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## EXTRA SESSIONS

# Ways to explore the Bible



### Aim

- to equip young people with the tools to engage with different Bible stories using a variety of methods

In this session there are examples of five Bible studies, each one using a different approach which is outlined below. The material in this session could be used in a variety of ways. For example, if there is space in your programme, you could designate a whole session to this material and set up each Bible study as a station around the room, inviting your group to move around the stations and engage individually. This could be done after completing all five sessions or would also be appropriate following session 3: How do I read it? You may find it helpful to gather the group together at the end of the session to briefly discuss and reflect upon which station helped them engage most with the Bible. You may choose not to discuss this but rather to gather together and end with a prayer. Alternatively, a Bible study (from the examples given) could be used at any point as you work through all five sessions. The material is designed to be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of your group and the time available, and can be used as a whole group Bible study or by individuals.

### Methods for engaging with the Bible

#### Art

Using a piece of art that links with a Bible passage can help to focus attention on the story in a different way. For some people who struggle with reading, or for those who prefer to learn visually,

this can be an alternative way than simply reading the text. You can use this technique for any Bible passage as long as you can find a painting/ photograph that is in some way related to the passage. Questions to help the young people reflect on the image can be given for individual use or group discussion. Young people may want to respond to the Bible passage through creating art themselves.

#### *Using the example*

An example of using art to engage with the Bible can be seen on page 39 entitled “Where is God?” This sheet could be used on a station for individual use, or for the young people to use at home. Alternatively you could simply adapt this for use in a group setting. You may want to show the artwork on a projector or have copies available. There is a copy of the artwork on the DVD.

#### Video

Using a video that is related to a biblical passage or theme can help to focus thoughts in a different way and may bring a passage or theme to life. There are many short videos available on the internet which relate to biblical stories. These may stimulate questions and responses from young people in a way that reading the text alone may not. Make sure the connection between the video and the Bible passage is clear.

#### *Using the example*

An example of using video to engage with the Bible can be found on page 41 entitled “Follow”.

You will need to have the means to play this clip whether you set it up as an individual station or for the whole group. The sheet with reflective questions could be used on a station for individual

use, for the young people to use at home or adapted for whole group discussion. If you don't have the equipment or time for the young people to make their own video then this can be missed out or set as a challenge for the young people to do at home.

## Lectio Divina

*Lectio Divina* is an ancient four-fold approach to reading scripture. It follows a pattern of reading, reflecting, expressing and resting. It is a slow meditative approach and one done individually. This can be used with any Bible passage.

### *Using the example*

An example of using *Lectio Divina* can be seen on page 42. This could be printed for individual use or the leaders could read from the sheet to lead and direct the stages.

## Bible Commentaries

For some, gaining more information about a Bible passage can help to deepen their understanding and aid their reflection. More detail about Bible passages, such as the historical context, background information about the author or explanations of language, can be found in Bible commentaries. There are numerous series of commentaries written, of varying ease of reading and depth of comments. Some commentaries can be quite daunting to a young person. Finding ways to help young people use the information found in these sources can help inform a deeper exploration of the Bible. One way could be for the leader to read the commentaries in advance and share key information with the group in creative ways. Alternatively, short sections of an easily-read commentary could be given to members of the group to read, discover for themselves and share amongst the group. This will of course depend on the nature and age of the group. Not all background information needs to be gained from books, you may choose to use video clips or suitable apps (for phones or tablets) or you may have someone at your church with appropriate knowledge who would be willing to speak to your group. Helping young people to see the benefits of gaining information about a Bible passage is a useful skill for their long-term discipleship journey.

### *Using the example*

There is an example of one way to use commentaries to gain insight into a Bible passage on page 43-45. This is very simple in structure and could be used for different passages if the relevant background information was sourced appropriately. In the example the extra information about the passage is written onto a sheet. However this could be delivered in more creative ways. This example is best used in a group setting where questions can be discussed, but with adaptation could be used for individuals. The key to this Bible study is enabling young people to see that having more information about a passage can aid understanding.

## Music

For centuries the Bible has been used as inspiration for hymns and songs. Listening to lyrics put to music can help some people to engage with the words in a way that reading the words alone may not. There are many examples of music that could be used ranging from modern worship songs to the most ancient of hymns. You may find it helpful to highlight the specific Bible passage that the song refers to and to have copies of the lyrics available. It may be helpful to use reflective questions to help draw out learning or insight gained from the experience of listening to the music. This way of engaging with the Bible is ideal to do individually but will also be a useful method for a group to use.

### *Using the example*

There is an example of engaging with a Bible passage through music on page 46. You may choose to play the music in this example as an internet clip with images or simply just as music. It may be useful to have the lyrics available. You may, of course, choose to use other examples of music which relate to the theme of kingship. If you wanted to have this Bible study available as a station for individuals to engage with you will need to have some mp3 players available with these songs. If you are doing this Bible study as a group you may find it helpful to sing one of these songs to finish the session.

# Where is God? – 1 Kings 19:9-13

Look at this image...



*There is also a copy of this image available on the DVD.*

What are your first impressions?

What strikes you the most?

What do you like/dislike about it?

Read 1 Kings 19:9-13

- What strikes you the most from the reading?
- Have there been times in your life where you've found God in places you didn't expect? What were they? And where did you find God?
- What similarities/differences are there between the passage and the image?
- What does the reading teach you?

Reflecting on the image and the passage, either create your own piece of art around the question, 'Where is God?' or find a picture/painting that expresses how you feel about where God is.

How has God spoken to you?

Reflect on some of the ways God speaks to people in...

- Luke 5:1-11
- Acts 9
- Exodus 3:1-6

WHERE IS GOD?

here?

Or here?

here?

here?

here?

HOPE

WWII



# Follow? – John 20:10-18

## Watch the video...

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-hW68opCLs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-hW68opCLs)

- Which bit stood out to you?
- What stories mentioned did you recognise? What were they?
- Were there any that you didn't recognise?
- Find some of the stories mentioned: what do they say about Jesus?

## Read John 20:10-18

- How do you feel about the concept of resurrection?
- What was the significance of Jesus seeing Mary Magdalene before the rest of the disciples?
- What effect does the resurrection have on you today?

## Create your own video!

Use your video to reflect on the following questions:

- What does it mean to follow Jesus?
- What do the disciples tell us about what it means to follow Jesus?
- How has following Jesus had an impact on your life?

# Servant King – John 13:1-17

*LECTIO DIVINA* MEANS SACRED READING AND IS AN ANCIENT WAY OF ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE. IT IS A PROCESS THAT ENABLES THE READER TO HAVE A DEEPER CONNECTION WITH THE PASSAGE. IT HAS A FOURFOLD APPROACH: **READ, REFLECT, EXPRESS, REST.**

Find a space in the room, make yourself comfortable, and focus on your breathing as you settle down. Reading Scripture this way is not rushed but a slow process. Take your time with each stage. Make sure you have a copy of the passage.



## READ

Read the passage through slowly and carefully. Read it a few times and focus on a word or phrase that really sticks out for you.



## REFLECT

As you find that word/phrase, repeat it to yourself slowly. Reflect on what that word/phrase might have to say to you in the context of your life, thoughts, memories, concerns, ideas.



## EXPRESS

Start to have a chat with God, in whatever way feels the most comfortable. It may just be odd words, it may be just through pictures and images that come into your head, it may be in full sentences as if you were having a conversation with another person. Talk about the thoughts that the Bible passage has raised for you. Ask God to help you to reflect and ponder on it further and deeper.



## REST

As the time draws to a close, just be still, enjoy the peace and tranquillity of simply being with God. Take yourself away from whatever else is going on, relax, and be thankful for the time you've just spent. You don't need to have a conversation with God or force any feelings, just rest knowing that God is with you.

# Last Supper – Luke 22:14-23



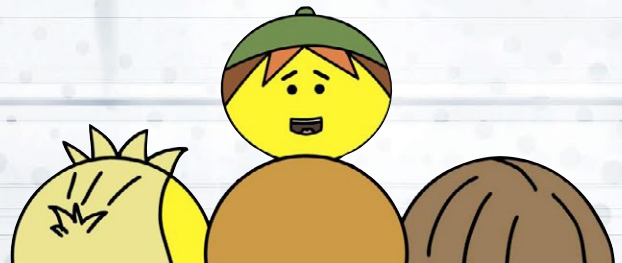
**READ THE PASSAGE ONCE.**

What words or phrases stand out?

**READ THE PASSAGE AGAIN.**

It may be interesting to look at the same passage in different versions/translations.

**WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE** about the passage? You may find it helpful to discuss your questions in small groups if possible. (You don't need to have the answers!)



**NOW READ THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET.**

This gives more detail about the passage. Read this in small groups and discuss the questions.

**READ THE PASSAGE AGAIN.**

Spend a short time quietly reflecting on what you have learned and discussed about the passage and what challenges it may have raised.

The process used here may be helpful in any further personal Bible study.

- Reading
- Listening/thinking about/questioning the passage
- Finding out more about the passage
- Discussing with others
- Personal reflection

# Background Information – Luke 22:14-23

## PASSOVER

Passover is a Jewish festival and at the time of Jesus was a particularly important festival when pilgrims would travel to Jerusalem for the duration of the festival.

Passover remembered the story of when the Israelites were held as slaves in Egypt. God sent ten plagues onto Egypt; the last was the plague of the death to the first born. To avoid this plague the Israelites had to sacrifice a lamb and smear the blood on the doorposts of their houses. Moses eventually led the people to freedom across the Red Sea.

The celebrations at Passover remember this story. On the Passover table there would have been food and drink as symbols to remember different parts of the story. The table would have had bread and wine on it as part of the meal. During the Passover meal, wine would be drunk altogether to remember key events in the story. Also unleavened bread would be broken apart and shared and then eaten by everyone together to remember the escape from Egypt.

## SYMBOLS

Jesus uses the symbols of the bread and the wine from the Passover table and made them about himself. The implication is that God set the people free through Moses, and now people will be free through Jesus, but in a different way.

Just as the lamb was sacrificed to save the Israelites on the night of the last plague, so Jesus will be sacrificed to save the people – the wine now represents his blood.

There was a glass of wine for Elijah at the Passover meal that remained untouched, as it was a symbol that the Jews were still waiting for the Messiah. It would not be drunk until the Messiah came. After the supper Jesus ‘took the cup’: this was a powerful symbol that he was the Messiah.



## THE OLD COVENANT

The old covenant was that the Jewish people promised to obey God and keep God’s commandments. Jesus brought in a new relationship, where it wasn’t just about showing that you could keep the commandments, but instead it was about what was inside people’s hearts. This is the new covenant. Whenever a covenant was agreed upon it was sealed by blood being spilt. Jesus uses wine to symbolise his blood which seals the new covenant.



## OTHER THINGS ...

Jesus didn't try and give the disciples a theory about his death, but by what he did he was telling them that he would die but that it would be for a purpose.

Judas (who went on to betray Jesus) was there throughout the whole meal.

The Passover meal happened in an upper room. It was common for an upper room to be used as a place where a rabbi could meet and talk with his disciples.

Luke was a Gentile (non-Jew) and probably a doctor. He also is believed to have written the book of Acts. He is the only New Testament writer who was not a Jew. He was writing for a non-Jewish audience.

## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What piece(s) of information did you not know before?
2. Which piece of information (if any) has made you think about this story differently?
3. How do you think the disciples would have been feeling? Would they have understood what was happening?
4. Did Judas and Jesus both know what Judas would do? How might Judas have been feeling?

# God as King – Matthew 21:1-11



What does the concept of 'King' mean to you?



What does it make you think about?



Read the passage through, and compare Jesus' entry to Jerusalem with the celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee or other royal event.

1. How are they different?
2. How are they the same?
3. What are the differences between our attitude to someone being a king, and what Jesus thought being a king was all about?

As you ponder these questions, use the following songs as a focus for your thoughts; reflect on the lyrics and what they have to say about the idea of being a king.

- Here is our king [www.youtube.com/watch?v=F45o6Fx9EtE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F45o6Fx9EtE)
- The servant king [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrQiLEO4D5s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrQiLEO4D5s)
- Build your kingdom here [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbdJXKqVgtg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbdJXKqVgtg)
- King of wonders [www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hmvEPVLOPs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hmvEPVLOPs)