



Christian Education

Year 8 (age 13 -14)

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Year 8



God is Love 5 Weeks

Outcomes:

At the completion of this unit students will understand:

- That God created the family structure
- The Bible gives instructions on family relationships
- That parents are not always perfect
- How single parent families are to be supported
- How to deal with broken relationships within families
- The best way to share God's love with unbelievers
- The best way to share God's love with people of other religions
- That the body of Christ is an example of a large family, and exists through loving relationships between fellow members with Christ as the head
- That Jesus told us to share God's love with love everyone, even our enemies

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

The Family: traditional values versus changing moral standards in the world today; respect for those who love and care for us.

Link between "God is Love" and classroom topics:

Love is the cement that holds the family together.

Values

compassion; cultural understanding, empathy, appreciation of family and community, kindness, gentleness, respect, friendliness, forgiveness

Biography

Elizabeth Fry

God is Love

Week 1

Love within a family

Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16 Honour your father and your mother.

1 John 4:20 – 21 If we hate our brother we cannot say that we love God.

1 Tim 5:8 A father's responsibility to provide for the household

Colossians 3:18-21 Rules for husbands, wives and children

1 John 4:20-21 If we hate our brother we cannot say that we love God.

Introduction

Read Exodus 20:12.

In this commandment God promises to do two things if we obey. One is long life. The other is a good life. But if we break this commandment then the opposite is true.

When we do not honour our parents we can get bitter about their faults. That bitterness can lead to rejecting all authority.

Discussion:

What evidence do we see in society today of youth rejecting authority?

Could it be that it started with disrespect for parents?

Who is the boss of the home?

The Lord Jesus must be the FIRST "boss" of your home. Dad has to be next, then Mum, in that order. The other members of the family are to be subject to them. Dad is to lead the house under God and provide for all its needs. The provision is not just 'things'; God expects Dad to take care of his wife and children.

God says, "Anyone who does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." 1 Tim 5:8

Does provision just mean financial provision? What else must he provide?

Ans: Love; time with his wife and children; spiritual and emotional guidance for the family

What is the mother's role?

A mother is to be the inspirer of the home. She is to stand behind Dad and encourage him in his work and leadership; she needs to be there when she is needed for comfort and advice.

What if this is NOT true about your family? What if your parents do not know Jesus? Children who love Jesus can be a positive influence in the home. God can use you to help your family.

God did not say, "Love your parents if they are nice to you." He said, "love, honour and obey your parents as you would obey the Lord." This means that as long as you

live in their home, and as long as they don't ask you to do something forbidden in the Bible, then you are to obey them for Jesus' sake.

Are parents always perfect?

Remember that parents are people, and they have problems in life, just as you do. God can use you to help and support your parents.

What if one parent has died or moved away?

In some families the father or mother is alone trying to bring up the children. Older brothers or sisters may have to carry more than their share of the load, but they can help their parents by being responsible and trustworthy. If it's a Mum who is on her own, then it is also the responsibility of the church to give support.

What if you think your parents are over strict?

It is important to show them that you can be trusted. Do exactly what you promise to do. If you tell them that you will be home at a certain time, then be there. Do all the jobs you are given. If you can prove that you are trustworthy then they may relax a little.

How do we deal with resentment?

Whatever wrongs you think your family may have done towards you, it is important to forgive them. You can show them that you have forgiven them by helping out around the house. You will find that something strange happens to your heart. As you do these things, step by step, God will restore the love you once had for them.

Reference: Pratney, W., Doorways to Discipleship chapter 10

God is Love

Week 2

Loving the body of Christ

Bible references

John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1; Galatians 4:6 Who are God's children?

Acts 2:46-47 The family of believers met together.

Hebrews 10:25: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Colossians 1:18 Christ is the head of the church.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 One body, many members

Romans 12:5 One body, many parts

Ephesians 4:16 The body of Christ working together

1 Peter 2:5 We are like living stones, together being built into a temple

Introduction

Why is it good to be part of a family?

We have parents to love us, provide for us and protect us. We have brothers and sisters to share our lives with. Older brothers and sisters can help younger brothers and sisters. Members of a family can support one another.

What do we learn by being part of a family?

We learn to love, share, help each other and work together.

When we are a child of God we are welcomed into a big family. All those who have Jesus as their Saviour are part of this family, and God is their Heavenly Father.

Bible study

What do we have to do to become a child of God, and a member of God's big family?

Read these verses: John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1; Galatians 4:6

In the book of Acts we read about the beginnings of the Christian church as we know it. Read Colossians 1:18. What is the meaning of the word 'church' in this verse? Is it a building or a group of believers? Who is the head of the church? Who is the body?

What did the early Christians do when they met together? (Acts 2:42-43)

What is the main purpose of meeting together? (Hebrews 10:24-25)

The church around the world is made up of many members who worship in different ways, in different types of buildings, with different ways of running their congregations. The Christian church is one body with different parts.

Read 1 Corinthians 12: 12-20. How weak a body would be if we were all fingers, or all feet, or all eyes and no ears. Every part of the body contributes to the strength of the whole.

In the same way, different churches place importance on different aspects of Christian truth, but we share the same love for our Lord Jesus Christ. The different types of churches are called 'denominations'.

List some examples of different denominations.

There may be differences, but the important thing is that we work together for one purpose: to be lights in a dark world and to share the Gospel of Christ.

Something to think about

To make a fire you need lots of sticks, all placed together.

If you separate the sticks while they are burning, one by one they will go out.

How is this similar to Christians being together?

Is it easier to keep our "light shining" when we are together with other Christians?

Being together with other members of God's family is called fellowship.

Quiz

How many smaller words can you make using the letters from the word FELLOWSHIP?
(fellow, fell, low, ship, hip)

God is Love

Week 3

Loving unbelievers

Mark 16: 15 Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all mankind.

John 17:15-18 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

Matthew 11:19 Jesus, friend of publicans and sinners

Matthew 9:9-13 Matthew the tax collector

Romans 5:8 But God has shown us how much He loves us; it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! (GNB)

Introduction

As Christians, what does it mean to be 'in the world but not 'of the world'?

Before Jesus went back to heaven, he told his disciples to 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all mankind'. (Mark 16: 15) This definitely means that as Christians we are to be an influence in the world.

But Jesus said that He was not of this world and either were his disciples. Let's read his prayer in John 17:15-18.

Discuss:

What does it mean to be in the world but not of the world?

Why do Christians need protection when they are doing God's work 'in the world'?

How did Jesus set the example of being 'in the world but not of the world'?

Jesus did not mix exclusively with people who liked him and agreed with him. He made a special effort to reach out to those who were sinners. (Read Matthew 11:19.)

Can you think of anyone who was hated for being dishonest, and came to know Jesus?
(*Zacchaeus; Matthew*)

Matthew the tax collector

Read Matthew 9:9-13.

Matthew was a tax collector. Tax collectors were people who used to collect money for the king. The king would use the money to build roads and bridges and other things the country needed. Most tax collectors were dishonest. They would keep some of the money for themselves. Zacchaeus was one who did this. People did not like tax collectors.

We don't know whether Matthew was dishonest, but we do know that when Jesus asked Matthew to be His follower, Matthew left his tax-collecting at once. Lots of Matthew's friends wanted to meet Jesus too. They all came to see Jesus at Matthew's house.

Some people called Pharisees said, "Isn't Jesus supposed to be a good person? Why is He making friends with all these dishonest men?"

Jesus heard them talking. He said to them, "I haven't only come to help good people. I have come to help sick people, poor people, and dishonest people like these tax-collectors!"

The Pharisees went away. But Matthew wanted to stay with Jesus forever. He was so happy that Jesus had been kind to him, a tax-collector! He was so happy that Jesus had forgiven him for all the wrong things he had ever done.

Discussion

Read Romans 5:8. On the basis of this verse, why should we extend kindness to those who do not live according to God's principles?

What should our motive be for reaching out to these people? (*sharing the Gospel*)

How should we share the Gospel? ... *e.g. tell them they are going to Hell? Find out what needs they have? Tell them God loves them?*

What precautions should Christians take when reaching out to non-Christians? (*ask for God's protection against Satan*)

God is Love

Week 4

Loving people of other religions

Bible references

Acts 17:16-32 Paul's speech to the people of Athens: the unknown god

Romans 1:20 God has made Himself known through the creation.

John 14:6 Jesus the way, the truth, the life

Introduction

The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only way to God the Father, and that no one can come to God except through Jesus, (John 14:6).

To people who are not believers, this sounds like narrow thinking. They think that all religions are equal and that people can believe in any god they like."

It is true that people can believe in any god they like, but not all religions will get people to heaven. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the only way to heaven. He sacrificed His life to make it possible. People only have to read the Bible to understand this.

What if a person is born into another religion? Or what if they have never heard about Jesus?

Romans 1:20: “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

This verse tells us that it is possible for people to come to knowledge of the true God through looking at the Creation. Although they may not have heard of Jesus, they can understand that there is a great God who created everything.

But God would want all to come to know Jesus if that was possible, and we have been given instructions to preach the Gospel to all mankind.

How should a Christian present the Gospel to a person of another religion?

Paul gave us an example when he went to Athens and met people who had never heard of Jesus.

Read Acts 17:16-32.

Paul looked for a way of presenting the Gospel without putting the people down for worshiping false gods. He didn’t try to burn their temples or their holy books, or hate them and fight with them. He did what he could to help them understand. He found the altar to the ‘unknown god’ and explained that this was the God who created everything. The Athenians previously did not know the Creator God, but now they had an opportunity to learn about Him. They all stood and listened.

Christians should share their knowledge of Jesus with all the people they can, but they should do this sensitively and with love. It is everyone’s right to believe what they want to believe. This is called ‘religious freedom’. Unfortunately, there are many countries in the world where there is no religious freedom. For example, in China and Russia, the Christian church has to go underground because Christianity is not allowed.

Christians need to speak up for their right to religious freedom. Even in nations that once had a Christian foundation, there is a growing attitude of hatred towards Christians and their values. Christians are now persecuted for voicing their views on Christian marriage and abortion. Fortunately in Fiji, Christians, and members of other religions, still have the freedom to stand for what they believe.

What are some of the religions followed in Fiji, apart from Christianity?

In Fiji we all try to live together happily, with the freedom to follow the religion of our choice. This is a basic, internationally recognized ‘human right’. We can talk about our differences in religion with one another but always sharing our views with love, not forcing our views on others, not expressing hatred or using violence.

God is Love

Week 5

Loving your enemies

Bible references

Matthew 5: 43-44 and Luke 6:27-36 Love your enemies

Romans 5:10 We were once God's enemies

Romans 5:5 The love of God poured out into our hearts

Matthew 7:12 Do unto others what you would have them do to you.

Bible lesson

Matthew 5:43

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"

Here Jesus is quoting a teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Leviticus 19:18 told the children of Israel to "love your neighbor as yourself." God's Word never said to "hate your enemy." The religious leaders added that part to the law. It is really the easy thing for us to do. But Jesus has an entirely different way of looking at things. He does not tell us that we should only love those close to us and hate our enemies. His kingdom works in a much different way.

Have you ever heard people say that we should only like those who like us? Maybe you have heard that we should only love those who love you back, and to hate your enemies. But even if the world tells us that this is how we should be, Jesus had something very different to say.

Matthew 5:44

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. . . "

This sounds unreasonable. Jesus said, "Love our enemies! But what if they hate us and want to hurt us? What if they curse us, wish evil and bad times on us, and even hate us, and they spitefully use us to get what they want?"

Jesus said, "Do good to those who hate us."

We might think that it would be much easier to hate them back. But Jesus wants us to pray for those that persecute and torment us. Fighting back and hurting back is man's way, but God's way is different.

Romans 5:10

For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!

We were once the enemies of God, through our sin, but God chose to love us. He sent Jesus to die for us, to bring us back to Him. If God loved us when we were His enemies, then we should also love others, even our enemies.

How do we find the strength to love our enemies?

First, we have to have Jesus as our Saviour. He gives us new life so we can step into God's kingdom as God's child. Then we ask Him for His love.

Romans 5:5

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

When you feel like being mean, or yelling back, or hurting back, you must stop and ask God to pour His love out into your heart by His Holy Spirit. God gives us true love for others.

Matthew 7:12

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Find out more about loving your enemies from **Luke 6:27-36**

Questions:

1. Who are we supposed to love even when they have wronged us? (Those who have hurt us.)
2. If someone wants to borrow something, are we supposed to let him or her borrow it? (Yes.)
3. Are we supposed to treat others the way we want to be treated? (Yes. The Bible says "Do to others, as you would have them do to you".)
4. If we give something to our enemy to show love, should we expect to receive something in return? (No. We should give without expecting anything in return.)
5. Why does Jesus expect us to forgive those who hurt us? (Because He forgave those who crucified Him)
6. God wants us to show mercy to our enemy. What do you think it means to show mercy? (Mercy is being kind, forgiving, and loving towards someone who you feel doesn't deserve it. God tells us to treat everyone with kindness.)

Year 8

God is a Provider 5 Weeks



Outcomes

At the completion of this module students will understand that:

- God wants us to be generous
- God has provided generously for us through the Creation
- Giving to others is giving to God.
- Everyone can give
- God provides for all our needs when we trust Him

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

Nations rich and poor: a study of food distribution around the world

Link between “God is Provider” and classroom topics:

God can use us to provide for others. There is enough food for everyone in the world but it is unequally distributed.

Values:

faith; care for the environment, peace, generosity, thankfulness

Biography:

George Mueller

God is Provider

Week 1

God wants us to share what He provides

Focus

God has provided enough food for the whole world, but greed and selfishness prevent many from receiving it.

Bible references

Proverbs 22:9 Be generous and share your food with the poor. You will be blessed for it. (GNB)

Proverbs 19:17; Proverbs 21:13 Give to the poor

Isaiah 58:7-11 Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. (GNB)

John 6:1-14 The boy who shared his loaves and fish.

Preparation

Buy a bag of dried beans or peas. Have ready three clear containers such as glasses or jars.

Introduction: Bean sharing exercise

The object of this exercise is to realise the differences in food consumption around the world.

Students can look at a map of the world and together, make a list of countries that are rich, poor or in-between. Note that in most countries there will be rich AND poor, but we are thinking about the greater majority of the population: is the majority of the population rich or poor? Also discuss: what is the definition of 'rich' and 'poor'. A rich country would have the majority of the population living in a comfortable house, having clothes to wear and enough food to eat. It does not mean that everyone has heaps of spare money. A poor country would be the opposite: the majority of the population NOT living in a comfortable home, NOT having enough food to eat.

Examples of countries to categorize: Australia, Japan, U.S.A, Germany, Cambodia, Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique, Bangladesh

Ask for three volunteer students to come out. Ask the first to fill one jar with dried beans/peas to represent the rich countries. Ask the second and third volunteers to pour into their jars beans/peas to represent the poor and the in-between countries.

Discussion

Name three countries that can produce more than enough food for their population. What often happens to the surplus? (*often wasted*)

What prevents poor countries from receiving the surplus? (*wars and corrupt governments*)

Why is it that some countries cannot produce enough food for their population?
(*drought, over-population*)

What do you think God would want people to do about the food crisis?

Is it true to say that God has not provided enough food for the whole world?

How can we help to provide for those who have little?

Bean sharing exercise continued

Now ask for a fourth volunteer to come out and share the beans/peas equally between the three jars. They pour some beans from the 'rich' jar into the 'poor' jar. Maybe the 'in-between' jar may also need to contribute some.

Bible research

Because God has given people a free will, He cannot change the hearts of people who are selfish and greedy. He cannot change the hearts of people who start wars and deliberately pollute the earth. However, Christians can do their part in sharing what they have with the needy. Read Proverbs 22:9 and Isaiah 58:7-11.

Think about the story of the loaves and fishes. How much food did the boy have? (John 6:9)

It seemed that the small amount of food was next to nothing compared to the amount of food needed. However, because the boy was willing to give, Jesus was able to bless and multiply the amount.

Sometimes Christians who decide to help the poor feel the same as the disciples did: so little food and so many to feed. However God can do great things when we are willing to give what we have. Something as small as a mustard seed can grow into a big tree.

The story of George Mueller

In the 1830s, George Mueller was disturbed by the number of homeless children throughout England. Although he himself had no money to provide for these children, he prayed for God's provision, and proved the faithfulness of God. He prayed for enough money to set up an orphanage, and without telling anyone of the need, started receiving funds from various Christian people.

On December 7th, 1835, he wrote in his diary:

'Today I received the first shilling for the orphan house. Afterwards I received another shilling from a German brother.'

On December 9th, he wrote:

'This afternoon, the first piece of furniture was given - a large wardrobe.'

On the evening of the 9th he addressed a meeting, announcing the planned establishment of the home.

"The home will only be established," he said, "if God provides the means and suitable staff to run it."... "Under no circumstances," he continued, "will any individual ever be asked for money or materials."... "The institution will be for truly destitute children;

any orphan whose relatives are able and willing to pay for their maintenance will be ineligible. The children will receive a plain education. The chief and special aim of the institution will be to seek, with God's special blessing, to bring the children to the knowledge of Jesus Christ by instructing them in the Scriptures."

As God continued to provide, George Mueller eventually supervised the building of five large orphanages, housing thousands of children.

(For the extended version see "Biographies".)

Discussion

1. George Muller did not receive money for the orphans by asking people for it. How do you think he received the money?
2. Describe the education that the children received.
3. Do countries such as Australia and U.S.A. produce more than enough food?
4. What often happens to the surplus?
5. What prevents poor countries from receiving the surplus?
6. Why is it that some countries cannot produce enough food for their population?
7. What do you think God would want people to do about the food crisis?
8. Has God provided enough food for the whole world?
9. Who is responsible for the hunger that many people experience?
10. What happens to the person who shares his food with the poor? (Proverbs 22:9)
11. How can I share what I have with the hungry?

God is Provider

Week 2

Food from God's Garden

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground - everything that has the breath of life in it - I give every green plant." Genesis 1:29-30

Imagine a world where everything was perfect. No fighting, no killing...animals and people all getting on perfectly together. People and animals ate only plants, so there was no need for killing. Imagine a world where there were no cold nights and no stifling hot days. The climate was absolutely perfect. The weather was just right, day and night. The plants grew wonderfully in the warmth, and they were watered by underground springs, and by dew, which formed on the earth. All the plants and seeds were edible, that is, except for one. What a feast the first man and woman had, eating all the delicious food God had provided. But what about that one they were not to eat. It was a fruit from a tree called 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil'. Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, disobeyed God. They ate from the tree.

Now God's perfect plan had been destroyed! God now had to curse the earth. The plants were no longer perfect. Thorns and thistles grew. Not all the plants were edible now. Animals were no longer satisfied with plants for food. They started killing one another. God was heartbroken. He had to make a new plan, but in the meantime, the perfect world would be imperfect.

The original garden provided enough food for Adam and Eve, as well as all the animals. After the Fall, the curse on the earth meant that the climate was not perfect everywhere. There were floods and droughts, which were not part of God's original plan. However, God made it possible for people to survive by providing foods that could be stored for times of emergency. Seeds, like grains, could be harvested in the summer and stored for use in the winter. God also allowed the eating of animals, for survival in such times, when there were no plants to be found.

Seeds are an important part of God's provision, because not only are they an excellent food by themselves, not only can they be stored for long periods, but also, they can start new plants. God intended that people use seeds to farm crops, and so His provision for the creation was on-going.

Some places in the world experience drought. This is a period of time when there is no rain to water the crops, and there is no harvest. The drought means there is a famine, when there is not enough to eat. In God's perfect world there would be no droughts or famines. Unfortunately, God's perfect world has been spoiled by sin, so it is no longer perfect. However, God has made a way. God expects those people who live in lands where there is plenty, to share with those lands that have little.

"Why doesn't this always happen?" you may ask. "Why are there children starving because of famine?"

There are many people who are willing to give food and money to people suffering from famine. However, there are other people who want to stop the food getting through. Because of wars and evil powers, food often does not get through and people starve. This is not God's plan, but the plan of evil greedy people.

There are many places, however, where food gifts can get through to the people. There are many organizations which make this possible. They need people like us, who have enough, to give to those in need.

Although many plants are no longer edible because of the curse, there are still many, many nutritious plants in God's wonderful world. God put them there for the health of His people. Plant foods straight from nature have excellent health properties. They were part of God's original perfect plan, for the survival of the people He made. Let's thank God for the wonderful plant foods He provided, right from the beginning of the creation!

Discussion

What did Adam and Eve and the animals eat for food before the Fall?

How did some plants change after the Fall?

Why did they change?

What are some of the health benefits of plant foods straight from nature?

Name three excellent properties of seeds.

What are some ways in which we can make our money go further, so that there's enough left to give away to those in need?

Some ideas:

- Doing without something so that you could give to someone in need.
- Doing without junk or rubbish foods and drinks.

Did you know?

The most expensive foods are the junk foods because these are empty foods. That means that they contain very few nutrients. Compare the cost of a piece of fruit with a packet of potato crisps. Which is better for you?

How can we give money to those in need?

There are many ways in which we can give money to those in need. Some families regularly give money to support an overseas child in need. Schools and churches can also do this. Eating less expensive, but healthier food is a good way to save some money to give away. A money box is a good idea, so that you can save regularly.

God is Provider

Week 3

Everyone can give

Bible references

Matthew 25:35-40 I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink.

Luke 6:38 Give and it shall be given.

Mark 12:41-44 The widow's gift

Psalm 112:5 Be generous.

Introduction

Revise the story of the widow's gift. (Mark 12:41-44)

A modern-day parallel:

Four students could be asked in advance to prepare the following role play.

Narrator: There is a fund-raising event to collect money for the poor. Everyone who comes to the event is asked to give a donation.

Collector: Can you please give a donation?

A well-dressed person: "There you are," (gives a small coin or one note)

An old person, who is obviously poor: "There you are." (empties his pockets and gives the last of his money)

Bible research

Matthew 25:35-39 What is this passage saying?

Panov's Christmas Story

A long time ago in a small Russian village, lived an old shoe maker. He was known by the people of the village as Grandpa Panov. He was not very rich, but he had all he needed: his small house and his shoe making tools. One Christmas he started feeling lonely, and started to complain to himself. He sat down and decided to read from his old Bible. From the book of Matthew he read the story of Christ's birth. He thought about the gifts the wise men brought to Jesus. "I wonder what I could have given to Jesus," he thought. "I have no money for expensive gifts." Then as he glanced over at his shoe-making tools, he suddenly thought of what he could give. "I would make a tiny pair of shoes for the baby, from the finest leather," he said to himself.

Grandpa Panov turned the pages of his Bible and read from another part of Matthew. "For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you took me in. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me..." He read no more as his head was nodding and soon he was fast asleep in his chair. As he slept he had a dream. In the dream he heard a voice speaking to him. The voice said, "Look out in the street tomorrow, for I will come to you." It was the voice of Jesus.

The next day Grandpa Panov remembered his dream. He looked out the window but did not see Jesus. Instead he saw an old road-sweeper, so cold and lonely. Grandpa Panov asked him to come in for some coffee and to warm himself by the fire.

Then he saw a young woman carrying a baby. She looked so tired, and her clothes were worn. The baby had no shoes. Grandpa Panov asked them in and gave them some of the cabbage soup he had cooking on the stove. Then he remembered a little pair of shoes he had made some time ago. He had been keeping them because they were the best ones he had ever made. He looked at the baby's bare feet. "These are for the baby," he said.

Later in the afternoon he saw some children playing in the street. Their parents were poor and couldn't afford expensive presents. "I know something I can give them!" he thought. "Would you like to hear a story?" he asked the children. He told them the true story of Christmas.

By the end of the day Grandpa had been able to help quite a number of people. His day had not been so lonely after all. However he was disappointed. The most important visitor had not come. He continued to look out the window until dark. Finally he went to bed. As he slept he dreamed once again. In the dream he heard the same voice that he had heard the night before.

"Didn't you see me, Grandpa Panov?" said the voice. I was hungry and you gave me food. I was lonely and you invited me in. All the time you were helping others, you were helping me."

A traditional Russian folk tale

Discussion

1. After reading the story of the three wise men, what did Panov think about?
2. How did Panov help the poor on Christmas day?
3. Why was he disappointed?
4. What did Jesus say at the end of the story?

Sharing Activity

Students can work in pairs to plan something they could make together to give away to others. This can be done for homework.

God is Provider

Week 4

God provide the things we need

Bible references

Exodus chapters 16 – 17 God provided for the Israelites in the desert

Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

John 10:1-18 The Good Shepherd.

Psalms 23 The Lord is my shepherd.

Isaiah 40:1 He feeds His flock like a shepherd.

Introduction

Ask if anyone has heard the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread". Does anyone know the name of the whole prayer? (*The Lord's prayer*)

Who said this? It was Jesus who told us how to pray. He showed us that it was important to pray daily for the food we need. Of course we need to thank God for our food too.

Why should we pray for our food?

If we belong to God, shouldn't He just provide it without us asking?

God wants us to pray for our food just so that we remember that it is He who provides it. So many people forget that, and are not thankful at all. God also wants us to *trust* Him for our food. Now that may be easy when there is plenty of food, and when we have enough money to buy it. But what if you didn't have enough? Would you be able to trust God to provide it?

God provided for the Israelites in the desert

This is what the Israelites had to do after they were set free from Egypt. As they started out on their long journey to the Promised Land, they had to travel through the desert, where there was no food. They couldn't buy or grow food out there. There were no shops. They soon ran out of the bread they had brought with them. But God provided. He sent bread! It was called *manna*. Every morning when they woke up it was there on the ground. All they had to do was to pick it up. God provided for the people's needs. However he didn't provide for those who were greedy. Some people wanted to collect a whole lot and put it in a bag for the next day...just in case God didn't provide. Do you know what? The next day the bread was mouldy and filled with worms. God wanted to teach the Israelites to trust Him daily for their food. We must trust Him daily too.

1. What is unleavened bread?
2. Why did the Israelites have to make unleavened bread?
3. What was the name of the bread that God provided in the desert?
4. What happened to the bread collected by greedy people who wanted to save it for the next day?
5. How often should we thank God for providing the things we need?

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

God cares and provides for His children as a shepherd cares and provides for his sheep.

In the land where Jesus lived, people were very familiar with sheep and shepherds. That is why the Bible speaks so much about them. The shepherd in Bible times cared for the sheep without the aid of fences and sheep dogs. Shepherds spent most of their time with the sheep and knew the name of every sheep in the flock. Shepherds protected the sheep from wild animals. They found fresh grass for them to eat and water to drink.

When God wanted to tell us how much He loved and cared for us, He thought of the care the shepherd showed for his flock. If God cares that much for us, He will certainly make sure we have everything we need.

Bible research

Read Isaiah 40:1 and Psalm 23. How does God show His care for us?

Read John 10: 14 & 15. What does Jesus call himself? How do we know that He really cares for us? (*He is willing to die for us.*)

Activity: Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need.

He provides ____ (*rest, food, water*) _____ (verse 2)

He provides ____ (*strength and guidance*) ____ (verse 3)

He provides ____ (*protection and comfort*) ____ (verse 4)

He provides ____ (*joy and fulfilment*) _____ (verse 5)

He provides ____ (*love and a home in heaven*)_ (verse 6)

God is Provider

Week 5

God our Father cares for us

Bible reference:

Matthew 6:25-27 Do not worry about what you should eat...look at the birds of the air and how he feeds them...

Matthew 10:31 You are worth more than many sparrows.

Ruth 1-5 God provided for Ruth and Naomi

Isaiah 41:10 Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Psalms 31:14 But my trust is in you, O LORD; you are my God.

Psalms 56:3 But when I am afraid, I will put my confidence in you. Yes, I will trust the promises of God. And since I am trusting Him, what can mere man do to me?

Psalms 20:7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

Introduction

Parents love their children and try their best to give their children the things they need. God, our Heavenly Father, also provides for us the things we need in life.

What are some of the things God provides? (Revise Psalm 23 from last week.)

Let's look at some of the things we need at different stages in life.

What does a baby need? (food and liquid, a warm home, a bed, sleep, love)

What additional things do we need as we grow up...?

...when we are six years old

...when we are teenagers

...when we are adults

...when we are old

God provides and cares for us

Read Matthew 6:25-27 and Matthew 10:31

When God's people really *trust* their Heavenly Father then He will provide, just as He has promised us in the Bible. If God provides for the birds, won't He provide for us?

He loves us much more than the birds.

The picture in the workbooks shows someone falling backwards into the hands of their friends. This person does this because they trust their friends not to let them down. This person trusts that their friends will not play a trick and pull their hands away. They trust that their friends are strong enough to support them. Who is the most trustworthy person in the universe? Just as the person in the picture is putting their life in the hands of their friends, God wants us to put our life into His hands.

In the Bible in the book of Ruth there is the account of two ladies who had to trust God to provide for them. Their names were Ruth and Naomi. Ruth was Naomi's

mother-in-law. They were very sad because their husbands had died. Naomi originally came from Bethlehem, but she had been living in a foreign land for some time. One day she said, "I am going home to Bethlehem."

Ruth, who was not from Bethlehem, said, "I want to go with you, Naomi," "No", said Naomi. "You will be happier here with your sisters. Bethlehem is a foreign country for you".

Ruth said to Naomi, "I want to live where you live, and I want to go where you go". "All right", said Naomi.

So the two ladies went on a long journey to Bethlehem together. But how would God provide food for them? When they arrived they had no food. They had used all the food they had taken with them for the journey.

In Bethlehem it was harvest time. People were busy working in the fields. Some of the workers saw them coming. "Is that Naomi?" asked one.

In the land of Israel, poor people who had no food were allowed to gather corn, which had been left behind in the fields. However it was sometimes hard to find enough. Naomi was getting too old to work in the field, so Ruth had to collect enough corn for both of them. One day, a kind man named Boaz said to Naomi, "Who is this stranger you have brought with you".

"She is my daughter-in-law, Ruth," said Naomi.

"Let her come and work in my field," said Boaz.

He told his servants to leave more of the corn behind for Ruth to pick up. Every evening Ruth went home to Naomi with a big basket of corn. They were very happy and thanked God for providing for them.

God cared for Ruth, and wanted to make her even happier. One day she married Boaz, and they had a baby boy, named Obed. Naomi was very happy too, for she had a little grandson to care for.

Questions:

1. What must we do if we want God to provide for us? (*trust*)
2. What is the opposite of trust? (*worry*)
3. How did God provide for Ruth and Naomi?
4. Who allowed Ruth to gather corn from his field?
5. What did God provide for Ruth, over and above food?

Year 8

God is our Saviour 3 Weeks



Outcomes:

At the completion of this module students will understand:

- The reason Jesus died on the cross
- That Jesus came alive again and is still alive today
- The gift of Salvation

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

The study of Europe

Link between “God is our Saviour” and classroom topics:

John 3:16 For God loved the world so much that He sent his only son so that whoever believes in Him should not die but have everlasting life.

God wants the people of every country in the whole world to come to know Him, so that they can live forever with Him in heaven. People of every nation can come to know the true God by asking Jesus to forgive their sins and then to follow Him. Some people have never heard about Jesus so those who know about Him must tell others. How did Fijians come to know about Jesus?

Values:

faith; compassion, cultural understanding, empathy, thankfulness

Biographies:

Sefanaia Sukanaivalu, Reona Peterson

God is our Saviour

Easter Week 1

Jesus died for you

Bible references

John 19:28-37 The death of Jesus

Matthew 26:36-44 Jesus prays in the garden

Matthew 27:46 "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

After three years of public ministry where He often spoke about His suffering and death, Jesus was arrested, beaten, and crucified until He died. This was the worst day for His family and disciples, but it was a day God had planned since the creation of the world.

Let's look at the true story of what happened when Jesus came to take our punishment.

Read John 19:28-37.

Questions:

- How does reading or hearing this description of Jesus' death make you feel?
- What does Jesus' death mean to Christians?
- What did Jesus mean when He said, "It is finished"?
- How did Jesus' death on the cross allow us to have our sins forgiven?
- Is everyone in the whole world automatically forgiven of sin or do they have to do something?
- Why did John write down all the details about Jesus dying on the cross?

The sacrificial lamb of God

Jesus spoke to His disciples often about His coming suffering and death. When He prayed in the garden, Jesus knew what was going to happen. It wasn't going to be easy, but He chose to obey His Heavenly Father because this was the reason for His life as a human on earth. From the foundation of time, God had planned to send a gift to His created world that would reconcile all people to Him. When the angel told Mary and Joseph to name their baby Jesus, it was because He would save His people from their sins. His death was a promised sacrifice. John tells us in this chapter of the details about Jesus' death foretold by the prophets hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

The Old Testament system for having sins forgiven was to offer sacrifices. God gave this system to Moses and the Jewish people as their means of being forgiven for their sins. That sacrificial system was a picture or a symbol of what was going to come. It was a symbol of what Jesus Christ would do. HE would become the sacrifice

for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus paid the price for our sins and bought us back to God, as redeemed people. 'Redeemed' means that once we were sinners, but now we are not. God does not see our sin anymore when we accept Jesus. Jesus with His sinless life was the perfect lamb, without fault, laid on the altar as God's own sacrifice for His people.

There are no bystanders at the cross; someone correctly said the crucifixion had no uninvolved observers. Everyone there was involved in what happened more than they ever realized. The Roman soldiers, the religious Pharisees, the other criminals, Jesus' mother and friends, and everyone watching were equally responsible for his death.

This may sound strange, but Jesus died to pay for the sins of the whole world. All those people, and all of us too, are sinners in God's sight and are separated from Him. Jesus died to set us free from the penalty and power of sin. He needed to do this because God is righteous and holy, and having our sins taken away by Jesus is the only way we can have a relationship with God. While our sins made the cross necessary, it was Jesus' never-ending love that put Him willingly on that cross to die. His death was an act of real love from God to us. Whenever we think about Jesus' death, we are reminded of how much He loves us and how much He paid to give us eternal life.

How hard was it for Jesus to suffer for us?

Read Matthew 26:36-44

List some of the words in this passage that show us that Jesus was in great sorrow, e.g. grief, anguish, sorrow (verse 36)

How do we know that Jesus did not want to go through with His death on the cross? (verse 39)

Why did He agree to die? (verse 42 – His obedience to the Father)

Apart from the pain of the cross, what was the other thing that really caused Him immense suffering? (Matthew 27:46)

Prayer of thanks

Give thanks to Jesus for His death on the cross for us, and thank God the Father for sending His precious Son to die – *just in case* the people of the world want to accept His gift of forgiveness for their sins.

God is our Saviour

Easter Week 2

The love of Jesus

Jesus loves us so much that He went to the cross for us.

Bible references:

John 20:24-30 Jesus appears to Thomas

Romans 5:8 But God has shown us how much He loves us; it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us.

Bible lesson

Read John 20:24-30

Thomas had been absent when the disciples saw Jesus after the resurrection. He did not believe the words of the disciples, that Jesus was alive. In this passage we read that later, Thomas did meet Jesus and made a confession that he believed. Jesus blessed Thomas for seeing and believing.

Questions

What do you think Thomas thought when he heard the reports from the disciples about seeing Jesus alive? How would you have responded?

What do you think the other disciples thought about him?

What do you think Thomas thought and felt when he saw Jesus? How would you have felt?

Jesus' scars show us that this really is Jesus, now alive again.

When Jesus showed Thomas his hands and side, the scars proved he was the one who had endured the cross. No one could deny Jesus had died and had risen again. Thomas and the others saw and touched their resurrected Saviour.

Jesus' scars tell the story of redemption.

Redemption means 'being saved from the penalty of our sins'. When Jesus showed Thomas His hands and side, the scars proved that He, as the sinless Sacrifice, had died and risen from the dead. Thomas and the others had seen Jesus die, and seeing the scars reminded them of that truth—it had not been a dream or an illusion. Jesus had, indeed, been sacrificed, had given His life for them.

Jesus' scars tell the story of love.

Seeing the scars, Thomas and the others knew Jesus had died for them, in their place. And there He was with them again. This is amazing love. Read Romans 5:8.

Remember the scars

When you begin to doubt whether Jesus is real, remember this eyewitness and historical account. Thomas saw the scars in Jesus' hands and believed.

If you ever begin to doubt Jesus' love for you or even your own worth, remember Jesus' scars in His hands and side are proof of his infinite, limitless love for you.

God is our Saviour

Easter Week 3

Demonstrating our love for Jesus

Bible references

John 13:36-38 Jesus predicts Peter's denial

John 18:25-27 Peter denies Jesus

John 21:15-17 Jesus says, 'Feed my lambs'.

John 10:11-16 The Good Shepherd

God loves us even when we do things that do not please Him. This is called 'unconditional' love.

Bible lesson

Read John 13:36-38.

Peter was so enthusiastic about following Jesus. What did he say he was willing to do for Jesus? (verse 37)

Then came the crucifixion. Peter was now scared because he thought that the authorities would catch him and crucify him too.

Read 18:25-27.

What happened that made Peter remember the words of Jesus? (verse 27)

How do you think Peter felt?

After the resurrection, the disciples returned to fishing. Jesus met them on the beach and asked Peter three times (parallel to the three denials) about Peter's love for him.

Read John 21:15-17

Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" Not once, not twice, but three times. Why do you think Jesus asks Peter the questions three times?

What did it mean for Peter to feed and take care of Jesus' lambs and sheep?

Jesus wanted to know if Peter really DID love Him, and because Peter said 'yes' absolutely, Jesus asked Him to work for Him. This showed Peter that Jesus still loved him and wanted him, even though he had failed Jesus.

Jesus asked Peter to *profess* his love for Him. Does Jesus expect us to tell Him that we love Him?

Each time Peter professed to love Jesus, Jesus asked Peter to respond: to feed his lambs, take care of his sheep, and feed his sheep.

Once we profess our love for Jesus, can we show that we love Him also by our actions?

Who are Jesus' lambs and sheep?

(Revise the story of the Good Shepherd, John 21:15-17.)

How can we work for Jesus in helping members of the body of Christ?

Year 8

God is Pure and Holy 4 Weeks



Outcomes

At the completion of this unit students will:

- Understanding the Biblical character qualities, (Fruit of the Spirit): patience, kindness, goodness, self-control
- Understand that these are qualities that God requires, and we practice these values as His servants
- Understand that Godly character comes from our growing relationship.
- Practice the Fruit of the Spirit in daily life and in relationships with others.

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

The Human Body, relationships with others

Link between “God is Pure and Holy” and classroom topics:

The Fruit of the Spirit will be studied, remembering that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Living a pure and holy Christian life involves displaying the Fruit of the Spirit. Note that *love, joy, peace* were studied in Year 6. In Year 8 we will study *patience, kindness, goodness, self-control*, and in Term 3, *gentleness/humility*.

Values:

integrity; honesty, fairness, respect for truth and justice, patience, kindness, goodness, self-control

Biographies:

Lolohea Akosita Waqairawai; John Mark

God is Pure and Holy

Week 1

The Fruit of Patience

Bible references

John 15:4-5 Stay connected to Jesus, the Vine

Galatians 5:22-23 The Fruit of the Spirit

Romans 8:28 All things work together for good...

Introduction

Read John 15:4-5

Remind the students of the importance of living close to Jesus, staying in constant touch with Jesus (John 15:4-5). By keeping close to Jesus, the Spirit of God will be able to move freely through our lives (our bodies, souls and spirits) growing the fruit in our character and personality that will be expressed in our actions.

We stay in touch with Jesus through prayer; Bible reading, and fellowshiping with other Christians, obedience to God's commandments and serving Him).

Making right choices

We also develop the Fruit in our lives by choosing God's way to think, act and live. In Year 6 we looked at the fruits of love, joy, and peace; in Year 8 we study the rest of the Fruits.

The Fruit of Patience

Definition:

Patience is:

- Being able to go through hard or boring times calmly, without making a fuss
- Being able to wait without getting annoyed
- Being calm and tolerant when difficult things happen
- Having quiet hope and trust, expecting things to turn out all right
- Accepting that you and other people make mistakes
- Doing something now so that later it will bear fruit, like planting a seed and waiting for it to grow
- A commitment to the future

Patience is yielding all our life's plans and goals into complete submission to God, realizing that he has a perfect time for our goals to be met.

If things are not going well, we wait calmly, trusting that things will turn out right. We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose, Romans 8:28

Bible study

1. 2 Peter 3:9 God is patient. What is God patiently waiting for?
2. 1 Thess. 5:14 We must be patient. Who are we to be patient with?
3. Hebrews 12:1-3 Do not become discouraged and give up. Jesus didn't!
4. James 5:7-9 What should we wait patiently for?
5. Col. 3:12-13 We should be patient because we are "the of God." (v 12, GNB)

Without Patience:

- People want everything NOW!
- They complain when unpleasant things happen.
- They get angry when things don't go their way.

With Patience:

- People wait without complaining.
- They forgive others and themselves for making mistakes. i
- They make the world a kinder, gentler place.

Practicing Patience is:

- Accepting things you cannot control, like the way other people act.
- Living with an illness or handicap that cannot be healed.
- Being gentle with people.
- Setting goals and working until you achieve your goals.
- Knowing that good things take time!

Group discussion

How can you practice patience in these situations? . . .

1. Your mother is very late picking you up from school and you have been waiting for a long time?
2. You decide you want to be a doctor when you grow up?
3. You want to grow some vegetables?
4. Your sister forgets to put back something she borrowed?
5. You wish you were taller?
6. You are the school's best runner and you break your leg three weeks before the inter-school athletic meeting.

Extra Questions:

Discuss the meaning and importance of the following questions.

1. When do you find it had to be patient?
2. Name three things you can do now that will help you get a good job later in life.
3. Write about a goal you set yourself, and achieved by working patiently and hard.
4. Write about a time you were patient with someone who made a mistake.

God is Pure and Holy

Week 2

The Fruit of Kindness

Bible references

Ephesians 4:31-32 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Definition:

Kindness is:

- Doing to others what you would want them to do for you.
- Showing that you care.
- Doing something good to make life better for others.
- Being thoughtful about people's needs.
- Showing love and compassion to someone who is sad or needs your help.
- Treating yourself and others gently.
- Caring about the Earth and all living things.
- Treating others with love and respect.

Bible Study

1. Titus 3:4-7 God revealed his kindness through His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. What were we like (v 3)? Did we deserve God's kindness? What did we deserve? What did God do for us? Who does He give to us to help us? Answer: The Holy Spirit.

What is the meaning of 'new birth'? (verse 5).

2. Eph. 4:31-32 God wants us to be kind to each other. What must we get rid of? What must we do instead? What does 'tender-hearted' mean?

3. Luke 10:25-37 In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus said being kind and loving is how we show that we have God's eternal life (27-28).

Without kindness:

- people and animals would be hurt, neglected and misused.
- relationships would break down.
- the world would be a lonely place.

With kindness:

- we want to reach out and help each other.
- we notice when someone or something needs care.
- we use our imagination to think of things that give others happiness.

- we don't criticize, tease or use hurtful words.

Group Discussion:

How could you show kindness in these situations?...

1. A new student comes into your class and looks lonely?
2. Some students start teasing a boy with big ears?
3. Your mother is late home and there are lots of dishes in the sink needing to be washed?
4. One of the students in your class does not have anything to eat at lunchtime.

Extra Questions:

1. How does it feel to be left out of a group or team when you badly want to join in?
2. What would be a kind way to treat someone who is disabled?
3. Name three ways we can be kind to animals.
4. What would you say or do if someone is not being kind to you?
5. How can we be kind to the earth we live on?

God is Pure and Holy

Week 3

The Fruit of Goodness

Bible reference

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.

Introduction

Parents often tell their children to "Be a good boy!" or "Be a good girl!" What does that mean exactly? Most of us would say that to be good, you shouldn't do anything that's bad. Goodness involves doing things that are right, but it goes way beyond staying out of trouble. We show goodness by choosing to obey God, even when it is hard. We should be actively looking for opportunities to do what God says is the right thing to do.

Definition:

Goodness is:

- Doing what is right in order to please God.
- Being honest, hardworking, and loyal.
- Doing what Jesus would do.
- Doing your best in everything you do.

Without Goodness, people:

- Only do things half-heartedly.
- Don't produce good quality work.
- Give in to temptation
- Do things that hurt God and others

With Goodness:

- We choose to go God's way
- We can find new and better ways of doing things.
- We can make a difference in this world.

Practicing Goodness is:

- Never giving or doing less than your best.
- Learning from your mistakes so you can do better next time.
- Obeying God's Word
- Doing what is right

Bible study

1. Philippians 4:8 What does this verse tell us about goodness?
2. Psalm 25:6-12 Does the Psalm writer think God is good? What does God do that is so good? (Ask students to suggest the good things that God does for us.)
3. Acts 10:38. What are some of the good things that Jesus did during His life on earth?

Group discussion

How can you practice goodness in these situations?...

1. It is your group's turn to clean the classroom
2. You are learning to sing a new song
3. You have a different opinion to your friend
4. You get tired in the middle of doing the dishes, or raking the yard
5. You are doing your homework, and your favourite TV show comes on

God is Pure and Holy

Week 4

The Fruit of Self-control

Definition:

Self-control is:

- the ability to remain calm and not show your anger
- thinking first before you speak and act
- doing what you know you should
- stopping yourself from doing what you shouldn't
- stopping yourself from being greedy

Bible Study

Gal. 5:22-2.3 Self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit.

1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Pet. 1:5-8 Self-control is a sign of growing maturity.

Prov. 16:32 Self-control is more important than great and heroic deeds!

James 3:3-9 Controlling the tongue

Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money.

Luke 12:15 Jesus said, "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed..."

Proverbs 25:28 Like a city whose walls are broken down, so is a man who lacks self-control.

Without Self-Control:

- We are ruled by how we feel instead of by what we should do.
- We can act in anger, hurting people physically or emotionally.
- We do things that we are ashamed of afterwards.
- We give in to being greedy.

With Self-Control:

- Know when to hold our tongue
- We only eat what we need, and only eat what is best for us.
- We only buy what we need.
- We get all our tasks such as homework, jobs at home etc., done on time.
- Our lives are peaceful and orderly.

Practicing Self-Control:

- Means acknowledging (owning) our feelings, and deciding how we are going to behave.
- If you feel angry, instead of yelling or hitting, you can accept that you are angry and use a calm voice to tell someone that you are angry and why, or, say nothing.
- Creating routines that bring order and peace to your day, such as when to wash, exercise, work and play.
- Set limits for yourself on how much time you watch TV etc., so that you get your homework and other tasks done.

- Manage your time and money wisely.
- Stop eating when you have had enough, or, refrain from eating / drinking rubbish.

Group Discussion

How would you practice self-control in these situations?...

1. You have put off doing a hard job for some time?
2. You are really angry when your brother starts teasing you?
3. You are watching TV and you have a school project to finish for school tomorrow.
4. You want the same pair of shoes that your friend has, but your own shoes are still in good condition.
5. You are offered another piece of cake, but you have already had 2 pieces.

Extra questions

1. What are some of the benefits of controlling anger? (*peace and harmony with friends and family*)
2. What are some of the benefits of controlling appetite? (*health and wealth*)
3. How do you stay in charge of yourself when you feel angry? (*take a deep breath, hold your tongue, move away from the situation until you've calmed down*)
4. Is it always good to keep your bad feelings inside you?
It is not good to express your bad feelings, but it is also not good to hold them inside you. Instead, begin to think of good loving thought, and begin to act in good loving ways. Your feelings follow your thoughts and actions.

Year 8

God is Creator 5 Weeks



Outcomes

At the completion of this module students will understand:

- The Biblical Creation account according to Genesis 1 &2
- That God has always existed and is outside of time as we know it
- That God is in charge of His creation and we need not fear the future
- That God created male and female as a partnership
- In brief, the different understandings that people have about the creation of the universe

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

Space and the Solar System

Link between “God is Creator” and classroom topics:

“The heavens declare the glory of God” Psalm 19

Values

faith; security; care for the environment, responsibility, respect for life including life of the unborn

Biography:

James Irwin

God is Creator

Week 1

In six days

by Russell Grigg, published in *Creation* 35, pp. 24–27, 2013

Have you ever wondered how everything in the universe came into being? Well, God tells us in the Bible that it was He who made everything. And, He chose to take a whole week to do it. We call this week ‘Creation Week’, because it involved six real Earth-rotation days, plus one rest day. You can read what actually happened in Genesis chapter 1.

Day 1

At first, there was nothing, nothing at all—apart from God. Then, Genesis says: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” How did God do this? He did it simply by commanding it to happen. Wow, what an amazing God He is—to create everything just by the power and authority of His word! When God did this, something else happened too—time began.

Next, God created light. “God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). This was not the sun, because God didn’t make the sun until Day 4. God can create light without the sun as a source. The Bible tells us that in heaven there will be no need of lamps or the sun “for the Lord God will be their light” (Revelation 22:5).

This first light provided ‘day’ and ‘night’ on a rotating Earth. So the very first day and the very first night were each about 12 hours long. Not vast periods of time, and not billions of years ago.

Day 2

On the second day of Creation Week, God continued His work of preparing the Earth so that plants could grow on it, and animals and people could live on it. He did this by making the atmosphere around the earth. The atmosphere contains the air we breathe. It is made up of oxygen, nitrogen, and small amounts of other gases, all in just the right mixture for you to live. The atmosphere also contains water vapour that condenses to form clouds.

All this happened because God ordered it to happen. It was not the result of volcanoes erupting, or blue-green algae producing oxygen for millions of years, or anything else that evolutionists have suggested.

Day 3

The Bible says that when God created the Earth, it was completely covered by water. So, on the third day of Creation Week, God commanded the dry land to appear. Parts of the ocean-floor sank down so that water drained off the land. Hills formed on the Earth, as well as flat lands. We don’t know how many continents there were then. There may have been only one, because the Bible says, “the waters were gathered

together into one place” (Genesis 1:9). Some of the seven continents we see today may have formed later as a result of Noah’s Flood, when once again, for a time, the Earth was completely covered by water.

Also on Day 3, God commanded the land to produce all kinds of vegetation. This included plants, seeds, fruit and trees that animals would feed on (instead of eating each other), and grains, herbs, vegetables and fruit that humans would eat. Also God created all sorts of beautiful flowers and fragrant plants for our enjoyment. The Bible says God made each of these according to its kind (Genesis 1:11–12). This means that not one of these plants evolved from something else.

Day 4

On Day 4, God created the sun, the moon, and the planets in our solar system, as well as billions of stars in the billions of galaxies in the universe. The Bible tells us that God made them for our benefit, “to separate the day from the night”, and “for signs and for seasons, and for days and years”, and “to give light upon the earth” (Genesis 1:14–18). God was able to do this just by commanding them all to exist. Another reason God made them all is: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1).

The stars did not form over billions of years from a big bang in which nothing supposedly exploded and became everything. Evolutionists, who say this, cannot explain where all the energy for the explosion came from. Nor how an explosion could have produced all the design we see in the universe. You know that explosions never produce order, but only a great big mess. Evolutionists cannot even say why the universe exists at all.

Day 5

By Day 5, God had made the Earth ready to support life. So next, God commanded the seas to teem with fish, along with all the other animals that live in the water. These included large ones like whales and plesiosaurs, and small ones like krill and zooplankton. God also created the flying creatures—birds, bats, bees and pterosaurs—on this day.

Genesis chapter 1 says that God created every fish and every bird “according to its kind”, and He commanded them all to “be fruitful and multiply”. This means that each was to make baby animals just like itself. Not one of them evolved from anything else, and not one of them has ever evolved into anything else.

Day 6

On Day 6, God commanded the earth to “bring forth” the land animals. These included all those we now call the tame animals, like your pets and sheep and cows. Also all those we now call the wild animals, like elephants and tigers and kangaroos. None of them were wild then, and none of them ate each other. God also made the creeping lizards and the dinosaurs on this day. The Bible says that God made all the animals “according to their kinds”, and we already know what this means. When dinosaurs laid their eggs, baby dinosaurs hatched out, not baby birds.

Last of all, God made the very first human beings—Adam and Eve. He made Adam from the dust, and then Eve from Adam’s side. God told Adam and Eve to have children so that, in time there would be people all over the earth (Genesis 1:28). This means that it was God who invented marriage as the union of one man and one woman. It was God’s purpose that children should be born in this way within families.

Adam and Eve are thus your great, great, great ... great, great, great ... grandparents. They didn’t evolve from apes, so neither did you. God made Adam and Eve “in His image”, so you too are “in the image of God”. This means that you can be filled with God’s Holy Spirit, and you can pray to God directly. You can love and worship God, and you can experience God’s love for you. Animals can’t do any of these things, because God didn’t make them in His image.

The Lord Jesus too is descended from Adam and Eve. As well as being the Son of God, Jesus became a human, and lived without sin as a perfect man. His death on the cross paid the penalty for our sin, because only someone who was both God and one of us could do this.

Everything that God produced during the Creation Week was beautiful and perfect for God’s purpose. Nothing was bad or evil. There was no death of animals or people; nothing imperfect, no killing, no struggle for existence.

Day 7

Where does our seven-day week come from?

It comes directly from God. God took six days to create everything and then rested on the seventh day. He wasn’t tired (the Hebrew word means “ceased”), but He did this as an example for our benefit. He put it into the Ten Commandments that He gave to the Israelites through Moses. The Fourth Commandment told them to rest one day in seven from their work, and the reason given was: “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day” (Exodus 20:8–11).

The Word of God: Jesus, the Word made flesh

Everything that happened during the Creation Week occurred because of God’s command, or God’s Word. Did you know that one of the titles of the Lord Jesus Christ is “the Word” (John 1:1–14)? The New Testament tells us that God made the universe through His Son, Jesus (Hebrews 1:2), and that all things were created by Jesus and for Jesus (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).

Are we made of stardust?

Evolutionists say that the universe began in a big bang that produced a lot of a gas called hydrogen. Then, they say that this hydrogen formed stars. Then, they say some of these stars exploded and this formed all the other stuff that things are made of. So they say that everything on Earth is made of stuff that formed in the stars, or ‘stardust’. Not so! God tells us that He made the Earth, with the seas, and the air we need, and the plants that grow in the soil—all before He made any of the stars.

Was there a big bang?

Evolutionists like to say that the universe started with a big bang, billions of years ago. But they can't explain how nothing became something, let alone everything; and all without a cause.....or why! They've had to invent invisible stuff called 'dark matter' to provide a theory to make the big bang sound feasible. And then they had to invent 'dark energy' to provide enough 'push'. By contrast, the power and authority of God's word, as recorded in Genesis, is a much better explanation of how everything began. And as to why ... it was God's purpose to prepare a place for us to live within His beautiful universe.

Is evolution a fact?

You have probably heard evolutionists say this on their TV programs or read it in their books. But it is not true. If you want to know about something that occurred in the past, the only way is to ask someone who was there and saw what happened. No evolutionist was there when the universe began, but God was. So He was an eye-witness. In fact, He created everything. You can read what God says He did, and how He did it, in Genesis chapter 1. And the universe is not billions of years old. The Bible makes it clear that the whole creation is only about 6,000 years old.

Which view is correct?

Although evolutionists make bold claims, they do not have answers to their own problems. The account in the Bible is much the better explanation of how and why everything happened. If you believe in God, you will find, as many scientists have, that God's Word, the Bible, tells us the true facts.

God is Creator

Week 2

The heavens declare God's glory

Bible references

Psalm 19:1-6 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.

Psalm 104 This whole Psalm speaks about God's creation, Note especially:

Verses 2-3 The LORD wraps Himself in light as with a garment; He stretches out the heavens like a tent.

Verses 19-20 He made the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down. You bring darkness, it becomes night...

Psalm 147:4 He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.

Psalm 8:3-4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?"

Bible lesson

Revise the days of Creation (Genesis 1)

On which day did He make the sun, moon and stars?

Was there light on the earth before Day 4? (*yes*)

How do we know? (*Day 1 – In the beginning God made light*)

Where do you think the light came from before the sun, moon and stars were created? (*God Himself*)

Read and discuss the verses from the Psalms about light, the sun, moon and stars.

When God made something out of nothing—Day 1

by Russell Grigg, Published in *Creation* 27(4):24–27, 2005

Long ago, there was nothing at all. There was no universe, no sky, no sun, no moon, no stars, and no Earth. There was no water. There were no plants, no trees, no animals, and no people. Nothing existed. Nothing at all, except, of course, God. He has always existed.

God decided that He wanted all these things to come into being. He would take six whole days to make them all, and He would create something different every day for a week. We call this week Creation Week.

‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.’

Genesis 1:1–5.

On Day 1 of Creation Week, God made:

Time

You may be surprised to learn that God had to create ‘time’ itself. ‘Before’ then, even time did not exist. Only God existed. He is eternal. So ‘before’ the beginning (Genesis 1:1)

Light

In the beginning, it was very, very dark—inky black—everywhere. So, early on Day 1, having made time, space and matter, God then created light. How did He do this? He just said, ‘Let there be light!’ and there was light. No problem for God. Again, His Word was all that was needed.

This light was not the sun, as God had decided that He would not make the sun until the fourth day. So where did this light come from? The Bible doesn’t tell us what this light source was, but we know it was shining onto the earth to begin with, as the earth rotated. In the new heavens and new earth, God Himself will be the source of light (Revelation 22:5).

If the light was on one side of the earth, then, as the earth turned around, part of it would have been in the light for a while, and part of it would have been in the dark. God gave names to these two periods of time. He called the light 'day', and He called the darkness 'night'. He had made the first 24-hour day, and a way for us to measure time by.

God said that the light was 'good'. This means it was a perfect part of God's plan for creation, and God was pleased with it. He knew that we would need light to see our way around. He knew too that we would also need darkness to help us sleep at night.

Creation needs a Creator

God did not have a beginning. He created time, space, matter, and light. We can trust this, because He says His thoughts are higher than our thoughts in Isaiah 55:9.

Some people who believe in evolution try to tell us in TV programs and books that time, space, matter, energy, and everything else all made themselves, and by accident. But how could anything make itself before it existed?

Others say that the universe has always existed. This cannot be so. If the universe had existed for ever, our sun and all the stars would long ago have used up all their energy and stopped shining. This condition would make everything so cold and lifeless that it has been called 'heat death'. But this hasn't happened, has it? The sun and stars are all still here, so the universe could not have existed forever.

Some scientists, but not nearly all, suggest that there was once a big bang that made everything. But when did you ever see 'an explosion' produce anything other than a huge mess? And we know from God's Word (the Bible) that God didn't use evolution or the big bang to make everything. He didn't use evolution or the big bang to make anything! He didn't need to. He is almighty. This means that He is absolutely powerful. Powerful enough to do anything He wants to do... like creating time, and space, and matter, and energy, and everything else. He created everything—just by His Word.

God didn't need to experiment either. Everything He did, He did right the very first time.

Who made God?

Some people ask: 'If everything needs someone to make it, then who made God?' The answer is that everything that has a beginning needs someone to make it. But God did not have a beginning. He has existed forever. So He did not need anyone to make Him!

Evolutionists like to say that the universe is billions of years old, but the Bible denies this. Adding up people's ages and other time periods in the Bible (for example Genesis 5 and 11, 47:9; 1 Kings 6:1), we find that Creation Week was about 6,000 years ago.

The creation account that God has given us in Genesis is neither a fairy story, nor poetry, nor a parable. It is a reliable record of what actually happened. It is the history of the earth and the universe from their very beginning, and of how everything came into being. It is scientifically accurate, and it shows us the power, wisdom and goodness of our almighty Creator God.

Questions

How did light exist before God made the sun, moon and stars? (*God Himself was the light.*)

Why did God make the moon? (Psalm 104:19) (*To mark the months – our months are based on a full cycle of the phases of moon. It takes 29.5 days for the moon to go through its cycle. There are approximately 30 days in each month.*)

How do we know that the stars did not appear by accident? (Psalm 145:4 – *God has counted the stars.*)

When we look at the sky we are reminded of the greatness of God. Such a great God is still concerned about us, (Psalm 8:3-4). How does this make you feel?

In Genesis 1, what is the statement made each time a Creation day was completed. If there was evening and morning every time before the creation of the next day, what does that tell us? (*Each Creation day was 24 hours.*)

God is Creator

Week 3

God is in charge of His creation

Bible references

Job 26:7 He hangs the world on nothing

Isaiah 40:22 God sits on His throne above the circle of the earth.

Joshua 10 The day the sun stood still.

Psalm 104:19 The sun knows the time to set.

The earth in space

What holds up the earth?

That question puzzled people for thousands of years. Long ago, in India, they thought the earth was resting on the backs of several large elephants. The elephants were resting on the back of a very large turtle. The turtle was either resting on a snake or swimming in a sea of milk.

Others said the earth was on the back of a catfish swimming in an ocean. According to the ancient Greeks, a god named Atlas had the difficult job of holding the earth on his shoulders.

What does the Bible say?

Read Job 26:7. “He hangs the earth on nothing”. Today we know that this is true: The earth is suspended in space. It isn’t sitting on anything!

But when the book of Job was written, people didn't know that. How did the writers of the Bible know it? Only God could have told them.

Another thing that people believed hundreds of years ago was that the earth was flat. If you went too far you would fall off the edge!

Now of course we know that the earth is round. In the 1500's a sailor from Portugal, Ferdinand Magellan and his crew were the first to sail all around the world. That helped prove that the earth was round.

But that too was already written in the Bible long before Magellan's discovery. Read Isaiah 40:22, "God sits on His throne above the circle of the earth."

God is in charge of His creation

What would happen if the sun burned out, or the earth moved slightly on its axis? That would be the end of the earth. But do we need to fear this?

No. God is in charge of His creation, and the Earth will go on for just as long as He wants it to. We are told that one day there will be an end to this Earth, and God will create a new Heaven and Earth.

God has already shown us that He has complete control over the heavens and the earth. In Old Testament times God actually made the sun stand still for a day. We can read about this in Joshua chapter 10.

The day the sun stood still

Not long after Jericho was defeated the Israelites defeated another city. All the kings in the land of Canaan knew how powerful the Israelites were in battle. One of the kings, the king of Gibeon decided that he wanted to be on Joshua's side because it would be safer. However, five other kings in Canaan did not like this. They joined together and formed one big army to fight the Gibeonites.

Joshua and his soldiers joined with the Gibeonites.

"Don't be afraid," Joshua told his army. "God is with us."

Joshua and his army marched all night until they met the five kings and their army. There was a big battle. God helped Joshua win the battle. Soon the enemies were running away. God sent huge hailstones from heaven. The hailstones fell on the enemy.

The battle went on all day. It would soon be night. Joshua knew they could not fight in the dark so he commanded the sun to stand still until the battle was over. God caused the sun to stand still. Night did not come until the battle was over. God worked a miracle because Joshua trusted in Him. God has power over everything He has made.

The Bible says, "You created the moon to mark the months, and the sun knows the time to set" (Psalm 104:19 GNB). God is in charge of everything.

Discussion

This miracle shows us God's power to do unusual things. The earth is always spinning around in space. God made it that way. And yet, if He needs to, God can even change the patterns in nature.

Think

Was it really the sun that stood still when Joshua prayed, or was it the Earth?
(When we see the sunrise and set, it is really the Earth that is moving, not the sun.)

God is Creator

Week 4

God created male and female

Bible references

Genesis 2:22-24 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Matthew 19:4-6 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' so they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage should be honored by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery (GNB).

Exodus 20:14 Do not commit adultery.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who have sex with men, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Ephesians 5:21,22 & 25 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the

Saviour. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favour from the Lord.

Introduction: Men and women were made for each other.

God took Eve from Adam's side, and so the first marriage was created.

Read Genesis 2:21-25.

But it seems that something has gone desperately wrong. All around there are broken marriages and quarrels between partners. That's why God is so concerned about marriage.

When God brought together the first man and woman, He told them, "Be fruitful and multiply and populate the earth." Without the power of re-creation, the human race would die out. But God has given guidelines for relationships between men and women.

God's rules for marriage

1. Marriage is between male and female. Read Matthew 19:4-6.

Sexual relations are only intended for within marriage, that is, marriage between one man and one woman, for life.

What does God say about sexual relationships between two men or two women? Men usually describe themselves as 'homosexual', or 'gay', when they are physically, emotionally and sexually attracted to other men. Two women who are sexually attracted to one another call themselves 'lesbians'. This is a corruption of God's created law of marriage.

God designed marriage to be between a man and a woman. God's Word is clear that marriage is for one man and one woman. God loves all people despite their sin, and we should do the same. But that doesn't mean we must accept all forms of ungodly behavior. The world tells us that homosexuality is just as valid as traditional marriage. But the Bible tells us that this is not the case.

Read 1 Cor 6:9-11

Aren't these people born that way?

The Bible says that He created them 'male and female'. We are born either male or female. There are very few people in the world who are born with a sexual genetic disorder. When we hear about 'transgender' people, we are talking about people who were born male and decide they want to be female, or born female and want to be male, even when there's no genetic reason to do so. This is a condition of the mind. These people need God's love and help, just like any other person who has not given their life to Jesus. God would want us to love all people, whatever their problem. However, we are not to say the problem is approved of by God's standards.

2. Sex is designed for marriage and should only take place within the marriage relationship.

Read Hebrews 13:4. If young people decide to live together before marriage, the result might be an unwanted pregnancy. God has designed marriage as a safe and secure place for children to be brought up, with a mother and a father who are committed to one another.

3. Honour the person you marry.

Marriage is a life-long commitment. When marriage partners promise “for better or for worse” and “till death us do part” they give their solemn vow. Marriage is a covenant relationship that is meant to last a lifetime.

Read Exodus 20:14. Do not commit adultery. Once a person is married, God expects them to be faithful to that person and not to go looking for another.

4. Husbands love your wives; Wives submit to your husbands.

Read Ephesians 5:21, 22 & 25. Marriage is about giving, not receiving. Marriage is about loving and caring for your life’s partner, and not just about you feeling loved or appreciated. It’s about making someone else feel loved and appreciated. Marriage is a partnership. This means working together, respecting each other’s desires, gifts and talents, likes and dislikes. One partner should not be bossy towards the other partner, but each partner should give the other space to be themselves. Marriage partners should want the best for their partner and encourage them in becoming the person God wants them to be. Even though the Bible says tell wives to submit to their husbands, it also tells husbands and wives to submit to each other.

Wise advice for boy-girl relationships

1. Never date just for the sake of it. Wait until you are old enough to be serious about finding your life’s partner. Be patient, and prayerful, and God will help you meet the right person in His time.
2. When you’re young, it’s best to fellowship with boys and girls in the group setting.
3. Don’t mix with the wrong crowd.
4. Girls, dress modestly.
5. When you think you have found the right person and you do start dating, have a list of Christian values and don’t compromise on them.

God is Creator

Week 5

Beliefs about Creation

Bible references

Genesis chapters 1 & 2

John 5:46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

Mark 10:6 But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.

Creation versus evolution

It's amazing how much the Bible has to say about our world. True science and true Scripture will always agree. But secular scientists have opinions about nature which clash with the Bible. The Bible does not tell fairy tales, so let's investigate.

Evolution is only an opinion, a theory or a story...about how the world was made. But no one was there to observe the creation of the universe, except for God. Therefore no one can say that evolution is fact.

Many Christians are confused about God's creation account in Genesis, because they do not understand that evolution is only a theory. The scientific method states that for something to be fact, it has to be observable. We can say that World War 2 actually happened because people observed it happening. That's history. God was there observing the creation of His world. He would have spent time talking to Adam and Eve about His creation. That was history too. It's history that has been recorded in the Bible. Every word of God is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus told parables in the New Testament. These are earthly stories with a spiritual meaning. They are word pictures that teach us something. You will know some of these – the lost son, the lost coin, the lost sheep. They are not reports of actual events, but stories of things that *could* have happened in Jesus day. Some Christians believe that Genesis is a parable too, and not history. However because Adam's family tree is shown in the Bible, we know it is history. If the story of Adam and Eve is a parable, then what about Noah, Moses, Joseph and all the others in Genesis; are the stories about them parables too? We know they can't be because these were real people.

When you move on to secondary school, it is likely that you will be taught the theory of evolution. Most secondary science books teach this. Remember that you don't have to believe everything you are taught. You know the one who was there from the beginning, and you know the truth.

Read Mark 10:6. Who was there at the beginning?

Four main beliefs that people have about Genesis chapters 1 and 2

1. *The day-age theory*

The theory of Evolution relies on the idea of life as we know it evolving over long periods of time. This is because no one has ever seen one species developing into another species, so evolutionists have to say that this happened over millions of years, when no one was around to see it. Some Christians want to believe in the millions of years too, even if they don't believe that life created itself. They want to believe in millions of years because they believe that science could never be wrong. They are forgetting that the theory of evolution is not true science; it's only historical science, which has not been proved by the scientific method.

In order to extend the six 24-hour days we are told about in Genesis 1, some Christians like to interpret each day in Genesis 1, as a long period of time, perhaps millions of years. They do this on the basis of this verse:

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” 2 Peter 3:8

Could this verse be talking about something else and not creation?

2. *The gap theory*

This idea has also been *invented* by Christians who want to believe that the Creation happened millions of years ago. Such people claim that there was an original creation, perhaps millions or billions of years ago, which in some way was wiped out by terrific destruction that turned our planet into ruin and waste. Then, on these ruins, God created our modern world's ancestors in six 24-hour days. That long time between the original creation and the one we know today, they believed happened between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. They believe that the Bible should be written as something like this:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (This would be the time when the ancient fossil world was created.) Then there is a gap in time, during which the first world was wiped out, and the fall of Satan happened. Then comes verse 2: “And the earth was without form and darkness was on the face of the deep.” From this point on, they believe that the Spirit of God begins the six-day creation.

This is a made-up theory which wants to believe that millions of years (as demanded by some scientists), must be right, RATHER than God's Word alone! Those who believe the gap theory are guilty of placing *man's opinion* above the *Word of God*.

3. *Theistic evolution*

The word 'theistic' simply means a belief in God or a god. Christians who believe in theistic evolution basically believe the same as evolutionists. But instead of life being created by accident during the 'big bang', they believe that God's hand was in the "big bang". God then guided the evolution of all life from the first single cell, over millions of years. This means that God did NOT create lions (just for example) as lions in the beginning, but that lions evolved from some other more simple animal form! This contradicts the Word of God obviously.

4. Young earth creation

The young earth model is based on taking Genesis as history, and believing God's Word exactly as it is written. Young earth creationists believe that the universe did not come into existence until about 6000 years ago, and that the "days" are literal 24-hour days. Also, that the earth's sediments, fossils and oil deposits were produced by Noah's flood. It treats the family tree of Adam to Christ, as shown in the Bible, as FACT. This is based on a straightforward reading of Genesis without altering the simple meaning.

How accurate is carbon dating?

Why do so many people believe that the secular scientists are right when it comes to the origins of the universe and the dating of fossils?

Secular scientists use a method called 'carbon dating' which measures the amount of carbon in a specimen; note; it does NOT measure time, but carbon content. It is highly inaccurate, giving results only up to 10,000 years maximum. So why do they say things are millions of years old? Because a baseline of millions of years is *assumed*; this is a guess! Then the scientist (whose beliefs are secular) adds the measurement of the carbon 'dating' to that. Results consistent with the Bible are screened out as errors.

What evidence is there for the earth *not* being millions of years old?

The ocean would be much, much saltier if the earth was millions of years old. The moon's surface would have a much, much thicker layer of dust if the universe was millions of years old.

What did Jesus say about the importance of believing the Bible?

Read John 5:46.

Which books of the Bible did Moses write? (*the first 5*)

Does that mean he wrote Genesis? (*yes*)

Did Moses write about Jesus in Genesis? (*yes, Jesus created the world with the Father and the Holy Spirit*)

If people don't believe the words that Moses wrote, what else might be a problem for them?

Year 8

God is Wise 4 Weeks



Outcomes

Wisdom is “the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.” Or a simpler definition is: “Wisdom is to know the right thing to do, and to do it.”

At the completion of the unit student will understand:

- How do discern between right and wrong moral values
- That we can rely on God’s guidance in the outworking of the plan He has for us
- We can hear God’s guiding voice through an inner conviction (‘the still small voice’), through trusting God to open or close the right doors (circumstances) and through confirmation through the Bible, other Christians or a sign directly from God Himself.

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

History of exploration & navigation; sea voyages

Link between “God is Wise” and classroom topics:

Life is like a journey. Just as ships and planes need mechanisms for guidance to their destination, Christians rely on God’s wisdom to guide them through life.

Values:

honesty, fairness, respect for truth and justice, goodness, discernment

Biographies:

John Williams, Christopher Columbus, James Cook

God is Wise

Week 1

Is it right or wrong?

Bible references

1 Samuel 16:7 The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

John 7:24 Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.

Luke 18:9-14 The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector

Introduction

Wisdom is to know the right thing to do, and to do it.

But what makes something right or wrong? How do we know what is right?

How to tell if something is wrong

God puts a warning light inside your soul. This is your conscience. This is a gift from God. Our conscience is a warning device that is dangerous to ignore.

Sometimes it is hard to know whether a thing is right or wrong. Obviously, things like murder, robbery and lying are wrong. That's easy. But there are some things that don't *look* obviously wrong, but still are wrong. These are wrong *motives*. Motives are the reasons for our actions. You may do something good, but your motives, (or reasons) for doing it are wrong.

Wrong Motives

Preparation: Write on the board: Revenge, Pride, Fear, Selfishness, Jealousy.

As you read through the list, ask students to match one of these three motives to the numbers below. (The motives can be used more than once.)

Examples of wrong motives

1. Are you doing this *good* thing to make yourself look good in the eyes of others? Is it because you want others to think you are great?
2. Are you doing something that looks as if you are helping someone, but really, it's for your own gain?
3. Are you doing something good just to show someone up, so that you can look better than the other person?
4. Are you choosing NOT to include someone because they can do things better than you?
5. Are you choosing NOT to do something or NOT to help someone because in the past they didn't help you, or they hurt you?

6. Are you acting in a certain way just because you want to be 'in' with the crowd?

Answers: 1. Pride; 2. Selfishness; 3. Pride; 4. Jealousy; 5. Revenge; 6. Fear

The Pharisee and the tax collector

Look for wrong motives in this story that Jesus told: Read Luke 18:9-14.

Two men who went into the temple to pray were from different ranks in society. The Pharisee was one of the proud leaders in the temple. The other was a tax collector. People hated tax collectors because they stole money and cheated.

To outward appearances, who *looked* to be noble and honorable?

What are the motives in the Pharisee's speech?

The Pharisee said out loud, "God I thank you that I am not wicked like other men who are unkind and selfish and evil. I'm glad I'm not like this tax collector. I pray every day and I give money to the poor."

Notice that he prayed out loud.

The tax collector was praying in the corner where no one could see him. His prayer was quite different. He stood with his head bowed and said quietly, "God please forgive me for the wrong things I have done."

What are the motives in this prayer?

Jesus told His disciples that the tax collector was praying in the right way. He was being humble. But the Pharisee had motives of pride. The Pharisee was not even praying. He was telling God and all those around him who could hear him, how wonderful he was. He did not think he needed anything from God.

What did the tax collector want from God? (God's forgiveness)

If you walked into the temple and saw these two people praying, what might you think at first?

What might you think after listening to the tax collector's prayer?

Right motives come from God

God's love is the only thing that can give us right motives. When our whole desire is to please Him, we will put Him above self. To love God simply means to unselfishly put Him first in everything we do. It is to choose the highest good and to live a life surrendered to Him. Then His love will flow out to others.

Making wise choices; questions to help us decide what is best.

1. *What would Jesus do?*

Ask yourself, "Would Jesus take part in this activity?"

1 Peter 2:21 Follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

1 John 2:6 Walk as Jesus walked.

2. Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

Ask yourself this when you are tempted to say something negative about someone.

Proverbs 17:27 He that has knowledge spares his words.

Ephesians 4:15 Speaking the truth in love

Colossians 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt..."

3. Is it helpful?

Is it the best thing to do in this situation?

Could it form a bad habit?

Will it help me in my Christian life or will it hinder my Christian life?

1 Corinthians 10:23 I have the right to do anything...but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything—but not everything is constructive.

4. Does it honour the Lord?

Will it bring glory to His name? Will He be pleased about it?

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

God is Wise

Week 2

How God guides us: Conviction & circumstances

Bible references

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice

1 Kings 19 Elijah and the still small voice

God's guidance throughout history

When you have given your life to Christ, you can be sure that He has a plan for your life. But how do we know what God wants us to do?

God has guided people in history, and in the Bible in many ways. Sometimes these were spectacular supernatural ways, like the burning bush that Moses saw, or the Voice that little Samuel heard; or the light that blinded Saul, the Pharisee who later became the apostle Paul. These were spectacular messages from God, but in our daily experience, God will most often speak as He did to Elijah, who knew the 'still small voice.'

Elijah and the still small voice

The background to this event is that a contest had been arranged between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. (The prophets of Baal were leading the Israelites people away from the true God into occult practices.) Elijah had to show the Israelites who the true God was. Elijah asked the prophets of Baal to place wood on an altar and ask Baal to come and set it alight. They set up their altar and prayed to Baal but of course nothing happened. Elijah set up his altar and even poured water over the wood. He asked the God of Israel to set it alight. God sent fire down and burnt up the

wood, the stones and scorched the earth that the altar was sitting on. Now the Israelites knew who the true God was. Elijah then ordered that the wicked prophets of Baal be captured and killed. When the wicked Queen Jezebel heard what Elijah had done, she sent out a death warrant for him to be killed. Elijah fled to the desert and did not know what to do. He called upon God. Read 1 Kings 19:1-12. After this Elijah knew what to do. God told him exactly where to go to find and anoint Elisha to be the next prophet of Israel.

God never shows off. He is humble, in all His greatness. But you can expect Him to speak to you; whether it is in a spectacular supernatural way experienced by some of the people in Bible, or the still small voice.

1. Conviction

Conviction is a deep-down sense of the right thing to do that comes from the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a clear conscience.

From reading God's Word, praying and working for the Lord, God will make clear what He wants us to do. Never act out of doubt. If you are unsure that this is the right step, don't move until you feel clear that this is what God wants. If you find while praying that something keeps coming back to you in your mind and spirit, then listen. God often keeps bringing things to mind that He wants us to act on. Conviction is something that 'grows' on you. If it is God speaking, then He will keep bringing it to mind.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow Me." (John 10:27). If we belong to the fold of God, we have Jesus' promise that we will know His voice.

Here are three simple steps for hearing God's still small voice:

1. Wait quietly and ask God to silence your own thoughts, desires and opinions of others, and to fill your mind with His thoughts.
2. Ask Jesus to protect you from any attempt of Satan to lead you in the wrong direction.
3. Expect answers. After asking the question that is on your mind, wait for Him to answer. Jeremiah 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

2. Circumstances

God will often close or open doors to help you see what His will is. You may set out to do something and find out that everything falls apart, or it doesn't go right, even when you pray about it. This may be God blocking a wrong path when you have missed His direction. On the other hand, after you feel something in your heart that you believe might be God's direction, an opportunity may come along when you are not expecting it. Push forwards and God will open the doors of circumstance as a confirmation of His will for us.

Reference: Pratney, W., A handbook for followers of Jesus

God is Wise

Week 3

How God guides us: Confirmation

Bible references

Judges 6:36-40 Gideon and the fleece

Confirmation

Revise guidance through 'conviction' and 'circumstances' from last week.

God may find other ways to confirm what He wants you to do. This could be in the form of a sign of some kind. Gideon used a 'fleece' and asked the Lord to confirm His word to him by the fleece being wet or dry.

Gideon and the Fleece

Sometimes it seemed like the Israelites never learned a lesson. The same thing happened again and again. First, the Israelites would begin to leave God and disobey Him. Then, the Lord would let enemies win battles against them and treat them badly. When the people were suffering, they were sorry they had disobeyed God. They would pray to God to help them. Finally, the Lord would send someone to help the people and save them from their enemies. This person was called a *judge*.

Once again, the Israelites began to forget about God. They even began to build idols and worship false gods. The people from the land of Midian did not like the Israelites. They stole animals, fruit, and grain, leaving nothing for the Israelites to eat. The Israelites began to pray to God to help them.

Gideon was an Israelite farmer. He came from a family that did not obey God. Gideon had to do his work in a hidden place so that the Midianites would not steal from him. One day Gideon was threshing grain. His threshing stick hit the wheat so that the grain seeds came loose from the straw. The grain would be used to make bread. While he was working, the angel of the Lord came and sat down under an oak tree right beside Gideon.

The angel said to Gideon, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." The angel told Gideon that he had been chosen to save Israel from the Midianites. Gideon couldn't believe what the angel was saying. Why would God choose him? He didn't think he was good enough. His family was not even a family that believed in God! They were small and weak.

"The Lord will be with you, Gideon. Go now and save Israel."

Gideon was still not sure. He didn't feel good enough. He wanted some proof. He begged the angel, "Could you please give me a sign. If you will please stay here I will go and make an offering for God."

Gideon left and prepared a young goat and made bread to offer as a sacrifice. He quickly brought these back to the angel. The meat was in a basket and the broth was in a pot. Gideon wanted these to be a gift to the Lord. The angel told Gideon to put these on a rock. When Gideon put them on the rock, the angel pointed his staff at the offering. When the tip of the staff touched the food, fire came from the rock. The fire burned up everything that had been on the rock. Now Gideon knew that this was really an angel. He knew that God had really chosen him to save the Israelites. Gideon built an altar and worshipped the Lord.

The first thing that Gideon did was to tear down the altar that his father had built. This altar was not built to worship God. This altar was built like an idol. Gideon's family worshipped the false god, Baal, at this altar. They had even made a tall pole to worship an idol. Some of the Israelites were angry with Gideon but Gideon did what the Lord commanded.

When the Midianites started to come and hurt the Israelites again, Gideon gathered together an army. He still wanted to make sure that he was doing the right thing, so he prayed to God to give him another sign. Gideon put a piece of fleece (or lamb's wool) outside on the ground. Usually, if a fleece was left outside on the ground, dew would fall on it and make it wet. Both the ground and the fleece would be wet. This time Gideon asked the Lord to do something different. He asked the Lord to make the fleece wet during the night but to keep the ground dry.

When Gideon looked at the fleece the next morning, guess what had happened? The fleece was wet and the ground was dry!

Next Gideon asked the Lord to do it one more time. This time he asked God to make the ground wet and the fleece dry. The next morning, the ground was wet and the fleece was dry. Just like Gideon asked! Gideon knew that God wanted him to fight the Midianites. He knew that the Lord thought he was good enough to do the job. Gideon decided to follow the Lord and do exactly what he wanted him to do!

Reference: Mission Bible Class

The Bible is another way that God can confirm His will for us. He may give you a Scripture that speaks to your heart and you just know that this is His Word for you. God can also use wise Christian people to confirm whether God is speaking to us in a certain way. If God confirms something clearly, then do it in obedience to Him.

God is Wise

Week 4

How God guides: dreams, visions & angels

Ask the students if they can think of any Bible characters who heard God speak through dreams and visions. Then add any they have not thought of.

Old Testament

Jacob (Genesis 28:10-17): Jacob, with his mother's help, stole Esau's firstborn inheritance. Jacob then fled Esau's anger, and on his journey he had his famous dream of a ladder reaching to heaven on which angels ascended and descended. In this dream Jacob received God's promise that Abraham's blessing would be carried on through him.

Joseph (Genesis 37:1-11): Joseph is one of the most famous dreamers, and one of the most famous dream-interpreters, in the Bible. His first recorded dreams are found in Genesis 37. They showed through easily deciphered symbols that Joseph's family would one day bow to him in respect. His brothers didn't appreciate the dream and in their hatred sold Joseph into slavery. Eventually, Joseph ended up in prison in Egypt.

Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker (Genesis 40): While in prison Joseph interpreted some dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker. With God's guidance, he explained that the cupbearer would return to Pharaoh's service, but the baker would be killed.

Pharaoh (Genesis 41): Two years later, Pharaoh himself had a dream which Joseph interpreted. God's purpose was to raise Joseph to second-in-command over Egypt and to save the Egyptians and the Israelites from a horrible famine.

Solomon (1 Kings 3:5): It was in a dream that God gave Solomon the famous offer: "Ask what you wish Me to give you." Solomon chose wisdom.

Daniel (Daniel 2; 4): As He had done for Joseph, God placed Daniel in a position of power and influence by allowing him to interpret a foreign ruler's dream.

New Testament

Joseph (Matthew 1:20; 2:13): Joseph would have divorced Mary when he found out she was pregnant, but God sent an angel to him in a dream, convincing him that the pregnancy was of God. Joseph went ahead with the marriage. After Jesus was born, God sent two more dreams, one to tell Joseph to take his family to Egypt so Herod could not kill Jesus; the second, to tell him Herod was dead and that he could return home.

The Magi (Matthew 2:12): God warned them to return home a different way, to avoid Herod.

Pilate's wife (Matthew 27:19): During Jesus' trial, Pilate's wife sent an urgent message to the governor encouraging him to free Jesus. Her message was prompted by a dream she had—a nightmare, really—that convinced her that Jesus was innocent and that Pilate should have nothing to do with His case.

Peter (Acts 10:9-15): While Peter was praying on the rooftop of a house in Joppa, God gave him a vision of animals lowered in something like a sheet. A voice from heaven told Peter to kill the animals (some of which were unclean) and eat them. The vision served to show that Christians are not bound by kosher law and that God had pronounced Gentiles "clean"; that is, heaven is open to all who follow Jesus.

Paul: Paul had several visions in his missionary career. One sent him to preach in Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10). Another encouraged him to keep preaching in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11). God also gave him a vision of heaven (2 Corinthians 12:1-6).

John (Revelation): Nearly the entire book of Revelation is a vision John had while exiled on the island of Patmos. John's vision explains in more detail some of the events that God had shown Daniel.

Today's Dreams and Visions

With the completion of the Bible, God does not have to use dreams and visions as much as He did before. That is not to say that He cannot or does not; God can communicate with us however He chooses. But when we have a decision to make, our first priority in looking for guidance should always be the Bible.

Ask the students if they can think of any Bible characters who heard God speak through angels. Then add any they have not thought of.

An angel came to Zechariah (Luke 1:11) An angel came to Mary (Luke 1:26)

An angel came to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-14)

An angel came to Philip (Acts 8:26-40) The angel told Philip to go on the desert road where he met the Ethiopian.

An angel came to Peter while asleep in prison (Acts 12:7) and told him to get up because his chains had been broken and he was free.

Summary: Nine ways that God can speak

1.Through the Word of God (2 Tim 3:16, Psalm 119:11, 105): This is the most clear and effective way of God's communication with His people. If you want to know how things work perfectly, you need to read the manual.

2.Through the inner still, small voice of Holy Spirit (Acts 11:12, Acts 13:2, Acts 16:6-7, 1 Kings 19:12, Isaiah 30:19-21)

3.Through the advice and counsel of the men and women of God (Prov 12:15)

4.Through the Audible Voice of God (Acts 9:4-5)

5.Through Dreams (Matthew 1:20-21) – There are many instances in the Bible, where God clearly communicates through dreams.

6.Through Visions (Acts 10:9-18)

7. Through Angels (Luke 1: 26-38)

8.Through circumstances

9. By inner conviction and peace

Year 8

God is a Servant 4 Weeks



Outcomes

At the completion of this module students will understand that:

- Jesus came to earth as a servant, to heal and deliver
- Jesus used His miraculous power to serve, by healing many people
- Jesus can still heal today
- Jesus showed the greatest sacrifice that anyone can ever make: to give His life for us
- Being a servant of Jesus may involve sacrifice

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

Missionaries who have served in the Pacific Islands

Link between “God is a Servant” and classroom topics:

God sent Jesus to serve humanity. He served by teaching, healing, delivering, miraculously providing basic needs, and most of all, giving His life. As followers in His footsteps Christians are called to serve sacrificially. We see this in the work of missionaries.

Values

Compassion, flexibility, service, humility, willingness, thoughtfulness

Biographies:

David Cargill and William Cross; Thomas Baker; Don Richardson; The Fijian call to PNG

God is a Servant

Week 1

Jesus came to serve

Bible references

Luke 4:18-21 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Psalms 147:3 He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.

Mark 10:46-52 Blind Bartimaeus

How does God serve us?

He provides for us and protects us, teaches us.

How did Jesus show that He was a servant while on earth?

He healed many people, taught people about God, delivered people from evil spirits, fed 5,000 people, turned water into wine at a wedding, washed His disciples' feet and many other things. He didn't act as if He was above everyone else. He became one of us.

What do we call it when a person does not boast about themselves, and is willing to help others all the time?

Answers: humble; a servant

How did Jesus show that He was a humble servant?

The beginning of Jesus' ministry

When it was time for Jesus to start His ministry, He went to the temple and read a passage from the Old Testament. It is in Isaiah 61:1-2. It had been written many years before as a prophecy, telling the world that Jesus would come. Jesus stood up and read this about Himself:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Good News to the poor

In the New Testament language, which is Greek, the word "gospel" is translated as "Good News." As part of His mission on earth, Jesus, would proclaim the 'Good News' to the poor. The poor were often overlooked and not afforded many opportunities in Jesus' day, but here they would hear the "gospel." But Jesus was also talking about the spiritually "poor."

Who are spiritually poor? Who was Jesus speaking about?

Heal the brokenhearted

Jesus also said that God had sent Him to heal the broken hearted.
What are some of life's problems that leave people with a broken heart?
What did Jesus also say in John 14:1?

Read Psalm 147:3 Part of Jesus' mission would be to comfort and heal the brokenness in people.

Set the captives free

Jesus was also going to "preach deliverance to the captives." When we think of the word "captives" we immediately think of those who are in prison. But Jesus was talking about a different kind of prison. Those who have not given their lives to Jesus are in the prison of sin. Jesus came to free people from sin. Jesus came to "proclaim", or tell us, that there is a way out; there is a way to be free from the sins that bind and hurt people. He came "to set free those who are bruised."

Heal the blind

Jesus also came to "recover sight to the blind." Jesus healed many while on this earth. Blind Bartimaeus was one of them.

Read Mark 10:46-52.

But there is another meaning of 'blind' too. People who cannot see the truth of God's word are 'blind' because they cannot see or understand what the Bible is about. But when they finally do see, they realize that they need Jesus in their lives.

Cancel all debts

Jesus also came "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." In the Jewish calendar, this was known as the Year of Jubilee. It was a time of great rejoicing. It was a time when all debts were cancelled and people and lands were restored back to their original owners. For us, it stands as a symbol of what Jesus would complete on the cross. For all those who believe in Jesus and accept Him as their personal Saviour, all debts of sin are cancelled. Jesus paid the price for our sins when He died on the cross. This was Jesus' mission on Earth.

Luke 4:20-21 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down, and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, "This day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears."

What can Christians serve Jesus by following in His footsteps?

1. Preach the Good News to the poor – yes we can do this!

But only Jesus can do the following:

2. Heal the broken hearted
3. Set the captives free
4. Heal the blind
5. Cancel all debts

As servants of Jesus, His power can work through us. We can tell others that Jesus can do these things and we can pray for them. By sharing the Good news, God can use us to bring salvation and healing to others.

God is a Servant

Week 2

Jesus, the healing servant

Bible references

John 11:1-44 The raising of Lazarus

John 11:25 "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,"

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."

The Raising of Lazarus

Read the story from John 11:1-44.

Background to the event

Lazarus was a good friend of Jesus. Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, were also committed followers of the Lord. So when Lazarus was ill, they asked Jesus to come and heal Lazarus. But Jesus waited. After a couple days, He told the disciples He was going to Bethany. Now Bethany was only two miles from Jerusalem, where there were Jews who wanted to kill Jesus. The disciples felt it was dangerous to go there. But Jesus was not afraid. He knew that God would protect Him if He did the Father's will.

Why didn't Jesus heal Lazarus straight away?

Many people misunderstood why Jesus waited before He went to Bethany. They all believed Jesus could heal and didn't know why He would let Lazarus die. Mary, Martha and their friends all believed in Jesus' power to heal. They believed that He was the Messiah. But still Jesus wanted to increase their faith. He wanted them to see the full power and glory of God. They said they believed in the resurrection on the final day, but had not yet seen God's power to raise the dead. Jesus allowed Lazarus to die in order to show God's ultimate power. Jesus hoped that those who witnessed the miracle would believe more in His supernatural power. Read verses 15 & 40.

Review questions

Why did Jesus wait before going to Bethany?

Did any of Jesus disciples or friends understand what He was going to do?

How did Martha show her faith in Jesus?

Who believed in Jesus' power to heal?

Was Lazarus a stranger to Jesus?

Did Jesus know Lazarus would die?

Why did Jesus want to show them God's power to raise the dead?

Go deeper:

How did Jesus show that He was a servant by performing this miracle?

If you were one of the witnesses of this miracle, would your understanding of Jesus be different from that time on?

How do we know Jesus was touched by the grief of Mary and Martha?

How do you think Mary and Martha felt when Jesus didn't come?
How do you think they felt when Lazarus came back from the dead?
If God doesn't answer our prayers, does it mean He can't do what we ask?

True or False

Jesus performed miracles in order to impress people. (F)
Jesus really didn't care about Lazarus. (F)
Mary and Martha believed in Jesus' power to heal. (T)
The disciples always understood why Jesus did things. (F)
We will always understand how God is working in our lives. (F)

Miracles in Java

This is a report from a book called *The Gentle Breeze of Jesus*, by Mel Tari. It took place in Indonesia during a period of great Christian revival in the 1970s.

In January of 1973, a man and his wife were walking home at the end of a long hard day's work. They had been weeding their rice fields outside their village in Java and they were terribly hot, tired and dirty. As they trudged up the road, they passed their neighbour's house. All at once they heard loud crying from inside the house. They were shocked. The wailing was so loud that something terrible must have happened.

They knocked on the door but there was no answer. The sobbing just continued louder than ever. Finally, they pushed the door open and walked in. There in the dim half-light of the little room they could make out a form lying motionless on the bed and a woman kneeling on the dirt floor.

"What on earth is the matter?" the couple asked.
"Oh, my husband has died," the lady sobbed.
"How long ago?"
"I don't know. Several hours at least. I've been crying ever since."

The couple walked over to the bed. The corpse had no breath and no pulse. In fact, it had already become so still that they couldn't move its arms or legs. It didn't take too many brains for the farmer and his wife to work out that the lady was right. Her husband was dead.

"Oh, we're so sorry," they said, trying to comfort her. "We must go back home right now to wash and change our clothes. Then we'll tell all our friends what has happened and make arrangements to have him buried. But first we want to pray for you."

Now actually, the farmer and his wife were brand-new Christians. Four months before, they had been Moslems. But since their conversion they were trying to learn everything possible about the new faith.

"Our pastor told us last Sunday that Jesus never changes," they went on. "If He could bring dead people back to life two thousand years ago, He certainly can do it again for us today. So let's ask Him to let His perfect will be done."

They bowed their heads and began to talk to the Lord. "O dear Lord Jesus, if You want to, please raise this man from the dead. You know how this lady needs her husband."

Then they said good-bye and walked outside the house. They had only gone about 20 metres when all of a sudden, the lady ran to the doorway. "Come back! Come back!" she yelled. "As soon as you left my husband started to move!"

By the time they got back inside the man was sitting in the middle of the bed, smiling from ear to ear.

"What happened to you?" they asked.

"Oh, I died and went to heaven to be with Jesus. It was so wonderful up there. I really didn't want to come back to earth."

This true story is a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit who is able to work miraculously today. Jesus is just as powerful today as He was when He was on earth two thousand years ago.

1. Where is Java?
2. What is meant by 'a period of great Christian revival'?
3. How do we know that the people in this story were poor?
4. What evidence is there in the story that the body was actually dead?
5. Why did the farmer and his wife believe that this man could come back to life again?
6. What does this miracle show us about God?
7. Read the story of a little girl who came back to life. (Mark 5:22-43)
8. Did the father believe that Jesus could bring his daughter back to life? (verse 23)
9. What did Jesus say in verse 36?
10. Do you think that Jesus could perform miracles today if people believed?

The things which are _____ with men are _____ with God. (Luke 18:27)

Missing words: impossible possible

Extension activity

Find out about the work of a missionary who served God because of their great love for Him.

God is a Servant

Week 3

Jesus still heals today

Bible References

Luke 7:1-10 The story of the sick servant.

Jesus said to the crowd following Him... "I have never found faith like this, not even in Israel." (verse 9, GNB)

Mark 2:1-12 Jesus healed the paralytic when he was lowered through the roof by his friends

Bible lesson

Part 1: The healing of the sick servant

Read the account of the sick servant from Luke 7: 1-10

Discussion

- What is a captain? What is a servant?
- What other accounts do you know of where Jesus healed people? Was Jesus usually with the person He healed?
- Why was this story different?
- Did the Captain believe that Jesus could heal the servant?
- Do we believe that Jesus can heal us when we are sick?
- Do you know anyone who has been healed by Jesus?
- Do you know anyone who is sick? What can we do for that person?

Part 2: The healing of the paralytic lowered through the roof

Read Mark 2:1-12

Jesus recognised their faith, (verse 5).

Discussion

- What was wrong with the man on the stretcher?
- Why did his friend bring him to Jesus?
- What was the house like and how did they get up on the roof so easily?
- What did Jesus say about the faith of the four friends?
- Does Jesus still heal today?
- *Could* Jesus still heal today?

What did the Pharisees think about the healing miracles of Jesus?

In the time when Jesus lived on earth, some of the religious leaders, the Pharisees, were very proud of the way in which they served God. They said long religious prayers and learned the Scriptures off by heart. They helped the poor and did all the right things. But the problem was, they were not serving God from their heart. They only did good things because it made them look good and feel good. They enjoyed feeling that they were better than everyone else.

They made sacrifices too. They went without food, and gave their time and money. But God was not happy with the Pharisees. He was not happy with their good works and sacrifices, because they didn't really love God from their heart.

The Pharisees would not accept Jesus either. Jesus often spoke strong words to them. Read John 5:38-44.

The mark of a true disciple

Jesus said, "If you *love* me, keep my commandments." (John 14) He is not impressed with people who keep His commandments to look good. He wants everyone to love Him with all their heart.

Jesus knew the hearts of His first disciples. Eleven of the twelve truly loved Him. This is why they were willing to leave everything to follow Him. They left their jobs to follow Jesus everywhere.

Serving Jesus involves sacrifice

Discussion

What sacrifices do you think the first disciples had to make?

Why were they willing to make those sacrifices?

What are some ways in which people can serve God?

God appreciates what people do for Him when they do it with all their heart. Read Mark 12:29-30

Testimony: A Scuba Diving Adventure

Ian McCormack was a young man who loved adventure. In 1980, at the age of 24, he decided to leave New Zealand to see the world. Surfing and fishing in South-East Asia, sailing on a schooner, and observing African wildlife were just some of his experiences. While deep-sea diving off the coast of Mauritius, late one night, he was bitten by not one, but five, deadly box jellyfish. Here is his story.

While in Mauritius, Ian had made good friends with the local divers. They helped him to learn about the wonderful deep-sea life off the Mauritian coast. One night, his Mauritian friend, Simon, invited Ian to come night diving. Now Ian knew that night diving could be dangerous. 'Tonight's conditions look pretty risky,' he thought to himself, as he watched some electrical storms hovering further out to sea.

"Don't worry," said Simon. "This storm will miss us."

Although Ian felt a little nervous, he could not resist an opportunity for an exciting new experience. Night diving proved to be more wonderful than he had ever imagined. There, right before them, lay huge crayfish and sleeping parrot fish, all for the taking. Meanwhile, the nocturnal life of the sea had come to life. He was seeing things he had never seen before.

Suddenly Ian saw a huge crayfish. Just as he was about to reach out to grab it, an unusual sort of jelly fish swam past. Ian had never seen one of these before. He touched the weird creature, which was almost invisible. Its transparent form was box-shaped and it had long tentacles.

Ian reached out for the crayfish. Suddenly a huge electric current hit his arm. Something had stung him. Ian looked at his arm but could see no sign of a sting. He rubbed his arm and immediately felt pain. Ian did not know it, but he had just been bitten by a box jelly fish, or sea-wasp. He had also just rubbed the venom further into his blood stream.

The box jellyfish is described in first-aid books as "a jelly-like creature with long venomous tentacles... and... little can be done if a lethal dose of venom is received."

Ian did not realize the seriousness of the sting. Holding the crayfish, he made his way back to the boat. As he swam, his arm started to feel numb. Swimming became more difficult. The arm soon became paralyzed. Ian looked below him and saw thousands of the jelly fish. The electrical storm had caused them to come in closer to the reef. By the time Ian had reached the boat he had been stung another three times on the same arm. The same electric shock went through his body each time.

Reaching the boat, Ian signaled to his friend Simon. As he put his head down into the water to gain his friend's attention, another jellyfish surged towards him. It was in front of his face. Ian held up his arm to protect his face. The tentacles of the fifth jellyfish stung the same arm. Simon surfaced and swam to the boat. Simon looked at the arm which had now swollen to twice its normal size.

"Invisible?" asked Simon in French. ('Invisible' was the term given to the box jelly fish by the Mauritian divers.)

"Yes." said Ian.

"How many?" asked Simon.

"Five," said Ian.

Simon looked horrified. "One!" he said, "and that's the end of you. You must get to a hospital immediately!"

Only now did Ian realize the seriousness of the situation.

Normally one bite was enough to cause death. The tentacles had stung him directly across his main artery, sending the poison directly into his blood. Death should occur in 15 -20 minutes.

Ian's friends would now have to get the boat back to shore the quickest possible way. That was directly across the reef and into the lagoon. With all aboard the boat, progress would be slow, and the bottom of the boat risked being torn open by its scraping on sharp coral. For the lightest possible load, they decided to send Ian ahead with the youngest member who was about 14 years old. As soon as they reached the shore the young boy decided that he must go back to get the others.

"Come back!" shouted Ian, but it was too late. Ian stood there alone. He struggled along the road, his arm now completely numb, and his legs weakening as the poison gradually moved through his body. Although close to midnight in an isolated part of the island, surprisingly he came across a parked taxi with some people standing near it.

"Please, would you take me to the hospital?" he asked the Indian taxi driver.

"Where is your money?" asked the taxi driver.

"I don't have any money on me," answered Ian, "but I can pay later."

The three men started to walk away. Ian heard a voice inside him saying, 'Would you be willing to beg for your life?' Ian followed the men, begging, "Please, please, I need a hospital!"

One of the Indians turned around and walked towards the taxi. He opened the door for Ian. Ian climbed in and the car drove off. However, the car did not take him to the hospital. The driver pulled up outside a tourist hotel. He opened the car door and pushed Ian out on to the ground. "The tourists can take care of you," he said, and he drove off.

Ian dragged himself up to the entrance of the hotel. Someone saw him. It was one of his Mauritian friends, Daniel. Daniel carried him inside, sat him in a chair, then called for an ambulance. All took too long. Ian knew that he was dying. Finally, the ambulance arrived. In the ambulance, Ian started to see a picture in his mind. It was a picture of himself as a young boy. Then he saw another picture of himself as a teenager. It was as if he was seeing before him a video of his life. He thought about God for the first time in many years. Would God accept him when he died? How could He? Ian thought of the years he had lived independently from God. He had given no thought to God at all. He thought of some words his mother had once said to him: 'When you are in need, cry out to God with all your heart.' (Ian's mother was a Christian.)

That's what Ian did. God heard his cry. Ian asked Jesus to forgive him for his past life, and promised that for the rest of his life, however short it may be, he would love and serve God. There in the taxi, he prayed the Lord's Prayer, which he remembered from his Sunday School days.

Desperately clinging to his life, he arrived at the hospital. The nurse took his blood pressure. Where was it? According to the instrument his heart had almost stopped beating. Surely the instrument was wrong. She tried another. It measured the same. When would someone realize the urgency of the situation? Finally a doctor looked at him. Ian mustered up all the strength he had. He looked the doctor in the eye and said, "I am dying. I need anti-venom...NOW!"

The doctor rushed him to another room. The anti-venom was administered. But it was all too late. Ian could stay awake no longer. He fell into a deep sleep. He soon realized that this was not sleep. He had died! He was still himself, but he had no body.

For the next 15 minutes, Ian, minus body, was taken on a tour of the places in which one may spend eternity. The first place he visited was a place of darkness. Ian had never believed in hell before, but now he knew there was such a place. God showed him this place so that he would understand that he had been snatched from here by his death-bed prayer. Then suddenly he was swept up in a shaft of light. Now he was in heaven. Ian came face to face with Jesus. His face was so radiant that he couldn't make out the details.

"Do you want to stay in Heaven or do you want to go back to your earthly life?" asked Jesus. Then He added, "If you want to go back, you must see things in a new light."

Heaven was the most beautiful place Ian had ever seen. He not only saw beauty, but he felt peace, joy and wonderful, wonderful love. Why would he want to go back? Then he saw a vision of his mother whom he loved dearly. She would be so sad to know that her son had died. She wouldn't even know that Ian had given his life to Jesus.

Then Ian saw a vision of many, many people standing behind his mother. All these people needed to know about the reality of Jesus, and this place called Heaven. Ian decided that he would go back and tell them. He wanted to tell others that to be with Jesus in Heaven was the most glorious place anyone could be.

"Yes," said Ian. "I want to go back".

Ian woke up in his hospital bed. He had been dead for 15 minutes. The doctors and nurses could not believe their eyes. But there was more to come. Ian was still paralyzed from the jelly fish stings.

"I don't want to live the rest of my life as a quadriplegic," he thought. "Lord, heal me!" he cried desperately. As he prayed, the feeling gradually came back into his body. Within a day, he was completely healed. Ian has now dedicated his whole life to telling others about Jesus.

God has power to do anything He wants to do. However, because He is also wise, He does not act like a magician. He does not do miracles so that people can be entertained. A miracle shows us that God is the greatest person in the whole universe. It also shows that He cares about people. He does not do miracles to impress people. He does them to help people.

Questions

1. Where is Mauritius? 2. Why was night diving so exciting?
3. Describe the appearance of a box-jelly fish. 4. How venomous is it?
5. What does it feel like to be stung by a box-jelly fish?
6. Why did they send Ian with a fourteen-year-old boy to get help?
7. Why did Ian start to think about God while he was waiting for the ambulance?
8. Describe Ian's picture of heaven. 9. Why do you think God wanted Ian to live?
10. What is eternal life? Read John 17:3

God is a Servant

Week 4

Paul, a servant of Jesus

Bible references

Acts 9 Saul's conversion

Isaiah 62:2 You will be called by a new name, a name given by the Lord himself. (GNB)

Zechariah 4:6 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

Introduction

After Jesus went back to heaven, the eleven disciples served Jesus in a greater way than they had ever done before. They were able to do this because of the power of the Holy Spirit which had come upon them. They saw people healed and delivered through the power of the Holy Spirit, (See Acts 3:1-10).

At this time, there were new followers who served Jesus in a great way. Paul was one of these. Here is his story.

Saul becomes a Christian

Saul was not one of the disciples. In fact he hated Christians. He hated them so much that he persecuted them. However, something very unusual happened to him. Read Acts 9:1-21.

Saul's life changed so much that God chose a new name for him. From then he was called Paul. We can also read about others in the Bible who had a change of name to show that their life had changed. One of these was Simon the fisherman, whose name was changed to Peter.

Not everyone has a change of name when they become a Christian, but they can have a change of life.

Discussion

1. What helps us to change when we become a Christian?

Ans: The Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is our helper, and He will show us the truth. Just as the Holy Spirit changed the lives of the disciples, He can change lives today.

2. What differences might we expect to see in a person who has just become a Christian?

3. How did Saul change?

4. Can we change by just trying hard?

Ans: Although it is important to try our best to be a servant of Jesus, it's hard to do it on our own. The Holy Spirit helps us when we truly want to love and serve God.

5. How can we demonstrate God's power in our lives?

EXAMPLES:

Power to say 'no' when tempted

Power to overcome problems

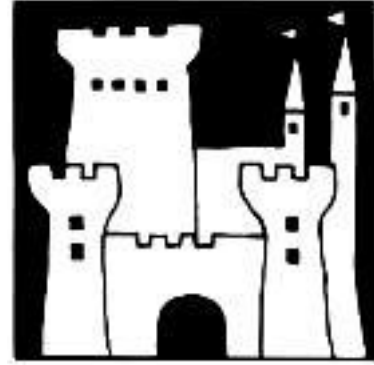
Power to forgive

Power to control anger

Power in speaking the truth at the right time

Year 8

God is Protector 3 Weeks



Outcomes

At the completion of this module students will understand that:

- God has created our bodies with inbuilt protective mechanisms, such as the immune system, the skeleton, the blood.
- These protective mechanisms work effectively if we follow rules for good health.
- God cares for our bodies. They are important to Him because He created us.
- Because of the Fall there is sickness in the world, so we may at times still get sick, even if we make our best effort to look after our bodies.
- We can ask God for healing.
- We will get sick/have accidents far less often if we are looking after ourselves by eating a healthy diet and following rules for safety.
- We can protect ourselves by following the eight “NEW START” rules for good health.
- Smoking, recreational drugs and alcohol abuse have negative effects on the body, and take us out from under the umbrella of God’s protection

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

A balanced diet; health and hygiene rules; smoking, alcohol and drug education

Link between “God is Protector” and classroom topics:

God has given us knowledge and common sense that we can use to keep our bodies fit and healthy. By following rules for good health we are protected against sickness and disease.

Values:

responsibility; security; peace; faith; care for self; self-control

Biographies

David Wilkerson; Jackie Pullinger

God is Protector

Week 1

God cares for our bodies

Bible references

James 5:14-15 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

3 John 1:2 Dear friends, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for you.

Discussion

1. What are some of the diseases from which people suffer today, for which there is no complete medical cure? (*cancer, diabetes, stroke*)
2. What are some of the reasons people get sick? (*improper diet, lack of hygiene, insufficient rest, not enough exercise, eating too much or too little, drug abuse and alcoholism.*)
3. Accidents: where do accidents happen, and what happens in an accident? (road accidents; accidents at home; playing sports; water accidents). What are the results of accidents? (*broken bones, paralysis*). *Are accidents preventable?*

Does Jesus really care about our physical body?

In what ways can sickness and accidents prevent people from living life to the full?

Read James 5:14-15. These verses tell us that it is generally God's will that we should be well, not sick. If we are sick, then we can ask people to pray for us to be healed.

Jesus healed many people in the Bible.

Ask students to work in pairs. They can choose one of the following healing miracles to read from their Bibles. They can read together, then after 5 minutes, ask for 4 volunteers to give a short explanation of what happened in these accounts.

Mark 1:40-45 The leper

Mark 7:9:1-7 The deaf man

John 9:1-17 The man born blind

Mark 5:24-42 A woman healed from bleeding, and a little girl healed

Discussion Question

If God is our protector, why is there sickness and suffering in the world, and why do we still get sick?

The answer is because evil came into the world with Adam and Eve's sin, and with it, sickness. Jesus died so that we can have a way out. We don't have to be a victim of sin if we accept Jesus. He also provides healing to those who ask, but because the

world is not yet free from the powers of Satan, we sometimes do get sick or have accidents, even if we are looking after our bodies. But the truth is, we will get sick and have accidents far less often if we are doing our best to eat a healthy diet and follow rules for safety.

As we learn from John 1:2 we can also pray for God's protection over our bodies and pray that we will be in good health. If we do get sick, we know that God cares for us (1 Peter 5:7) and He can still heal today.

God is Protector

Week 2

Looking after our bodies

Bible references

1 Cor 6:19-20 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies.

1 Cor 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

Fitness & food Choices: 8 rules for fitness

NEW START is a good way to remember eight rules for healthy living:

Nutrients: Choose healthy foods that are as close to nature as possible.

Exercise: Exercise is good for our heart. Fast activity gets the heart pumping rapidly, and gets blood flowing around our body faster. Exercise is also good for building muscles and strengthening our bones.

Water:

Drink 6 glasses per day. Drink less fruit juice and keep fizzy drinks for only very special occasions.

Sunlight:

We need sunlight for vitamin D, which makes our bones grow strong.

Toxin-free:

Choose foods and drinks that contain no artificial chemicals like colours, flavours or preservatives. Don't abuse your body with drugs.

Air:

Spend time outdoors and get plenty of fresh air.

Rest:

Go to bed early. Don't stay up late. The body needs sleep for growth and good health.

Think happy thoughts and trust in God:

Bad thoughts, like anger, hatred and unforgiveness, will make us feel unhappy and stressed.

A closer look at:**Nutrients**

The Bible teaches that we can eat both meat and plant foods. (Before the Flood, only plant foods were eaten, but after the Flood God gave permission for the killing of animals, Genesis 9:1-4). Some people prefer to be vegetarian because they don't like the thought of killing animals.

The nutrients we take in from our food are:

- Protein for muscles
- Minerals such as calcium for bones
- Good fats
- Vitamins and minerals from a wide variety of foods, especially vegetables and fruit.
- Fibre from vegetables and fruit.

Protein is found in meat, but if a person chooses to be vegetarian, then they can get adequate protein from plant foods such as lentils and dried beans, and from dairy foods such as milk and cheese.

The best foods are those directly from nature. Bad foods are junk foods, sugary foods and drinks, and salty savoury snack foods. These have virtually no nutrients and therefore bad for our health, including our teeth! They are a waste of money.

We should eat only what is required to keep us healthy. Feasting is fine on special occasions but not every day.

Dieting and fasting

What is the difference?

Dieting is when we do not eat certain foods because the doctor has told us not to do so, or when we want to lose or gain weight.

Fasting is when we don't eat certain foods (or any food at all,) for a certain time. Jesus and His disciples fasted. He told us to do this so that we can concentrate on prayer and devotion for a period of time. Fasting shows our commitment to God. We practice it to show God that we are willing to give up everything for Him.

Water

How much water should we drink? (6-8 glasses per day)

What is wrong with drinking fruit juice and fizzy drink instead of water?

Exercise, sunshine and fresh air

How do phones, computers, TV and other screen technology interfere with exercise? What can we do about it?

Rest

Even Jesus needed to rest, so how much more do we, especially when we have been busy at school or home. God does not need to rest, but He did rest on the seventh day of the Creation, to set a pattern and an example for us to follow. God wants us to rest our bodies. Our bodies were made for both work and rest. When Jesus lived among us in a human body, He needed rest, just as we do.

Thinking happy thoughts

Did you know that the body produces special chemicals called 'endorphins' when we laugh and feel happy? These chemicals are good for the health of our body. So when we are happier, we are healthier.

But there is one thing that creates bitterness and stops our happiness. That is unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is like a disease in our inner person. It spreads like a rash, or grows like a cancer in our hearts, spoiling our attitudes and building walls between us and God, and us and each other.

Read Matthew 6:14-15 and Luke 6:37-38. Forgiveness is a gift that we receive and give. A heart that is filled with anger and hatred cannot receive the gentle forgiveness of God.

Jesus showed that He cared for people's physical needs while He was on Earth

The students can work in pairs to read one of the following passages. They can choose between:

Mark 6:30 – 44 (Feeding of the Five Thousand)

Matthew 8:14-15 (Jesus healed Peter's Mother-in-law)

Ask for two students (one for each Bible passage), to report back and give a brief outline of the passage to the class, and explain how this account showed that Jesus cared for people's physical needs.

God is Protector

Week 3

Smoking, drugs and alcohol

Bible references

1 Cor 6:19-20 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

1 Cor 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

John 7:37-39 The Living Water, The Holy Spirit living within us, changing us to become more like Jesus

Introduction

Last week we looked at the 8 rules for healthy living, NEW START.

Who can remember what the letters stand for?

Today we will look at the letter 'T' for toxins.

Discussion

Toxins are substances that are bad for our health. One way to look after ourselves is not to put into our bodies things that make our bodies sick. What are some of these things?

Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

If God lives in our bodies, how should we treat our bodies?

Cigarettes

If you are a Christian and smoke, think about how Jesus would feel about living inside you with a cigarette.

Why do people smoke? How do people begin smoking? Here are some reasons:

- to impress a crowd
- to please a friend
- to feel 'in with the crowd'
- because they are tense and worried

Reasons why we shouldn't smoke:

1. A Christian finds joy and fulfillment in a life through Christ. There is therefore no need to smoke for an extra experience.
2. Smoking is a dangerous habit. Many toxins in cigarette smoke are unquestionably related to dangerous diseases, including heart and lung diseases as well as cancer. Our bodies don't belong to ourselves but to God. (We are bought with a price.)
3. It is an unfair habit. It forces all others who share a space with a smoker, to inhale the same fumes, or even secondhand stale smoke.
4. It is a filthy habit. The burnt paper and tobacco leave ash and burned remains. The smoke stains the teeth, makes the breath foul smelling, stains the fingers, pollutes the air and makes clothing smell foul. The ashes and butts pile up as an unsightly mess.
5. It is a waste of time, money and health. That is, a waste of God's time, God's money and the health of a body that belongs to God.
6. It is a gateway into other harmful habits. In most societies, alcohol and gambling go together with cigarette smoking. Cigarette smoking can also lead into smoking marijuana, which can lead into taking other drugs.
7. Cigarette smoking is highly addictive. The nicotine in cigarettes is an addictive drug. Once you've started, and realize that it's not as much fun as you thought, and want to stop, it is very hard. To stop smoking, you will suffer from withdrawal. The lack of nicotine in your body will cause: nervousness, anxiety, headache, nausea,

constipation or diarrhea, tiredness, drowsiness, inability to sleep, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and a depressed mood.

Recreational drugs

There are two types of drugs: pharmaceutical drugs (drugs prescribed by the doctor), and recreational drugs. What is the difference between these?

People have used plants and chemicals for thousands of years to change their feelings or thoughts. Since the 1960's, people all over the world have turned to drugs to try and find answers to their problems, with terrible results. Thousands die from bad chemicals or overdoses or accidental death.

Drugs affect the mind, causing 'uppers' and 'downers'. While experiencing an 'upper', the user may experience colours, lights, and everything beautiful. The person sees himself (or herself) as someone strong and beautiful, and life is beautiful. But many hours later, he comes 'down'. The shock hits him; life is not so beautiful any more. The drug experience was just an empty vision, and now he sees himself as he really is. It was all in his mind.

The colours and scenes come from chemicals. Your world is only pretty when your mind is a slave to a drug. When it wears off, there's the same old world and the same old problems. You are still the same person as before, and probably even worse off. Now it will take a bigger dose of drugs than before to get the same experience again. Nothing is different; your guilt, your loneliness and emptiness are still there waiting for you.

How different it is with Jesus! When we see ourselves through Christ's eyes we know that we are loved and precious. We have someone to share our burdens. The world is no longer empty or meaningless. God's joy is direct, immediate and real. His love is not subject to 'ups' and 'downs'. It is always there, and always the same.

Alcohol

Alcohol is actually a type of drug and has the same effects on the mind as recreational drugs. It causes uppers and downers. It may be less dangerous in moderation, but in excess can be just as dangerous. Some of the immediate effects of alcohol may include feeling more confident, feeling sleepy, losing balance or feeling dizzy.

If you drink to excess you're likely to experience a number of physical effects, including:

- Hangovers
- Nausea
- Shakiness
- Vomiting and memory loss
- Injury to yourself
- Alcohol poisoning

Alcohol is a major cause of injury and death among young people. When you're drunk, you're more likely to put yourself in risky situations, like getting into a car with a driver who has been drinking, or being the perpetrator or victim of violence.

Continuous heavy drinking over a long period of time can lead to:

- Physical and psychological dependence on alcohol
- Significant damage to the brain and liver
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat or esophagus
- Possible increased risk of neurological disorders, heart problems, and sexual problems (especially male impotency)
- Emotional and mental health problems developing, such as depression and anxiety
- Problems at school, work and with relationships

It is not uncommon for young people to experiment with alcohol. The younger a person is when they start drinking alcohol, the more harm they will potentially do to themselves. Alcohol is a toxin, and even when consumed in small amounts, it can be harmful to the still-developing brain and body of a young person.

There are differing views among Christians about whether a Christian should abstain from alcohol completely or whether an occasional drink is acceptable in social situations. Something to think about is this: Having more than one glass of alcohol at any one time may provide a doorway to an addiction, which will have very negative effects on the body. It is also important that Christians do not look to drink as a means of making them forget their problems. We can bring all our problems to Jesus and put our trust in Him completely to sort out our life, whatever situation we find ourselves in. Certain church denominations, such as Methodist, Baptist, and Salvation Army ask their members not to drink alcohol at all.

How to say 'no'

How do you refuse to take part in an activity without putting down the person who asks you?

1. Most times you can simply smile and refuse without going deeper into it. If you are offered a cigarette, drugs or alcohol, simply say, "No thanks, I don't smoke", or "no thanks, I don't drink or "no thanks, I don't use drugs."
2. If asked why not, you can just give them your short testimony for the Lord. Just say, "Well to tell you the truth, I'm a follower of Jesus and He owns my body."

References:

Pratney, W. Doorways to Discipleship

<http://www.tuneinnotout.com/topics/alcohol-other-drugs/alcohol/>

Year 8

God is Truth 3 Weeks



Outcomes

At the completion of this module students will understand:

- That most people will be a leader at some stage in their life
- That everyone is a follower of someone
- What makes a good leader
- The Biblical standards for good leadership
- Honesty is a most important attribute of good leaders
- That there have been many examples of evil leadership throughout history
- What to do if you find yourself under the rule of a leader who orders you to follow principals that are not Biblical

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

Government, law, leadership

Link between “God is Truth” and classroom topics:

God blesses governments that are founded on the Ten Commandments and the Bible. Many countries have in the past, had the Ten Commandments as their foundation, e.g. USA (“In God we trust”), Britain and the Commonwealth. These countries have traditionally used the Bible for swearing in political members. However there is a move away from this truth in our modern world and we are now seeing a decline in moral values all around the world.

The world needs leadership that is founded on the truth of God’s word. Unfortunately we see few examples of this in the world’s political systems. The Christian church can provide the example of true leadership and be a light in a world that is becoming darker. Jesus predicted that the world would become darker as we approach His second coming. He said that it would be “as in the days of Noah”.

Values:

honesty, fairness, respect for truth and justice, integrity

Biographies:

Martin Luther; Peter the leader; John Wesley (2)

God is Truth

Week 1

Leaders and followers

Bible references

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Mark 6:34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

John 10:14-15 I am the Good Shepherd

Isaiah 40:11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young. (NLT)

John 12:49 For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.

John 8:28 Jesus therefore said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.'

Why do people need someone to lead them?

Everyone is or will become a leader at some time in their life. Everyone is also a follower.

Who are the leaders and who are the followers in these situations?

A family

A classroom

A school

A sports team

A country

Everyone leads someone. If you have younger brothers or sisters, they will look up to you and follow your example. In school you may be given an opportunity to lead a group, a sports team, or lead in a group task or project. When people marry, they become leaders of their children. It therefore is important that everyone learns how to be a good leader, and to be a good follower.

Jesus was the greatest example of a leader that ever lived.

How did He lead people?

Jesus told us that He was the Good Shepherd. A shepherd in those days led the sheep around the countryside to find food and water. The shepherd protected and cared for the sheep.

Read John 10:14-15.

Why did the people need leadership?

Read Matthew 9:36. How did Jesus lead them?

Read Mark 6:34. He taught them many things. Jesus taught the people the truth about God

What kind of a leader was Jesus?

Read Isaiah 40:11

Was Jesus a follower as well as a leader?

Read John 12:49 and John 8:28.

These passages show us that Jesus followed His Heavenly Father's instructions.

Moral value: honesty

To be a leader, we need to be open and honest, with nothing to hide. We need to lead people in the way of truth.

To be a follower we have to be able to discern the truth. We do not automatically follow any leader that tells us to do something. We only follow leaders that speak and act in truth.

Honesty is...

- speaking the truth
- not cheating
- not stealing
- not exaggerating
- being trustworthy
- being yourself and not trying to be someone you are not

Discernment is...

- knowing what is true and what is false
- asking the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth
- knowing what the Bible says and measuring it against everything we hear
- listening carefully and thinking carefully when we hear new ideas
- being alert, and watching out for things that are not right

Discussion:

Why would you like people to be completely honest with you?

When might people be tempted to be dishonest?

What if...

You are invited to a birthday party and you say you will go, but then you are asked to play in a sports team on the same day. Would it be right to not turn up to the party, but instead to go and play in the sports team without telling the party host? Would it be honest to give an excuse such as 'I am sick'?

What if...

You are doing a school project with a partner. You didn't get around to doing your share on the weekend. Your partner asks how the project is going. You say, 'it's going well' or 'I'm making progress'. What is the most honest answer?

Is there any such thing as a 'white lie'?

God is Truth

Week 2

Qualities of good leaders

Good leaders are:

- Humble: In order to be a leader, they must be willing to be led. They must serve others, and not want to be served.
- Kind: They lead gently from the front rather than push or bully people from behind. They don't criticize their team for mistakes but talk through the mistakes in an encouraging way.
- Honest: They do not lie or mislead people. They do not pretend to be someone they are not. They do what is right, not what is popular.
- Strong in their understanding of truth: If they are to lead a sports team, for example, they must know the rules of the game! They must have the right information to pass on to the followers.
- Decisive: They must be able to make decisions and stick with them, not change their minds all the time, especially if their decisions are not popular.
- Creative: They must be able to think of new ways of doing things.
- Hard Working: They should not give up when the job is too difficult.

The things good leaders do:

- They relate: This means that they work with people to develop their gifts and skills. They know the strengths of their team and allow the team members to use their gifts.
- They stand out in front: A leader is someone who is being watched, so he or she must be a good example.
- They are responsible: They have certain tasks to do and people to look after. They are not given the title of leadership just to make them important.
- They are accountable: Leaders usually have to report to someone higher than them (and to God) for the way they have led. They are responsible to someone for their actions. They are willing to admit their mistakes.
- They organize: They plan carefully *what* needs to be done, *when* it needs to be done, *who* is available to do it and *what* is the best way to do it. They give the team freedom and control to make decisions.
- They delegate. They don't do everything themselves. They give their team freedom and control to make decisions.
- They achieve: They get the job done properly.
- They act with honesty: they uphold what is right and expose what is wrong, (we call this 'ethics'). In other words, good leaders lead people to do things that God would approve of.

- They endure: Good leaders don't stop until the task is finished.

Humility

Definition - Humility is:

- Seeing myself as God sees me.
- Knowing my strengths and my weaknesses.
- Understanding and appreciating the true worth of others so that I respect them and consider their ideas.
- Acting as though other people are as important as myself.

Without Humility:

- People act as if what they have to say and do is much more important than what anyone else is saying or doing.
- People compare themselves to others, and feel proud that they can do things better, or angry that they can't do things as well as that person.
- People feel proud that they belong to a certain race or family or group.

With Humility:

- I listen to what others are saying and try to understand their opinions.
- I don't deny who I am, (if I am a chief, or a prefect, or a leader), but I don't make others feel they are not as important as me.
- I am grateful for my strengths, and conscious but not depressed by the things I cannot do so well.

Practicing humility means:

- I don't try to impress other people; I just be myself and do my best.
- I don't worry too much about my failures or mistakes, but I try to learn something from them.
- I ask for help when I know I need it.
- I admit it when I am wrong or have done something wrong.
- When I win or do something good, I am grateful, not boastful.

Bible study

1. John 13: 3-6 Humility is not denying who we are, but rather helping others to feel important. Jesus knew who He was (vs. 3) and how powerful He was, but how did He act?
2. Mark 10:45. What is real greatness in the Kingdom of God?
3. Luke 14:7-11 Sometimes people act proud, and then find themselves embarrassed or humiliated (in other words, forced to take a humble place). It's better to take a low place and maybe you will be given a more important one.

Group Discussion

How should you react if:

1. You notice that your friend usually gets better marks than you?
1. Your brother does a job for mum and you think he could have done a better job?
2. You have a problem that you cannot solve?
3. You and your friend are at the canteen and you both want an ice block, but there is only one left?
4. You are captain of a sports team that has just beaten your friend's team by a big score.
5. Your family is very wealthy and live in a big, modern house. You go to your friend's birthday party and you discover that he lives in a very small house that doesn't have much furniture or even a TV, because his dad can't find a job.

Extra Questions

1. How does being humble help you to accept your mistakes and move on?
2. Name two things you could do to serve someone in your family.
3. What does it feel like to be around someone who always thinks they know more than you do?
4. How should leaders show humility? What is a servant leader? (One who is willing to serve the people they are leading, and not to set themselves apart as being too important to do humble jobs).

God is Truth

Week 3

Evil leaders

Bible references

1 Kings 18:18 - 40 Elijah and the prophets of Baal

2 Kings 9:33, 2 Kings 9:35 Jezebel's death

Introduction

Throughout history there have been many examples of evil leaders. In most cases these leaders have been dictators. A dictator is a ruler with total power over a country, typically one who has obtained control by force.

Bible lesson

At the beginning of the 9th century BC, a Phoenician princess named Jezebel was born. Her family worshipped many gods, the most important being Baal, a nature god. While Jezebel was growing into a woman, Israel crowned a new king. To create an alliance with Israel, the king arranged for his son Ahab to marry Jezebel. Jezebel became Israel's Queen. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel served as leaders of the northern kingdom of Israel, and were both known for their evil actions. Jezebel continued to worship the god Baal, and in doing so, earned many enemies. She brought 800 Baal prophets to Israel and ordered the murder of several Jewish prophets. At this major moment, Elijah, a Jewish prophet, appeared. As recorded in the book of Kings, Elijah

gave a prophecy: That a terrible drought would come upon Israel. Amazingly, famine and drought spread across Jezebel's land. The three-and-a-half-year drought was part of God's judgment on the wickedness of the nation and its leaders.

When Elijah confronted Ahab near the end of the drought, the king said to him, "You have brought trouble on our land!" But Ahab had it wrong. Elijah was not the one bringing trouble on the land. The prophet corrected the king: "I have not made trouble for Israel . . . but you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed Baal's".

Read what happened next from 1 Kings 18:18 - 40

What did the priests of Baal do? (*Called out, hurt themselves, offered sacrifices*)

How did Elijah avoid any doubt that the sacrifice was burned by God? (*He covered it with water to make it hard to burn*)

Why did God respond to Elijah? (*To demonstrate to Israel that Elijah's message was from God, and to demonstrate that the God of Israel was the only true God.*)

What happened to the prophets of Baal? (verse 40)

After this, Jezebel sent out a death warrant against Elijah, who had to escape into the wilderness.

Both Ahab and Jezebel were leaders of God's people who forsook the Lord and served other gods. The royal couple earned a reputation for sin and violence, and they both suffered violent deaths as part of God's judgment on their actions.

Ahab's death was predicted by Elijah. Jezebel's gruesome death was also predicted by Elijah. True to the prophecy, Ahab was killed in a battle with Syria. Later, Jezebel was thrown from a tower, "and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled on her" (2 Kings 9:33). Then, "when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands" (2 Kings 9:35). Just as Elijah had said, the dogs ate Jezebel.

Other examples of bad leadership in history

Herod was the king who ordered the slaughter of the innocents. Jesus could have been killed but God protected Him. How? (Matthew 2:13) Herod could not accept any rivals. He was willing to kill babies in order to keep his position as king. He ruthlessly killed some of his own wives and children. Herod is thought to have died in Jericho about a year after Jesus parents hid him in Egypt.

Hitler was the leader of Germany, and used by Satan to start the Second World War. Hitler was fascinated by the occult (Satan worship and black magic), and was convinced Germans were the master race, destined to rule the world for 1000 years. When Hitler and his Nazi Party came to power, most Germans adored him; he promised to make Germany great again: to rebuild the economy, and to eliminate unemployment and poverty. But part of his grand plan was to put all Jews to death. Because Hitler believed the Jews were racially inferior, six million went to their deaths in gas chambers and concentration camps. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German

Lutheran Pastor who opposed Hitler and the murder of Jews. He was imprisoned and finally executed by hanging three weeks before the end of the war.

Discussion

What similarities are there between Queen Jezebel and Hitler?

(Both were involved in Satanic worship; both killed God's people; both dictators)

What should a person do if they believe the leadership of their country is of Satan?

Read the following and make a list of attributes of a good government according to the Bible:

- Proverbs 8: 11, 15, 16, says that governments should use wisdom to rule and to make laws that are just.
- Proverbs 17:7 says governments should not lie.
- Proverbs 17:23 says that judges shouldn't accept bribes
- Proverbs 20:26 says wise presidents always try to punish the wicked.
- Proverbs 28:2-4 and 29:4 urge government to maintain order justly, to follow God's moral code and to avoid oppressing the poor.
- Romans 13:3-6 and 1 Peter 2:13-15 say that government officials, are ministers and servants of God who punish and restrain criminals, and commend those who do good works according to God's moral code.
- Deuteronomy 16:18-20 records Moses as saying of government that the people should "judge the people fairly... not pervert justice or show partiality... not accept a bribe...follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you."

What should Christians do if they are living under an evil government?

- a) We should never obey rulers that tell us to go against what the Bible says, (Acts 5:29)
- b) Paul extended his life by appealing to the Roman authorities, and the Roman army when the Jewish leaders were trying to have him killed. (*We can appeal to the government through petitions and letters.*)
- c) The Underground Church in China hold Christian meetings in homes even though it is against the law. Should they do this?
- d) Jesus lived in a country ruled by the Romans. He faced the corrupt religious leaders, Roman army and Herod the tyrant. How did He both submit to and resist their authority? (*He agreed to paying taxes, saying "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's"; He spoke out against the use of the temple as a market place; He answered the trick questions of the Pharisees with wisdom, and replied with questions to which they had no answers; He submitted to the Roman authorities at the point of His death, knowing that this was the Father's will.*)
- e) What should we do about laws in today's world that are against the Bible: abortion; gay marriage; restriction of religious freedom?

Additional notes: Leadership Styles

A. Dictator

This is a leader who:

1. shows their own authority and power; dictates by telling people what to do; disciplines by punishing people if they don't do what they are told or don't do things the leader's way, or don't do things properly
2. is very strict
3. is more concerned with work and time and systems rather than how people are feeling.

Some countries are governed by dictators; people who come into power backed by the army and who make laws without an elected government. They are not elected by the people, so the people have no say in deciding what rules they would like to govern their society.

Discuss: countries ruled by a dictator; what it would be like to be ruled by a dictator?

A benevolent dictator is one who is not elected by the people and who has 'absolute power', but who is kind and good to the people they rule over. We could say that God is a 'benevolent dictator'. A teacher is also a benevolent dictator. They have authority, but they rule over the classroom in a way that benefits the students.

B. Democratic Leader

A democratic leader is one who:

1. Likes to call meetings of the people involved in a task before they start work;
2. Asks peoples' opinions and Listens carefully to what others suggest;
3. Thinks of everyone else as equal, even though they lead others;
4. Believes that everyone has a right to an equal say in decision-making, and an equal share in any reward, profit or benefit
5. Waits to make a decision until all or most people are in agreement.

Name: countries that have democratically elected governments (*All Commonwealth countries for example*)

How do we elect a democratic government? (*By voting*)

C. Laissez-faire Leadership

This style of leadership:

1. Allows people a lot of freedom to make their own decisions;
2. Doesn't make too many rules or laws;
3. Doesn't necessarily try to get people to agree (as in democracy) but is happy for everyone to do their own thing.

Revision Questions

1. What leadership style would your teacher be using if they:
 - a) appointed a class prefect
 - b) asked the students to choose a class prefect
 - c) didn't appoint any prefects but allowed the students to make their own rules and do what they liked
2. What styles of leadership were operating in Acts 6:1-5? Acts 8:26-27?

Year 8

God is Lord and King 3 Weeks



Outcomes

At the completion of this module students will understand that:

- God is in charge of the whole world
- Christmas is a special time when we remember when God sent Jesus into the world as part of his big plan for the world
- Baby Jesus was God's son. This means that although he was a human baby, he was also God.
- Jesus will return as King.
- God wants to be Lord and King of our whole life.

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

World geography; world map; countries and continents

Link between "God is Lord and King" and classroom topic:

Discuss with children that God is in control of the whole universe, that is, our world, the sun, the planets and the stars. He tells the sun the time to set. He makes the tides because the moon is under His control, (Ps 104:19). Because God is looking after our world, He looks after the people whom He made. He sent His son Jesus into the world so that every person in the whole world could have the opportunity of knowing the true God.

Values:

faith; respect for truth; holiness

God is Lord and King

Christmas Week 1

Jesus came to us

1 Timothy 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Galatians 4:3 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...

Luke 1:26–38 An angel came to Mary

Matthew 1:20–22 An angel came to Joseph

Luke 2:1–14 The birth of Jesus

Introduction

Jesus could have come to earth as a triumphant political leader. He could have paraded into Jerusalem on a beautiful horse with an army behind him. He could have chosen his disciples to be brilliant economists, lawyers, bankers, military generals, civic leaders, academics and celebrities. But instead He chose to come to us as a baby, born in a stable, into the family of ordinary folk, and choosing ordinary men to be his disciples.

An angel comes to Mary

Read Galatians 4:3.

When this right time had come, God sent an angel named Gabriel to a young woman named Mary, who lived in Nazareth, to tell her that she would have a son and that she should call His name Jesus. Mary was greatly surprised to hear this because she was not married. However, the angel told her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy: the Son of God”.

An angel from God also appeared in a dream to Joseph, who was engaged to be married to Mary. The angel said, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins”.

The name Jesus means Saviour. The English word Christ is not Jesus’ surname, but is a title. It comes from the Greek *Christos* which means ‘anointed one’ or ‘Messiah’. So Jesus Christ means Jesus the Anointed One, or Jesus the Messiah. Messiah means ‘Saviour’.

Caesar Augustus fulfils an Old Testament prophecy

In due time, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This came about because the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, wanted to have a census conducted and so, everyone in the Roman world had to go to their ancestral home town to be registered there. Under God’s oversight, Augustus thus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy in Micah 5:2, which said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Joseph had to take

Mary from Nazareth to his own home town of Bethlehem, a distance of about 110 km (70 miles). While there, Mary gave birth to Jesus.

The Shepherds

The very first people to whom God announced this were some nearby shepherds. An angel told them that Christ the Lord had just been born. When this happened, the glory of the Lord shone around them and a great company of angels appeared, praising God.

The Wise Men

A year or so later, some 'wise men' (called 'magi' in Greek), living in another country to the east, saw a strange new light in the sky. They thought it was a special star that announced the birth of a new king, whom they were meant to go and worship. Later, when they got to Jerusalem, they went to the palace of King Herod, expecting that this was where any new king would be. Herod was dumfounded. He sent for the Jewish leaders and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They told him that the prophet Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. So off the wise men went again.

The Bible doesn't say how many wise men there were; just that there were three gifts. The light led them to a house in Bethlehem where the infant Jesus now was. Stars, or a conjunction of planets (formerly 'wandering star'), or a comet, don't normally move like that, and certainly don't illuminate just one particular house. Therefore, it is more likely that the light that the wise men saw and followed, was the glory of God, sometimes called the Shekinah glory or a divine visitation of the presence of God. This was "the glory of the Lord" that had appeared to the shepherds.

When the wise men saw the child Jesus, they worshipped Him and gave Him costly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold was a symbol of Jesus' kingship. Frankincense was incense used by the priests in the worship of God and so represented homage to the Christ-child as God, as well as being a symbol of Jesus' priesthood. Myrrh was oil used to embalm bodies for burial, and so was a symbol of Jesus' future suffering and death. The Bible doesn't say how many wise men there were. It just says that there were three gifts.

God protects baby Jesus

God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. This was because Herod was planning to murder all the male children two years old and under to make sure of killing Jesus, whom he now regarded as a rival. God also warned Joseph in a dream to take Mary and the child Jesus and escape to Egypt (Matthew 2:7–12). The gold was probably God's provision to pay for their needs there, before they could return to Nazareth after Herod died.

What is the real reason for Christmas?

The reason for the Christmas season is that Jesus came to Earth to die for the sins of the world, and then to rise again to give new life to all who put their faith and trust

in Him. In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah calls the coming Messiah a “Kinsman-Redeemer” (Isaiah 59:20). This meant that the Messiah must be a blood-relative of those He redeems. So it was necessary for Jesus to be born into the human race, as a physical descent from Mary, and a descendant of Adam.

Was Jesus born on December 25th?

Jesus was actually born around the end of September. December in Israel is in winter, which would have been much too cold for shepherds to be in the fields at night. The date, December 25th was decided upon 336 years after the birth of Jesus, by the first Christian Roman Emperor Constantine.

Who celebrates the real Christmas?

In countries today that celebrate Christmas, it is only Christians who truly worship Jesus for coming to Earth as God. Everybody else just has a party and perhaps a holiday. And, indeed, Christmas trees, lights, decorations, exchanging cards and presents, family reunions, and enjoying a delicious Christmas dinner, are all fun things to have or to do.

However, all this means that Christmas for most people is just a giant shopping spree, with people giving gifts to each other, but not paying homage to Jesus as the shepherds and the Wise Men did. Also, nowadays, the celebration of Christmas often involves a jolly fat man in a red suit, who supposedly lives at the North Pole and travels all over the world by snow sledge on Christmas Eve, distributing presents to children who have ‘been good’. This of course is a fairy story, but it is also idolatry when used as a substitute for worshipping Jesus. God, not Santa, is the One who knows all that we say and do.

The modern Santa Claus is a corruption of the name of a real man, Saint Nicholas. He was Bishop of Myra in modern-day Turkey, and famous for his generosity. A legend says that he provided wedding gifts for three daughters of a poor man—under the cover of night, he threw three purses full of gold coins through the window. But the real Nicholas would be horrified at the claims about Santa Claus.

So as we enjoy all the good things about Christmas, we also need to remember that the ‘reason for the season’ is that Jesus came to Earth to be born, to live, and to die for the sins of the world, and then to rise again to give new life to all who put their faith and trust in Him.

Reference: Russell Grigg, Published: 25 December 2015 www.creation.com

God is Lord and King

Christmas Week 2

Jesus will come again

Bible references

Acts 1:3-11 Jesus is taken up into heaven

I Corinthians 15:4-7 Jesus appeared to more than 500 followers at once

Matthew 24; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 The Second Coming

The Ascension and the Promise of the Second Coming

After Jesus had died and risen, He appeared to his followers on several occasions. One day over five hundred of those who believed were gathered in one place and Jesus appeared! It was such an amazing thing that some were still doubtful, even though they saw Him. How eagerly they must have listened as He talked to them. ‘All power and all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me,’ He said. That meant that no one in heaven or earth is greater than Jesus. Then He gave them a command. “Go and make disciples in all nations,” he said. “Baptize them. Teach them to do all things I have taught you. And remember, I am always with you until the time the world shall end.”

One time the Lord Jesus appeared to seven of his disciples at the Sea of Galilee, by which time He had appeared to many people who knew him. There were now many proofs that He had been truly dead, but was now alive.

The disciples returned to Jerusalem, because Jesus had told them, “Stay in Jerusalem” until the one comes whom the Father has promised to send. I have told you about Him before.”

They remembered that before He died, the Lord Jesus said, “I am going away, but the Father will not leave you alone. He will send the Holy Spirit who will live in you.” Now the Lord Jesus reminded them of that promise. “In just a few days the Holy Spirit will come,” He said.

“When He comes you shall receive power to be witnesses, to teach and preach about me.” The disciples were to tell about Jesus’ life, His death and His resurrection. And, the Lord promised that the Holy Spirit would bring things to their mind which they may have forgotten. (John 14:26)

While the Lord was telling the disciples these things, they were looking at him and listening carefully. As he stopped speaking, His feet left the ground and He began to go up into the air! The disciples stared! Then they saw a cloud come from the sky. As the cloud came down and the Lord Jesus went up, He disappeared into the cloud and was gone. The disciples still stared, but they were looking into space! Immediately two men dressed in white appeared. They must have been angels. They said to the disciples, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here staring into the sky? This same

Jesus who was taken away from you into Heaven shall come again in the same way you saw Him go into Heaven.” As suddenly as they had come, they were gone. But their words remain with us today: “This same Jesus, who was taken away from you into Heaven, shall come again in the same way you saw Him go into Heaven”.

Some day He will appear. In the meantime His Holy Spirit lives with us, and is in those who believe and love the Lord Jesus, helping us to live in such a way that pleases Him. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and is like the presence of Jesus always with us.

What things will happen before Jesus comes again?

Before Jesus died, He told His disciples about the signs that believers can watch for, showing that Jesus’ return is close.

Read Matthew 24:3-14. What are some of the signs?

Read verses 24:23-27. How will the coming of Jesus surprise some people?

Read verses 29-31 Why will it be wonderful for some and not good for others?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 What will happen to those who love Jesus?

Read Matthew 24: 36-44 Why will it be like the days of Noah?

What is the most important thing to remember (verse 44)?

God is Lord and King

Christmas Week 3

Jesus wants to be Lord and King of your life

Bible references

John 3:1-7 Nicodemus

Acts 2 The Holy Spirit gives us a new heart

2 Corinthians 5:17 We are a new creation

Ezekiel 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

1 John 1:12-13 Whoever received Him He gave the right to be sons of God.

Revelation 3:20 Behold I stand at the door and knock.

2 Corinthians 5:17 A new creation

We must be born again

Read John 3:1-7

Nicodemus was puzzled when Jesus said that he must be born again. He was a good man, a Pharisee, a leader in the temple. He kept God’s commandments. But still Jesus said that he must be born again.

Even if we are good people, come from good Christian parents, go to church and Sunday School or youth group, we still need to be born again of the Holy Spirit. God wants to give us a new heart. Read Ezekiel 36:26.

The new birth happens when we decide to receive Jesus Christ into our hearts. That means we believe in Him and what He did on the Cross, and we invite and receive His Holy Spirit into our lives. Read 1 John 1:11-13.

The coming of the Holy Spirit

Just before Jesus went back to heaven, He promised to give the disciples the Holy Spirit. It is by the Holy Spirit coming into us that gives us a new heart. (John 3:6) After the death of Jesus the disciples were afraid to speak about Jesus because they thought that they too might be arrested. They hid behind locked doors.

Read Acts 2:1-17

Were the disciples still afraid to talk about Jesus?

Were they still hiding behind locked doors?

Were they still afraid of being arrested?

Who is the Holy Spirit promised to? (*Ans. To all people, children, adults, rich, poor – to all who believe and want to receive*)

Read Acts 2:37-42.

How can we have a new heart, be born again, and receive the Holy Spirit?

Read Revelation 3:20

What does it mean to make Jesus Lord and King of your life?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Jesus makes us a 'new creation'. He gives us a new spiritual heart and wants us to serve Him, love Him, worship Him, and keep ourselves clean of sin for Him.

What kinds of things belong to the 'old creation'?

(Not just things like lying, boasting, jealousy, but also problems like loneliness, depression, fear and worry. We can give all these to Jesus.)

When we have given our lives to Christ, He wants us to start growing in our faith. We can do this by having fellowship with other Christians, praying, learning from the Bible, and doing what God wants us to do. We can be a witness for Christ by sharing our faith with others. We choose to make Jesus Lord and King of our life by obeying His commands and following wherever He leads.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (Good News Bible)

For it is by God's grace that you have been saved...

Grace means kindness and mercy that we didn't deserve.

Through faith...

We start our Christian life by believing with all our hearts that Jesus is God's Son, and He saved us by what He did on the cross.

It is not the result of your own efforts...

We are not saved by our own prayers, fasting, or other action.

But God's gift...

To have a gift we must take it from the giver; we must choose to receive Christ, God's gift to us.

So that no one can boast about it.

If we thought we were good enough to go to heaven we would be very proud. That very pride would be a sin in God's sight! That pride would make us think we were better than other people. God says that we are all sinners, all the same, and His gift is offered to everyone.

When we make Jesus Lord and King of our life, what does He expect us to do?

Read Ephesians 2:10.

As Christians we are connected to Christ and can do nothing without Him, (John 15:5). God wants Christians to do good things, help people, be kind, loving and share what they have with others. God has planned our life already, and when we receive Jesus Christ we begin to fit into His plan as we love and obey Him.