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SESSION Two

Why should I read it?



Aims

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

Recommended activities*

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

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

Leaders' notes

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

Activities

DVD clip

Start the session by watching Chapter 2 of the DVD.

Note on the clip:

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

What happened?

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

Information point

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

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

The story...

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

Why should I?

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

Timeline*

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Things
start off**

**Things
go wrong**

**Story of
the Jews**

Hero

**Story
of the
Church**

Now

**All things
made new**

Timeline : stories

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

Order for the timeline

Things start off

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

Things go wrong

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

Story of the Jews

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

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

Hero

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

Story of the Church

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

Now

31. NOW – Between Jude and Revelation

All things made new

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

Multi-stories

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

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

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

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

The book of you?*

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

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

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

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

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

Additional activities

Design an advert

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

Bible in a minute

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

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

The Book of _____

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Psalm 119:105)

