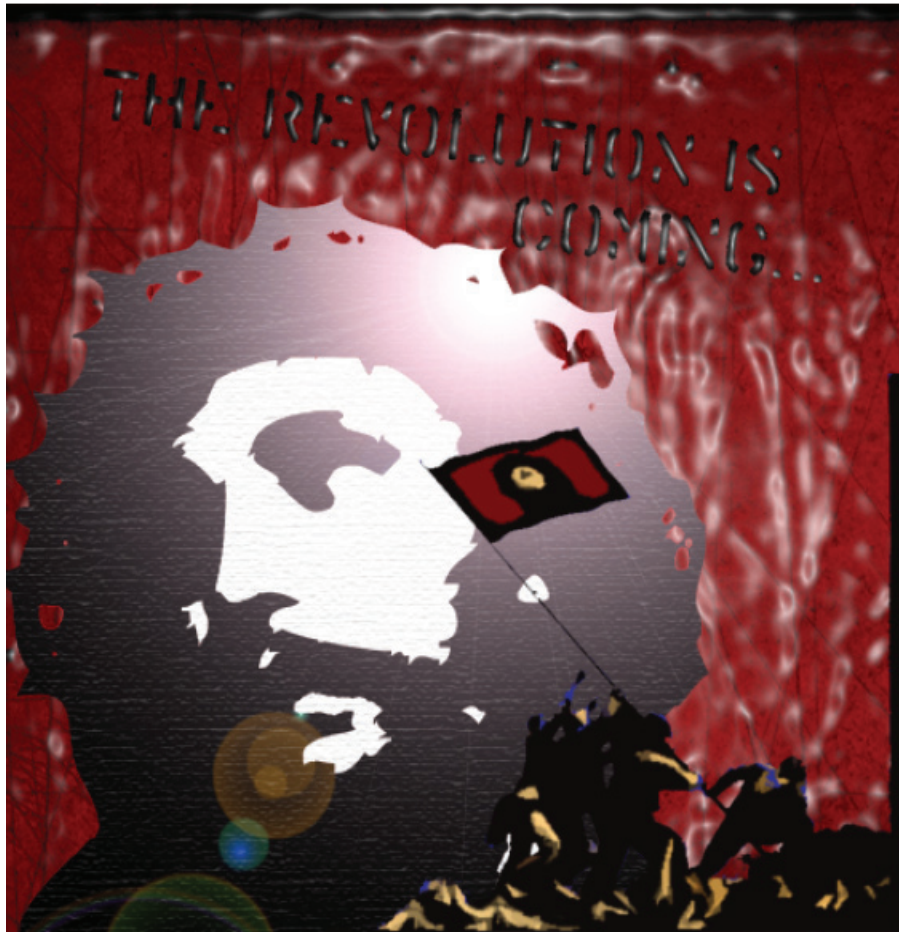


**Unit 7**



## **A LEADER'S AIM & PRAYER**

I am discipling young people so that they can say, 'I acknowledge Jesus as my Saviour and Lord.'

I know that they will watch my life. Help me to live so that they only see Jesus in me.

I will study God's word so I can present its great truths faithfully and well.

## **SAFETY AND CARE**

Carelessness is the opposite of loving. True care will be anticipatory (thinking ahead and being responsible), pro-active (their concerns are my concerns) and personal. The most important thing is not the program – it's the person. So keep your ministry safe! Don't assume that everything will be OK – build safety and care into your youth ministry.

---

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many people have contributed to this publication as writers, editors, layout and design specialists and proof readers and we acknowledge their expertise and input. To God be the glory!

We would like to especially acknowledge the Territorial Youth and Children's Ministries, The Salvation Army, Australia Eastern Territory for their resourcing.

Various versions of the Bible have been used including the Good News Bible (GNB), Contemporary English Version (CEV) and the New International Version (NIV).

We also acknowledge the contribution of Retired Corps Sergeant Major Cyril Bradwell (O.F.)

Printed January 2009

*(Reference Part A 2005 & 2009 = Unit 8 AUE)*



Territorial Youth Mission Department

The Salvation Army

New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga Territory

P.O. Box 6015

Wellington, New Zealand

Phone - (04) 382 0725

Email: Youth\_Mission\_Team@nzf.salvationarmy.org

Visit us at: [www.salvationarmy.org.nz](http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz)

[www.firezone.co.nz](http://www.firezone.co.nz)

---

---

# LEADER'S NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to TRIBE! You have chosen a great resource for young people in the 12 to 16 age group who are meeting in small groups within The Salvation Army. Some of your group may be enrolled Corps Cadets and others may be young people not connected with any church. They are attending TRIBE for various reasons and you are holding a tool in your hands that can make an impact on their lives.

In this handbook you will find 20 sessions you can use at any time and in any order. Have a look at the contents page and think about how often you meet and any other events that may be on in the next 6 months that will cut into your group time – things like school holidays, corps events and divisional events. A few of the sessions may go together and others are stand-alone ones. So be flexible and work out how many of the sessions you can fit into a 6 month block and which ones are most suitable for your group.

Each *TRIBE* session has several sections that take you through the teaching material. They are written to last about 45 to 60 minutes and always provide more material than you can use, so you need to carefully plan and prepare.

\* **AIM**

What the session is focussing on is spelt out in the aim. Once you are clear about aims, you can prepare in a way that will reinforce the purpose of the session.

\* **OBJECTIVES**

These are for your referral only and reflect desired learning outcomes. The objectives state the ways in which the young people's thinking, attitudes or beliefs might be modified or reinforced. Sometimes you may want to concentrate on only one or two objectives and at other times you will be able to work on them all.

\* **FROM THE BIBLE**

These will be the main passages included in the *TRIBE* lesson. You need to check out these verses to find out what God has to say on the topic.

\* **INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER**

This is information, advice and so on that may be useful in your preparation and presentation. Sufficient material will be given in order that you have no difficulty in knowing how to answer any questions raised during the session, what the session is about and how to go about conducting the session. Sometimes this is supplemented with side column boxes with LEADER TIPS or NOTES that give specific information.

❖ **GETTING STARTED**

By using one of these warm-up activities at the start of the session, you'll help the group unwind. It will be based around an activity connected with the theme of the session. Sometimes this will lead to a revision of previous work or it will prepare them to tune into the general theme of the session. Try to give a time limit on the starter. The young people should be able to tie this activity into the aim of the session and you can do this under the sub-heading 'Point to make'.

❖ **GOING DEEPER**

By exploring some of the different teaching approaches, you'll find out as a group what the topic is all about. Some of the main ideas will be suitable for large groups; some for small; some for older groups; some for younger groups; some to involve input and some to involve discussion. All should involve interaction. There will always be more teaching ideas suggested than there is time to use, **SO BE SELECTIVE AND FLEXIBLE!** Choose one or more of the teaching approaches, depending on what you want to accomplish. You may have some other ideas to add – just check that you are still true to the aim and objectives.

❖ **TAKING IT HOME**

By this brief summary of the teaching, the young people will be helped to look at how it applies to their living today. This segment also offers a challenge through the Get Involved and Grow strand for the young people to think about how they can do something practical that involves a response from them.

❖ **WORK SHEETS**

Photocopy these for the young people depending on whether they are juniors or seniors. The work sheets have specific activities that arise as part of the session and are a useful tool for feedback on whether you are getting the message across.

Well, now that you have a brief overview of the session format, pray, plan and prepare to lead your group through some exciting times. Think of your young people as unique persons, created and loved by a mighty God who desires the very best for them. As their leader you will want to build meaningful relationships with your group and use the best resources available to help shape their lives. There is help available for you through training and networking with other leaders through your Divisional Youth Secretary. We pray that God will equip you and lead you in this ministry.



---

---

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	i
<b>GET INVOLVED AND GROW</b> .....	iii
<b>1 HONEST TO GOD</b> .....	1
<b>2 THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR</b> .....	9
<b>3 BAPTISM</b> .....	16
<b>4 GOOD, BETTER, BEST</b> .....	25
<b>5 SINCERELY JOHN</b> .....	34
<b>6 FAITH IN ACTION</b> .....	43
<b>7 REVEALING REVELATION – PART 1</b> .....	51
<b>8 THE END IS NEAR – PART 2</b> .....	63
<b>9 HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH?</b> .....	73
<b>10 JUST HAVING FUN</b> .....	84
<b>11 TRUE FORGIVENESS</b> .....	95
<b>12 KEEP ON GOING</b> .....	103
<b>13 DARE YOU!</b> .....	112
<b>14 DANGERZONE</b> .....	120
<b>15 NO ADDITIVES NEEDED!</b> .....	128
<b>16 HEAVEN IS BETTER THAN THIS!</b> .....	136
<b>17 REGENERATION IS NEEDED</b> .....	143
<b>18 LAWS TO LIVE BY – PART 1</b> .....	152
<b>19 PRAYERS AND PLANS – PART 2</b> .....	161
<b>20 MEDIA WATCH</b> .....	169
<b>21 DOCTRINES</b> .....	177
<b>22 DISCIPLESHIP RECORD</b>	

---

---



## **GET INVOLVED AND GROW**

---

An important part of nurturing any person in their understanding of the Christian faith is to help them see that Jesus expected us to listen and then obey by doing.

If you love me you will obey my commandments – John 14:15

A great challenge that every leader must present to those they are discipling is that they need to 'get involved' and be committed.

Because of its importance this strand of the TRIBE program is set out at the beginning of this Handbook and is called **GET INVOLVED AND GROW**.

A wide choice of challenges is presented so that every group may choose those that particularly suit their situation – country, city, small or large.

A Your Choice challenge is included because it is always exciting when a group sees a specific need and thinks of a way they can help.

As your group members grow in spiritual discernment you will be able to suggest that they take on a challenge that has appeared to be too difficult or demanding. This will give them the joy of knowing that they can do marvellous things in God's strength.

The challenges are divided into three sections:

1. Get involved in worship
2. Get involved in mission
3. Get involved in training for leadership

As each challenge is listed a short explanation is given for those that are not self explanatory. The suggestions are the same for each year. Following discussion with your group, aim to have each member accept five challenges from each section – every unit (or six months).

Nurturing young people so that they grow to be committed, active members of our corps community is a 'huge' task and one that you as a leader are taking on.

Seek out discipleship partners from soldiers in the corps who will uphold you with their faithful prayers and keep them informed of your needs.

**IT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**





## **GET INVOLVED AND GROW IN MISSION (REACHING OUT IN SERVICE)**

---

Motivation: (Matthew 25 :40 GNB) Whenever you did this for one of the least important brothers of mine, you did it for me.

- ❖ **HELP WITH OPEN-AIR OUTREACH**
- ❖ **BE AN ENCOURAGER**  
(e.g. Write or phone somebody who is feeling a bit sad, or who should be thanked for a great job.)
- ❖ **TAKE PART IN THE RED SHIELD APPEAL**
- ❖ **BE INVOLVED WITH THE YOUTH GROUP**
- ❖ **PRAY FOR YOUR FRIENDS**  
(Pray regularly for the specific needs that a friend has.)
- ❖ **CARE FOR OTHERS**  
(Help someone with a disability with a task they find difficult to do.)
- ❖ **HELP WITH TODDLERS**  
(If your corps runs a creche, take part as a helper.)
- ❖ **PARTICIPATE IN A SCHOOL GROUP**  
(Find out if your school has any Christian gatherings and join one.)
- ❖ **HELP AT A COMMUNITY WELFARE CENTRE**  
(for several hours)
- ❖ **BE INVOLVED WITH CAROLLING/ CHRISTMAS OUTREACH**
- ❖ **BE A FRIEND**  
(Chat to a newcomer and introduce them around)
- ❖ **HELP ANOTHER CORPS**  
(Be involved in leading a meeting at a smaller corps)
- ❖ **ACCOMPANY A COMMUNITY CARE MINISTRIES WORKER**  
(on visitation at a special time such as Christmas, Mother's Day etc)
- ❖ **BRING A FRIEND WHO DOES NOT ATTEND THE ARMY ALONG TO A YOUTH GROUP**
- ❖ **HELP AT THE LOCAL SHOW**  
(e.g. distribute literature, help on a stall)
- ❖ **BE A HELPFUL MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY**
- ❖ **VISIT A NURSING HOME AS A MEMBER OF A GROUP**
- ❖ **HELP WITH OTHER APPEALS**  
(e.g. Forty Hour Famine)
- ❖ **MAKE A POSTER FOR A SPECIAL EVENT AT YOUR CORPS**
- ❖ **SHARE A CHRISTIAN BOOK/VIDEO WITH A FRIEND**
- ❖ **DO AN UNEXPECTED FAVOUR FOR SOMEONE**
- ❖ **PREPARE INVITATIONS FOR A SPECIAL EVENT AND HELP GIVE THEM OUT**
- ❖ **YOUR CHOICE**







## GET INVOLVED AND GROW IN WORSHIP

---

Motivation: (Psalm 100:1 GNB) Sing to the Lord, all the world! Worship the Lord with joy; come before him with happy songs

- ❖ **WORSHIP REGULARLY**  
(By attendance and attitude)
- ❖ **DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL DEVOTIONS**
- ❖ **MEMORISE SCRIPTURE**  
(Approximately 6 – 8 verses)
- ❖ **READ THE BIBLE IN A MEETING**  
(Prepare beforehand and give the congregation time to find the passage)
- ❖ **REPORT ON HOW A WORSHIP SERVICE HELPED YOU**
- ❖ **REGULARLY WEAR THE CORRECT UNIFORM FOR THE SECTION YOU ARE IN**
- ❖ **TAKE PART IN A SMALL GROUP**  
(Singing, playing an instrument, drama or creative dance)
- ❖ **LEAD A WORSHIP SEGMENT AT TRIBE**  
(Use a song that helps you worship)
- ❖ **OPERATE THE AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT**  
(Overhead projector, Power Point presentations and so on – for four meetings, changing transparencies slides efficiently)
- ❖ **KEEP A PRAYER DIARY**  
(List your prayers and tick them as they are answered)
- ❖ **TELL OTHERS WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN YOUR LIFE** (Spontaneous or prepared testimony)
- ❖ **GIVE A CHILDREN'S STORY USING A VISUAL AID**
- ❖ **DESIGN A PRAYER BOOK MARK**  
(To help you remember the types of prayers we can pray)
- ❖ **TAKE PART IN A MUSICAL SECTION IN YOUR CORPS**
- ❖ **PRAY PUBLICLY IN A MEETING**  
(Write out the prayer beforehand so that you can include all the things you should pray about)
- ❖ **CHOOSE SONGS AND CHORUSES**  
(Select 4 – 5 that could be used in a worship service on a given theme)
- ❖ **SPEAK ON A GIVEN TOPIC**  
(Have 2 weeks' preparation – use a Bible verse or talk on a famous Christian)
- ❖ **TAKE UP THE OFFERING**  
(And explain why giving is a part of worship)
- ❖ **TAKE PART IN A SCRIPTURE PRESENTATION**  
(Use drama, mime or creative dance or verse speaking with a visual presentation)
- ❖ **MEMORISE A SONG**  
(Choose one with words that help you)
- ❖ **HELP WITH THE PA SYSTEM**  
(Indoors or outdoors)
- ❖ **YOUR CHOICE**





# GET INVOLVED AND GROW IN TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

---

Motivation: (1 Timothy 4:6 GNB) If you give these instructions to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus.

- ❖ **LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY**  
(Explain what responsibilities you hold e.g. class captain, prefect, monitor, team captain, patrol leader)
- ❖ **HELP TO ORGANISE A MONEY RAISING EFFORT FOR SELF DENIAL/OWSOMS**
- ❖ **LEAD A SONG IN A PUBLIC MEETING**
- ❖ **HELP THE JUNIOR SOLDIER SERGEANT**  
(Assist with bronze level Juniors Soldiers for four weeks)
- ❖ **HELP WITH STREET MINISTRY**  
(Hand out literature or help on a stall)
- ❖ **ASSIST A LOCAL OFFICER**  
(For one month)
- ❖ **REPORT ON THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LOCAL OFFICER**
- ❖ **COMPLETE SOME TRAINING IN YOUTH OR CHILDREN'S WORK**
- ❖ **TEACH A CHORUS TO YOUR YOUTH GROUP OR TRIBE GROUP**
- ❖ **ORGANISE AN OUTING FOR YOUR TRIBE GROUP**  
(e.g. to a Christian concert)
- ❖ **DEVELOP AN AWARENESS OF OFFICERSHIP**  
(Recognise that God calls people to serve Him in full-time work)
- ❖ **HELP TO PLAN A CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**  
(e.g. for a nursing home and be involved in presenting it)
- ❖ **LEAD CHORUSES IN A MEETING**
- ❖ **ASSIST WITH THE SETTING UP OR PACKING UP**  
(In any section for several weeks)
- ❖ **REPORT ON HOW OUR OFFERING IS USED**  
(This may be worked out with the help of the Corps Treasurer)
- ❖ **HELP WITH FUNDRAISING FOR THE YOUTH GROUP**
- ❖ **USE YOUR TALENTS**  
(Think about what special talents you have and find out how your gifts could be used for God)
- ❖ **LIST THE LOCAL OFFICERS IN YOUR CORPS**  
(Briefly describe their respective roles)
- ❖ **HELP PREPARE SPECIAL GIFTS**  
(Ask how you may help the Community Care workers prepare for a special event e.g. Christmas, Mother's Day gifts)
- ❖ **PLAN A MEETING ON A GIVEN THEME**  
(Songs, Bible reading, choruses, drama all fitting in)
- ❖ **BE INVOLVED IN SOME FORM OF YOUTH OUTREACH**  
(e.g. coffee shop, street theatre)
- ❖ **YOUR CHOICE**



# **A FEW WORDS FOR YOUTH WORKERS - YES ... THAT'S YOU**

---

George Barna is an American researcher who is known for his nationwide surveys and interviews with teens and pre-teens published in his book *Real Teens* (Regal Books, 2001). This age group born after 1984 (which includes your TRIBE group) is called the 'Mosaic generation' and is said to be 'highly mobile, information drenched, totally connected, decidedly upbeat and dedicated to making a difference in the world around them.'

Barna gives the following suggestions (based on his research) for helping youth workers have positive outcomes in their ministry:

Your preparation for effective ministry to teens should include:

- ❖ Understanding the world of the teenager.
- ❖ Entering your ministry with a worldview (know yourself before you try to know them).
- ❖ Entering with a philosophy of youth ministry (have a clear vision of why you are engaged in youth ministry).
- ❖ Praying daily for each teen in your group by name addressing their individual needs).
- ❖ Finding resources (by calling favours from friends, seeking resources from your corps and developing creative solutions to problems that might hinder effective ministry).

Your performance of ministry duties should include:

- ❖ Intimate involvement (be a friend).
- ❖ Modelling (live the lessons you teach).
- ❖ Experiential learning (learning that is hands-on and interactive).
- ❖ Unapologetic commitment (to loving and serving Christ and to caring for the teens in your group).

(Summarised from *Real Teens* by George Barna, Regal Books, 2001, pages 149 - 155.)

# HONEST TO GOD

## AIM

To help the young people realise that honesty and integrity are essential elements in the development of Christian maturity.

## OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ understand what the Bible means by honesty and integrity;
- ❖ be able to evaluate their own honesty and integrity;
- ❖ develop a plan to live honestly.

## INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

What is integrity? The dictionary defines it as 'wholeness, soundness, trustworthiness, uprightness, honesty'.

There is therefore a moral quality about integrity and it is expected that it be seen in all Christians' lives.

In today's world, honesty and integrity are in short supply. A successful businessman was asked: 'What would you say is the greatest need in your field of business?' He thought for a moment and said, 'Integrity ... because almost daily I am faced with dishonesty and duplicity and whenever I confront it people take the view that dishonesty is only a problem when it is found out.'

It's interesting to note that those who laugh most at their own lack of honesty get deeply upset when they are victims of the dishonesty of others.

Today's attitude seems to be: 'Everyone is doing it, so it must be OK ....'

'Why not have a free ride on the train? We won't get caught - we can jump the fence. Even if we do get caught, the fine's not that much. We've got away with it enough times to pay for that anyway.'

'She gave me the wrong change, but that's her problem. She should have learned maths at school.'

Sometimes the partial truth is told.

Sometimes debts are left unpaid.

Sometimes not all money earned is put down on the tax return.

BUT just because everyone else does it, doesn't make it right!

## SESSION 1

### FROM THE BIBLE

Proverbs 6:16 - 19; 11:1, 3 - 6;  
Genesis 39; Daniel 6:1 - 10;  
James 4:7 - 10.

### CHECKLIST ✓

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. For Getting Started 1 you will need slips of paper and a pen for each young person. Getting Started 2 will require either cards from the game 'Balderdash' or 4 - 5 words from the dictionary each with three meanings written on a card or paper only one of which is correct.

There are four suggested teaching approaches. It is important to try to use them all. Approach 1 defines integrity and has some discussion questions. Keep to the time that you allow for this approach so that you have sufficient time to complete the others.

Approach 2 will also need to have a strict time allocation as the situations being discussed should lead to animated discussion.

Approach 3 looks at Bible verses and activity 1 on the work sheet can be used as this approach is completed. This approach also includes relating incidents from the lives of Joseph and Daniel and these could be told by other leaders or done in small groups.

It is important to use approach 4 to make it clear to the young people that God does expect His people to be honest. Activity 2 on the work sheet can be used here as it ties into the Bible passage from James. Seniors also have a passage from *Chosen to be a Soldier* to discuss. This passage is printed on their work sheets.

### **What does the Bible say?**

Proverbs 6:16 - 19 tells us that there are seven things that the Lord hates. God certainly disapproves of sin. He knows all our thoughts and desires, even if we don't get caught by our human law-keepers, He knows what we have done, and so do we!

A lie is never right - no matter what attempts we might make to justify it. God, the Father of truth, cannot alter His Word or break a promise (Numbers 23:19). We also know that lies can never come from the truth (1 John 2:21).

Read Proverbs 8:5 - 9, 13a. These verses tell us to be mature. Maturity means to be fully developed, and that's not just by growing physically and learning a lot of facts, but real maturity involves the whole person - fitting our lives together.

Integrity, then, is necessary if we are to become whole people. We need to be able to make honest decisions about what is right and wrong.

It is important to have a transparent integrity. We should be seen to be above reproach. There should be no desire to deceive or to stretch the truth.

Read James 4:1 - 10. The ultimate choice in life comes down to pleasing oneself or pleasing God.

James realised that there is a deeper problem. Becoming a friend of the world leads to becoming an enemy of God. God is a jealous God who doesn't want any rivals. We must be totally devoted to God.

In *Chosen to be a Soldier* we are reminded that soldiers pledge themselves to practise absolute honesty in the important matters of life as well as in the trivialities of daily life. (Pages 36 - 37.)

Although non-practising Christians may accept dishonest practices for themselves, they quickly point the finger at Christians whose actions show any kinds of dishonesty. They label such people as hypocrites living a double standard.

Christians who lack integrity therefore hinder the progress of the gospel in this world and falsely present the Christian message. As Christians we need to determine to be honest in thought, speech and action.

Help your young people to see that honesty is the best policy.

## **GETTING STARTED**

---

### **1. Whopper / Furphy**

On a piece of paper, each young person writes down three statements about themselves – only one of which is true. In turn, the group tries to guess which one is the true statement.

**Or**

### **2. What's my word?**

Choose four to five difficult words from a dictionary. Write each word on a card to show to the group. Then make up and write out three other meanings as well as the true one. Or if you have the game *Balderdash*, you can use the words and meanings out of this game.

e.g. 'cartouche' (pronounced car toosh) means:

- a. a new car that mustn't be touched;
- b. a full sized drawing on strong paper;

- c. an old fashioned horse drawn cart;
- d. on oval ring containing hieroglyphic names of Egyptian kings (true).

Having shown or read the word, read the four meanings out and have the young people try to guess which was the true one. Ask if they were able to guess from your actions or speech.

If you wish, other leaders or seniors could be prepared to present the remaining words.

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. Definition and relevance

Ask the group for their definitions of the words 'honesty' and integrity' and write up their ideas.

Compare their definitions with the following points.

- Integrity comes from a Hebrew word that means 'whole, sound or unimpaired'.
- The dictionary says integrity is 'wholeness, soundness, trustworthiness, uprightness, honesty'.
- When one has integrity, there is absence of hypocrisy.
- A person of integrity is personally reliable, financially accountable and innocent of wrong motives.


Discuss with the young people the value of these attributes. (Use the following ideas or choose others.)

- Are honesty and integrity necessary parts of a Christian's character?
- Are they old-fashioned values that are no longer relevant?
- Are people of integrity hard to find?
- How do we react when people in positions of responsibility lack integrity? (Try to give an up-to-date example.)
- Nobody is really complete or sound if they lack integrity.

### 2. Integrity in the everyday

Here are some situations that we have all probably had to face. Keeping in mind the definition of integrity, ask the young people to discuss what frequently happens in such a situation, as well as what should happen if we are really living lives that please God.

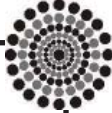
- a. No one else in your group is going to buy a return train ticket. They are sure that they won't be caught. There will be no one on the station when you get back ... you just walk through.
- b. The lady at the shop gives you too much change.
- c. All of your friends have decided to skip school on Friday to hang around together. They come home and when their parents ask how school was, they say it was great.
- d. If you tell a half-truth, it's fairly likely that everyone in your group will think that you're cool. If you tell the truth, then they will think you're a loser.
- e. You overhear your dad saying that he's having a sickie to go and play golf because he hasn't had a day off for months.



**POINT**

Some people sound so convincing we believe them even when we know what they are saying couldn't possibly be correct.

We must be sure that people know we are honest and dependable. How God helps us to be like this is what we want to talk about in this session.



**LEADER TIP**

You will find times in the other approaches when you will refer back to these definitions.

Write up some of these definitions of integrity so that the young people can read them through together and then discuss them.



### LEADER TIP

Activity 1 on the work sheet can be completed here.



### LEADER TIP

You could have two other leaders relate these incidents.

If your group is large, split into two groups – one doing Joseph and the other Daniel. Report back to each other to see the similarities and differences. Each report should include:

- an outline of the overall circumstances in which Joseph / Daniel found himself;
- an explanation of the accusation brought against him
- his response.

### 3. What does God’s Word say?

The Bible says that there is a need for us to become mature people. As our body and minds grow and develop, so, too, must our spiritual understanding.

Read Proverbs 6:16 - 19 and 11:1, 3 - 6. If the Lord hates these things, what must He must like?

Two biblical characters whose integrity shone despite their circumstances were Joseph and Daniel.

#### Joseph (Genesis 39)

Although sold as a slave by his brothers, Joseph had quickly risen to be the trusted servant of Potiphar and was put in charge of the household. However, Potiphar’s wife wanted Joseph and did her best to seduce him. Joseph’s integrity was such that he remembered God’s Law and also the trust placed in him by Potiphar and he ran from her.

Joseph was not rewarded for his integrity. His master naturally believed his wife and Joseph was thrown into prison. Joseph knew he was honest and God’s plan for his life worked out when he was finally taken from the prison to interpret the Pharaoh’s dream.

#### Daniel (Daniel 6:1 - 10)

As Joseph showed integrity and faithfulness in adverse conditions, so Daniel showed them in prosperous times. All kinds of subtle temptations come to people who are in positions of power. (This is why God’s list of hates in Proverbs 6:16 - 19 begins with pride – for it grows very quickly following success.) Daniel was reliable and completely honest and the local administrators were really furious that ‘this foreigner’ was about to get further promotion. When they looked for some accusation to smear Daniel’s character, they could find nothing. This man’s life and work showed no sign of corruption – he was ‘squeaky clean’. These jealous men knew they would only be able to trick him up on his religion. And Daniel, knowing about the punishment for praying to other gods other than the king, still went to his window and prayed to God.

Daniel was sure in his knowledge that living for God made him whole.

Read Hebrews 11:32 - 38. This passage gives a dramatic picture of righteous people who were not rewarded by the world for their integrity – but were not prepared to compromise.

### 4. How can I develop honesty and integrity?

We have seen that the world’s values can easily become part of our lifestyle because it is so easy to go along with the crowd. Developing honest attitudes takes a conscious effort on our part.

True integrity is seen when a person does what he/she knows is right when no one is looking. The completely honest person does not keep God’s Law because he/she is afraid of being caught in a dishonest act. Honest people keep God’s Law because they know the joy that it brings to their lives.

James points out very clearly the problems that face us when we try to show honesty and integrity.

Read James 4:7 - 10.

What are the seven steps that James says we should take to help us build up honesty and integrity? Have the young people suggest ideas from the readings and how they might implement them.

- i. Submit to God - allow Him to control you.
- ii. Resist the devil - firmly refuse to give in to temptation.
- iii. Come near to God - take time to pray.
- iv. Wash your hands - clean up your actions.
- v. Purify your thoughts - don't dwell on impure thoughts.
- vi. Be sorrowful, cry and weep - be truly sorry for wrong actions.
- vii. Humble yourselves before the Lord – acknowledge that you need God's help.

In *Chosen to be a Soldier* the Army's standard of honesty is set out clearly (p.36). Read this passage with your group and discuss it with them. (It is on the work sheet.)



## LEADER TIP

Activity 2 on the work sheet can be used here.

## TAKING IT HOME

---

In today's world honesty and integrity are in short supply, but it is possible for people to live honestly, by being prepared to live for God, rather than for themselves. God sees the motives, thoughts and desires of the heart.

How far are we prepared to go to be people of integrity? Would we rather be a friend of the world, or a friend of God?

It is important that the Christian is an example in this area in our world today.

Am I sound, whole, trustworthy, upright and honest? God can help me to improve in any areas where I am not.



## FOR SENIORS

## FOLLOW-THRU

---

The challenge in Get Involved and Grow in Worship to take part in a Scripture presentation ties in with this session. The young people could take one of today's Scripture passages and create a mime or dance to be done with the reading. Encourage them to practise and produce it in a meeting. See that you follow this through.

## FURTHER READING

---

HYBELS, Bill, *Honest to God*, Zondervan, 1990.

HYBELS, Bill, *Who Are You When No One's Looking?*, Inter-Varsity Press.

MORRIS, Leon, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, Eerdmans, Michigan, 1974.

*The Interpreter's Bible*, Abingdon, Nashville, 1980.

*Chosen to be a Soldier*, The Campfield Press, St. Albans, 1977.



# HONEST TO GOD

1. Read Proverbs 6:16 - 19 and 11:1, 3 - 6.

These verses tell us what the Lord hates. Rewrite the statements by changing one word so that they are what the Lord loves.

*The Lord hates*                      *therefore*                      *the Lord loves*

\* a proud look

\* a lying tongue

\* hands that kill innocent people

\* a mind that thinks up wicked plans

\* feet that hurry off to do evil

\* a witness who tells one lie after another

\* a man who stirs up trouble among friends

\* people who use dishonest scales

\* people who can't be trusted

Write out the verse in Proverbs 11:3 - 6 that you want to remember.

---

---

2. Read James 4:7 - 10.

Write out in your own words the seven steps that James lists to help us build honesty and integrity into our lives. (Start at v.7.)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## JUNIOR WORKSHEET

### 3. True or False?

#### HONEST PEOPLE:

- \* always keep their promises.
- \* expect to be let off a promise if something better comes up.
- \* can be trusted to keep their word.
- \* can go back on a promise if it wasn't in writing.
- \* tell the truth even if it means being punished.
- \* take notice of their conscience when faced with a problem.
- \* believe that if everybody is doing it, it might be O.K.
- \* do the right thing whether they are being watched or not.
- \* are happy people because they are "whole" people.

Write out the true statement that is important for you to remember.

---

---

### 4. Rank the following from the most dishonest (1) to the least dishonest (6).

- a.  —  Lying to parents in order to get permission to go out.
- b.  —  Cheating on a test.
- c.  —  Shoplifting.
- d.  —  Giving a falsified excuse to the teacher.
- e.  —  Protecting a friend by lying.
- f.  —  Goofing off when you are being paid to work.

**Discuss: Are they all dishonest?**

---

---



#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Unless we are honest, we are not "complete" people.
- People of integrity are honest, whether any one is watching them or not.
- The world says "It's O.K. if you don't get caught."
- Sometimes being honest will mean we lose our popularity or success.
- We need God's help to become people of integrity.

be a good loser is often less demanding than being a good winner.

3. In saying how a salvationist should view honesty, "Chosen to be a Soldier" says this:

*"There is no guarantee that the honest person will always benefit from his honesty. The secretary who refuses to type a dishonest letter may suffer loss of employment; and the one who uses the firm's postage stamps for personal use may not be discovered. But even if the salvation soldier has to suffer for the sake of honesty, he must never resort to falsehood, dishonesty or untruthfulness. The idea that falsehood which does not hurt a private person but a group, e.g., the State or corporation, is permissible, is totally unworthy of a Christian. Pilfering from a place of employment or a department store is also wrong. Salvationists must by example and precept contribute to the strengthening of a public opinion which condemns falsehood in statements issued by a authority, and the colouring of facts in the mass media and in political propaganda ..."* (p.36)

**Discuss it with your group.**

*Joseph was the straightest man in the Bible because Pharaoh made him into a ruler.*

4. Comment on these statements, keeping in mind what this session is about.

\* She's as good as her word.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\* The desire to be "number one" makes many people forget about integrity.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\* The greatest hindrance to the spread of the gospel is a Christian who does not practise what he preaches.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\* His handshake is better than a contract.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS R FOR

## Aim

---

To enable the young people to see how they can be true friends.

## OBJECTIVES

---

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ become familiar with biblical teaching about friendships;
- ❖ have an understanding of everyone's need to have friends;
- ❖ identify ways to become a better friend and develop skills in making friends.

## INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

---

If we are popular, we don't spend a lot of time thinking about friendship. For those who think they have no friends, it is a most important issue. We may all experience both the heartbreak of friendships lost and the joy of new ones made.

However, as we get older and especially as we grow in our Christian experience, our friendships can be enriched and wounds healed if we look at how Jesus handled friendships.

Jesus was not only friends with those He chose to be His disciples, He also befriended those He knew needed friendship. As we grow and mature, we need to recognise that Jesus calls us to be friendly to all people, not just the ones we want to include on our list of friends. As you prepare this session you may like to pause and consider whether each of your young people feels accepted by the group.

In Luke 6:31 - 33, 35 Jesus said, 'Do for others just what you want them to do for you. If you love only the people who love you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners do that! ... No! Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back ...' (GNB)

Jesus used this illustration to point out to us why we should love our enemies, but it would be just as effective to include in this group those around us who are not necessarily our enemies but are in need of friendship.

Friendship can also be a bridge to faith. We do not go out to make friends just so we can win them to Christ – but caring about those around us and showing them Christlike love means that people are attracted to Christianity. More people are brought to Christ through friendship than any other way! This is not actually a point in the session but your seniors

## SESSION 2

### FROM THE BIBLE

1 Corinthians 13:4 - 7; Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:6, 10.

### CHECKLIST

There are three suggested Getting Started activities. They are all based on our need to have a friend.

Score the perfect friend is on the work sheet as activity 1.

If you use the wrap the parcel game, you will need books, paper, string/sticky tape and a small table for each pair.

There are four suggested teaching approaches. Try to use them all. Approach 1 considers the attributes described in 1 Corinthians 13 and activity 2 on the work sheet is best done here.

Approach 2 discusses the good qualities shown by friends. List these and use activity 3 on the work sheet as you work through this approach.

Approach 3 lists four reasons why Jesus was a good friend. Write these up so that you can consider them with your group. It would be helpful to have the four questions to be asked already written up as well so that the young people can read them and take time to pause over the one that best applies to themselves.

In approach 4 the young people read some proverbs about friends and in activity 4 they link the proverbs to statements on the work sheet. Allow them time to compose their own proverbs and read them to each other.

may like to consider this.

Colossians 4:5 - 6 says: 'Be wise in the way you act towards those who are not believers, make good use of every opportunity you have. Your speech should always be pleasant and interesting, and you should know how to give the right answer to everyone.' (GNB)

Encourage your group to share problems and difficulties they are experiencing in their friendships. Often there is a simple answer to what seems to be a complex problem, if both people are willing to be humble and forgiving.

## GETTING STARTED

---

Play a game that shows the value of working with our friends. Here are three suggestions.

### 1. **Score the perfect friend**

This activity helps the young people to consider what they feel is important in a friend.

They are given 25 points to use and their task will be working out how they will use their points. This is activity 1 on the work sheets.

**Or**

### 2. **Knots**

This is a good way to show your group the importance of being able to work together. (You will need at least 6 people for this activity.) Stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder and all stretch their hands into the centre. Everyone then grabs two other hands (make sure nobody grabs the two hands of the same person or holds the hand of the person right next to them). Now untie the knot (i.e., get back into a circle) without letting go of hands. It is possible and it's a lot of fun!

**Or**

### 3. **Wrap and tie the parcel**

Have a small table ready for each pair with some paper, a book, string and sticky tape on the top. Stand the pairs beside each other with one arm around their partner or behind their back and a short distance from the table. On a given signal they run to their table and using one hand each (the other arm must remain firmly around their partner), they try to wrap the book in the paper, tie it with the string and secure the ends with sticky tape.

**POINT**

We need friends to have fun with, to share our hopes and dreams, to be there when we need them. In this session we will look at some things that make better friendships and look at how Jesus' example can help us to be true friends.

## GOING DEEPER

---

### 1. **Bible reading and activity**

Read together 1 Corinthians 13:4 - 7 then complete activity 2 on the work sheet. Make sure that your young people understand the correct meaning of each word. This can be checked by having them give an example of a person's actions that best shows the particular attribute. Spend some time to consider that if these attributes are missing, do they make it harder to make friends?

### 2. **The qualities good friends show**

This is a list of the things that make a good friend. (It is adapted from the book *The Best Time of Your Life* by Alan MacDonald.) (Have the following 4 headings written up for the group to read.)

Read through and discuss each quality.



### LEADER TIP

The young people can complete activity 3 on the work sheet, rating the importance of each quality with one to five stars. (Like the ratings for motels!)

a. **Good company**

It's miserable to have some great news and nobody to tell it to. Most of our activities are more enjoyable when they are shared with others. During the sharing a good friend recognises that there are two people taking part so he/she won't try to monopolise the event, nor will he/she refuse to discuss it. Friends are there to share, otherwise we may as well be on our own.

Jesus is a great the model for our friendships. It was a well-known and criticised fact that His life-style clearly showed that He was a friend of tax collectors and sinners. He did not just associate with them. He shared Himself and His life with them. He wasn't just being friendly, He was a friend. (Matthew 11:19.)

There was no way He approved of bribery or prostitution because He befriended these people. Yet they must have found Him good company because they invited Him to their houses. Jesus always concentrated on individuals, not their actions. He must have made them feel their friendship was worth something – whatever their lifestyles.

**DEFINITION**

Tax collectors and sinners were looked down upon by the Pharisees (the religious leaders of Jesus' day). Nobody wanted to be seen as their friends.

b. **Help when needed**

When disaster or trouble comes our way, what we need most is someone who is ready to listen to us. A real friend is someone who will drop everything to be with us at such a time. We can admit our trouble to them, knowing they'll be there for us.

When there's a problem, advice is not always the first thing we look for – a good listener is much more valuable. Often a friend's greatest gift is just to keep us company when we are at our lowest.

Even Jesus had this need. He took his friends to Gethsemane, because in His hour of need He needed their company. Sadly when He needed them to be there, they fell asleep (Mark 14:32 - 37).

How often does our friendship fail just when it is needed?

c. **A sense of humour**

How much do you laugh with a friend?

It's important to be able to laugh with each other about mistakes and faults without being unkind to each other.

We know our friends well enough to be aware of differences (e.g., tidiness; upbringing; family life; education) but friends can recognise the differences and see the funny side to them. If they don't, they will not be friends for long.

d. **Being yourself**

Have you ever been in a situation where someone has tried hard to be your friend – but the harder they try, the more you feel like running away?

We need to remember that friendships are based on freedom rather than forcing. Someone who is too eager and wanting to monopolise others, suffocates a friendship before it starts. We must allow the other person the choice of having us as a friend. If we try to monopolise their company, they will feel pressured and even trapped.

Being ourselves is really important in forming a friendship. Pretending we are different to what we really are, is no base for a friendship. People sense we are lacking in security if we talk too much or say nothing at all.

Remembering that God cares for us as a favourite child means that we know we are loved and we do not have to depend on others to build up our self-esteem, so we can be ourselves with our friends.

This doesn't mean that we should be rude, pushy or irritable. (Quickly recall the passage read earlier from I Corinthians.) But it does mean we don't have to try to be the life of the party all the time.

### 3. What made Jesus a good friend?

Here are four good reasons why Jesus was a good friend to so many people while He was here on earth.

#### a. Personality

It is clear from the gospels that He was always Himself.

He wasn't out to impress those around Him.

#### b. Security (i.e. self worth)

He didn't need to prove Himself to other people. He didn't need their approval or appreciation. He was absolutely sure that His Father loved Him. It is important to remember that Jesus didn't get this knowledge from His friends, but from time alone with God.

#### c. Sensitivity

Jesus didn't always approve of the lifestyles of His friends, but He cared about them and their needs and not just His own.

#### d. Availability

He was there sharing with His friends in the good and the bad times. We see examples of this in the gospels. Ask the young people to think of such times (the wedding at Cana/Lazarus' death).

#### What about me?

Allow time for the group to read the four points on the bookmark silently and thoughtfully.

- Do I offer my friendship naturally or am I always out to impress?
- Am I secure in the knowledge that my Father, God, loves me or am I always seeking approval from my friends?
- Am I sensitive to the needs of those I'm with or too wrapped up in my own problems?
- Am I available when my friends need me or do I feel they are interrupting my time e.g., when I'm just settling down to watch my favourite TV show and a friend calls to talk to me?

### 4. Proverbs about friendship

Read and discuss what these proverbs say about friends:

Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:6; 27:10.

Then ask the young people to consider what they have discussed in this session and compose their own proverb about friendship.



#### LEADER TIP

These four headings could be written up as you discuss each one.



#### LEADER TIP

This is a book mark on the work sheet and you could encourage the members of your group to cut it out to keep. You may even like to have magnetic strips to be added so that they could hang it up on their mirror.



#### LEADER TIP

Activity 4 on the work sheet ties in with this approach.

# TAKING IT HOME

---

Friendship is more than people who spend lunch times together. It is being prepared to give and take, support and encourage, forgive and forget.

Anyone who would have friends, must be one.

Give the young people the opportunity to read one of the Proverbs from the work sheet and spend some quiet time praying that God would help them be that kind of friend.



## LEADER TIP

You may want to play some quiet music while this is done.

# FOLLOW-THRU

---

This is an excellent session to tie in with the Get Involved and Grow in Mission challenge to 'pray for a friend'. The young people may even be prepared to make a list of friends they should pray for and commit themselves to praying for these people on a regular basis.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

COLEMAN, Lyman, *Youth Ministry Encyclopedia*, Scripture Union Publishing, 1983.

LYNN, David, *Talksheets*, Zondervan Publishing.

MACDONALD, Alan, *The Best Time of Your Life*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1989.

MOFFET, Bob, *Crowdbreakers*, Pickering Paperbacks, 1983.





A bore is someone who insists on holding their own view after we have enlightened them with ours.

**3.** (Rate these attributes ☆ - ☆☆☆☆☆ according to how important you think they are.)

Good friends should:

- \* be good company,
- \* give help when it is needed,
- \* have a sense of humour,
- \* be natural with each other.




*We cannot share our love without becoming involved.*

**4.** A friend is one who knows the best and worst of us and loves us just the same.

Read these Proverbs then link them to the right statement:

**Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:6; 27:10.**

**Real friends stick up for each other.**

**Friends never set out to hurt each other deliberately.**

**Friends love us all the time and share our troubles with us.**

**Friends are there when we need them.**

*If you can't be kind, be quiet.*

My Proverb about friendship:

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What kind of friend am I?**


1. Do I just offer my friendship naturally or am I always out to impress?
2. Am I secure in the knowledge that my Father, God, loves me or am I always seeking approval from my friends?
3. Am I sensitive to the needs of those I'm with or too wrapped up in my own problems?
4. Am I available when my friends need me or do I feel they are interrupting my time (e.g. when I'm just settling down to watch my favourite TV show and a friend calls to talk to me).

*Love never gives up and its faith, hope and patience never fail.*

*1 Corinthians 13:7*

## SESSION 3

# BAPTISM



### FROM THE BIBLE

Isaiah 1:13 - 14; Micah 6:6 - 8; Matthew 23:23 and other selected readings.

### CHECKLIST ✓

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. You will need a board or chart to write up the group's responses in Getting Started 1.

Getting Started 2 is a discussion on some 'old wives' tales' to lead the young people from what they may have heard about baptism towards the teaching that follows.

There are 5 suggested teaching approaches. It is recommended that all are completed.

Approach 1 asks some questions to find out what the young people know about baptism.

Approach 2 gives a brief biblical introduction to baptism.

Approach 3 briefly states the Army's historical position.

Approach 4 is a Bible search and ties into activity 1 on the work sheet.

Approach 5 sets out the current position that the Army takes on baptism.

### AIM

To help the young people understand the Salvationist viewpoint of the sacraments of baptism.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand:

- ❖ some of the history of the sacraments;
- ❖ the Army's position concerning baptism;
- ❖ the importance of knowing Christ as a personal Saviour.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

The following notes have been adapted from Lt. Colonel Robert Street's book *Called to be God's People*:

The Roman Catholic Church recognises seven sacraments: the baptism of infants and converts, the confirmation of baptism by the bishop, the rite of penitence and forgiveness, the anointing of the sick, the ordaining of priests, the uniting of people in marriage, and the Eucharist liturgy or mass.

Churches following in the Protestant tradition have tended to recognise only two sacraments. Luther wrote: 'There are strictly speaking, but two sacraments in the Church of God – baptism and the bread.'

If the word 'sacrament' is understood in this sense, the Army, by its non-practice of baptism and the breaking of bread, is non-sacramental.

However, another broader definition has been applied in both ancient and modern times. St. Augustine offered two famous definitions of 'sacrament': 'a sign of something sacred' and 'a visible sign of an invisible grace'. More recently Joseph Martos has explained that 'any ritual or object, person or place can be considered sacramental if it is taken to be a symbol of something that is sacred or mysterious'. By these definitions, ancient and modern, the Army is a sacramental Movement. We do not deny the value of the symbolic in religion.

Neither do we accept that tradition has a determining role in the formation of doctrine. We affirm 'that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by God and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice'. (Doctrine 1)

The word 'sacrament' is not found in the Old or New Testaments, there is no evidence of a concept, such as the sacramental, which draws together baptism and the breaking of bread. . .

'Sacrament' derives from the Latin *sacramentum*. *Sacramentum* was the word used in the Vulgate to translate the Greek *mysterion*. *Mysterion* is never applied to baptism nor the breaking of bread. It is used definitely by Paul in Colossians. In Colossians 2:2 the *mysterion* of God, Paul says, 'is Christ'; in Colossians 1:27 Paul says the *mysterion* is 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'. (pages 91 - 92)

## DEFINITION

Vulgate: a Latin version of the Scriptures made in the 4th century.

'Christ in you' means there is a difference in our lives which can be seen by others. The believer shows Christ to the rest of the world through the way he/she lives.

The word baptise means: 'to dip'. Although it does not always mean 'in water', most New Testament references have this implication.

Some churches have made the observance of this particular sacrament a condition for church membership (e.g., Baptist). Their argument for this is based on the fact that Jesus himself was baptised as recorded in Matthew chapter 3. It is important to understand however, that John the Baptist, by implication, considered water baptism less important than the baptism with the Holy Spirit (v.11). John told Jesus that he needed this new baptism which could only come through Jesus (v. 14).

In Acts 1:5 Jesus reinforced this idea just before His ascension to heaven when He told His disciples 'John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

It is interesting to note that in no time during Jesus' ministry did he baptise with water (John 4:2). Although the apostle Paul did occasionally baptise (1 Corinthians 1:14 -16), this was not an essential part of his ministry for he goes on to say in verse 17 that 'Christ did not send me to baptise. He sent me to tell the Good News.'

Some Christians express their obedience to Christ's words found in Matthew 28:18, 20 by the practice of infant baptism, others by adult immersion. In 1 Corinthians 10:1 - 4 Paul talks about the early Israelite fathers being baptised as followers of Moses in the cloud and the sea. The cloud was the pillar of cloud that they followed through the wilderness and the sea was the Red Sea which parted so that they could cross safely.

By saying that the Children of Israel were all baptised as followers of Moses (or 'into Moses', GNB), Paul is saying that:

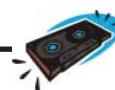
- They went from the rule of Pharaoh to the rule of Moses and the rule of God.
- They went from captivity to freedom.

'Baptised' in this passage means:

- They followed.
- They were obedient and accepted the command and the discipline of Moses.
- They acted in faith. They fled.
- They shared together in an unforgettable event which marked the passing from an old life into a new one, or from death to life.

## WEBQUEST

Further current background on the Army's view on baptism can be found on the Army's webpage: [www.salvationarmy.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk). Follow the links to the fact sheet on baptism.



Lt. Colonel Street points out that we might choose to note that in this baptism none of them got wet.

Why then do some modern evangelicals insist that nothing less than total immersion will do? They are missing the point. It is not the plunging into the waters which matters but the entry 'into Christ', and the incorporation of the believer into 'the body of Christ'.

Given this, there should not be any objection to another form of recognising membership into a Christian community that is culturally relevant, for example, the swearing-in of soldiers. The act of swearing-in of soldiers should be seen as another means of recognising that an individual has formally joined a Christian community. It could be understood as a 'dry baptism'. This is not to suggest that soldiership is the only means, or will always be the only means, of joining The Salvation Army. The Army may well consider an alternative recognition should soldiership ever become irrelevant.

This session aims to help our young people understand why The Salvation Army supports the idea that taking part in a sacrament is not necessary to salvation and how that belief is based upon biblical teaching.

## GETTING STARTED

---

### 1. What's a Christian?

Put the young people into a circle – including all leaders. On a signal all walk around in one direction. You walk around the opposite way to the circle until someone calls 'Stop.' You then ask the person you are nearest, 'What makes a person a Christian?'

Have someone record the replies as you repeat this 5 - 6 times and then stop the game and discuss the replies – both the similarities and differences.

See if you can combine the replies into one sentence to keep displayed.

Or

### 2. What is really true?

Ask the young people to tell you some tall tales they've heard that they know to be untrue. There are some listed here to get you started:

- If you eat your crusts, you will have curly hair.
- Eat carrots and you'll see better in the dark.
- If you swallow fruit seeds, a tree will grow inside you and the leaves will come out your ears.
- If you watch too much TV, you will get square eyes.
- If you are pulling a face and the wind direction changes, your face will stay that way.

## GOING DEEPER

---

### 1. Questions to consider

- Do you know when you were born?
- Do you know how you were born?
- Do you know when / how you became a Christian? What did you do? What did God do?
- Do you know what happened in the early Church when people wanted to become a Christian? Some good examples are found in Acts 2:36 - 41 and 8:27 - 38.

**POINT**

In this session we want to explore how much a step of faith or a ceremony is necessary for a person to become a Christian.

**POINT**

There are lots of misunderstandings about things in our daily lives. The same can be said about some things in our Christian life and what is essential for salvation. Today we are going to look at one of the sacraments that many churches view as an essential part of salvation.

- Have you got a friend or relation who has been christened or baptised?
- Has anyone ever made you feel that you are not really a Christian because you haven't been baptised?
- What do you say? (Hopefully this session will help you find an answer for such a question if you are asked.)

## 2. The history of baptism

Baptism was carried over from the Jewish custom of baptizing proselytes. Jesus was baptized by John as a sign that this was the beginning of His ministry. It was His Jewish tradition to take part in ceremony (for e.g., circumcision) but Jesus Himself did not baptise.

Baptism that happened immediately so it was an outward sign of an inward determination to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord was very meaningful (as in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch that Philip helped). But it has a great danger of becoming a ceremony – with the churches divided on whether it can be infant or adult baptism

Paul had also been brought up to observe ceremony but he sends out a warning about legalism. Read Colossians 2:16 - 17. What does he say? (To know Christ is more important than keeping rules.) What does Paul say is more important than baptism in 1 Corinthians 1:17? (Telling the Good News.)

## 3. The Army viewpoint

William Booth was concerned about the number of church goers who professed Christianity but had no personal knowledge of a Saviour who was in control of the way they lived their lives. He wanted all Salvationists to know the power of Christ in their lives. He had been baptised as an infant and had performed the Lord's Supper when he was a Methodist minister.

When The Salvation Army grew to be an accepted part of the Protestant movement, a decision had to be made as to what form Salvation Army services should take.

William searched the Scriptures because he believed that the Bible and not tradition alone tells us how to live the Christian life.

## 4. What did the Bible say?

- Read Isaiah 1:13 - 14.  
What was Isaiah saying? (Religious gatherings are hateful to God when unforgiven sin is in our heart.)
- Read Micah 6:6 - 8.  
What does Micah say that God wants from us? (We must be fair – or 'just' – in our dealings with others, show love and walk humbly before God, recognising our need of Him.)
- Read Matthew 23:23.  
What was Jesus saying? (He attacked the religious leaders of His time because they thought that the keeping of trivial rules was more important than justice, mercy and honesty.)

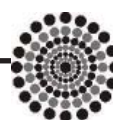
So William Booth saw that the Bible was clearly saying that living as Christians was far more important than any ceremonies we might attend.

### But:

- Matthew 3:13 - 16 tells of how Jesus was baptised.  
Read this together.  
Why did John not want to baptise Jesus?

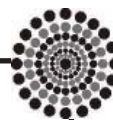
## DEFINITION

Proselytes: people who were not born Jewish but wanted to accept the Jewish religious belief in one God.



## LEADER TIP

There is room for the young people to write what lesson we need to learn from these passages in activity 1 on the work sheets.



## LEADER TIP

Activity 2 can be used here.

What had John just said about Jesus? (Read Matthew 3:11.)

- What does John 4:2 say about baptism? (Jesus did not baptise anyone.)

Jesus offered salvation to people who did not have a choice to be baptised.

Read Luke 23:39 - 43. What did Jesus promise this criminal? (That they would be in heaven together.) Would Jesus have said this if it wasn't true?

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:14 - 17. What was Paul's opinion about baptism? Was it essential to becoming a Christian?
- Read John 3:5. This verse is often used by believers to prove that Jesus Himself said baptism was a necessity. However Jesus is explaining how we must be born again. He is talking about our natural birth (when the mother's water breaks so the baby is born through water) and our birth when the Holy Spirit helps us to believe that Jesus is our Saviour and can bring us back to God.

So to William Booth these verses clearly showed that it was not necessary to be baptised to be accepted by God.

#### 5. What then do we believe?

Use this extract from the 'Statement on baptism' to read and discuss with your group.

##### **Statement on baptism**

(From the *Study Guide to Salvation Story*, p.115 and *Called to be God's People*, p.105.)

After full and careful consideration of The Salvation Army's understanding of, and approach to, the sacrament of water baptism, the International Spiritual Life Commission sets out the following points regarding the relationship between our soldier enrolment and water baptism.

1. Only those who confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord may be considered for soldiership in The Salvation Army.
2. Such a confession is confirmed by the gracious presence of God the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and includes the call to discipleship.
3. In accepting the call to discipleship Salvationists promise to continue to be responsive to the Holy Spirit and to seek to grow in grace.
4. They also express publicly their desire to fulfil membership of Christ's Church on earth as soldiers of The Salvation Army.
5. The Salvation Army rejoices in the truth that all who are in Christ are baptised into the one body by the Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians 12:13*).
6. It believes, in accordance with Scripture, that there 'is one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all' (*Ephesians 4:5 - 6*).
7. The swearing-in of a soldier of The Salvation Army beneath the trinitarian sign of the Army's flag acknowledges this truth.
8. It is a public response and witness to a life-changing encounter with Christ which has already taken place, as is the water baptism practised by some other Christians.



### **LEADER TIP**

This statement is on the senior work sheet.

9. The Salvation Army acknowledges that there are many worthy ways of publicly witnessing to having been baptised into Christ's body by the Holy Spirit and expressing a desire to be his disciple.
10. The swearing-in of a soldier should be followed by a lifetime of continued obedient faith in Christ.

## **TAKING IT HOME**

---

Every Christian is made right with God by taking the step of faith that shows we know that Jesus died in our place to bring us into God's presence. Having accepted this great gift of salvation, our lives become an outward witness of God working within us. Being baptised with the Holy Spirit is what really matters.

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

The young people might like to make a list of songs/choruses that speak about being sealed as a child of God and baptised by His Holy Spirit. e.g. *Refiner's fire*; *Send the fire*; *O what a wonderful, wonderful day* and so on.

This would fulfil the challenge to choose songs and choruses on a given theme and you could then use them in a challenge to 'Get Involved and Grow in Training for Leadership', 'Lead choruses in a meeting', in one of your own sessions.

## **FURTHER READING AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

RICHARDSON, A. (Ed.), *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, SCM Press Ltd, London, 1979.

METCALF, W., *The Salvationist and The Sacraments*, Campfield Press, St. Albans, 1965.

JOHNSON, S.E., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Volume 7, The Gospel According To St. Matthew, Abingdon Press, New York, 1951.

*The Beacon Dictionary of Theology*.

*Salvation Story*, MPG Books, 1998.

*Study Guide to Salvation Story*, IHQ, 1999.

STREET, Robert, *Called to be God's People*, IHQ, 1999.



1.

Read these verses and explain why God was saying such things.

● Isaiah 1:13 - 14 says “It’s useless to bring your offerings. I am disgusted with the smell of incense you burn. I cannot stand your New Moon Festivals, your Sabbaths, and your religious gatherings; they are all corrupted by your sins. I hate your New Moon Festivals and holy days; they are a burden that I am tired of bearing.”

---



---

● Micah 6:6 - 8 “What shall I bring to the Lord, the God of heaven, when I come to worship him? Shall I bring the best calves to burn as offerings to him? Will the Lord be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep or endless streams of olive-oil? Shall I offer him my first-born child to pay for my sins? No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.”

---



---

● Matthew 23:23 “How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! You hypocrites! You give to God a tenth even of the seasoning herbs, such as mint, dill, and cumin, but you neglect to obey the really important teachings of the Law, such as justice and mercy and honesty. These you should practise, without neglecting the others.”

---



---



---

BAPTISM

2.

● What did John the Baptist say Jesus would do? (Matthew 3:11 - 12)

---



---

● What does the Bible say about Jesus baptising others? (John 4:2)

---

● What was Jesus referring to when He told Nicodemus he needed to be born twice. (John 3:5)

---



---

# JUNIOR WORKSHEET

# 3.

Put true or false beside these statements.

- (i)  Accepting Jesus as our Saviour and Lord is what makes us a  Christian.
- (ii)  Jesus baptised hundreds of people.
- (iii)  The Early Church baptised people as soon as they became believers.
- (iv)  Following Jesus means being prepared to obey His commands.
- (v)  Being enrolled or baptised is one way of showing publicly that we are committed to become members of the body of Christ.
- (vi)  Being baptised or enrolled is the only way to be saved.
- (vii)  We become Christians because our parents are good Salvationists.

Many people would compare being baptised into membership of a church with being enrolled as a soldier in The Salvation Army. What do you think?

---

---

---

### HIGHLIGHTS

- A sacrament is an outward sign of an inner desire.
- Some churches practise adult immersion while others baptise infants.
- Acceptance by God comes when we decide that we want to have Jesus as our Saviour.

3.

This is the Statement on Baptism set out by the Spiritual Life Commission regarding the relationship between a soldier's enrolment in The Salvation Army and water baptism.

Highlight the three points you consider are most important.

# BAPTISM

## A Statement on Baptism

1.  Only those who confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord may   
 be considered for soldiership in The Salvation Army.
2.  Such a confession is confirmed by the gracious presence of   
 God the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and includes the   
 call to  discipleship.
3.  In accepting the call to discipleship Salvationists promise to   
 continue to be responsive to the Holy Spirit and to seek to   
 grow in grace.
4.  They also express publicly their desire to fulfil membership of   
 Christ's Church on earth as soldiers of The Salvation Army.
5.  The Salvation Army rejoices in the truth that all who are in   
 Christ are baptised into the one body by the Holy Spirit  
 (1 Corinthians 12:13).
6.  It believes, in accordance with Scripture, that 'there is one   
 body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one   
 God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in   
 all'.  
 (Ephesians 4:5, 6).
7.  The swearing-in of a soldier of The Salvation Army beneath   
 the Trinitarian sign of the Army's flag acknowledges this truth.
8.  It is a public response and witness to a life-changing encounter   
 with Christ which has already taken place, as is the water    
 baptism practised by some other Christians.
9.  The Salvation Army acknowledges that there are many    
 worthy ways of publicly witnessing to having been baptised   
 into Christ's body by the Holy Spirit and expressing a desire   
 to be his disciple.
10.  The swearing-in of a soldier should be followed by a life-time   
 of continued obedient faith in Christ.



# GOOD, BETTER, BEST

## SESSION 4

### AIM

Through a study of the book of Hebrews to help the young people gain a better understanding of the work of Christ in the life of the Christian today.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand that:

- ❖ it is only through Christ that we can achieve a right relationship with God;
- ❖ we can face an unknown future by trusting in God alone;
- ❖ Christians should avoid the temptation to believe that practices and rites will save them.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

We are attempting a difficult learning task in this session. The book of Hebrews is packed with Old Testament allusion and follows a complex argument. In the time available, it will only be possible to touch briefly on the main points. Remember too, that your young people are probably not experienced enough or knowledgeable enough to understand much of the writer's argument.

This means that each leader must study the epistle so that he/she can confidently discuss the points raised in groups and guide the young people quickly to the appropriate reference. You will find it profitable to read the whole of the letter to the Hebrews. Prepare well or your young people will soon be confused and bored.

#### About the letter to the Hebrews

##### Who wrote it?

Although in some editions of the King James version, the letter is headed 'The Epistle of Paul', we really do not know who the writer was. There is little or no evidence pointing to Paul and a great deal pointing away from him.

There are no conventional greetings to give us a clue, but we do know that the author knew Timothy (13:23) and writes extremely polished Greek. The arguments in Hebrews are set out by a competent teacher who knows the Old Testament thoroughly. The version quoted by the author is the translation of the Hebrew writings to Greek (the Septuagint). So he probably was a Greek-speaking Jew as most educated Jews were, writing to fellow Greek-speaking Jews. He has thought through the relation of his Christian faith to Judaism.

### FROM THE BIBLE

Selected passages from the letter to the Hebrews, especially chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12.

### CHECKLIST ✓

There is one suggested Getting Started activity. You will need to have a series of objects/pictures ready to show as well as preparing a copy of the recording chart similar to the one shown.

There are four suggested teaching approaches. Try to use them all.

For approach 1 you will need to have written up the four explanations of the passages read so the young people can match the passage with the explanation.

For approach 2 you will need to have written up the three objectives of this session leaving space between them for placing the verses. Photocopy the verses from page 28 and have them cut up ready to be used.

Activity 1 on the work sheet ties into approach 3. Three Scripture passages are read to find the key message of the letter to the Hebrews.

Approach 4 is a quiz on the people of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11.

Remember we are more concerned with the message than the messenger so do not spend valuable time on this question.

#### To whom was it sent?

It was written to Jewish Christians who had a history of persecution (1:36 - 37). They should have been mature Christians by this time, capable of teaching others (5:11 - 6:2) but, instead they were withdrawn and inward looking. The writer feels that they have half a mind to turn back to Judaism. So, he writes to give them a forceful reminder that what they possess in Christ is far better.

#### When was it written?

It is considered that the letter was written in the late 60's, because there is no mention of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple that occurred in A.D. 70.

#### What is it about?

The letter explains Christ's relationship to all that had happened in the religious history of Israel.

'So the writer compares and contrasts the person and the achievements of Jesus with the Old Testament priesthood and sacrificial system. He is not only incomparably greater and better than these, he is the ultimate realisation of all they stand for. He is the perfect priest, offering the perfect sacrifice. He had finally removed the barrier of sin and given men access to God in a way the sacrificial system could never do. That was the copy: he is the original pattern. That was the shadow: he is the reality men have always been searching for. To turn away from him – back to an inferior substitute, back to a proven failure – is to lose everything.' (*New Lion Handbook to the Bible*, p. 740)

It is not that Judaism is bad, but that Jesus is best.

The following study may help you understand why Jesus' sacrifice was superior to the Old Testament or Levitical sacrifice.

#### **Comparison of the Levitical sacrifice and Jesus Christ**

SIMILARITIES (Compare with Leviticus 4:27 - 35.)

1. Both sacrifices required unblemished victims – 1 Peter 1:18 - 19.
2. Both were presented to God – Hebrews 9:24 - 25.
3. Both sacrifices involved the shedding of blood – Hebrews 9:22.
4. Death was necessary – Hebrews 9:15.
5. Both proclaimed forgiveness of sin – Hebrews 9:22.

#### DIFFERENCES

1. Levitical sacrifices were frequent but Christ's sacrifice is once and for all – Hebrews 9:12, 26.
2. Levitical sacrifices only removed the sins of the individual from the last time they had offered a sacrifice. But Christ's death removed all sins before He came – Hebrews 9:15.
3. The High Priest entered only a man-made shrine; Jesus won entrance into the presence of God – Hebrews 9:24.
4. Jesus was both priest and victim – Hebrews 9:11, 12.
5. Jesus put away sin – an impossibility for Levitical sacrifices – Hebrews 10:11 - 12.

The writer then goes on to remind his readers of the faith of some of the famous people in Israel's history. We often call this chapter (11) the great faith chapter. He then urges his readers to remain faithful and to continue faithful to the end with their eyes fixed on Jesus.

## GETTING STARTED

Choose between the good, better, best.

Have a series (about 8) of three objects or pictures to display. e.g.,


- 3 types of chocolate bars
- 3 types of chips
- 3 types of sports
- 3 colours of football teams
- music groups, movies, etc.

Put up the following outline so that you can fill it in as the young people decide which is good, better, best.

Article	Good	Better	Best
Chocolate			
Sport			
Sneakers			
Music groups			

After the young people look at the group of three, explain that you will hold up one of the three and you want them to vote on whether it is 'good', 'better' or 'best'.

This should promote some lively discussion and you may not even get a consensus of opinion! If so, use different individuals to decide which articles or name they would put into which column. Keep the discussion and recording moving so that not too much time is spent on this starter activity.



Sometimes it is easy to make a choice between things. If one is so much better than the others, we do not hesitate. Other times, it is hard. They all seem good. How do we decide which one is really the best?

The Jewish Christians were being confused by people telling them one way was just as good and as necessary as other ways. The letter to the Hebrews explains that in all ways Jesus is the best.

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. Jesus' supremacy

Some members of the early Christian Church were being confused by false teachers who were telling them that as well as believing in Christ they still had to obey all the rules and practices set up under the old system of sacrifices for sins. The writer of Hebrews set out to prove to them that this was not so. Through Jesus we have all we need to come to God. Let's look at some verses in Hebrews where the writer proves that Jesus is supreme in every way.

Put the young people into groups and give them either one or all of the Scripture passages to read: Hebrews 3:5 - 6; Hebrews 4:14 - 16; Hebrews 10:19 - 22; Hebrews 12:1 - 3.

The following four statements should be written up ready to use. Once the groups have read their Bible references through, allow them to decide which Bible reference should go beside which statement.

- a. Jesus was greater than Moses. Moses was a faithful servant but Jesus is the Son of God. (Hebrews 3:5 - 6)

- b. Jesus is the true High Priest. His priesthood supersedes the old Levitical system and He understands us. (Hebrews 4:14 - 16)
- c. Jesus' death allows us to come directly into God's presence, because He has purified us. (Hebrews 10:19 - 22)
- d. Jesus never gave up. We need to fix our eyes on Him and run the race before us. (Hebrews 12:1 - 3)

**2. Matching verses to the objectives**

Now give each of the groups the prepared copy of the objectives for this session. (They should be written on a large sheet of paper with sufficient space between them for two of the following verses to be placed.)

Give the young people one of these verses to read and decide which objective it best reinforces. They will then place the verse under the objective. The group must be ready to explain their choice and why the verse matches the point.



**LEADER TIP**

Write out the three objectives of this session to display. Photocopy these verses and cut them out ready for the young people to use in this approach.

Hebrews 10:19 - 20. My Friends, the blood of Jesus gives us the courage to enter the most holy place by a new way that leads to life! And this way takes us through the curtain that is Christ himself. (CEV)

Hebrews 6:19. We have this hope as an anchor for our lives. It is safe and sure, and goes through the curtain of the heavenly temple into the inner sanctuary. (GNB)

Hebrews 7:25. And so he is able, now and always, to save those who come to God through him, because he lives forever to plead with God for them. (GNB)

Hebrews 12:1. Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us! So we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that won't let go. And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us. (CEV)

Hebrews 7:19. For the Law of Moses could not make anything perfect. And now a better hope has been provided through which we come near to God. (GNB)

Hebrews 9:14. Since this is true, how much more is accomplished by the blood of Christ! Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself as a perfect sacrifice to God. His blood will purify our consciences from useless rituals, so that we may serve the living God. (GNB)

(The verses should be matched this way:

Hebrews 10:19, 20 and 7:25 – objective 1.

Hebrews 6:19 and 7:19 – objective 2.

Hebrews 12:1 and 9:14 – objective 3.)

Once the verses are in place, read the three objectives again and discuss with your group how important these beliefs are for a Christian.

- In what way do these beliefs affect the way we live?
- Do they give us more confidence to 'have a go'?
- Do they help us realise that a personal relationship with God is more important than going through lots of rituals?

### 3. Discussion of key passages

a. Read together Hebrews 12:1 - 3.

- Ask the young people what the writer was reminding the Christians to do.
- Do we need to be reminded of the same things?
- How hard is it to keep on to the end?

b. Read Hebrews 9:23 - 28.

- What is the important message in this passage?
- Why is it better to be under Christ's sacrifice (which was once and for all) than to be living under the old system as set out in the Old Testament?
- Does Christ's sacrifice still apply to us?

c. Read Hebrews 10:19 - 25.

- How has the way been opened for us to come into God's presence?
- Before Jesus' sacrifice who was the only one who could go into God's presence? (Leviticus 16:17)
- What was the significance of the tearing of the curtain when Jesus died? (Mark 15:38)
- How do you use this privilege of being able to come near to God? (Hebrews 4:16)

### 4. Quiz on people of faith

The Old Testament is full of examples of people who knew they could rely on God and lived and died with this as the keystone of their lives.

Hebrews 11 gives a list of such people.

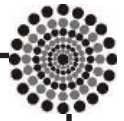
Without reference to this chapter, see if the young people can relate an incident in the named person's life that shows how faith was an important part of his/her daily life. (Know chapter 11 well so you have the answers ready!)

Abel	Abraham	Jacob	Moses	Samson
Enoch	Sarah	Joseph	Rahab	David
Noah	Isaac	Moses' parents	Gideon	Samuel

What does Hebrews 11:16 say about such people?

V.13 tells us that they did not live to see God fulfil His promises. Does this mean that they believed in vain?

V.40 tells us it was because God wanted to include us, too, in His plan to perfect all His people through Christ.



### LEADER TIP

Activity 1 on the work sheet ties in with this approach.



# TAKING IT HOME

---

The original readers of this letter were tempted to go back to Judaism, to put their faith in the old rituals rather than in the complete work that Jesus had done. Maybe God's gift of salvation was so simple they couldn't believe it!

Ceremonies must never become more important than the faith they represent.

Jesus is superior to all the prophets. He is the true High Priest who allows us to come directly into God's presence because He was also the perfect sacrifice, dying once and for all so that our sins are forgiven.

We can confidently hold to our faith in God and live to please Him.

## FOLLOW-THRU

---

This would be a good session to suggest the challenge in Get Involved and Grow in Worship to memorise a song. The song should be at least 16 - 20 lines long. A song speaking of Jesus' death and sacrifice for us fits in with this. e.g. *Lord I lift your name on high* or SSB 363, 120 or 133.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

ALEXANDER, D. , and P., *The New Lion Handbook to the Bible*, Lion Publishing, England, 1999.

MANLEY, G.T., *The New Bible Handbook*, London Inter-Varsity Fellowship.

Hebrews, Tyndale *New Testament Commentaries*, Commentary by Thomas Hewitt, InterVarsity Press, 1978.

Solution for activity 4 on both work sheets:

That is why we must hold on all \_\_\_\_\_ the more firmly to \_\_\_\_\_  
the truths \_\_\_\_\_ we have heard. ( 2:1 )  
Let us go \_\_\_\_\_ forward \_\_\_\_\_ , then, to \_\_\_\_\_ mature \_\_\_\_\_ teaching and leave  
behind us the first lessons of the \_\_\_\_\_ Christian message \_\_\_\_\_ (6: 1 )  
Let us keep our \_\_\_\_\_ eyes fixed \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus on whom our faith depends from  
beginning to end. (12: 2 )  
Through faith they fought \_\_\_\_\_ whole countries \_\_\_\_\_ and won. They did  
\_\_\_\_\_ what was right \_\_\_\_\_ and received what God had promised. ( 11:33 )

**1.** Key passages in Hebrews include:

a) Hebrews 12:1 - 3.

It reminds us \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

b) Hebrews 9:23 - 28.

Its important message is \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

c) Hebrews 10:19 - 25. This passage explains \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Which passage do you think is most useful to teenagers today?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**GOOD,  
 BETTER,  
 BEST!**

**2.** Match the comments about the readers of the book of Hebrews to the correct statement about the writer.



The readers knew the Old Testament well



The writer says that faith is to be sure of the things we hope for. (11:1)



Facing persecution the readers were having difficulty sticking to their faith



The writer says that faith makes us strong in persecution. (11:33 - 35)



The readers were tempted to use rituals set out in the Old Testament rather than faith



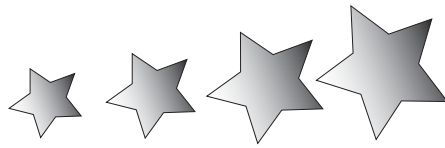
The writer points out that the Old Testament ways have now been superseded. (9.32)



As new Christians the readers were not sure in their faith



The writer uses Old Testament experiences to explain the work of Jesus (1:1 and 3:5 - 6)



**3.** The following is a brief statement of the message in the book of Hebrews. If you make a list of the missing letters, you can probably guess the five letter word which is the main theme.

In the e\_\_rly t\_\_mes priests were the media\_\_ors between God and \_\_ is people. T\_\_ey could only \_\_pproach Him throug\_\_ sacri\_\_ice and ritu\_\_l. Even so, many mighty people of \_\_aith showed us an example. Now that Jesus \_\_as come and we \_\_ave received real knowledge of God's pl\_\_n, we should believe in Jesus, trust Him, not ritual and live a life of real \_\_\_\_\_. The main theme of Hebrews is \_\_\_\_\_.



**4.** Complete these verses. (Only part of the reference is given but they are all from Hebrews. The Good News version would be best.)

That is why we must hold on all \_\_\_\_\_ we have heard. ( \_\_:1)  
 Let us go \_\_\_\_\_, then, to \_\_\_\_\_ teaching and leave behind us the first lessons of the \_\_\_\_\_ (6: \_\_)  
 Let us keep our \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. (12: \_\_)  
 Through faith they fought \_\_\_\_\_ and won. They did \_\_\_\_\_ and received what God had promised. ( \_\_:33)

**5.** The writer knew that his letter would be read by people who knew the Old Testament well, so he constantly refers to it. After each reference write the name of an Old Testament person mentioned.

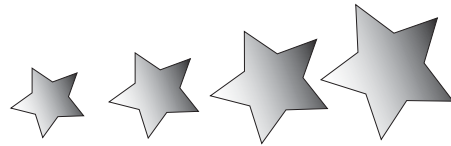


3:5 - 6 \_\_\_\_\_  
 6:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
 7:15 \_\_\_\_\_  
 11:7 \_\_\_\_\_  
 11:22 \_\_\_\_\_

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Hebrews was written to show that the Jesus way is the best.
- We are saved through our faith, not by rituals and ceremonies.
- We can face the future confidently, knowing that God is with us.
- Faith helps us know that God will keep His promises.





**3** The following is a brief statement of the message in the book of Hebrews. If you make a list of the missing letters, you can probably guess the five letter word which is the main theme.

In the e\_\_rly t\_\_mes priests were the media\_\_ors between God and \_\_is people. T\_\_ey could only \_\_pproach Him throug\_\_ sacri\_\_ice and ritu\_\_l. Even so, many mighty people of \_\_aith showed us an example. Now that Jesus \_\_as come and we \_\_ave received real knowledge of God's pl\_\_n, we should believe in Jesus, trust Him, not ritual and live a life of real \_\_\_\_\_. The main theme of Hebrews is \_\_\_\_\_.

*We do not really know who wrote the letter to the Hebrews.*

**4** Complete these verses.  
(Only part of the reference is given but they are all from Hebrews. The Good News version would be best.)

That is why we must hold on all \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ we have heard. ( \_\_:1)  
 Let us go \_\_\_\_\_, then, to \_\_\_\_\_ teaching and leave  
 behind us the first lessons of the \_\_\_\_\_ (6: \_\_)  
 Let us keep our \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus on whom our faith depends from  
 beginning to end. (12: \_\_)  
 Through faith they fought \_\_\_\_\_ and won. They did  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and received what God had promised. ( \_\_:33)

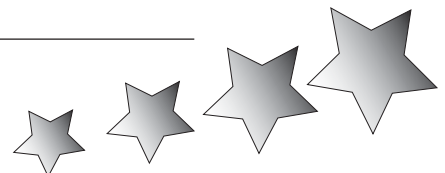
*Some women would like to think Hebrews was written by Priscilla and she dared not put her name to it.*

**5** Of all the verse I read today, the verse I like most is

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## SESSION 5

# SINCERELY JOHN

### FROM THE BIBLE

1 John, selected passages; 2 John and 3 John.

### CHECKLIST

There are two Getting Started activities.

For Getting Started 1 you will need to be familiar with the video clip from *The Little Mermaid*.

If you choose to use Getting Started 2, you will need to have the necessary equipment.

There are three suggested teaching approaches.

In approach 1 you will be giving the young people the background to the writing of John's three letters. Prepare this from the material in the Insights for the Leader.

For approach 2 it will be helpful to have the six basic certainties written up. Many of these certainties are discussed in detail in other sessions, so remember that this session is looking at John's writings and try not get sidetracked. Note that for each certainty there are Bible verses to read and then questions to discuss.

In approach 3 some verses which point out the need for our love and obedience are studied. Have your young people in four groups to study one passage each.

For the Taking it Home you will need to refer to the six certainties as outlined in approach 2.

### AIM

To help the young people understand John's teaching on the need to live in close fellowship with Christ.

### OBJECTIVES

Through a study of John's letters the young people will understand:

- ❖ why John wrote these letters;
- ❖ the importance of knowing Christian certainties;
- ❖ why love and obedience are essential Christian characteristics.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

There is little doubt that the three letters known as 1, 2 and 3 John are the work of the same author. The style of writing also links them to the gospel of St. John. John was the only apostle still alive who could claim that he had seen and known Jesus. Compare the first five verses of John's gospel with 1 John 1:1 - 5.

Both gospel and letters belong to the end of the first century. The Christian faith was now more than 50 years old. John was an old man living somewhere near Ephesus (in modern Turkey) which was the strategic centre of the Christian church.

#### 1 John

This letter was written to outline the basic fundamentals or certainties of the Christian faith. There were some false teachers beginning to infiltrate and undermine the Christian belief. They denied some basic truths as well as adding to the gospel foundation. There was great pressure to accept these new philosophies and ideas and to incorporate them into the life and teaching of the Church.

John sets down the Christian certainties and encourages all the believers to hold on to the faith. He counteracts the false teaching with the truth of the gospel throughout the five chapters.

The basic Christian certainties are:

- The certainty of sins forgiven – 1 John 1:7 - 10.
- The certainty of answered prayer – 1 John 3:21 -22; 5:14 - 15.
- The certainty of eternal life – 1 John 5:11 - 13.
- The certainty of victory over sin and Satan – 1 John 5:18b.
- The certainty of belonging to God – 1 John 5:19.
- The certainty that Christ is God – 1 John 1:1 - 2; 5:20 - 21.

## 2 John

This is a short note reiterating what John said in his first letter. At this point in time John was pleased that under the pressure of these false prophets, Christians were keeping hold of the faith, but as always some had come under their influence and were deceived. Visiting Christian teachers were warmly welcomed by the churches in the offering of both free accommodation and food. The problem was that some of these visitors were false teachers doing a great deal of harm to the Christian church and others were phonies pretending to be true prophets taking advantage of the Christians who gladly offered their hospitality.

2 John warns about false prophets teaching wrong doctrine.

## 3 John

In 3 John the writer has to address the opposite problem – Christians who failed to provide hospitality for genuine teachers.

Three people are involved in the third letter.

1. It was written to a respected local leader, Gaius.
2. Diotrephes held a chief office in the church and eventually resented any direction or correspondence from John. He had refused to welcome some genuine missionaries and was even trying to drive out of the church those who welcomed them.
3. Demetrius (who is thought to have carried the letter) is a highly respected man of integrity.

In summary: first century false teaching was called docetism and was an early form of gnosticism. It clearly undermined and contradicted the gospel of Jesus Christ. The teaching denied:

- the messiahship of Jesus Christ – I John 2:22;
- that Jesus is the Son of God – I John 5:5;
- His humanity – I John 4:2;
- that sin separated a person from God – I John 1:6, 8, 10;
- the need for Jesus' atoning death to provide forgiveness and a way back to God – I John 2:2.

### DEFINITION

Gnosticism: the belief that people could be saved by special knowledge. Gnostics believed all matter was evil so Christ wasn't really human.

## GETTING STARTED

1. Show the clip from the movie *The Little Mermaid* where Ariel shows the 'human' objects she found at the bottom of the sea to her friend Scuttle and asks him what they are. Scuttle picks up the objects and tells Ariel the most ridiculous stories about each one's function, filling Ariel with false knowledge.

This segment is about 8 minutes 45 seconds into the movie and starts with Ariel bringing the objects to Scuttle. It goes for 1 minute 45 seconds and ends with Ariel swimming away. (Adapted from *Group's Blockbuster Movie Illustrations* by Bryan Belknap, Group, 2001.)

Or

2. Have ready three glasses, a blindfold and each of the following:
  - a bottle or can of Coca Cola;
  - a bottle or can of Pepsi;
  - a bottle or can of a no name Cola.

### VIDEO CLIP



### POINT

Finding out that a teacher taught you incorrectly is always a shock. When it comes to Scripture, too many people accept everything a preacher says without testing it against Scripture. We must know God's Word so we don't fall for false teaching. We'll see in this session that John's letters were written because false teaching was creeping into the early church.

## POINT

Stress to the young people that some things in life look good, sound attractive and have an irresistible offer but are not the real thing. What people say or sell is not always the original. It is not until you look past the surface that you find it is a fake.

False teaching had crept into the early church. Christians were being pressured to accept further doctrines and John had to write letters to the churches warning them to reject such ideas. We will look at these letters in this session.



## LEADER TIP

Have the numbers 1 - 6 written up with 'The certainty of ...' beside each number. For each of these certainties have the young people decide what the 'certainty' is from the Scripture passage.

Blindfold a young person who is sure he/she can choose which one is the original Coca Cola. Fill the three glasses with the three different drinks and have a taste test. (TIP: This could be done with three different brands of other popular products, e.g. chocolates or chips.)

Talk about how they decided which one was the genuine one.

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. Background

Using the material in the Insights for the Leader, briefly tell the young people how and why the three letters by John were written.

You may like to allow your seniors to compare John 1:1 - 5 with 1 John 1:1 - 5.

### 2. Christian certainties

People can be very persuasive in presenting false ideas. Sincerity is no guarantee that the truth is being presented. The only way to avoid being misled by false doctrines is to know what the Bible teaches.

People were beginning to teach that Jesus hadn't been a real person at all. John was certain that Jesus' appearance on earth was real – he had personally seen and touched Him, and he also knew that Jesus had actually died. He'd been at the cross and been asked by Jesus to look after His mother.

John knew that if Christ did not become man and die for human sin then there was **no** Christian faith. To cut out this truth, was to cut the heart out of Christianity.

No wonder false teaching upset him! So John put forward the basic certainties of the Christian life.

#### a. The certainty of ... (forgiveness)

Read together 1 John 1:7 - 10.

Have the young people decide how this passage can give us the assurance that our sins are forgiven.

(V.9 says that so long as we confess our sins, God will keep His promise and do what is right. We can be absolutely confident that God keeps His promise.)

One night Martin Luther dreamed that Satan stood at the foot of his bed holding a scroll on which all of his sins were written. All sorts of sins – disobedience, failure to act – it was not a pretty sight. Some he could remember, some he could not.

Satan mockingly asked Luther, 'How can you be a Christian, how can you belong to God when you have done all these wrong things?'

Luther replied, 'Write in red over them all, 'the blood of Jesus, God's Son, purifies us from all sin.''

- What verse was Luther quoting. (1 John 1:7)

Satan and the list of sins disappeared!

This is the 'certainty passage' of knowing our sins are forgiven.

1 John 1:9 is well worth memorising, so we, too, can say 'I know my sins are forgiven.'

- **Discuss**

Once we become Christians, do we stop sinning? (See I John 5:18.)

b. **The certainty of ... (answered prayer)**

Read I John 3:21 - 22 and I John 5:14 - 15.

Have the young people read out the certainties in these passages and list them.

- We can be sure He hears us.
- He hears us at any time.
- He gives us what we ask from Him.
- We can come with courage into God's presence.
- What conditions does God put upon our prayers?
- What we ask for must be in accordance with His will.
- Our conscience must be clear.
- We must obey His commands.
- We must do what pleases Him.

**Discuss** with your group how it is that some prayers don't seem to be answered.

God may not answer prayer when you expect it or how you expect it.

God may choose to answer in three ways; yes, no or not now (wait).

c. **The certainty of ... (eternal life)**

Read I John 5:11 - 13.

What certainties can we find in this passage?

The first statement John makes in this passage is that we can know we have eternal life. One of the purposes for his letter was to emphasise this fact.

There is no reason to go through life wondering whether you have eternal life. You can know for certain, without doubting.

John made this point clear in his gospel as well.

Read the gospel of John 1:12 and consider whether it is teaching this same certainty.

d. **The certainty of ... (victory over sin and Satan)**

Look at I John 5:18, especially the last part.

What certainty is explained here?

It is wonderful to know that Satan cannot harm us when we are God's children.

He can (and does) tempt us, tease us and try to make us feel like failures.

**Discuss** ways we see Satan working in the world today.

The world is dominated by Satan and sin, but as Christians we have power over these things.



1 John 3:4 - 10 explains the difference between the believer and non-believer. Verse 9 says, 'Whoever is a child of God does not continue to sin, for God's very nature is in him; and because God is his Father, he cannot continue to sin.' (GNB) One of the things that happens when we are saved is that sin's power over us is broken. The Christian does not continue in a life of sin, and does not have to live a defeated life.

e. **The certainty of ... (belonging to God)**

Read 1 John 5:19.

**Discuss**

- What should be the differences between a Christian and a non-believer?
- How should other people know that we belong to God?
- Should people know automatically we are Christians?

Christians are different from the world. This verse gives a very personal touch, we are of God.

**Discuss** the part in the Corps Cadet Promise that says: 'I want to develop a lifestyle that is clean in thought, word and action, avoiding all things that would be harmful to my body, mind and spirit.'

f. **The certainty of ... (knowing that Christ is God)**

Read 1 John 1:1 - 2 and 1 John 5:20 - 21.

John had really written this letter because too many people were infiltrating the church trying to prove that Jesus was not divine – or that if He was divine, He could not possibly have become a human being.

In 1 John 1:1 - 2 John calls Jesus the Word, as he had done at the beginning of his gospel.

What certainties does John bring out here about Jesus?

John

- heard Him,
- saw Him and
- even touched Him,

but Jesus

- had been in existence from the very beginning,
- was the Son of God,
- came so we could know what God is like,
- has the power to give us eternal life.

This area of the Christian faith is still denied by various cults that are active today. This is why John stressed the importance of knowing that Christ is the Son of God. When Jesus was alive, some called Him a liar and a deceiver (Matthew 27:63). Others have suggested He was a religious fanatic, a madman or perhaps a Jewish patriot who was sincere but sadly mistaken. The people to whom John was writing had been exposed to a popular false teaching that Jesus was merely a man who had died just like any other man.

But John had seen Him after the resurrection.

### 3. The need for our love and obedience

(Scripture passages I John 1:5 - 7; I John 2:1 - 6; I John 3:11, 14 - 18; I John 4:7, 19 - 21; 5:3.)

- a. Some of the false teachers were saying that our souls were quite separate from our physical life here on earth. They said God was a pure spirit but, as all matter was evil, God had nothing to do with it, so people could lead immoral lives and it did not matter.

John had to point out that people who deliberately went on sinning after they had been saved were not Christians at all. God is light, and He expects His followers to walk in the light of His commands.

Have the group with this passage read it out now. (I John 1:5 - 7)

- b. John reminded the believers and us that we have to try to be more like Christ. We should have no desire to sin – because we want to please God. However, if we do sin, Jesus Himself will plead with the Father on our behalf so that we are forgiven.

The more we know about God, the more we will love Him and want to obey Him.

Have the group with this passage read it out. (I John 2:1 - 6)

- c. The Christian life-style is controlled by love. If we love one another, we will obey all of God's instructions about relationships with other people. But Christian love is more than just words or feelings. It will mean that we care for others, and that caring will be costly. This could involve giving up money, time, possessions and even our lives.

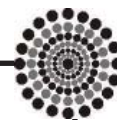
Have the group with this passage read it out. (I John 3:11, 14 - 18)

- d. God is love and He helps us to love others. As we consider how much God loves us, we know we must allow God's love to come through us to them.

We cannot say we love God if we hate another person.

Loving God means we obey His commands.

Have the group with this passage read it out. (I John 4:7, 19 - 21; 5:3)



#### LEADER TIP

If possible divide the young people into four groups. Give each group one of the passages and allow them to read it through. Ask them to listen to the statement you make and to raise their hand if the passage they have confirms the statement. Have a reader from the group stand and read the passage.

## TAKING IT HOME

I John 5:13 tells us why John wrote his letter. 'I am writing this to you so that you may know that you have eternal life – you that believe in the Son of God.' (GNB)

He did not want to see Christians being confused by false teachers.

If we know what we believe and hold on to the certainties set down in the Bible, we can know the difference between what is the true gospel and what is a false gospel. That way we can know our salvation is real.

Pray sentence prayers thanking God for the certainties we have about our Christian faith.

#### FOLLOW-THRU

This session lends itself to a challenge in Reaching out in Service where the young people would be helping those in need. e.g., Help another charity.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALEXANDER, D. and P., *The New Lion Handbook to the Bible*, Lion Publishing, England, 1999.

MACARTHUR John, *Assurance of Victory* I John 5, Moody, USA, 1986.

1. Read these passages and select from two of them the certainties John writes about.

- I John 1:7 - 10
- I John 5:11 - 13
- I John 5:14 - 15, 3:21 - 22
- I John 5:18b
- I John 5:19
- I John 5:20 - 21, 1:1 - 2

A. I can be sure

---

---

---

B. I know for certain that

---

---

---

This makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_ because

---

---



*Sincerely  
John.*

# JUNIOR WORKSHEET

**2.** **Eight ways to test false teachers.** (True or False.)  
(Write true or false according to whether such questions or methods would help you.)

- A. Do they believe that Jesus Christ is Lord? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Pull their beards. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Do they believe in the authority of the Scriptures? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Do they love their fellow-workers? \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Do they teach that sin separates us from God? \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Do they speak with great sincerity? \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Know what the Bible actually says. \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Check they do not speak for more than ten minutes. \_\_\_\_\_

**3.** Find a verse in John's letters that emphasises the importance of loving others if we are true Christians. Write it here.

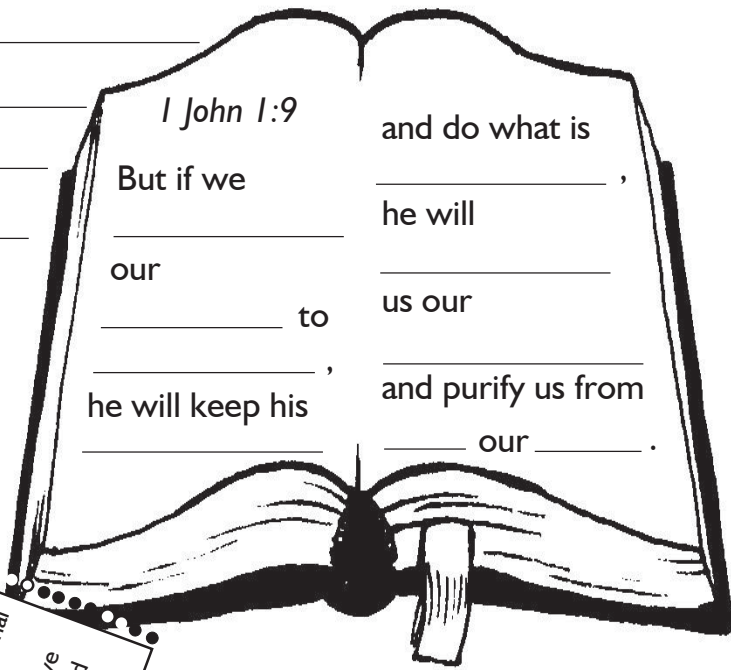
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4.** Memorise I John 1:9 as you write it into the Bible.



**HIGHLIGHTS**

- John wrote to the churches to remind them that we must live in fellowship with each other.
- He told us that we can be forgiven and we have eternal life.
- He reminded us that we must love one another and keep God's commands.

A recurring theme in John's letters is that we should love one another.

**2. Eight ways to test false teachers. (True or False.)**

(Write true or false according to whether such questions or methods would help you.)

- A. Do they believe that Jesus Christ is Lord? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Pull their beards. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Do they believe in the authority of the Scriptures? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Do they love their fellow-workers? \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Do they teach that sin separates us from God? \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Do they speak with great sincerity? \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Know what the Bible actually says. \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Check they do not speak for more than ten minutes. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. a.** Find a verse in John's letters that emphasises the importance of loving others if we are true Christians. Write it here.

---

---

---

**b.** Write another verse that emphasises the need to obey God.

---

---

---

---

*Memorise one of them.*



Love is self-giving not self-seeking.



# FAITH IN ACTION

## AIM

To help the young people realise that the letter of James emphasises the importance of doing as well as believing for growing Christians.

## OBJECTIVES

As a result of this study of the letter of James the young people will learn:

- ❖ how to react in tough times;
- ❖ why rich and poor are treated equally;
- ❖ about the damage a tongue can do;
- ❖ how our faith can be shown through our actions;
- ❖ that we should apply these teachings to our daily lives if we want to grow as Christians.

## INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

It will be helpful if you sit and read the letter of James in one reading. Unlike many epistles that were written to specific churches addressing particular problems, the letter from James was written as practical instruction to established Christians, 'scattered over the whole world'.

In the introduction to the letter of James in *The Message Bible*, Eugene Peterson says:

'When Christian believers gather in churches, everything that can go wrong sooner or later does. Outsiders, on observing this, conclude that there is nothing to the religion business except, perhaps, business – and dishonest business at that. Insiders see it differently. Just as a hospital collects the sick under one roof and labels them as such, the church collects sinners. Many of the people outside the hospital are every bit as sick as the ones inside, but their illnesses are either undiagnosed or disguised. It's similar with sinners outside the church.

So Christian churches are not, as a rule, model communities of good behavior. They are rather, places where human misbehavior is brought out in the open, faced, and dealt with.

## SESSION 6

### FROM THE BIBLE

The letter of James.

### CHECKLIST

It will not be possible to cover in depth all the material in this session on James. You will need to select those approaches, or parts of each approach that will be of most benefit to your group.

There are two Getting Started activities. For Getting Started 1 try to use the video camera suggestion and have it set up in a different room to record the responses from each young person.

If you select Getting Started 2, you will need to make sufficient copies of a map for each pair in your group to have one. Do not spend too long on this activity.

There are four teaching approaches, each one dealing with a different passage from James.

Approach 1 – James' advice on how to react in trials.

Approach 2 – James' advice on treating all people equally.

Approach 3 – James' advice on the damage the tongue can do.

Approach 4 – James' advice on how to show that our faith is active.

Activities 1, 2 and 3 on the work sheet tie in with approach 3.

Activity 4 allows the young people to show what they have learned in approach 1 and activity 5 asks for the young people to find out about the 'good works' done in the corps. It would help if you are aware of the various avenues of service carried out in your corps so you can help with this.

The letter of James shows one of the church's early pastors skillfully going about his work of confronting, diagnosing, and dealing with areas of misbelief and misbehavior that had turned up in congregations committed to his care. Deep and living wisdom is on display here, wisdom both rare and essential. Wisdom is not primarily knowing the truth, although it certainly includes that; it is skill in living. For, what good is a truth if we don't know how to live it? What good is an intention if we can't sustain it?

According to church traditions, James carried the nickname 'Old Camel Knees' because of thick calluses built up on his knees from many years of determined prayer. The prayer is foundational to the wisdom. Prayer is *always* foundational to wisdom.' (p.2201)

James is full of sound advice to those who are established on the Christian path. Having made Christians look clearly at themselves, their own maturity and their personal relationship with God, James goes on to talk about our relationship with others.

James calls us, for example, to care for orphans and widows (1:27), to be impartial in our courtesy and care of others (2:1); he emphasises the duty of love for our neighbour (2:8), speaking of it as the 'royal law'; he scorns a profession of faith which fails in love and compassion (2:15 - 16) and applauds the life that risks itself for the sake of those who are at risk (2:25); he warns against feelings which threaten fellowship (3:14) and words which put others down (4:11); we are to discharge our honourable debts (5:4), guard our reactions (5:9), help the sick (5:14), share with the distressed (5:16) and urgently pursue those who stray from Christ (5:19 - 20).

### **Who was James?**

There are five people listed by this name in the New Testament.

Consider the 'James' mentioned in the following references:

- i. Acts 12:2. James the son of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman, brother of John and executed by Herod Agrippa.
- ii. Matthew 10:3. James the son of Alphaeus.
- iii. Matthew 27:56. James, the son of Mary.
- iv. Luke 6:16. James, the father of an apostle named Judas.
- v. Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3. James, the Lord's brother, who was prominent in the leadership of the church at Jerusalem (see Acts 15:13, 21:18).

It is this James, the Lord's brother, who is considered to be the likely author of the epistle bearing his name.

### **When did James write his letter?**

If the author was James, the Lord's brother, then the letter must have been written in the period AD 50 to AD 65. Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, records that James died a martyr's death in AD 62. So then, we can be reasonably safe in assuming that the letter was in circulation in the Early Church in the 60's of the first century.

### **Who were the recipients of the letter?**

James 1:1 says, 'From James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Greetings to all God's people scattered over the whole world.' This then, is a circular letter directed to both Jewish and Gentile Christians. His

readers could be living in both rural and urban areas of the Empire. His letter was not addressed to one specific congregation, as Paul's letters generally were.

The letter also indicates that some of the readers were quite poor and being oppressed by the rich, either within the congregation or the society where they lived. (See James 1:9 - 11; 2:2 - 9.)

It is impossible to handle all the subjects James addresses in one session. Some have been dealt with in other sessions, so the topics discussed in this session will be those set out in the objectives. You will need to decide which ones are most suitable for your group and treat them first.

## GETTING STARTED

### 1. Video gossip

Set up a video camera in a separate room to record each young person making a statement. The statement will be what was whispered to them by the previous participant. The statement is whispered only once, and the person on camera must attempt to repeat what he/she heard. This is just like sharing gossip in a circle, only you get to see how the message deteriorates with each person. There will be a drastic change from the original message to the final one, illustrating the point.

If you don't have a video camera, play the game in a circle with each person simply whispering to the next.

Sample message: Henry Barfinsnickel, with flaming sword in hand, soundly defeated the Great Fugi monster atop Mount Carmel before receiving his much-deserved dessert: a hot fudge sundae. (Taken from EGAD ideas website. 'Just give it up' – a complete meeting guide.)

Or


- Place your young people in pairs. Enlarge a page of a street directory map and make a copy for each pair. Mark on it two spots, A and B. Explain that you want them to work out the most direct route from A to B. As they begin to plan, point out different obstacles in the way. e.g. there is no right turn into \_\_\_\_\_ Street. (This should be one of the streets they would have to choose.) There is a bad accident blocking the intersection of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Streets. \_\_\_\_\_ Road is under repair. (It doesn't matter if this makes the way so difficult that they never actually get to point B.)

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. James' advice for tough times

Read together James 1:2 - 8, 12, 5:7 - 11 and discuss what James is saying.


- Notice that James says, 'Consider yourselves fortunate WHEN all kinds of trials come your way.' Why did he not use the word 'if'? (He expected that Christians WOULD face trials – not that everything would be easy, simply because we are serving God.)
- What good things does James say will come out of facing tough times?  
(We will find that our faith has grown.)



**POINT**


Isn't it amazing how the message deteriorated? Why? Could you believe how drastic the change was from the original message to the final result?

This is a fun activity, but we can see how easy it is to change the message. James gives us lots of good advice concerning controlling ourselves, our tongue included and that is what we will be thinking about in this session.



**POINT**

It's not enough to have a map to be able to move quickly from one place to another. We need some practical help with the fine, but important details. Life is like that. We know our starting point was accepting Jesus as our Saviour and that we are on our way to heaven. How to travel the road in a positive way that will bring happiness to ourselves, as well as others, is what James wrote about in his letter to Christians all over the world.

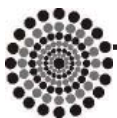


**LEADER TIP**

Each of these questions could easily become a session in itself. Move on once a simple answer, such as the one in the brackets, has been worked out.



- Can we know how strong our faith is, if it has never been tested?  
(A test really shows whether our faith is strong enough to last. Remember Peter who was sure his faith would stand the test.)
- Does God allow bad things to happen to good people, or do they happen simply because we are part of the world in which we live?  
(God only gives us good gifts but He can make good come out of evil if we allow Him to use the situation.)
- Why is it important to have the ability to endure?  
Read v.12. (Keeping on is essential if we are to be faithful to the end and so receive eternal life.)
- What good things happen to our character as we learn to endure?  
(v.4 – it will develop.)  
When v.5 talks about lacking wisdom, it is referring to spiritual maturity. So when tough times hit us, we will feel that we lack wisdom in handling them and we need God's help. Should we talk such trials over with our peers or with older people?
- How does v.5 tell us that God will respond to our prayer?  
(He will give us the wisdom we need to face the tough time and He will give it graciously and generously.)  
This does not mean that God will take the trial away. One of the biggest problems in our society is that we have been taught that we shouldn't have to face problems. We have all kinds of things (medication, therapies, entertainment and so on) to make us feel better or help us forget. But James is telling us to hang in there, to face the trials believing that God will give us the strength that we need and we will find that eventually we will come out of the trial wiser, better Christians.
- Do you know any Christians whose lives have proved the truth of these verses?
- Why is patience needed if we want to maintain our faith?  
(Re-read James 5:7 - 11.)



## LEADER TIP

Choose from these questions ones that will help your group to discuss the passage.

## 2. Treating people with courtesy

Read and discuss James 2:1 - 9.

- Does what James describes in this passage still occur? Does it happen in your corps?  
(Briefly tell this story from the book *The Old Corps*.)  
One Sunday evening a wealthy, genteel lady came to kneel at the mercy seat in an early day Army meeting. An unkempt, smelly drunk came forward and went to kneel beside her. The officer hurried to move him along away from the lady but she looked up with tears in her eyes and said, 'Leave him, Captain, we are both seeking the same Saviour.'
- Is everyone of equal value in God's sight?  
(The Bible has a great deal to say about the value of poor people to God. God hates the way wealthy people exploit the poor and He constantly used prophets to denounce such behaviour. Deuteronomy 10: 17 - 18.)

- What gifts does God give to the poor? (v.5)
- Who did James say it was that dragged the people off to court?  
James is saying to us, 'Don't be sucked in by the outward appearance of people. God can see the attitudes in the heart.' We are commanded as a community of believers to treat rich and poor as equals. When the rich members of the group also treat the poor in their group with courtesy and respect, then God blesses that group.

### 3. Damage that the tongue can do

Read James 3:1 - 12.

The tongue is one of the greatest gifts God has given to people. To be able to communicate our thoughts and ideas to others is a great blessing. James, however, reminds us that our speech must always be controlled. No matter how sorry we are for words said in the heat of the moment, we cannot grab them back. Letting our anger or jealousy cause us to say things that hurt others can have no part in the Christian's life.

- What are the six word pictures James uses to describe the tongue?  
[A bit (v.3); a rudder (v.4); a fire (v.5 - 6); a wild, uncontrolled animal (v.7 - 8); fountains of water (v.10 - 11); a fruit tree (v.12).]
- Is the tendency to use the tongue in a hurtful way pleasing to God? Which verse supports your answer? (v.6, 10)
- What does James say about a tongue that is used to praise God? (v.9 - 10)
- When James likens the tongue to a fruit tree, what does he want us to remember? (v.12)
- Read James 1:19 - 20.  
What does James say we should be quick to do?
- Why is it hard to be a good listener? Consider your reactions when you are with a group of people.
- What does James say we should be slow to do? What do you think he means by this? Complete activity 2 on the work sheet.

### 4. Showing our faith in a positive way

Read together James 2:14 - 20, 26.

James is not saying that we are saved by doing good works. He is talking about Christians who have already been saved by faith. What he is saying is that such people must show evidence in their lives that they are growing to be more like Christ by the works and fruits produced in their lives. James is reminding us that faith must be expressed in Christian love and service, or there is no faith at all.

#### Discuss

When Christians know people are in need, what should they do? (v.15 - 16)

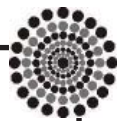
- What reply does James have for people who say, 'But I believe in God?' (v.19)
- Is it harder to say, 'I love you' or to demonstrate it by our actions? Should we do both?
- How do Salvationists try to show faith in action?



#### LEADER TIP

Discuss each word picture as it is found and consider how effective it is.

If you used Getting Started 1, remind the young people how quickly and easily the message was changed.



#### LEADER TIP

Activities 1, 2 and 3 on the work sheet tie in with this approach.

- How do you?
- If our faith is not shown in acts of service, what are we spiritually? (v.26)

## **TAKING IT HOME**

---

James reminds us that God expects us to keep on growing in our knowledge of Him and in our care and compassion for one another. Challenge your young people to read the letter of James right through in the coming week.

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

This session would have an excellent follow through if you joined together as a group to do a few hours work for someone in need. Reaching out in service has several challenges that could be used – caring for others; helping at a community welfare centre; doing an unexpected favour for someone.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

TASKER, R.V.G., *James*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, InterVarsity Press, 1974.

LE PEAU, A.T. and P.J., *James – Faith That Works*, Scripture Union, 1988.

CLARKE, D., *It's Character that Counts*, The Salvation Army, 1989.

MOTYER, J.A., *The Message of James*, InterVarsity Press, 1985.

# FAITH IN



Read James 1:19 - 20.

James says that we must be \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

How do you react in a group? Use a tick or a cross.

- i.  I listen with interest to what others are saying.
- ii.  I listen for a while then go off into thinking my own  thoughts about the subject.
- iii.  don't bother to listen to some people's opinions.
- iv.  wait impatiently for the person speaking to finish  so I can make another comment.

Goodness is love with its sleeves rolled up.



Rate your speech pattern. Circle the correct response for you.

My speech is often out of control.	Always	Sometimes	Never
I express my anger often.	Always	Sometimes	Never
I can ask for forgiveness without hesitation.	Always	Sometimes	Never
I find it easy to praise and thank others.	Always	Sometimes	Never
I can say "sorry" when I have to.	Always	Sometimes	Never
People can count on me to keep my word.	Always	Sometimes	Never
I blurt out words I'm ashamed of later.	Always	Sometimes	Never
When people push me into a corner, I lash out.	Always	Sometimes	Never
My language at home or the Army is the same as it is with my friends.	Always	Sometimes	Never

Now underline the responses that Christians should have and decide whether you need to pray about your speech.

He also says we should be \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Discuss with your group then tick the ones you agree on.

Does being slow to speak mean:

- i.  I must think carefully before I open my mouth.
- ii.  I must remember not to offer a judgemental opinion.
- iii.  I must be aware that there are two sides to every argument.
- iv.  I must remember that my opinion is not necessarily the truth and so be slow to offer a hurtful criticism.



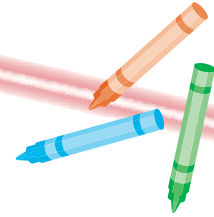
No one can read the Bible thoughtfully without either hating it or hating sin.

# ACTION

**4**

Think of a friend who is going through hard times at the moment. Compose an encouraging note to them based on what you have learned from James 2:1 - 8.

Many of us would do well to wait and listen more and speak less.



*Hang in there!*

Some people seem to suffer badly from verbal diarrhoea.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- The letter James wrote is a letter filled with good advice for Christians.
- Christians must learn how to hold on when things get tough.
- The tongue can do damage that can never be repaired.
- Our faith can be shown in the way we serve others.

*God loves you!*

Find out about the good works done regularly at your corps.

List them here:

---



---



---



---



---

**5**





# REVEALING REVELATION

## SESSION 7

### AIM

To help the young people begin to understand the different methods of interpreting the Revelation to John.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ learn the different methods of interpretation;
- ❖ understand some of the symbols used;
- ❖ realise that an underlying message of hope and victory for Christians runs through the book.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This is one of two sessions where the Revelation to John is studied. We recognise that it is impossible to study all of the Revelation in only two sessions, but feel it is important to include some sort of session on it as our young people are interested in 'end times'. They will also encounter conversations with friends, books and films about the topics included so we want to ensure they are properly informed.

In this session they will be given a quick look at the methods of interpreting this book. (The age of your group will determine how you use this material.)

Then there is an explanation of the common terms the young people may well hear when 'Last Things' are being discussed, as well as the imagery used in describing heaven.

In the following session (8:8) the warnings and judgment given to the seven churches are studied.

Read both sessions so that you know what material will be in the following session.

It is important that you are familiar with the basic themes of Revelation. Read through the chapters that will be used in the study.

Revelation has to do with the end time: what is to come, the certain defeat of Satan and the triumphant return of Christ.

There are many books available on the 'end times' and care should be taken when choosing what to read. Many present only one point of view and do not give a complete or overall picture. You will find that the books listed in the bibliography give either a balanced interpretation or declare what method of interpretation they are using.

### FROM THE BIBLE

Selected passages from Revelation.

### CHECKLIST

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. For Getting Started 1 you will need pen and paper for each young person. A calculator might be useful for the leader.

Getting Started 2 requires a list of six book titles.

There are three teaching approaches. It will be important to watch your timing so that you cover the basic ideas in each approach.

Approach 1 may be a little difficult for the juniors, but by involving them with the activity on the work sheet it should be possible for them to grasp the basic idea. Emphasise the Army's viewpoint on interpretation.

In approach 2 four commonly used terms to do with the Second Coming are studied. Try not to get bogged down in discussions of movies that use these terms but are not Bible based, instead, keep showing your group what the Bible does say. Activity 2 ties into looking at the term 'antichrist' and activity 3 is used with the study of the mark of the beast.

Approach 3 looks at John's vision of heaven and why he uses word pictures to describe heaven.

The lesson may seem daunting but remember the objectives of the session and watch your timing.

In looking at books on the Revelation, browse through the introduction and read the writer's comments on methods of interpretation. This will enable you to discern if the book is 'extreme'.

Always keep in mind the instruction of William Booth not to put the letter over the spirit, i.e. don't take it so literally that you ignore what God is saying.

It would be helpful to read one of these books to help in your overall understanding of Revelation and of those areas not dealt with in either of these sessions.

### **Background**

The early tradition of the Church and subsequent research places the writing of the Revelation to John during the time of the Roman Emperor Domitian, i.e., somewhere around AD 81 - 95.

At this time Emperor worship was expanding and there was an increasing requirement for people to recognise publicly the Emperor by calling him the 'Lord our God' or to declare 'Caesar is Lord'. After the acknowledgement of the Emperor's divinity, the person could then go and worship whatever god or goddess he/she liked.

Those who refused the declaration were classed as 'enemies of the state' and treated accordingly.

The Jews as a body would not observe any form of Emperor worship, and they were granted a special exemption. The Christians, of course, would refuse to acknowledge Caesar as Lord. For them there was only one worthy of worship (Isaiah 44:6). For a time they were classed as Jews and received the same exemption, but as more Gentiles became Christians, they were seen to be a different sect and they lost this protection.

In Asia Minor (location of the seven Churches) the crisis was most intense. Here where the Christian Church was strong, temples and a special priesthood devoted to Emperor worship were instituted, and here the new commands were vigorously enforced by the civil authorities.

For individual Christians this now became a time of crisis. They must either publicly deny their Lord or suffer for their faith, which for some meant death.

It would appear that John, like other Christians of his day had proclaimed the truth that revealed Jesus Christ (1:9) and as a result he was exiled to the Island of Patmos some 37 kilometres from Ephesus.

'The revelation of Jesus Christ' (1:1) was given to the apostle John while he was in exile.

### **Purpose**

Revelation was written to meet real needs of real people. It was written to help Christians who were suffering persecution understand that:

- God was in control of events;
- they were safe in His hands;
- the victory of Christ was assured.

It was a message of encouragement and hope in very dark days.

Michael Wilcock suggests the message of Revelation is twofold:

'It brought encouragement, in the true apocalyptic manner, to Christians who were under great pressure, assuring them that their enemies would in the end be destroyed and God would be triumphant. On the other hand, in the style not of apocalyptic but of prophecy, it challenged them to combat even within themselves the subtle forces of evil, for Satan must be overcome and Christ given his rightful place here and now in their own spiritual and moral lives.' (*The Message of Revelation*, The Bible Speaks Today, InterVarsity Press)

Its message is still applicable today and although many people put Revelation in the 'too hard basket', it is worth taking the time to read and to be encouraged by its message.

In reading this book we should remember that the symbolism was understood by the first century Christians. We shouldn't be looking for deep meaning of the symbols for our generation, although they may still be relevant today.

John is like an impressionist artist, rather than a photographer. As such we will not be able to successfully program the exact series of events leading to the end of the world, but we have an impression of the decline.

Revelation is not a book to be frightened from, it is a book to be encouraged from. It is not a book to feel defeated about, rather it is a book that speaks of the victory of Jesus Christ and our victory in Him.

It is not an easy book, but it is not an impossible book. You may not understand all the symbols, but you stand in good company, and you can understand and teach the message of God's victory.

As you read and teach Revelation be encouraged from William Booth's exhortation that the message is far more important than its imagery.

## GETTING STARTED

---

### I. You can do anything with numbers

Ask the young people to write down a number between 1 and 99, but not tell you. Tell the group that you can find out the number they have thought of.

Have the group follow your instructions and at the end you will be able to tell them their age and the number they first thought of.

Write down your age.

Double it and write down the answer.

Add 5.

Multiply the total by 100. (Add on two noughts.)

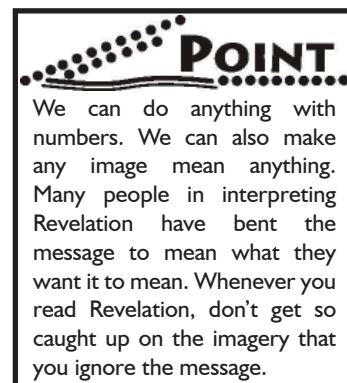
Divide the total by 2.

Deduct the number of days in the year (365).

Add the number you first thought of.

Ask each young person their total.

You then add 115 without telling them, and the two figures on the left will give you their age and the two figures on the right will give you the number they first thought of!





**POINT**

Revelation presents truths symbolically, and sometimes these symbols are difficult to understand resulting in differing interpretations. However, this book has a clear message that God is in control, Jesus reigns supreme and He is coming again. We are going to look at its message in this session.

Or

2. **Can you judge a book by its title?**

From your own knowledge, choose about six book titles and have the young people guess what type of book it is. Try to include fiction, non-fiction, biography, thriller, mystery, romance, science fiction.

Then name six books from the Bible and see if the young people can put them into their correct category.

e.g., Luke – gospel, biography.

Colossians – letter of advice.

Hosea –prophecy.

Leviticus – law.

Psalms – devotional poetry

I Kings – history.

Different books have different styles of writing. In the Bible there are books of history, romance, poems, biography, letters, and books of prophecy.

## GOING DEEPER

1. **Ways of interpreting the book of Revelation**

Each book of the Bible has a particular style. Revelation is known as ‘apocalyptic’.

Apocalyptic literature uses many symbols, colours and parables. These seem confusing to us, but were quite easily understood by the early Christians. Persecution had begun and so secrecy was important in messages sent to them.

Numbers had a special meaning – especially the number 7 and multiples of 12. Unfortunately, the key to the meaning of many of these numbers has largely been lost.

The book is a pastoral letter to the churches, but it is also a drama of divine judgment and victory.

**There are four main ways that people interpret the book of Revelation**

a. **Written for the day** (The Preterist view)

One group of people believe that Revelation was written specifically to encourage the persecuted and suffering Christians of the first century and only they could understand all the imagery used by John.

Preterists believe that Revelation holds little or no relevance for us today.

b. **Timetable** (Historical)

Another group believe that Revelation presents a timetable from John’s writing in the first century until the return of Christ.

It predicts all of human history. The symbols relate to people and events throughout history, but describing only the events concerning Western Europe.

**DEFINITION**

Apocalyptic: the revealing of something hidden.



**LEADER TIP**

Present this teaching with the use of the work sheets. As you read the description, the young people should match the method of interpretation with its explanation in activity 1.

Find the statements on the work sheet that fit each viewpoint as you come to them.

An historical approach encourages us to see that the whole of history is under the control of God, but it means the early Christians, for whom Revelation was written, would get little comfort out of the letter, and they would not have been able to follow or understand most of the letter.

A problem of this view is that because the symbols only make sense in hindsight, you have to keep re-interpreting the symbols to keep pace with the changes in the world.

c. **In the future** (Futurist)

Other groups believe the book deals only with what will happen at the end of the world, i.e. the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the final defeat of Satan, judgment of mankind, punishment of the wicked, eternal life for the believers.

As the book relates only to the future, Revelation therefore has no relevance for any generation excepting the last. For everyone else it is merely a forecast of what will happen in the last days.

d. **Ideals and principles** (Idealist)

The last group believe that Revelation symbolises the conflict between God and evil.

There is no relevance to history, places or time. The book speaks in a poetic form, showing the way that God acts throughout human history.

e. **What view does the Army take?**

*Salvation Story* says: 'The Salvation Army has avoided speculation about details of the return of Christ. Salvationists prefer to emphasise the Christian responsibility to live in a state of expectation and hope. We should be constantly open to the presence and judgement of God in Christ, and fully involved in the mission of God for the salvation of the world.' (p. 122)

- In view of the differing ways of interpreting Revelation, why is this a good stand to have?

(It's important to be ready for Christ's return so it's good and wise to live so we are ready – no matter what.)

2. **Making sense of some symbols**

The young people may have heard or read some names or terms in relation to the Second Coming or Revelation. This approach deals with four terms giving Scripture references and an explanation.

a. **'The antichrist'**

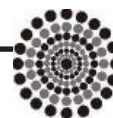
It is generally accepted that in the last days there will be an increase in evil and sometimes this is linked with an individual who may be called the antichrist, or the beast.

The antichrist is exactly what it sounds like, 'anti' meaning opposite, against or hostile to, Jesus Christ. He is closely linked to Satan.

What does John actually say about the antichrist in the world?

Read chapter 13:1 - 10.

v.1 - 2 The beast is associated with the leadership of a nation. (It wore crowns.)



**LEADER TIP**

You may need to select which terms you will study with your group.

v.3 Signs were given that encouraged people to follow the antichrist. (Notice that signs and miracles can come from Satan and so fool people.)

v.4 Worship is given to Satan and the antichrist. 'Who is like the beast?' is a direct contrast with the Old Testament question, 'Who is like God?'. (Read Exodus 15:11.)

v.4 - 10 Before the end there will be a Satanist power in conflict and fighting against the Church.

**The antichrist in contrast**

Have the young people find the following verses and then compare and contrast the work of Christ with the misleading antichrist.



**LEADER TIP**

This is activity 2 on the work sheet.

Christ	Antichrist	
19:16	13:1	They both had a name written upon them, but what a contrast in the names!
1:5b - 6	13:4	Christ brings people to God but the beast leads them to Satan.
1:5	13:3	Christ – resurrected from the dead. Beast – fatal wound but lives.
7:3	13:16	There is a seal of God as well as a seal or mark of the beast.
19:11, 19 - 21	19:19 - 21	Christ is victorious against all opposition and finally the beast is defeated by Christ.
22:1 - 5	20:10	Christ reigns forever but the beast suffers forever.

As Jesus Christ and the antichrist are opposites, so their future, and the future of their followers are at two extremes.

Jesus Christ leads to God, victory and eternal life.

The antichrist leads to Satan, defeat and eternal death.

b. **'The mark of the beast'** (Chapter 13:16 -18)

This can be either the sign of the beast (antichrist) himself, or the number can be used to identify those who have accepted and follow 'the beast'.

The number is most commonly believed to be 666, although recent studies suggest it should be 616.

The mark is placed upon the forehead or the hand and the mark must be used to buy or sell, but you can only get the mark by acknowledging the 'beast' is in control.

The first century Christians would understand this symbolism to have referred to emperor worship where only those who have worshipped Caesar could purchase or sell goods.

Some people today 'see' the mark of the beast as our cashless society.

In the ancient world of both Greek and Hebrew, letters of the alphabet were used for numbers. Throughout history it has been suggested that different people or institutions have had this mark of the beast and are therefore evil.

Be warned! Don't see a devil in every number.

God's number is generally accepted as 7, the number of perfection and the devil's number is considered to be 6. Satan continues to try and present himself as God, but he is not God. As much as he tries, he always falls short of the perfection of God.

Using different numerical codes most people can have the number 6 or 666 applied to their name, e.g., Nero, Hitler, Kissinger, Billy Graham and many Popes have all been shown to have the 'devil's number'.

Try this exercise with the young people to show them how it is possible to make almost any name fit the number of the beast.

Using this simple code, record the numbers for the word 'young people'.

a=1, b=2, c=3, d=4, etc.

Add together all the numbers that are not multiples of 5 in the word 'young'. (21, 14, 7 = 42)

Add these two numbers together (4 + 2 = 6).

Add together all the non multiples of 3 in the word 'people'. (16, 5, 16, 5 = 42)

Add these two numbers together (4 + 2 = 6).

Count the consonants in 'young people'. (6)

Does that make young people evil because the answers are 666?

Don't try to read into numbers more than is there!

c. **Millennium – the thousand year reign**

Millennium means: a thousand years. It refers to the time of the reign of Christ and the saints over the earth.

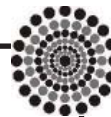
There has been great discussion and dispute over what happens here.

Read together Revelation 20:1 - 12.

Be ready to list the events as the young people find them

The main events recorded in chapter 20:

- i. Who in v.2 was defeated (or captured)? (Satan was defeated.)
- ii. How long was he held in captivity – v.2? (He was bound for 1000 years.)
- iii. Who was raised in the first resurrection – v.4 - 5? (Those who had been beheaded for proclaiming the gospel and refusing the mark of the beast.)
- iv. What did they do in the millennium – v.4? (They ruled as kings with Christ.)
- v. What was Satan's final rebellion – v.7 - 9? (He led a huge army against God's people.)
- vi. How was Satan finally defeated – v.9 - 10? (Fire came from heaven and destroyed them and the devil was thrown back into the burning lake.)



**LEADER TIP**

To save time you may like to prepare the code for display before the session. This is activity 3 on the work sheet.

vii. What great event then took place – v.12? (The dead were judged according to their works.)

- What in these writings would have encouraged first century suffering or persecuted Christians?  
(Satan is defeated, Christ comes again, victory for believers.)
- Are these truths still relevant for us today? (Yes, we know that ultimately Christ will come and believers will be victorious.)

d. **Armageddon** (Chapter 16:16)

Armageddon is mentioned only once in the Bible. It is during the last series of plagues upon the world when the army from the nations of the world gather for war at Armageddon.

Armageddon is a valley which Napoleon called 'the most natural battlefield of the whole earth'.

The basis of the word goes back to the word 'Megiddo' which means 'place of troops' or 'place of slaughter'.

Therefore, Armageddon is both a place and a war.

Armageddon will be 'The battle of all battles'. (See 19:19, 20:7 - 9.) It will be the final battle between God and evil.

There were some who said that the Kuwait invasion and subsequent war between Iraq and most of the countries forming the United Nations in 1990 - 91 was going to be the Armageddon. (Iraq's leader called it 'the mother of all battles'.) They were proved wrong.

When both World War I and World War II began, there were those who believed that these wars would prove to be Armageddon. They also were wrong. Some say World War III will definitely be it.

The fact is that nobody knows for certain. However, the Bible is clear that Armageddon is the final conflict or battle between good and evil.

The message of Armageddon for us who believe is that no matter how strong the enemy may seem, no matter how weak God's people appear, God will triumph and win the victory. God will resoundingly overcome evil.

- Do the young people know of any other time when the enemy appeared strong but God's supposedly weak people have triumphed? (Encourage them to think of both Bible and personal examples.)

3. **John's vision of heaven**

Not only was John an exile on the island of Patmos, he was also a very old man. It was no wonder that his thoughts were turned to heaven and what it would be like.

It's very difficult to describe 'snow' to a person living near the equator. It's just as difficult to describe 'heaven' in language that has no words to describe it – so we have to use symbols.

Often we use symbols to represent a country. People become familiar with the symbol and quickly associate it with the right country.

Ask the young people:

- what does the kangaroo symbolise? (Australia)
- what does the eagle symbolise? (America)
- what does the kiwi symbolise? (New Zealand)
- what does the lion symbolise? (England)

No term or description we could ever think of would be able to describe heaven properly, so John used symbols. Some we may understand, some we can't.

Chapter 4 is a doorway into heaven. As we read this chapter we will be able to get a preview of what heaven will be like.

From chapter 4 read the verses listed below:

The young people may like to give their ideas on the meaning of the following symbols found in this chapter.

- Stones (v.3).  
(Precious, expensive stones give flashes of light which may represent that John could not look directly at God because of His brilliance.)
- Rainbow (v.3).  
(God's expression of love to Noah was sealed by a rainbow. A symbol of the end of punishment. A rainbow around God may mean that His promise or covenant of love is eternal.)
- Emerald (v.3).  
(Its colour is green and green meant forgiveness and mercy.)
- Sea of glass, clear as crystal (v.6).  
(Clear, pure, holiness.)
- Throne (v.9).  
(Kingship, authority.)
- 24 elders around God (v.10).  
(Possibly the 12 patriarchs of the Old Testament and the 12 apostles of the New now united together.)
- The living creatures (v.6 - 7).  
(The living creatures represent all creation praising and worshipping God.)

See if the young people can work out what the four living creatures symbolise.

<u>Image</u>		<u>Represents</u>
Lion	wild	
Ox/bull		domestic
Man		humankind
Birds/eagle		birds of the air

(So the whole of creation is shown in the living creatures.)

**Discuss:**

- What is the main theme of chapter four? (Worship.)
- Who is involved in worshipping God? (All things created.)
- What sort of image of God do you get from this chapter?

Read together verse 11 as a reminder of our responsibility to worship God.

# TAKING IT HOME

---

We will never understand Revelation completely but its message is that this world is a battlefield between good and evil. We are involved in that battle and we will ultimately share the results of either defeat or victory if we have Jesus as Lord of our life. It challenges us to keep on trusting in God when times are tough because in the end God is always the winner.

## FOLLOW-THRU

---

This session should lead your group to consider how sincerely they join in worship. The challenge in the Get Involved and Grow in Worship to worship regularly could be discussed here.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

BARCLAY, William, *The Daily Study Bible, The Revelation of John*, Volume 1 & 2, The Saint Andrew Press, 1976.

GUTHRIE, Donald, *The Relevance of the Apocalypse*, The Paternoster Press.

Morris, Leon, *The Revelation of St. John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Inter-Varsity Press, 1983.

TENNEY, Merrill C., *Interpreting Revelation*, Eerdmans, Michigan.

WIERSBE, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Volume 2, Victor Books, 1989.

WILCOCK, Michael, *The Message of Revelation*, The Bible Speaks Today, Inter-Varsity Press, 1975.

*Salvation Story*, MPG Books, 1998.

GREGG, Steve (editor), *Revelation: Four Views, A Parallel Commentary*, Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1997.

LADD, George Eldon, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1972,

# ONE

There are four ways of interpreting the book.

Write these statements in the correct boxes.

**THE PRETERIST**

**HISTORICAL**

**FUTURIST**

**IDEALIST**

# A timetable of human history until Christ returns.

# A description of events at the end of the world.

# Symbolic portrayal of the conflict between good and evil.

# Written only for the day.

# Has no relevance to history, places or time.

# Only has value for the last generation.

# As changes occur in the world - reinterpretation is necessary.

'Salvation Story' reminds us that we should not speculate about Christ's return. Instead we should give our attention to living correctly i.e.

- a) knowing that one day Christ will triumph;
- b) living to please Him;
- c) ready for when Christ will return

# REVEALING REVELATION



**TWO**

The winner is:

\_\_\_\_\_



**CHRIST**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

People bear the 'mark' of the world or the 'seal' of God and it shows.



**THE ANTICHRIST**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**THREE**

Be careful about reading numbers into people's names. You can take numbers and use them to reach very false conclusions. Look at this example.

Use the Code: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4 etc., write down the number for

**Y O U N G P E O P L E**

— — — — — — — — — —

Add together all the non-multiples of 5 in the word 'Young' \_\_\_ Add together \_\_\_

Add together all the non-multiples of 3 in the word 'People' \_\_\_ Add these together \_\_\_

Now count how many consonants are in 'young people.' \_\_\_

John was an old man living on an island in exile when he wrote Revelation.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- John wrote Revelation to comfort and encourage Christians who are suffering persecution.
- He used symbols to hide the truth from local authorities.
- There is a glorious and wonderful future for faithful believers.
- Christ is the Lord of history and He is coming again to see that justice is carried out.

**OH NO!**  
**THE MARK OF THE BEAST**



# THE END IS NEAR

## AIM

---

Through a brief study of the Revelation to John the young people will be made aware of God's purpose for humanity and our need to remain faithful.

## OBJECTIVES

---

As a result of this session the young people will understand:

- ❖ that God is always in control;
- ❖ that Jesus will judge the church as well as the world;
- ❖ the need to maintain a healthy relationship with Christ.

## INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

---

You do not need to do session 7 'Revealing Revelation' first, but you will need to read the Insights for the Leader in that session so that you have the background information required for this session.

Revelation shows us a God who is interested in His people and in their struggle against evil – assuring them of final victory.

Revelation gives us hope. We need to know that God is in control of history. Events are moving to a glorious climax for the Christian and the New Jerusalem shines ahead as the hope for mankind.

In the Revelation we see a new picture of Jesus – exalted (chapter 1) and gloriously triumphant – 'King of kings and Lord of lords' (19:16).

This new picture gives us a deeper appreciation of His glory and majesty (often forgotten when we think only of the 'human' Jesus of the gospels) and it should help us to worship Him more sincerely, more reverently and with adoration.

Revelation has a real message for the people of God, His Church.

The *New Testament Commentary* Salvation Army Edition states:

'The general object of the book ... was, in the first place, to admonish the churches, by suitable messages sent to the seven representative churches of Asia; and in the second place, and especially, to stimulate and encourage the churches by the assurance of the victorious advent of their Lord, and of the eternal happiness of His faithful people. This advent they are not taught to expect immediately, but at the close of a lengthened period of suffering and conflict, in which it might be their duty to resist unto blood, striving against sin. The whole teaching of the book suggests a patient faith in the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness ... The lesson was needed, by the Christian subjects of

## SESSION 8

### FROM THE BIBLE

Selected passages from  
Revelation.

### CHECKLIST

There is one Getting Started activity and you will need to have ready the necessary materials so that the young people can draw on a board or sheet of paper. Have the name of the object to be drawn written out on paper so that you will not be overheard whispering its name.

There are three teaching approaches and the work sheets are the same for both junior and senior.

Approach 1 looks at the letters to the seven churches and the whole group completes the four 'C's activity together for the first letter. Then divide into two groups and assign three of the remaining letters to each group to work through. You will need the definition of the three 'C's written out as a reference for the young people. The work sheets with the three outlines can be completed. If it isn't possible to break into groups, decide which letters you will study.

Approach 2 is a Bible search.

Approach 3 looks at the seven beatitudes found in Revelation and is set out as activity 2 on the work sheet.

the Roman empire, and it survives to cheer us in the conflicts of the present day.'

Revelation is an encouragement and challenge to the Church, i.e., both the first century church and the 21st century church.

The letters to the seven churches are generally accepted as being written to real churches. However, some interpreters of Revelation believe that the churches stand for different periods of time in history. To them, Ephesus represents the first century, Smyrna the period of persecution, Pergamum the age of Constantine, Thyatira the Middle Ages, Sardis the Reformation era, Philadelphia the time of the modern missionary movement, and Laodicea the apostasy of the last days. Others say the message is addressed to the church as a whole and the division is purely artificial. From the information we have on the actual cities named, we can assume they were written to actual churches.

Each letter follows a set pattern.

1. Introduction – which takes one point from the introduction and image of Christ in chapter 1:13 - 15.
2. Praise – for what is good in the church.
3. Criticism – of a bad thing in the church
4. Conclusion – that includes:
  - a. a warning or a call to repentance;
  - b. an exhortation – 'If you have ears...';
  - c. a promise of victory – 'those who overcome...'

For the purpose of this session the letter outline has been simplified to three 'C's – Commendation, Concern and Conclusion.

A fourth 'C' has also been included, Contemporary message, so that the message of the letter can be applied to today.

As you read Revelation, you will notice time and again that events occur at God's prompting. For example the first series of judgments are the seven scrolls. The question is asked in heaven: ' "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But there was no one in heaven or on earth or in the world below who could open the scroll and look inside it.' (5: 2, 3) No one could bring about the destiny of humanity, except Jesus, the Lamb who was killed.

People and Satan may try to prevent God's plans, but they never do. There is a surety in the destiny of mankind that is shown clearly through the Judgments. General Orsborn caught that vision in song.

'Jesus shall conquer, lift up the strain!

Evil shall perish and righteousness shall reign.' (SASB 173, chorus)

As you teach this session remember the warning given in session 7. John is an impressionist, not a photographer.' Don't try and show how the ten horns and seven heads fit on one beast (13:1), rather teach the message conveyed by the symbol itself.

## **GETTING STARTED**

---

### **What's my picture?**

Choose a young person to draw a picture (either on a board if your group is large or on a piece of paper if you all fit around one table). The others

try to guess what the picture is. Have a time limit of one minute for each drawing and guessing. Keep to a set time for this activity as the session is a very full one.

The drawer must make no verbal or physical communication and sketching and guessing can continue until the time is up. Once a correct guess is made, change the drawer.

If your group is large, you could break up into groups of four or five. A drawer is selected and told what to draw. The team that guesses first gets a point.

Some suggestions for drawings (begin with easy ones and progress to the more difficult): swordfish, computer, tyre jack, car radio, the Salvation Army shield, salute, electric razor, pearl, ankle, throw, enlarge, diet, clap, sandstorm, stomach ache.

## GOING DEEPER

### I. Letters from Christ to the church

Because of his Christian testimony, the apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos. There, he had a series of visions or messages from God which he recorded and which we know as the book of Revelation.

Part of the revelation was a series of letters that John wrote to the seven churches in the province of Asia and each of the seven letters seems to follow a set pattern in its writings (with the exception of the letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia which don't have a 'Concern').

The pattern of each letter has been simplified to fit into the three 'C's with a fourth 'C' for ourselves.

#### COMMENDATION:

Praise for the church.

#### CONCERN:

An accusation or criticism of a failing.

#### CONCLUSION:

Advice to urgently correct its faults and the promise of overcoming in the power of God.

#### CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE:

What does the letter say to us today?


The following summary is a guide to the answers that could be given. Once you have done the first letter together, give the groups the references for the three different churches. The contemporary message will be worked on together.

#### a. To the church in Ephesus

Revelation 2:1 - 7.

**COMMENDATION:** vv.2 - 3, 6 (Good deeds, keeping away from evil people and false teaching. They patiently suffered and have not given up.)

**CONCERN:** v.4 (They are no longer as devoted to Christ as they had been.)



Images are used to explain or describe something. Images that are perfectly clear to me, and that I understand, when shown to another person may be confusing.

Revelation is filled with imagery. Some we can understand clearly, others lead to confusion.

However, Revelation gives us a clear and underlying message that God is in control, Jesus reigns supreme and He is coming again and that is what we want to consider in this session.



### LEADER TIP

Have the four 'C' headings and explanations written up so the young people can refer to them as they do the activity on the work sheet.



### LEADER TIP

You may like to do one message together using your outline and then break into two groups who will do a further three.

Use activity 1 on the work sheet. Have the group read the message and fill in the summary under the three Cs. Ask them not to fill in the fourth C until you discuss it as a group.

CONCLUSION: v.5 - 7 (Go back to your first love by thinking about what it was like originally. Repent and do again what you did at first.)

**Discuss**

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE: (Do I still love God as much as I did when I first committed my life to Him?)

- What danger might we be warned of today?
- What sort of good things were you keen to do when you first were saved? Do you still do them?

b. **To the church in Smyrna**

Revelation 2:8 - 11.

COMMENDATION: v.9 (Although they appeared poor, they were rich because they lived for God.)

CONCERN: (The church at Smyrna didn't have a criticism, just encouragement to 'hang in there'.)

CONCLUSION: v.10 - 11 (Don't be afraid. Be faithful and God will give the victory.)

**Discuss**

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE: (It can be costly to be a dedicated Christian.)

- Would non-Christian friends think that I was 'poor'?
- What does it cost me to be a Christian?

c. **To the church in Pergamum**

Revelation 2:12 - 17.

COMMENDATION: v.13 (The church is in the middle of evil and is being faithful to God even in the midst of great difficulty.)

CONCERN: v.14 - 15 (They were being led astray by false teachings in the church.)

CONCLUSION: v.16 - 17 (Turn from this sin because you should know better.)

**Discuss**

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE: ('When the going gets tough, the tough get going' but don't go after anything but the truth!)

- How can we be sure we are learning the truth?
- How can we test false teachings today?

d. **To the church in Thyatira**

Revelation 2:18 - 29.

COMMENDATION: v.19 (Love, faithfulness, service, patience and an increase in activity.)

CONCERN: v.20 - 23 (Some were tolerating false teaching from outside the church and compromising Christian standards. They refused to repent of their sin.)

CONCLUSION: v.24 - 29 (Not all had been deceived, and those who remained faithful to God were to keep on being faithful in the face of evil. The believers are also promised authority and that they will rule with Christ.)

### **Discuss**

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE: (Sometimes those around us will be taken in by false teaching. Jesus encourages us not to give up but to keep doing what we are doing.)

- What could we do so as not to be deceived?
- What promise does Jesus give to those who remain faithful? (v.26 - 28)

#### **e. To the church in Sardis**

Revelation 3:1 - 6.

COMMENDATION: v.1, 4 (A few have remained faithful to Jesus. The rest had a reputation for being a live church, but really they were spiritually dead.)

CONCERN: v.1 - 3 (The church was living on past glory, on its reputation instead of its current activity. It is slowly dying, but not yet dead. There is no persecution, no suffering, just no activity. They were content with what they had and yet what they had was disappearing.)

CONCLUSION: v.2 - 6 (Wake up before you sleep forever. There are a few who still are faithful to Jesus and these need to move at strengthening and renewing what they have been taught and know.)

### **Discuss**

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE: (Who you are today is more important than what you were like yesterday. Our relationship with God is a daily experience that needs to grow each day.)

- Is our corps in danger of 'going to sleep'?
- Does this letter offer hope or despair for those who want renewal? (v.4 - 5)

#### **f. To the church in Philadelphia**

Revelation 3:7 - 13.

COMMENDATION: v.8, 10 (The church may not be strong, but it is faithful and has not been led astray. It has endured persecution.)

CONCERN: (Like the church in Smyrna, there is no blame, only praise for the church in Philadelphia.)

CONCLUSION: (It may not have been a strong, big or powerful church, but it was faithful and God was going to bless its ministry by giving it an open door i.e. further opportunity for ministry. This church also received the promise that God would take care of its enemies and that He would keep the church safe in the future.)

### **Discuss**

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE: (Many of our Corps are not 'big or strong', but size is not as important as faithfulness to the task God assigns.)

- To every corps God offers an 'open door' for ministry. Can you think of any doors of ministry that God has opened for your corps?

#### **g. To the church in Laodicea**

Revelation 3:14 - 22.

COMMENDATION: v.15, 17 (Jesus has no commendation for this church at all. It is neither cold nor hot. They professed Christianity, but were untouched by it.)

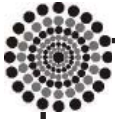
CONCERN: v.15 - 17 (They had lost their spiritual power, their contact with Christ, and reality. A major concern was that the church did not know how poor, blind and naked it was.)

CONCLUSION: v.18 - 22 (The healing of this situation was to be found in Christ.)

#### **Discuss**

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE: (Don't allow yourself to become blind to your own needs and unwilling to face the truth. If you want the best from God, then be honest with Him and let God be honest with you.)

- Get serious or get out! Is this statement a fair summary of this letter?
- The Laodicea church didn't allow Christ to touch their lives; how has Christ touched your life?



### **LEADER TIP**

If you worked in two separate groups, take the time now to let each group report on their three churches and discuss the contemporary message together.

## **2. The judgement**

John sets out the three dreadful series of judgments God will bring on to the world. We will look at the last one – the seven bowls.

The seven bowls is the last vision of judgement on the world and the imagery has a suggestion of finality about it.

Unlike the first two judgments, the seven seals and the seven trumpets, there is no holding back of God's anger.

This is God's final overthrow of all that is evil. At the completion of the seven bowls comes the record of Satan's final destruction and the triumph of God over all his enemies, culminating in the coming of Christ and His kingdom.

Bowl 1: Revelation 16:1 - 2.

Judgement: Permanent sores on the body of all who have the mark of the beast.

Bowl 2: Revelation 16:3.

Judgement: Everything in the sea dies.

Bowl 3: Revelation 16:4 - 7.

Judgement: All fresh water turns to blood – an acknowledgement of the blood of the martyrs.

Bowl 4: Revelation 16:8 - 9.

Judgement: The sun burns people because of its intense heat, but they only curse God and don't turn to Him.

Bowl 5: Revelation 16:10 - 11.

Judgement: Darkness falls upon Satan and all who follow him are in great pain.

Bowl 6: Revelation 16:12 - 16.

Judgement: The raising by Satan of an army for battle.

Bowl 7: Revelation 16:17 - 21.

Judgement: Utter destruction – terrible earthquakes and hailstorms.

### Discussion points

- Although this judgement has a stress on finality, is there still the opportunity for all to repent?
- God alone can stop the calamities, but how do men respond to Him? See v.9 - 11.
- What is the warning of verse 15?

### Conclusion

God has a twofold purpose in His judgments:

- We see God's wrath against evil.
- And we also see that the judgments have a merciful purpose – to drive the wicked to their knees and to seek the Lord and His mercy.

Every generation has been able to identify with these judgments of God. Each generation has had its own 'beast' who oppresses God's people. But in the end there will be an increase in intensity and the Bible's prophecy will be fulfilled. We must take notice of the warning of verse 15. Jesus Christ may return at any time, so we must keep our lives clean and remain faithful – ready whenever He comes.

### 3. The seven beatitudes

There are seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. Seven is an important number because it signifies fullness and completeness. Revelation shows us how God is going to complete His work by bringing into being the fullness of His kingdom.

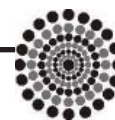
- a. Revelation 1:3. (Read, listen and obey.)
- b. Revelation 14:13. (Die in the Lord's service.)
- c. Revelation 16:15. (Be alert and keep clean, i.e. avoid the stains of sin.)
- d. Revelation 19:9. (Have an invitation to the wedding.)
- e. Revelation 20:6. (Involved in the first resurrection.)
- f. Revelation 22:7. (Obedience to God's word.)
- g. Revelation 22:14. (Washed clean and can enter God's city.)

### DEFINITION

Beatitude: a blessing or happiness of the highest kind.

### LEADER TIP

Read the verse and record how the blessing is obtained. This is activity 3 on both work sheets.



## TAKING IT HOME

---

Each of the letters to the churches deals with a different issue but the message is the same, 'If you have ears, then listen to what the Spirit says to the churches'.

Throughout the judgments comes the same message: turn and listen to God before it is too late.

The church today has problems too. We have our faults and our sins. The question from Revelation for us today is 'what are we going to do about it?'

Jesus says, 'Listen! I stand at the door and knock: if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and eat with him, and he will eat with me.' Revelation 3:20.

We need to listen to the Spirit of God, be forgiven by Jesus and live our lives ready for whenever He returns.



## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

Ask the young people to look at the challenges and consider one that they may have once been keen to do but now brush aside. Pray that we will keep our love and desire to serve God strong and active and that they will accept a challenge to complete.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

MORRIS, Leon, *The Revelation of St. John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Inter-Varsity Press, 1983.

WIERSBE, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Volume 2, Victor Books, 1989. (Also available as a single commentary on Revelation called: *Be Victorious*.)

WILCOCK, M., *The Message of Revelation*, *The Bible Speaks Today*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1975.

BARCLAY, W., *The Daily Study Bible*, *The Revelation of John*, Volume 1 & 2, The Saint Andrew Press, 1976.

*Salvation Story*, MPG Books, 1998.

GREGG, Steve (editor), *Revelation: Four Views, A Parallel Commentary*, Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1997.

LADD, George Eldon, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1972,

I.

FROM JESUS CHRIST TO:

COMMENDATION:

CONCERN:

CONCLUSION:

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE:



FROM JESUS CHRIST TO THE CHURCH AT:

COMMENDATION:

CONCERN:

CONCLUSION:

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE:

# JUNIOR & SENIOR WORK SHEET

## HIGHLIGHTS

- God is always in control of the world.
- There is still a message for the church of today found in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation.
- Facts about Jesus, His character and work are given in the Revelation.
- Jesus will return and judge the world.
- We need to be prepared.

FROM JESUS CHRIST TO THE CHURCH AT:

COMMENDATION:

CONCERN:

CONCLUSION:

CONTEMPORARY MESSAGE:

# BLESSINGS FROM GOD

2. Read the verse and complete the blessing that it describes.

a. Revelation 1:3. Happy is the one who \_\_\_\_\_

b. Revelation 14:13. Happy are those who \_\_\_\_\_

c. Revelation 16:15. Happy is he who \_\_\_\_\_

d. Revelation 19:9. Happy are those who \_\_\_\_\_

e. Revelation 20:6. Happy are those who \_\_\_\_\_

f. Revelation 22:7. Happy are those who \_\_\_\_\_

g. Revelation 22:14. Happy are those who \_\_\_\_\_



# HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH?

## SESSION 9

**FROM THE BIBLE**  
Selected references.

### AIM

Through a study of Doctrine 8 to help the young people understand that we cannot earn our salvation.

### OBJECTIVES

To help the young people understand:

- ❖ that we are 'justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ';
- ❖ the terms 'justification', 'grace' and 'faith';
- ❖ our response to God's gift.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

There are two sessions in the *TRIBE* series on the teaching of Doctrine 8.

In Unit 4, session 2 dealt with the second part of this doctrine 'he that believeth hath the witness in himself'.

In Unit 6, session 13 dealt with Paul's letter to the Romans and so had as one of its objectives to help the young people understand that 'we are justified by grace through faith'.

The following notes are adapted from *This We Believe* by John Coutts, pp.87 - 90, 92

Doctrine 8 begins with a quotation from Ephesians 2:8, 'we are justified by grace through faith'.

The words, 'justified' and 'grace' are important biblically and this doctrine allows us a chance to study them. This is good, because a large part of our teaching aim is to help the young people become familiar with the meanings of words which are going to be included in their religious vocabulary through the years, when they sing, read the Bible or listen to Bible messages.

The blessings given to us when we are saved are:

- regeneration by the Holy Spirit,
- justification by grace and
- the witness within, i.e. an assurance of salvation.

Although justification, regeneration and assurance are part of the one spiritual experience, it is doctrinally correct to speak first of justification by grace. It is this which establishes a new basic relationship with God.

### CHECKLIST ✓

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. It is recommended that both are completed, however, be sure to do the second activity.

For Getting Started 1 you may choose to video the mock trial prior to the session to show as a lead into the session.

Getting Started 2 looks at words and asks the young people to give examples of words. Writing materials to write up their ideas are needed.

There are only two suggested approaches. For approach 1 you need to have Doctrine 8 already written out. A dictionary or Bible dictionary may be helpful as well.

Approach 2 is presented as a drama involving three people. It will need to be prepared before the session. A Senior Song Book is also needed. You may choose to video the conversation in approach 2 as well.

For the Taking it Home have the prayers written on pieces of paper to be distributed to your group.

The term 'justify' originates in the law-court. It means to 'declare righteous' or 'to acquit'. Thus, in Exodus 23:7, the Lord says, 'I ... will never acquit (justify) the guilty.' This means that the wicked man will not escape God's justice and he ought not to escape man's justice either!

God's justice was seen in particular in His defence of the rights of the weak against the strong and powerful. Thus, in Isaiah 46:13 we read 'I am bringing the day of victory near'. In the Old Testament justification came to mean rescue or liberation by the sheer goodness of God.

That 'sheer goodness' is called 'grace' which means God's undeserved kindness and favour.

The prophet Amos was horrified at the unjust behaviour of his fellow Israelites, who had received so many favours from God:

'... they sell the innocent for silver and the destitute for a pair of shoes... Yet ... it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt ... says the Lord' (Amos 2:6 - 11).

God in His displeasure, therefore, rejected the worship of the self-satisfied Israelites.

They forgot that they owed everything to the goodness ('grace') of God! They expected God to stand by them even though they oppressed their fellow citizens!

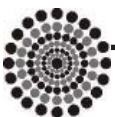
Turning to the New Testament, we find that the term, 'justification by faith', is much used by Paul, but the idea behind it is fundamental to the teaching of Jesus. Several parables illustrate this:

The 'workers in the vineyard' were hired by their employer at various times of the day. When evening came, and they waited for their pay, they found to their great surprise that all received the same amount – one denarius! (Matthew 20:1 - 16). This, of course, is nonsense if we judge by the normal rules of industrial relations. But Jesus wanted to make people realize that you cannot deal with God as you would with an ordinary employer. You can never say to God, 'I deserve so much from You,' because we are completely dependent on His great kindness – His 'grace' – which we do not deserve and can never earn.

Paul was a former Pharisee and had tried with all his might to be 'justified' by keeping the Law of Moses; yet he felt profoundly dissatisfied. Paul found peace when he came to realise that he would be accepted by God, not on the grounds of his own effort, but through humble trust in what Christ had done for him.

Down through the years people have tried to justify themselves before God.

In this session we aim to help our young people understand that our service to God is a joyful response to His free gift of salvation which is the only way we can be put right with God.



### **LEADER TIP**

For this to be effective you will need to have explained beforehand what parts you want the different participants to play. You could video some of your young people acting in this trial before the session and show the tape.

## **GETTING STARTED**

---

### **1. Mock trial**

- a. Have one young person (maybe one who often gets into trouble, provided he/she is good natured) accused of and tried for something trivial that undoubtedly took place.

E.g., Did not hand in homework on time.

Does not pay attention in *TRIBE* sessions.

Witnesses will give convincing testimony and throughout the trial the prisoner will declare his/her innocence.

Finally the prisoner changes his/her mind and pleads 'guilty'. Then, just as the prisoner is quaking, awaiting a heavy sentence, the judge sets him/her free.

- b. **And/or** take an old torn coat to class. Put it on the prisoner, then try him for having an old torn coat! Brief the prisoner to insist that the coat is not torn, until he has to abandon his defence in the light of the facts (and witnesses). After he has been pronounced guilty, the judge puts a better coat on him. So the prisoner leaves the court, not only free, but re-dressed by the judge himself.

Ask the prisoner to describe how he/she felt while trying to justify his/her actions.

Discuss how natural feelings of trying to prove or justify our actions are the right ones and should not be condemned. And they can be found in us all.

Now ask how the prisoner felt when the judge set him/her free as though he/she was innocent.

Ask the group what kind of judge would do such a thing.

## AND

2. Ask the young people to think of as many words that end in 'ify' as they can.

List them, e.g., purify, simplify, clarify, modify, horrify, terrify, glorify, justify.

Ask the young people to take each word and show what it does:  
e.g., purify is to make something pure,

Terrify is to bring terror or fear.


Justify is therefore to make just or right.

Write this up and have the young people try to use the word 'justify' in sentences.

E.g., The headmaster tried to justify his decision to cancel sports.

I feel justified in complaining about the meals we had at camp.


The teacher's faith in the student was justified by her success.



In God's sight we have all sinned. We are all guilty of breaking His laws and God expects us to admit our guilt.

Then, having found us guilty, God sets us free as if we were innocent.

God acquits us, making us right with Himself when we do not deserve it. This is what we want to talk about in this session.



Paul, writing to the Romans, said that we are justified or put right with God through faith.

Our actions never justify us in God's sight and this is what we want to talk about in this session.

## GOING DEEPER

---

### I. Doctrine 8

Have Doctrine 8 written up so that the young people can read it.

Have them read the doctrine through several times.

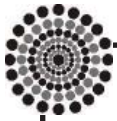
Block out key words and have the young people repeat it again until finally the whole doctrine is covered over and can be successfully said.

Now underline 'justified', 'grace' and 'faith' and have the young people work in three groups to come up with an explanation of these terms. (A dictionary and Bible dictionary would be helpful.)

Rewrite the doctrine putting the phrases decided upon in the place of these words.

E.g. We believe that we are /put right with God/ by /His undeserved kindness/ through believing that Jesus' death has saved us.

Have the young people read this through and check that they now feel that they understand the terms more clearly.



## LEADER TIP

The drama could be video taped prior to the session, using the young people from the corps. You will need to pause the video where Scripture is being read.

This approach can also be presented as straight teaching if you do not have a large enough group or someone to do the videoing.

### 2. Drama – 'How good is good enough?'

You will need participants to be well prepared and to know when to involve the other young people. Make sure all the listening young people as well as those taking part have a Bible and turn to it at the appropriate time. You also need a Senior Song Book for one young person.

**Person 1:** Do you believe you're good enough to get to heaven?

**Person 2:** Well, I try to be good and do the right thing and all that- but how good is good enough? We'd better ask our leader!

**Both:** Excuse us, \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of leader)

but we were wondering if there is an answer to the question 'How good do you have to be to get to heaven?'

**Leader:** Jesus was once asked that question. It was asked by someone trying to trap Him – but He gave a plain answer anyway. Let's read about it in Luke 10:25 - 27.

*(Have either one of the young people in the drama, or one of those listening in the group read the passage.)*

**Leader:** So we see that the man asked, 'How good is good enough? What must I do to inherit eternal life?'

Jesus referred him back to the law and the answer he gave was 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' (Luke 10:27)

So from a legal or moral point of view, to be good enough you must always love God in all things, and always love others.

And if you don't, then you have broken the law and you are not good enough.

That is a pretty high standard. And I don't have much chance of being good enough, because I have broken the law. I haven't always loved God with 'all my heart.'

**Person 1:** Yeah, and there have been plenty of times when I haven't used 'all my strength' to express my love for God either.

**Person 2:** And I certainly haven't always 'loved my neighbour as myself.' So I will never be good enough.

**Person 1:** So – we can never be good enough to go to heaven?

**Leader:** Luke 18 tells of a rich ruler who met Jesus. He was a pretty good man.

He asked Jesus how he could inherit eternal life and Jesus questioned him about his obedience to the law.

'How do you go with the commandments not to commit adultery, murder, to steal, not to give false testimony, to honour your father and mother?' Jesus asked.

'No worries mate,' says the man. 'I have kept these things since I was a boy.'

Here is a man who should be good enough. Here is a man who has obeyed all the commandments. Surely he will be good enough. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'There is still one more thing you need to do.'

*(Ask a young person to read Luke 18:22.)*

The rich man had obeyed the moral law, but he couldn't obey the law of loving God before everything else.

**Person 1:** He'd obeyed all those laws, and he wasn't good enough.

**Person 2:** Who on earth is good enough then?

**Leader:** The people felt like that, too.

*(Ask a young person to read Luke 18:26.)*

But Jesus knew there was a way.

*(Then have read v.27.)*

The only way to become good enough is through God's way.

**Person 1:** Nobody is good enough? Not one single person?

**Leader:** Even in Old Testament times people knew this was so. Let's look at Psalm 14:2 - 3. *(Have a young person read this.)*

**Person 2:** That's pretty clear. – 'Not a single one.' – Can't misunderstand that, can we?

**Leader:** But don't forget, Jesus said, 'What is impossible for man is possible for God.'

Paul explained God's wonderful way in Romans. Look at Romans 3: 21 - 24.

*(You may wish to read the Living Bible paraphrase of this passage, to emphasise it to your group.)*

'But now God has shown us a different way to heaven – not by 'being good enough' and trying to keep his laws, but by a new way ... Now God says he will accept and acquit us – declare us 'not guilty' – if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been like. Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal; yet now God declares us 'not guilty' of offending him, if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins.' (Romans 3:21 - 24, LB)

**Person 1:** That's it? God accepts us and puts us right if we believe in Jesus Christ?

**Person 2:** It's as simple as that?

**Leader:** Yes. Think about these people.

- A criminal who hung on the cross next to Jesus. He believed in Jesus and Jesus said to him, 'Today you will be with me in paradise.'



- A woman, described as having ‘lived a sinful life’ came to Jesus and washed His feet with her tears, dried them with her hair and poured perfume on them.

Her life had been bad and at the feet of Jesus she said by her actions, ‘Jesus I love you.’

Jesus said to this woman, a sinner, ‘Your sins are forgiven... your faith has saved you; go in peace.’ (Luke 7:48, 50)

- Paul was a good church man. Philippians 3 gives his ‘church’ credentials that are better than most.

But he concludes his impressive résumé with the declaration, ‘But all these things that I once thought very worthwhile – now I’ve thrown them all away so that I can put my trust and hope in Christ alone ... no longer counting on being saved by being good enough or by obeying God’s laws, but by trusting Christ to save me; for God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith – counting on Christ alone.’ (Philippians 3:7, 9, LB)

- Martin Luther was one of the outstanding leaders of the Reformation, but in his early days as a priest he was acutely aware that in the sight of God he was bad. He used to punish himself severely because of his sense of sin. Luther made the statement, ‘There is nothing I can do to make myself pure in the sight of God. I cannot please God by incredible penance, confession or suffering.’

He felt guilty all the time. He felt a failure before God. He suffered spiritual torment because he could not be ‘good enough!’ Then Luther was assigned to study and teach the Psalms. And in Psalm 22 he came to realise that Jesus came as redeemer.

Later when he had to study Romans, he came to the wonderful realisation that justification, or being good enough before God, comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not by what we do.

**Person 1:** If I believe that Jesus Christ died in my place and that He forgives me and cleanses me of all my sins, then I AM GOOD ENOUGH?

**Leader:** You’ve been made good enough, \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of young person)

That’s the important truth to remember.

**Person 2:** But why? Why is it so simple? Don’t we have to prove we’re good enough by all the good things we do?

**Leader:** No, we don’t! We’ve just seen that we can never make ourselves good enough, so God in His wonderful compassion and mercy (we often call that God’s grace) made this wonderful plan.

**Person 1:** And I remember there’s a verse of a hymn that we sing on Good Friday that talks about who is good enough.

It’s ‘There is a green hill far away’ – does anyone remember that verse? (Have a Song Book ready for a young person to read v.4 of 133.)

There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin;  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of Heaven, and let us in.

**Leader:** Only Jesus is good enough to make us right in God's sight. He never sinned – so He was the sacrifice for us all. Believing that His death was for us, puts us right so that we can stand before God and be pronounced 'Not guilty'. (Refer back to the trial in Starter 1 if you used it.)

**Person 1:** And can we be sure we are saved and going to heaven even though we don't deserve it?

**Leader:** Yes, we can. God always keeps His promises. What He says, He will do. He said He would forgive us and make us His children and best of all He gives us peace.

*(Have a young person read Romans 5:1.)*

Once we are saved, we have the peace of God in our hearts and are assured of His love for us.

**Person 2:** So it doesn't matter what we do, either? We don't really have to work for God.

**Leader:** We don't have to work to get to heaven \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Corps Cadet) but if somebody does something wonderful for you, how do you react?

**Person 2:** Well, I thank them – and I want to show them how much I appreciate their kindness.

**Leader:** And that is what Christians do. Because God has saved us, we respond by loving and serving Him.

*(Have Ephesians 2:8 - 10 read by a young person.)*

You see our response is to go about doing the good deeds He has prepared for us to do.

**Person 1:** So really Doctrine 8 is talking about all of this.

**Person 2:** When we say it, we'll try to remember this conversation.

**Leader:** Let's all say it together once more.

*(Whole group repeat Doctrine 8 together.)*

We believe that we are justified by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

## **TAKING IT HOME**

---

No one has to struggle with the question 'Am I good enough for God?' The answer is 'I'm not', but He makes me good enough! He puts us right with Himself although we don't deserve such kindness. He does this because Jesus died in our place, bearing the guilt of our sins.

Have these prayers on pieces of paper ready to hand out. Ask the young people to take one and read it for the whole group.

- Help me, O God, to remember that I do good things for You because I love You but they do not save me. Amen.
- Thank You God that You care about me so much that You sent Jesus to die for my sins. Amen.
- Thank You God that You make us good enough to come into Your presence because Jesus died for our sins. Amen.

- Thank You God that having asked for forgiveness, we can know You have forgiven us and we are Your children. Amen.

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

Remind the young people that as our response to God's gift, we look for ways to serve Him. One such way is helping others. In Get Involved and Grow in Mission by reaching out in service, they could accept the challenge to visit a nursing home as a member of a group or accompany a Community Care Ministries worker.

OR You could start to plan now how your group could assist in the preparation of Christmas gifts in your corps. This is a challenge in Get Involved and Grow in training for leadership.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

*Salvation Story*, MPG Books, 1998.

COUTTS, John, *This We Believe*, Challenge Books, 1980.

DRANE, John, *Paul*, Lion Publishing, 1982.

RIVINGTON, T.S., *The Story of Luther's Life*.

**1.**

Write out Doctrine 8 in your own words as though you were explaining to someone how we believe we are 'justified by faith'.

# HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH?

**2.**

A Reversed Wonderword

D	E	I	F	I	T	S	U	J
N	C	N	L	H	H	S	W	F
A	A	O	A	T	R	E	C	L
T	R	T	I	E	O	N	H	E
D	G	A	R	S	U	T	R	S
I	F	A	U	T	G	I	I	M
N	Y	S	O	R	H	W	S	I
B	E	L	I	E	V	E	T	H
J	T	H	A	T	H	A	T	E

As you find every word of the Doctrine write it out here.

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

# JUNIOR WORKSHEET

**3.**

Read these verses of Scripture with your group.  
Then choose the two verses that you think say best what you  
have learned in this session and write them in the Bibles.

- Romans 8:3     Ephesians 2:8 - 9     John 3:16
- John 3:36     Romans 3:24     I John 5:11 - 13



**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Nobody can earn their way to heaven.
- We are made right with God through His loving kindness.
- When we believe that Jesus died to save us, our sins are forgiven.
- We respond to God's gift of salvation by loving and serving Him.

**4.**

Compose a prayer thanking God for making you 'good enough' to come to Him.

---

---

---

---

---

---

**3.**

Read these verses of Scripture with your group.  
Then choose the two verses that you think say best what you  
have learned in this session and write them in the Bibles.

- Romans 8:3
- Ephesians 2:8 - 9
- John 3:16
- John 3:36
- Romans 3:24
- I John 5:11 - 13



Living by faith is the opposite to living by the law.

**4.**

Compose a prayer thanking God for making you 'good enough' to come to Him.

---

---

---

Grace is God's undeserved kindness.

**5.**

Why is it impossible for  
us to make ourselves  
'good enough' to stand  
before God?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Because of Jesus'  
death we are  
made holy  
enough  
to stand  
before God.

## SESSION 10

# JUST HAVING FUN

### FROM THE BIBLE

Psalm 150; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:15; 1 John 2:15 - 17; Philippians 4:8, 9.

### CHECKLIST

There are three suggested Getting Started activities. Getting Started 1 is a video interview that the young people need to prepare in advance with the older generation talking about what they did for fun.

Getting Started 2 needs some creative thinking to complete activity 1 on the work sheets.

Have the labels prepared for Getting Started 3, 12 bowls and dried peas.

There are four different topics covered in the teaching approaches – parties, movies, music and information technology. Try to do them all.

Approach 1 ties in with activity 1 on the work sheet. Have the points a to f written up ready to discuss.

Approach 2 looks at movies and presents discussion points. Activity 3 on the work sheet outlines a questionnaire that could be used for this.

Approach 3 looks at movie choices and you need to have some of the young people bring along the words of their favourite songs – secular and Christian. Have the words written out so they can be discussed by the groups.

Approach 4 gives some advice for using the internet. Photocopy the guidelines from page 90 to hand out.

### AIM

To help the young people understand that Christians can have fun without lowering their standards.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session, the young people will realise that:

- ❖ God loves to see us enjoying life;
- ❖ our thoughts, words and actions reflect our attitude to God;
- ❖ our choice of entertainment and its venues has an effect on our Christian experience;
- ❖ we need to be discerning in the way we use information technology.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

The idea that human beings did have fun can be traced back to very early times. Archaeologists have uncovered a form of chessboard and pieces at Ur of the Chaldees which have been dated at about 3000 BC. This means that people were enjoying this form of leisure long before Abraham left this area and long before Moses received the Law on Mt. Sinai. Chess or draughts may no longer be a popular choice for young people as a form of relaxation, but it is obvious that people have had a need for taking time out for thousands of years.

The games mentioned in the following passages will be familiar to your group. In fact, in New Zealand, sport has become very much a part of our way of life. Notice Paul's comments on sports in 1 Corinthians 9:23 - 27 and in 2 Timothy 2:5; 4:7 - 8.

To most teenagers, recreation equals entertainment (having a good time) and means escaping from responsibility and the day-to-day pressures of life for a time. This can include a whole range of outdoor and indoor activities.

Being a follower of Jesus Christ and deciding on a choice of entertainment can mean that pressure is brought to bear on a young person's moral values and standards of acceptable behaviour. It is always a good exercise for any of us to ask ourselves 'Why do I really want to go to this place or see this movie?' or 'Will taking part in this strengthen or weaken my Christian faith? Will it help me in reaching out to my non-Christian friends or deny the very thing that I am wanting to say to them about Jesus?'

### Parties

Scripture shows that Jesus did not make a point of avoiding parties. In

John 2, we read that He kept the party spirit going by topping up the wine supply.

He was also accused on occasions of being a drunk by those who were trying to find fault in Him. (Matthew 11:19)

His secret was that He knew how to eat, drink and have a good time amongst sinners without sinning Himself. He listened to them, sympathized with them, laughed with them, but always sought to influence rather than be influenced by them.

The only advice that some people would give to young Christians regarding parties is 'don't go'. However, when we only ever associate with Christians, we run the risk of becoming more and more irrelevant and narrow in our outlook.

Young people who live by high standards of moral behaviour have always had to grapple with the issue of how to relate to the world at large. The suggestions in approach 1 are not intended as a rigid checklist, but as guidelines to help the young people think through the issue with more awareness.

### **Movies, DVDs and videos**

We have dozens of movies beamed into our homes on the television each week and the option is also ours to join video libraries and cable networks, giving access to literally thousands of movies which do not have to be subjected to the censorship standards of a TV station. This means that we run the risk of being influenced by the philosophies and morals of those who produce the movies and write the scripts.

It is increasingly important that we each have personal biblical limits for what we allow to affect our thinking. The Bible reminds us that 'the eyes are like a lamp for the body' (Matthew 6:22). What we see and absorb by looking can affect our discernment of truth. Unfortunately the classifications given to movies are not always an accurate guide to their worth, particularly those which come to our TV screens. Some shows, whether movies, mini-series or specials can be offensive with only a PG rating. On the other hand, it is possible to have a show with an MA rating due to a certain level of violence or some coarse language which has a good moral to its story.

It is extremely important that the young people develop the ability to think about what the show is saying, reinforcing or implying. They can begin doing this by asking themselves a few pointed questions. This is the basis of approach 2, starting with the discussion on choices of TV shows.

### **Music**

Over the years the type of music the Christian uses or enjoys has been most controversial. What is needed is encouragement to learn to discern good from bad, whether it is categorised as Christian music or not. Approach 3 is an exercise which may challenge the young person's ideas of what is acceptable, while acknowledging that each person has his/her own preference of music style.

There is a wide range of good, bad, thought-provoking or downright dangerous and offensive lyrics. It will not be sufficient to bring along a copy of the worst set of lyrics you can find of some band's CD. Most teenagers realise that there are some songs that are just plain crude and have no artistic value at all. It is more of a concern that a song can have a very catchy tune and easy-listening sounds using suggestive words.



Just as subtly dangerous are songs that sound honourable because of 'God-talk', but are theologically unsound. We want them to be able to discern the value of the message in the songs. This can be an excellent means of stimulating some worthwhile discussion with friends.

Be it good or bad, music is a form of expression and the young people should be encouraged to apply the 4-way test included in approach 3 to one of their favourite secular songs.

### **Information technology**

The Internet, World Wide Web, information superhighway, cyberspace are all words used to describe this exciting and useful tool. The sheer volume of places to go and things to do online can be overwhelming even when limiting yourself to Christian websites. It is often difficult to find the exact thing that you want. In fact, some people have compared cyberspace to a library with all the books dumped on the floor. Like radio, movies and TV before it, the internet has raised concerns about its possible negative impact on young people.

Just remember, it's not technology, but how it is used that makes a difference. Listed below are a few definitions you may find useful when discussing information technology with your young people.

**World Wide Web:** sites often contain colourful graphics, animation, as well as text, and each may be linked to many other educational and nonprofit organisations. Some sites are sponsored by movie companies, toy manufacturers, publishers, and other businesses in order to sell their products. There also are thousands of sites developed by individuals to express an idea, pursue a hobby, or 'publish' their own vision.

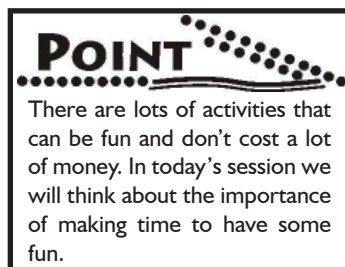
**Usenet groups:** are postings on specific topics, where the group makes comments – and sometimes images – follow one another in bulletin board style.

**Chat rooms:** are generally devoted to particular subjects such as rugby league or video games. Participants can talk to each other in real time, with their remarks appearing as they type them on screen.

**Email:** makes it possible to send a written message to one person or thousands almost instantaneously.

## **GETTING STARTED**

---



1. If you have found out beforehand what sorts of activities entertained the older generation, you could talk about this now. This could be prepared as an interview between a young person and various older people they know. It could be videoed to play now and discuss.

**Or**


2. Use the work sheet to have a brainstorming session on suggested low cost or free activities that could be done by the young people. This is activity 1 on both work sheets.

**Or**

3. Give each person 20 dried peas (or something similar). On a table, lay out 12 bowls, each labelled with one of the following: suspense, funny, good music, love scenes, blood and guts, good acting, being with the right person, makes you think, famous actors, scary, comes with cool stuff, soppy ending.

Pose the question: 'What makes a really good movie?' Everyone is allowed to vote by putting peas in the relevant bowls. They can give more than one vote to particular categories (although they are not allowed to 'flood' any one bowl as a joke), and some of them may not warrant any votes at all. If someone suggests an additional feature, put out another bowl and label it accordingly.

When everyone has used their votes, add up the results (involve the group members in counting and writing up the score). Declare what the collective opinion of the group has turned out to be.



**POINT**

Suggest that God has an opinion about entertainment too. It is not one that He wants to force on us, but since he inspired all the technology and imagination involved in entertainment, it is worth taking his opinion seriously.

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. When to party

Parties are fun and an important part of life. But party-going means different things to different people. How do you decide whether or not you will go to a particular party?

Maybe it is a well known fact that your high school formal or graduation party is going to be an excuse for everyone to try booze and drugs and get wasted so it would hardly be the right time to be building meaningful relationships with friends! You may feel pressured to go to a party, whether you feel right about it or not.

A few basic ideas may be helpful to you in your decision-making.

#### a. **Set your standards**

(Decide ahead of time what kind of parties you will attend. Working out what's 'off-limits' now will make your decision making in the future easier. Many of the young people will acknowledge that they have rules set by parents.)

#### b. **Know the time to be home**

(Understand and respect that parents may set a curfew for attending parties. We also need to remember that going to a party shouldn't prevent us from performing our other responsibilities such as school, work or Sunday services.)

#### c. **Be honest with yourself about your weaknesses**

(If you are easily led into drinking alcohol or using any sort of drug, avoid going anywhere where this could happen.)

#### d. **Be accountable to your Christian friends**

(Taking a reliable friend along can help keep you honest and clear-headed. Agree to warn each other if one thinks things are getting out of hand.)

#### e. **Avoid judging others**

(Making public statements at parties like 'I don't drink because drinking is sin' sounds judgmental and won't help – in fact it will reinforce the opinion that Christianity is nothing more than a list of things you can't do. Instead, enjoy yourself and don't just sit around looking disgusted with the behaviour of others.)

#### f. **Be an influencer**

(Your refusal to be part of anything 'over the top' at parties may encourage others to act more responsibly.)

### 2. Movie madness

- a. Ask the young people to think about the most recent movie they have seen.



#### LEADER TIP

Have this list written up. Go through each point discussing the young people's ideas. The information in the brackets will help your discussion.



#### LEADER TIP

Activity 2 on the work sheet could be done as part of this approach.



## LEADER TIP

This is activity 3 on the work sheet.



## WEBQUEST

There are some websites which give previews and ratings of movies. Check out:

[www.christiananswers.net](http://www.christiananswers.net)

[www.hollywoodjesus.net](http://www.hollywoodjesus.net)

You could print out some reviews of current movies to discuss with your group.

Have them fill in the questions about the movie on their work sheet. Those who liked the same movie may like to work together.

**Or**

- b. We realise that not everything in movies is good for us. Philippians 4:8 may help us decide what to listen to or what to avoid seeing. (Read the verse together.) It still leaves difficulties. An anti-war movie may have a violent scene which is nevertheless 'true' and 'honourable'. A romantic or sex scene in a movie may be 'lovely', but gives the impression that having sex with someone you've just met is an acceptable way of life.

Ask the group to think of some personal ground rules. Here are some suggestions:

- Don't break the law (e.g. ratings on hired videos).
- Go for movies that will bring out the best in you, so you don't have to pretend you enjoyed something you didn't.
- Be prepared to switch off, walk out, turn the volume down, phone and complain, phone and congratulate, scream for more, cut down, or cut in – when appropriate.
- Would Jesus have a good time at the movies you select?

### 3. Music

Music is great! It is a gift from God.

- Read Psalm 150:3 - 6.
- With the group's help list some different styles of music (e.g. classical, jazz, ballads, blues, country, reggae, rock, gospel and so on).
- Which types of music do you enjoy listening to? At different times it can make us feel happy or sad, angry, depressed or encouraged to keep on going. Some of it is written by people who are only interested in making money and don't really care what the song says.

#### Discussion

- Have you ever written down the words of any of your favourite songs, or do you even listen to the words?
- Have you read/seen interviews with a singer or members of a group?

It is easy to listen and sing along to music without giving any thought to what the song is actually saying.

Divide the young people into two groups. One group is to select a song from the current secular top ten and the other group is to select a song from the current Christian top ten.

Groups work through the following discussion points separately and then report back to the whole group.

- What is the song about?
- Does the song have a positive or negative slant?
- Why is this song popular?
- Is this something we should be listening to? Why?
- Does it give you any insight into the mind of the writer/s?



## WEBQUEST

The website [www.lyrics.net](http://www.lyrics.net) has the lyrics to most current songs if you need to find the words.

The current top ten songs can be found on the [www.aria.net](http://www.aria.net) site as well as in CD shops.

- What kinds of feelings does the song stir up within you?
- Is it truthful, or does it promote lies, either subtly or openly?

Try to emphasise the fact that it is not your intention to criticise a particular type of music, but to encourage them to be discerning about what they accept in the name of entertainment.

Whether the group or artists call themselves Christians or not is irrelevant to the issue of what a song says to us. Some Christian music is worthless and some secular music is good value.

Ask yourself the question, 'Would I feel comfortable having Jesus sitting with me listening to the music I like?'

#### 4. Information technology

Computers have literally shrunk the size of our world and sometimes we can be so overwhelmed by what we can access that we forget we need to be cautious in using this technology.

Have the young people list the technology that computers have made available to households: emails, the world wide web, computer games, online games, user groups, chat rooms, discussion groups, bulletin boards, playstation, X box and so on.

While all of these things have been designed to provide information, be entertaining or provide a forum for people across the world to communicate, it has also been open to abuses and we need to take some precautions.

- Ask the young people if they have ever been given guidelines for the use of this technology.
- List any guidelines they can think of.
- Hand out the photocopy of page 90 and discuss the points. Some of your young people may have had some good or bad experiences they want to share with the group – finding some really useful sites, opening links that were not so good and so on.

Guidelines are not meant to scare you but rather to help you think about how you use the net. Is there anything you will do differently in the future?



### WEBQUEST

There are various sites that give other information on safety on the net – here are two such sites:

[www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)

[www.safekids.com/safeteens](http://www.safekids.com/safeteens)

## TAKING IT HOME

---

The Bible tells us that we, as followers of Jesus Christ, are to be 'in the world but not of the world'. It is impossible to be the salt of the earth if we are totally removed from the society our friends and neighbours live in. We must always be aiming to be a positive influence for good in society and not be influenced by the false values of this society. We need to be discerning in our recreation and social life. Having fun that doesn't make us compromise our Christian beliefs is important to our happiness and to the work of reaching other people for Jesus.

## FOLLOW-THRU

---

Why not have your group work together or as individuals creating a 'Your choice' challenge that would be an outreach but would also be a lot of fun to prepare. They could also be encouraged to bring a friend to a youth event.

# HOW TO SAFELY SURF THE NET

---

The following information is designed to keep you safe while you are having fun. This list is by no means complete.

- **Do NOT give out any personal information over the internet.** This includes your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, city you live in, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, the school you go to, passwords, etc. Giving out personal information can assist a person in locating you physically. People in chat rooms and other internet forums can and do lie about their own location, age, gender, etc to make you feel safe, because they are 'on the other side of the world and can't hurt you'. We need to be very cautious about the information we give out online for this reason.
- **Keep your password to yourself.** The purpose of a password, is to allow the owner of the password a means of keeping information secure and private. By giving out a password you allow the other person access to all your data.
- **Never send or upload your photograph.** Some people become obsessive over a simple photograph and may begin to stalk the object of their new found affection.
- **Know what kind of information people can find out about you off the web.** Go to your favourite search engine and type in your name in quotes (e.g. "Jane Doe"). If it is information you don't want given out, request that the website remove it.
- **If something makes you feel uncomfortable or just doesn't seem right, logout.** Trust your instincts.
- **Do NOT fill out profiles.** These are viewable by anyone who wishes to find out more information about you.
- **Choose a gender-neutral name.** While cyberstalkers do harass males, statistics show they tend to prefer female victims. Using a gender-neutral name will keep you from standing out as an easy target.
- **Refrain from sexual oriented conversation.** If it is not something you would walk up to and say to a stranger on the street, don't say it in a chat room or e-mail.
- **Do not give anyone your main e-mail address.** Use one of the free e-mail accounts provided by companies like Yahoo! or Hotmail. This will assist you in maintaining your privacy and make it easier to change your internet identity should an undesirable person take an interest in you.
- **Watch who your friends are.** Many accounts offer instant messaging and / or a place to store "friends" identities. You should be able to change your account settings to not show your online status.
- **Learn to lurk.** Lurking is sitting in on a chat session and not saying anything. Take some time to see what other people are talking about in the chat room. See if you are interested in the topics of conversation and make sure there are not any disturbing or odd conversations happening.
- **Take a good look at the e-mail program you are using.** Does it offer "Signatures" or v-cards (e-business cards)? Do you have it setup to automatically include a signature or a business card at the end of every e-mail message you send? If so, take a good look at what kind of information you are sending to people. If you post a message online, everyone can see it.
- **Choose chat rooms with moderators.** Moderators sit in on chat rooms to make sure all the chatters conduct themselves in an acceptable manner.
- **Last but not least, if it appears that someone is intentionally trying to irritate you or insult you, do not respond to them.** Place them on your Blocked list and move on. Some people like to anger, upset, irritate, and make the object of their "affection" feel uncomfortable. Don't bite the hook.

**1.**

Five fun things that won't cost very much to do.

---

---

---

---

---



**2.**

Ten commandments for my behaviour at parties.

1.  I will \_\_\_\_\_

2.  I will not \_\_\_\_\_

3.  I will \_\_\_\_\_

4.  I won't \_\_\_\_\_

5.  I will \_\_\_\_\_

6.  I won't \_\_\_\_\_

7.  I will \_\_\_\_\_

8.  I won't \_\_\_\_\_

9.  I will \_\_\_\_\_

10.  I must be home by \_\_\_\_\_

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Having fun doesn't have to be expensive.
- Parties can be enjoyed when we think about what we're doing.
- We need to be discerning in our choice of movies and music.
- We can have good, clean fun and reach other people for Jesus.

# JUNIOR WORKSHEET

3. A good movie I have seen recently \_\_\_\_\_



What was the movie all about?	
-------------------------------	--



Why was it worth seeing?	
--------------------------	--

What were some things in it that you know are true?	
---	--

Which parts of the movie wouldn't you want to discuss with Jesus?	
---	--

4. What some of my favourite songs say about important things:

	What it says about life or love or friends or the world	Is this true?
Song title		<i>yes/no</i>
Song title		<i>yes/no</i>
Song title		<i>yes/no</i>

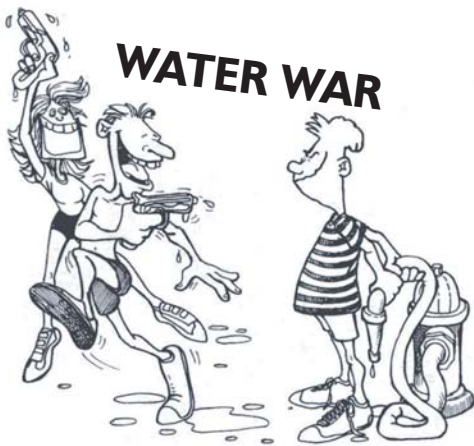
# 1. The Top 10 'Cheap Thrills'

Cost per person

1.  Picnics \_\_\_\_\_
2.  \_\_\_\_\_
3.  \_\_\_\_\_
4.  \_\_\_\_\_
5.  Water bomb wars  \_\_\_\_\_
6.  \_\_\_\_\_
7.  \_\_\_\_\_
8.  Rodeo \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_



# 2. My partying principles.



I will try to avoid \_\_\_\_\_

If I have to be at school or church the next day, I will \_\_\_\_\_

I will make a point of \_\_\_\_\_

The Christian person with whom I will be totally honest about my social life is \_\_\_\_\_



A fly landing on the rail of an ocean liner can cause the vessel to list by 1/10 of the width of an atom.



### 3. A critical look at a movie



Name of the movie \_\_\_\_\_

#### THEME

e.g., life / death / romance / conflict / good v. evil / etc.

#### CHARACTERS were:

e.g., true to life / honest / believable / etc.

#### PLOT

what was the story about?

#### TONE

how did it make you feel?

#### TRUTH

what was worth learning from the movie?  
what was in conflict with what you know to be truth?

*Christmas shopping need not become 'dashing through the dough'.*

### 4. Quotable quotes from songs I enjoy hearing

about love \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

about life \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

about possessions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





# TRUE FORGIVENESS

## AIM

To help the young people understand true Christian love through a study of Paul's letter to Philemon,

## OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session, the young people will understand that:

- ❖ Paul was asking Philemon to do more than just forgive Onesimus;
- ❖ forgiveness must be an act of love;
- ❖ Onesimus had to face up to the responsibility of his wrong doing.

## INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Onesimus was a slave who had escaped and run away from Colossae to Rome, a centre for fugitives. It seems he had also stolen from Philemon, his Christian master (verses 18, 19). Theft and escape were crimes for which runaway slaves could be executed. While on the run, Onesimus had somehow come under the influence of Paul and had become a Christian. Paul knew it was his duty – both as a citizen and as a Christian – to return Onesimus to his master. There were legal penalties in the Roman empire for anyone harbouring runaway slaves – and in addition, Paul could see that any other course of action would threaten the bonds of Christian friendship that existed between himself and Onesimus. It was for these practical reasons that Paul therefore sent Onesimus back to Colossae, along with this short personal letter.

Onesimus must have been willing to return to Philemon (and presumably take whatever the consequences would be), otherwise Paul would not have been writing as he did. Onesimus was accompanying the bearer of the letter. Would Philemon take Onesimus back? Would the faith that both now professed make a real difference?

Philemon was probably a wealthy man since he had household slaves and the church at Colossae met in his house. Apphia and Archippus (v.2) were possibly his wife and son. Archippus is also mentioned in Colossians 4:17. The letter is addressed to them and to the church (v.1 - 2), who must, therefore, all consider whether to forgive and receive Onesimus into the fellowship. Philemon would have to put aside his rights; other slaves might feel angry if Onesimus 'got off scot free'.

### Paul and slavery

Paul's appeal was revolutionary. He was not advocating the abolition of slavery; society was not ready for such a shift in attitude. Instead he was

## SESSION 11

### FROM THE BIBLE

Colossians 4:7 - 9; Paul's letter to Philemon.

### CHECKLIST ✓

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. For Getting Started 1 you will need to bring along a box of junk with sufficient stuff in it to allow each young person in your group to work at making something useful. You will also need a small prize if you plan to give one.

For Getting Started 2 each young person will need a Bible.

There are four suggested teaching approaches and it is important to use them all. Reading the letter to Philemon aloud to your group (or listening to a dramatised version of it) is an important part of approach 1. They are then asked to use their imaginations as they take on the role of one of the characters in the story and try to identify the feelings he would be having. (It would be advisable to have considered this yourself.) Activity 1 on the work sheet has room for them to express their ideas.

Approach 2 deals with Paul's appeal to Philemon to accept Onesimus as a fellow Christian and activity 2 is used in conjunction with this.

In approach 3 the meaning of real forgiveness is discussed.

Approach 4 brings the young people to the need of considering his/her own ability to forgive and forget. Activity 3 has a code to be worked out that can be used in this approach. It would be beneficial to have previously written out the two steps from the Alcoholics Anonymous program so that the young people can actually read them.

stressing the equality of all believers before God.

Paul's commission was not to reform the ordering of social life in the Roman empire. His commission was to show how we may become children of God rather than slaves to sin.

It is significant that Paul's letter to the Colossians, which was written and delivered at the same time as Philemon's letter (Colossians 4:7 - 9) gives teaching on a Christian attitude to slaves in 3:11 and 3:22 - 4:1. 'It doesn't matter ... a slave or a free person, yet Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.' (3:11) Then he talks about forgiveness: 'Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you.' (Colossians 3:13, CEV)

There were, however, responsibilities for Onesimus to accept now that he was a Christian. In 3:22 Paul reminds slaves that they must obey their masters, doing their work whether they are being watched or not because it is now the Lord's approval they are seeking. Onesimus had to be a better slave if his master was willing to forgive him.

### **Brothers in Christ**

We can learn from the tone of Paul's appeal. It is courteous, gentle, affectionate and firm. He makes it easier for Philemon to forgive.

He begins with encouragement and praise, rather than commands or criticism. Philemon was someone who loved 'all God's people'. He had 'cheered the hearts of all God's people' (Philemon vs. 5, 7). As he read these words, Philemon would have been receiving a positive image of himself.

Then Paul puts himself alongside Philemon, laying aside his authority as an apostle. He reminds Philemon that he is his brother in Christ (v.8), suffering from the loss of liberty (vs. 9 - 10). He is willing not to do anything unless Philemon agrees (v.14).

Paul now regarded Onesimus as 'my own son in Christ'. The name 'Onesimus' means 'useful' and Paul found him so useful that he would have liked to have kept him. The potential that Paul recognised in the converted slave led him to the assurance that Onesimus would now be really useful to Philemon as 'a dear brother in Christ' (v.16). Paul was himself willing to pay anything that Onesimus might owe Philemon (vs. 18 - 19). Paul's plea was that Philemon should welcome back his runaway slave in just the way he would welcome Paul.

We have no certain knowledge of what happened when Onesimus got back to Colossae. He may have been set free and returned to Paul to become a leading figure in the Christian churches of the area. At the beginning of the second century, Ignatius mentions an Onesimus who was leader of the church at Ephesus, describing him as 'a man of inexpressible love' and 'an excellent bishop' (Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*). It has been suggested that if this was the same person, it could explain why a short personal letter to Philemon had been preserved and included in the official collection of Paul's letters to churches. We can certainly assume that Philemon must have complied with Paul's request – otherwise this note would undoubtedly have been quickly forgotten.

# GETTING STARTED

1. Bring along a box of junk (e.g., old cans, papers, old wire coat hangers, candles, plastic milk bottles, etc.).

Allow the young people to work in groups and give them 5 - 7 minutes to create something out of the material in the junk box.

You may like to have a prize for the 'most useful' object.

**Or**

2. Have the young people skim through the New Testament to find answers to the following questions. (Quickly look at the title to see whether Paul is the author and quickly judge how many chapters are in the letters.)
  - a. How many letters from Paul are there in the New Testament? (13)
  - b. Which is the longest? (1 Corinthians or Romans)
  - c. Which is the shortest? (Philemon)
  - d. Why did Paul write so many letters? (To advise the young churches; to answer their questions.)
  - e. Is it useful to have these letters available to us? (Yes, the advice helps all Christians.)

# GOING DEEPER

## 1. The characters

Read the letter to Philemon with the whole group.

Put the young people into three groups – one group will specifically take on the role of Philemon, another Onesimus and the third one Paul.

Ask them to re-read the letter in their group, concentrating on imagining how the character they are being must have felt.

Once the work sheet is completed, come back together as a group and have each group relate these ideas to the others.

## 2. Paul's appeal

Paul was appealing to Philemon to do more than just forgive Onesimus.

What was he asking? Read again verses 16, 17 and 18.

**True or false** (solution to activity 1)

- To release Onesimus from his slavery. (False.)
- To treat him as a brother in Christ. (True.)
- To welcome him just as Philemon would have welcomed Paul. (True.)
- To make Onesimus head slave. (False.)
- To treat him with Christian love. (True.)
- To make Onesimus pay for what he had done. (False.)

## 3. True Christian forgiveness

In verses 8 and 14 Paul says he could have ordered or forced Philemon to forgive Onesimus. However, he says he would like him to do it of his own free will.


- Why do you think Paul saw this as important?



**POINT**


With the commitment society is making towards recycling we are learning that what we once considered completely useless can be recycled and made useful again.

In the letter to Philemon we learn about a formerly useless slave who, because of his conversion to Christianity, came to live up to his name Onesimus which meant 'useful'.



**POINT**


As we have seen, Paul wrote many letters. However, the little letter to Philemon is unique. It is the only private letter by Paul we have today. It has special significance to Christians because of its brief but clear teaching on Christian love and forgiveness.



**LEADER TIP**

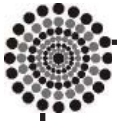
If you have an audio version of the Bible, listen to the letter of Philemon.

Activity 1 on the work sheet has room for them to write down why this person felt and acted the way he did.



**LEADER TIP**

Activity 2 on the work sheet can be completed now.



## LEADER TIP

Play the song 'Forgiven not forgotten' by The Corrs to spark discussion. How is it possible to forgive and forget?

You can check out the lyrics for this song on [www.thecorrswebsite.com](http://www.thecorrswebsite.com). One of the young people may have their CD.

- What right did Paul have to ask Philemon to forgive Onesimus?
- Can someone be forced to forgive another person?
- Can we forgive grudgingly?
- What does true Christian forgiveness involve?

What example of true Christian forgiveness did Christ leave for us? (Read Luke 23:34.)

Write up the following words and ask the young people to unjumble them to make a statement which sums up true Christian forgiveness.

BE FORGIVENESS LOVE ACT AN MUST OF

Have them repeat the correct statement several times. Ask them whether they think that is the only way true forgiveness takes place.

Some people say that they can forgive but they can't forget. Is this a true act of love? Is it better than nothing?

#### 4. Facing up to the past

Allow the young people time to complete activity 3 on the work sheet by decoding the inscription which appeared on the Roman slave badge.

Roman law declared that a slave had no rights. He was seen not as a person but just as a possession or living tool of his master. A master had absolute power over his slaves.

Thus, a slave who ran away or stole, faced several dreadful punishments. He could be branded with the letter 'F' with a red-hot iron on his forehead. At worst, he could be crucified to death. Paul would have known all this and would have known that even to send Onesimus back to the Christian Philemon was a considerable risk.

Why do you think Paul took this risk?

'Christianity is not out to help a man escape his past and run away from it: it is out to enable him to face his past and rise above it.' (Barclay)

Read these two steps from the Program for Alcoholics Anonymous. They talk about steps to be taken to make restitution for the past:

#### Step 8

Make a list of all persons we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all.

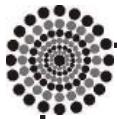
#### Step 9

Make direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

- Do you think this would be a good spiritual exercise for all Christians to help them seek forgiveness from anyone they have harmed?

## DEFINITION

Restitution: an act of making amends/putting things right.



## LEADER TIP

Have these two steps written out so that the young people can read them.

## TAKING IT HOME

God is a God of love and forgiveness. He demonstrated this in the life and death of Jesus Christ, His Son.

As Christians we must learn to forgive in God's way. True Christian forgiveness must be an act of love – freely offering forgiveness to those who wrong us.

Just as Onesimus had to face up to the responsibility of his wrong doing, so we as Christians need to face responsibilities for any wrongs we have done, making amends wherever possible.

Is there anyone whose forgiveness you should be seeking and to whom you should make amends?

Pray for God's help to do so.

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

Forgiveness is such an important topic that you might like to plan a meeting with your group to be used on a Sunday when your group leads the meeting. This is 'Plan a meeting on a given theme' in *Get Involved and Grow in Worship*.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

DRANE, John, *Introducing the New Testament*, Lion Publishing, 1986.

BARCLAY, William, *The Daily Study Bible*, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh.

**1** There are three people involved in the Letter of Philemon. Circle the one whose role you have taken: Philemon; Onesimus; Paul. Read through the letter to Philemon and answer these questions.

- a.  Are you a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_
- b.  How do you feel about this letter?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c.  Why was it necessary for it to be written?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d.  What part do you have in this story?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e.  Write out the verse in the letter that is really  important to you and explain why it affects you.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- f.  What do you hope will be the outcome of this letter?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2.**

Paul made a very big request to Philemon. Read verses 16 - 18 then choose the right reply.

Paul was asking Philemon:

- a.  To release Onesimus  from his slavery.  
 **true / false**
- b.  To treat him as a  brother in Christ.  
 **true / false**
- c.  To welcome him just  as Philemon would  have welcomed Paul.  
 **true / false**
- d.  To make Onesimus  head slave.  
 **true / false**
- e.  To treat him with  Christian love.  
 **true / false**
- f.  To make Onesimus  pay for what he had  done.  
 **true / false**

# TRUE FORGIVENESS

# 3.

In Paul's day slaves were made to wear a band with a message on it. Use this code to work out the message.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
α	β	χ	δ	ε	φ	γ	η	ι
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
φ	κ	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	θ	ρ
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
σ	τ	υ	ω	ω	ξ	ψ	ζ	

\_\_\_\_\_  
 σ ε ι ζ ε μ ε  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 ι φ ι σ η ο υ λ δ  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 τ ρ ψ τ ο  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 ε σ χ α π ε α ν δ  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 σ ε ν δ μ ε  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 β α χ κ τ ο μ ψ  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 μ α σ τ ε ρ

# 4.

What part of the Lord's prayer shows us how important it is to forgive those who hurt us?

---



---



---



---



---



---

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Paul wrote to Philemon to ask him to forgive his runaway slave, Onesimus.
- Onesimus knew he could be branded or put to death for the wrong he had done.
- Paul showed Philemon that forgiveness is a real act of love.
- We must ask God for help to forgive and forget.



### 3.

In Paul's day slaves were made to wear a band with a message on it. Use this code to work out the message.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
α	β	χ	δ	ε	φ	γ	η	ι
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
φ	κ	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	θ	ρ
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
σ	τ	υ	ω	ω	ξ	ψ	ζ	

Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire. Yet it was the place where fugitives could best hide.

σ ε ι ζ ε μ ε  
 ι φ ι σ η ο υ λ δ  
 τ ρ ψ τ ο  
 ε σ χ α π ε α ν δ  
 σ ε ν δ μ ε  
 β α χ κ τ ο μ ψ  
 μ α σ τ ε ρ

The name Onesimus meant 'useful'.

### 4.

Which do you find hardest to do – to forgive someone who has hurt you?

**OR**  
to believe that someone has really forgiven you for something you did?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How can we make amends to show we are truly sorry for hurtful words or actions?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

God knows what we are and yet still believes in what we can become.



# KEEP ON GOING!

## AIM

To help the young people understand the background to Paul's letter to the Philippians and what it says to us today.

## OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session, the young people will:

- ❖ consider the problems the church at Philippi faced;
- ❖ understand how we can avoid such dangers;
- ❖ be encouraged to keep on going.

## INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Philippi was an important city because it straddled the great east-west highway known as the Egnatian Way. The population of this city was cosmopolitan, being made up of Tracians, Greeks, Romans and a few Jews. In the centre of the city was a large forum surrounded by temples, a library, fountains, monuments and public baths.

In 42 BC Antony and Octavia defeated Brutus and Cassius near Philippi. In honour of his victory, Antony made Philippi a Roman colony. This provided the Philippians with special rights and privileges as Roman citizens, and they responded with a great deal of pride and loyalty. Women enjoyed a high status in Philippi, taking an active part in both public and business life. Because of this, women also had important responsibilities in the Philippian church.

Paul founded this church sometime around the year AD 50, during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:12 - 40). From the letter to the Philippians, we learn that this church was in some danger of division (1:27; 2:2; 4:2), it may have been leaning toward a doctrine of perfectionism (3:12 - 13). It was also threatened by the teaching of Judaizers – a group which insisted that all Christians adhere to Jewish laws and customs. But, despite these problems, Paul's love for this church was obvious. He sincerely rejoiced at the progress they were making.

We know Paul was writing to the Philippians from prison. The letter was written around AD 54.

Paul had several reasons for writing this letter. He wanted to explain why he was sending a man named Epaphroditus back to Philippi. He wanted also to thank the Philippians for the gift of money they had sent and to reassure his friends of his condition. Also, the news Paul had received concerning the Philippians made him long to encourage and advise a church he loved.

## SESSION 12

### FROM THE BIBLE

Paul's letter to the Philippians.

### CHECKLIST ✓

There are three suggested Getting Started activities. For Getting Started 1 you will need to have a pile of heavy books to be used as weights.

For Getting Started 2 you will need to have a few difficult questions or riddles that you are confident the young people will not have heard.

In Getting Started 3 you will need writing materials for yourself to list their ideas.

There are five suggested approaches. Try to use them all as they cover different aspects of the writings in the letter to the Philippians.

Approach 1 should be kept short – just outline for the young people the details that set the background to this letter. Have a suitable map ready to show them – most Bibles have maps in them.

In approach 2 the three major problems facing the church are read and discussed. Activity 2 on the work sheet ties in with this approach.

Approach 3 applies the problem of disunity to the young peoples' own situation. Help them to see what they can do to help unify their groups rather than criticising others.

Approach 4 studies Philippians 2:5 - 11 and the young people have questions to answer about Christ's attitude.

Approach 5 is a Bible search for verses on prayer, contentment or joy and the young people should be encouraged to select one verse they particularly like to write down and memorise. (Activity 4 on the work sheet.)

This letter has some wonderful passages which not only taught and blessed the Philippians, but have been a great source of blessing for Christians through the centuries. The emphasis on joy, confidence, unity and perseverance in the Christian faith and life makes it a letter referred to by many, and this session is a chance to help our young people become familiar with this great source of encouragement for Christians.

It is strongly recommended that you make time to read the whole letter through before you prepare for this session.

## GETTING STARTED

**POINT**

The young person might have wanted to keep on going but the load got too heavy. Christians have to work at keeping on, too.

**POINT**

All through our lives we will be faced with tough challenges. Our attitude will decide how we tackle them and whether we are determined to keep going.

When writing to the Philippians, Paul said this: '... the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and do my best to reach what is ahead.' (Philippians 3:13) We are going to look at the words of advice and encouragement Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians.

1. See how long each young person can stand with arms outstretched to the side holding a heavy book in each hand. The leader could keep adding books until the young person can no longer hold his/her arms out straight.

**Or**

2. Ask the young people two or three questions or riddles that they won't know the answer to. Allow them the opportunity to 'give up'.

(Check out [www.riddlenut.com](http://www.riddlenut.com) for hundreds of possibilities!)

- I'm a word that's hardly there. Take away my start and I'm a herbal flair. What am I? (Sparsley – no s = parsley)
- Rearrange the following letters to make just one word. USTOODWERNJ (Just one word.)
- In 1990 a person is 15 years old. In 1995 that same person is 10 years old. How is this possible? (The years are BC ... not AD.)
- What is red and blue, and purple and green? No one can reach it, not even the queen. (A rainbow.)

**Or**

3. Ask the young people to think of some really tough challenges they have had to face. You may like to list these.

Discuss with them:

- how many times they felt like giving up;
- whether they were encouraged to keep going;
- how they felt when the assignment was completed.

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. The background

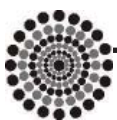
Philippi was an important city in eastern Macedonia. It was about 12 km from the sea, situated on the busy highway that went from the coast right through to the Adriatic Sea and so on to Rome. It was a very cosmopolitan city and modelled itself on Rome.

The Roman ruler Antony made Philippi a Roman colony. This gave the Philippians special rights and privileges as Roman citizens and they had great pride in this connection to the mother city.

Around AD 50 Paul was on his second missionary journey with Silas. Paul's visit to this city was in direct response to the vision that he should leave Asia and take the Christian message to Europe.

Read Acts 16:9 - 10.

It was in Philippi that Paul and Silas were thrown into prison and the jailer was converted.



### LEADER TIP

Refer to a map of New Testament places. Most Bibles have maps and the young people can be shown how to refer to these in their own Bibles.

Paul visited Philippi several more times and always had a real affection for this church as he watched it grow.

The church was probably 5 to 10 years old when Paul wrote to them from prison.

There is not a lot of formality about this letter. Paul was writing as a friend to a church he knew well. He freely expressed the emotions he felt as he heard both good and bad news about the church at Philippi.

## 2. The problems in the church

There were three major problems facing the church at Philippi and Paul wrote to give advice to the church on how to handle these problems.

After each point give the young people time to write a short summary of what Paul says about each problem.

### a. Disunity

(Read Philippians 2:1 - 5.)

Paul knew that a church with many divisions would not be firm and effective. Paul saw disunity as a sin threatening the heart of the church and destroying their effectiveness.

What positive ways to overcome disunity did he offer them?

Summary should include these points: Be like minded. Seek to consider others. Develop the same attitude to others as Jesus had.

### b. Judaizers

(Read Philippians 3:2 - 11.)

The Judaizers were a group of Jews who insisted that all Christians kept the Jewish laws and customs. They were trying to force rules, regulations and rituals upon the new Christians. They were saying that all these physical things were necessary for salvation. Paul was so annoyed about this that he called them 'dogs'.

Notice how Paul poked fun at them about their claims, pointing out that he really should have been saved above all others if 'external' acts were what counted. But he knew by personal experience that such things did not save.

Summary should include these points: Put no confidence in external ceremonies. It is Christ who makes people Christians.

### c. Perfectionism

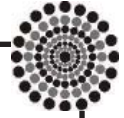
(Read Philippians 3:12 - 14.)

This was a dangerous doctrine, teaching that to be acceptable to God, you must be perfect. It resulted in two extreme responses:

- i. spiritual snobs who thought they had achieved perfection and looked down on those who had not;
- ii. discouragement for those who felt they could not achieve this standard and so just gave up trying to be good or even better.

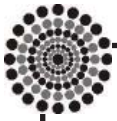
Paul's advice to them was that he himself was still striving and would go on running towards the goal of eternal life through Christ Jesus. In other words, he was saying, 'Keep on going!'

Summary should include these points: Keep on going. Keep trying. Don't give up.



## LEADER TIP

Use activity 2 on the work sheet here to match the references to the problems. Your group may find it easier to make a corporate summary which you could write up to be used to make their statement.



## LEADER TIP

This is activity 3 on the work sheet.

### 3. The effects of disunity in our lives

Without it becoming a time of criticism, allow the young people the opportunity to talk about similar problems facing the church today. Depending on your group, this could be an opportunity for them to be honest about their own corps situation.

One of the worst problems facing the church today is still disunity. Using the multiple choice questions on the work sheet, help the young people realise that we all have a part to play in our church.

Consider together how Paul's teaching for the church at Philippi can be applied in the young people's own lives.

An important point that needs to be made is that Christians face problems from inside and outside the church, but they need to keep on going. Giving up was never one of the answers and it still isn't today.

Just as Christians are not perfect, neither is any church and so the young people need to discover how **THEY** can be the best Christians possible in an imperfect world and an imperfect church.

### 4. Paul's description of Christ

When Paul was advising the believers how to live at peace with each other, he pointed them to the example Christ left us regarding humility. Even though He was entitled to claim His right of being Lord, He did not.

Read together 2:5 - 11 and have the young people find the verse that answers these questions.

- Did Jesus always have the nature of God? (v.6)
- Was He forced to give up all He had? (v.7)
- What path did He walk along? (v.8)
- What honour did God give to Him? (v.10 - 11)

Ask the young people to think quietly about their own feelings when they get annoyed with other people's actions as you read the passage to them again.

### 5. Bible search

The letter to the Philippians says a lot about prayer, contentment and joy.

Divide your young people into three groups, giving them one topic and ask them to select from these references three verses to read to each other.

e.g., Prayer                    1:2, 3, 4, 9; 4:6.

Contentment                2:14; 3:10; 4:7; 4:12; 4:19.

Joy                                1:4; 3:1; 4:4; 4:8.

Come back together for the verses to be read and encourage the group to have a reason for the verses they chose.



## LEADER TIP

Encourage them to write the verse they like best in activity 4.

## TAKING IT HOME

Paul's letter to the Philippians could just have easily been written for us today because we all need to remember to work in unity with our fellow believers.

We all need to remember that we are saved through our faith in Christ Jesus, not by keeping rules.

We must keep straight on, not being discouraged if others think they are better than us, or if we fail.

With the Holy Spirit's help we can make it!

Give the young people the opportunity to pray for help to be more like Jesus and for power to keep on going when the going gets tough.

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

This session is a good one to have your group look through all the Get Involved and Grow challenges and choose one that would take a bit of effort to complete. Remind them that to 'keep on going' is very good advice and helps us grow as Christians.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

BAKER, Donald, *Philippians – Jesus Our Joy*, Lifebuilder Bible.

MOTYER, Alec, *The Message of Philippians, The Bible Speaks Today*.

ALEXANDER, D. and P., *The New Lion Handbook to the Bible*, Lion Publishing, England, 1999.

# KEEP ON GOING

**1.**  
Cross out the incorrect word

- Philippi was a **Greek / Roman** colony and enjoyed many special **taxes / privileges**. The city was often classed as a miniature **Rome / New York**.
- The church at **Philippi / Walgett** was founded by **Bob Hawke / Paul** the apostle around AD50 / 1982 during his **103rd / 2nd** missionary journey.
- When Paul wrote his letter, he was in **prison / Club Med** and he wrote to the **church / RSPCA** at Philippi because he was **concerned / delighted** with what he had heard.
- He gave the church **good advice / a piece of his mind** and urged them to **go on arguing / keep on going** and to strive to be **good athletes / Christians**.
- He assured them of his **love / despair** for them.

**2.**  
Read what Paul said about these problems

<b>Disunity</b>	Philippians 2:1 - 5
<b>Judaizers</b>	Philippians 3:2 - 11
<b>Perfectionism</b>	Philippians 3:12 - 14

Now summarise the advice Paul gave to them about:

**Disunity** \_\_\_\_\_

**Judaizers** \_\_\_\_\_

**Perfectionism** \_\_\_\_\_

**3.**  
**T**alk about these statements with your group and then put a tick in the boxes that are closest to what you believe

- A. When there is disunity in my church, I should:**
- pack up and go to another church
  - see if I am causing any of the problem
  - just give up on Christians and stop going
  - remember that Jesus never gave up on His followers
  - keep on going!

- B. Unity in the church means:**
- we all dress the same
  - we are all accepting of each other
  - we share fellowship and worship together
  - anyone who doesn't agree with me is wrong

- C. Belonging to a Christian fellowship: (Tribe or Youth Group or the Corps)**
- helps me to feel a sense of oneness with others
  - means I learn to care about other people
  - helps to fill in the weekend
  - makes me feel special and good
  - gives me more people to talk about

- D. Gossiping about other people in my group:**
- is fun
  - never really hurt anyone
  - can get me into trouble
  - is only bad if I get caught out
  - hurts other people and breaks up friendships

**4.**  
**M**y favourite verse in Philippians is:

---



---



---



---

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Paul had begun the church at Philippi and loved it dearly.
- Paul was in prison yet his advice was to be thankful for everything and rejoice in God's goodness.
- Disunity always pulls a church apart. We must work together.
- When things seem to be difficult and tough, we should keep on going.



# KEEP ON GOING

**1.**  
**M**y favourite verse in Philippians is:

Paul loved this church and remembered it with great joy.

---

---

---

---

(Make sure that your favourite verse is one that you have memorised.)

In Philippi women enjoyed a high status - taking part in public, business and church life.

**2.**  
**M**atch the three references to the problems they address

- Disunity**                      Philippians 3:12 - 14
- Judaizers**                    Philippians 2:1 - 5
- Perfectionism**              Philippians 3:2 - 11

**N**ow write a summary of the advice Paul gave to the Philippians on how to deal with these problems

**Disunity** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Judaizers** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Perfectionism** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B.**  
**T**alk about these statements with your group and then put a tick in the boxes that are closest to what you believe

- A. When there is disunity in my church, I should:**
- pack up and go to another church
  - see if I am causing any of the problem
  - just give up on Christians and stop going
  - remember that Jesus never gave up on His followers
  - keep on going!

- B. Unity in the church means:**
- we all dress the same
  - we are all accepting of each other
  - we share fellowship and worship together
  - anyone who doesn't agree with me is wrong

- C. Belonging to a Christian fellowship: (Tribe or Youth Group or the Corps)**
- helps me to feel a sense of oneness with others
  - means I learn to care about other people
  - helps to fill in the weekend
  - makes me feel special and good
  - gives me more people to talk about

The church at Philippi was begun by Paul and Silas.

- D. Gossiping about other people in my group:**
- is fun
  - never really hurt anyone
  - can get me into trouble
  - is only bad if I get caught out
  - hurts other people and breaks up friendships

Philippi was a colony of Rome with special privileges. Paul reminded the believers that they were also a colony of heaven.

**A.**  
 Compose a prayer that you could pray that is full of joy for God's working in other people's lives

---



---



---



---



---



---

## SESSION 13

# DARE YOU!



### FROM THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 2:1 - 4.

### CHECKLIST

If you choose to do Getting Started 1, you will need to have pens and the work sheets ready for the young people to use.

Getting Started 2 is a brainstorming of outreach ideas.

Decide how you will present the biographies – either the young people present these to the rest of the group or invite some older people to be guest presenters.

Try to encourage your presenters to be innovative in how they tell their stories.

It is important to use some of the ideas brainstormed to encourage the young people to think outside the box in reaching unchurched people.

### AIM

Through the example of early New Zealand Salvationists, the young people will be encouraged to take a stand for Jesus.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ learn about the difficulties and successes of the early days of the Army in New Zealand;
- ❖ recognise the ingenuity and innovation shown by these Salvationists;
- ❖ consider how they can be daring for Jesus.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Teenage Christians may not be allowed to take part in the regular mission outreach activities of their corps for many reasons – their age, their lack of experience, their perceived inability to lead and so on. But given encouragement, opportunities and guidance they may well have fresh ideas on how to reach unchurched people and bring them to Jesus.

Peer pressure would be the main persecution they have to endure. They can forget that Christians can be victorious despite physical and mental persecution. They equate ‘fighting for God’ with attending a few church services and sections, forgetting that young Salvationists in other times and places have been adventurous, innovative and daring.

Our challenge is to raise their sights so that they, like the young officers and soldiers of our beginnings, become leaders showing the way with courage and intelligence to their older comrades.

The history of the Army in New Zealand is full of young men and women (some of them still teenagers) who took charge of difficult places and by determination and ingenuity, won victories for God despite difficulty and opposition.

Other examples may be known to you from the beginnings of your corps or through Army biographies.

### GETTING STARTED

1. Fill in the ‘Maturity’ quiz (activity 1 on the work sheet). Have some friendly discussion on the various responses.

Decide whether the discussion is sincere enough for the young people to fill in the statement about what they think they could do if their elders trusted them and gave them the opportunity to do so. If it is not, then keep this part of the activity to be done after the teaching has been given.

Or

## 2. Brainstorm

Your corps officer wants some ideas of how the corps could reach out to unchurched young people in your community. Make a list of ideas that the young people feel would work (e.g. helping younger kids with their homework, leading a Bible study group at the local school during lunchtime and so on.)

## GOING DEEPER

Methods of presenting the following stories could be:

- At least a week before, hand out to group members one biography from the notes so that the young people can prepare a presentation on the life of that Salvationist for the rest of the group.
- If you don't have enough group members, use discipleship partners or other people from the corps or the corps officer and so on to help with this presentation.
- Have one or two older people present this session as if they personally 'knew' these Salvationists. E.g. 'I remember when ...'

### a. Miss Arabella Valpy

Miss Valpy was a devout evangelically minded Christian who was a daughter of one of the richest and most influential pioneers of Dunedin. In 1882 she had the vision and concern to send William Booth a bank draft for £200 with a plea that he send officers to New Zealand to commence the Army's work in depression-ridden Dunedin. Her initiative and financial support typified the notable support that the Army received from many other Christians in its pioneer period in New Zealand.

Brainstorm: What are some ways you can show genuine love, practical care and encouragement to those you know?

### b. Mrs Annie Rudman

Annie was one of the first converts of the Wellington City Corps in 1883. She typifies those pioneer soldiers who at "grass-roots" level, saw a desperate social problem and without waiting for orders did something practical about it. With her friend Mrs Hawker they opened their own homes to prostitutes and unmarried pregnant girls they encountered in the poorer areas of the city.

Two Brownlie sisters undertook the same self-sacrificing work in Dunedin. Along with a group of officers and soldiers called the "Prison Gate Brigade" who provided help for discharged prisoners, the pioneering ventures of Annie Rudman heralded the beginnings of the Salvation Army social work in New Zealand in the mid-1880's.

Brainstorm: What would be some creative approaches to mission for your corps?

**POINT**

In this session we will look at some of the early day pioneers of Army work. You will notice how young some of them were and how they were willing to try new ideas if they would bring people to the Lord.

**LEADER TIP**

Use one of the suggested presentation ideas to bring the biographies 'alive' for this age group.



Arabella Valpy



Annie Rudman



Stephen Buick

c. **Stephen Buick**

Stephen Buick was converted from a career of drinking and gambling in Australia and served for a number of years as an officer in Australia and New Zealand. Dedicating himself to a lone ministry in the back-blocks, Buick settled in the north Taranaki district in 1886. For the next 67 years the strident voice, the tousled hair, and the bearded face of this rugged soldier of God, with his bag of Salvation Army periodicals and his battered Army cap, was a familiar and respected sight in every back country road and school and farm in the district.

Known far and wide as “The Taranaki Prophet”, Stephen Buick in 1926 was the first New Zealand Salvationist to be awarded the Order of the Founder. He carried on his lone ministry almost to his death in 1953, at the age of 96.

**Brainstorm:** How can we maintain some of the founding principles of mission in the Army and remain relevant to contemporary society? What would be a fearless act of evangelism in your community?

d. **Ensign George Jackson**



George Jackson

George Jackson was a senior boarder at Otago Boys High School and was greatly influenced by the Christian witness of a third form boy who had made a decision at a Salvation Army meeting in Dunedin in 1883. With the consent of his good Presbyterian parents he joined the Salvation Army and volunteered for officership in 1888. A remarkably gifted young man he was the pioneer of Salvation Army music-making in New Zealand. He was solely responsible for all the early issues of the New Zealand Band Journal as well as being an accomplished trainer of both brass and vocal groups, which included the 24 piece band which featured in General Booth’s first visit to New Zealand in 1891.

He was also engaged in pioneer work in photography, in developing a special zinc process for War Cry illustrations, and in producing slides for the early limelight or magic lantern programmes which the Army was pioneering. Tragically he died of tuberculosis in October 1893. In his short five-and-a-half years of officership George Jackson’s winning personality and his diversity of talents made a profound impression on his contemporaries. His song (number 426 in the Salvation Army songbook) is known and loved throughout the Army world, and typifies his passionate commitment to the cause of Jesus Christ.

**Brainstorm:** What sort of ‘training’ could you be doing to be ready for mission and evangelism at your corps - internship with a local officer, assisting with leadership in any section, talking about your faith to your friends and so on?

e. **Kazuyuki Tsukigawa**

One day early in the 20th Century Captain James Walker, the corps officer at Balclutha was visiting farms in his district when he was surprised to meet a young Japanese man working as a labourer. He not only befriended the lonely young man and offered him the hospitality of his own home, but also led him into a conversion experience and enrolled him as a soldier of the Balclutha corps. The young man, Kazuyuki Tsukigawa, came from an old Samurai family in Nagasaki. He had traveled to many parts of the world, qualified as an AB, and slipped his ship in Dunedin after a dispute with a tyrannical captain.

He worked in many places in Otago and Southland, and eventually

passed his master's certificate and for more than thirty years was master of both the "Clyde" and "Clutha" river steamers. His winning personality, his dedication and his leadership qualities won for him great influence in the Balclutha corps of the Salvation Army and throughout the Clutha River district. In 1907 he became the first Japanese person to be naturalised as a New Zealand citizen. Captain Tsukigawa retired from service with the Clutha River Board in 1941 and died on December 22 1948, remembered as an outstanding Salvationist and one of the most colourful personalities in the Clutha district in the era of the river trade.

**Brainstorm:** How available are you to being used by God in mission and outreach, in leadership and service in the Army? Think about how God can use you NOW – not just when you are older or more educated or after you get a job!



Kazuyuki Tsukigawa

f. **Lt-Commissioner Alfred Bramwell Cook**

Alfred Bramwell Cook was born at Gisborne on March 7 1903, one of three sons of Commandant Henry and Edith Cook, Salvation Army officers. Mrs Cook died in 1909 and for the next six years the boys were inmates of the Army's Eltham Boy's Home. Bramwell's education from primary school to university was one long academic triumph. In his late teens in a youth meeting led by Commissioner Hodder in Auckland, Bramwell responded to a challenge to give his life as a medical missionary, and through the generosity of a benefactor, the door opened for him to be able to fulfill that resolve. After post-graduate studies in England and a course at the Salvation Army's Training College he became the Chief Medical officer at the Emery Hospital, Anand, India in 1932. He married Lieutenant Dorothy Money in 1935 and this talented and dedicated couple continued their medical missionary work at Anand for a further 19 years. In 1954 Colonel (Dr) Bramwell Cook was appointed Chief Secretary of the New Zealand territory, a remarkable promotion for an officer who had never commanded a corps or a division or a territorial department. An intellectual giant, he must rank as one of the greatest personalities in our history. He revolutionised the Army's work among alcoholics, and brought a penetrating intelligence to all aspects of our evangelical and social work in the post-world war 2 era. The brilliance of his academic and missionary achievements coupled with a disarming humility of spirit was a tremendous example to the New Zealand Salvationists of all ages.

In 1963 Cook was promoted to the rank of Lt-Commissioner and appointed to the Eastern Territory of Australia, where he had a very successful period of Command, including a term as President of the Australian Council of Churches.

Lt-Commissioner Bramwell and Dorothy retired as active officers in 1968, and the Doctor began a new life as a busy general medical practitioner in Christchurch. In 1982 he was made a CBE and in 1983 was admitted to the Order of the Founder, the Salvation Army's highest award. Throughout his life he successfully combined the callings to minister to body and soul. Dorothy was promoted to glory in 1992 and at the age of 91 Bramwell followed in 1994.

**Brainstorm:** Have you considered if officership is a way you can serve God? Talk about what is involved in becoming an officer and how you can leave that option open for future service in the Army.



Alfred Bramwell Cook

#### g. **Kim Lock**

Kim Lock was a young Chinese man who wandered into a meeting in the Wellington Citadel one Sunday evening, and was led to make a decision at the penitent form by Ernie Robinson, a colourful character who had been stationed in Chinese waters in the Royal Navy, and who knew a smattering of the language. Laboriously taught the rudiments of English by Ernie and his friend "Dad" Hawker, Kim Lock was enrolled, with 47 others, as a Salvation Army soldier at the 42nd anniversary of the corps in June 1925.



Kim Lock

It became a common and stirring sight to see Kim witnessing in the open air to groups of Chinese in their own language in the Chinese quarter of Haining Street on Sunday afternoons. Eventually he decided to return to China to preach the gospel in the district where he was born. He was warned of the turbulent state of the country with large areas under the ruthless control of warlords, but he persisted with his aim. News filtered back that he had gathered about him a group of young men who had been imprisoned several times for continuing with their Christian witness. News ceased for two years, but then confirmation came from Salvation Army headquarters in China that Kim Lock and his companions had been taken outside the village and beheaded after stoutly refusing to deny Christ.

Commissioner Dean Goffin has told an interesting sequel to the story of Kim Lock's martyrdom. In 1957 when serving as Music Secretary in Britain he led meetings at the Oxford corps, and noticing some Chinese children in the congregation, he told them that as a boy of nine years he had been in the meeting when Kim Lock had made his decision at Wellington, and he went on to tell the story of Kim Lock's martyrdom. At the close of the meeting an elderly officer, Brigadier James Gilman told Dean Goffin that in 1928 he had been a young Captain in China and had been sent to the village to investigate the tragic story of the death of Kim Lock and his friends. Gilman had been able to talk to many Chinese who verified that Kim Lock had heroically sealed their Christian witness with their blood.

Brainstorm: Are there people from different cultures in your corps area? Think about more than different nationalities – what about other groups with shared attitudes, language and customs such as surfies, bikers, alternative lifestyle groups and so on. How can we share the gospel message with them today?

#### h. **Brigadier Ernest Holdaway**

Born Ernest Holdaway, the pioneer of the Salvation Army's work amongst Maori, was one of the most able, attractive and dedicated characters in our history. He was the son of pioneers of the Nelson settlement. Influenced by the Christian witness of 16 year old Elizabeth Edwards, whom he was later to marry, Ernest became a Salvationist in 1884 and volunteered for officership in the following year. Among his early appointments was assistant to Captain Dave Patrick of the Flying Brigade. In 1886 Holdaway pioneered the Army's work in Gisborne, and his contacts with Maori people in Kaiapoi, Wanganui and Gisborne reinforced his conviction that he should devote his life to work among the Maori people. Early in 1888 he married Lieutenant Elizabeth Edwards, and it was announced that he would "lead an expedition" to start work among the Maori people of the Wanganui River District. He co-operated successfully with the Roman Catholic sisters at Jerusalem, and also gained the support of Chief Tamatoa Aunui. Tragically, Mrs Holdaway died of typhoid fever, and later Holdaway married Captain

Agnes Alston. Holdaway was an inspiring and innovative leader and in the next few years gathered a team of young dedicated officers about him committed to the progress of the Maori work. In the early 1890's he made a profound impression when he led a Maori party to an Australasian Congress in Melbourne, and in 1894 when he led another party to the International Congress in London. The work spread to Opotiki, Rotorua, Whakatane, and Wairoa and a training home was started in Gisborne to train officers for the Maori work.

Then a short-sighted decision sent the Holdaways to the Australasian Training College in Melbourne where they did splendid work, but at the expense of the Maori work which lost focus without their dynamic leadership. In 1908 they were posted back to New Zealand in charge of youth work, and the Maori work continued to decline. In 1910 Ernest was sent to command the Army's work in Tasmania. Sadly he took ill with anaemia and died just four days short of his 50th birthday in 1913. A multi-gifted personality, it was unfortunate that he was not given the opportunity to work out a long term strategy for the sphere of ministry to which he felt he had been called.

Brainstorm: What would be some risk taking ways you could show your commitment to the Army and to God? How far are you prepared to tell others of your growing faith?



Holdaway Ernest & Eva  
Aroha Holdaway

## TAKING IT HOME

---

The Salvation Army enjoys a high popularity in New Zealand today, but this has not always been the case. Beatings and ridicule by mobs, imprisonment and persecution by the law caused these early day Salvationists to take a stand and be counted. The motivation of those who led the way was the great love they had for people, and the right of every person to hear about Jesus.

Has this changed? We each have the responsibility to be sure about what we believe and to take our stand, even if at times we have to stand alone.

Read 2 Timothy 2:1 - 4 as a challenge to your group.

## FOLLOW-THRU

---

This would be a good session to tie into the Get Involved and Grow in Training for Leadership challenge to assist a local officer or describe a local officer job. Or your young people could think of a project that they would like to do that would reach out to unchurched people in their community. This could well be the ideas shared during the session from either Getting Started 2 or the brainstorming in each biography.

### FURTHER READING

BRADWELL, Cyril, *Fight the Good Fight*, A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1982.

Symphony of Thanksgiving - (Biography of Commissioner Sir Dean Goffin)

MANSON, Kenneh J, *He walked with God and Man - Commissioner Ernest Elliot C.B.E.*

BRADWELL, Cyril, *Touched with Splendour*, Flag Publications, 2004





# JUNIOR & SENIOR WORK SHEET

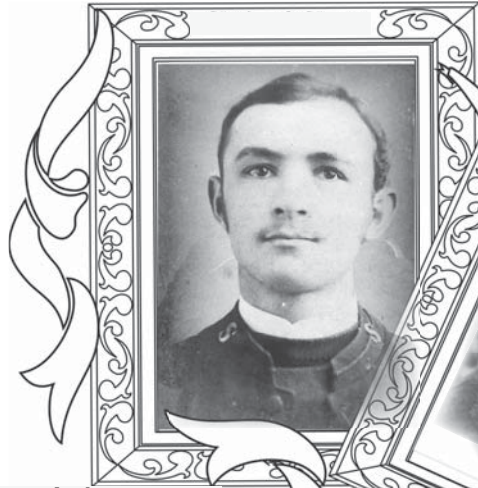
When a publican sent showers of red hot pennies into an open-air ring, the officer waited for them to cool and put them into the collection.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Early day New Zealand Salvationists were always filled with the desire to spread the gospel
- many of these people were teenagers when they began their work for God.
- They were prepared to try new ideas to win people to God
- They faced persecution and ridicule

Public officials often gave vocal support to the gang of larrikins attacking the Army.

**Stephen Buick**  
First New Zealand salvationist to be awarded Order of the Founder



**George Jackson**

Pioneer of Salvation Army music-making in New Zealand

**Arabella Valpy**

Instrumental in commencement of Army's work in Dunedin



**Annie Rudman**

Pioneer of Salvation Army social work in New Zealand



2

Place your picture here.



In 2050 how will you be remembered as someone who took a stand for Jesus?

Some larrikins were converted because of the life and witness of those they were attacking.

## SESSION 14

# DANGERZONE!

### FROM THE BIBLE

Acts 21 to 28, Romans 8:35 - 39.

### CHECKLIST

There are three suggested Getting Started activities. For the first one you can tell the story given about a Christian facing opposition.

If you select Getting Started 2, you will need to write up the young peoples' suggestions.

Getting Started 3 is a clip from the movie *Twister*. Make sure this is cued ready to use if you choose this starter.

There are three suggested teaching approaches. In approach 1 you could record Paul's responses on video prior to the session, allowing time between the responses for the questions to be asked by either the leader or the young people.

Approach 2 looks at Paul's responses to his hardship and could be completed in conjunction with activities 1 and 2 on the work sheet.

Be sure to include approach 3 so that you make a link with the lesson and the young people's lives.

### Aim

To help the young people learn how to be stronger during times of difficulty through a study of Paul's arrest and trial.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand that:

- ❖ Paul faced opposition but knew that God was with him;
- ❖ God will be with us and guide us during times of trial;
- ❖ our best 'defence' is to speak openly and honestly about Jesus and our relationship with Him.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

The trials and imprisonments of Paul are described in Acts 21 - 28. This reading is too long to use during this session. These following passages give an overview of the events to be studied. Make sure you are familiar with them.

Romans 15:25 - 26. (Paul's reason for being in Jerusalem.)

Acts 20:20 - 24. (Paul's response to his troubled future.)

Acts 21:10 - 14. (Contrasted responses.)

Acts 21:27 - 36. (Paul's arrest.)

Acts 21:39 - 22:10. (Paul's defence to the people.)

Acts 23:6 - 11. (Paul strengthened by God after a violent attack.)

Acts 24:1 - 9. (Ananias and Tertullus' charge against Paul before Felix.)

Acts 24:10 - 23. (Paul's defence.)

Acts 25:9 - 12. (After appearing before Festus, Paul appeals to Caesar.)

Acts 26:24 - 30. (Paul again speaks openly and honestly about Jesus and our relationship with Him.)

Acts 27: 18 - 25. (Paul's comfort during the storm at sea.)

Acts 28:16 - 30. (Paul in Rome preaching to the Jews.)

Philippians 1:12 - 14. (Paul's estimate of gospel possibilities in prison.)

Acts 22:25 - 29 sets out Paul's standing as a Roman. Born a Roman citizen, he had all the rights and privileges of a Roman.

Emphasise the prejudice and hatred of the Jews and the reason for it – their misunderstanding of Paul's position of salvation by grace, not law. Their loyalty to the law and Jewish tradition blinded them to the gospel of grace that Paul preached.

'Judaisers' were those Jews who had embraced Christianity but believed that all new Christians must conform to all Jewish religious law to be saved. The Council of Jerusalem had already decided what was necessary for new Christians to observe. Acts 15:22 - 29 gives the ruling. The Judaisers did not agree with this.

When Paul preached God's love and grace, they thought he was undermining the law by which they had lived and served God for centuries. They felt that Paul was teaching heresy.

Jesus experienced the same opposition. Like Jesus, Paul faced that opposition squarely, knowing that God was with him. Opposition tested Jesus and Paul. Your young people may not face opposition in the same way as Jesus and Paul did, but they will certainly face opposition in other ways when they stand for Christ.

Guide them through this session so that they identify Paul's best defence against such opposition and the way God was with him throughout it. Knowing such facts can help them in times of opposition.

## GETTING STARTED

---

1. Relate the story of a Christian who faced opposition. The following story could be used:

Ever been persecuted at school for being a Christian? Salvationist Garth Hentzschel tells why it's worth it.

'When I was in Grade 10 there was a young girl who used to sit next to me. She was a beautiful girl on the outside but nasty on the inside. She fought to sit next to me so she could persecute me as a Christian.

One weekend, she went away and she got saved. On the Monday when she came back, she stood at the door of the classroom and said, 'Come here.' I thought, 'Oh no, she's going to give it to me' – I had been bashed at school as a Christian before. So I walked up, and she gave me a huge hug and a kiss on the cheek and said, 'Garth, I got saved.'

Through that, nearly all of our Grade 10 maths class got saved (and a lot of them are still Christians).

The teacher couldn't believe the change in the class. Although he didn't become a Christian then himself, he used to come and talk to the class about his personal problems. Here was a class of Christians who were getting their lives together and he wanted to know how to get his life together too.' (From the November 2003 issue of the *Venue*.)

**Or**

2. Ask the young people to think of a time in their lives when they had a problem or when they were going through tough times.

Ask them what helped them through. It was ... (make a list of suggestions, e.g.,

- a. a walk on their own;
- b. being in a quiet or beautiful place;
- c. finding someone who would listen to them;
- d. just having someone there who didn't talk much but was a comfort.)

**POINT**

We all have to learn how to react in times of opposition and hardships. In this session we will examine how Paul faced the troubles in his life and decide whether such actions will help us, too.



**VIDEO CLIP**



**LEADER TIP**

You could help to keep it moving quickly by having another leader ready with the answers to every fourth question.

You may like to video someone portraying Paul giving answers to the questions, allowing time on the tape for either the leader or a young person to ask the question during the approach.

Ask them how prayer and knowing that the Holy Spirit is present with them helps in times of trouble.

Or

- The movie *A walk to remember* is about a Christian girl, Jamie, being taunted by a group from her school. A boy, Landon, who has been in all her classes since she was little is forced to spend time with her and becomes intrigued with her faith and positive outlook on life.

Show the scene where Landon's ex-girlfriend, Belinda, plots to embarrass Jamie by computer imaging a photo of Jamie's face on a bikini clad body and distributing it throughout the school. This clip is about 55 minutes into the movie and lasts for about 2½ minutes. Stop the clip just after Landon intervenes.

## GOING DEEPER

### I. Interview via a Bible search

This is a long Bible search but it would be helpful to use all of it.

One leader or young person can be the interviewer.

When the question is asked, give the Bible reference so that everyone in the group can search for the answer. Having found the answer and thought about how to put it into their own words, a young person will stand and answer the question.

It will be necessary to write up the key replies, i.e. how Paul felt or reacted, so that these can be used during approach 2.

Question 1: Well Paul, what are you doing here in Jerusalem? My contacts tell me you're usually further west.

Answer: Romans 15:25 - 28.

Q2: So you expected it all to be really wonderful when you came here? You expected a big welcome?

A: Acts 20:22 - 23.

Q3: Paul, if you knew all that, why did you come?

A: Acts 20:24 -25.

Q4: Your friends aren't much use to you are they? You told them this and they didn't try to stop you?

A: Acts 21:10 - 14.

Q5: The Jews have tried to kill you. Yesterday they nearly succeeded. I couldn't understand what they were shouting. What was it?

A: Acts 21:27 - 30.

Q6: Paul, you've succeeded in causing the Roman garrison a great deal of trouble. They got you safely to the steps of the Temple yesterday and then they had to carry you bodily to stop the mob killing you. Then you had the nerve to ask to speak to the crowd. Who are you?

A: Acts 22:3 -5.

Q7: I know you persecuted Christians. But you became one of them. The mob heard you out while you described what happened. But something made them mad again. What happened?

A: Acts 22:20 - 23.

Q8: The Roman commander had you brought before the chief priests and the Council. But you had one group arguing against the other in no time. They had to rescue you again. Yet you were calm enough next morning. How do you do it?

A: Acts 23:1 - 11.

Q9: Felix the Governor kept you in prison for a long time, hoping for a bribe. What sort of conversations did you have with him?

A: Acts 24:10, 14 -16, 21, 24 -25.

Q10: Festus followed him as Governor. How did you get on with him?

A: Acts 24:27; Acts 25:1 - 12.

Q11: Paul, you've been shipwrecked, imprisoned, put in stocks, had death threats. Do you ever feel that your God isn't too interested in your safety?

A: Romans 8:35 -39.

Q12: You had a mixed reception when you preached to the Jews in Rome. What happened with them?

A: Acts 28:23 - 24.

Q13: But weren't you supposed to be an apostle to the Gentiles? Are you still doing that?

A: Acts 28:28, 31.

## 2. Paul's reactions to hardships

Have the young people read the list made during approach 1. Ask them what impresses them about Paul's reaction to hardship. (e.g., his faith that God was in control; his willingness to listen to God; he did not see that his safety was more important than preaching God's Word; he was ready to die for Jesus' sake; he spoke boldly about Jesus; etc.)

Ask the young people to list five of Paul's hardships and his reactions.

Then ask them to highlight the reactions that are good ways they could use when facing hardships themselves.

## 3. Paul preached the good news

a. From what has been learned about Paul, ask your group to answer the following questions.

- Was Paul a good man?
- Was he a wise man?
- Would you choose him as a friend?
- Was he honest with himself and others?
- Was he successful in the way the world judges success?

b. What was it about Paul's preaching that drew people to Jesus?

- He always pointed to Jesus and the gospel, never wanting praise for himself.
- He knew that God was utterly faithful and when He made a promise, it would be kept.
- He had a contagious faith which was shared with sincerity.
- He had one purpose in life.
- He was filled with spiritual energy.
- He used his mind to argue for the gospel not to justify himself.

Give the young people time to consider how many of these points apply to themselves.



### LEADER TIP

This is activity 1 and 2 on the work sheet.



### LEADER TIP

You could make a list as the young people come up with ideas.

**Discuss:** Would I be a more effective witness for Jesus if they were part of my life?

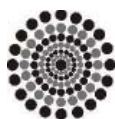
## TAKING IT HOME

---

Every Christian who stands for Jesus and the truth will have opposition at some time, in some way. For you it may be ridicule, loneliness or something else again. Paul had the lot, as well as physical persecution. Knowing how he coped could help you cope as well.

Read Romans 8:35 - 39 together.

Outline the promises in these verses and ask the group to pray one-sentence prayers based on these promises.



### LEADER TIP

You may find *The Message* translation of Romans 8:35 - 39 helpful.

## FOLLOW-THRU

---

This session could well be used to challenge the young people to consider how God has helped them when they have faced opposition or ridicule. The challenge to prepare and give their testimony in Get Involved and Grow in worship could be made.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

BARCLAY, William, *Daily Bible Study, Acts*, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh.

NEIL, William, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (The New Century Bible Commentary), Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1981.



**1.** Make a list of five hardships Paul faced and how he handled them.

- a.  When Paul was \_\_\_\_\_  
he \_\_\_\_\_
- b.  When Paul was \_\_\_\_\_  
he \_\_\_\_\_
- c.  Paul had to face \_\_\_\_\_  
so he \_\_\_\_\_
- d.  Faced by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e.  When Paul was \_\_\_\_\_  
he \_\_\_\_\_

**2.** Highlight the ones you think show Paul was wise in the handling of his problems.

Now consider two problems or difficulties you are facing, and explain how you could apply two of Paul's methods to overcome them.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**D  
A  
N  
G  
E  
R  
Z  
O  
N  
E**



**3** Even as a prisoner, Paul continued to preach the good news of the gospel and to write and encourage Christians to be faithful.

Write an explanation that you would give to a friend who asked why Paul did all this.

(Re-reading Romans 8:35 - 39 will be helpful.)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Paul knew that God was with him in all his circumstances.
- Paul always put preaching the gospel first.
- Paul believed God's promises.
- God will guide us in all our times of trial.
- We should never be ashamed of the gospel message.

Prayer does not help us avoid the demands of life, it provides for them.

START HERE

# This is Your Life, Paul.

Trace through these main events in Paul's life. Fill in the verses in the chapter that tell about this.

Acts 22:1 - \_\_\_\_.  
An honoured Jew and Pharisee. Became aware of Christians and persecuted them.



Acts 9:3 - \_\_\_\_ . Converted & commissioned to become apostle to the Gentiles.



Acts 15:44 - \_\_\_\_ . Misunderstood by Jews who thought that the law was more important than God's grace.



Roman 15:25 - \_\_\_\_ . Went to Jerusalem with relief money for Jerusalem Christians.



Acts 21:10 - \_\_\_\_ . Had been warned that he would be imprisoned in Jerusalem.



## DANGER ZONE

The crowd reacted when Paul told of his commission to the Gentiles. Acts 22:21 - \_\_\_\_



Paul gave his testimony to them. Acts 22:6 - \_\_\_\_



But Judaisers incited a riot in the Temple. Acts 21:27 - \_\_\_\_ ; 30 - \_\_\_\_



Was welcomed by Jerusalem church Acts 21:17 - \_\_\_\_



Paul had been born a Roman citizen and was therefore protected by Roman law.

Roman soldiers rescued him & brought him before the chief priests & Jewish council. Acts 22:30 - 23: 9.



While enemies plotted his death God was with Paul. Acts 23:11 - \_\_\_\_



The death plot failed. Acts 23: 16, 23, 24.



Kept as a prisoner by successive governors until he appealed to Caesar.

Shipwrecked on way to Rome but knew God would protect him. Acts 27:18 - \_\_\_\_

As a prisoner in Rome, he wrote to encourage Christians to be faithful and preached the gospel to Jews and Gentiles. Acts 28: \_\_\_\_

Paul's young nephew helped foil a murder plot on Paul's life.

## SESSION 15

# NO ADDITIVES NEEDED!

### FROM THE BIBLE

Paul's letter to the Colossians.

### CHECKLIST

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. For Getting Started 1 you will need to have material ready. If you plan to use the puzzle, see that you have sufficient photocopies of it for your group and prepare it as suggested.

For Getting Started 2 you will need to be able to write up a list.

There are three suggested teaching approaches. Aim to complete them all.

Approach 1 is a Bible search. Be familiar with the extra material in the Insights for the Leader so that you can fill in extra information if it is needed.

Approach 2 ties in with activity 1 on the work sheet.

Approach 3 reminds the young people of the need to grow up into Christ with a firm faith. There is an acrostic to be worked on and it would be helpful to have all but the missing words written out beforehand. Only uncover one line at a time so they do not race ahead.

## AIM

To help the young people understand the background to Paul's letter to the Colossians and its message for us today.

## OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ be familiar with the background to this letter;
- ❖ be aware that we are saved through Christ's death alone;
- ❖ understand that Christians live a new life in Christ.

## INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Colossae was a small town in the beautiful Lycus Valley, about 160 km east of Ephesus, in modern Turkey. (Have a look on a map from your Bible to see where this is.)

The church there was probably founded during Paul's three years in Ephesus (Acts 19). Two prominent men from Colossae – Epaphras and Philemon – became Christians and spread the Christian message in their home area (Colossians 1:6 - 7; 4:12 - 13; Philemon 1 - 2, 5).

The letters to Colossians and Philemon were written at the same time, the first to the church, the second to one member of it.

Epaphras visited Paul during his imprisonment in Rome, and gave him a generally encouraging report of the Colossian church. But one thing was causing him real concern. This was the spread of a false teaching.

The trouble at Colossae was 'syncretism' – a tendency to introduce ideas from other philosophies and religions as though they were on a level with Christian truth. It is interesting to note that this is also a great temptation today.

It is understandable that this was happening. There were Greeks and Jews in the Colossian church, as well as 'native' Phrygians. It was natural that they should cling to their own ideas and want to incorporate them into Christianity. It seemed harmless enough! But Paul knew that it struck at the heart of the Christian faith.

Some of the Colossians had been suggesting that they needed other supernatural agencies. They were used to having intermediaries between themselves and God – angels and spirits who surrounded God; and it is thought that they considered Jesus to be simply on the same level as these spirits or angels.

Some of the Jewish Colossians had been trying to retain circumcision,

their food laws and festivals (Colossians 2:11, 16) and in doing this they brought the whole basis of our acceptance by God into question. Either the sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient on its own, or it was not.

The idea of angel intermediaries (2:8) was a direct challenge to the supremacy of Christ. And the introduction of asceticism (severe bodily discipline) and high flown philosophy meant people relied on themselves and human wisdom (2:18 - 23) – which had already proved to be a failure.

Although Paul does not deal with these issues point by point, these are the thoughts that lie behind his letter. The Colossians needed to take a fresh hold of Christ, of His complete supremacy and utter sufficiency. This is Paul's theme.

Paul addressed the problem of false teaching which had superseded his 'Jesus is Lord' gospel, and had pushed the Lord Jesus from first and central place. So the heresy was that salvation could only be obtained through Jesus and ... something else. This is always a dangerous position. Beware of the Christian who insists or concentrates on adding secondary things to the gospel, like:

Jesus and the second coming;

Jesus and tongues;

Jesus and creation science;

and to bring it right to our doors – Jesus and uniform wearing;

Jesus and being a bandsman or songster.

None of these extra things is necessary for salvation, rather it's Jesus.

Jesus should not have to share His central position with any other ideas or philosophies.

In Colossians 1:15 - 23 Paul deals with the leadership of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the living expression of God Himself – active in the creation and the holding together of all that exists. He was first, He is first – in existence, in power, in position, He has first place in God's new creation and His new people, the church. He brought it into being. He is its Head. Through His death it is possible for us to become God's friends - this is the good news of the gospel.

Focusing on Jesus is of paramount importance (1:18).

It was Jesus who solved the problem of sin (1:20).

It was Jesus who defeated evil on the cross (2:15).

It was Jesus who put an end to the demands of religious legalism (2:11 - 12).

False argument was filtering into the Colossian church from different beliefs. It was misleading and dangerous. The Christian cannot afford to compromise either with near-Christian philosophy or with legalism. Both of these are man-centred. Christianity is Christ-centred – or it is nothing at all. We have all we need in Him. We do not need to invoke other spiritual powers or intermediaries (2:8, 23), because Christ is infinitely greater. No religious rite can give us more than we already have. Old Testament practices are only a shadow of the reality – which is Christ (2:16ff). He is our life. He is the One we must hold on to. We depend on Him, not on ourselves, our spirituality, our asceticism.

Reading the four chapters of Colossians in one sitting is strongly recommended.

## GETTING STARTED

---

1. Do an activity where you give the young people more material than they need, but expect them to use it all.

You could use the puzzle below. It has one more piece than is necessary for its completion.

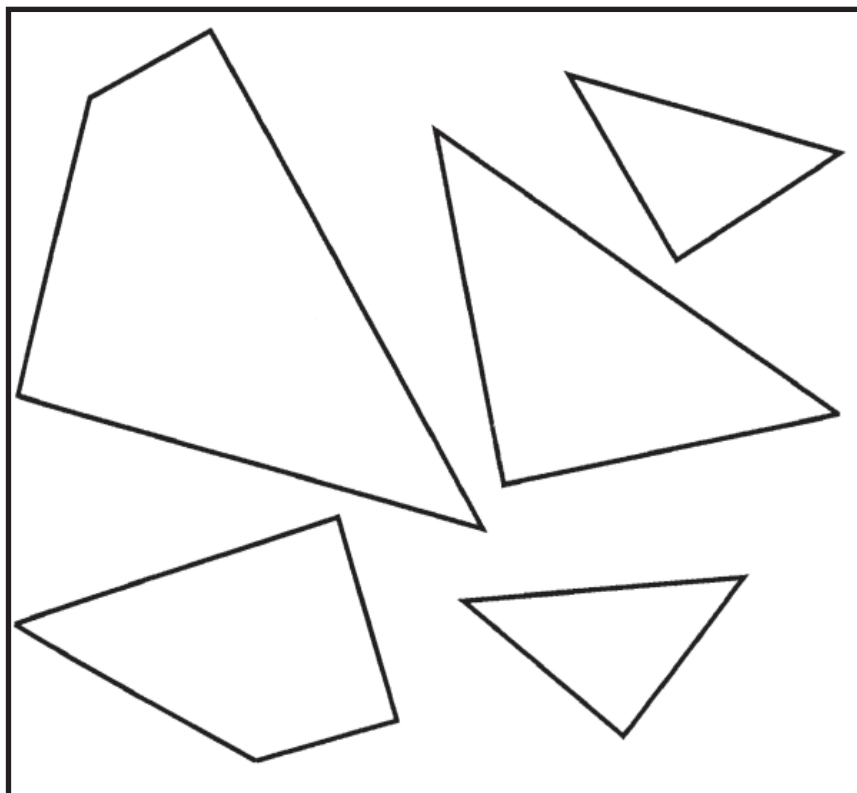
Make sufficient photocopies of the puzzle for your young people to work in pairs. Cut out the pieces beforehand (which will save time) or supply scissors so that the young people can cut them out.

Someone will finally realise that there is an extra piece left over.

**POINT**

It is misleading to be told that you need more than you do to complete a puzzle, isn't it? It is just as bad to be told you have to do more than you actually do to become a child of God.

In this session we are going to look at the letter Paul wrote to young Christians who were being told that they needed more than Christ to be true followers of God.



**POINT**

Getting to know a good friend always takes time and effort. In this session we want to consider how important it is to take the trouble to learn more about Jesus – the best friend we can ever have.

Or

2. Ask the young people to think of a close friend they have only known for about two years.

Ask them to suggest ways they got to know this friend and list these. E.g., talking together, sharing good times, telephone conversations, sharing problems, finding common interests.

## GOING DEEPER

---

### 1. Bible search

- a. The Christians of Colossae were confused by different ideas coming into their church. So Paul wrote to them to try to bring them back to the simple gospel message.

Read Colossians 1:5 - 6.

What was Paul doing in this opening part of his letter? (Encouraging the Colossians to remember the true message they had been taught and how God's grace became a reality for them.)

- b. But the Colossians had begun to think they needed something deep and mysterious if they were to have full salvation, so Paul told them God's secret (or mystery).

Read Colossians 1:27.

(God's secret mystery is available for everyone – 'Christ is in us', which means we 'all share in the glory of God'.)

- c. Paul described Jesus in a wonderful way in Colossians 2:3. Read it together. ('He is the key that opens all the hidden treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge.')
- d. Some Jewish Christians were insisting that circumcision was still necessary to become a Christian. They were claiming that being circumcised made them super-spiritual. What did Paul say to them?

Read Colossians 2:11.

(Paul says that all Christians have received 'a circumcision made by Christ, not by men' because they had put off the power of the sinful self, that is their old way of pleasing themselves, so that they might live a new life in the power of the Holy Spirit given to them by Christ.)

- e. What was the only way to be made spiritually alive?

Read Colossians 2:13 - 15.

(Paul says that all Christians have been made alive by God through what Christ did on the cross. His death removed the sin and sinful desires.)

- f. What false wisdom did Paul attack?

Read Colossians 2:20 - 23.

(Some members of the church were trying to enforce different rituals on to the congregation:

- not eating certain foods;
- worship of angels;
- false humility – which led to pride in their achievements;
- severe treatment of the body – which included whipping themselves for wrongdoing.

Paul reminded them that this had no real value in controlling physical passions.)

- g. What did Paul say they should concentrate on, instead of these secondary things?

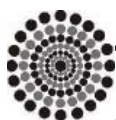
Read Colossians 3:1 - 3, 8 - 11.

(Paul told them to live up to their true position in Christ. Whoever they are, and whatever experiences they claim to have, all Christians stand equal before God. All have the same temptations to face, and there is only one way for all of them to overcome such temptations: 'Keep your minds fixed on things there (heaven), not on things here on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God ... There is no longer any distinction between Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves and free men, but Christ is all and Christ is in all.')

- h. What did Paul recommend to those who were following a false set of values based on their own worthless speculations?

Read Colossians 3:12 - 17.

(He told them that they ought again to remind themselves that the true ambition of the Christian must be to become like Christ in the way they live and treat others.)



## LEADER TIP

This is activity 1 on the work sheet.

### 2. Consider Jesus

Read together Colossians 1:15 - 23.

Make a list of the attributes of Jesus Christ that are mentioned in this passage.

Select three of them and write down what difference knowing these attributes of Jesus makes to your life.

We belong to Jesus, and to our Heavenly Father and to each other. We are 'in Christ', so we have a new identity. What difference should that make to:

- how we see ourselves?
- how we see each other?
- how we see God?

### 3. There's nothing more to add

Read Colossians 2:6 - 7. It talks about living in union with Jesus Christ. It goes on to talk about keeping your roots deep in him. Think of a growing tree and what that means.

Paul insists that faith in Jesus is all that is needed in the Christian's life. No other additions are necessary. Christ's ability to save us is complete and this is why we must keep growing in Him.

Using Colossians 1:23 to get ideas, ask the young people to help find the suitable word to complete this acrostic on faith. (The actual words may not be mentioned, but the meaning of the word is there.)

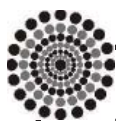
Faith in God comes through Jesus. This faith must be

A \_\_\_\_\_ (abiding) faith – constantly depending on Jesus.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (immovable) faith – cannot be shaken.

T \_\_\_\_\_ (tested) faith. It stands on a firm foundation.

H \_\_\_\_\_ (hoping) faith. It fills us with a wonderful hope that is able to overcome all trials and doubts.



## LEADER TIP

Have the letters and the rest of the acrostic message written up ready.

This is activity 2 on the work sheet.

## FOLLOW-THRU

This session reminds us of the importance of knowing Christ. It would be a good session to offer to the young people several passages of Scripture that could be memorised for the challenge 'Memorise Scripture'. Suitable passages would be: Colossians 1:15 - 23 or Colossians 3:12 - 17.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALEXANDER, D. and P., *The New Lion Handbook to the Bible*, Lion Publishing, 1999.

DRANE, J., *Paul*, Lion Publishing, 1982.

BARCLAY, W., *Daily Study Bible, The Letters to Philipians, Colossians, Thessalonians*.

## TAKING IT HOME

There can be no doubt that Jesus Christ has a unique position in the Christian's life.

As Lord, He has authority to direct His followers in ways that promote God's Kingdom on earth. And that authority is because He is above all other authorities.

As the unique Son of God, He is superior to angels and any other intermediaries.

As Saviour, He alone provides salvation for His people.

Allow time for your young people to share if there was a main point or Scripture verse that spoke to them today.

Read Colossians 1:15 - 23.

Make a list of the attributes of Jesus that it mentions.

1.

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

no additives needed!

Select three of them and explain how knowing these truths about Jesus affects your life.

---



---



---

2.

Using Colossians 1:23 make up an acrostic on the word faith.

**F** \_\_\_\_\_

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

**I** \_\_\_\_\_

**T** \_\_\_\_\_

**H** \_\_\_\_\_





# JUNIOR WORKSHEET

Read these verses from Colossians. Write out the one you think best sums up what Paul wanted to teach the Colossians. 2:8 - 10; 1:27; 1:18; 1:23; 2:2 - 3.

3.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

We have a gospel that matches the hour,  
We have discovered the true source of power,  
Man is a weakling, but he can be strong,  
Choosing the right and refusing the wrong.  
Man has no meaning, no purpose, no soul,  
Till he discovers that God is his goal.  
This is the gospel that claims all our powers,  
This is good news for this age of ours.

4.

How do the words of this chorus tie in with what Paul wrote to the Colossians?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### HIGHLIGHTS

- People are always trying to add unnecessary extras to how we receive salvation.
- Christ's work in bringing salvation to us is complete.
- 'Jesus is Lord' is central to our Christian belief.
- It is Christ who gives Christians new life.

3.

Read these verses from Colossians. Write out the one you think best sums up what Paul wanted to teach the Colossians. 2:8 - 10; 1:27; 1:18; 1:23; 2:2 - 3.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Paul was in prison in Rome when he wrote this letter.

Paul said that finding out about Christ was like finding a key to a treasure chest.

Part of obedience is listening to what we do not want to hear.

How could you use Paul's letter to answer people who say that to be saved you must accept certain rituals or do certain activities besides believing in Jesus Christ?

4.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Onesimus, Philemon's slave, went with Tychicus to deliver this letter.

## SESSION 16

### FROM THE BIBLE

Selected references.

### CHECKLIST



There are three suggested Getting Started activities. Getting Started 1 is a 'Finish the story' game based on a pretend return from death experience.

For Getting Started 2 the video or DVD *What dreams may come* is used. This needs to be cued ready to show only the short segment described.

For Getting Started 3 you will need plain paper, scissors and glue plus the relevant pages from the *War Cry* and newspapers.

There are three approaches and you need to do all of them. Approach 1 looks at the biblical truths concerning heaven and activity 1 ties in with this.

Approach 2 has a Bible search on hell – set out in activity 2.

Approach 3 gives the background on the term 'promoted to glory' and there is a description on the back of the work sheet of Catherine Booth's final days.

The Taking it Home gives opportunity for a time of self expression through painting and it is important that you have all the required materials ready to save time. Have large sheets of paper, paints and brushes and cleaning cloths already laid out.

# HEAVEN IS BETTER THAN THIS!

## AIM

To help the young people realise that 'heaven is a wonderful place.'

## OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ be familiar with biblical truths concerning heaven and hell;
- ❖ understand that trust in Christ removes the fear of death;
- ❖ know the background to the Army's phrase 'promoted to glory'.

## INSIGHTS FOR LEADERS

For many young people an understanding of the terms 'heaven' and 'hell' may only be what they have learned from their early childhood. 'Heaven' will probably have associations of being a nice place and 'hell' a place for wicked people with lots of flames and heat. Differences of opinion about these terms are more likely due to our own ideas than from scriptural facts, e.g. some people think of heaven as simple, others would like heaven ornate; some would like hell to be okay because all their mates will be there, others think of it as unending punishment.

This session aims to give the biblical facts without any bias. In your preparation make sure you are clear in your own thinking about these terms.

Note that there have been two other related sessions in this unit dealing with 'last things' (session 7) and Christ's second coming (session 8), so keep your teaching to this session's objectives. (There is also a session in unit 3 on death and dying.)

The starting point in this session is a discussion of some return from death experiences. These are topical with teenagers and often form the basis of movies and books. But return from death experiences are not superior to scriptural teaching and **it would be wise to spend the bulk of your time getting the facts straight before going off on a tangent discussing whether someone really died or not.**

The following short explanations are helpful:

### What is heaven?

In thinking about heaven we have only earthly language to describe unearthly things. While our minds are to be trusted within their limits,

they do have their limits, and in thinking about heaven we are trying to escape the limits of the three-dimensional world in which we are placed.

The New Testament teaches that we have eternal life. It is here hampered by the world, the flesh and the devil, but then we will enjoy it without any hindrance whatsoever. 'So shall we ever be with the Lord' (1 Thessalonians 4:17) – that is enough for faith, and wisdom will leave the matter there.

### **What is hell?**

In the book of Revelation an attempt has been made to describe heaven in detail, but only symbols are used. Pictures of hell are similarly drawn. Outside Jerusalem in the valley of Hinnom was a rubbish tip, continually burning, called Gehenna. Hell was like a sanitary arrangement for preventing sin from spreading. The wicked were burnt with fire (Mark 9:43; John 15:6) and the idea of 'everlasting burning' is figurative. Hell is any place where God is not. What we should remember is that Jesus regarded hell as torturous and tormenting like the figures used to describe it.

### **Can a God of love condemn a soul to hell?**

Hell is never the will of God, for He is 'not willing that any should perish' (2 Peter 3:9). The sufferings of those who persist in rejecting God's love in Christ are self-imposed, for they have contracted out of heaven.

### **'Promoted to glory'**

This phrase is best summed up by the first paragraph from the *Salvation Army Ceremonies* book in the chapter on funerals:

'The funeral of a salvationist is characterised by a note of triumph. The faithful soldier is 'promoted to glory'. Much as his loved ones will miss him, they do not mourn as those without hope, but give thanks to God for his life and work. A Salvation Army funeral therefore seeks to reflect this sure and certain hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ, and the triumph of faith even in sorrow.'

## **GETTING STARTED**

---

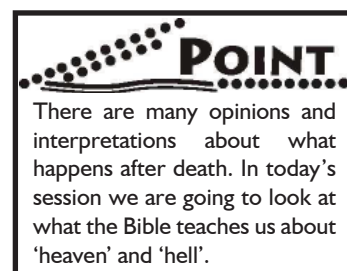
### **I. Finish a story**

Explain to the young people that you are going to start a story and you want them to finish it. If you have a large group, then each young person can make up one or two sentences only. If your group is small, give them a few minutes to speak before stopping them mid-story or let them naturally come to a halt.

Give the background to the story: There has been a serious accident. You (the story teller) are no longer on the critical list, and you claim to have seen a future life.

Now begin the story for the young people to continue: 'I know I am dying. The pain is unbearable. I can hear voices around me. They sound urgent. Doctors and nurses asking for instruments and vital signs. There is a pause. A voice says: 'It's no good we're losing him/her.' An uncomfortable buzzing noise begins ...'

If the story falters at any point, either move on to the next person to take over or add a few sentences of your own.





## VIDEO CLIP

Or

### 2. Video clip

Show the clip from the movie *What dreams may come* where Chris meets Leona and she escorts him into heaven. Chris has died in a car accident and is coming to terms with his own death. This is about 50 minutes into the movie and the clip goes for about 2½ minutes and ends with his wife Annie reminiscing.

Discuss the movie's image of heaven reminding the young people that this is just someone's impression of what heaven is like.

Or

### 3. Death notices

Have recent copies of *the War Cry* ready for the young people to search through and find the 'Promoted to glory' section. They can select one, cut it out and paste it on a sheet of paper. Now do the same exercise with death notices from a newspaper. How is the 'Promoted to glory' notice different?

When Salvationists die, we say they have been 'promoted to glory', i.e., that through death, they are rewarded by a promotion to better things.

**POINT**

Today's session explains why it is wonderful to know that although we feel sad when someone leaves us here on earth, we can rejoice because they have been promoted to glory.

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. What about heaven?

- Ask your group what words/pictures come into their mind when they think of heaven.

Heaven is most simply defined as where God is. The best way to answer our questions about heaven is to look in our Bibles and discover what is said there.

- What is heaven like?

People don't really ask about heaven out of a desire to go, but just a desire to know. We are just as curious to know details about heaven as about any other exotic or distant place. Look up Isaiah 57:15; Revelation 7:17, 21:23, 7:16, 21:4 and Hebrews 11:16.

- Who will be in heaven?

This can be a worrying question at times when young people feel down. Others who are full of self confidence rarely consider they won't be there. Answering this question will get your young people thinking about heaven as reality and about whether they will be one of those who will be there.

God is the central figure in heaven (Revelation 22:5) and Jesus shares the heavenly house with the Father (John 14:2). Besides the heavenly hosts of angels in heaven, there are people whose names are on heaven's roll (Revelation 21:27). We know who will NOT be in heaven (Revelation 21:8), but rather than wondering who will or will not be there, we should make sure we ourselves will be there.

- How can we be sure we will be in heaven?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:14. We will be there because Christ paid the admission price. God does not let us in because He is impressed with our kindness or sincerity. We get in because we believe that Jesus saves us. All who believe in Jesus will be there. (Romans 3:21, 22)



## LEADER TIP

Activity 1 on the work sheet can be done as you work through this approach. Ask a question, look up the Bible verse and complete the sentences. Leave doing the wonderword until later.

- What will we do in heaven?  
Read Revelation 5:9. Everybody in heaven appears to sing.

‘How boring!’ may be the cry from some young people! Music and heaven seem to go hand in hand. The song is new because it is both spontaneous and irrepressible and it is impossible not to sing because it is a response to God’s grace, power, love and peace.

There is a chorus which says:  
‘Heaven is a wonderful place,  
Filled with glory and grace,  
I want to see my Saviour’s face,  
Heaven is a wonderful place.’

## 2. What about hell?

The final destiny of the wicked is hell. There are various descriptions of hell given in the Bible.

- Who was hell originally prepared for? (Matthew 25:41) (The devil and his angels.)
- What is hell according to 2 Thessalonians 1:9? (Eternal punishment, separation from God.)
- Who is in hell? (2 Thessalonians 1:7b - 9. People who have rejected the Lord.)
- What two images are associated with hell in Mark 9:48? (Worms and fire.)
- In Luke 16:19 - 31, especially verses 27 - 28, what did the rich man remember? (His previous life – his family.)

Seniors may want to spend more time looking at this story of the rich man and Lazarus from Luke 16.

For some of your group the teaching on hell may seem inconsistent with the love of God. But, God in His love, has done everything necessary to deliver us from eternal punishment. His justice requires that He punish sin, but His love provides salvation freely for all who will accept it. Those in hell are there because they refused or ignored God’s love; they are solely responsible for their condition.

## 3. What is meant by the term ‘promoted to glory’?

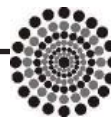
To a Salvationist, death is not a misfortune or a ‘passing away’. It is progressing to the next part of the Christian life. In reporting the death of a Salvationist *The War Cry* of December 14, 1882, introduced a new expression and ever since, when soldiers die, it is reported that they have been ‘promoted to glory’.

Read or tell the story of Catherine Booth’s dying which is on the work sheet.

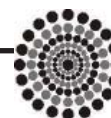
The ‘homecoming’ of Catherine Booth gives us a beautiful example of how Christians can face death with courage and faith. It also shows us how the funeral service of a Salvationist can be used to the honour and glory of God.

### LEADER TIP

Work through activity 2 on the work sheet.



### FOR SENIORS



## TAKING IT HOME

Have some painting equipment prepared. Give each young person one large sheet of blank paper and a choice of paints and brushes.

Ask them to paint in symbols or self expression what they now understand

about heaven and hell.

This will give opportunity for you to question their understanding of the session by how they explain what they are painting. A display of their completed works with an appropriate title should be made.

In a time when everyone dressed in black to show they were mourning the end of life, Salvationists wore a white armband with a red crown and cross on it to show they were rejoicing that the dead person had been promoted to glory.

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

In Get Involved and Grow in worship there is a challenge to pray publicly in a meeting. Why not suggest that the young people consider how, now that they know death is 'promotion to glory', they can help a person who is grieving and that they compose a prayer to pray on behalf of those in the corps who are grieving.

## **FURTHER READING**

---

*Chosen to be a Soldier*, Chapter XII, section 7, 'Soldiers Bound for Glory', The Campfield Press, 1977.

We believe, S.P. & S., 1964.

MALZ, Betty, *My Glimpse of Eternity*, Hodder and Stoughton.

GILMORE, John, *Probing Heaven*, Baker Book House Company, U.S.A., 1989.

LITTLE, Paul E., *Know What You Believe*, Anzea, 1980.

*Salvation Story*, Chapter 11, MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall 1998.

Solution to activity 1 on the work sheet:

\* Heaven is a **HIGH** and **HOLY** place. (Isaiah 57:15) \* Heaven is a **HAPPY** place. (Revelation 7:17) \* Heaven is filled with God's **GLORY** . (Revelation 21:23) \* There is no **HUNGER** or **THIRST** in heaven. (Revelation 7:16) \* There will be no tears, **DEATH** , **CRYING** or **PAIN** . (Revelation 21:4) \* There is no place in heaven for **COWARDS** , **TRAITORS** , perverts, **MURDERERS** , the **IMMORAL** .... or **LIARS** . (Revelation 21:8) \* The Lord God will be the **LIGHT** so there will be no need for **LAMPS** or **SUNLIGHT**. (Revelation 22:5) \* Our **NAMES** must be written in the Lamb's **BOOK** of the living, to enter heaven. (Revelation 21:27) \* Jesus has gone to **PREPARE** a place for us in His Father's **HOUSE** , (John 14:2) \* Heaven is a **BETTER** place than here. (Hebrews 11:16) \* All in heaven will **SING** a new song. (Revelation 5:9) \* All who have died **BELIEVING** in Jesus will **BE** there. (1 Thessalonians 4:14)

SOLUTION TO WONDERWORD: **HEAVEN IS AN AWESOME PLACE**

# HEAVEN IS BETTER THAN THIS!



Read the Bible verses to find the missing words, then find them in the wonderword.

\* Heaven is a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ place. (Isaiah 57:15) \* Heaven is a \_\_\_\_\_ place. (Revelation 7:17) \* Heaven is filled with God's \_\_\_\_\_. (Revelation 21:23) \* There is no \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven. (Revelation 7:16) \* There will be no tears, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. (Revelation 21:4) \* There is no place in heaven for \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, perverts, \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ .... or \_\_\_\_\_. (Revelation 21:8) \* The Lord God will be the \_\_\_\_\_ so there will be no need for \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. (Revelation 22:5) \* Our \_\_\_\_\_ must be written in the Lamb's \_\_\_\_\_ of the living, to enter heaven. (Revelation 21:27) \* Jesus has gone to \_\_\_\_\_ a place for us in His Father's \_\_\_\_\_, (John 14:2) \* Heaven is a \_\_\_\_\_ place than here. (Hebrews 11:16) \* All in heaven will \_\_\_\_\_ a new song. (Revelation 5:9) \* All who have died \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_ there. (1 Thessalonians 4:14)

D	E	A	T	H	I	G	H	H	S	E	B
L	E	S	H	O	A	A	V	P	E	E	N
I	I	R	I	L	S	P	M	I	T	A	T
G	L	O	R	Y	I	A	P	T	N	A	H
H	A	T	S	E	L	A	E	Y	B	W	G
T	R	I	T	E	G	R	R	S	O	C	I
C	O	A	O	S	I	N	G	S	O	O	L
R	M	R	M	N	S	E	U	P	K	W	N
Y	M	T	I	E	S	U	O	H	L	A	U
I	I	A	M	U	R	D	E	R	E	R	S
N	P	A	P	R	E	P	A	R	E	D	A
G	N	I	V	E	I	L	E	B	C	S	E

Now use all the letters that you have not circled in the wonderword to work out this message.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.

- HIGHLIGHTS**
- Those who reject Christ go to hell.
  - Christians can face death with courage and faith.
  - Heaven is where God is.
  - Heaven is a wonderful place.
  - Hell is where God is not.



2

## What a hellish idea!

a. Who was hell originally prepared for? (Matthew 25:41)

\_\_\_\_\_

b. What is hell according to 2 Thessalonians 1:9?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Who is in hell? (2 Thessalonians 1:8)

d. What two images are associated with hell in Mark 9:48?

\_\_\_\_\_

e. In Luke 16:27 - 28 what did the rich man remember?

What would be a good description of hell from this story? (e.g. 'Regrets make hell hell')

\_\_\_\_\_

There are 162 texts in the New Testament about the doom of the unrepentant and 70 of them were uttered by Jesus.

3

## Catherine Booth's Homecoming



□ Early in 1888 it was discovered that Catherine had cancer. Surgery was performed, but the progress of the disease could not be stopped. William, who was always deeply moved by the suffering of others, felt Catherine's pain as keenly as if it were his own.

□ Often as he left Catherine's room, he would break down – yet he somehow managed to get on with his work. Day and night he scribbled and revised his notes on how to help the poor, interrupting his work only to pray, 'Oh, God, help my darling.'

□ Catherine's bedroom became the meeting place where the Army's expanding social policy was talked about and shaped. In sickness, as in health, she was still 'The Army Mother.'

□ Her suffering stretched out for two years, but her faith remained strong. 'Don't be concerned about your dying,' she wrote to friends. 'Only go on living well, and the dying will be all right.' On another occasion she said, 'I know I can leave it all in the hands of God.'

□ On October 2, 1890, she grew much worse. William sat beside her, his hand in hers, and felt her ease the thin gold wedding ring from her finger and slip it on his own. 'By this token we were united for all time,' she said, 'and by it now we are united for eternity.' Quietly Booth accepted this expression of love.

□ Two days later, early in the morning of October 4, Catherine went home to be with the Lord. Only William was present during her final moments. She died in his arms.

□ Her funeral was huge – like one for royalty, for thousands of people from all walks of life were present.

□ At the funeral white streamers fluttered from flagpoles, and a white badge gleamed on every soldier's arm. This was the Army way; they would not mourn in black. Catherine was in heaven, and white was the sign of rejoicing, a symbol of her promotion to Glory.

When our days are gone, we'll find death is not night at all, but breaking sun.



# REGENERATION IS NEEDED

## SESSION 17

### AIM

To help the young people clarify their understanding of the three essential steps to salvation through a study of Doctrine 7.

### OBJECTIVES

During this session the young people will be challenged to consider the importance of:

- ❖ true repentance toward God;
- ❖ active faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;
- ❖ the changed life which comes with regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Knowing and understanding what we believe makes each one of us better able to 'be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you.' (1 Peter 3:15, GNB). This is why study of doctrine is so essential.

As the young people's thinking patterns develop, they can deepen their understanding of the great truths contained in this doctrinal statement.

In this session we study Doctrine 7 which says: 'We believe that repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.'

The three steps:

1. repentance toward God;
2. faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;
3. regeneration by the Holy Spirit;

have been made simplistic in the session so that the young people can go away from the session remembering that to have received salvation:

1. we need to be sorry;
2. we need to believe;
3. we need to be different.

If you reinforce these statements enough times, the young people will have a solid understanding of the teaching in Doctrine 7.

The following information on Doctrine 7 is adapted from chapter 7 in John Coutts' book *This We Believe*, pages 79 - 85.

In the sixteenth chapter of Acts we read about the adventures of Paul and Silas at Philippi. Here they were put in prison and set free by an earthquake. The jailer thought about killing himself, but changed his mind when he found the prisoners had not escaped. 'Men, what must I do to

### FROM THE BIBLE

Colossians 3:7 - 14 and selected verses.

### CHECKLIST ✓

There are two ideas for the Getting Started activities. You would need to have a reasonably large group to play the game suggested in Getting Started 1. Make sure that you understand the directions so that you can explain them quickly. For Getting Started 2 you will need to have writing materials and a chart or board for yourself to make a composite list of their ideas.

There are four suggested teaching approaches. You will need to use them all to teach the whole doctrine. In approach 1 the young people are asked to write a reply to the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' This will give you a good idea of their grasp of this great truth. Doctrine 7 is then examined and their answers compared with the doctrine. Have the three steps already written up so that you are ready to write on them in this approach. Remember that constant reference to these steps throughout the session will reinforce these statements.

Approach 2 uses explanation, discussion, Bible verses to be read and has an extra segment for Seniors. Allocation of your time is important so that the next two approaches are treated properly. A similar pattern is used in the following two approaches as the need for faith and the need to be different are taught.

Activities 2 and 3 on the work sheet tie in with approach 3.

For approach 4 you will need to have the chart ready for the 'Before and after' lists.

be saved?’ was his cry.

‘Believe in the Lord Jesus’ was Paul’s answer (Acts 16:30, 31, RSV).

The apostle was offering hope to a desperate man! He stated clearly the second of the three conditions which The Salvation Army’s Articles of Faith lay down as necessary for someone to be right with God. These are:

Repentance toward God.

Faith in Jesus Christ.

Regeneration (re-birth) by the Holy Spirit.

## **REPENTANCE**

The word ‘repent’ means to ‘turn around’. This gives us a picture of people going astray, or walking in the wrong direction, who then decided to do an ‘about-turn’ and changed their course.

Repentance is more than just feeling sorry. Judas Iscariot felt sorrow for what he had done (remorse), but this led him to self-destruction instead of true repentance.

True repentance includes both *feeling* and *acting*. We must feel sorry for what we have done and be ready to do something about it. Zacchaeus declared, ‘If I have cheated anyone, I am ready to repay him four times over’ (Luke 19:8, GNB).

In the Bible repentance means *turning back to God*. This was a continuous message the prophets gave to the Children of Israel.

Jesus followed in that great tradition when He came into Galilee declaring: ‘The time has come; the Kingdom of God is near; repent ...’ (Mark 1:15, NIV).

## **FAITH**

After calling on his countrymen to repent, Jesus summoned them to ‘believe the good news’ (Mark 1:15). Later on Paul was to advise the jailer at Philippi to ‘believe in the Lord Jesus’ (Acts 16:31, RSV). ‘Belief’ (or ‘faith’) is certainly one of the key words in Christian doctrine.

We talk about faith in two ways. Firstly, with the mind or reason, a person believes that certain things are true. This ‘intellectual faith’ we will call ‘believing that ...’.

Secondly, with the heart, or will, a person commits him/herself to something or somebody. This ‘heart-faith’, or trust, we will call ‘believing in...’.

True faith in God includes both of these ways. We cannot believe in or trust God if we are not sure whether there is any God at all! As the writer to the Hebrews points out, anyone who comes to God must ‘believe that He exists’ (Hebrews 11:6).

Intellectual faith by itself is not sufficient either.

James warns us in his letter: ‘You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder’ (James 2:19, NIV).

So we believe that Jesus died to save us and we believe in His power to save and keep us. After the resurrection of Jesus, Paul became the champion of faith. ‘Belief in the good news’ now becomes ‘belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the good news!’

## **REGENERATION**

The followers of Jesus felt that a great change had come over them. They

were no longer slaves to sin and bad habits and they were able to live lives of fulfilment and joy. This great change they described in various ways.

Sometimes they compared it to a change of clothes: 'You have *put off* the old nature ...' says Colossians 3:9, 10, RSV, 'and have *put on* the new nature.' Paul speaks of a 'new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17, RSV) and, in Romans 6:3, 4, he speaks of the new life in Christ as *burial* and *resurrection*.

The most famous comparison of all, however, is found in John's Gospel, where we read of 're-birth' or 'regeneration'. 'To all who received him ... he gave the right to become children of God' (John 1:12, NIV). In His discussion with Nicodemus Jesus declares, 'No one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again' (John 3:3, GNB). This new life that comes after we are saved is the work of the Holy Spirit.

There is one sure test of the Spirit's presence: 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God' (1 John 4:7, RSV).

Just as the outward sign of true repentance is the willingness to make up for the wrong we have done, so the outward sign of re-birth is Christian love.

## GETTING STARTED

---

NOTE: Neither of these ideas is a perfect example of how salvation is obtained, but they should help the young people to think about the importance of and the need for salvation.

### I. Game

Have the group sit in a circle and send three young people outside. Give them the following instructions on a slip of paper so that they can study it while they are outside.

'You are trapped on the fifteenth floor of a burning building. Sitting in the group inside is someone who can save you. Ask as many questions to as many people as you can to find that person. **BUT REMEMBER** that you have thirty seconds to find the right person before you 'die'.'

Read the same message to the group inside and explain to them that nobody is specifically the one to help. Instead, as soon as the person in trouble asks a question that shows he/she genuinely sees the desperation of the situation and how badly help is needed, then the person being asked will respond. e.g., 'Are you my rescuer?' asked in an offhand manner brings a 'NO' response. 'Will YOU help me?' with the emphasis on the 'you' brings a 'NO' response but a desperate enquiry, 'PLEASE, will you help me?' receives a YES!' (If the members of your group are not sure, ask them to look to you for a nod or shake before they respond.)

REMEMBER that the enquirer only has thirty seconds to ask, so have someone timing who will pronounce the person 'dead' if time runs out.

The other two taking part may watch the first enquirer to try to work out how the game works.

## POINT

It would be terrible if people would not come to our rescue because we sounded as though we didn't really care whether we were saved or not.

It would sound ridiculous to suggest that people could die because they do not recognise the seriousness of their situation or are too proud to seek help. Yet, in their spiritual life, this is what many people do. It is important to know about God's gift of salvation and this is what we want to think about in this session.

## POINT

People in life threatening situations would be very foolish not to accept the help that they need. Yet, all the time, people are rejecting God's plan for the saving of their souls (which are much more important than their bodies).

In this session we want to consider how God's plan for our eternal salvation depends upon the steps we take to accept it.



## LEADER TIP

Have some steps already drawn and write the three steps necessary to salvation on the appropriate step as the young people call them out. Make sure that you leave sufficient room so that as you deal with the three steps you can write the three 'needs' under the original wording of the doctrine.

See diagram over the page.

This is also activity 1 on the work sheet and could be used at the end of the session to recap the main points.

If they all 'died', a young person in the 'know' could then have a turn, using the correct question immediately, and preferably to someone who had refused help to the others. This will just add to their confusion!

Or

### 2. Discussion

Discuss with your group what thoughts must go through the mind of someone who is in a desperate life-threatening situation.

Each member or small group may like to consider different examples and then report back to the main group. (Paper and pens would be helpful to list ideas.)

E.g., A person trapped in a burning building.

An injured person lying on the edge of a cliff.

A person swept from a boat in a storm.

A person trapped in a car after a serious accident.

A swimmer being swept out to sea in a dangerous rip.

List the various thoughts that are presented.

Try to see that these ideas are included:

How did I get into this mess?

I need help really badly.

If I ever get out of this situation, I'll be different.

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. Doctrine 7

Ask the young people to tell you the necessary steps to find Jesus. Don't worry about the order to begin with, just write up all their ideas. Then ask them which of these are absolutely necessary in the steps to salvation.

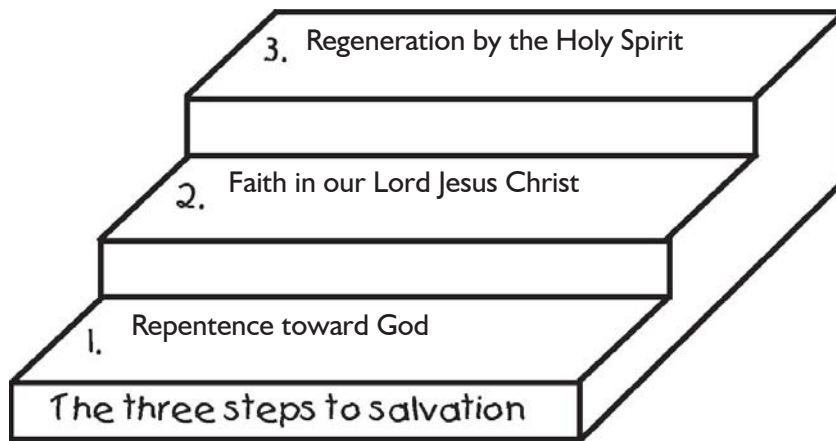
Now show Doctrine 7 that you have previously written out. (You may need to explain the word 'regeneration' – new birth; new life or a positive new attitude to life.)

Have the young people read Doctrine 7 together. Ask them to compare it with their own ideas. Is anything omitted or mentioned in their reply that is not in the doctrine?

Do they need to add to their statement because they had left an important step out?

Ask them to look at the doctrine again and identify the definite three steps that it mentions:

- i. Repentance.
- ii. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- iii. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit.



## 2. The need to be sorry

### a. Explanation

- Some people find it very easy to say that they are sorry and just as easy to repeat the mistake again and again.
- Others say they are sorry, but are really only sorry that they have been caught.
- Then there are other people who are so overwhelmed by what they have done that they resolve that such a mistake will never happen again.

We call this 'being sorry enough to give the sin up'.

**Discuss:** Which of these ways of feeling sorry is more genuine?

- Do you know that the word 'repentance' means?

It means changing one's mind, or turning from one thing to another.

When applied to someone seeking salvation, it means that the sinner changes his/her direction, determined, by the help of God, to turn from pleasing self to pleasing God. So, people seeking salvation must firstly see what an offence sin is to God and feel genuinely sorry that they have grieved God by the way they have been living.

### b. Role play extreme forms of repentance

Different young people may like to show ways people try to prove they are sorry, e.g., beating chests, wailing, banging heads, wringing hands.

**Discuss:** What outward signs really prove how genuine our sorrow is?

### c. Bible search

Look up the following references. What do they all have in common?

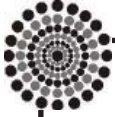
Ezra 9:6; Luke 5:8; 2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51:3.

(They are all cries of repentance as people have recognised their sin and felt the need to be sorry.)

### d. Explanation of words often used with Doctrine 7

Write up each word one at a time. Ask the seniors if they have heard the word used and what they think it means. Try to lead them to definitions like the ones in the brackets.





## LEADER TIP

STEP 1: Write 'The need to be sorry' under 'repentance toward God' on step 1 as you remind the young people that this is the first step to salvation.

CONVICTION ('I have done wrong.')

HATRED OF SIN ('I do not like doing wrong.')

CONTRITION ('I am sorry I have done wrong.')

RENUNCIATION ('I will not do that wrong again.')

CONFESSION ('I will tell God I have done wrong.')

CONSECRATION ('I will give myself to God.')

RESTITUTION ('I will put my wrongs right where I can.')

### 3. The need to believe

#### a. Explanation

Belief or faith is a key word used in Christian doctrine.

With our mind we can believe that certain things are true.

When we know and trust someone, we can believe in their ability to help us.

With our heart we can commit ourselves to somebody or something. We can believe in as well as believe that.

True faith in God and in Jesus' ability to save us covers both of these ideas of faith.

We cannot believe in God if we don't believe that He exists.

James warned us that it is 'no big deal' to believe that God exists. Even the demons have faith like that! (James 2:19)

We need to exercise our faith in God and in His wonderful gift of salvation.

#### b. How trusting am I?

Ask the young people to fill in the quiz on the work sheet.

When it comes to trusting, how would you describe yourself?

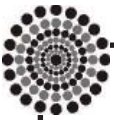
- I think things through.
- I act too quickly.
- I weigh up all sides.
- I put off making a decision.
- I am scared about making decisions.
- I am a push over for a sob story.
- I say, 'Seeing is believing'.
- I can trust someone I look up to.

Consider what was discussed in the Getting Started activity about faith. When a person is in a life-threatening situation, they have no other option than to trust in the person who comes to help them. The Bible says that we are unable to save ourselves. We must trust in Jesus to save us.

#### c. Bible quiz

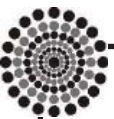
Look at these verses of Scripture to find the answers to the questions.

- John 6:29. What does God want us to do?
- James 1:6. What is a doubting person like?
- I John 3:23. What has to go with faith?
- John 3:15. What will those who believe in Jesus be given?



## LEADER TIP

This is activity 2 on the work sheet.



## LEADER TIP

This is activity 3 on the work sheet.

STEP 2 Write 'The need to believe' under 'faith in our Lord Jesus Christ' on step 2.

#### 4. The need to be different

##### Explanation

Ask your group who has seen the results (damage) from a bushfire.

- What did the area look like? (Dead, completely destroyed, devastated, hopeless.)
- What happens when the rain comes? (The area begins to regenerate.)
- What do we mean by 'regenerate'? (New life begins to appear on trees that looked completely dead and tufts of grass begin to grow.)

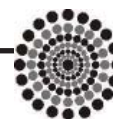
Just as we see new life after a bushfire, so it is when we come to God. The Holy Spirit gives us a fresh start so we can live a new life. This is why the doctrine uses the word 'regeneration'. It is as if we have been reborn or turned around. We want to please God rather than ourselves.

This new attitude means that our actions are different. The change in our lives should be seen by others.

In some people it will be a dramatic change – because they have lived lives that hurt many other people.

But for all of us, there should be a change in our actions so we live to please God rather than ourselves. And this positive improvement should be seen by those we live with and mix with.

Paul set it out very clearly in Colossians 3:7 -10a, 12 - 14. Two young people could read a passage each.



### LEADER TIP

After reading the passages from Colossians, the group could complete activity 4 showing the differences in our lives before and after salvation.

STEP 3: Write on step 3: 'The need to be different'.

## TAKING IT HOME

---

Sometimes we can be overcome by such feelings of failure and guilt that we begin to doubt whether we are saved.

Refer to the three steps again.

Emphasise to your group that if we have truly taken the first two steps, then the Holy Spirit does give us the power to be new beings and if we ask Him, He will remind us if our attitudes begin to revert back to pleasing ourselves.

Have a time of silence to allow the young people time to consider whether their first desire is to please God or whether they need to ask for help to live as His child. You may well feel that now is a good time to move into a time of commitment.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

COUTTS, John, *This We Believe*, The Campfield Press, 1980.

*Handbook of Doctrine*, The Campfield Press, 1969.

*Chosen to be a Soldier*, The Campfield Press, 1977.

*Salvation Story* (chapter 11), MPG Books, 1998.

### FOLLOW-THRU

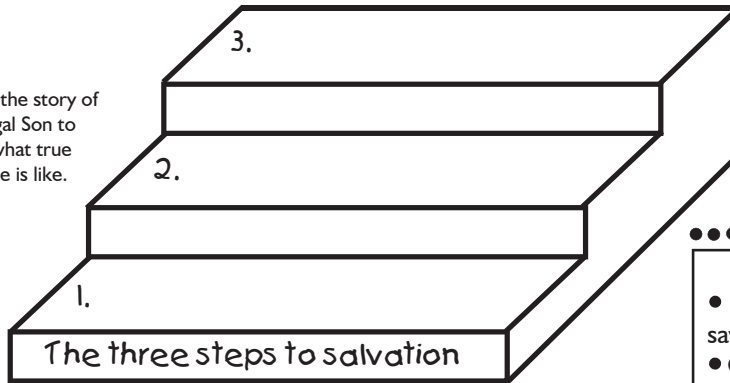
Ask the young people to consider whether they can complete the challenge 'Leadership in the community' in *Get Involved and Grow in Training for Leadership*. Those who work with us should see the evidence of our changed attitudes coming through in helpful, loving actions. Our desire to be responsible can be fulfilled in accepting positions of responsibility.





There are three steps to take to receive salvation. God's gift is there for the taking as long as we make the move towards Him. Write down the three steps.

Jesus told the story of the Prodigal Son to show us what true repentance is like.



*A person who never makes mistakes rarely makes anything.*

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Everyone needs to be saved.
- God has done His part - we must do ours.
- There are three steps to take.
- We need to be sorry for the wrong we have done.
- We need to believe that Jesus does have the power to save.
- We need to be different so that others can see God's love shining through us.



Some people will believe anything! Others won't believe unless they have hard evidence before them!

How do you rate on the 'trusting' scale?

Tick in the column that best describes you.	Not at all	Sometimes	Often	Always
I think things through				
I act too quickly				
I weigh up all sides				
I put off making a decision				
I am scared about making decisions				
I am a push over for a sob story				
I am easily fooled and believe anything				
I say 'Seeing is believing'				
I can trust someone I look up to				

Which of these characteristics makes trusting in God difficult?

**3**

Use your Bible to find the answers to these questions.

**A** (John 6:29) What does God want us to do?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B** (James 1:6) What is a doubting person like?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**C** (1 John 3:23) What has to go with faith?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**D** (John 3:15) What will those who believe in Jesus be given?  
\_\_\_\_\_

In the Holy Spirit we have a unique form of help for our helplessness.

**4**

**Fill in the list.**

Before I was saved my chief aim was to please \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

After I was saved my chief aim was to please \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The easiest way to make a simple job seem difficult is to keep putting it off.

## SESSION 18

# LAWS TO LIVE BY

### FROM THE BIBLE

Ezra 7:1, 6 - 14, 25, 27, 28; 8:21 - 23; Nehemiah 8:1 - 3, 5 - 9; 9:1 - 3.; Psalm 119:9 - 16.

### CHECKLIST

Be familiar with the background material in the Insights so that you can use this in answering questions your group may ask.

There are three suggested Getting Started activities. If you use Getting Started 1, you need to have pre-warned one young person to break the rules all the time so that he/she upsets the other players.

Getting Started 2 is a discussion of the chaos that would result in our society if there were no laws. Think about some good examples to fire your group's imagination!

Getting Started 3 is similar but suggests using a video clip to show the chaos that occurs when there are no laws.

There are four suggested teaching approaches and they all involve Bible readings. Know the story so well that you can bring it alive for your group.

Approach 1 sets the background for the story and you will need to have the profile already written out.

Keep approach 2 moving along by not getting bogged down on any one discussion point.

For approach 3 you will need to write up the young people's responses. Again, there are a lot of questions so you will need to watch that you do not spend too long on any one answer.

Approach 4 looks at a passage from Psalm 119 and activity 3 on the work sheet is to be used with this strategy. Be familiar with the link up so that you can explain it to your group in an effective way.

### AIM

Through a study of the work of Ezra to show the young people how God's Laws are the basis for right living.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand better that:

- ❖ whenever there is a need God will raise up a person to complete the task;
- ❖ Ezra was living in exile when called to help with the re-teaching of the Law to the Jews;
- ❖ Ezra gladly prepared himself and trusted God to carry through his plans;
- ❖ all believers should have 'God's laws within their hearts' and 'delight in obeying them'.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This session and the following one on Nehemiah form a series.

The story of Ezra is told in Ezra 7:1 to 10:44 and in Nehemiah 8:1 to 10:39. Take time to read these chapters.

The following historical background will help you understand the situation in which Ezra was called to work. When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon finally demolished Jerusalem in 586 BC he carried away to Babylon all the princes, the leading men and the skilled workmen leaving behind only the poorest of the land (2 Kings 24:10 - 16; 25:8 - 12). He utterly destroyed the Temple, the palace, the houses and the city wall.

Until 539 BC a succession of Babylonian kings held the Jews captive but in that year King Cyrus of Persia seized control of the Babylonian Empire. He was an enlightened and tolerant king and he issued an edict that allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of the Lord. This is the story of Ezra chapters 1 - 6. Many of the Jews returned to Jerusalem but a significant number remained in Babylon. Upon the death of Cyrus a succession of Persian kings ruled until, in 465 BC, Artaxerxes became king. This was the king who ruled during the time of Ezra.

#### Ezra – God's man for the task

Ezra was descended from one of the Jews who remained in Babylon. That he was a man of some importance is evident, for a lengthy genealogy is provided (Ezra 7:1 - 5). He was a priest of the line of Aaron and a scholar with a thorough knowledge of the law. Unable to carry out his priestly duties in far away Babylon, he had spent his life studying the law. The

return of Ezra to Jerusalem was prompted by God in that He 'made the emperor willing' (Ezra 7:27). That Ezra also had his part to play is indicated by 'the emperor gave him everything he asked for' (Ezra 7:6 - 7). His task in Jerusalem and Judah was 'to see how well the Law of your God ... is being obeyed' (Ezra 7:14), 'to appoint administrators and judges to govern all ... who live by the Law of your God ... (and) ... teach that Law to anyone who does not know it' (Ezra 7:25).

Ezra was God's man for such a task as he had not only devoted his life to studying the Law of the Lord, but he also had made a life habit of practising it and teaching it to the people of Israel in his own community in Babylon (Ezra 7:10).

### **Preparation, plans and protection**

In 458 BC, that is, in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:7), Ezra set out for Jerusalem with a group which included priests, Levites, temple musicians, temple guards and workmen.

A period of preparation preceded this, however. Ezra really praised the Lord that by His grace he had won the favour of the emperor, of his counsellors, and of all his powerful officials. He praised the Lord for the gift of courage which had enabled him to persuade many of the heads of the clans of Israel to return with him (Ezra 7:27, 28).

Ezra 8:15 - 21 provides extra insight into the planning and organisation which Ezra undertook to make sure he had the right people to accompany him. He set up a camp for three days by the Ahava Canal and invited all those who had decided to return to Jerusalem. He soon discovered a problem: there were priests among the number but no Levites. (N.B. In temple worship the Levites were divided into (1) assistants to the priests; (2) judges and scribes; (3) gate keepers; (4) musicians.) So Ezra took measures which ensured that this important group was well represented.

Ezra did not forget to pray. Part of the preparation consisted of prayer, fasting and fellowship as they camped together by the canal. The specific prayer recorded was to ask God 'to lead us on our journey and protect us and our children and all our possessions' (Ezra 8:21).

Ezra trusted God. He was prepared to 'put his money where his mouth was', for he had told the emperor that God blesses everyone who trusts Him. Logically, then, he could not ask the emperor for an armed escort to protect him and his group from any enemies they may encounter. And he did not. He asked God to protect them, and He did (Ezra 8:22, 23). The long and tedious journey of approximately 1,448 km and involving about two thousand people took four months to complete (Ezra 7:8, 9).

### **God's man**

Ezra was God's man for the task for he loved the Word of the Lord. His devotion to the Word had been noted by the emperor (Ezra 7:12) and his capability in that area was recognised (Ezra 7:25). Ezra was also a man of prayer (Ezra 8:21). See also Ezra 9:5 - 15 which is a prayer of confession and penitence on behalf of his people. He was a man of faith (Ezra 8:22, 23) and a man of action (Ezra 8:15 ff; Nehemiah 8:2, 3).

Ezra was a chosen man for the task of bringing his people back to the Book – chosen by God, chosen by the emperor and, finally, chosen by his people (Nehemiah 8:1b). For any 'back to the Bible' movement to be successful, God's man (or woman) is needed and Ezra certainly was that.

## Good planning and organisation

The right place was chosen so that all the people could hear the Word – ‘men, women and the children who were old enough to understand’ (Nehemiah 8:2). It should be noted that only men were allowed within the Temple.

The right people were there – the priests, the Levites and even the governor! The clergy and the laymen were there together. The men, women and older children were there by the Water Gate and as Ezra read the Word from dawn until noon, they all listened attentively! (Nehemiah 8:3).

It was right to include the older children, for they are the leaders of tomorrow. It was right to include the women for they are the nurturers of the younger children, the leaders of the future.

It was the right setting. Ezra stood on a platform high above the people (Nehemiah 8:5) where everyone could see him and all could hear him. (Remember there was no amplification system in those days!)

There were also interpreters, translating the Word of the Lord from the Hebrew to Aramaic, the adopted language of the returned exiles (Nehemiah 8:8).

And there were those who explained God’s Law so that the people could understand it (Nehemiah 8:8).

## An unexpected response

The occasion for Ezra’s public reading of the Law is thought to be the New Year Festival, though this is not explicit in the text. Therefore it would be expected to be a day of gladness and joy. However, an unexpected response was drawn from the people for, when they ‘heard what the Law required, they were so moved that they began to cry.’ (Nehemiah 8:9a). They became aware of their sins and this was the reason for their weeping. But Nehemiah, the governor, and Ezra told the people not to weep just now but to go home to celebrate the day with a feast.

# GETTING STARTED

---

1. Have the young people divide into small groups. Allow a short time for the groups to play a game of their choice. Arrange, surreptitiously, for one young person in each group to break the rules deliberately and consistently.

After the game, discuss the following in your small groups:

- What happened during the game?
- What caused the problem?
- Are rules necessary? Why or why not?
- What happens when even one person doesn’t keep the rules?
- Can you apply what happened in your game to your everyday lives? e.g., Rules of the road.

**Or**

2. Imagine that there are no laws – a universe, a world or a city without laws! Discuss one or more of the following:
  - What would happen if there was no law of gravity?
  - Suppose all rules (laws) for driving on our roads were cancelled. What do you think would happen?
  - Imagine that all laws concerning buying and selling land and property suddenly did not apply! What effect would that have in your city/town?

**POINT**

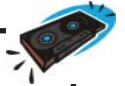
Rules are generally made to keep us safe and so that we all get a fair go. When we disregard rules, we find that not only we suffer, but others do, too. Disobeying God’s laws always has bad consequences, although they may not appear immediately. Today we want to look at the importance of knowing and keeping God’s Laws.

- What would happen if we all ‘did our own thing’ for one day and broke every law we chose?

Or

3. Show a clip from a movie such as *Batman Returns*, or *Mad Max*, or *Waterworld* which depicts the lawlessness that exists in those societies. The clip should be no longer than 5 - 7 minutes.

**VIDEO  
CLIP**



## GOING DEEPER

### 1. Background

Jerusalem had been totally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and he had taken into exile all the princes and leading men, leaving behind only the poorest people.

When the Babylonian Empire was conquered by Cyrus, King of Persia, he issued an edict allowing the Jews to rebuild the Lord’s temple. Under two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, many Jews returned to Jerusalem to help with the rebuilding. Ezra’s family, along with many others, stayed on in Babylon and in the reign of Artaxerxes, some 74 years after King Cyrus had sent the first group off to Jerusalem, Ezra was the man God chose to return to Jerusalem to teach the people the Law.

Read together Ezra 7:1, 6, 7, 10 and 11. These verses will help the young people see why Ezra was so well equipped to be God’s man for the task.

Have the profile already written out and ask the young people to find the missing information from the verses they have just read.

### DEFINITION

Edict: a law or decree proclaimed by the authority of a king or government.

#### PROFILE OF EZRA

##### Ezra – God’s man for the task

1. Ezra’s ancestry could be traced right back to \_\_\_\_\_ (v.1) the High Priest.
2. Ezra was both a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ (v.11).
3. His knowledge of the Law given by God to Moses was \_\_\_\_\_ (v.6).
4. The Emperor Artaxerxes gave Ezra \_\_\_\_\_ he asked for, because he had the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord his God. (v.6 - 7)
5. Ezra had devoted his life to (v.10):
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

- Why did this background make Ezra qualified for the task?

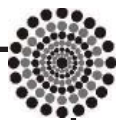
### 2. Ezra’s preparation, plans and protection

- a. Read Ezra 7:12 - 14, 25.

Ask the young people to use these verses to find the answers to the following questions.

- What was Ezra’s task? (v.14)
- How was he to carry it out? (v.25)
- How would he succeed in the task? (v.25)

**FOR  
SENIORS**



- b. Read Ezra 7:27, 28.
- What words express Ezra's joy? (v.27)
  - Why was he praising God? (v.28)
  - Why is it important to praise God for progress in His work?

- c. Read Ezra 8:21 - 23; 31.

If Ezra was to see that the Law was strictly obeyed, he needed to have priests and Levites to carry out the Temple duties. Camped by the Ahava Canal he counted the people and found he had priests but no Levites, so he sent off men with an urgent appeal to a nearby Jewish community to send Levites. They sent about 40 men and with over 200 Temple workmen, his work party was complete.

Having made the necessary plans, Ezra now had the whole group spend time in prayer before they set off.

Ask the young people to find these details from the passage read.

- What were they specifically asking God for?
- Why didn't Ezra want to accept military protection from the emperor?
- Do you think Ezra put his group in unnecessary danger by not having an armed guard?
- How would you have felt if you were a member of the group and knew that you were carrying much silver, gold and fine utensils through dangerous territory?
- Did God answer their prayers? (v.31)

### 3. Ezra's task in Jerusalem

The travellers needed three days of rest after the safe but difficult four month journey to Jerusalem.

Then the treasures they had brought were carefully recorded and turned over to the priest.

Great sacrificial offerings were made to purify themselves and the documents from the emperor were lodged with the governors of the province.

Once this was done Ezra could begin his real work of bringing his people back to keeping God's Laws.

- What can you learn about Ezra's personality from the way he went about his task in Jerusalem? (He was methodical and well organised.)

#### Discuss

- Was this good or bad?
- Was it one reason why God had chosen him?

- a. Read Nehemiah 8:1 - 3, 5 - 8.

What a meeting!

Ask the young people to look at the passages again and find the clues as to why Ezra's teaching was well received.

They should find these points:

- The people were all settled in their towns (so they weren't worried about where they would live).
- They assembled in the square (so everyone could come – in the Temple women had to stay in the outer court).
- The people asked Ezra to get the book of the Law. (They were ready to listen.)



## LEADER TIP

List their ideas as they call them out.

- Men, women and children who were old enough to understand were all there. (The message was for everyone.)
- Ezra read God's Law from dawn until noon. (He let God's Word speak for itself.)
- The people listened attentively. (They therefore heard what was being read to them.)
- Ezra led them in an act of praise and worship before he read. (This helped to open their minds to receive the Word.)
- Levites were available to explain the Law. (They acted as translators as well as seeing that what was being read was understood.)

Ask your group to consider how important these points are if we want God's Holy Spirit to move in our meetings. Can God make any place the right place for His message to be proclaimed?

- b. Read Nehemiah 8:9 (first sentence only).
- What effect did the reading of the Law have on the people?
  - Would this be what was needed to bring about a change in the people's living standards?
  - How would God look upon this? (Consider Psalm 51:17.)
  - Had God's man been successful in his task?

Explain how this day was the beginning of a series of festivals so the people were told to go home and celebrate the feast with joy, remembering what God had done for their nation.

This they did and we can imagine how they would talk to each other about what they had learned.

**Discuss:** Has a special meeting, camp or youth council ever moved you so deeply that you have really wanted to talk about it later?

Are we missing out on God's blessings if this does not happen to us?

- c. When the celebrations were over, the people gathered together again. Read Nehemiah 9:1 - 3.

Notice that the confession was followed by a time of praise.

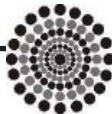
Some of the young people may have taken part in a hallelujah wind-up after a long prayer battle when people have responded to God and confessed their wrongdoing. They might like to compare this practice with what happened at this meeting.

#### 4. God's Laws are the basis for right living

Ezra's own love of God's Law and his sincere desire to keep it no doubt had an influence on the people.

It is considered that Ezra was the author of Psalm 119. Read together verses 9 - 16 from this psalm.

Make sure you are familiar with the link made with each verse and the part of the hand it is written on so that you can emphasise this to your group.



**LEADER TIP**  
Complete activity 3 on the work sheet.

## TAKING IT HOME

---

Whenever there is a need, God will raise up a man or a woman to complete the task. Ezra was such a man; he brought his people back to the Law of the Lord. Ezra had devoted his life to studying, practising and



teaching the Law. He was a man of prayer, faith and action. So he was well suited to lead his people into a spiritual awakening through a public reading and explanation of the Law of the Lord. The people responded to the teaching. Spiritual renewal today is also marked by sincere attention to the reading and study of His Word, the Bible. A natural consequence is penitence, confession, faith and obedience.

Ask a young person to read Psalm 119:9 - 16 to the group. Seek to gain commitment from the group to reading, studying, learning and obeying the Word of God. Commitment should be made in terms of practical goals, e.g., 'I will read, study, learn and endeavour to obey one (or more) commandment of the Lord each week.'

Organise for the young people to be accountable to someone for their commitment. It may be a friend, their discipleship partner or you as the leader. This should be ongoing to encourage their study of the word, rather than just for one week.

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

As this session deals with God's law, it would be a good session to link to the challenge in Get Involved and Grow in worship to read the Bible in a meeting. Ask your corps officer to use the young people as often as possible so that they can complete challenges.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

AHARONI, Y. & AVI-YONAH, M., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, New York, Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1968.

DEMARAY, C., *Beacon Bible Commentary, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*, Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1965.

FENSHAM, F., *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Ezra and Nehemiah*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing, 1982.

KIDNER, D., *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Ezra and Nehemiah*, Leicester, England, Inter-Varsity Press, 1979.

McCONVILLE, J., *The Daily Study Bible, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*, Edinburgh, The Saint Andrew Press, 1985.

# Ezra - God's Man For The Task!

Find words in the columns in the crossword.

- Ezra
- God's man
- blessing
- Aaron
- everything
- was
- his
- priest
- study

P	R	I	E	S	T	U	D	Y
R	A	L	O	H	C	S	G	G
A	D	K	A	R	Z	E	N	N
C	A	N	L	N	T	I	I	I
T	H	O	R	O	U	G	H	H
I	S	W	W	R	R	O	C	T
S	E	L	S	A	W	D	A	Y
I	S	E	W	A	L	S	E	R
N	O	D	A	H	A	M	T	E
G	M	G	L	I	W	A	S	V
B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	E

- scholar
- to
- had
- law
- thorough
- Lord
- knowledge
- teaching
- study

2. Now use as many as you can to write in a few sentences why Ezra was God's man for the task of reminding the people of God's law.

---



---



---



---







# PRAYERS AND PLANS

## SESSION 19

### AIM

Through a study of Nehemiah to help the young people realise that God can help us to triumph over difficulties.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- \* understand the difficulties faced in rebuilding Jerusalem;
- \* consider the 'sword and trowel' approach to difficulties;
- \* understand how to face their own difficulties.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

The story of Nehemiah's work is told in the book of Nehemiah. However, chapters 8 - 10 are concerned with the reading of the Law by Ezra and the renewal of the covenant, which are dealt with in session 18, 'Laws to live by'. To gain a good understanding of the life and work of Nehemiah, it would be wise to read chapters 1 - 7 and 11 - 13. Essential reading for this lesson covers Nehemiah chapters 1, 2, 4 and 6.

#### Historical background

In 586 BC the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, leaving the city in ruins. All of the princes, the leading men and the skilled workmen were carried away captive to Babylon, leaving behind only the poorest of the land (2 Kings 24:10 - 16; 25:8 - 12.) The army of King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple, the palace, the houses and the city wall. In 539 BC Babylon was conquered by Cyrus, Emperor of Persia. All those lands previously dominated by Babylon now became part of the great Persian Empire which then stretched from India to Ethiopia (Esther 1:1). In 538 BC Cyrus issued an edict which allowed all exiles to return to their homelands and many thousands of Jews returned to Judah (Ezra 2).

Nehemiah was born in exile and lived during the reign of Artaxerxes I who began to reign in 465 BC. It was 'in the twentieth year that Artaxerxes was Emperor of Persia' (Nehemiah 1:1) - 445 BC - when Nehemiah received news from Judah about the needy Jews and the broken down walls and gates in Jerusalem.

At this time Nehemiah served as wine steward to the emperor (Nehemiah 1:11), a very important and influential position. He had direct access to the emperor for it was his duty to taste wine, and probably food, before serving it to the emperor to demonstrate that it was not poisoned.

#### Nehemiah learns of his people's plight

(Nehemiah 1:1 - 4)

### FROM THE BIBLE

Nehemiah 1:1 - 11; 2:1 - 9, 11 - 18; 4:1 - 23; 6:1 - 16.

### CHECKLIST ✓

This is an involved session that would be more successful if extra time was available - try to allow half an hour more time.

You will need to gather together sets of dominoes to play Getting Started 1. You need three sets for each group of five. If you use Getting Started 2, think about those people in our country who could feel like this.

The introduction to the approaches gives the young people several options on how they will deal with the story of Nehemiah.

There are four suggested approaches. It is important that in each approach you make time to use the discussion so that the young people relate the story to their own lives.

Approach 1 examines the problems in Jerusalem and how Nehemiah reacts.

Approach 2 looks at the need for prayer to precede plans.

Approach 3 shows how difficulties are overcome. Writing up the answers will give the young people information to use in the activity. If time is short, summarise the readings.

Approach 4 looks at Nehemiah's practical approach to the problems and ties in with activity 1 on the work sheet.

We meet Nehemiah in Susa, the winter capital of the Persian Kings. (Susa is about 240 kilometres north of the Persian Gulf.)

A group of Jews, including his brother, Hanani, arrived from Judah with bad news. (Note a later reference to Hanani in Nehemiah 7:2.) Nehemiah 'asked them about Jerusalem and about our fellow-Jews who had returned from exile' (1:2).

He was told that the people were despised by their foreign neighbours, the city walls were still broken down and the gates had not been restored.

Nehemiah wept over the news and then, having mourned and fasted for several days, he prayed for guidance and began to plan a positive way of helping solve the seemingly hopeless situation.

Nehemiah preceded his plans with prayers. These brief, pointed petitions expressed by Nehemiah on the occasion of a sudden emergency have been called 'arrow' prayers.

Nehemiah was not idle as he prayed and waited. He made plans so that when the opportunity came, he knew exactly what to ask for.

Three non-Jews: Sanballat, the governor of Syria; Tobiah, an Amorite chief and Geshem, an Arab sheik were opposed to the scheme. They ridiculed the work to dishearten the workers and tried to stop it.

They used various plans to discourage the people and make them believe that the job was just too hard to be completed.

Yet in spite of overwhelming difficulties, Nehemiah persevered with the work (Nehemiah 4:6, 7, 15b, 21), strengthening himself and his men by prayer (Nehemiah 4:4; 6:9), and encouraging the people in their faith (Nehemiah 4:14).

### **The 'sword and trowel' approach of Nehemiah**

Read Nehemiah 4:15 - 23.

Nehemiah used the 'sword and trowel' approach to allow for both the continuation of the re-building program and the safety of the workers and their families (Nehemiah 4:17, 18). The builders' labourers carried bricks in one hand and a weapon in the other. The builders themselves, because they needed both hands for their work (a brick in one hand and a trowel in the other), each carried a sword strapped to his waist.

In spite of all the opposition, the walls were completely rebuilt in just fifty-two days (Nehemiah 6:15) and all the glory was given to God (Nehemiah 6:16).

## **GETTING STARTED**

### **I. The domino game**

Have the young people work in groups of 4 - 5 to set out as many dominoes as they can. They should be placed closely behind each other so that if one is knocked, they all fall. They may choose to place them in a straight line or in a more difficult pattern. Give them a set time which means they will have to hurry to use all the dominoes. Someone will possibly knock a domino over and spoil the line. Or when the time is up, ask a young person to knock over the first one.

## **POINT**

The rule of the domino game is that if one falls, so do the rest. Everyone has an adverse affect on the one following. Have you ever thought how we can do that to each other? We can knock someone else over as we fall flat.

It takes a very strong, God-controlled person to start rebuilding when the whole place looks like knocked over dominoes! But such a man was God's servant, Nehemiah, and he was able to rebuild under really bad conditions. How he prayed and planned, can be an example to us when things look bad.

Or

## 2. What would I do in that situation?

Ask the young people to imagine themselves as migrants who have settled well into their new country and have risen to positions of importance in the community.

News has just come to hand that the people in their homeland are suffering extreme hardship and deprivation and are in constant danger of attack. (This is the case for some people who have settled in Australia.)


### Discuss

Possible reactions to such a situation, e.g., 'That's not my problem. They are silly enough to stay there, let them deal with their own difficulties!' or 'I feel really sorry for them, but what can I do when I live so far away?' as well as more positive ones.

The young people may like to create a role play around a person who feels he/she should go. Have their family, friends and even the officials of their new country all discouraging them because 'what could one person do anyway?'



**FOR  
SENIORS**



**POINT**

Nehemiah was very comfortably situated in Susa and his circumstances were all that could be desired, but he felt deeply about the ruined city of his fathers. With God's help he decided he could do something about it.

## GOING DEEPER

### Introduction and explanation

Explain to your group that you will quickly work through the story of Nehemiah (using the four approaches) and that then they will choose one of the suggested activities to retell the story in their own way.

Read these options to them now – but ask them to wait until the story is completed to decide which one they will use.

1. Role play the story, telling it from the Emperor Artaxerxes' point of view. A written script will need to be produced for this.
2. Write Nehemiah's diary, expressing your feelings, as well as your plans.
3. Write an eye-witness account for the local Jerusalem News – telling of Nehemiah's plans in far off Susa as well as all that happened as the walls were rebuilt.
4. Prepare a children's story that could be used with the corps officer's permission for the children's segment in the meeting.

### I. Nehemiah's reactions to the problems in Jerusalem

- a. Read Nehemiah 1:1 - 4, 11b.
  - i. Who brought bad news from Jerusalem to Nehemiah? (v.2)
  - ii. Who was the Emperor of Persia at the time? (v.1)
  - iii. What were the four problems suffered by the Jews back in Jerusalem? (v.3)
    - They were despised by their foreign neighbours.
    - They were suffering low morale.
    - The city walls were still broken down.
    - The gates had not been restored since they were burnt.
  - iv. What was Nehemiah's position at the time? (v.11b)
- b. Read Nehemiah 1:4 - 11 and write out how Nehemiah reacted.



### LEADER TIP

If you have a large group, break them into small groups. Try to encourage each group to select a different option. A very small group may decide to only use one option.

If a children's story is well prepared, see that it is used in a meeting.

It would be helpful to give each young person a photocopy of the summary of the drawings found at the end of the approaches.

There is room on the work sheet to write out their ideas. The other page has the drawings to be used for the children's talk. Bring extra paper for the writing of the role play, diary or eye-witness account.

- He sat down and wept – the news brought sorrow to his heart (v.4) and he mourned and fasted for several days (v.4).
- He prayed and his prayer included:
  - praising God for His faithfulness (v.5);
  - confessing his people’s sins (v.6 - 7);
  - reminding God of His promise to bring His people home if they turned back to Him (v.9).

**Discuss**

What can we learn from Nehemiah’s actions?

Try to have the young people relate his actions to how they could face specific problems.

**2. Pray before you plan**

Read Nehemiah 2:1 - 9.

When the opportunity arose, Nehemiah asked the emperor for permission to go to Judah to rebuild Jerusalem and its walls. This was a very risky request as the king had already ruled this out. (Briefly outline Ezra 4:11 - 23 to your group.)

Ask the young people to find examples of Nehemiah’s short prayers in this passage and in Nehemiah 4:4 - 9.

From this we can see that prayer does not have to be long or in a particular place, it can be short and prayed wherever we are.

Nehemiah had not been idle during the four months of prayer and waiting. His plans were made so that when the opportunity came, he knew what to ask for – safe travelling and timber supplies.

The emperor gave Nehemiah all he asked for and more (2:8, 9) and Nehemiah was careful to give God the glory (v.8b).

Read v. 14 - 18. Once he arrived in Jerusalem, Nehemiah’s first action was to make a secret night-time inspection of the south and west walls which proved to be badly in disrepair (v.14). Having carefully assessed the situation, he then announced his plan and received an immediate, positive response from the people (vv.17, 18).

**Discuss**

Praying and doing go hand in hand.

Nehemiah prayed and had his plans ready – he was a pray-er and a do-er. Am I?

Nehemiah also praised God for answered prayers. Do I?

**3. Difficulties overcome**

Passages to be studied: Nehemiah 4:1 - 4a; 6 - 23 and 6:1 - 16.

Display the following questions so that the young people can call out the answers as they are found. (You will then have ready the information they will need for the activity.)

a. There were three officials who opposed the rebuilding of the wall. Nehemiah 6:1 - 2.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

b. How did they show their opposition?

- i. Nehemiah 4:1 - 3 \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Nehemiah 4:7 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. Nehemiah 6:1 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv. Nehemiah 6:10 - 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- c. How did Nehemiah react to this opposition?
- i. Nehemiah 4:6, 7, 15b, 21 \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Nehemiah 4:9 \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. Nehemiah 4:14 \_\_\_\_\_

**Discuss**

Do the strategies employed by Nehemiah still work today?

Does God’s work prosper when these strategies are used?

Will I be a positive help if I persevere with my work, keep on praying and encourage others to keep going?

**4. Nehemiah’s approach**

Read Nehemiah 4:15 - 23.

Nehemiah had to plan for the safety of the workers as they continued with the rebuilding.

The labourers carried bricks in one hand and a weapon in the other. But the builders needed both hands to work so they strapped swords to their waists.

Nehemiah also had them working in family groups because wanting to look after their own family would urge them on to work harder and look after each other.

**Discuss**


Would the men work better knowing they were also prepared for an attack?

How can I be prepared for attacks on my faith?

Nehemiah’s approach was very practical – carrying bricks and swords.

**Discuss**


Ask the young people to think of situations they face when this approach could be used. e.g. at a party when friends pressure you to drink, smoke or take drugs. During a difficult exam you are tempted to cheat. Others at school pick on you because you are a Christian. What will they do when this happens?



**LEADER TIP**  
Activity 1 on the work sheet could be completed to help the young people better understand Nehemiah’s approach.

**SUMMARY OF DRAWINGS**

- A Nehemiah working as the emperor’s wine steward. This allows him to speak personally with the emperor.
- B Hanani tells Nehemiah that the people living in Jerusalem are in great difficulty.
- C Their foreign neighbours look down their noses at them; they are downhearted; the city walls are still broken down and the gates are still in a burnt heap.
- D Nehemiah is so sad that he cries and does not eat but he prays to God about it all – and he keeps on praying until an answer comes.



**LEADER TIP**  
This summary of the drawings on the work sheet would be helpful for each group to use as they re-tell Nehemiah’s story, no matter how they do this.



- E One day, four months later, the emperor notices how sad Nehemiah looks. He asks why.
- F Nehemiah prays and then tells the emperor that the city of his fathers is in ruins. He asks for permission to go and help the people to rebuild it. This is a risky request for the emperor had already ruled against it.
- G The emperor not only agrees to allow Nehemiah to go, but gives him all he asks for and more. The emperor gives Nehemiah letters of authority to help him on his long and dangerous journey and to provide materials he will need for the building. Deep in his heart, Nehemiah praises God.

Nehemiah prayed about the problem.

Nehemiah planned what he would do when the opportunity came.

Nehemiah was prepared to go himself and do what he could.

Nehemiah praised God for answering prayer.

## **TAKING IT HOME**

---

Nehemiah faced several forms of opposition as he led the people in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. By calling on God with short prayers for help, by careful planning and organisation and the famous ‘sword and trowel’ approach – the wall was completed in just 52 days.

We have a job to do – building up God’s Church. There will always be people opposed to this happening who will ridicule and try to stop us. By using prayer, planning and participation we can be successful builders. Remember Nehemiah’s example.

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

Those young people who work on a children’s story and then present it will have completed the challenge in Get Involved and Grow in worship to give a children’s story using a visual aid.

Don’t forget to remind your young people there are Christmas related challenges they can complete.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

AHARONI, Y., AVI-YONAH, M., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, New York, Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1968.

DEMARAY, C., *Beacon Bible Commentary, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*, Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1965.

FENSHAM, F., *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Ezra and Nehemiah*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing, 1982.

LEE, R., *The Outlined Bible*, London, Pickering and Inglis.

McCONVILLE, J., *The Daily Study Bible, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*, Edinburgh, The Saint Andrew Press, 1985.

MENCKEN, H.L., *A New Dictionary of Quotations on Historical Principles from Ancient and Modern Sources*, New York, Knopf, 1942.

# Prayers and Plans

Artaxerxes was the Emperor and Nehemiah was his wine steward.

## 1. Weapons and work.

◆ Nehemiah's approach to protect the people as they rebuilt the walls was very effective. Use the following verses to write how Nehemiah achieved both goals.

4:4a  Nehemiah \_\_\_\_\_

4:6  We went on \_\_\_\_\_

4:9  We \_\_\_\_\_ and kept \_\_\_\_\_

day and night.

4:13, 14  I \_\_\_\_\_ the people with

\_\_\_\_\_ and reminded them how

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the

Lord is.

4:20, 21  Every day \_\_\_\_\_

of us \_\_\_\_\_ while the other

\_\_\_\_\_ stood \_\_\_\_\_ .

God expects us to use our common sense.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Nehemiah gave up a comfortable position to take on a difficult task.
- Nehemiah always prayed before he planned what to do.
- Nehemiah did not give up when others ridiculed him.
- Nehemiah always remembered to thank God for answered prayers.

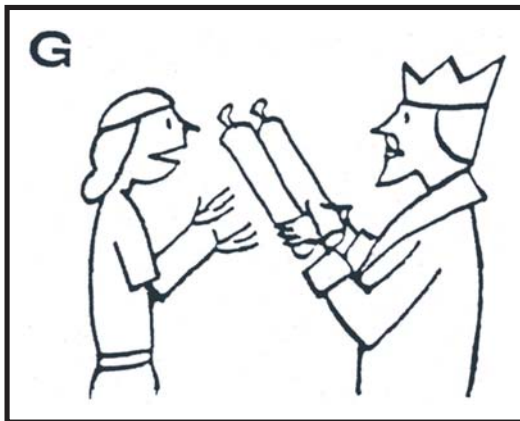
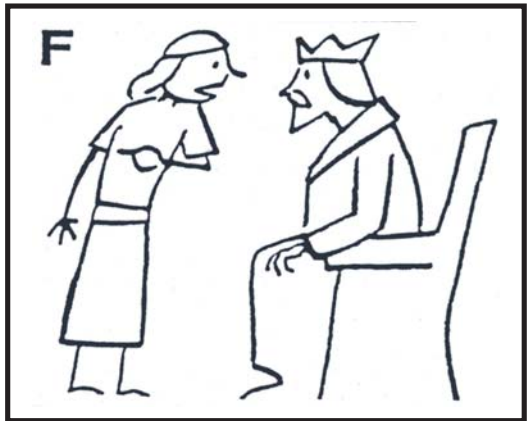
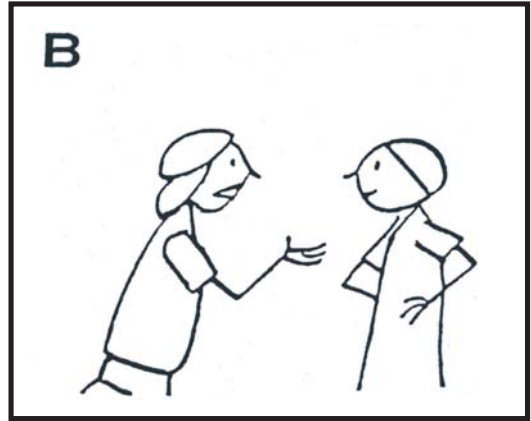
## 2.

On a separate page, write a role play, diary entry, eye witness report or children's story about Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the Jerusalem walls. Ask your corps officer if you could present your work to the corps.

# JUNIOR & SENIOR WORK SHEET

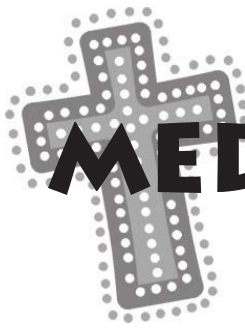
When emergencies arise, send a silent prayer to God.

The Persian Emperor sent Nehemiah back to Jerusalem to be the governor.



Susa is 240 km north of the Persian Gulf.

Flash cards  
O.H.P. slides  
Powerpoint® presentation  
or  
Outline faintly on paper  
and draw boldly when  
needed.



# MEDIA WATCH

## SESSION 20

### Aim

To equip the young people to cope with pressures placed on them through television, radio and the printed page.

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session the young people should be able to:

- \* be aware that the mass media is profit driven;
- \* understand that the media distorts the facts and often gives an untrue representation;
- \* recognise and deal with the pressures placed upon them by the media;
- \* realise that if used honestly and with integrity, the media can be positive, helpful and informative.

### INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Become familiar with the following information so that you can refer to it during discussions. Before the young people can be equipped to deal with the pressures exerted through the media, it is essential that the mass media be defined and the pressures be identified.

The dominant form of media in the western world is television – with nearly every home having at least one TV set and many having more. Radio is the next biggest influence, with movies, newspapers and magazines following. Across all these media forms, advertising has a huge impact. When all this is combined, we have a complete picture of the mass media.

The mass media is comprised of different forms of communication reaching many, many people. The number of educational programs and coverage of the world means that we have the world at our doorstep. The nastiness of war is broadcast from where it is happening, into our lounge rooms almost instantly. The world has shrunk because of television. Unfortunately it is the controversial and not the everyday that comes into our homes, so we do not always get a balanced view of life in other countries. In addition we are only given brief pieces of information about the issues or events that occur, often without later follow-up.

Television is a very credible media. Polls have proven that television news is regarded by many as more believable than other forms of news. Although it is not as rapid in its news transmission as radio, television probably has more credibility because of its background pictures.

In one session it is not possible to go into detail about all the pressures exerted on people by the media. Aim to alert the young people to the fact that many pressures are present. When they realise this, they can then

### FROM THE BIBLE

Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:7 - 10 and Ephesians 5:1 - 11, 15 - 17.

### CHECKLIST ✓

This session requires the use of television/video and radio. It may be helpful to hold it in someone's home so that access to this gear is possible.

There are three suggested Getting Started activities. Getting Started 1 would work better if the young people were asked in the previous week to come prepared with the information needed for it.

Getting Started 2 will require thorough preparation, especially if you decide to use the printed report. Make sure the presentation is convincing.

Getting Started 3 needs the recording of a few ads to play back to the group.

There are four suggested approaches covering different aspects of the media. Choose what you will cover and make sure you allow time for the Bible reading and the discussion.

Approach 1 asks the group to agree on the definition of the 'media'.

Approach 2 looks at television. Be familiar with how the chart on the work sheet is to be filled in so that you are able to explain it quickly.

Approach 3 considers how bias leads to inaccurate news reporting.

Approach 4 looks at advertising and you will need large pictures from magazines or newspapers of various ads and/or a pre-recorded video of about 5 television ads. Activity 2 on the work sheet ties into this approach.

begin to deal with them.

The pressures are all mainly concerned with enticing people to live life differently and it is almost always on a lower level than God planned for us. Throughout all forms of media there are constant, subtle pressures to accept and conform to what the media presents as the normal lifestyle, thus compromising the Christian standard.

One of the dangers of the media is that many people generally accept everything that is shown, said or written, to be the truth. In actual fact it is not. The majority of items presented through the media are, in fact, someone's interpretation of the facts. It is extremely rare for anyone to have a totally unbiased view and this means that the facts are being slanted (sometimes unknowingly). Bias comes across in the questions an interviewer asks and in the information that is left out.

Wrong impressions are given to the public by the inflection in the voice, the wording used or the way a particular still or moving picture is taken (e.g., at a mainly peaceful protest rally the cameras may focus on one moment of violence). This misinformation is also present in TV shows or movies produced for entertainment, when particular lifestyles are presented as being normal or the ideal to aim for (e.g., out of marriage sex relationships, that all women should be extremely thin, that homosexual relationships are fine, and so on).

When it comes to advertising, bias is taken one step further and exaggeration, manipulation and lies may be used to get a message across. Advertisers imply that life will be better, or people will accept you more readily if their product is purchased. The young people need to be aware of the lack of factual information in advertisements and that they need to look out for the emotional triggers in advertising.

Many people in New Zealand are concerned about the amount of violence, sex and swearing that occurs in movies, on TV and radio and in the print media. When these negative aspects of life are given more and more coverage, people begin to believe that they are, in fact, normal and acceptable behaviour. Even families with strong Christian teaching can experience a dulling of senses in these areas after prolonged exposure through watching or listening to shows or reading literature that is sub-Christian.

Emphasise throughout this session the hidden agenda of the people behind the media – to make a profit! This goal influences every aspect of the media from political reporting to advertising.

Session 10 in this unit, 'Just having fun', deals with the information technology and video/movie aspect of the media.

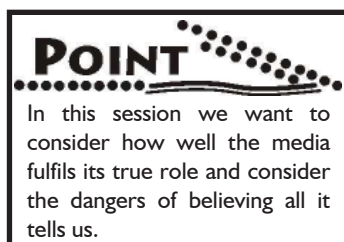
## GETTING STARTED

---

1. Ask the young people to name their three favourite TV shows, the papers and magazines they read, the radio station they mostly listen to and the first three advertisements that come to mind. All these items could be listed. Discussion could then take place, e.g.,

- Why are these TV shows so popular? (This is especially for shows where there was a consensus of opinion.)
- Why are certain magazines or papers popular with young people?
- Why do they listen to that particular radio station?

Or



2. A leader, visitor or a young person (who has been given time to prepare) could present a distorted news report of some recent event at the corps. (The event should have been attended by most of the group.)

The report should deliberately have wrong information and gross exaggeration. It could even be slanted to give a completely opposite picture of what happened.

Discuss the feelings such exaggeration or false reporting brings out in the reader/listener.

Or

3. Have some pre-recorded TV ads ready to show to the group. Ask them to try to pick whether the ads are accurate or inaccurate. Discuss: What half-truths are told? What promises are made that may not be able to be kept?

## GOING DEEPER

### 1. Defining the media

Ask the young people to help work out what the word 'media' includes and list these. (Media includes TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, the internet, movies and advertising.)

### 2. Television

Ask the young people to list five different TV shows and complete the first row in the chart on activity 1 on their work sheet. Then they use ticks or crosses to fill in the columns for each show.

If you decide to use a combined effort, then choose shows that the majority of the young people know about. One way to do this would be for them to fill in their own charts and then put the five most mentioned programs up onto your list. Remember to point out that crosses will be used for negative or harmful influences, e.g., violence – while ticks indicate that the viewer benefits from this being in the show.

#### Discuss

Why do some shows have more ticks or crosses than others?

Should we mentally go through such a rating before we settle down to watch a show?

Should we turn off a show that we wouldn't really want to discuss with Jesus if He came into our lounge room?

Read together Philippians 4:8 and link it in with the effect that constant watching of some shows must have on people.


If we get really hooked on watching 'soapies' that are very different to real life, how does this affect us?

Is it my responsibility to choose more carefully what I will watch?

### 3. News

Have a list of the major news items from TV, radio and newspapers during the past week. Have copies of the same news item from different papers. Discuss what sort of events get into the news and why. Also what sort of picture would these news items give of the world to someone who had been lost in a jungle for 40 years and was trying to get up to date?


Look at the same news items in different papers – did they take different angles on the story? Was any bias shown?



**POINT**

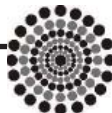
Have you ever considered that such false reporting happens frequently in the media to make a story more sensational and therefore attract more listeners/readers?

Why this happens and how we can protect ourselves from such bias is what we want to discuss in this session.



**POINT**

Don't swallow all you see! Think about the likelihood of exaggeration or inaccuracy when watching or reading anything in the media.



**LEADER TIP**

You will need to be aware which media most affects your group so that you can spend more time on that particular topic. Try to touch on all the different topics discussed so that you have made your group aware of the influences that can be brought to bear on their lives.

Activity 1 on the work sheet is used in approach 2.

Discuss the importance of truthfulness in reporting. Talk about reporting that involves lying as well as reporting that leaves vital information out.

Ephesians 5:6, 7 could be used to discuss what the Christian should do concerning biased news reporting.

#### 4. Advertising

Have copies of newspaper or magazine or TV advertisements for top selling products – cars, soft drinks, alcohol, cigarettes, breakfast cereals, clothing, perfume, ice cream.

Discussion points to use as each, or selected, advertisements are examined:

- What does the advertisement actually say about the product?
- What is used to sell the product?
- What does the advertisement imply will happen to the person if they buy this product?  
(E.g., will they enjoy life more?  
Will they be accepted more readily?  
Will they be successful?  
Will their looks improve?  
Will they be materially better off?)
- To what emotions does the advertisement appeal?
- How is the truth stretched in an effort to get the product sold?
- How should the Christian view advertisements that exaggerate the benefits of a product or resort to lies?

The standard for Christians is clear. Read Colossians 3:7 - 10.

Should Christians buy products which use advertising methods that are contrary to Christian standards?

#### Sponsorship and advertising

Advertising and sport may come into discussion. Is it morally right for cigarette and alcohol companies to link their product with sport?

Are money and jobs more important than the moral issues at stake here? Public opinion can reverse these rules.

#### Appealing to our emotions

It should be pointed out in this section that advertisements try to manipulate people to buy a product through the use of emotion and the implication that success and happiness will come when the product is bought. They play on greed and the desire that most people have to be accepted - to be part of the in-crowd.

Read Ephesians 5:1 - 11; 15 -17.

Discuss whether this passage sets the Christian standard in this area. (Pay particular attention to verses 6 and 11.)

## TAKING IT HOME

Whatever way we are using the media, whether reading, watching or listening, it is important to be discerning. We must be aware of the various pressures placed on us through the media, often in very subtle ways, to put pleasing ourselves above everything else. Being aware of the techniques used, can help us not to give in to them. However, the media is not to be totally disregarded. There are many good shows that provide information and others that entertain – but we need to be selective; sifting the truth from the exaggeration of lies and avoiding shows that degrade.



### LEADER TIP

If you have access to Christian media sources such as radio and magazines, take copies/recordings along and have the young people compare with the secular ads using the same questions in this approach.



### FOR SENIORS



### FOR ALL GROUPS



### LEADER TIP

Activity 2 on the work sheet ties in with this approach.

Jesus wants us to live our life to its highest potential! He loves us. Most people involved in the media are out to make money for themselves or the firm! When it comes to TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, advertisements and movies – don't lower your standard by going along with the crowd, instead, mix with the best, Jesus. You can trust Him!

## **FOLLOW-THRU**

---

Suggest to the young people the value of sharing Christian books or CDs with a friend, and the need to pray for friends becoming hooked on the media or the net without thinking how it is influencing them. These are challenges in Get Involved and Grow in mission that will tie into this session.

## **FURTHER READING**

---

GOWER, Ralph, *Frontiers*, Lion Publishing, 1983.

GRANT, Andrew and Gai, *In Search Of Meaning*, Tirian Publications, 1988.

Web savvy: A guide for teens using the internet is found on the world wide web at <http://www.nccasa.org/teen/TheScoop/websavy.html> (retrieved 15/8/03.)





Select 5 different TV shows and write their titles in the boxes along the first row.

Use ticks or crosses to fill in the chart as you consider each program. Ticks indicate you feel it is beneficial to the viewer. Crosses indicate you feel it has a negative or harmful influence. eg.,

- 1 tick  =  A little       ■ 1 cross  =  Could be harmful
- 2 ticks  =  Reasonably so       ■ 2 crosses  =  Generally harmful
- 3 ticks  =  Very definitely       ■ 3 crosses  =  Definitely harmful

T.V. SHOW					
VIOLENCE					
SEX					
SWEARING					
NEWS-WORTHY					
DOCUMENTARY					
SUITABLE FOR FAMILY VIEWING					
TRUE TO LIFE					
ENTERTAINMENT VALUE					
MAKES ME THINK ABOUT LIFE					
BENEFICIAL TO HUMANITY					

Television is the dominant form of media in the western world.

The average pre-schooler has watched over 2,000 hours of television before going to school.

# JUNIOR WORKSHEET



Consider an advertisement that you have seen many times and fill out this chart.

Beware the advertiser!

Product's Name	
SALES PITCH	
WHY SHOULD YOU BUY IT?	
WHAT FACTS ARE YOU TOLD ABOUT THE PRODUCT?	
WHAT MARKET IS IT AIMING TO REACH?	
IS IT MISLEADING?	
WHAT DOES IT APPEAL TO? - OUR NEED OF ACCEPTANCE, SECURITY?	
WHAT MOTIVES ARE BEHIND THE ADVERTISEMENT?	

How would you rate it: as a consumer?

---

as the maker of the product?

---

as someone concerned about truth in advertising?

---



---



- HIGHLIGHTS**
- The media includes television, radio, internet, newspapers, magazines and advertising.
  - Many pressures are being placed on us by the media.
  - We must be aware that the media is out to make a profit.
  - Advertising must be examined carefully before we believe it.
  - We must be selective in what we watch, listen to or read.



Consider an advertisement that you have seen many times and fill out this chart.

Beware the advertiser!

Some news programs resort to splicing in different questions after an interview has been completed.

<i>Product's Name</i>	
SALES PITCH	
WHY SHOULD YOU BUY IT?	
WHAT FACTS ARE YOU TOLD ABOUT THE PRODUCT?	
WHAT MARKET IS IT AIMING TO REACH?	
IS IT MISLEADING?	
WHAT DOES IT APPEAL TO? - OUR NEED OF ACCEPTANCE, SECURITY?	
WHAT MOTIVES ARE BEHIND THE ADVERTISEMENT?	

How would you rate it: \_\_\_\_\_ as a consumer?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ as the maker of the product?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ as someone concerned about truth in advertising?

*The media tries to tell us what is normal behaviour.*



What five rules should a Christian use when selecting programs, CDs or magazines?

---



---



---



---

## A SIMPLIFIED FORM OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE SALVATION ARMY

We believe that

1. God helped good men to speak and write what is in the Bible, so that from it we may learn the way God means us to live.
2. There is only one God, and He is altogether perfect in every way. He is the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things. We should not worship anything or anyone else.
3. God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God.
4. Jesus is both truly God and truly human: He has both God's nature and our nature.
5. Our first parents, by their disobedience, lost their sense of God's favour, and came under the power of sin; and because of this we are all inclined to do wrong.
6. On the Cross Jesus suffered and died for the sins of everyone, so that whoever wants to may be saved.
7. To be saved we must be truly sorry for doing wrong and trust in Jesus, then the Holy Spirit will make us new people.
8. Salvation is a free gift from God. It is received when we believe in Jesus; and when we are saved we know it.
9. To keep good we must trust in Jesus to help us, and we must go on doing as He wants us to do.
10. Saved people are given the chance to be used by God to help Him. When they have given themselves to Him fully, they can be given power to serve Him, and be kept from sinning.
11. When our bodies die we ourselves go on living in a new and different way. At the end of time Jesus will judge all people. Those who have chosen Him to be their Saviour will be happy to live with Him as their King, forever. Those who have not done so will always be unhappy because they chose what separates them from all that is good and lovely.

