need*

- *Set of colourful Bocce Balls (plastic sets from toy stores or bargain shops are excellent)*
- *Tape measure*
- *Honour board to record the names of champions*

Bocce is played in teams. If you have the colourful kind of Bocce set with four different colours, you can have four teams of two.

The aim of the play is to roll your bocce balls to stop as close to the 'jack' - the small white ball - as possible.

Play begins with rolling the jack into the middle of your space.

Each team then takes turns to roll their ball towards the jack.

'Spocking' - knocking the opponent's ball away from the jack is allowed.

Once both balls have been rolled for each team, award a point to the team with the ball closest to the jack.

Pick up all the balls and start again playing another round.

Set a limit on the number of rounds (5 or 7 is good especially for younger players).

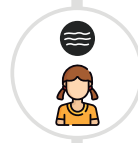
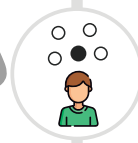
Record the winner on your Bocce Champions honour board, Re-form new teams and begin a new game.

### **Linking Lines:**

As we played Bocce we were looking carefully to see how close the bocce balls were coming to the jack. Jesus encourages his followers, where ever they go to be looking for the kingdom of God - that is for the ways in which God is near, bringing peace and bringing people together in communities.







## PEACE WELCOME MATS

### You will need

- *White A4 paper*
- *Coloured paper strips 30cm long x 1cm wide*
- *Coloured paper strips 21cm long x 1cm wide*
- *Silver paper squares 1cm x 1cm*
- *Clear sticky tape*
- *Glue sticks*

Stick twenty-one 30cm long coloured strips to one 21cm strip of paper securely with sticky tape.

Weave 21 centimetre long strips in and out of the 30cm strips - and push them securely up against the end that is sticky taped. You will need 30 strips to complete the mat, weaving in and out alternately with each row.

Stick the final 21cm strip to edges of the 30cm strips to hold them in place.

Place a row of sticky tape across the top and bottom edges of the 21cm strips to hold them in place.

Cover an A4 sheet of paper with glue and stick the entire mat gently onto the A4 sheet as backing.

Using the pattern in **Day8Consider1.pdf** stick silver squares on the squares to form the letters PEACE

### Linking Lines:

Jesus taught his followers to look for places to build communities of peace, where people welcomed peace and where peace could grow.

## WORK 4 PEACE NAIL BOARDS

### You will need

- *Copies of pattern in **Day8Consider2.pdf** for nailing in letters 'WORK 4 PEACE'*
- *Wood blocks (ask Bunnings) at roughly 15cm x 25cm or a little larger*
- *Class set of light hammers (ask a school)*
- *Flathead nails*
- *Sticky tape*

Place a copy of the pattern for the letters 'Work 4 Peace' over your block of wood and tape it down securely.

Lightly tap nails in on all the dots in the pattern, through the paper into the wood to at least mark the place where the nails will go. If some of the nails fall out, that's ok - so long as there is a mark in the wood underneath.

Tear the pattern away and hammer the nails in properly.

### Linking Lines:

Jesus was clear to his followers that they were to be peaceful neighbours, not to expect a free ride or special privileges. He encouraged them to do work in their communities and to always work for Peace. Peace can sometimes take courageous gutsy hard work.



## BISCUITS

*You will need:*

- *Plastic table cloth, trays, paper plates, plastic knives*
- *Labels (See **Day8Consider3.pdf**)*
- *Optional cellophane/ribbon*

*For Smiley-Face-*

*Neighbour biscuits*

Round Marie biscuits

Brown /skin toned icing

Other coloured icing for hair

Smarties

Chocdrops

Teeth lollies

Red lolly snakes

Garlic press or clean

playdough extruder

*For Dusty-Welcome-*

*Mat biscuits*

Milk coffee biscuits

Brown icing

Plastic tea strainers

Cinnamon.

*For God-is-Near*

*biscuits*

Small choc-chip biscuits

Icing of any colour



Prepare a clean surface with the plastic table cloth, and spread out the plates and knives to be accessible to each person.

Explain the three different kinds of biscuits to make and show samples of each.

***To make Smiley-Face-Neighbour biscuits:***

Cover round biscuits with skin-toned icing.

Add Smartie eyes and choc drop pupils

Add teeth lollies for smiling mouth, or red snakes cut in half for lips.

Using a tooth pick press in two nostrils.

Place a small ball of whatever coloured icing you want for hair in the garlic press and squeeze through to make strands.

***To make Dusty-Welcome-Mat biscuits***

Spread a thin layer of brown icing on the top of a milk coffee biscuit.

Put a small amount of cinnamon in a tea strainer and gently shake it above the surface of the biscuit to cover the icing with cinnamon evenly.

***To make God-is-Near biscuits:***

Cover one side of one biscuit with icing, then sandwich it to a second biscuit.

If you have a surplus of these biscuits, create 3 or 4 or 5 layer biscuits.

Each person should make one of each kind to begin with to take home, and then make extras to share.

To take home, place each person's biscuits on a plastic plate and wrap a sheet of cellophane around it and tie to keep safe and clean.



### Linking Lines:

Jesus didn't expect his followers to all clump together and keep to themselves. He sent them out to be part of different communities where they would be friendly peaceful neighbours with those who welcomed them, they'd shake the dust off and not let it worry them with those who weren't friendly, and regardless of whether people were kind or kicked them out, their message was the same - God is near.



# CONSEQUENCE



- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation



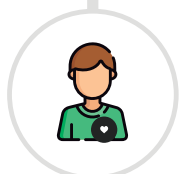
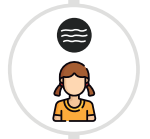
## SPIRAL RESPONSE

In a large clear area, use either rope or flour to mark out a large spiral. Along the path of the spiral place some cones holding signs reading 'looking for God's peace' 'hearing about Jesus' 'wanting justice' 'listening for God' 'feeling God's presence' 'being amazed by nature' 'wanting to put things right', 'giving prayer a go'.

Introduce the spiral to your group saying 'In the story today, the followers of Jesus were told to keep saying 'God is near' - to people who were wanting to know God, who were welcoming the ways of God as well as people who weren't interested, and didn't want to know - still the message was the same. God is near to us all.

You might be a bit like the people who welcome the message, who want the peace of God, who want to know that God is near. Or you might be like those who don't welcome news about God, and aren't interested to hear that God is near. That's ok too.

Or maybe, you're not sure. As we finish today, each of you has the chance to go for a walk through the spiral - the spiral is a reminder that God is present here everywhere, but also we can sometimes know God more closely - it's like we're right in the centre of God's peace. Other times we feel right out on the fringes. As you walk through the spiral - into the middle along the path and then out again, ask yourself about knowing and welcoming God.





## 'HOW TO BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS' QUIZ

Stick together in one big group  
Spread out and live with other people  
Be gentle and peaceful  
Form a powerful and attacking group  
Take a money bag to ask for money  
Live simply with what you have  
Go to your local town  
Travel around on long journeys everywhere  
Stop people on the road to get attention in public  
Have quiet peaceful conversations at home  
Hang out with people who welcome you  
Try to force your way into places that aren't interested in your message  
Make friends and form community  
Move around everywhere  
Work for your food  
Try and live off people's donations  
If people disagree with you tell them God will get them and punish them  
If people disagree with you, leave them in peace with the message that God is near to them.-

You will need

List of quiz questions written on individual cards, stored in a large box  
Two large posters headed 'How to be a follower of Jesus' and 'How not to be a follower of Jesus'  
Timer and Buzzer  
Costume for Quiz leader  
Bluetac

Announce to your group that you going to run a Game show quiz.  
Put on your costume and transform into the character of a game show host as you do.

In this quiz contestants will sort things into two categories - how to be a follower of Jesus and how NOT to be a follower of Jesus, - the decision of the judges is final, and all the answers are taken from things that Jesus told his followers in the Bible, in the book of Luke - which we have heard today. Contestants will draw one card at a time out of a box and choose which heading it belongs to.

*Continued on next page...*





Contestants will have the chance to answer 3 questions, placing three statements under one of the two headings, before choosing the next person to be a contestant.

To keep things moving, and light hearted, use a 10-second timer and a comical buzzer noise to limit the time given to each question.

Ask for volunteers to begin - choose someone and invite them to take a card from the box and begin the quiz. Setting the timer going.

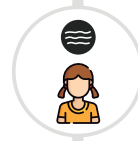
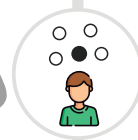
Help them read the card and then remind them they have to decide whether this is something a follower of Jesus would do, or wouldn't do. When they make their decision, bluetac their card under their chosen heading, while they choose a second card.

After taking 3 cards, that person 'retires' and chooses who goes next.

When all of the cards are gone - the game ends.

Check through the answers, referring to the Bible reading in Luke 10 (Face to Face Bible Bits **Day8BibleBits1.pdf**)

Finish by taking off your costume and returning to your own 'self'. Look down the list of ways to be a follower of Jesus.



### Linking Lines:

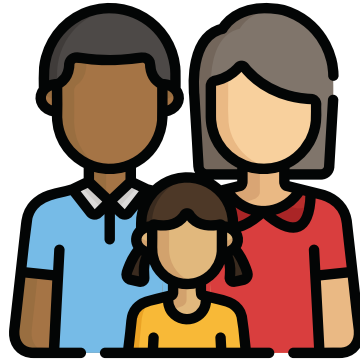
All of the team here, all of the leaders are followers of Jesus. We have all decided that these ways of Jesus - praying peace on people, working for peace, and sharing life in community, are great ways to live and to get to know God face to face as we keep realising that God's kingdom is near to us all.



# FACE TO FACE PARENTS

## CONVERSATION STARTERS 8

Neighbours of Peace



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

One of the fundamental tasks of early childhood is learning to share. Visit any playgroup or kinder and you'll see this very tough business in action. Kids learning how to play together, how to share stuff, how to share space.

There are usually plenty of tears. Learning to share things, to be in community, to get along and live with each other's needs and ideas and preferences is a very difficult process.

And if we're honest, although we make a big deal of wanting our kids to learn to share and develop their social skills, some adults still haven't learned how to play well in the sand pit and share the buckets and spades.

Even though sharing resources and space is a tricky skill to learn and to keep choosing to put into practice, it's worth what it takes.

People are built for community. We're not meant to struggle along by ourselves, relying on only our own resources.

Community can be challenging, but life really is better when we have each other, when we share the journey, when we don't hide ourselves in our own space and pretend everything is ok.

Our kids need this too. The African saying 'it takes a village to raise a child' crosses cultural borders. When we are connected into community, we broaden our kid's resources for their living. They see different role models - positive and negative, and even the negative help them figure out their choices - and not have to make all their mistakes themselves.

If only for the sake of our kids it's worth seeking peace in our neighbourhoods.

## SHARE YOUR STORY

What's great about your neighbourhood?

What are the challenges or threats or issues your neighbourhood faces?

Is your neighbourhood the kind that pulls together on things or is it more of a 'mind your own business' place?

## GOD'S STORY

The stories of the Bible are mostly about communities, not just individuals. While God is interested in all of us personally, face to face, no exceptions, the stories of the Bible are all about neighbourhoods.

Most of these stories are set in situations that just are really far from ideal. The people don't get to choose their neighbourhood, their neighbours aren't necessarily friendly, they are just scraping by to keep things together and 'peace' is not a word to use lightly.

The communities of Bible stories are full of division - political and religious debates rage, judgement and gossip and accusations rattle the cage. There are traitors, extremists, radicals, public trouble-makers, disturbers of the peace, power mongers. Sounds familiar, hey?

Yet these are the places that people talk about God being near.

And God's people are given this advice about surviving and thriving in their non-ideal communities:

Give it your best shot.

Try to settle, don't give up too soon, and don't just scoot around everywhere.

Give people a chance to get to know you.

Do life together, eat and drink and chat.

Find people who love peace, and work on growing that peace and willingness to understand together.

And if people aren't up for sharing and community - don't sweat it, don't force the issue, move on to finding those who are.

Of course, your kids are all a part of this too!

And the bottom line that Jesus gives is this - whether people are on board with community, or cold shoulders, whether people are welcoming or thwarting - this is the reality: God is near. God is near in the midst of whatever your community is like. No matter how tricky or trustworthy or troubled or tightknit or terrorised - God is near.

Read some more in the Bible - Luke 10

SU Missions/Camps use only



DAY 9

# TRANSFIGURATION

SU Missionary Camps use only

SU Missions/Camps use only

# TEAM STUDY 9

## MERCY

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
- *Use these questions to explore further*



Why do you think Jesus spends most of his time looking so ordinary and human, when he obviously could have looked brilliant like he does on the mountain?

How does this shape our understanding of how we do mission and what kind of Jesus we best share with others?

Moses represents the law and Elijah the prophets - this is the totality of Hebrew Scripture and faith. Jesus stands in the centre between them. What is Mark trying to say here?

# AGE GROUP SESSION 9

## TRANSFIGURATION

God crosses cosmic time and space and comes camping

### MARK 9:1-9

Jesus appears as a human, but shows us that he is fully God. We recognize and know God in Jesus.

### BIBLE LINK

God turns up face to face in unexpected ways showing he understands and cares for our humanness

### INTRODUCTION

Just when we think we've got the hang of following Jesus, seeing him live and work and eat and get tired and need alone time and enjoy community life...he switches is up on us and pulls a surprise. Suddenly we realise that Jesus, who is perfectly at home with us in human skin in the dust of earth is also the God of the universe who is perfectly at home across the entire cosmos beyond time and space!

When Peter and James and John see Jesus on the mountain, transformed and displaying his cosmic brilliance and busting out of the first century and the boundaries of his local region across time and space connecting with the ancient characters of Moses and Elijah, they are rightly surprised and frightened.

Here they have been tracking through life with Jesus, eating and drinking, sleeping and working - getting to know God in new ways bit by bit. Then there's this - mind blowing, didn't see it coming, beyond your imagining, never really going to get your head around it experience of Jesus - God face to face with them in a completely different way.

Moses is there - the bearer of the law and the deliverer to freedom - he's on one side of Jesus. And Elijah - the mighty prophet who called God's people back to faithfulness and justice with mighty demonstrations of God's power - he's on the other side of Jesus. And Jesus - he's in the centre. Jesus IS the centre. Law and Prophets, escaping to freedom and experiencing power are all part of the story, but Jesus is the centre. Nothing takes his place. And that's why after all, even though there's been Moses and Elijah, Jacob and Nehemiah, plenty of people in history to tell us about God, in the end it's not enough. They've had their face to face with God.

But God crosses the cosmos - all of time and space - and sets up camp with humans, as a human, so we can know him face to face too.

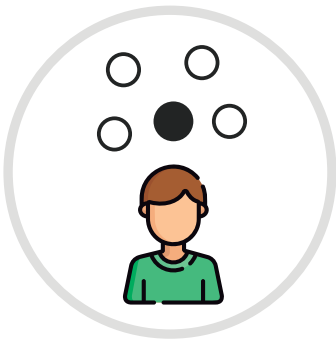
# THE 5 Cs CHECKLIST

Choose one activity from each category  
(details on following pages)



## CONNECT

- Triple Tent challenge *p.205*
- Celebrity head *p.205*
- Change your appearance game *p.201*
- Blanket game - recognition. *p.215*



## CONTEXT

- What story am I thinking of?
- Mountain Quiz
- Moses and Elijah cards



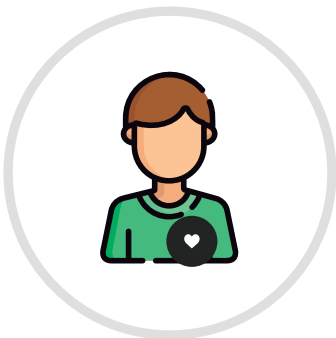
## CONTENT

- Surprising Changes Part 1 and Part 2
- Action story
- Sand and stick story



## CONSIDER

- Glow in the dark faces
- Beards and Eyebrow
- Black Paint Over Candle Wax Art
- Glitter Jesus/Everyday Jesus



## CONSEQUENCE

- Glitter and Sand Prayers for everyday life
- Pegs on the Mountain
- Who from history would you invite camping?

# CONNECT



- Use one of these activities to create strong connections with and between the people in your group.
- Make sure everyone feels included.
- Spend time listening to each person
- Be alert to the group dynamics that are revealed
- Use the linking lines to help connect your group with the ideas they will encounter in the text.



## TRIPLE TENT CHALLENGE

### *You will need*

- *Materials for making three tents - three sheets or large plastic table cloths, rope, sticks.*

Invite your group to work out how to use the materials gathered to make three tents. The group may divide into three teams to do this and work simultaneously, or work as a whole team on each tent one after the other. Encourage all the efforts and ingenuity being shown.

### **Linking Lines:**

Strangely in the story we will hear today, some of Jesus friends suddenly decide to build 3 tents - makes you wonder what they would have used to do that!??



## CELEBRITY HEAD

### *You will need*

- *The names of famous people written on individual pieces of paper. Keep these hidden from the group.*

Choose two volunteers to guess their secret identity. Hold one name up above each of their heads. The first volunteer begins to ask questions of the group to help guess their identity. Questions can only be answered with yes or no. They keep asking questions until they get a 'no' answer, then the other volunteer has a turn at asking questions. They continue until they get a 'no' answer and the questioning returns to the other player. Continue until one of them guesses their celebrity identity.

### **Linking Lines:**

In the story today, we meet a couple of famous people from the history of the Bible making a surprise appearance in a vision. Fortunately the friends of Jesus seem to know who they are straight away.





## CHANGE YOUR APPEARANCE GAME

Divide your groups into pair. Give the pairs 20 seconds to take a good look at each other, then turn their backs and each change one thing about their appearance. Turning around they each have to guess what has changed.

### Linking Lines:

In the story we will hear today, Jesus' friends see him change in a really dramatic way, and yet they still know that it's him.



## BLANKET GAME - RECOGNITION

### You will need

- *Blanket or Tarp*

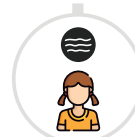
Make sure that everyone in your group knows the name of everyone else. If there are new people to the group, spend some time on this or the game won't be fair. Divide your group into two, randomly.

Two people hold up a tarp vertically between the two groups so that they can't see each other. Silently choose a person from each side to kneel right up close to the blanket/tarp. On the count of three the tarp is dropped and the two people race to say the name of the other person.

Have a number of rounds of this, and switch who holds the tarp.

### Linking Lines:

In the story we will hear today, Jesus' friends see him change in a really dramatic way, and yet they still know that it's him.



# CONTEXT

- Use one of these activities to give your group a common starting point for accessing the world of the text.
- These activities are designed to help your group find relating and connecting points to the text.
- Make sure everyone is included; the common context activity should make sure that some people aren't disadvantaged because they are not as familiar with the Bible as others. Justice is a priority as we engage with the Bible.

## MOSES AND ELIJAH CARDS

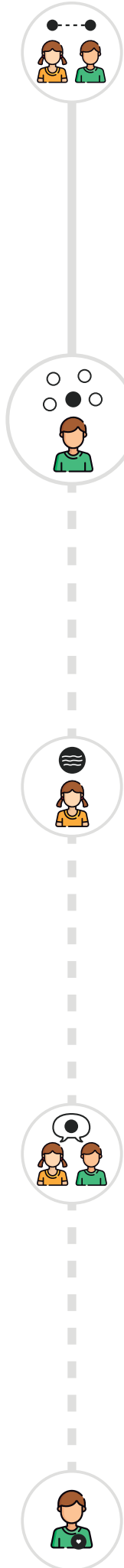
### *You will need*

- **10 cards (5 Moses and 5 Elijah) from [Day9Context1.pdf](#)**
- ***These cards spell out the letters of the two names, with pictures of the main events in their lives and brief explanations.***

Distribute the Cards, in any order among your group. Go around the group one by one and let each person share what's on their card. When every card has been examined, ask the group to work out how the cards might go together to spell two names of people from the Bible. Let there be as many attempts as it takes.

### **Linking Lines:**

These two characters turn up in the story today - even though they lived a long time before Jesus. They were legendary (but true) characters in the history of the Jewish people - like Ned Kelly or Peter Lalor are in the history of settler Victoria.





## MOUNTAIN QUIZ

### You will need

- *Cut out cardboard mountain painted green at the base, rocky half way up and snow capped at the top. (~70 x 70cm)*
- *Mark a scale of points up the side of the mountain.*
- *Clothes pegs, 3 different coloured cardboard cut out people stuck on perpendicular to peg.*
- *Mountain quiz questions*

Divide your group into 3 teams and allocate a 'peg person' to each team.

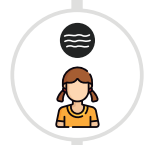
Attach pegs to the side of the base of the mountain.

As you ask the questions, teams volunteer to answer - pick the first hand up.

A correct answer moves the team's peg person one mark up the mountain.

### Questions.

1. Name an animal that lives high on mountains. (goats, mountain lions)
2. What is the name of the highest mountain in the world? (Everest)
3. As you climb a mountain does it hotter or colder? (colder)
4. A group of mountains in a line is called: (range)
  - a) a row
  - b) a ridge
  - c) a range
5. Uluru is Australia's highest mountain - true or false (False)
6. In the Bible, God always/sometimes/never/often speaks to people on a mountain (often)
7. Which of the following are not a famous mountains
  - a) the Rockies
  - b) the Blackies
  - c) the Grampians
8. Which of the following countries is not famous for its mountains (c. Belgium)
  - a) Switzerland
  - b) Scotland
  - c) Belgium
  - d) Greece
9. Alps' is another word for mountains - true or false (true)
10. What is the name of the strange kind of mountain singing that Switzerland and Austria are famous for? (Yodelling) +Bonus points if you give a demonstration.





## WHAT STORY AM I THINKING OF?

*You will need:*

- *List of stories and key words*
  - *Genie Lamp Princess (Aladdin)*
  - *Straw sticks bricks wolf (three little pigs)*
  - *Star, shepherds, manger (Christmas)*
  - *Tower, hair, witch (Rapunzel)*
  - *Pig, Spider, Competition (Charlotte's Web)*
  - *Chocolate, Competition, Oompaloompas (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory)*
  - *Wizard, Scar, School (Harry Potter)*
  - *Cat, twins, trouble (The Cat in the Hat)*
- *Alternative - print pictures of the covers of these books with the Titles and authors removed/blacked out.*

Tell your group that you are going to play a game in which they have the chance to guess a well-known story you are thinking of from just three words.

Slowly say the three words that suggest a story allowing pauses for early guesses.

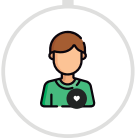
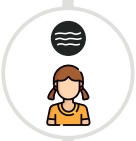
After several of these, you might give others a chance to say three things from a story for the group to guess.

As an alternative, show some pictures of the covers of famous stories, with the Titles and authors removed and see if the group can guess.

### Linking Lines:

In our story about Jesus today, a couple of characters from the ancient stories of the Jewish people appear with Jesus. The friends of Jesus who are watching, immediately recognise who they are and know their stories - Moses brought God's rescue and his good ways to the people when they were slaves - his story means freedom! and Elijah showed the people that even when they thought God was against them, and they had turned against God, God was still powerfully present and hadn't given up on them - his story means hope.

When they appear with Jesus it reminds his friends - and us - that God's story brings freedom and hope - way, way back in time, across all times and places, and in our time too.



# CONTENT

- Use one of these to give your group a hands on experience of the Bible text
- Use the collection of texts from Face to Face Bible Bits **Day9BibleBits.pdf** to make finding the right part of the passage easy – but at some point show your group a complete (paper-print) Bible and an online Bible to help them see where the stories have come from.
- Be confident that experiencing the text in engaging, active and tactile ways is more important than reading and following and understanding every single word for helping people get comfortable with the Bible.
- Repeat the reading-activities more than once to increase your group’s familiarity with The text, and give people a chance to take different roles or respond differently – or just because it’s fun to do again.
- These readings can be a bit chaotic – intentionally. Make the most of the people in your group to help set things up and pack things up afterwards – enjoy doing this together, building community as you do.

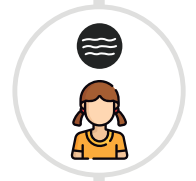
## MARK 9: 1 - 9

Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him. They went up on a high mountain, where they could be alone. There in front of the disciples, Jesus was completely changed. And his clothes became much whiter than any bleach on earth could make them. Then Moses and Elijah were there talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, “Teacher, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” But they were terrified, and Peter did not know what he was talking about.

The shadow of a cloud passed over and covered them. From the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, and I love him. Listen to what he says!” At once the disciples looked around, and they saw no one, but Jesus alone was with them.

As Jesus and his disciples were coming down the mountain, he told them not to say a word about what they had seen, until the Son of Man had been raised from death.





## SURPRISING CHANGES

### *You will need*

- Copies of *Face to Face Bible Bits Day 9 Bible Bits 1.pdf* for each person
- List of 'changes' to make in reading the text
- Bag of party poppers, some with specific words from the story written on them (either wrap extra blank paper around the popper, or remove the label and write directly on the plastic with permanent marker).

Announce to your group that together you are going to read a story about Jesus in which there are some surprising changes. And to help watch out for the changes, you will throw in some changes to the words in the story.

Place a pile of party poppers in the middle of your group. If they think they hear something that sounds like you've changed a word in the story they should try to be the first person to grab a party popper and holding it above their head, pull the string.

When this happens, you will stop and ask the person who fired the party popper which word they think was changed and what it should be according to the story.

### *Words to change in bold below*

Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him. They went **skiing** (up) on a high mountain, where they could be **seen by the crowds** (alone). There in front of the disciples, Jesus was completely **flabbergasted** (changed). And his clothes became much **scruffier** (whiter) than any bleach on earth could make them. Then Moses and Elijah were there **dancing** (talking) with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Teacher, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three **bathtubs** (tents), one for you, one for Moses, and one for Winnie the Pooh." But they were terrified and Peter did not know what he was talking about. The shadow of **an elephant** (cloud) passed over and covered them. From the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, and I love him. Listen to what he says!" At once the **dinosaurs** (disciples) looked around, and they saw no one, but **sausages** (Jesus) alone was with them.

### *Part 2*

Place another set of party poppers in the middle of your group. This set of party poppers have actual words from the story written on them. Announce that you are going to read the story again, and this time you will read all of the words properly. Hand out the party poppers to each person in the group - doubling up if you need to. Make sure each person knows what the words are on their party popper. When anyone hears their word in the story, they call out the word, hold their popper above their head and pull the string.

### **Linking Lines:**

Good job stopping all the silly changes to the story. It was pretty easy to tell that these changes didn't belong in the story. They just didn't make sense.

But the change that happened to Jesus on the mountain - it was surprising and a bit freaky, but when the disciples thought about it, they knew it made sense. Jesus was simply showing more of who he really was - the God of the entire universe - not changing into something else.



## SAND AND STICK STORY

*You will need:*

- *Large pile of sand*
- *6 sticks*
- *Permanent marker*
- *Pieces of fabric in plain, earth-tone colours and one white piece*
- *String*
- *One larger branch*

Begin with your group by inviting them to build a mountain from the sand. As they do this say:

“In many of the ancient stories of the Bible, mountains featured as places where God would speak to people in a special way, so they would know him better in a face to face way”.

When the mountain is complete, ask the group to sit back in a circle around it and continue.

Introduce the characters in the story and the sticks.

Ask for some volunteers to draw faces on the 6 sticks, and to ‘dress’ them in the earth tones fabric, tying it roughly on with string. Introduce the names of the characters as this is happening.

“Jesus had lots of different friends and followers, some who travelled around with him, and others whose homes Jesus visited. Three of his closest friends or disciples were Peter, James and John. These young men had all been fishermen together before their adventures with Jesus began. They knew the ancient stories of their people and the way God kept turning up to wrestle and rescue and rebuild and reconcile. And they figured that Jesus seemed to know more about God’s ways than anyone they had ever met before.”

Select one stick to be Jesus and three sticks to be the disciples, Peter James and John.

“These other two characters in the story are Moses and Elijah - they are dead now, but were mighty friends of God in the long past history of the Jewish people.”

Introduce the branch. This branch is going to be the voice of God that appears in the story as a cloud - the way God often did in the stories of old. Choose someone to be ready with the ‘cloud’ branch.

Read the story slowly and expressively, leaving plenty of space for those with sticks to perform the action of the text. Keep it simple, fun, but on track. Be ready with the white material to transform the Jesus stick.

When you are finished if there is enthusiasm, repeat the story with new performers.

### Linking Lines:

In this story there were some really familiar things that happened - mountains, old characters turning up, God speaking from a cloud, someone appearing in white. Although this was surprising for Jesus’ friends at the time, as they thought about it later they realised that this was the way God had been in the past. Jesus - face to face God in human being, was just like the face to face God had always been.





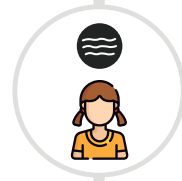
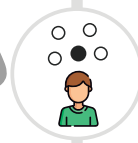
## ACTION STORY

### You will need

- Copies of *Face to Face Bible Bits Day9BibleBits1.pdf*
- Leader who has confidently learned all of the actions to accompany the text (See below)
- This story is best presented with one person reading the story slowly, and pausing for the actions, while another clearly demonstrates the actions for the group to follow.

Six days later	hold up 6 fingers
Jesus	hold up pointer finger of left hand
took Peter, James, and John with him.	hold up 3 fingers on right hand
They went up on a high mountain,	hands pointed fingers together overhead
where they could be alone.	finger in front of lips 'Shhhhhh' sign
There in front of the disciples, Jesus	hold up 3 fingers on right hand hold up pointer finger of left hand
was completely changed.	wiggly fingers in front of you from head to toe
And his clothes became much whiter	flashing 'light bulb' hands
than any bleach on earth could make them.	hands make earth circle
Then Moses and Elijah were there	hold up right hand and hold up left hand
talking with	both hands 'talking' like puppet mouths
Jesus.	hold up pointer finger of left hand
Peter said to Jesus,	hold up pointer finger of right hand and hold up pointer finger of left hand
"Teacher, it is good for us to be here!	thumbs up
Let us make three	hold up 3 fingers on left hand
tents,	fingers together in pointing roof in front of you

Continued on next page...



one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”	hold up pointer finger of left hand (Jesus) then hold up right hand and hold up left hand (Mo & El)
But they were terrified,	hands either side of face in ‘scream face’
and Peter did not know what he was talking about.	face palm
The shadow of a cloud passed over and	hands open large movement roll past face
covered them.	hands open overhead
From the cloud a voice said,	hands around mouth as if shouting
“This is my Son, and I love him.	hands on heart
Listen to what he says!”	hands behind ears
At once the disciples	hold up 3 fingers on right hand
looked around,	hand shading eyes looking around
and they saw no one,	hands either side in shrug.
but Jesus alone was with them.	hold up pointer finger of left hand

Invite your group to follow the actions as this story is presented. After the first time through, give it another go, as the group will only just be getting familiar with it.

There are 28 actions - if your group is enthusiastic, try it a third time dividing up the actions between you all. If you do this, make one person always responsible for the Jesus action, one person always responsible for the three disciples, another responsible for Moses and Elijah. Divide the rest between other participants.

# CONSIDER

## HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

- You've been camping?
- You've been so interested in a person from history, you wished you could actually meet them and hang out together?
- You've been out in nature and felt like God was really near?
- Something happened that reminded you of an earlier event or story you had heard?

- Use these 'has anything like this ever happened to you...?' questions to fire up discussion and story-sharing while your group work on their 'consider' activities.
- Don't be moralistic or heavy handed in linking their experiences to the Bible passages, but where it is natural encourage them to make the connections.

## GLOW IN THE DARK FACES

### *You will need*

- *Cut out face templates*
- *Glow in the dark paint, sturdy containers, brushes*
- *Dark space (e.g. large cardboard carton covered in thick blanket) for testing the 'glow' effect of the faces.*

Give each person in our group a face template and invite them to paint on whatever face features they like. As the paint dries, allow them to test their faces in the dark space.

### **Linking Lines:**

Our glow in the dark faces will shine because of the paint we used. Jesus face shone brilliantly on the mountain to show his friends that he really was God - the same God who has always been through all time and space - but appearing to them in their own land, their own time, face to face as a human.







## ANCIENT HEROES GREY BEARDS AND SERIOUS EYEBROW HEADBANDS

*You will need:*

- *Brown (skin tones) Fabric scraps cut in 2cm wide strips, roughly 60cm long.*
- *Grey fabric scraps cut in 2cm wide strips, roughly 20cm long*
- *Grey wool scraps (a few different tones/thickness is good)*
- *Cotton wool*
- *Grey textas*
- *Craft glue*
- *Scissors*
- *Elastic*
- *(Optional extra) Old stockings*

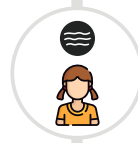
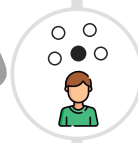
Give each person a brown strip of fabric, long enough to reach around their head. Use a 7cm length of elastic to join the two ends, so that it fits easily on their head (you may need to trim the fabric back if they have a small head). Using craft glue, stick two patches of cotton wool to the head band for eye brows, shaping them as they wish. With the grey texta, add a few little dabs of grey to the cotton wool, leaving lots of white showing through

Give each person a grey fabric strip, and a 15cm length of elastic. Tie the ends of the fabric to the ends of the elastic so that it holds the fabric firmly under the chin, with the elastic reaching over the top of the head.

Double over lengths of grey wool and loop them through the grey fabric all along the section that sits under the chin, until there is a long fulsome beard. Attach two patches of cotton wool to fabric strip on either side to form sideburns. Again dab a little grey text on these to blend with the beard. Show your group how to wear the beard and eyebrows, pulling their hair over the elastic to cover it.

Extra - bald cap: The top section of the leg of old (clean) stockings can be used to create a bald head.

Place the stocking on head for size, tie off the extra stocking, remove from head, cut off the excess past the knot, turn inside out to hide the knot when it's worn.



### Linking Lines:

Jesus friends recognised the heroes Moses and Elijah from their ancient stories. They appeared in the vision to show Jesus friends that Jesus was God - the same God that was a face to face friend with Moses and Elijah - was face to face friend with them, showing them God was with them as he had always been.





## BLACK PAINT OVER CANDLE WAX ART

### *You will need*

- *White card*
- *White household candles*
- *Black paint, brushes*
- *Tub of soapy water and towel for cleaning up*

Invite participants to draw anything they like in response to the story - or something in the story of their own life which the story makes them think of or which is especially on their mind.

Explain that when they have finished drawing they will paint over the whole page with black paint - and the white wax will shine through.

### **Linking Lines:**

In the story today, Jesus friends saw him changed from an ordinary country worker like them, to be glowing and shining brightly in the dark and face to face with the heroes of their people's stories. Most of the time, Jesus didn't actually glow in the dark, but his actions and words were light and hope to the people he met. What do you think is a better way for God to show he is with us and loves us face to face - appearing in shining, dazzling light, or looking like an ordinary person, showing compassion, helping those in need, standing up for justice?



## GLITTER JESUS/EVERYDAY JESUS

### *You will need*

- *Cut out cards of Jesus figure - brown and white*
- *Glue*
- *Black wool*
- *Brown/grey/ fabric scraps*
- *White fabric scraps*
- *Gold/silver/white sparkly glitter*
- *White cotton wool*
- *'Here's one I made earlier' sample.*
- *Fishing line,*

Give each person in your group a two sided 'Jesus' cut out - one side brown one side white

Remind your group that most of the time, Jesus looked like an ordinary poor country peasant, wearing normal clothes for his time, and blending in with the crowd - so that's how we are going to make the Jesus on the brown side of the card look, sticking clothes and dark hair onto the figure.

On the reverse side, we will stick white clothes, white cotton wool hair and add lots of glitter all over Jesus. Poke a small hole in the top of the figure and thread a loop of fishing line through to be able to hang it up.

### **Linking Lines:**

In the Bible story Jesus' friends saw him in a way they didn't usually - white and shining and amazing. It seems Jesus could have appeared to people like that all the time, but instead chose ordinary rough country peasant as the way to know God face to face best.



# CONSEQUENCE



- Use these activities to help open up responses to the Bible of many kinds
- Welcome, accept and affirm all responses
- Build the culture that the Bible is something that we listen to and respond to lots - constantly - and in many different ways.
- Share your own genuine responses - including loving and following Jesus as an example, but not as an expectation



## GLITTER AND SAND PRAYERS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

*You will need:*

- *Print outs of the prayers in **Day9Consequence1.pdf***
- *Backing card of different colours, including colours appropriate for planets, cut in circles*
- *Glitter*
- *Craft glue*
- *Sand*
- *Optional - thin craft wire*

In this activity your group will make a set of circular prayer cards. Some of the prayers are focused more on everyday life on earth, and some relate to the wider universe.

Stick a prayer on to a coloured card that you think suits the prayer.

Add craft glue right around the edge of the card.

Sprinkle either sand (if it's an earthy prayer) or glitter (if it's a cosmic prayer) on the glue edging and tip off the excess.

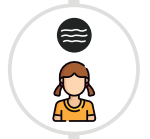
The cards can be either threaded onto a single piece of wire through a hole somewhere around the edge of each card (doesn't have to be the top).

OR

Attach each card to a piece of wire. Twist the ends of each wire together securely, folding the very tips over on themselves. Attach a vertical wire to the twisted ends, and fold over a loop at the top to hang it all up.

### Linking Lines:

Jesus shows us that God is with us and loves us and cares for in our everyday lives on earth - so we can talk to him about anything like a friend, face to face. But he also shows us that he is God of the whole universe of every time and space - so there's no question too big for him and we can trust our small earthy lives to his cosmic-sized goodness.





## WHO FROM HISTORY WOULD YOU INVITE CAMPING?

You will need:

Easy to set up dome tent (e.g. beach shelter)

Invite your group to all try to fit inside the tent. Start with one person in the tent. They invite someone else to join them in the tent. This person invites someone else, and so on, until everyone has been invited to come camping. When you are all settled in the tent, ask your group to think about who they would want to go camping with and why - anyone from anywhere in history, or maybe their favourite people to go camping with is their own family and friends.

### Linking Lines:

Wherever we go and whatever happens, God is with us and part of what is happening. We don't need to invite God along camping with us, he's already here - this is his universe we are living in. In fact it's more like God invites us to come camping with him. Whichever way, it's good to let God know we know he's here: Thanks God for your great universe and for our place in it. Thanks for being close to us all the time. Help us to get to know you better.



## PEGS ON THE MOUNTAIN

*You will need*

- *The same cardboard mountain and pegs as were used in the Mountain Quiz (Context)*
- *Extra pegs and blank people cards.*
- *Markers*

Explain to your group that this activity is a chance for them to each think about their own thoughts and responses to the story. It's not a quiz like before, and there are no wrong or right answers.

Give each person their own peg person, and allow a little time for them to use the markers to make their cardboard person look like them.

Put aside the markers and sit around the mountain.

Say something like: 'You will get the chance to put your peg somewhere up the mountain to mark what you think about certain things.

First statement is 'How much I like climbing mountains' - the more you like climbing mountains, the further up the mountain you put your peg.

More statements to respond to:

I like being on holidays with my family

I feel like I know lots about Jesus now

I am a really good yodeller

I have lots of questions about God

God seems close to me and I'm sure God's always with me.

### Linking Lines:

Thanks for sharing your responses together. There are no right or wrong answers to these things, but it is good to stop and think about how you're going every now and again. If you want to keep talking about any of the things we have been thinking about - that's good too, and we've love to do that.



SU Missions/Camps use only

# FACE TO FACE PARENTS

## CONVERSATION STARTERS 9

Being human - and loving it



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

Being human- it can be frustrating. We get tired and cranky. We get hurt and angry. We get old and broken. But - we grow and learn, we find reasons to try again and again, we work for justice, and building better things, we reach out to others beyond ourselves, we hope and we love.

Being human is awesome.

This is one of the great messages we can give our kids.

That being 100% human is a great thing. We don't need to be super-powered.

Being human, even with its limits is worth celebrating - in big ways - that's why we have birthdays with cake and LOTS of sugar. But also in little ways - in the day to day - we give our kids and ourselves reminders that we are human (not invincible) and that's a wonderful thing.

We celebrate trying and learning and leaving and growing - we even celebrate losing a tooth. One of the great ways we have of saying 'being human is amazing, weird and we love and accept each other in it'.

## SHARE YOUR STORY

How do you celebrate being wonderful human beings in your tribe? What are your rituals?

What do you just love about your kids?

How do you look after yourself? - being real about the fact that you're a finite human being - and that's a good thing!

## GOD'S STORY

For the most part the stories of Jesus are about everyday human things. Eating and sleeping and working and paying taxes and trying to get along with people. It all happens at a pretty basic level in the back blocks. You do get the odd miracle, but even then its mixed in with this humanness of Jesus - he's asleep in the boat when the storm breaks out; he's walking through a crowded street on his way somewhere else when someone reaches out to him for healing, he's having a decent booze-up at a wedding when his famous water to wine transformation happens. So for the most part Jesus look, sounds, smells, sleeps, slouches like anyone human. Some people were extremely sceptical that Jesus had anything to offer because he was just so ordinary.

But there was this one time, when high up the mountain, just with his three best buddies, away from the crowds, Jesus appears, just for a short while looking like... well something completely amazing and more than human. His buddies see the 'God' that Jesus really is, showing through strongly.

And then it's over.

Back to looking normal. Mr. Average. Nothing to see here.

What is amazing about this little episode is that it reminds us that Jesus deliberately chose low key, to dress down in civvies, to live the human condition fully and for real, when he could have maxed out his God factors and made a sensational impression.

What is that about? I reckon it's God giving the big thumbs up to being human. Let's face it, God has always had a soft spot for humans. When God has a choice - and he always does - he hangs out with humans. He loves us. He backs humans as being ok. He's no way giving up on humans.

Maybe this helps us not to give up on humans - on one another, on ourselves, either.

Read more of this in the Bible in Mark 9

SU Missions/Camps use only



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**DAY 10**  
**CRUCIFIXION &**  
**RESURRECTION**

SU Missions/Camps use only

# TEAM STUDY 10

## CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION

- *Read the introduction for each session (on next page)*
  - *Read the passages*
- *Use these questions to explore further*



If we have noted that God has been face to face with people - e.g. Adam, Jacob, and Moses in the Old Testament - what significance does it have that Jesus is slapped in the face and spat in the face in his trial? When this happens, is it really the face of God being spat on and hit?

We have texts from all 4 gospels, each telling the story of the death and resurrection from a different slant.

Divide into 4 groups, allocate a gospel to each group. In your group, look through the texts that come from our allocated gospel. What kind of things are emphasised in the telling? Names? Times? Dialogue? Action? Emotion? Nature? Politics? Check out some other parts of the death and resurrection narrative of your allocated gospel in your Bibles - does the emphasis carry through. Report back to the whole group.

How does the multi-vocal telling of the story of Jesus death and resurrection shape how we do mission?

# AGE GROUP SESSION 10

## CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION

God goes face to face with death and so we can face life

### INTRODUCTION

Selections from all four gospel narratives

This session is designed to be run as a combination of street theatre storytelling and a set of activity stations, to work through the selected death and resurrection texts, with time for processing and wondering and questions along the way.

Stations like this can work well in family groups, as well as in age groups. You might choose to run this as a family event at a different time slot, rather than as a regular small group program.

If you don't think the stations event style is appropriate for your context, choose several of the activities to structure into a regular small group session

*You will need*

- *Story Teller-Street Performers*
- *A troupe of well-rehearsed, confident street theatre style story tellers.*
- *Each story teller will deliver a short section of the text throughout the event, while the other performers act out the scene according to the performer notes.*
- *Each story teller should have a similar costume (for example a black suit, or overalls) but with distinctive elements that set them apart and connect to their part of the story (e.g. - hat, scarf, tie, umbrella, suit case or other props)*
- *NB: Text 4 and 6 share the same activity station and are best presented by the same performer. (4 is very short!)*

*8 activity stations, corresponding to the sections of text*

- *At each station display part of the text in large print*
- *At each station are resources and instructions for an activity that draws participants into the story in some way. These activities should have a facilitator on hand to help people engage*
- *A couple of the stations cover two sections of text that relate to each other*
- *When the story tellers present their section of the text, they should position themselves near or at the station that relates to their part of the story.*

## OPENING AND CLOSING GATHERINGS

*(Connect and Consequence)*

Begin this event with a strong hearty welcome and a clear explanation of the session.

Explain that there are 8 stations to visit that each feature a little bit of the story of how Jesus went face to face with death so that we can face life.

At each station you can read part of the story for yourself and engage in an activity to connect with that part of the story.

The stations can be visited in any order.

But listen out for the stories of Jesus facing death and rising to life again being told in order through the time.

At the end of the session, regather and finish with a simple thank you for coming, thank you to the story tellers, and offer an invitation to keep thinking and wondering and chatting about how the way Jesus faced death helps us face life.

You might include a song in these gathering at the beginning or end.

Possible songs include

Oh Have You Heard (Snack Music)

Jesus is Alive (Beth Barnett - Click)

There is a Reason (Beth Barnett - Find Out)

### 1. COIN FACE (AS MARK TELLS IT)

It was now two days before Passover and the Festival of Thin Bread. The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses were planning how they could sneak around and have Jesus arrested and put to death. They were saying, "We must not do it during the festival, because the people will riot."

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples. He went to the chief priests and offered to help them arrest Jesus. They were glad to hear this, and they promised to pay him. So Judas started looking for a good chance to betray Jesus.

#### **Street Performer Notes:**

- Jangle a bag of money for sound effects at the beginning and end - and at strategic points in the telling.
- Use large exaggerated sneaking steps, hiding behind things and people, and shhhh-ing in between sentences. Allow your voice to rise in excitement, then check yourself, and return to a loud stage whisper. Pick a couple of people in the crowd to interact with as though they are the Chief priests, tapping them on the shoulder or elbowing them (of course without actually making physical contact - use exaggerated stage mime). Finish with 'looking around' to suggest the last line of the text.

#### **Station Activity:**

From a clothes line or clothes rack, or over-hanging branch, suspend lots of larger silver "coins", about the size of a CD made from Cardboard covered in alfoil. Have a good supply of these also ready on a table for participants to draw their own head on the coins, in place of the emperor, and then suspend them along with the other coins.

## 2. FACE DOWN TO THE GROUND (AS LUKE TELLS IT)

After supper, Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane. When they got there, he told them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”

Jesus walked on a little way. Then he knelt with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, don’t make me suffer. But do what you want, and not what I want.”

He came back and found his disciples sleeping.

He said, “Get up! Let’s go. The one who will betray me is already here.”

### **Street Performer Notes:**

Carry a shovel, and begin digging into the dirt. Don’t dig deep, or a very large patch, so as not to create a dangerous surface (And remember to fill it in and smooth it over later).

Digging on the same spot can be exaggerated and effective.

This action has the double impact of suggesting digging a grave, and focussing on Jesus face down to the ground.

When you come to the part of the text where Jesus is face down to the ground, stop digging and squat, with your hand indicating the ground.

Stand up and take a few steps to suggest going back to the disciples, and bang on the wide part of the shovel with your fist to make a clanging sound to ‘wake up’ the disciples.

### **Station Activity:**

Prepare a patch of dirt - use a shallow tub if necessary in your context.

Invite participants to stick a cut out of a ‘sleeping disciple’ on a craft stick.

Ahead of time, write on each craft stick, ‘Are we asleep too while others suffer?’

## 3. KISS ON THE FACE (LUKE AND MATTHEW SHARE THE TELLING)

Jesus was still speaking, when Judas came up, and a mob of men armed with swords and clubs were with him.

Judas walked right up to Jesus and said, “Teacher!” Then Judas kissed him, and the men grabbed Jesus and arrested him.

Jesus was led off to the high priest.

The chief priests and the whole council tried to find someone to accuse Jesus of a crime, so they could put him to death. But they could not find anyone to accuse him.

### **Street Performer Notes:**

Arrive with a baseball bat in hand looking threatening as the story begins.

But then tuck the bat under your arm and pull out some lipstick and begin to apply it, in between telling the part where Judas greets Jesus and kisses him.

Finish the story by blowing a couple of kisses, then thumping the baseball bat in your hands again.

### **Station Activity:**

At this station a large poster face of Jesus is displayed.

Participants are invited to put on fluoro zinc lipstick and ‘kiss’ the cheek of Jesus, like Judas did. For those who are too shy, provide fluoro highlighters and suggest they draw an X as a kiss on the face of Jesus.

#### 4. SMACK IN THE FACE (MATTHEW TELLS IT STRAIGHT)

Then they spit in his face and hit him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, “You think you are the Messiah! So tell us who hit you!”

***Street Performer Notes:***

Circle around an imaginary ‘Jesus’ as you deliver these lines, leaning in threateningly.

**Station Activity:**

Make a papier-mâché balloon piñata, painted and decorated with wool hair and beard to look like Jesus face. String it up and allow participants to smash it with a stick. You might need to make a few to have as spares, in case it breaks early.  
(this activity is also shared with part 6 of the story)

#### 5. FACING POWER (MARK PICKS UP THE STORY)

Early the next morning the chief priests, the nation’s leaders, and the teachers of the Law of Moses met together with the whole Jewish council. They tied up Jesus and led him off to Roman Governor Pilate.

The chief priests brought many charges against Jesus. Then Pilate questioned him, “Don’t you have anything to say?” But Jesus did not answer, and Pilate was amazed.

***Street Performer Notes:***

Wander in looking like you are listening to someone talking, with hmmmms and aha’s and ‘right’....

Then begin the story telling. When you get to ‘Don’t you have anything to say?’ stop and wait, and wait and wait...looking like you are expecting an answer - make this pause really long and at the edge of uncomfortable. Then finish the last two lines, dusting off your hands and striding out.

**Station Activity:**

At this station provide a supply of paper speech bubbles. Stick some on a display board with quotation marks and “...” indicating no answer. Invite participants to think about what answer Jesus could have given, and write it on a speech bubble to add to the display

## 6. SMASH IN THE FACE (JOHN'S VERSION) (SEE NOTES FOR PART 4)

Pilate gave orders for Jesus to be beaten with a whip. The soldiers made a crown out of thorn branches and put it on Jesus. Then they put a purple robe on him. They came up to him and said, "Hey, you king of the Jews!" They also hit him in the face.

When the chief priests and the temple police saw him, they yelled, "Nail him to a cross! Nail him to a cross!"

## 7. DEATH FACE (LUKE'S STORY)

Jesus was taken away, nailed to the cross, and on each side of him a man was also nailed to a cross.

Pilate ordered the charge against Jesus to be written on a board and put above the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The words were written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

Around noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until the middle of the afternoon.

The sun stopped shining, and the curtain in the temple split down the middle. Jesus shouted, "Father, I put myself in your hands!" Then he died.

When the Roman officer saw what had happened, he praised God and said, "Jesus must really have been a good man!"

### *Street Performer Notes:*

Carry a hammer and board - mime writing on the board as you tell the story. Then hold it up against a tree or a wall and hammer it in each corner (but not using nails), in between sentences. Hold it up against the tree right until the last sentence, then take your hand away and let it drop. Watch it fall, then walk away slowly.

### **Station Activity:**

Make lots of crosses from sticks and set them up in a long line.  
Provide extras sticks and wire for participants to make their own crosses to add to the row

## 8. STONE FACE (MATTHEW TELLS US...)

That evening a rich disciple named Joseph from the town of Arimathea went and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate gave orders for it to be given to Joseph, who took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. Then Joseph put the body in his own tomb that had been cut into solid rock and had never been used. He rolled a big stone against the entrance to the tomb and went away.

All this time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb.

### **Station Activity:**

At this station, provide a large pile of rough (unpolished river stones) in various sizes. Have an already assembled 'face' picture made from the stones, like a mosaic. Invite participants to make their own 'face', perhaps working as a team.



## 9. MISSING FACE (JOHN'S COMMENTS)

On Sunday morning while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran to Simon Peter and to Jesus' favourite disciple and said, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb! We don't know where they have put him."

Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. They ran side by side. When Simon Peter got there, he went into the tomb and saw the strips of cloth. He also saw the piece of cloth that had been used to cover Jesus' face. It was rolled up and in a place by itself. They did not know that the Scriptures said Jesus would rise to life. So the two of them went back to the other disciples.

### *Street performer notes*

Arrive running and breathless, pull a large white handkerchief out of your pocket to mop your face as if sweaty from running. Drop the handkerchief on the ground half way through so you can 'find' it and pick it up, at the point that Peter finds the cloth. Fold and roll it up. Then use it as a scripture scroll and unroll it sideways and read off it as if it is a scroll. At the end - shrug your shoulders and run off again.

### **Station Activity:**

Provide plain sorbolene face-cream and paper towels  
Invite participants lightly rub face cream into their face, then take a 'print' of the face on a paper towel. If it doesn't print, try with a little extra sorbolene not rubbed in so well.

Hang these 'face prints' up with pegs on a line.  
Display a 'shroud of Turin' picture.

## 10. FACE TO FACE

Mary Magdalene stood crying outside the tomb. She was still weeping, when she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know who he was. Jesus asked her, "Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener and said, "Sir, if you have taken his body away, please tell me, so I can go and get him."

Then Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned and said to him, "Teacher!"

### *Street Performer notes*

Wear a blindfold (not a commercially produced one, just a colourful piece of cloth)  
Begin crouched over, sobbing. Gradually rise. Deliver all of the lines wearing the blind fold, until Jesus says "Mary!" At this point take the blindfold off, and with a large brilliant smile deliver the last line.

### **Station Activity:**

Provide a large table area of soil and garden twigs, leafy bits and flowers, and invite participants to create a garden from these elements.

Additionally or alternatively,

Provide cups of potting mix and seeds or seedlings and invite participants to plant some seeds to take with them

# FACE TO FACE PARENTS

## CONVERSATION STARTERS 10

Facing life, Facing death, Facing life



### WHAT'S OUR STORY?

Over the past year, our kids have seen plenty of terror on their screens. The panic is palpable. Media leverages the sense of randomness, the targeting of the ordinary unsuspecting citizen, and plays to our sense of vulnerability.

Our kids are swept up in this story-telling. We are yet to see how this will play out in the next generation.

But for the moment, our children, on the one hand living with longer life expectancies than were ever previously imaginable, on the other hand are steeped in the vibe that death maybe just around the corner.

And it's not just the terrorism scripts. Our young people are sensitive to global futures of climate change and managing our natural resources and the environment. And of course, nuclear war - did it ever go away? - is back front and centre in the power plays.

Maybe we'll just wipe ourselves out.

What do we say to our kids in the midst of the death talk that surrounds them?

One thing I've learned over the years is that this is often a bigger deal for adults than it is for kids. And the way we vibe it with them has a huge impact on their capacity to either roll with the realities of life and death, or get stuck in the frozen ice fear of the unknown.

Whatever you believe about what's on the other side - the living to be done now is good living. We don't gain anything by living less heartily, loving less warmly, embracing the joys of life less enthusiastically because death is a reality. We face death well, when we face life well.

## SHARE YOUR STORY

How have recent global events impacted your kids?

How do you go about handling your own feelings about the future?

What experience have you had of dealing with death with your kids? - What has helped?

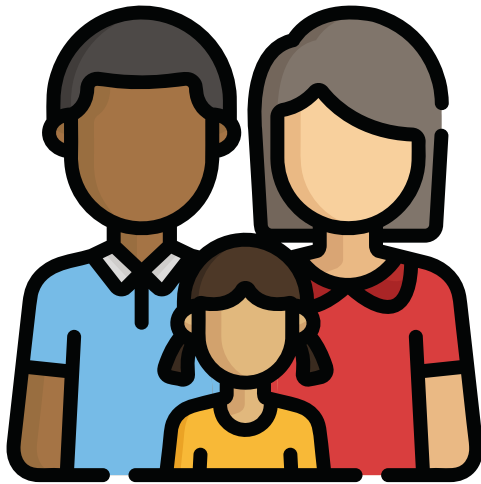
## GOD'S STORY

For a religious book, the Bible is actually pretty sketchy on what happens when we die.

The main game for God seems to be life - life now and life on and on and on.

God goes face to face with people in this life - and says 'get used to it - because what I'm working on is life that is so good it goes on and on and on in which we are face to face, completely known and thoroughly loved. That's what life is about.' We see that in Jesus. Death knocked Jesus in the face in a violent and humiliating way. He was spat in the face, smashed in the face, he faced his own questions about death with tears and prayers, alone in the dark of the night with his friends out to it.

But Jesus' story of death leads to life again. In God's story death is a part of life for all of us, but it's not the last word, the final reality. Jesus faces up with a life that is stronger than death. On the other side of death is life grounded in love that is stronger than anything.



## FACE TO FACE

Face to Face is a resource for opening the Bible in fun and creative ways with primary school aged children, teenagers and their families. It was written for use in Scripture Union Family Missions and Camps. It is easily adaptable for use in many other contexts: holiday programs, multi-age Bible activities and church.

Face to Face takes ten stories from The Bible and invites the participants to turn their face towards God through exploring the stories of those who have.

