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Inspire.

A RESOURCE FOR BUSY YOUTH WORKERS

VOLUME 1

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Inspire.

A resource for busy youth workers - Volume 1

Contents

Introduction

How to use this resource

THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Adam and Eve – Created in God’s image
2. Adam and Eve – Temptation
3. Adam and Eve – What Guilt does to you
4. Cain and Abel – Jealousy between brothers
5. Noah – A man under pressure
6. Noah – Faith in God’s words
7. Noah – Obedience rewarded
8. Noah and the God who keeps his promise
9. Noah gets drunk
10. Job – When things go wrong
11. Job – Judging others
12. Job Blames God
13. Job – God speaks
14. Job – It’s all sorted
15. Abram gets a big call from God
16. Abram – do lies get us out of trouble?
17. Lot compromises his principles

18. Hagar – The God who sees me
19. Sarah and God’s impossible promise
20. Abraham – Deal or no Deal?
21. Lot escapes with his life
22. Abraham takes his exams
23. Eliezer is given a mission
24. Isaac and the double miracle
25. Jacob and the long con
26. Jacob takes up wrestling
27. Jacob and his bro call a truce
28. Jacob! Joseph his son
29. Joseph is wrongly accused
30. Joseph’s opportunity
31. Joseph and his big brothers
32. Moses the secret baby
33. Moses murders someone
34. Moses the unsure leader
35. Moses hits a brick wall
36. Moses experiences signs and wonders
37. Moses faces a challenge
38. Moses disobeys God
39. Moses gets moaned at
40. Joshua is called to lead
41. Rahab protects the spies

42. Joshua is successful

43. Achan makes God well angry

44. Joshua forgets to pray

45. Deborah leads

46. Gideon chosen for mighty works

47. Gideon – is it ok to test God?

48. Gideon overcomes fear

Further resources

INTRODUCTION

This book is all about raising up young people who know their God, who can understand his word and will let him impact their lives in a deep and meaningful way.

As you can see, this volume contains 48 sessions for church-based youth workers to teach young people. These meeting plans have been used and re-used, tweaked and rewritten. I've tried and tested this material over the course of 10+ years with various groups of young people as a week in week out Bible teaching series.

INSPIRE is aimed at doing just what it says on the front: inspiring youngsters. Through mystery, suspense and discovery we can help our youth to understand and apply the Bible to their lives.

A wise man once said, "Give a man a fish and you will feed him for a day, but give him a fishing rod and teach him to fish and you will feed him for life." INSPIRE will provide you with the tools to train youngsters to "catch fish" for themselves; to gain a mind-set that can understand and correctly interpret the Bible throughout their lives.

I believe this is really important for our youngsters to make it in adult life. Some young people can feel alienated from the Bible, simply because they read and don't understand. This resource gives youngsters a greater confidence in understanding the Bible.

The "science" behind each session

Each week the teaching develops through four stages of interactive discussion:

- Stage 1. Establishing what's happening
- Stage 2. Identifying the key parts of the text
- Stage 3. Applying what's there to today's situation
- Stage 4. Understanding what God is saying today

These discussion questions are aimed at developing the way young people read and interpret the Bible.

The first two volumes of this resource will take your young people chronologically through the Bible from Adam and Eve through to Ezra the prophet in the Old Testament. Volume three covers the people of God in the New Testament. Each week has a meeting plan with icebreakers, text to read, discussion points and helpful answers for the leader to know what the questions are getting at. This is a very versatile resource that provides several years' worth of teaching material. Perfect for busy youth workers!

Here is an example of how these steps aid the young people's learning:

Stage 1: Establishing what is happening in the text.

We know the story, we've heard it all before, right? Er... not necessarily. Noah's ark. The animals went in pairs two by two, didn't they? No. In Genesis Noah was required to take seven pairs of every kind of "clean" animal. From the start, the session aim is to establish what actually happened. This is the foundation the sessions are built on.

Stage 2: Identifying the key things of significance in the text

Often there are key words, statements or sentences that help to unlock pivotal questions about a text. For example, we read the statement "But God remembered Noah." Had God forgotten about Noah? A question like this then leads us on to a discussion about God's timing. This resource highlights key details of the text, enabling us to discover something fresh. Frequently, there will be clues in the Bible text that enable youngsters to discover why that particular information is there. Of course, they may need you to help point them in the right direction!

Stage 3: Applying the text to today's situations

Bible study can't simply be an academic exercise. We develop the discussion questions to then ask, "How might we respond in this situation?" and "Are there situations like these that we can find ourselves in today?" For example, if we are presented with an instruction from God that we don't understand at the time, what might we do? This leads onto themes of discipleship such as trust and obedience in our relationship with God.

Stage 4: Understanding what God is saying today

The last stage of questions focus on what God is saying to us as individuals and as a group. Is it about trusting him? How may God be reassuring us? Is it to help us more fully enjoy God's protection and provision? This last stage is all about bringing clarity where there is confusion about what to do today. Is it an action to take? Maybe it is concerning guidance or moral decision making.

How will I know the answers to the questions?

In this resource the hard work is done for you. The research has been done so that your preparation time can be focused on understanding the issues and communicating the Bible, rather than having to go through all the commentaries and dictionaries to understand what's going on. The information in brackets after each question is there for two reasons:

Firstly, to answer the question so that you can see what it's getting at. Since this is an interactive discussion resource, you may feel more comfortable re-wording some questions to your style. The answer in brackets helps you to "get" the question.

Secondly the answer is there to give you confidence in affirming people's replies and teasing out the truth of the text. It's not all about getting the right answer, but in understanding the Bible there has to be a correct teaching point coming out at the end.

What about the youngsters who don't like a discussion?

Not everyone is going to be super-chatty on every session. Therefore, there are a variety of icebreakers, stories, scenarios and other things that aim to involve the whole group and enable people to be at ease; even the shy ones like me!

It is worth having a packet of sweets (eg. a bag of Haribo) available for the first few times you lead these sessions (if not all the time!). The idea is that when someone answers a question, they get a sweet. This isn't a sweet for the "right answer," but rather for a sensible, well thought out response to the question asked. Suddenly everyone wants to say something!

How to use this resource

This resource works well if you have a small group setting, such as on a Sunday morning or during the week. The size of the group doesn't really matter. This material works best for numbers from 6 and 30 youngsters and caters for ages from 11 to 17 years old.

It is advisable that leaders take around an hour preparation time each week, to read through the Bible text and the notes to familiarise themselves with the theme and the games. The games have been chosen so that there are minimal resources needed each week. You don't want to keep having to go shopping for every session!

The Bible is essential

Since this is a Bible resource, it works best if each youngster has a Bible to use. Have someone read out the text each week with youngsters following along. It's also very handy that they have Bibles open during the teaching so that they can base their answers on evidence found in the text rather than just guessing. This will enable them to have a basis for their answers as opposed to guesswork.

Volume 1 - From Adam through to Gideon

This resource is both text based and story based. Each session takes a look at a situation that a Bible character faces and aims to drill down into the text to relate it to things that we face today. There is so much that will help us today as we discover God working in our lives through their stories, their mistakes, their failures as well as their successes.

May your young people continue to develop in their understanding of the whole counsel of God, as they go through some of the key moments of Bible history. My hope is that they will grow stronger in their faith and discover more of how God wants to lead them in the future!

SESSION 1

ADAM AND EVE - CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

ICEBREAKER 1 – CHINESE WHISPERS

⌚ 5 Minutes

The leader whispers in one person's ear, that person passes it on: "Fred rang to say he's late, it looks like midday flight will be at eight. He said he won't forget to bring your surprise, can you remind him of your size."

INTRODUCTION

⌚ 1 Minute

Over the next year we are going to be studying the lives of some of the most important characters in history. There's so much insight that we can gain for help in living our own lives, by learning what the people of God did in the Bible. It's important to remember that these people were ordinary people just like us. They did some amazing things, but also made mistakes just like we do.

By keeping this in mind we can really understand how God related to people in the past and how he will relate to us today.

DISCUSSION

⌚ 10 Minutes

Jenna Franklin has told her mother that she would like bigger breasts for her 16th birthday present. Her mother, who is a cosmetic surgery consultant, has herself had breast implants and has agreed to pay the bill of around £3,000.00.

However, the surgeon who would have performed the operation has announced that he considers cosmetic surgery inappropriate because Jenna is still developing physically. He also thought that a 15-year-old lacked the psychological maturity in making such an important decision. He has announced that he will not operate until Jenna is 18.

Newspapers have reported that Jenna anticipates having lip-suction and dental work in her 20s and a face lift at 40. Around 25,000 teenagers receive cosmetic surgery each year in the United States. It seems that a similar trend is developing among young people in the UK to opt for the knife and implants to achieve the "perfect look and shape."

01. Do you think Jenna is old enough to decide for herself if she wants cosmetic surgery?
02. Jenna says she wants the surgery "to be successful, I need to have them." What do you think about that?
03. Describe the pressures to be a certain shape that affect young men and women...

04. **Glossy magazines, adverts and films all tend to emphasise physical attractiveness. What else can make a person attractive?**

TEACHING 1

🕒 10 Minutes

READ Genesis 1:1-27 & Genesis 2:4-7

01. **Does anyone have any comments on what we've just read? Have you noticed anything that you hadn't seen before? Any initial thoughts?**
02. **How does Genesis say the plants appeared?** (It's easy to think that God just made them appear, but here we see that he has established laws of nature and v6 tells us that he uses water to spring up from the earth to make the vegetation grow).
03. **Where does the Bible say Adam came from?** (The dust. In the same way God uses what he has already established to form Adam ie. the dust).
04. **What image does God use to create Adam?** (v27 His own. No other living creature is said to have been made this way).
05. **Tell me what do you think the words "image" and "likeness" communicate about Adam and Eve?** (They were made having certain things in common with God. But being made like God is not just about our physical appearance).
06. **How does this make you feel about yourself knowing that you've been made in God's image?** (God has made you in the form of his own beauty, there are some truly lovely things about you).
07. **In what way are we different from the other creatures on the Earth?** (Get them to try and think how Adam and Eve were made)
08. **Verse 26 hints as to why we are different to the animals... The clue is where God says "Let us make man in our own image."**
09. **Why "Us"?** (God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 3 parts in 1 God).

As humans we have: **a mind** where we think, we feel pain, we love and stuff, **a body** that is physical that we can see and interact with others **and a spirit** inside us and will go to the next life when we die. In this way we are like God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God made mankind different from the animals in that we have a spirit. Animals don't know right from wrong. A lion will kill you and eat you without a second thought. They can feel pain, hunger, they can be loyal and intelligent, they can also be trained by us, but they have no in-built conscience.

There is no spirit inside them. They cannot go to heaven or hell. They simply have a body and a mind, and when they die, they return to the earth. In this way we are special and distinct from the animal world.

10. **What attributes do you think mankind has that are like God?** (Love, compassion, faithfulness, goodness, authority over the other creatures of the earth, power to rule, the ability to choose, etc.)
11. **Do you think a person can be beautiful simply by having these good attributes, without having a stunning outward appearance?**
12. **Who would you rather be friends with:**
 - A. **Someone who is outwardly beautiful but not necessarily inwardly beautiful, or**
 - B. **Someone who has a beautiful character, but not necessarily outwardly good looking?**
13. **Same question again, but this time who would you rather go out with??**

If we are honest, we often give those who are physically good looking more attention than those who are good on the inside. It takes a deeper person to see people for who they are on the inside, ie. their character. This is what makes a good friend and a good relationship.

14. **Here we have the first human being, made perfect by God. Why do you think God made humans as special?** (Read Deuteronomy 7:6 He made us to have a relationship with him. It is because we have a Spirit inside of us that we can have a relationship with God).

TEACHING 2

🕒 8 Minutes

READ Genesis 2:8-15

We're going to look at these verses more next week, but does this tell you anything about God's relationship with Adam?

1. **Try and put yourself in God's shoes... Have you ever had an Action Man or a Barbie doll or a small pet like fish or guinea pig? In what way are verses 8–15 similar to this?** (God made a special place for Adam to stay, that Adam could take care of and enjoy. It was a special place of immense beauty in which Adam could make his home).
2. **How else does God interact with Adam in these verses?** (He helps Adam in his search for a companion).
3. **What does this say about God caring for our needs?** (Don't worry if you don't have a girlfriend/boyfriend and you want one. God will take care of that and find you what

you need *when* you need it! This might not be right away! Sometimes we think things happen instantly, but we see with Adam it took some time. There were lots of living creatures on the Earth!).

So, take heart, he understands where you're at and hears your prayers.

ROUND UP

🕒 1 Minute

Here is a fantastic picture of Adam interacting with God. Adam and Eve, made in God's image, made different from all the other living creatures, made with a spirit for a relationship with God. God shows himself here as one who interacts with us, and who thinks of our needs and provides for us in order that we may be satisfied in life.

Of course, we all want to look nice, but whether we are stunningly good looking on the outside is not as important as developing good character on the inside. It's far better to build relationships with people who genuinely love and respect you for who you are on the inside.

PRAYER TIME

🕒 5 Minutes

SESSION 2

ADAM AND EVE – TEMPTATION PRESENTS ITSELF

ICEBREAKER 1 – DO NOT TOUCH

🕒 2 minutes

Leave an item that people will want to pick up somewhere in middle of the room (if you can source a remote doorbell button that would be ideal). Place a sign on it saying “do not touch.” Say that you've just forgotten something and need to get it and leave the room... Come back a minute or so later and see if anyone has touched it.

ICEBREAKER 2 – TRUE AND FALSE?

🕒 10 Minutes

Ask everyone to think for a couple of minutes and come up with two statements about themselves, one true and one false. They can be as wacky as you like, but if they've got unusual things to say about themselves which are true it could become very interesting. When everyone has had time to think, begin with one of the leaders, to give the youngsters a good idea of the sort of thing they can say. The leader has to give two statements about themselves and then the group has to decide which statement is true, and which is the false statement. Move around the group, allowing each person to make their two statements and everyone to select the true statement.

Have fun doing this, but at the end try make a point about lies. Sometimes they are more convincing than the truth; but they are always wrong. Satan is the father of all lies and Jesus is the way the TRUTH and the life.

INTRODUCTION

🕒 1 Minute

Last week we began looking at Adam and Eve. We learned about how God made them in his own image and although that doesn't mean physical likeness, it does mean likeness in character.

As humans we have: **a mind** where we think, we feel pain, we love. We have **a body** that is physical that we can see and interact with others. We also have **a spirit** inside us that will go to the next life when we die. In this way we are like God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

So, Adam and Eve were made in God's image. They were made different from all the other living creatures and made with a spirit for a relationship with God.

TEACHING 1

🕒 8 Minutes

READ Genesis 2:18-25

01. **Why did God decide that Adam needed a helper?** (v18 He acknowledged that it wasn't good for Adam to be alone. God knows that we need others to be in relationship with. We get lonely).
02. **How did God go about getting Adam a helper to begin with?** (vs 19-20 He brought all the living creatures to Adam for him to name them)
03. **Why do you think Adam didn't find a helper among all the creatures of creation?** (There was no-one who he could communicate with, no-one with the same mind, body and spirit, so no-one he could be in equal relationship with).
04. **What did God do about it?** (vs 21, 22. God caused Adam to fall asleep and then created a woman out of Adam's rib. Original cloning?! "The woman was *made of a rib out of the side of Adam*; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." *Matthew Henry*).
05. **How did Adam respond to God's new creation?** (v23. He recognised their likeness and felt her to be a suitable helper; he also saw the lifelong commitment it would be.

TEACHING 2

🕒 15 Minutes

READ Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-7

01. **What did God actually tell Adam he could and couldn't do? What would happen if he was disobedient?** (He could eat the fruit from any tree in the garden, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he ate from that tree he would die.)
02. **Do you think that was fair of God?** Discuss.
03. **What do we learn about the snake? Who was it?** (The snake was clever and cunning. It was Satan).
04. **How did he begin his conversation with Eve?** (v1 by questioning what God had actually said and casting doubt on it).
05. **Was Eve sure about what God had told them?** (She knew that she could eat from all the trees except the one in the middle of the garden because they would die if they ate from that one).
06. **What did the snake say in reply and why was this a temptation to Eve to eat the fruit?** (He contradicted God and said they would not die, that they would know about good and evil and be like God. This appealed to her pride that she would be like God).
07. **How did Eve deal with Satan's temptation?** (She gave in).

08. **What would have happened if she had resisted the temptation Satan put before her?** (She and Adam could have continued living in the garden in comfort and at peace with themselves and God).
09. **Think about when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. How did He resist temptation? What did He do?** (Matthew 4:1-11. He answered with the word of God and stood firm with faith in God).
10. **What can we learn from Adam and Eve's experience and how it compares with Jesus and how He dealt with temptation?** (Discuss).

ROUND UP ⌚ 1 Minute

Satan will always try to turn us away from God, he will do all he can to shake our faith. He is the master of lies and will delight in making us believe that God has lied to us. Remember Jesus said "I am the Way, **the Truth** and the Life." Also remember that we have a choice. Satan cannot make us give in to temptation any more than God would make us be obedient to him. We have free choice and that choice brings responsibility. We choose to listen to God or to listen to Satan's lies and we have to take responsibility for that choice. What can we do?

We can ask God to help us stand firm against temptation. Remember that line in the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." God can give us the strength to say 'No' to Satan, but only if we want to.

PRAYER TIME ⌚ 5 Minutes

Spend a few minutes chatting about things to pray for. Encourage the group to share if they have any particular difficulties or temptations they are facing and then have a prayer time together.

SESSION 3

ADAM AND EVE - WHAT GUILT DOES TO YOU

ICEBREAKER – PASS THE KEY

🕒 8 Minutes

Players sit in a circle, facing inwards; one person stands in the middle, holding a key behind their back.

The game begins when a player from the circle stands up, takes the key from one in the middle and sits back in the circle. The key is then passed behind their back undetected to another player, who must in turn secretly pass it on. The person in the middle must try to keep track of where the key is.

At some point the leader will say "STOP" and then everyone must hold both their hands in front of them, clenching their fists so the key cannot be seen. The person in the middle has three guesses at which hand contains the key. If they guess correctly, they swap places with the person with the key and the game runs again. Any players can do fake moves to make it harder for the guesser to keep track of the key.

After a couple of rounds add a further element to the game. This time, when the leader says "STOP" the guesser can ask up to three questions before making his/her three choices. For example, they might ask "Do you have the key?" "Where is the key?" "Did you have the key at some point?"

Then ask... did being able to ask questions and see reactions make it easier? Why/Why not? Did anyone make guessing easier by looking guilty?

DISCUSSION

🕒 10 Minutes

Picture the scene. It's Saturday, around 3pm. You have rumbles in your stomach and you could really do with something to eat. It seems like ages until dinner time and you feel like you can't last out. So, you go foraging around in the kitchen, where you come across your brother's stash of fun-size Twixes. He's not around to ask and there are loads in there. You're sure he won't even notice if one measly little bar is gone.

No-one's around and you know the Twix is just what you need. If no-one notices you, it's probably not even like a crime at all?! (You think!). You slip the Twix into your pocket and disappear upstairs.

You are now in your bedroom with the said Twix bar.

01. **What is going through your head right now?** (What are the options you are considering? Is there much debate in your head as to what to do next, after all it is just a Twix? Or is it more than that?).

You look at the Twix, and think of the biscuity, caramel chocolate mix and you unwrap it. The shiny layers of chocolate look so tasty, so you decide to devour it on your own in your bedroom.

02. **How do you feel at this point?** (Satisfied? Happy? Guilty?)
03. **Now the Twix is gone. If you had a time machine, would you go back and make another decision?** (Discuss).
04. **Why is it that we are sometimes told *not* to do things? After all, aren't rules just boring?** (Discuss).

Now, it's nearly dinner time and you are watching the TV downstairs. Your brother comes home from playing sports. He needs to replenish his body sugar levels. He goes into the kitchen for his stash of Twixes. Something's wrong. It's not as he left it. Fortunately, he knows how many are left as he has one for every day left in the month. It's the 3rd today, so he should have 28 left!

05. **What would you do at this moment in time??** (eg. Find a place to hide, or find your parents fearing for your personal safety?).
06. **What feelings are you experiencing at this moment??** (Anxiety, fear etc).

Your brother is now looking for you. He confronts you and tells you that he's counted them, and there's a Twix missing! He tells you in no uncertain terms that he believes you did it.

07. **How do you respond?** (Discuss).

INTRODUCTION ⌚ 1 Minute

Last time we saw how Adam and Eve were faced with a choice, a temptation. We learned that, because they chose to listen to Satan and disobey God, they were responsible for what followed. This week we're going to see what happened as a *result* of the choices Adam and Eve made.

TEACHING ⌚ 20 Minutes

READ Genesis 3:1-20

Here, Eve is standing at the tree and Satan is telling her to eat some fruit.

01. **Did Satan *make* her eat the fruit?** (No. She was faced with the choice. The only power the snake had was to try and persuade her to eat the fruit. The snake could not force her to eat it).

With just the power of persuasion, just with words, the snake managed to make Eve do something wrong. This would affect the future of her life. He used the tree and its fruit to lure her.

02. **It says in verse 6 that the tree was beautiful. Would the outcome have been the same if the tree was unattractive and the fruit ugly?** (Often we will find that at the time, the wrong things that we are tempted to do can appear very attractive).

ACTIVITY – STRAIGHT FACE

🕒 5 Minutes

Find five volunteers who think they can keep a straight face no matter what. Get those in the group to ask the volunteers questions. The only reply the volunteers can answer is with the word "sausages." The one who keeps a straight face for the longest time wins a prize.

01. **What was the winner's secret to success?**
02. **Now, take the example of the Twix bar. When it looked so enjoyable and you really wanted to eat it, how could you overcome such strong feelings?** (Think about the outcome, think about something else, pray and ask God to help you find something else!).
03. **Did the fruit fulfil all that the snake said that it would?** (No. Satan lied when he said they would be like God. He also told a half-truth that they would know good and evil. There were some very negative effects as a result of their disobeying God).

There's always the *before* and *after* with temptation. Before, things look very attractive and promise to make you feel happy, excited or be something you will enjoy. You can end up thinking of nothing else. But after, when you realise it was wrong and that you have made a mistake, you will probably wish you could turn back time. You've been tricked by a half-truth. Yes, the chocolate would be tasty, but you don't enjoy it as much as one you would have paid for. So you feel guilty.

TEACHING CONTINUED

🕒 10 Minutes to go

06. **Describe the negative feelings Adam and Eve must have had?** (v10 They felt guilty inside and shameful of what they had done. They were afraid of God).
07. **What does guilt do to us?** (It makes us feel full of regret for what we've done. It's a horrible feeling we get inside, because our conscience reminds us that we've done a bad thing. It can stop us from sleeping and make us want to do things to help us forget about it. We just want to blot it out from our minds. It can mess us up on the inside and lead us to do further destructive things).
08. **If guilt makes us feel so bad, is guilt wrong?** (Guilt is good as it is our gauge as to what is right and wrong. If we lose this, we will lose control of our lives).

09. **Who and what were Adam and Eve afraid of?** (They were afraid that God would find out and be angry and He was. It made them want to run away and they were worried because of what might happen to them as a result of what they had done).
10. **What were they afraid would happen?** (They'd messed up big time. This was the start of the world and they didn't realise it at the time, but their actions had poisoned the human race. Our actions affect others, and when we do wrong others are affected).
11. **Adam and Eve knew there would be consequences, so they legged it. Do you ever run away from God when you've done something you know he isn't pleased with?** (Discuss).
12. **How can we get rid of this guilty feeling? What can you do after you've messed up?** (Confess it to God, and ask to be forgiven. Jesus will forgive you! 1 John 1:8-9).

Being forgiven is God's solution to the problem of guilt that we feel inside when we do wrong things. Guilt makes us feel all wrong on the inside. God is good, holy and pure and will judge all sin. But in his great love He has provided a way to take away all guilt and sin. Thousands of years later Jesus would come to Earth and through believing in him all guilt and every sin is taken care of.

13. **Take a look at verses 16-19. Do you think this is a harsh punishment for simply eating an apple?** (These are very serious punishments, but we can always trust God to be fair).
14. **If God is always fair, this must mean that what they did was very serious. If it was more than just eating an apple, what was it that was so bad?**

Firstly, they disobeyed God. They decided to believe the snake instead of God and went against what God had asked them to do.

Secondly, this was something more than an apple, because they were changed after eating it. Something irreversible had happened to them. They knew things they didn't before ie. that they were naked. God had made everything in the world good, but now it was no longer all good any more.

As a result of the change that happened in Adam and Eve, things now had to change around them.

ROUND UP ⌚ 1 Minute

We see in verses 13-20, that as a result of what Adam and Eve had done, things were now going pear-shaped. The consequences of their actions were now being realised and the passing pleasure of eating a forbidden apple has turned into a nightmare. Often things that are wrong are wrong for a reason. God wanted to protect Adam and Eve from the bad things

of the world, and provide a pleasant and restful environment for them to live in. Unfortunately, by disobeying God they destroyed many of the good things God wanted them to enjoy.

Often our actions have repercussions for other people's lives too. Eve's actions affected Adam's life and in turn their actions affected their children's lives and all of humanity. When we risk getting involved in bad things, we also put at risk our future happiness. God wants you to be happy, and he sent Jesus to set us free from the guilt and fear that attacks us as a result of what we do wrong.

PRAYER TIME

🕒 5 Minutes

Maybe there is something they feel guilty about and wish they hadn't been tempted. Maybe they made a mistake. Encourage them that there is forgiveness through Jesus and pray.

SESSION 4

CAIN AND ABEL – JEALOUSY BETWEEN BROTHERS

ICEBREAKER – STRING TOSS GAME

🕒 10 Minutes

Get a ball of string or yarn. Have each person answer a question (from the list of questions at the end of this study) when they have the string in their possession. They then hold on to the string and throw the ball to another person so they can answer the question. You eventually create a web of some sort. In the end, describe how we all played a part in creating the web, and that if one person was gone it would look different. When we all take part that is what makes the group what it is, unique and special.

INTRODUCTION

🕒 1 Minute

Last week we looked at the consequences of Adam and Eve giving in to temptation. They lost everything. They lost their comfortable lifestyle, their innocence and their peace of mind. This was replaced with pain, hard work, eviction from the only home they had ever known and the knowledge that they had disappointed God. Their actions did not only affect them; the consequences would go on and on throughout the generations. We are still paying the price!

When we risk getting involved in bad things, we also put at risk our happiness. God wants us to be happy, and He sent Jesus to set us free from the guilt and fear that attacks us as a result of what we do wrong. Today we see the birth of the first babies in the Bible and then things go a stage further down the slippery slope.

TEACHING

🕒 25 Minutes

READ Genesis 4:1-26

- 01. What did the boys do when they grew up?** (v2 Abel became a shepherd and Cain became a farmer).
- 02. What was significant about the offerings Cain and Abel brought to God?** (vs 3-4 Cain brought some food, but Abel brought the best of his flock).
- 03. How did God respond to the gifts?** (vs 4-5 God accepted Abel's gift, but not Cain's).
- 04. Why did God respond like that? And how do you think God felt?** (God gives us so much. Our response is to give him the first fruits; not the worst fruits. All things come from God. What we give back to God is what he has already given us! God must have felt sad and disappointed with Cain's response).

05. **How do we respond to God's generosity to us? Do we give back to him generously, or do we only give God what's left?** (It's the attitude of heart when giving back to God, as well as the quality of what we give).
06. **Cain felt rejected. How did he respond to God's words?** (He didn't want to hear them, instead he left the way open for Satan).
07. **Why did Cain kill Abel? Was there any justification for his actions?** (Jealousy and Abel was making Cain look bad).
08. **What reasons can we have for being jealous of a brother or sister?** (Maybe if we feel they get better treatment from us or when they are treated special because of something they have done well).
09. **What is the right response in these circumstances?** (It isn't right to punish or blame them for doing well).

SCENARIO

🕒 8 Minutes

Imagine your younger brother has just passed some important exams. It's a big thing in your family, as he is the first person to ever have passed these exams (your parents didn't and neither did you). So as a reward your mum and dad buy your younger brother an expensive present and you all go out to celebrate at Pizza Express.

1. **How does that make you feel?** (Hopefully really happy, but probably a little overlooked and left out?).
2. **What do you think the right way of dealing with those feelings is?** (It is right to reward exceptional achievements, and we would always want the best things for our younger brothers and sisters since we love them. Rather than feeling down on yourself, instead enjoy the food and how everyone wants to celebrate. If you get on with enjoying it, you will be demonstrating great love to your family and a good example for your younger brother to follow).

So just because someone else in the family gets a lot of attention it doesn't mean that you are being rejected.

TEACHING CONTINUED

🕒 8 Minutes to go

01. **What emotion fuels Cain's jealousy?** (It's his anger, combined with his jealousy that leads him to commit his violent actions).
02. **What did Cain do to compound his actions?** (He wasn't honest with God).
03. **Do we try to cover up or make excuses when we feel guilty and caught out? Are we any different from Cain?** (Discuss).

04. **What was the result? Did Cain get away with murdering his brother?** (No, he had to accept his punishment, which was that he would wander around the land and never settle. He would have no home and he would never grow good crops).
05. **Was that it? Had God abandoned Cain completely?** (No, when Cain pleaded, it was because he was afraid. God promised him protection, but he still had to see through the consequences of his actions).
06. **What happened to Cain in the long term?** (He moved to the land of Nod, married and had children, but through the generations they did not worship God and moved further and further from him, marrying more than one wife, killing, etc. The consequences continued through the generations).
07. **What was going on with Adam and Eve?** (They had another son, called Seth).
08. **Did Adam and Eve turn away from God because they had lost both sons? Abel being killed and Cain wandering the land and going away?** (No, they acknowledged that their child was a gift from God).
09. **What happened about the time of Adam's grandson Enosh?** (People started praying to God).
10. **What can we learn from what we've looked at today?**
(Discuss)

ROUND UP ⌚ 1 Minute

Today we've looked at the beginning of family life. Family life is not easy, but Cain's reaction was perhaps a bit excessive!! He was jealous of Abel because God approved of Abel's offering.

Unfortunately, he let this make him angry. His anger, mixed with his jealousy led him to commit the world's first murder. Adam and Eve lost both of their sons; one to death and one to darkness and disillusionment.

As a result of Adam and Eve's original disobedience, mankind is left to struggle with the problems of jealousy, misunderstanding and suspicion. The root problem of disharmony in today's homes is the same as that which afflicted the first human family, a refusal to let God be God.

PRAYER TIME ⌚ 5 Minutes

Spend a few minutes chatting about things to pray for. Encourage the youngsters to share if they have any issues they are facing either at home or at school and then have a prayer time together.

QUESTIONS FOR ICEBREAKER

01. What was the first thing God created? (The heavens).
02. Can you name three of the 12 disciples? (Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot).
03. How many sons did Jacob have? (12).
04. Who was Moses' brother? (Aaron).
05. Who heard God call his name in the night? (Samuel).
06. What amazing thing did Jesus do at a wedding? (Turned water into wine).
07. Who was blinded by a bright light on the road to Damascus? (Saul).
08. How many commandments did God give to Moses? (Ten).
09. What number is the longest Psalm? (119).
10. Which is the only book in the Bible not to mention God? (Esther).
11. Who had a talking donkey? (Not Shrek! Balaam).
12. Who washed his hands when passing judgement on Jesus? (Pontius Pilate).
13. Who laughed when they heard they were going to have a baby? (Sarah).
14. Can you name the strongest man in the Bible? (Samson).
15. How many friends were put in the fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar? (3. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego).
16. How many people did Jesus feed with five loaves and two fish? (5,000+).
17. Who walked on the water towards Jesus? (Peter).
18. Where was Jonah supposed to be going when he was swallowed by a big fish? (Nineveh).
19. Apart from the animals, who went on the Ark with Noah? (His wife, 3 sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth & wives).
20. Who found Jesus' tomb empty on Easter day? (Mary Magdalene and the other Mary).

21. Which disciple denied Jesus? (Simon Peter).
22. How many years did the people of Israel wander in the wilderness? (40).
23. How old was Jesus when his parents took him to Jerusalem and he got lost? (12).
24. Who was Jacob's twin brother? (Esau).
25. Who had a coat of many colours? (Joseph).
26. Who was Jesus' cousin? (John the Baptist).

SESSION 5

NOAH – A MAN UNDER PRESSURE

ICEBREAKER 1 – TONGUE-TWISTER RACES

🕒 3 Minutes

Say five times “Irish wristwatch” or “Big bib on Bob the bouncing baby.” See who can say it the fastest five times.

ICEBREAKER 2 – THE YES NO GAME

🕒 8 Minutes

Select contestants and ask them a barrage of questions. When they say “yes” or “no” they are out.

INTRODUCTION

🕒 1 Minute

Last week we saw that in giving to God, it's important to give him first place. To God, the reasons and motivations we have for giving a gift is even more important than the actual gift itself. A gift given to God that is meaningful to us is what God is looking for, rather than giving him something because we feel we have to.

TEACHING

🕒 30 Minutes

Read Genesis 5:28 – 6:22

01. **Little quiz question for you... How many generations was Noah from Adam? (See chapter 5).** (Noah was the 10th generation from Adam).

Last week, we had a question which turned out to be a bit of a mystery. After Cain killed Abel, he was sent away. He was worried that people out there might find him and kill him. We wondered where these people came from. The assumption is that God created other people after Adam and Eve.

02. **Look at verse 2-4 of chapter 6. Does this shed any more light on this issue?** (Sons of God sounds like other men on the earth).
03. **It says “Sons of God” what do you think this means? Isn't there just one Son of God?** (Sons of God probably refer to just that, human men made by God and put on the Earth, not Divine like Jesus. Jesus is different as he is God, and is his only Son).

What was different about these Sons of God is quite interesting. They seem to have been warriors of some kind, physically big. Their children were also big (called the Nephilim). See Numbers 13:3-33.

04. **How do you think God hoped these “Sons of God” would live their lives?** (As good men).
05. **And how does the Bible describe the people who lived at the time of Noah?** (Wicked and evil).
06. **Over 10 generations the world had been corrupted. How does God view all that’s going on?** (He regrets even creating man).
07. **If God is omniscient (all knowing), why did he bother creating man in the first place?** (God has given us free will to choose to love him or not. Even though he knew mankind would do evil, rather than force us to be good and to love and obey him, he gave us the opportunity anyway. God being holy must exercise his judgement on those who are living evil lives; but there is one man who is good).
08. **What do you think upset God most, the people’s sin or the fact that they were ignoring him?** (He had created mankind to be in relationship with himself. If they had chosen him, their lifestyles would have been different. We can see this because of Noah's life).
09. **Why do you think God is pleased with Noah?** (Because his character was different from those around him).

The pressure to be like those around us is always very real. When someone is different it is noticeable. The people around at the time Noah was alive, seem to have been violent, probably murderers, taking many wives, drunkenness and all sorts. These were people out of control, and a dangerous time to live in. In those days there was no TV, or posh houses to sit in, the people would have spent much of their time outside, living off the land and interacting with each other. Many people were becoming corrupted as a result.

10. **However, Noah “found favour with God,” do you think God has favourites? Are there any other people in the Bible that might be described as favourites of God?** (At times it seems that God chooses certain people to use for his plan. Therefore, he promises things to them and does amazing things in their lives).
11. **What does it mean to be righteous? And blameless? Verse 9** (A person who is morally good. Being “righteous” has nothing to do with judging other people, but rather making sure our own lives are good. A person who believes what is good and does it. Blameless in that he didn’t get involved with the bad stuff that was going on around him).

ICEBREAKER 2 – PLASTICINE MODELS

🕒 5 Minutes

Give everyone a piece of modelling clay with these instructions:

'Please make a small model. Everyone should make every effort to make an identical model to everyone else. You may not talk or write notes to each other. You have three minutes.'

Do not say anything else. Observe how the young people go about choosing a leader and then copying them.

01. **How did you find that task? Difficult/Easy?** (Discuss).
02. **Why was it difficult to try and create exactly the same thing as everyone else?** (Discuss).

Sometimes it's right to do what everyone else is doing. However, there are other times when you have to break the mould and be who you are. Not to copy those around you by trying to fit into the shape people try to put you in. It's more important to do what is right. It takes wisdom and courage to decide against something others want you to do which is harmful to you or others and go your own way.

03. **Noah was righteous. How difficult is it to be "righteous" at School?** (Discuss).

SCENARIO ⌚ 5 minutes

01. **How does the way other people are behaving around us change the way we behave?**

Say you have been looking forward to going bowling with your school mates for ages. You all meet up, but once inside one of your mates produces some alcopop drink. She shares it round and everyone has a swig. It gets round to you. What do you do? They say "Oh go on, it's only a sip" and "you can't get drunk on a sip" and "what's wrong with you? Is it because you're religious?" But you know as a 14-year-old you are under age and it is illegal.

02. **Have you been in or can think of any situations where it's easy to compromise and just do what everyone else is doing, even though it's wrong?** (Discuss).

TEACHING CONTINUED ⌚ 10 Minutes to go

12. **Verse 11 tells us that the earth was corrupt. How do you think corruption starts?** (Often it will start with something small, where you have to make a choice on some moral judgement. Say for example, you are working in a shop. You do a friend a good deal on an item of clothing. As a result, they buy you a box of chocs. Then the next time they come in they ask you for a good deal on something and offer you some money. Maybe they even threaten to tell your boss about the previous deal? What do you do? If you give in it's easier the next time etc).
13. **With this in mind what's the best way to avoid our lives becoming corrupted by friends and people around us who don't believe what we believe?** (Discuss).

14. **When the Bible says Noah “walked with God,” it’s using picture language. What idea is it trying to communicate about Noah?** (That he had a close relationship with God. He was devoted to God and wanted to communicate with God. As a result, God blessed him and communicated back with Noah, telling him what’s going to happen next).
15. **How can we walk with God?** (By taking time to talk with God and be interested in what he has to say. When we involve him in our lives and tell him about our day and ask for his help).
16. **Do you think it’s possible to have a close relationship with God where he talks to us?** (Discuss. Maybe someone has an example from their life where they felt God was speaking to them).
17. **Noah chose to live differently from those around him. How does this benefit him?** (God entrusts him with a special task. To build an Ark).
18. **Do you expect this made him popular?** (Hmm... we’ll see next week. But doing the right thing won’t always make you popular!)

ROUND UP

🕒 1 Minute

Today, we’ve seen that when everyone is living their lives, doing what whatever they want (be it right or wrong), those who choose to do what is right will instantly stand out. Pressure can be put upon such people to change to be just like everyone else. However, it is possible to live “righteous” if we learn what it is to “walk with God” and live our lives in relationship with him. This is a life that pleases God and he’s sure to look after us through the tough times and involve us in his future plan.

PRAYER TIME

🕒 5 Minutes

Spend a few minutes chatting about things to pray for. Encourage the youngsters about the power of prayer and how God can really change things when we involve him with our lives. Ask if anyone can remember anything recent that they have asked God for help with and whether they have begun to see an answer yet.

SESSION 6

NOAH – FAITH IN GOD’S WORDS

ICEBREAKER - COUNT TO 20

⌚ 5 Minutes

The aim of this game is to count to 20, but without interruptions. Without indicating who, one person will start by saying “one.” Then anyone else in the room can say “two” and so on up to twenty. However, if two or more people say the same number at the same time, you have to start again at one.

FILM CLIP

⌚ 3 Minutes

Show a clip from Evan Almighty “There’s going to be a flood.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_U9jZQ54LM

INTRODUCTION

⌚ 5 Minutes

Last week we saw how Noah stood out. Four words describe Noah best: “He walked with God.” We can all have that sort of relationship with God; it’s our choice! To have that kind of relationship, we have to be willing to make sacrifices, to spend time with God. Going for a walk takes time. A good walk is not done in five minutes, nor is our walk with God something we can cut short because something better comes along. We need to invest our time with God and so develop our relationship with him and “walk with him.” When we do that, he will walk with us.

TEACHING

⌚ 25 Minutes

READ Genesis 7:1-16

- 01. Why did God say that Noah and his family could go into the ark?** (v1 Because Noah was the best person alive at that time. Note that God doesn’t say that he was faultless, just that Noah was the best around).
- 02. What special instructions did God give to Noah about the occupants of the ark?** (vs 2-3 He should take seven mating pairs of each type of ‘clean’ animal and bird and one mating pair of every other type of creature).
- 03. Why did they have to be male and female?** (So that after the flood they could establish new herds/flocks, by mating.)
- 04. Do you know or can you guess which animals were “clean” and which were “unclean”?** (Split the group into two and have one group open at Deuteronomy 14:4-

20 and the other at Leviticus 11:1-31. Start a list of clean and unclean animals. See below.)

Clean: Cud chewing animals with split hooves, cattle, sheep, goat, deer and gazelle, freshwater fish with fins and scales can be eaten, birds such as chickens, turkeys and pheasants, crickets, grasshoppers and locusts.

Unclean: camels, rabbits, and pigs, as well as creeping things like moles, mice and lizards as well as four-footed animals with paws; cats, dogs, bears, lions, tigers; sea creatures without fins and scales, catfish, lobsters, crabs, shrimp, mussels, clams, oysters, squid, octopi, any birds that eat decaying flesh like vultures, birds of prey, plus ostriches, storks, herons and bats.

05. Why does God say that some creatures were fit to consume, but not others? (We know that God gave laws "that it might be well" with those who seek to obey him. We've already said that some of those on the "no" list are creatures that eat decaying flesh as well as other animals that might eat decaying flesh. Animals like bears, pigs and vultures do that, whilst hunting animals like wolves often go for the weakest in the herd, sometimes weak because they are diseased).

Sea creatures and bottom dwellers such as lobsters and crabs scavenge for dead animals on the sea floor. Shellfish such as oysters, clams and mussels similarly consume decaying organic matter that sinks to the sea floor, including sewage.

Many of these creatures have this in common: God labelled them as unclean since they would often eat flesh that would sicken or kill human beings. When we eat such animals, we are eating things from the part of the food chain that includes things harmful to people. Maybe God made these "clean up" creatures for the very purpose of consuming the nastiness that comes through death and disease.

06. With this in mind, why do you think God told Noah to take seven pairs of 'clean' animals and birds and only one pair of the other creatures? (It was likely that Noah needed the 'clean' animals for food for him and his family. Therefore, there needed to be more than one pair. Those animals could breed more quickly and thus be used for food as well as to sacrifice to God).

07. What if Noah found some road-kill one day and was very hungry. Do you think it would have been that bad if he'd eaten it? (We have to trust God's words are there for a reason. This is one of the ways we exercise faith. Obedience is really important in our relationship with God).

08. God was very specific with Noah about when the rain would be coming and for how long it would last. Why do you think he was so specific? (Discuss. It could be that it was such a big and frightening thing that God knew that he needed to be really specific with Noah about when and for how long, so that Noah would have a better understanding and be able to trust God more).

09. **Is God ever that specific with us about things?** (It depends on what God is doing. Sometimes he is very specific. Other times we just have to trust God without any indication of how long something is going to take).
10. **How did Noah respond to God's instructions?** (He obeyed God totally, showing complete trust in him).
11. **Do you think Noah had much trouble rounding up the animals to get them into the ark?** (Note that in verse 9 it says "they came to Noah". Isn't that amazing?? They just came. How powerful is God, to be able to do that?!! Not only did they just come, but exactly the right number and sex of each kind! Stunning, isn't it??).
12. **Just think about it for a minute. Try to picture the scene. What do you think it would have done for Noah's faith?** (It says twice in these few verses that Noah was 600 years old when all this happened. Notwithstanding that he had to build a boat when he lived a long way from the sea. Now God said he had to load in all these animals too. He must have wondered about how to find every species and mating couple of animal and then how to get them to the ark. But to see them come to him proved God's provision for what he has asked Noah to do. Here was the proof at last!).
13. **What do we see in verses 10 and 11?** (The rain came just when God said it would. This is the first mention in the Bible of rain. Would Noah have even known what God meant by rain? See Genesis 2:5-6. Still, he was obedient and built an enormous ship, miles away from water. God showed his faithfulness to Noah in doing what he said he would do).
14. **In this short passage we see it repeated that Noah was 600 years old when this happened and also that the rain came seven days after they entered the ark. Why are these details put in twice?** (When things are repeated in the Bible, it means that they are important. These show us that God's word can be trusted. He said seven days and sure enough it was seven days. Noah was so old that it would have been impossible to do all this without God's hand. It shows the power of God in this situation).
15. **So much of this story is repeated within the passage, which emphasises there are some big things to learn from it. What do you think those lessons are for us today?** (Discuss. Hopefully the group will talk about obedience to God and God keeping his promises; God's faithfulness and our need to trust God, etc.)
16. **Who closed the door? And what does that tell us?** (God closed the door. He was in control. He made sure it was properly shut, thus he was protecting Noah, his family and all the animals).

READ Hebrews 11:1, 6-7

01. **What is faith?** (Try to get the group to put the definition in verse 1 into their own words, to make sure they really understand what faith is).

02. **This chapter of Hebrews is often called the “Roll call of faith” because it lists great men and women of faith in the Bible. Why is Noah included?** (He trusted God and obeyed him when he was asked to do something which seemed totally outrageous and impossible. How much faith must that have taken?!)
03. **How can reading about Noah and his relationship with God make a difference to us today?** (Discuss)

ROUND UP

🕒 3 Minutes

This short passage of only 16 verses can teach us so much about God and what he requires of us his people. God is still that same now as he was then, and he still wants the same things from us as he wanted from Noah then. Noah is a wonderful example for us of a man full of faith, who was obedient to God and as a result we see God's blessing in his life.

In Noah's case, these blessings were **protection** for Noah and his family from the flood, and **provision** in the here and now, as well as in the future. At the time, the animals came to Noah in the right numbers and types. God also provided for their future needs so that there were enough animals to breed and provide meat for the future. God also provided **relationship**, in which Noah and God could communicate together. God wants to pour his blessings into our lives, but he can only do that if we have a relationship with him. For that to work, we need to be able put our trust in him. What this means is that we are obedient to what he requires us to do in faith without knowing what the outcome will be.

PRAYER TIME

🕒 5 Minutes

Spend a few minutes chatting about things to pray for. Encourage them to get into the habit of talking to God about everything that happens in their lives so that they can be open and honest with God, because God loves each one of us and cares passionately about us.

SESSION 7

NOAH – OBEDIENCE REWARDED

ICEBREAKER 1 – FIZZ BUZZ

🕒 5 Minutes

This is a concentration game where counting and knowing your times tables might help. Everyone sits in a circle and one person begins counting, 1, the next person 2, etc. However, whenever a person is about to say a multiple of 2, they must say "fizz" instead. As people get counting and get the hang of that, start again and say that any multiples of 5 must be replaced with the word "buzz."

People will soon realise that when a number is both a multiple of 2 and 5 they must say "Fizz Buzz." Carry on until their brains have had enough.

DISCUSSION STARTER

🕒 10 Minutes

In July 1976, Israeli commandos made a daring raid at an airport in Entebbe, Uganda, to rescue 103 Jewish hostages. In less than fifteen minutes, the soldiers had killed all seven of the kidnappers and set the captives free.

As successful as the rescue was, however, three of the hostages were killed during the raid. As the commandos entered the terminal, they shouted in Hebrew, "Get down! Crawl!" The Jewish hostages understood and lay down on the floor, while the guerrillas, who did not speak Hebrew, were left standing. Quickly the rescuers shot the upright kidnappers.

Unfortunately, two of the hostages hesitated. Perhaps they stood to see what was happening, but they were also shot and killed. One young man was lying down and actually stood up when the commandos entered the airport. He too, was shot with the bullets meant for the enemy. If these three had listened to the soldiers' command they would have been freed with the rest of the captives.

01. **Put yourself in the position of the hostages. If you heard the warnings in your own language, what's the most sensible thing to do?** (Discuss).
02. **How do you define obedience to someone (like your parents)?** (Doing what they say you should do).
03. **What two actions do we do when we obey?** (We listen to them and do what they say).
04. **How do you tend to act when you aren't sure of what the consequences of our obedience will be?** (Discuss. Some people won't obey if they can't see why they should).

INTRODUCTION

🕒 5 Minutes

Last week we discovered that Noah is not only mentioned in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament as a man of faith. We saw that God asked him to build a boat; but it was miles from the coast! We saw how it was God who guided all the animals into the boat saving Noah the job of herding cats and chasing chickens!

As Noah trusted God by doing what he said, God protected and provided for Noah and his family. Today we're going to see what the Bible has to teach us about the benefits of obeying God.

TEACHING

🕒 20 Minutes

READ Genesis 7:17-24 to 8:1-22

01. **Why did God send the rain?** (To destroy the evil and wicked that was going on in the world).
02. **What word would you use to describe God's action?** (Judgement).
03. **What does this judgement tell us about God?** (That God is a good God and that he hates all evil, injustice and violence).
04. **Do you think Noah told the people what was going to happen?** (Read Luke 17:26-28 and 2 Peter 2:5-6. It appears that Noah did tell the people that what they were doing was not right. He gave them opportunity to live and be saved in the boat; but they did not take it).
05. **What warnings does this give us?** (That it's better to give our lives to God now in case we don't get another opportunity).

What you do? You're in the boat the door has shut, it has started to rain big style and your friends are banging on the door calling "let us in!" However, because they haven't taken the opportunity to get on the boat it is now too late; you can't let them in. In fact, two days ago, those same friends were taking the mickey out of you because your dad was building a boat in the middle of the land. How would you feel?

You would obviously want them to be saved. The people just needed to believe what Noah was telling them. Today, eternal life is received by faith for those who believe in Jesus before they die. There will be a time when it is too late.

06. **In verse 1 of chapter 8 it says, "But God remembered Noah," do you think he had forgotten about him?** (No. God had done many things to protect Noah and wasn't going to forget about him now!).

07. **What might this phrase tell us about the passing of time?** (Reflect for a moment what this might be telling us about how God responded to Noah's prayers. It communicates the passing of time before God did something).
08. **It took 40 days and 40 nights for the rain to stop. How long did Noah actually stay in the boat for?** (Nearly a year. See Genesis 7:17, 24 and 8:3-4).
09. **Did God lie in Genesis 7:4 when he said it would take 40 days and 40 nights?** (No. God said it would only *rain* for 40 days and 40 nights).
10. **What does this tell us about God's timing?** (God's timescales are always perfect, but sometimes we assume God will answer a prayer in a certain way, or at a certain time. Sometimes we don't understand all the facts and we can wrongly misinterpret God's plan).
11. **Why did God save Noah?** (Noah obeyed God).
12. **What does this tell us about how God will treat us?** (When we listen to his word, and believe in him in faith, he will save us too).
13. **What's the first thing Noah does when he gets out of the boat?** (He builds an altar and offers a sacrifice to God).
14. **Why does he offer a sacrifice to God?** (He wanted to show his gratitude to God in a special way).
15. **Are there ways in which we can show special gratitude to God?** (Discuss. See what they come up with. Maybe a special thank offering? Or giving time over to serve God in the church or on mission?)

Instead of going off and building himself a house straight away, he decides to build an altar to God and make a thank sacrifice to God.

16. **How does God respond?** (In return for Noah's obedience and trust, God is pleased with Noah's response and promises never to destroy every living thing again like he did).
17. **What does this encourage us to not forget to do when God does something amazing for us?** (Sometimes it's easy to forget that God worked in an amazing way on our behalf. We can get so focussed on what God has given us that we can forget God in it all. It can also sometimes be possible to forget that Jesus has saved us and given us the amazing gift of eternal life).

ROUND UP

🕒 1 Minute

Today we have seen that God is also a God of judgement as well as a God of love. In love, God offers us the opportunity of being saved from disaster. At the cost of the life of his own dear Son he has done everything for us to accept his gift and avoid judgement.

Yet God is righteous too. If we don't accept his gift that frees us from judgement, we are still in line to be judged. Noah chose to believe God and obeyed him by building an ark, filling it with animals. God remembered Noah's trust and obedience that was rewarded with safety from God; but many others could have who didn't. Have you asked God for his gift of Jesus, so that you might become right before him?

PRAYER TIME

🕒 5 Minutes

Have you ever thought about what it means to be a Christian? God loves you and wants you to be in heaven with him. It is by believing in Jesus, in his life, death and resurrection, that we are rescued. Would anyone be interested in asking Jesus to save them?

Pray a prayer that they can pray in their heads and ask them to tell you afterwards if they made that commitment.

SESSION 8

NOAH AND GOD'S PROMISE TO HIM

ICEBREAKER – SHOPPING LIST

🕒 10 Minutes

Play a game of "I went to the shop and I bought ..." with the first person saying what they bought. The second person then begins with the words "I went to the shop and I bought..." before repeating the first item and adding a new item. The next player now has two things to repeat, before adding their own. Keep it going through the group until someone forgets something on the list. They are then out and the game continues until there is only one player left.

Sometimes our memories are not always very good, which is why we need to keep reading God's word, to remember his promises to us. Often, he has a promise for us to carry with us for the day.

INTRODUCTION

🕒 3 Minutes

Do you remember what we looked at last time we met? We thought about those who were not on the ark drowning; that they made their choice, even though Noah had told them about God and what would happen. They still wanted to do their own thing. We too all have that choice, either to follow God or to ignore him. No-one else can make the decision for us and we can only take that step for ourselves. It is not because it might please our parents or our friends have become Christians. It has to be a personal choice and decision to ask God into your life and then to follow him in all you do. Heavy stuff, but something we all have to think about.

TEACHING

🕒 10 Minutes

Read Genesis 9:1-17

01. **What did God tell Noah and his family to do when they left the ark?** (v1 To have big families and fill the earth again).
02. **What did God give to Noah and his family?** (v2 He gave them all the living creatures. He said they would all respect and fear man from that point onwards).
03. **What did God say about what Noah could eat?** (v3 He said they could eat meat as well as veg!).
04. **Why did God say that they must not eat meat that still had blood in it? What do you think he means?** (Discuss. Could it be that this represented uncooked meat which could be a health hazard, as well as blood being sacred?).

05. **What does God say about killing generally?** (It's not allowed).
06. **Why is it not acceptable for humans to be murdered?** (We're made in God's image and are special).
07. **Who did God make his agreement with and who was it for?** (Noah and his sons and all the people who were to come after them, also every living creature).
08. **What was the sign that sealed God's promise?** (A rainbow).
09. **What was the agreement God made?** (He promised never again to destroy all living things by flood).
10. **Why was it important that God gave a sign to back up his promise?** (It meant that they didn't have to live in fear every time there was a heavy rainfall. When they saw the rainbow, they knew that God remembered his promise and was faithful and would keep it).
11. **How long was the agreement for?** (Forever).
12. **When you see a rainbow do you ever think about God's promise and what it means? Is it still relevant today?** (Discuss).

DISCOVER IN GROUPS

🕒 10 Minutes

What other promises did God give? Get them into small groups and ask them to read two promises and to think carefully what they actually mean... Joshua 1:9; Jeremiah 29:11; Genesis 28:15; Exodus 4:12; Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 33:3; Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 25:1; Isaiah 30:15; Isaiah 41:10; Isaiah 43:25; Isaiah 54:9; Isaiah 58:11; Malachi 3:17; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 7:7-8; Matthew 18:20; Matthew 28:20; John 14:3; Romans 6:28; Hebrews 13:5.

01. **What happens when we read these promises?** (Faith grows in our hearts to believe that God will break-through where we need him to).
02. **Does God always keep his promises?** (Yes! 2 Corinthians 1:20 says that Jesus is the yes and as we come into agreement with his promises in prayer, we are the amen! Then those things will surely come to pass).
03. **Are there any circumstances under which God will break his promises?** (Wilful disobedience on our part, can disrupt God's plan for our lives).
04. **Do we keep our promises? How do we feel when others break their promises to us?** (Discuss. Share any experience you might have had of a promise being broken and share how you felt when that happened).

ROUND UP

🕒 1 Minute

Today we have seen God making a promise to Noah, a promise that is still true for us today and sealed the promise with a symbol, the rainbow. That symbol is still a reminder for us every time we see one, that God will keep his promises.

We can trust God. He keeps his promises, always; but the question is, do we? How often do we break our promises, or other people break their promises to us? This always has an effect on those involved.

Promises are special and important. It's why they are called promises. So don't make promises unless you are sure you can keep them. Remember too, that you can stand on God's promises, since they are written for you in mind. He will never break his promises. When you are reading the Bible in your quiet time, look out to see if you can see a promise, and put your name on it.

PRAYER TIME

🕒 5 Minutes

Spend a few minutes chatting about things to pray for. Where appropriate declare God's promises. When we remind God of his promises, we are showing that we believe what he has said. Romans 8:28 tells us that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord, according to his work. God's hand is on our lives as we trust in his promises.

SESSION 9

NOAH GETS DRUNK

INTRODUCTION CLIP ⌚ 3 Minutes

Show a clip from "The war of the Simpsons" which is a clip of Homer Simpson getting drunk.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRKrvxow9_M

ICEBREAKER 1 – CREATE A STORY ⌚ 5 Minutes

Each person is allowed five words each. One person must begin by saying the start to a story (eg. One day it was raining and...). The next person then continues the story with their five words. Players must use no more and no less than five words. Stop when the story seems to be completed.

ICEBREAKER 2 – BROOM SPIN ⌚ 5 Minutes

Get a young person to hold a broom, to spin around whilst looking at the top of the broom. When they have spun about 5 times, get them to walk in a straight line. Keep cups and objects out the way and have someone ready to catch them if they look like they will get into bother.

INTRODUCTION ⌚ 5 Minutes

Today we are going to read about some stuff that happened to Noah when he drank too much wine. Just as in our "create a story game" the ending was unpredictable and anything could happen; so when people get drunk the outcome can often have a negative effect on us, we're going to see how.

TEACHING ⌚ 20 Minutes

READ Genesis 9:18-29. Can anyone summarise last time's talk (Noah and the promise. The rainbow).

01. **What was Noah's occupation?** (Farmer).
02. **What did he specialise in (apart from boat building!)?** (Vineyards and wine making).
03. **Noah gets drunk. Do you think he knew what the wine would do to him?** (Yes and No. Sometimes we can feel a change happening to us when we've drunk a certain amount and feel a bit woozy).
04. **Is there a point at which if we cross we're likely to get drunk?** (Yes).

05. **How do we know the point at which we are getting drunk?** (May start to feel light headed, reaction time slows but knowing what that point is, is not always easy.)

Boiling a frog

People say that if you were to boil a frog you can't just drop it in boiling water, as it would hop out. To boil a frog, you put it in a pan of cold water and heat it up. The frog won't be aware that it is too hot until it is too late. Likewise, if a person tries to gauge whether or not they have had too much to drink whilst drinking they will not know when to stop. The alcohol continues to have an effect for another thirty minutes after you have consumed it. Therefore, it's pretty impossible to know whether you have had enough until it's too late. The best solution is to know your limits, to decide beforehand and stick to it (or choose not to drink at all!).

So we assume that Noah started drinking innocently, however it got out of hand. For us as young people, at first you might start off drinking with your parents and that seems okay. However, it might be whilst out with friends that you may be persuaded to secretly drink (under age). Then this may become a habit which leads to binge drinking with friends. This can cause severe intoxication, and lead to accidents. Imagine trying to make your way home after doing that broom spin!

It may just look like an innocent bottle of liquid, but if we misuse it, it can possibly even change the course of our future.

06. **What were the effects of the alcohol for Noah?** (He got drunk and naked).
07. **Are the effects of alcohol always the same or does it make us behave in different ways?** (Alcohol can make us behave in different ways, we may become loud or quiet, violent or soppy, depending on our personality and our mood).
08. **So Noah got naked. Do you think as young people that alcohol is likely to make us flirtier with the opposite sex and do something we will later regret?** (For Noah it caused a problem, changing his future relationship with his son Ham).
09. **Does this highlight any dangers that alcohol can present us?** (Yes, when we lose control of our actions, we don't always understand our surroundings, and can be taken advantage of. For Noah, he had two responsible sons who looked after him).
10. **Does alcohol make us do things we wouldn't normally do?** (Yes, if we drink too much of it).
11. **Some people get drunk because it makes them act a certain way (ie. more confident, or bubbly etc.) is this a good reason to drink?** (No. It's better to be yourself and work on your character, who you are, rather than to rely on a drug to make you into someone else).
12. **Do these verses in the Bible say whether Noah's actions were right or wrong?** (It doesn't say either way).

13. **Are there any places in the Bible where it says that getting drunk is wrong?** (Yes. Look it up in the back of the Bible) (Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 6:10, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Peter 4:3).
14. **What reason does the Bible give for why it is wrong?** (It is because it leads us into bad actions and poor choices, whether that be immoral behaviour, danger, addiction or health problems).

ROUND UP

🕒 1 Minute

Today we saw how Noah overstepped the mark from being a bit light headed to getting drunk. As we have seen, there is a point we cross when we've had too much to drink. For our protection, we need to drink responsibly since alcohol can affect the way we view our surroundings. For youngsters peer pressure can be a deciding factor for getting drunk. Don't let it be! It is your body and your life! This is an important, but difficult thing to do. Doing the right thing isn't always the easy option!

Yet giving in to excessive drinking can carry consequences that affect our relationships, and even the future of our lives. We ought not to rely on alcohol to make us into fun people; we really can be fun without it. The Bible says getting drunk is wrong, since God wants to protect us and provide a good future for us. We put that at risk if we ignore this.

PRAYER TIME

🕒 5 Minutes

SESSION 10

JOB – WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

ICEBREAKER – CARD PRIZE DRAW

🕒 10 Minutes

You will need: Two packs of playing cards (no jokers). A number of small prizes, at least twelve; have a range of prizes from small chocolate bars, to unwanted gifts, to tacky toys.

Description:

Everyone needs to sit in a circle. Place all the prizes in the centre of the circle, talk about each prize in turn emphasizing how desirable it is.

The leader deals out one pack of playing cards to everyone in the circle, don't worry if some people have one more card than others. The leader now uses the second pack of playing cards, calling out each card in turn.

As a person's card is called, they can choose a prize from the middle and discard their card. Once they have their prize, they must put it down in front of them in full view. Keep calling out the cards until all the prizes have been chosen, then continue to call out the cards. Now those whose cards are being called out can take a prize from someone else.

Once the leader has been through the entire pack, those with prizes in front of them can keep what they have won.

Use what happened in the game to lead onto a discussion on loss.

INTRODUCTION

🕒 1 Minute

It's very difficult to cope when bad things happen to us or those we care about. Whether it's an accident or when other people are responsible for causing disaster to happen to us, it can leave us feeling crushed and wondering what's going on. The book of Job has such a person who experiences exactly that.

Last week we saw how Noah drunk way too much of his home brew and things went pear-shaped for him. In the Bible the character to follow on chronologically from Noah is Job. Never heard of him? Well, apparently at the time, he was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

TEACHING

🕒 20 Minutes

READ Job 1:1-22

01. **Job is a good chap. Is there anything he does wrong?** (It says he was blameless and upright and he even did his best to ensure his children were as well).
02. **Can you describe Job's life before the disaster?** (He was happy, wealthy, lived a good life and followed God).
03. **Who can tell me where all this trouble starts for him?** (In God's throne room).
04. **Did God make a mistake by mentioning Job to Satan?** (No. God is in charge of the situation. Satan could only do what God permitted him to do and no more).
05. **This scenario raises a very big question. How can God hand Job over to Satan who obviously wants to harm him? Aren't parents meant to protect their children?** (Discuss).

The book of Job doesn't seem to answer this question directly. However, when we see what happened to Job in the context of the whole Bible, we can get a better picture. Sometimes when two people talk there's an unspoken history between them that outsiders may not understand.

The book of Job is thought to be the one that happened next after Genesis (chronologically). In Genesis we see Adam and Eve tempted by Satan who told them not to believe God about the harm that eating from the forbidden tree would do. Because they chose to believe Satan and to act on his words (effectively obeying Satan), they handed over rights to Satan by coming into agreement with him.

The ill effects of this fall weren't just limited to Adam and Eve, but to their children and children's children and so on. The curses that came to them affected all of mankind. They had handed over rights to Satan and Satan used this to poison mankind with sin and every kind of evil.

We know this because the Apostle Paul writes about Jesus being the last Adam and reversing the effects of the curse. In the Old Testament people made sacrifices to cover their sin. The life is in the blood, which had power over Satan's curses. So, in the Garden of Eden, because Satan caused Adam and Eve to come into agreement with him, he then had a legal right over those who hadn't given their hearts to God.

Maybe if this history had been spoken about, the conversation might go a bit like this:

SKETCH - THE THRONE ROOM SCENE

🕒 1 Minute

Satan: The humans are worthless. They have all turned their back on you.

God: Have you considered my man Job? There's no-one on earth like him; he's a good egg. He loves me.

- Satan:** Of course Job praises you God. You've given him everything. But take it away and he will curse you.
- God:** No he won't. His love for me is secure. I know this because I know all things.
- Satan:** But you've put a hedge of protection around him. Take that away and he will curse you.
- God:** I protect him because I love him and he loves me.
- Satan:** He's mine!! Do I have to remind you that I have a legal right to every son of Adam and daughter of Eve??
- God:** Not to the ones that love me.
- Satan:** Prove it then!! Otherwise, I'm right and I'm having what's mine!!

TEACHING CONTINUED

🕒 10 Minutes to go

Proving Job's faith had eternal consequences. If Job's faith was not genuine, he would not be with God when he one day died. Satan was accusing God of putting a hedge of protection around Job, so that Satan couldn't get at him.

06. **Do you think God was still protecting Job, even when Satan attacked him?** (Yes. God was only allowing so much and no further).
07. **So bad things happen to good people. Is this a new concept for you?** (Discuss).
10. **We can see that Satan is the direct cause of this disaster which befalls Job. This is a direct spiritual attack. Do you think spiritual attacks happen today?** (Evil spirits do attack people in today's society in many different ways).
11. **Do all bad things have a spiritual cause?** (No. Some disasters happen for no other reason than accidents happen).
12. **What do these verses tell us about God's power in such situations?** (For the moment things look really bad for Job, a complete disaster. He could lose courage and give up. However, we have to wait for the end of the story. Things may look bad, but this is only part of the picture).
13. **What does verse 7 tell us about Satan?** (He can only be in one place at the same time. He is not all-powerful. Neither is he omnipresent; but God is).
14. **Does Job know what is happening to him?** (No. It all has come as a complete shock. He doesn't know what is going on in the spiritual realm).
15. **How does Job respond?** (He praises God).

16. **On a scale of 1 to 10, how easy is it to say, “God gives and God takes away” and still praise him? (Discuss).**
17. **Why is it difficult?** (It's difficult, because we feel God could have done stuff to stop this from happening. However, at the same time we see that God is working and still protecting Job).
18. **Satan is not allowed to touch Job. What does verses 13-19 tell us about Satan?** (He will try to do the very worst that he can, as he is evil. Evil is in the world because of Satan).

There are hardly any references in the Bible to Satan. The following texts give further detail about where Satan and evil spirits originated from: Ezekiel 28:12-17 & Isaiah 14:12-15 & Revelation 12:7-9.

19. **Job didn't know why these things were happening. But unlike many people, he didn't just come to the solution that it was God's fault. Why didn't Job blame God for what happened?** (He trusted God totally).

ROUND UP ⌚ 1 Minute

We live in a physical world, but also a spiritual world. Satan is in this world and wants to kill, steal and destroy things in people's lives. However, God is more powerful. Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan, and Jesus has power over Satan. Jesus gives us the power of prayer to overcome spiritual attacks in our lives. It is important to note that not all bad things that will happen to us are spiritual attacks. These seem to be occasional things and God will help us to see when our difficulties are caused by a spiritual enemy.

For Job at this point, he has more questions than answers. He doesn't know what's going on, or why all this has suddenly happened. If you've ever had to go through a disaster situation, you know that answers and reasons, or just something to help understand what is going on are of great benefit in difficult times. However, with no answers coming, with no reasons for these disasters he finds himself just trusting God.

PRAYER TIME ⌚ 5 Minutes



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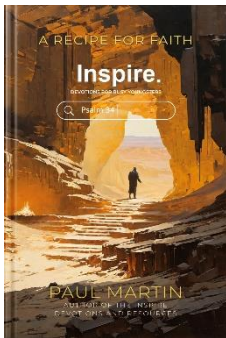
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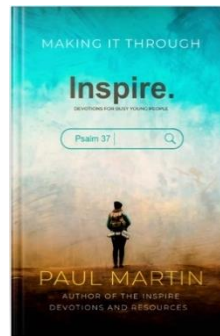
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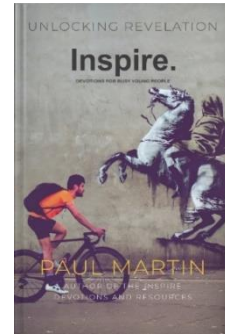
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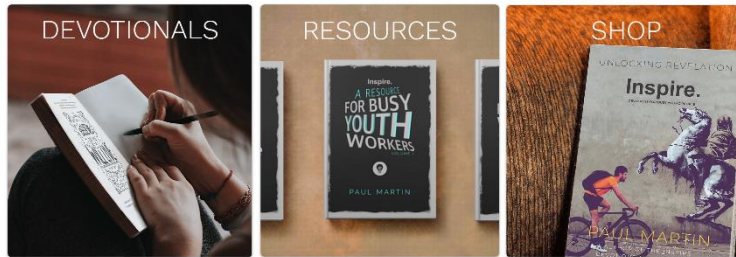
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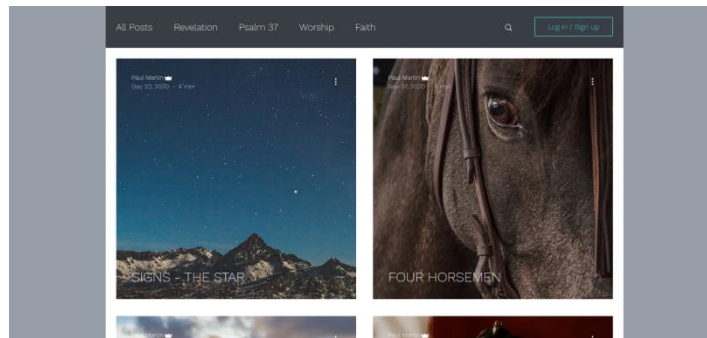
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Paul Martin is a Bible teacher with over 21 years of experience in full-time youth ministry. He has worked as a Youth Pastor in Baptist, Anglican and Pentecostal Churches.

"The idea to start writing, began during a conversation that I had with a friend, about how to communicate the full counsel of God (as found in the Bible) to today's young people."

It took five years before he began the project to go chronologically through the Bible, looking at the lives of God's people. It took a further ten years to develop his three volume resource *Inspire. A resource for busy youth workers.*

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Paul enjoys watching and playing football, gaming, as well as being arty and creative. He lives in Northern Ireland with his wife and two teenage sons.