

JESUS IS BETTER



CONTENTS

Jesus is better than Adam	4
Genesis 3; Mark 14: 32-42	
Jesus is better than Abel.....	12
Genesis 4:1–16	
Jesus is better than Noah	16
Genesis 6:5-22; Genesis 7 & 8	
Jesus is better than Isaac	21
Genesis 22:1-18	
Jesus is better than Joseph.....	25
Genesis 45:1-15; 1 John 1:9	
Jesus is better than Moses.....	29
Exodus 32; John 14:1-6	
Jesus is better than David.....	37
1 Samuel 17:41-50; 1 Corinthians 15:57	
Jesus is better than Jonah.....	40
Jonah 1 and Mark 4:35-41	
Jesus is better than Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego.....	45
Daniel 3:8-30	
Jesus is better than Esther.....	50
Esther 4:11-5:2, 8:1-8	
Memory Verses	54

INTRODUCTION

This year the theme for the programme is 'Jesus is Better'.

This programme is about discovering more about who Jesus is and how His uniqueness brings about change in people's lives, only for the good. This makes Him 'better' than all the characters we see in God's word - indeed many point to the greatness of Jesus.

It is our prayer that the programme and the discussions that will come out of the questions at the end of each session, will be about faith and trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. We also see this as good teaching material for those young people who have made a commitment to Jesus in their lives.

This year, the Christian Education and Church Relations (CECR) Committee has grown significantly and all of our new members have contributed to the programme and we welcome their fresh input.

Rev Ian Cahoon

Ben Cavan

Rev Andrew Conway

Rev Dorothy Dunwoody

Laura Ewing

Rev Nigel Kane

Rev Peter Munce

Andrew Norrie

We also acknowledge those who have moved on from the committee and want to thank them for their service over the years

and we know that many of them will continue to serve BBNI through their companies and the committees, in the days to come, to the glory of God.

May God bless you as you teach the 'Jesus is better' lessons to the young people in your company during this session. As the committee has prepared these lessons, it has been our prayer that the Holy Spirit will prepare the hearts of the young people to respond as you teach this material so that they meet Jesus in a personal way and accept the gift of salvation.

It is also our prayer that for those young people who are Christians will grow deeper in their relationship with their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, we pray that you will learn more about Jesus and pass this on to those under your care, and that you will know the blessing of being able to share the truth of His word.

Jonathan Moxen

Christian Education and Church Relations
Committee

BBNI



Jesus is Better

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...ADAM



The Big Idea

Adam failed the test of obedience in the Garden of Eden. Jesus is better because He passed the test of obedience in the Garden of Gethsemane.



Bible Reference

Genesis 3; Mark 14:32-42



Introduction

Talk about the importance of obeying instructions when making something in technology, or conducting an experiment in chemistry or playing in a sports team.



Lesson

When God created the world it was perfect. All kinds of animals lived together in harmony with one another, and with mankind, in a wonderful and beautiful place the Bible calls the Garden of Eden. There God had provided everything that was necessary for life.

When God made Adam, the first man, He gave Adam control over all the animals, and over everything that He had created.

But, God told Adam, **“You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”** (Genesis 2:16-17).

RESOURCES

- ▶ Jungle Book: Mowgli Trust in Me
- ▶ Write a 'How to Guide'
- ▶ Following Instructions



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.

Adam was different from the animals because he was created in God's image. Adam was initially alone because there was no-one he could talk to, and there was no-one to help him with the task God had given him, of working and taking care of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15).

So, God took a rib from Adam's side and from that rib God formed a woman, whom Adam called Eve. Eve was the perfect partner for Adam (Genesis 2:18-25).

Adam and Eve enjoyed a perfect relationship with each other and a perfect relationship with God in a perfect place.

However, this state of perfection did not last. Satan, God's arch enemy, came into the Garden of Eden as a serpent who could speak.

Read Genesis 3

Satan said to Eve, **"Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"** (Genesis 3:1) By saying this, Satan tried to make Eve doubt what God had said, and doubt God's goodness.

When Eve replied that God said they were not to eat from the tree which was in the middle of the garden, because if they did they would die, Satan said to her, **"You will not surely die"** (Genesis 3:4). Satan lied to Eve by telling her that what God said would not happen.

Satan went on to suggest that God did not have Eve's best interests at heart by stating, **"God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"** (Genesis 3:5)

Sadly, Eve and Adam listened to Satan rather than obeying what God had told them:

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate." (Genesis 3:6)

Adam failed his test of obedience in the Garden of Eden. When Satan began to tempt Eve, Adam should have driven him out of the garden rather than listening to what he had to say, eating the fruit, and then blaming God and Eve when God challenged him about his disobedience (Genesis 3:12).

Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God they were separated from Him and put out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23). This was the

beginning of sin, and since Adam was our representative, we are all born with a sinful nature which leads us to sin in a multitude of ways, on numerous occasions. So, our sin separates us from God too.

Thankfully, when God was pronouncing a curse on Satan after he had tempted Adam and Eve, He stated **"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel"** (Genesis 3:15)

God promised that one of Eve's descendants would defeat Satan.

This descendant is Jesus. Jesus was born into this world as someone who is fully man and fully God, knowing that one day, He would have to take all the sins of His people upon Himself and die to take the punishment, which those sins rightly deserve.

Read Mark 14:32-42

After celebrating the Passover with His disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus **"began to be greatly distressed and troubled"**, and He told Peter, James and John, **"My soul is very sorrowful, even to death"** (Mark 14:33-34)

Jesus went off by Himself, fell to the ground and prayed, **"Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."** (Mark 14:36)

Even though it was going to be very difficult for Jesus to take His people's sin upon Himself, and bear the punishment for it, He knew that this was the only way His people's sin could be dealt with.

So, Jesus was willing to do what was necessary to purchase His people's salvation, rather than spare Himself the physical, mental and spiritual pain that this would involve.

Jesus is better than Adam because He passed His test of obedience in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Apostle Paul points out, **"For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."** (Romans 5:19)

Adam's disobedience separated us from God, but when we believe that Jesus died to take the punishment for our sins, God forgives our sins, and He declares us to be as righteous (right in His sight) as Jesus is.

When we trust Jesus to be our Saviour and Lord we are reconciled to God (our relationship with God is restored) and adopted into God's family because our sin no longer separates us from God.



Application

Satan still tempts us to disobey God by:

- making us doubt what God has said in His word
- making us doubt God's goodness
- denying the truth of God's Word
- suggesting that God does not have our best interests at heart.

So, we need to know what God is like, and what He requires of us through studying His word, and hearing it taught to us.

Our sin is so serious that only the perfect life, atoning death (taking the punishment for our sins), and victorious resurrection of God the Son could deal with it. So, we need to trust Jesus to be our Saviour and live with Him as the Lord of our life.



Questions

1. What are some of the temptations you face?
2. What can you do to avoid these temptations, or to minimise the risk of giving in to them?
3. How serious do you consider your sins to be?

RESOURCES

Jungle Book: Mowgli Trust in Me

Type of Activity: Video

Aim of Activity: suggesting that God does not have our best interests at heart.

Instructions/Rule: Link to Youtube Video <https://youtu.be/TEAMrZ3uld8>

Write a 'How to Guide'

Type of Activity: Game

Aim of Activity: Ask the young people to write a how to guide/work instructions.

Instructions/Rules: Get your reader's head nodding in agreement immediately by:

- Showing you understand the problem
- What your guide will teach them

Another helpful tactic is to:

- Mention the problem
 - Provide a solution
 - Show proof
 - Preview what they'll learn
-

Following Directions

Type of Activity: Game

Aim of Activity: Learn what it means to follow instructions.

Instructions/Rules: Refer to Instruction on next page.

Name _____ Score _____

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

1. Read everything carefully before doing anything.
2. Put your name in the upper right-hand corner of this page.
3. Circle the word NAME in sentence two.
4. Draw five small squares in the upper left-hand corner.
5. Put an "X" in each square.
6. Put a circle around each square.
7. Sign your name under the title of this paper.
8. After the title write, "yes, yes, yes."
9. Put a circle completely around sentence number seven.
10. Put an "X" in the lower left corner of this paper.
11. Draw a triangle around the "X" you just put down.
12. On the back of this paper, multiply 703 by 66.
13. Draw a rectangle around the word "corner" in sentence four.
14. Loudly call out your first name when you get this far along.
15. If you have followed directions carefully to this point, call out, "I have."
16. On the reverse side of this paper, add 8950 and 9305.
17. Put a circle around your answer and put a square around the circle.
18. Punch three small holes in the top of this paper with your pencil point.
19. If you are the first person to reach this point, LOUDLY, call out, I AM THE FIRST PERSON TO REACH THIS POINT, AND I AM THE LEADER IN FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS."
20. Underline all even numbers on the left side of this paper.
21. Loudly call out, "I AM NEARLY FINISHED. I HAVE FOLLOWED DIRECTIONS."
22. Now that you have finished reading everything, do sentences 1 and 2! Keep busy so that others will continue to read without disturbance from you. Do not make any sign to give a clue to your having completed the assigned task.

Name _____ Score _____

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Directions: You have five minutes to complete this test. Carefully read the entire test before doing anything. In order to ensure the accuracy of this exam, you should not use more than the allotted time of five minutes. Good Luck!

You may begin now!

1. Write today's date—month-day-year in the top right hand corner of your test paper.
2. Write the answer to the following multiplication problem directly underneath the date on your test paper— $6 \times 5 = ?$
3. Write the name of the month that begins with the letter "D" in the top left hand corner of your test paper.
4. Add 15 to the answer you got in #2, and write this new total directly underneath your answer for #3.
5. In the lower left hand corner of your test paper, write the names of your favourite singer and your favourite group.
6. Just above your answer to #5, write "This test is very easy."
7. In the lower right hand corner of your test paper, draw a rectangle and inside the rectangle draw a five pointed star. The size of these drawings is not important.
8. Directly above your answer to #7, draw a row of three small circles. Once again, size is not important.
9. Write the name of the first president of the United States on the back of your test paper anywhere you choose. If you don't know who this is, write your own name instead.
10. Write the name of any country that begins with the letter "I" directly underneath you answer to #2.
11. Take the number of dwarfs in the Snow White story and add it to the number of bears in the Goldilocks story. Divide by 2. Write this total in the approximate center of your test paper.
12. Think of a number between 1 and 50. Double that number. Add 20. Add 6. Subtract 17. Subtract 9. Divide by 2. Write this number on your test paper directly underneath your answer to #11.
13. Now that you have carefully read all of the parts so far, and you have not carried out any of the actual work, skip the next 2 questions and go back and only complete #3.
14. The name of the first president of the United States is George Washington. He was president from 1789 until 1797. Add the two dates together to see if the total is less than 5000.
15. You should not be reading the end of the exam before the beginning of the exam, but now that you are here, you have just wasted some of the time you may need to complete the test.

Name _____ Score _____

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

The ability to follow directions is very important for many jobs. These types of questions measure a job applicant's ability to follow directions by giving a set of rules, and then have the applicant answer questions by following the rules.

RULES

The three types of storage are regular, warehouse, and special. Listed below are the rules for deciding which type of storage to use.

- Regular or warehouse storage should be used for items that do not need special handling.
- Special storage should be used for items that need special handling.
- Warehouse storage should be used for items weighing over 200 pounds.
- Regular storage should be used for items weighing less than 200 pounds.
- Special storage should always be used for storing hazardous materials.

Codes: 1 - SPECIAL 2 - WAREHOUSE 3 - REGULAR

1. What type of storage would be used for equipment weighing 350 pounds?

1. SPECIAL
2. WAREHOUSE
3. REGULAR

2. What type of storage would be used for a fifty-pound box of dynamite?

1. SPECIAL
2. WAREHOUSE
3. REGULAR

3. What type of storage would be used for a five-gallon drum needing refrigeration?

1. SPECIAL
2. WAREHOUSE
3. REGULAR

4. What type of storage would be used for machinery weighing 175 pounds?

1. SPECIAL
2. WAREHOUSE
3. REGULAR

5. What type of storage would be used for a cement truck used for parts?

1. SPECIAL
2. WAREHOUSE
3. REGULAR

Following Instructions Sample Questions Answers and Explanations

1. The correct answer is “2”, Warehouse, because according to the third rule, warehouse storage should be used for items weighing over 200 pounds.
2. The correct answer is “1”, Special, because the last rule states that special storage should always be used for storing hazardous materials.
3. The correct answer is “1”, Special, because the item needs the special handling of refrigeration.
4. The correct answer is “3”, Regular, because the item weighs less than 200 pounds.
5. The correct answer is “2”, Warehouse, because a cement truck weighs more than 200 pounds.

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...ABEL



The Big Idea

Jesus is better than Abel because Abel's innocent blood pointed to Cain's guilt and cried out for justice, whereas Jesus' innocent blood satisfies God's need for justice, cries out for our forgiveness, frees us from guilt and opens up the way to perfect peace with God.



Bible Reference

Genesis 4:1–16



Introduction

Some people have a fascination with true crime stories, especially stories about murder, those who commit murder and the process of finding them and bringing them to justice.




Films and documentaries about these true stories seem to attract large audiences, especially where innocent victims are concerned.

Engage the young people's attention by chatting about some of these which they may have seen (e.g. The Good Nurse/Capturing the Killer Nurse)

Talk about how they feel when innocent people's lives are taken.

Introduce the Bible lesson as being the story of the first murder – and it was the killing of an innocent person.

RESOURCES

-  Cluedo Board Game
-  Wink Murder
-  Bible Detective Game



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Lesson

Set the scene for the young people, bearing in mind that for some it may be the first time they have heard/studied this story.

Adam and Eve were blessed with two sons – Cain and Abel. Following their disobedience in the Garden of Eden, God had promised Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15) that a Saviour would be born to them.

With the birth of their first son they may have thought he would be the one who would destroy Satan, but instead of that he became the murderer of his innocent brother, Abel.

Read the story together, asking the young people if they can spot 4 differences between the two brothers:

- Cain was older; Abel was younger
- Cain was a farmer; Abel was a shepherd
- Cain offered fruit/crops to God; Abel offered a firstborn lamb
- Cain's offering was rejected; Abel's offering was accepted

Let's investigate

Ask the young people to put on their investigator's hats. In a murder case, certain things have to be proven – that there was a motive, an opportunity and the intention to kill.

Looking at the passage, ask them to find each:

- Motive (jealousy)
- Opportunity (they were alone in the fields)
- Intent (Cain's attack was premeditated and planned. He deceived his brother by luring

him out to the fields. Abel would surely have felt completely safe going there with his brother!)

Why did God reject Cain's offering but accept Abel's?

Cain's offering seemed outwardly good, but his heart clearly was not right before God (1 John 3:11 & 12). This becomes clear in Cain's reaction to God's displeasure at what he had brought to Him. Instead of sorrow and repentance, he became resentful and jealous, which led him to shedding the blood of his innocent brother, whose heart was right before God. His rebellious heart is further seen when he tries to conceal his guilt after God confronts him about his brother, saying he is not responsible for looking after him!

Abel however, offered to God his very best lamb with true faith. Scripture tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God. Abel's faith is later commended in a famous chapter of Biblical faith heroes (Hebrews 11:4).

The Blood of Abel

Abel was an innocent man whose blood was shed as a result of the sin of his brother. God told Cain, "**The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground**" (Genesis 4:10). Cain was therefore punished by God.

Explain that God is a God of justice. Therefore, sin has to be punished by Him.

The Blood of Jesus

This points us forward to the death of Jesus. He was the only completely innocent man put to death by jealous and angry people. They

shouted, **“Crucify Him”**, even though He had done nothing wrong.

Jesus’ death is different from Abel’s, however, because He was being punished for everyone else’s wrong-doing. He willingly allowed Himself to die in this way because He knew that by bearing that awful punishment God’s justice against sin would be satisfied once and for all.

As Jesus’ blood poured out, forgiveness

became possible (was secured) for anyone who, unlike Cain, accepts they have done wrong and that their heart is not right before God. By repenting and asking God for this forgiveness they can be at peace with God forever.

This is why Jesus is better than Abel: His blood frees us from guilt and punishment and offers freedom, forgiveness and a new start with God. This is amazing grace.



Application

How we worship matters

Worshipping God is something that ought to come from the heart. It is not just going to church or singing songs. Abel’s worship came from a place of faith and love in his heart. This is why it pleased God.

How do you approach worship?

God sees everything

God sees beyond what is outwardly visible. He knows what is in our hearts as well as seeing what others do not see. Cain learned this the hard way. His heart was not right and his murderous action, done out of the sight of human eyes, was seen by God.

God is gracious and merciful

Despite Cain’s awful actions, God, in punishing him, also protected him by putting a mark on him (v.15). God could have put him to death immediately. Sadly, Cain then left God’s presence (v.16).

We should respond to God’s gracious offer of forgiveness for our sins by trusting in Jesus, not by turning our back on Him.

What is your response to Jesus?



Questions

1. What causes you to be jealous? How should we deal with jealousy?
2. How do you respond when confronted about doing something that is wrong?
3. How would you describe God in this story?

RESOURCES

▶ Cluedo Board Game

Type of Activity: Game

Aim of Activity: To play a game of Cluedo.

Instructions/Rule: Play a game of Cluedo as a group, in teams of 4 to 5 in each group



▶ Wink Murder

Type of Activity: Ice Backer

Aim of Activity: The objective of the game is for the murderer is to kill as many other players as possible without being identified and, if you are not the murderer, identify the killer before you get murdered. This goal is the same across all versions and offshoots of the game.

Instructions/Rules: Wink Murder is a great parlor or party game for many players. You can have as few as six and up to 30 or so people. What is great about it is you do not need any equipment to play the game, the rules are pretty simple, and your party group can have a lot of fun with it. It is perhaps best played and more manageable with about 10 players.

Just as there can be many murderers, the game also goes by many names. You may know it as Murder Wink, Wink Wink Murder, Killer, Killer Killer, Lonely Ghost, or Murder in the Dark. There are a few versions of Wink Murder, and there is a closely related offshoot of Wink Murder called Murder Handshake.

▶ Bible Detective Game

Type of Activity: Game

Aim of Activity: A Bible lesson activity that will help children become eager to investigate the Word of God.

Instructions/Rules: <https://www.kidssundayschool.com/gradeschool/activities/bible-detective>

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...NOAH



The Big Idea

The ark saved Noah and his family from judgment on this world; Jesus saves His people from God's everlasting judgment in hell.



Bible Reference

Genesis 6:5-22; Genesis 7 & 8

RESOURCES

▶ One Big Question

▶ Build a Boat

▶ How to Build a Boat



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Introduction

Fun fact: There was no ship built bigger than Noah's ark until 1858! The ark is estimated to be 510 foot long (That is bigger than a football stadium). Perhaps you could show a picture of some of the life-sized arks that have been constructed.

Throughout history, many people have claimed to have found the ark. On the other hand, others have ridiculed the idea of such an ark, as they did in Noah's day. After all, why would someone build an ark on land that did not experience much rain, let alone flooding? Thousands of years later, some things never change. People still come up with excuses to disbelieve or ridicule God's Word.

Ask the young people how they would react if God asked them to build an ark when there seemed little chance of any rain? How do they think others would react? Emphasise that this shows Noah's faithful obedience.



Lesson

God's eternal redemption (rescue) plan (2 Timothy 1:9) was put into action right after the fall. Genesis 3:15 promises an offspring (seed) who will crush the head of Satan, the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Would that seed be Cain or Abel? In Genesis 4, Abel is murdered and Cain is exiled. But Adam and Eve had another son, Seth, through whom the promise could continue. Genesis 5 lists the various offspring that come from Seth, leading eventually to Noah.

Seemingly, however, disaster strikes when we reach Genesis 6. Verse 5 tells us that, **"Every intention of the thoughts of [man's] heart was only evil."** As the righteous judge of the Earth (Psalm 50:6), God was grieved and decreed that all living things on Earth would be destroyed as punishment. But what about Noah and God's promised seed? Well, the promise (covenant) making God never breaks a promise (Hebrews 6:17), so Noah found favour in God's eyes (v8) and was spared. You may wonder at this point how God could regret something if He is all knowing (omniscient)? Well, this human language highlights to us that as God carries out His plans, He does not do it coldly or distantly.

God's instrument of judgment on the world was a flood (v16). So, God instructed Noah to build an ark that would hold his family of just eight people, and two of every kind of animal. What less people are aware of is that there were actually seven pairs of each clean animal, and two pairs of each unclean animal (Genesis 7:2-3)! In 2 Peter 2:5, Noah is called a **"Herald of righteousness"**.

This means that he pleaded with people to join his family on the ark, the only way by which they could be saved from God's sure judgment. Sadly, no-one believed. Jesus Himself picked up on this in Matthew 24:38, when He described the people of Noah's day,

"Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." In other words, they carried on with normal life, thinking they did not have to worry about God or His Word. Oh how wrong they were.

People probably thought Noah was deluded (even before the age of scepticism in which we live) that is, until the rain came in Genesis 7. In verse 16, we are told that after Noah, his family and the animals entered the ark, **"The LORD shut him in."** When God shuts the door, it remains shut. Just as any true exam needs a deadline for it to be considered an exam, God's mercy needs a point at which it ceases for those who do not believe His Word, for it to be considered mercy.

Genesis 8 records the story of God delivering Noah and his family through the flood. The ark was designed in such a way as to protect Noah from the battering waves of judgment, and the purpose it fulfilled. Ask the young people if any of them get sea sick and, if so, how they think they would have fared? Noah showed his thankfulness to God by offering a sacrifice (v.20), a natural response to a God who rescued Him! Do we have this response? God then makes another covenant to not destroy man by another flood (v.21).

At this point, you could ask the young people if they know the symbol of this covenant (Answer - the rainbow).

Through Noah's son Shem, the line of the promised seed continues, leading eventually to Abram, the father of the Jewish people. It is through these people that THE promised seed comes - The Lord Jesus Christ.

I wonder if anyone could point out any similarities between Noah and Jesus? Both

were part of God's redemption plan; both were preachers of righteousness; both were faithfully obedient to God; and both saved their people from God's judgement. However, Jesus is better than Noah. Noah was only part of God's redemptive plan, Jesus was the fulfilment of that plan. Noah was faithful to God and God's message, but he was imperfect. Only one chapter after the events of the flood, we discover that Noah was still prone to sin and disobedience! Jesus, on the other hand, was perfect (1 Peter 2:22) and was even obedient to death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).

Most importantly, Noah only helped save his family from global judgment, whereas Jesus saves His people from eternal judgment. Throughout the Bible, we are told about "**The day of wrath**" (God's righteous anger) in which God will judge the whole world (Acts 17:31). Through His life, death and resurrection, Jesus has provided salvation for all those who repent and believe (Ephesians 1:4). But why did He need to save them? By our human standards, there are some people we would call 'good'. The response of the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:10 is to say, "**None is righteous, no, not one.**" In light of the perfection and holiness of God, there is no person who can stand on their own merit (Revelation 6:17).

Jesus is like Noah's ark, because He too is able to protect His people from God's judgment. He is able to do this because He is a substitute. Just as in the Old Testament, the sins of the Israelites were given to a lamb that was slain to appease the wrath of God, so too were the sins of God's people imputed (transferred) to Jesus on the cross (John 10:11) to appease God's wrath. Rather than receiving eternal punishment in hell, it was God's will to crush Jesus (Isaiah 53:10), the perfect lamb of God (John 1:29), so that His people would be saved. Likewise, Jesus' righteousness is imputed to them (2 Corinthians 5:21), so that now they may spend eternity in Heaven! Unlike lambs in the Old Testament, Jesus' sacrifice only needed to occur once because it was

sufficient (Hebrews 10:12).

Unlike Noah, Jesus is a living Saviour. Noah lived a whopping 950 years (Genesis 9:29)! Would you like to live that long? What would you do? While this is a long time, Jesus has existed forever (John 1:2) and when His human nature was killed, death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24). Now, Jesus lives at the right hand of God and intercedes (mediates) and advocates for His people when they inevitably mess up (1 John 1:8-9). Even though Noah was flawed He points us to Christ.

Just as in Noah's day, many people ridicule this message. Some see it as outdated, offensive, outlandish, while others do not even care. Do you know anyone who responds to God's salvation plan in such a way? For those that reject the gospel message, Jesus says, "**The wrath of God remains on Him**" (John 3:36). While God made a covenant not to flood the whole earth again, He also promises a fiery judgment on those who reject Jesus (Revelation 20:15). Just as many were probably shocked in Noah's day when the rain came, so will many be shocked when Jesus returns (Matthew 24:39). These days, many professing Christians try to cover up the message of God's judgment for fear that people will not like it. However, if we are to truly love our neighbours, we need to be bold in telling them the truth, even if that truth will be hated (John 15:18). No-one deserves to be saved. So, the fact that anyone is saved highlights God's love and grace.

Just as in Noah's day, Christians are now called to be heralds of righteousness (Matthew 28:20). It may seem foolish to the rest of the world, nevertheless we are to continue to preach Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23). Even though we will continue to have doubts (John 16:1), we can be assured that Jesus will return, just as Noah was assured that the flood waters would come! Let this give us a sense of urgency in our message, just as Noah had for his message. But let us also look forward to the

return of Jesus, for when it happens, all that is wrong with the world will finally be made right. Redemption will be complete.

Is Jesus your ark, or are you like those in Noah's day who disbelieve the message? After the flood, evil continued, but when Jesus comes back to judge the world, all evil will cease (Revelation 21:4). While this is good news for God's people, it is terrifying for

those who reject God as there will be no more restarts, no more second chances. The flood waters only remained on Earth for 150 days, but the lake of fire burns forever. Every day we draw nearer to the day of wrath, are you ready? As the 19th century preacher, Charles Spurgeon, said, "**Come, for the door which open stood, is now about to close.**" When God shuts the door, it stays shut forever.



Application

A number of years ago, a film was released called *Evan Almighty* which was a modern-day parody of the story of Noah. While the movie was highly unbiblical, how would you react if God tasked you today with building the ark?

In summary, Jesus is better than Noah because He saves His people for eternity. If you knew your death was imminent, or that Jesus' return were tomorrow, would you hasten to enter the ark, that is Jesus, by faith? None of us knows what tomorrow holds, but it is certainly no surety. Ask the young people to be honest about what may hold them, or someone they know, back from coming to Jesus.

Maybe get the young people to act out the story of Noah and see what those portraying

Noah would say to the others. Afterwards, emphasise it is the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit alone which causes people to repent and place their faith in Christ. This is good news for Christians as it means they need not worry when their words are seemingly failing to make any difference!

At this point, if willing, a leader could share their personal testimony of how Jesus saved them. It is important throughout this particular lesson to "un-Sunday-schoolify" the story of Noah so that the young people do not just think it is a cool story about an ark and a flood. The ark was the means by which God saved His people for that time. Christ brings a greater salvation for all who trust in Him. The flood was the judgement on the world but there is still a judgement yet to come and for that we need to be ready.



Questions

1. If you knew you or someone was about to be hit by a truck, what would you do? Does the urgency of your answer change knowing that the day of judgment is coming and it will hit us all?
2. What are some of the most common reasons people use to reject God's message? Do you think these reasons are similar or different to those in Noah's day?
3. What is the importance of the story of Noah in the overall narrative of the Bible?

RESOURCES

One Big Question

Type of Activity: Other

Aim of Activity: To get the boys to think about what they want from their lives?

Instructions/Rule: Simply ask the boys the questions: "What would you do if knew the world would end tomorrow?"

Build a Boat

Type of Activity: Craft

Aim of Activity: To get the boys to understand, how difficult it was for Noah and his sons to build the ark.

Instructions/Rules: Provide the boys with arts and craft to build a boat which could fit inside a sink, that can hold 8 small weights without sinking.

How to Build a Boat

Type of Activity: Written

Aim of Activity: To think about how to go about building a boat.

Instructions/Rules: If you were asked to build a boat, how would you start, write a list of activities?

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...ISAAC



The Big Idea

To put God first in his life, Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac.

God wants us to put Him first in our lives.

Jesus took our place as a sacrifice for our sin so that we could have a relationship with God.



Bible Reference

Genesis 22:1-18

RESOURCES

- ▶ Top 10 Things I Could Not Do Without
- ▶ Moving Home
- ▶ Have a Little Patience



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Introduction

What is your most prized and precious possession?

What would you do if someone asked you to give it up?

How would you feel?

This story is about a man who was called to give up his most precious possession in order to prove that God was number 1 in his life.

Abram, a descendant of Noah, through his son, Shem, lived in Ur, (modern-day Iraq).

God called him to leave his home town and country and move to a land called Canaan.

God made a covenant, or promise, that this land would (belong to his descendants) be his, his children's and his grandchildren's. At this time, God changed Abram's name to Abraham, meaning 'Father of a multitude'.

Abraham found it hard to understand and believe that he would have many descendants as he and his wife Sarah were childless. But when Abraham was 100 years old, God was true to His word and Sarah gave birth to a baby boy, who they called Isaac.





Lesson

A number of years later, God wanted to test Abraham's faith. He asked him to take his only son Isaac to a mountain in another part of the country and offer him as a sacrifice. Now Isaac was his father's pride and joy, his most precious possession. How must he have felt when God asked him to do this? What do you think he did?

Abraham chose to obey God even though this meant sacrificing the son he had waited so long for.

He saddled up his donkey and took Isaac and two servants with him. He cut wood for the sacrifice and brought his knife and the fire. Three days into the journey, Abraham could see the place God had told him to go to. He told his servants to wait with the donkey while he went to worship with his son. Abraham set off with Isaac, asking him to carry the wood for the altar, while he brought the knife and the fire.

As they were walking, Isaac asked his father the question that he must have been dreading, "We have the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb to burn as a sacrifice?" Imagine the feelings of Abraham as he answered that God would provide the lamb to sacrifice.

Could you have continued if this were you?

Eventually father and son arrived at the appointed place. Abraham began to build the altar and lay the wood on top. He tied up Isaac and placed him on top of the wood. He drew his knife to kill his son...

No account is given in the book of Genesis about how Isaac was feeling. We can only imagine his fear, his feeling of abandonment, the questions he wanted to ask his father.

Suddenly an angel of the Lord called out to

Abraham from heaven, **"Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."** (v.12)

Wow! What an intervention right at the last minute! Relief all round! Abraham saw a ram caught in nearby bushes and took it to place on the altar instead of his son Isaac.

The angel of the Lord spoke again to Abraham, telling him that because he was willing to give up his son, God would bless him and give him many descendants - as numerous as the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky. Have you ever tried to count the grains of sand on the beach or the stars in the sky on a dark night? God was going to use these descendants to bless all the nations in earth.

What a test to have been given by God! Thankfully, Abraham's faith was so strong, he was able to do as God asked, to the point of sacrificing his only son.

Of course, what God asked Abraham to do - sacrifice his only son - God also had to do years later. The perfect lamb was provided on the same mountain two thousand years later in the form of Jesus.

In order to save His people from their sin, God sent His son, Jesus, to this earth to be a sacrifice. He was crucified and died on a cross on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem. When we trust Jesus to be our Saviour, we are saved because Jesus took the punishment for our wrong doings.

We can be sure that one day we will go to heaven and live with Him forever. Hallelujah! Thank you, God!



Application

Think back to your most precious possession and how you felt about giving it up. Abraham was asked to give up his son in order to prove his faith in God.

Every day, God challenges us to prove our faith in Him, to show ourselves and others that God is number one in our lives.

God is pleased when He sees His people

following His commands. He knows that often it makes us unpopular with others but He appreciates your right actions.

To be people of faith, we must trust in the sacrifice of Jesus, and keep Him number one in our lives.

Look out for opportunities to do this during the week!



Questions

1. When you are in school and everyone wants to hang out in the corner of the playground at lunchtime and discuss weekend plans, but you know Scripture Union is on and you want to go. What do you do?
2. A new pupil has come to your school and knows no one. You know that God wants us to look out for one another, but when you suggest to your friends they ask the new student to join your table in the canteen, they all say 'No way!' What do you do?
3. How is Jesus better than Isaac?

RESOURCES

Top 10 Things I Could Not Do Without

Type of Activity: Written

Aim of Activity: To understand what the boys value most

Instructions/Rule: Write a list of, Top 10, ranking for what you could not do without, number 1 being the most important?

Moving Home

Type of Activity: Ice Breaker

Aim of Activity: Get the boys talking

Instructions/Rules: Ask the questions, "If you have to move house, what are some of the most important things you carry with you?"

Have a Little Patience

Type of Activity: Ice Breaker

Aim of Activity: Get the boys thinking about what it means to want something.

Instructions/Rules: : Ask the questions, "What is the longest that you would be willing to wait for something, save for it, chore money etc.."

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...JOSEPH



The Big Idea

Christ in His great love freely forgives all who come sincerely to Him. Though we deserve death and hell for our sin, yet He willingly went to the cross to pay our penalty and secure the forgiveness of all who entrust themselves to Him.



Bible Reference

Genesis 45:1-15; 1 John 1:9

RESOURCES

- ▶ Who Do You Love The Most?
- ▶ Trust Obstacle Course
- ▶ William Don't Tell



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Introduction

Play a game with the young people that involves trying to hit a particular target. It could be something like darts or archery, or it could be trying to throw or kick a ball at a specific target (maybe a small cone to knock over or something like that).

Explain to the young people that in life we have all missed the mark and indeed that we do not even aim at the right target. This is what Paul means when he says that we all

have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

We are God's creatures who depend on Him for every breath we take but who are not living as He wants us to. That means we deserve His punishment. In His amazing and free love He has come in the person of His beloved Son Jesus to provide forgiveness for everyone who comes to Christ.





Lesson

The opening book of the Bible, Genesis, focuses most of its last 14 chapters (out of a total of 50) on a man named Joseph. Much of Genesis has to do with the simple word 'seed'. When Adam and Eve defied God and fell into sin, God in His great mercy promised that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). In other words, God told Adam and Eve that a descendant ('seed') would come, who would rescue and put things right. As Genesis progresses, the attentive reader is naturally on the lookout for this promised seed of the woman.

In chapter 12 it is made clear that this person will be a descendant of Abraham and will bring blessing to all nations. The remainder of the book (and indeed the rest of the Old Testament) focuses on Abraham's offspring. Of all Abraham's descendants who are recorded in Genesis, the one who gets closest to fulfilling this promise is undoubtedly Joseph. In his days, a great rescue was brought about that saw his own family and many others besides (from a wide variety of nations) delivered from famine.

This amazing rescue came about in an utterly extraordinary fashion. Having aroused his brothers jealousy by relating dreams in which they bowed down to him, Joseph became the victim of their cruelty and was sold into slavery in Egypt. Having excelled in his master's house he nevertheless fell into deeper trouble, ending up in prison on a false and fabricated charge. Here his God-given ability to interpret dreams again came to the fore, but the cupbearer whose dream Joseph explained forgot all about him once he was released himself.

The cupbearer's memory was jogged at a later stage when Pharaoh's unsettling dreams proved too much for all his wise men and advisors to explain. On hearing the

cupbearer's tale, Pharaoh sent for Joseph and was astounded at his ability to explain his dreams. So amazed was Pharaoh that he not only confirmed Joseph's release, he made him Prime Minister of Egypt. In this exalted role Joseph was able to prepare for the coming famine the dreams had warned of, and thus bring a blessed rescue to a great many in Egypt and beyond.

At the heart of this wonderful story there is a magnificent message of forgiveness. Joseph suffered a great deal over a long time, and it all stemmed from the vindictive treatment meted out to him by his brothers. In his position of authority within Egypt, Joseph had it in his power to punish his brothers should he have chosen to. They were in a situation of desperate need, and he could have punished them for their misdeeds by simply not helping them out. By the grace of God, Joseph not only chose to avoid inflicting direct punishment on his brothers (such as having them all imprisoned or sold into slavery), he went much further and did good things for them – providing them with food and with new homes. Great things were accomplished in and through Joseph, and gifts of grace to the undeserving were at the heart of them.

Breath-taking as all this truly is, still the book of Genesis intentionally leaves its readers hungering for something more. Great blessings have come to people from all nations through Joseph, who is Abraham's seed, but not on such a scale as to fully 'crush the head of the serpent' and bring about the redemption (rescue) promised in Genesis 3:15. Genesis deliberately concludes with a recounting of how a great deliverance was brought about through one of Abraham's offspring, but without the promise of chapter 3 being fully realised. It thus encourages its readers to long for the full completion of the promise.

That full completion, of course, comes in a descendant of Abraham who is even greater than Joseph. Like Joseph he brings blessing to people of all nations. Like Joseph he brings this blessing through immense and undeserved suffering. Like Joseph, at the heart of the deliverance he brings about, there is astonishing grace to the undeserving. In all these ways Jesus Christ is like Joseph, but far greater than Joseph. His sufferings are

of an entirely different scale and all the more truly undeserved. To people of all nations who come to him he brings not merely temporary relief from famine (as important as that obviously is) but everlasting rescue from sin and shame. He offers forgiveness not only to a handful of biological relations, but to any and all who repent and believe the gospel. He is oh so much better than Joseph. He is astoundingly and wonderfully good!



Application

We are all sinners. We have all missed the mark. Indeed, we naturally spend our lives aiming at the wrong target. Instead of consciously and gladly living for God's glory we live for other, lesser things. Yet, He has a deep and marvellous love for us, expressed in the gift of His Son who paid for our sins

on the cross. He offers a full and complete forgiveness to all who embrace Christ as Saviour and Lord. Marvel at what Joseph did for his brothers, and see that Jesus offers something better by far to you. Entrust yourself to Him!



Questions

1. Who needs God's forgiveness?
2. Why did Joseph forgive his brothers?
3. Why does Jesus offer forgiveness to sinners?

RESOURCES

How Do You Love The Most?

Type of Activity: Ice Breaker

Aim of Activity: Get the boys talking

Instructions/Rule: If you had had to chose one sibling to save who would it be and why?

Trust Obstacle Course

Type of Activity: Ice Breaker

Aim of Activity: The Trust Walk is a popular teambuilding activity that helps people practice trusting each other. A leader guides his or her blindfolded partner around obstacles using verbal or nonverbal instructions.

Instructions/Rules: This activity is an active team building activity that requires a great deal of space. An outdoor setting with some obstacles (but nothing too dangerous!) is ideal. The recommended group size is: small, medium, or large. Participants will form pairs. Materials required include blindfolds and any props that you can set up as minor obstacles.

William Don't Tell

Type of Activity: Game

Aim of Activity: Trust Exercise

Instructions/Rules: You will need a nerf gun, an empty bottle, a blind flood and safty glass. You will need one boy to hold and shoot the nerf gun and another to stand with the bottle on his head, blindfolded with safety glasses on.

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...MOSES



The Big Idea

When Jesus died to pay the price for His people's sin, He turned God's righteous anger away from them forever. This is why trusting in Jesus is the only way to Heaven.



Bible Reference

Exodus 32; John 14:1-6

RESOURCES

- ▶ Treasure hunt
- ▶ Distractions
- ▶ Never Have I Ever (Kid Version)
- ▶ Drama Script



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Introduction

When men get lost while driving somewhere, they are far less likely to ask for help than women.

Apparently, on average, men drive around lost for 276 miles each year rather than asking for help. Even if they do ask for help, 40% of men say that they would not trust the directions they receive.

Do you like to find out things for yourself, or are you willing to ask for help?

What are some of the areas of life where we need a little bit of help sometimes?

Can you think of a time when you asked someone to help you, and this was a really good idea?





Lesson

Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving instructions from God about how to make the Tabernacle and all the items associated with it. The Tabernacle was going to be the special tent where God would be present among His people, and where His people would come to worship Him.

Altogether Moses was on Mount Sinai for forty days and nights. At some point during this time the Israelites became so impatient that Moses had not returned they asked Aaron to make a god they could see.

Before going up Mount Sinai, Moses had put Aaron and Hur in charge of the people while he was gone. So, Aaron should have said to the people something like, 'No, I won't do that because that would break the commandments God gave us, and we promised we would obey them.'

Sadly, Aaron did not say this. Instead, he told the people to bring him their gold earrings and Aaron used these to make an idol in the shape of a calf. Aaron then announced there would be a time of worship the next day. During this time of worship the Israelites bowed down to the golden calf, made sacrifices to it, and said that it brought them out of slavery in Egypt.

God knew all about what the Israelites were doing, and He told Moses that He was going to wipe them all out and make a great nation out of Moses (Exodus 32:9-10). However, it appears that God used the threat of punishment to prompt Moses to pray for the people. And this is what he did.

Moses gave God three reasons why it would not be a good idea for Him to wipe out the Israelites. First of all, it would make no sense for God to destroy Israel because they were His chosen people, whom He had rescued from Egypt. Secondly, the Egyptians would misinterpret God's annihilation of Israel and

this would lead to them speaking badly of God instead of seeing how great He is. Thirdly, annihilating Israel would not be in keeping with God's promise to make a great nation out of Abraham's descendants.

God answered the prayer for mercy that He had prompted Moses to pray, by promising not to bring on the Israelites the disaster He had threatened.

When Moses eventually came down from Mount Sinai, and saw what the people were doing, he asked Aaron why he had led them into such great sin.

Instead of admitting what he had done wrong, and asking God to forgive him, Aaron blamed the Israelites for being evil, and he then told a blatant lie by saying that he just threw the gold into the fire and out came the calf!

Moses asked whoever was on God's side to come to him, and only the members of his own tribe, the Levites, came to him.

They put to death 3,000 people. While this is a lot of people, it was only 0.5% of the adult male population of Israel. Presumably, when the Israelites saw what the Levites were doing, the vast majority of them stopped sinning against God and He spared their lives.

The Levites did not randomly kill people, instead they probably targeted those who were the ringleaders of this rebellion, and those who continued to indulge in sin.

While Moses' prayer had secured Israel's survival, God had not said anything about forgiving Israel's sin. So, after the dust had settled Moses turned his attention to this. Moses asked God to remove his name from the record of His people if He was not prepared to forgive Israel's sins (v.32).

God made it clear to Moses that He alone has the right to decide whose names are recorded in His book of life, and that He would only punish those who are guilty of sin.

Moses' example points us to Jesus, who not only prayed for His people to be forgiven, but gave His life as an atoning sacrifice for their sins (Hebrews 9:15; 1 John 2:1) and, by doing so, He secured forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7) and eternal life (John 3:16) for them.

Jesus could do what Moses could not do. Jesus could pay the price for His people's sin because He had no sin of His own to pay the price for.

Because Moses pleaded with God to forgive His people's sin, those who trusted in God's plan of salvation entered the Promised Land of Canaan. And, only those who trust in God's plan of salvation will enter Heaven.

This is why Jesus said, **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."** (John 14:6)

We need to recognise the seriousness of our sin, and ask God to forgive us, believing that He can, and He will, because He sent Jesus to purchase our forgiveness.



Application

There are still many idols that we can have in our life. An idol is something that we value, and trust in, more than we value or trust in God.

When we are challenged about sin that is in our life, we should not try to minimise it by blaming other people for our behaviour, or tell lies in an

attempt to cover our sin.

If we are a Christian, we should pray that God would be merciful to people we know who are not Christians by enabling them to repent of their sin and trust Jesus to be their Saviour.



Questions

1. What are some of the idols you have in your life?
2. How do you try to excuse the sins you commit?
3. If you are a Christian, who could you pray, for God to be merciful to?

RESOURCES

Treasure Hunt

Type of Activity: Game

Aim of Activity: Get the team to follow instructions, without question.

Instructions/Rule: Treasure hunt, will be made up of, Hop, skips and jumps, with items around the hall, list down the first letter of the item.

Distractions

Type of Activity: Written

Aim of Activity: Get the young people to talk about different idols in their lives (sports, phones, TV etc)

Instructions/Rules: Ask the question, "What are some of the things that distract them from BB?"

Never Have I Ever

Type of Activity: Ice Breaker

Aim of Activity: Get the young people talking

Instructions/Rules: Everyone sits in a circle and starts with their ten fingers. The first player says "never have I ever.." and says something they've never done. For example, "never have I ever been in detention."

If you've done what the first person said, you must put one finger down. Move around the circle and repeat with each person. At the end of the game, the person with the most fingers still standing wins.

For ideas of questions see, Never Have I Ever Questions for Kids (next page)

Never Have I Ever Questions for Kids

1. Never have I ever gone skiing.
2. Never have I ever made up a fake language.
3. Never have I ever fallen out of bed in the middle of the night.
4. Never have I ever laughed so much it hurt.
5. Never have I ever seen a shooting star.
6. Never have I ever hidden things under my bed.
7. Never have I ever broken a bone.
8. Never have I ever fallen asleep in the car so that a parent would carry me in.
9. Never have I ever worn something dirty.
10. Never have I ever jumped off the diving board.
11. Never have I ever told a really bad joke.
12. Never have I ever made a wish on my birthday candles.
13. Never have I ever forgotten to do my homework.
14. Never have I ever done karate.
15. Never have I ever watched the same show five times.
16. Never have I ever danced in the rain.
17. Never have I ever eaten candy that was six months old.
18. Never have I ever been on a train.
19. Never have I ever been on an airplane.
20. Never have I ever seen the ocean.
21. Never have I ever climbed a tree.
22. Never have I ever played a musical instrument.
23. Never have I ever been on a road trip.
24. Never have I ever stayed overnight in the hospital.
25. Never have I ever tripped over my shoelaces.
26. Never have I ever been in a natural disaster.
27. Never have I ever sang karaoke.
28. Never have I ever fainted.
29. Never have I ever stayed up all night.
30. Never have I ever ridden on a roller coaster.
31. Never have I ever ridden in a tractor.
32. Never have I ever read a whole book in one day.
33. Never have I ever been on a subway.
34. Never have I ever had to stay in at recess.
35. Never have I ever been on a helicopter.
36. Never have I ever been snowboarding.
37. Never have I ever been scuba diving.
38. Never have I ever run a race.
39. Never have I ever had a cavity.
40. Never have I ever eaten squid.
41. Never have I ever been on a zipline.
42. Never have I ever climbed a mountain.
43. Never have I ever been on a city bus.
44. Never have I ever ridden a horse.
45. Never have I ever played in a treehouse.
46. Never have I ever had a bloody nose.
47. Never have I ever been on a cruise.
48. Never have I ever moved from one home to another.
49. Never have I ever seen a sunrise.
50. Never have I ever been car sick.

DRAMA SCRIPT: THE BETTER WAY



This script was written for BBNI by local Christian drama company, Play It By Ear. To find out more about them or to book a drama workshop visit www.playitbyeardrama.com

The Better Way – Exodus 32

Narrator 1: Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls, it's time to introduce the stars of the show

Narrator 2: Please give a big round of applause to the people of Israel!

People walk on and form a line facing the audience

Narrator 1: Now the people of Israel were God's chosen people

People wave

Narrator 2: and you would think when choosing his people, God would choose the best of the best

People smile and look confident

Narrator 1: The strongest

Show muscles

Narrator 2: The smartest

People: Eureka!

Narrator 1: The coolest

People do finger guns and say

People: 'Sup

Narrator 2: and of course, the most faithful

People hold their hands in a praying pose and look up to God

Narrator 1: But the people God actually chose were just a bunch of ordinary people

Drop poses, put hands in pockets/fold arms and whistle casually

Narrator 2: Some were strong

A third of the people show off muscles

Narrator 1: Some were smart

A third of the people say

People: Eureka!

Narrator 2: Some were cool

A third of the people do finger guns and say

People: 'Sup

Narrator 1: but some were none of the above

All go back to ordinary poses, perhaps doing a slight shrug

Narrator 2: And most of them were not very faithful

People all turn their backs to the audience

Narrator 1: But God had always been faithful, in every situation

Narrator 2 Like when they were slaves in Egypt

People turn around and pretend to use pick axes; they all say

People: Heave ho, heave ho

Narrator 1: Or when they were being chased by the Egyptians and God guided them to safety through the Red Sea

People run on the spot and shout

People: Aaaaaahhhhhhhh! (then look behind them, wipe their foreheads and say) Phew!

Narrator 2: Or when they had been wandering around the desert for ages and were absolutely starving so God provided manna from heaven

People start scrounging around on the floor, gathering up food and then eating

People: Nom nom nom nom nom nom

Narrator 1: And so you would think after their leader Moses had been up on a mountain talking to God for a really long time

During the above line, someone brings out a step ladder and a cardboard cloud and someone playing Moses gets up on the ladder and stands behind the cloud

Narrator 2: That the people of God would probably remember how faithful God had been and trust that everything was going to be ok

People pull cheesy smiles and do a thumbs up

Narrator 1: But that's not what they did

Narrator 1: No, they surrounded Moses' brother Aaron

1 of the people play Aaron and the rest surround him

Narrator 2: and then they said

Person 1: Make us a new god!

People: Yeah!

They hold threatening poses towards Aaron

Narrator 1: And even though Aaron had been by Moses side every step of the way and seen God do so many amazing things, he simply said

Aaron: Ok

Narrator 2: And so the people brought Aaron all of their jewellery

People surround Aaron again, this time so Aaron can't be seen

Narrator 1: And Aaron used it all to make a golden calf

People step back to reveal one of the actors has put on a cow mask painted gold.

People: Wow

Narrator 2: The people decided that this would be their god so they bowed down and worshipped the calf

People bow before the calf and hold their poses

Narrator 1: Meanwhile up on the mountain, God told Moses what the people were doing

Moses looks out from behind the cloud and says

Moses: Uh oh!

Moses puts his head back behind the cloud

Narrator 2: God was really angry and was planning to destroy his people

Moses looks out from behind the cloud and says

Moses: Uh oh!

Moses puts his head back behind the cloud

Narrator 1: So Moses pleaded with God

Moses: Please God, please!

Narrator 2: And God listened, He changed his mind

Narrator 1: God would not destroy his people, instead he had mercy on them

Narrator 2: But even though God did this amazing thing, the people of God didn't really learn their lesson

Narrator 1: They continued to hurt people

People make a fighting freeze frame

Narrator 2: They still got up to no good

Stand up straight and try to look innocent as if covering something up

Narrator 1: And they still turned their backs on God

People turn away from the audience

Narrator 2 They still deserved to be punished

Narrator 1: But God made a better way

Narrator 2: For as Moses had pleaded with God to turn His anger away from the people

Narrator 1: So Jesus, Son of God turned the Father's anger away from us, instead pouring out mercy for all people and for all time

Narrator 2: Jesus took the punishment for the wrong things we do and gave us the chance to be close to our Father God.

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...DAVID



The Big Idea

The Lord Jesus has won the greatest of all victories. He has triumphed over sin, Satan and death!



Bible Reference

1 Samuel 17:41-50; 1 Corinthians 15:57

RESOURCES

- ▶ The Hare and the Turtle
- ▶ Empires
- ▶ Jesus our Bridge



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Introduction

Play a game with the young people in which one young person, on their own, has to compete against all the others at once. It might be a football match in which this young person is on their own and there are several in the other team. If you have time, several young people could have a go at being the

one on their own.

Ask them how amazing someone would have to be to win on their own in that sort of situation. Explain to them that Jesus is altogether amazing because He has won the greatest of all victories on His own, and in the most unexpected way!



Lesson

One of the overarching themes in the Old Testament is leadership. How well things went for God's people (Israel) often depended on what sort of leaders they had – bad leaders brought problems on the nation at large, and good leaders brought about victories that all the people could share in. Sometimes those victories came about in astonishing ways that nobody could have expected.

Perhaps the most famous of those victories in the Old Testament was the incident that established the reputation of Israel's greatest king. David was still a young lad, a long way from exercising any leadership role in the nation let alone becoming King (though he had already been anointed by Samuel at God's command), when the chilling spectre of Goliath hung over Israel. Whereas no-one else would rise to the challenge and duel with the giant, David fearlessly entered the arena.



Various factors contribute to the explanation of David's victory. Goliath's arrogant complacency, no doubt played its part in his downfall. Using a slingshot was a tactical masterstroke on David's part.

It was a way of engaging the enemy that suited David's main strength, while avoiding a situation in which Goliath could bring his best assets to bear. While these factors are not insignificant, overarching them is a bigger truth that David himself articulated at the time. It was by God's almighty enabling that David triumphed.

If a shepherd boy with a sling, overcoming a physically imposing, battle-hardened warrior seems unlikely from a merely human point of view, does not a crucified man triumphing in any sense at all seem all the more unlikely? Few means of execution are as intentionally torturous as crucifixion, and the intention of the Roman authorities in their use of it was simple. Those who were crucified would suffer in the most ghastly and publicly humiliating way imaginable, and thus the empire would make it clear what those who opposed it could expect. It was a loud declaration that the crucified person was an abject failure, and that anyone who joined them in resisting the empire could expect the same.

In our society today even people who are not committed Christians are so familiar with the idea of a crucified Saviour, that we find it almost impossible to grasp how people in the days of the New Testament would have reacted.. You probably quite often see people wearing a cross in some way or other, maybe on a gold necklace, and you do not find that odd. How would you feel, though, if they were wearing a little golden electric chair? Or a gallows or a guillotine? These questions maybe help us see how outrageous the idea of a person who triumphs by crucifixion would have seemed to people in the ancient world.

Yet, Jesus Christ has triumphed in a wonderful and everlasting way by His death. In it He paid fully for the sins of all who come to Him in repentance and faith, and on the third day He rose and now reigns forever as the Lord of Glory. One day He will come again to bring His redeeming work to full completion. Anyone anywhere, who embraces Him as Saviour and Lord can have forgiveness, a place in the family of God and a home in the new creation for all eternity. Not only has He won a far greater victory than David, He has done it in what from a merely human perspective seems an even more unlikely way. How amazing must He be?



Application

Let us take to heart what an amazing victory Jesus has won, and what a breath-taking way He has done it in. If you are not yet a committed Christian then see that He offers you a share in His victory, and that He is worth entrusting yourself to and following. If you already know and love Jesus, let this truth refresh your appreciation of Him, your gratitude to Him and your desire to glorify Him.



Questions

1. Why is a cross a surprising way to triumph?
2. What did Jesus win the victory over?
3. How can we share in His triumph?

RESOURCES

The Hare and the Turtle

Type of Activity: Video

Aim of Activity: Don't underestimate the little guy

Instructions/Rule: <https://youtu.be/E01DJ6H8cVU>

Empires

Type of Activity: Game

Aim of Activity: To build the biggest empire

Instructions/Rules:

Everyone sits in a large circle with a piece of paper and a pen/pencil. Each person is to write the name of a famous person/cartoon character/TV personality/footballer etc on their piece of paper. Have one person collect all the names and read them all out.

Each person is to try and remember all the names and guess who in the group has written it. You may need to read all the names during the game.

Start with one person who makes a guess eg Peter, are you Mickey Mouse? If Peter is Mickey Mouse, he moves beside the person who has guessed and they have another turn. If Peter is not Mickey Mouse, then Peter has a guess.

Continue the game until all the names are guessed. Each time a person is guessed correctly, they move to sit beside the person who has made the guess. The group with the biggest 'empire' at the end, are the winners.

The person who started the game will also need to be identified, and when they do, their whole empire moves with them.

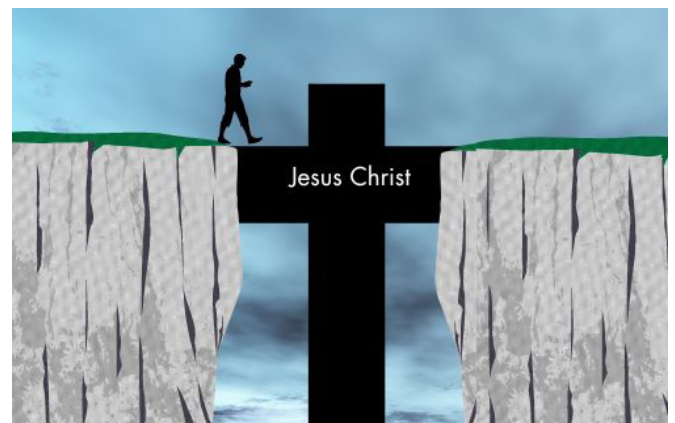
Jesus our Bridge

Type of Activity: Picture

Aim of Activity: to show that JESUS is the only way to GOD

Instructions/Rules: chat about the image.

Explain the gap between us and God due to sin and how Jesus bridges the gap.



JESUS IS BETTER THAN...JONAH



The Big Idea

In Jesus we have one greater than Jonah. We need rescued and Jesus rescues us.



Bible Reference

Jonah 1 and Mark 4:35-41

RESOURCES

- ▶ Worship songs
- ▶ Jonah runs from Ninevah



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Introduction

Start by showing a storm rescue video from the RNLI to introduce Jonah, the storm and Jesus calming the storm. Here is one but there are plenty on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/6n00k7SUt4Q>

What are the key parts of being rescued? (2 minute discussion on this question making the point that, something or someone needs to be rescued. You need someone or something to rescue. You must have a means to rescue.)

Use the story of the Dunkirk evacuation:

The spring of 1940 found Hitler's panzer divisions mopping up French troops and preparing for a siege of Great Britain. The Dutch had already surrendered, as had the Belgians. The British army floundered on the coast of France in the channel port of Dunkirk. Nearly a quarter of a million young British soldiers and over 100,000 allied troops faced capture or death.

The Furrher's troops, only a few miles away in the hills of France, closed in on an easy kill. The Royal Navy had enough ships to

save barely 17,000 men, and the House of Commons was told to brace itself for "hard and heavy tidings."

Then while a despairing world watched with fading hope, a bizarre fleet of ships appeared on the horizon of the English Channel. Trawlers, tugs, fishing sloops, lifeboats, sailboats, pleasure craft, an island ferry named Gracie Fields, and even the America's Cup challenger Endeavor, all manned by civilian sailors, sped to the rescue. The ragtag armada eventually rescued 338,682 men and returned them home to the shores of England, as pilots of the Royal Air Force jockeyed with the German Luftwaffe in the skies above the channel. It was one of the most remarkable naval operations in history.

The British Army in France needed rescued, the ragtag armada was sent to the rescue. The boats of all sizes were the means to bring the army home.





Lesson

God called Jonah to go and speak His word to the people of Nineveh. Jonah 1v2 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.' But Jonah was a reluctant prophet. He did not want to go, so he ran from God by getting on a ship bound for Tarshish, which happened to be in a completely different direction to Nineveh. God saw the people of Nineveh and their evil, so God had sent Jonah with a message to rescue them from their sinfulness. But Jonah had decided he didn't want to go.

God quickly lets Jonah know that he simply can't run away (literally) from his calling, and almost capsizes the ship he's onboard. The sailors throw him overboard, and a fish swallows Jonah, where he spent three days and nights. Jonah cried out to the Lord from the belly of the great fish. He acknowledged his desperate condition and his needy state, and his desire to return again to the Lord. He knew that the Lord alone had saved him.

See how the tables had turned? Jonah needed rescued from the belly of the fish and God was the only one who could rescue him. The great fish spat him onto dry land.

God gave Jonah a second chance, and he went to Nineveh with the original message God gave them to repent of their sin. When the people of Nineveh heard this message they turned to God. Jonah was angry when they did this because he thought God's promises were just for His people, and not for the Ninevites. Jonah 4v2. 'And he (Jonah) prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.'

God then showed Jonah through a simple

plant that Jonah was wrong in his view of the Ninevites. While Jonah understood some of the depth of God's grace and mercy to the people of Nineveh, he did not share those characteristics. Jonah wanted to see his enemies destroyed instead of being saved.

We move then to the New Testament and see how Jesus is greater than Jonah. Jesus told the religious leaders of His day, "something greater than Jonah is here." Matthew 12:41.

Read Mark 4:35-41 and spend a few moments with the young people looking for some of the similarities between the two stories.

Jesus on Galilee, in the middle of the storm shows clearly how He is greater than Jonah. The disciples needed rescued, they maybe tried themselves unsuccessfully. They had the means of rescue in the boat itself, Jesus. But it took this desperate situation for them to turn to Him. In three words He rescues them, 'Quiet, be still'. Everything changes on these three words. The result, the disciples were rescued, saved.

He (Jesus) said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" Mark 4:40 Even after things settle down, Mark tells us, the disciples' fear has not subsided; rather, it's only moved on to another topic. And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Mark 4v41. Great calm does not preclude the disciples' great fear.

In other words, the disciples' deliverance has nothing to do with the strength of their faith. Surely one of the lessons the disciples learned was their security, their rescue resides in Jesus alone.



Application

The Bible tells us that because of sin:

- we are separated from God (Isaiah 59v2)
- we are lost (Luke 15)
- we need found and rescued (Luke 19v10)
- we cannot find ourselves, we can only be found by Jesus - He is our rescuer alone. (a Bible reference for this would be good)

You might want to play the following video by Rend Collective Rescuer (Good News)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAg7rn7fH3Q>



Questions

1. Are there times in your life when you feel like doing a Jonah and running away from situations you find yourself in?
2. In Matthew's gospel Jesus says one greater than Jonah is here? How is that the case?
3. If we are lost and need rescued, how does Jesus do that?

RESOURCES

Worship Songs

Casting Crowns - Praise You In This Storm (Official Lyric Video) - YouTube

Reminding the young people that God is with us, even when we face a storm in life. Things may seem out of control, but God will never leave us.

Will your anchor hold - YouTube

What are you holding on to when a storm comes into your life – God is our Anchor, the one we can hold on to. He will never let go of us.

Game: Jonah runs from Ninevah

Jonah was a man who was given a mission by God - to tell the people who lived in a city called Nineveh that God wanted them to turn from their evil ways. Instead of following God, Jonah ran the opposite way. Remind the Young people that we should be obedient to God because He knows what's best for us.

SUPPLIES

18 ping pong balls

Red & Blue Sharpie

Masking tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Use masking tape to create a line on the floor in the middle of the hall. Divide the group into two teams, on opposite sides of the hall.

Using a blue sharpie, mark eight balls with a "N" for Nineveh and one ball with a "J" for Jonah. Using a red sharpie, mark eight balls with a "N" for Nineveh and one ball with a "J" for Jonah.

Assign a ping pong ball colour to each team.

Place all of the ping pong balls on the centre line, keeping each team's balls lined up together.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

When you shout "GO," the teams will run to the centre line and pick up one coloured ping pong ball.

- If the ball is marked with an "N," you will run back to your team's wall.
- If you pick up a ball that is marked with a "J," you must run to the opposite wall. (Just as Jonah ran away from Ninevah in the story)

- The first person to the opposite wall with the “J” ball must shout “Jonah! – you are the Winner! The player from the other team with the “J” ball is out.
- Place all of the balls back on the centre line, this time removing one of the “N” balls from the team who lost a player in the last round.
- The game will continue until there is only one person left on one of the teams.

If you have more than eighteen young people in your group, here are some gameplay options:

- You can play a few rounds of the game until every has had an opportunity to play.
- If you have a large space, you can have multiple games going at the same time, side-by-side.
- If you don't have many more than eighteen kids, divide your group into equal size teams.
- In the first round, if a student is unable to grab a ball when the game starts, they are out.

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...

SHADRACH, MESHACH & ABEDNEGO



The Big Idea

Even in a world where faithfulness to Jesus is difficult, we always find that it is worth it, because He will always be even more faithful to us. Choosing Jesus – and the life we find in Him – is always better.



Bible Reference

Daniel 3:8-30

RESOURCES

- ▶ The Pilgrim's Progress
- ▶ Stewart Townend, What a faithful God
- ▶ Who to turn to?



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Introduction

Sometimes we are faced with a difficult situations and we struggle to know what the right thing is to do, as we try to stay faithful to God. Other times we know what the right thing is to do, but it will prove to be costly. It may cost us because it means standing out from the crowd, we may think it affects our reputation, or even people we thought were our friends.

Where can we turn to if we find ourselves in these situations? Well, the story of Shadrach,

Meshach and Abednego in Daniel 3 reminds us that we turn to what God has told us. These three men knew the commandments God had given them to live by and in doing so they trusted in God's power and plan.

Often as we stay faithful to God we see reminders of His faithfulness and we realise that following Jesus is greater than anything else that we might be afraid of losing in this life.





Lesson

In the verses immediately before our reading King Nebuchadnezzar had an impressively huge, golden statue of himself created, standing at around 27 metres high. The idea was that when the people under his rule heard the signal, they were to bow down and worship it, in allegiance to him.

There would also be a consequence for those who refused – they were to be thrown into a fiery furnace. It would be an awful way to die and something people would be out to avoid at all costs!

There was a group of people called the Chaldeans, who were opposed to God's people, the Jews and saw this as an opportunity to get them into trouble, knowing they would only worship the Lord alone. So they specifically named three people, who they were sure would refuse to worship the statue: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

This angered the King and they were brought before him and told what the consequences of their refusal to worship the statue would be. They were even goaded about the consequences in v 15, they were asked which god would be capable of saving them from a fiery furnace, where they would meet their end.

Even after hearing this they replied with a statement of faith in the Lord, **“O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”** (vv.16-18)

It was a summary of their trust in God, because they trusted both God's power and

God's plan. As they demonstrated to the King, they trusted God's power because they knew the Lord was the One who is sovereign and in control of all things. That means they knew He was able to rescue them from any situation. He had the power to do this, if He chose to do it.

They also trusted in God's plan, because He would always do the right thing according to what He has planned for our lives and our world. Essentially, they trusted the Lord to make the right decision whatever the outcome.

In whatever way the Lord chose to answer their prayer, He would still be their God and they still would not worship any other gods, idols or statues.

The reason they were prepared to go to such great lengths, to defy the King, was because they would have known that to bow down and worship the statue would mean breaking the first two commandments. It would have been saying that Nebuchadnezzar was more important to them than God, and it would have been bowing down to an idol. God's people often got this wrong throughout the Old Testament, but these three men were not going to repeat this mistake, even though they knew the consequences. Firstly, when it was announced to the people generally and secondly, when they were brought before the King privately.

God had given His commandments after He rescued His people to show them how to live as His people. These were not laws for His people to live by so they could earn His approval. He had already rescued them from slavery in Egypt. They were given so that people knew how they could live out their status, as God's chosen people and reflect the God they had. Even when they were taken

off into exile, as was the case in the book of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew what it meant to live as God's people, faithful to Him.

The first two commandments also remind us that we are created for worship - all of us have hearts which are ready and willing to worship. The Lord alone deserves to be worshipped. The first commandment tells us not only do we have to avoid worshipping something instead of the Lord, but also about worshipping something else alongside Him. He and He alone deserves to sit on the throne of our lives.

In the ten commandments we are also warned against worshipping images, statues, icons or relics – like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were being commanded to. That is because the Lord is so much greater than anything we can make or create for ourselves.

Nebuchadnezzar was so furious at their response, that he did not even wait for them to break the royal decree, he had them thrown into the furnace there and then. For good measure he ordered the heat in the furnace to be turned up seven times more than normal. It was punishment for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's refusal to worship him and give him the honour he felt he was due. His pride was dented and he probably could not believe why anyone would dare to put anyone or anything above him.

The furnace was so hot that those who were ordered to throw in the three bound men died when they were exposed to the heat. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown in with no-one expecting to see them again. In reality, the story should have ended at verse 23. The fact that it does not, is because of the miracle the Lord brought about that day.

The King, presumably from a safe distance, was able to see into the furnace and instead of the three men who were thrown in he could

see four. An astonished King said in verse 25: **"But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."**

What happened that day was a miracle. There is no other way to explain how the three men who were thrown into the hottest furnace imaginable were able to walk around unhurt – not even a hair on their heads was singed. Some believe the fourth man was the appearance of Jesus in the fiery furnace with the three men who had shown their trust in God's plan and power. Either way, this was proof that God was with them and had answered their prayer. As impressive as the faithfulness of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and their determination to live the way God had commanded them was, God's faithfulness was even greater by rescuing them in the most miraculous way possible.

The actions of the three men, as well as God's response to them, was the greatest witness a hard-hearted king could have. He was so amazed at their trust in God and God's ability to deliver them that he issued a new decree: **"Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way."** (v.28)

The passage begins with Nebuchadnezzar struggling to comprehend that there could be anyone in the world who was greater than him, or more worthy of praise and honour.

The chapter ends, as he acknowledges that there is none greater than the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. God is given His rightful place by three faithful men in the form of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. In turn, they get a glimpse of God's amazing faithfulness to us and even King Nebuchadnezzar has come to know that God's plan and power can be trusted.



Application

Just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego there is temptation all around us to compromise our faith in Jesus and worship idols. We might think that today we are too sophisticated to worship things like we find in Daniel 3. The truth is we face the temptation to worship all sorts of things, which are competing for God's rightful place as the most important thing in our lives.

This is called idolatry and Tim Keller, who was an American author and pastor, described it as making a good thing into a God thing. This often happens with good things, which God has given us to enjoy in life become the most important thing in our lives – it could be friends, sport, music, money, our reputation, our appearance or anything else.

Those are all good things and we should make time for them in our lives, but when we put them in God's rightful place we can end up worshipping them by giving them most of our time, our energy and our attention.

The story of Daniel 3 reminds us that, through faith in Jesus, we can keep good things in their rightful place and, in turn keep Jesus in His rightful place as the Lord of our lives. So, in this way Jesus is better than Shadrach,

Meshach and Abednego.

When Jesus talks of what it means to be His follower in Mark chapter 8, He tells the disciples, and us, that: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (v.34). This means we are called to follow Him in a way that goes against the grain and sometimes means showing our faithfulness to Him in ways that make us stand out. These ways are often counter to the world and time we live in.

The amazing thing about what Jesus invites us to do in Mark 8, means that when we do this we find new life in Him. It is the life and life in all its fullness, as He promises us in John 10:10.

Our hearts are always looking for something or someone to worship, it is how God has made us. The choice is that we can either worship empty, worthless, promise-us-lots-but-give-us-little idols or we can worship the One who came to die so that we can live as God had always intended us to. A new life which begins now, restores our relationship with our heavenly father and continues for eternity. Choosing Jesus is always better.



Questions

1. What are the good things around us which people are most tempted to make into God things, and worship?
2. When are the times in life you find it difficult to be faithful to Jesus?
3. What do we find in the passage which helps to remain faithful to Him?

RESOURCES

The Pilgrim's Progress

Type of Activity: Video

Aim of Activity: Remaining faithful to the end.

Instructions/Rule: Link: <https://youtu.be/ksu-zTG9HHg> Start at 1:41 to 1:44

Stewart Townend (What a faithful God)

Type of Activity: Song

Aim of Activity: Ask them, to explain what the words mean.

Instructions/Rules: Play the song <https://youtu.be/sDi6B9UTMyY>

Who to turn to?

Type of Activity: Written

Aim of Activity: Ask the boys, if they were in trouble who is the first person they would turn to?

Instructions/Rules: Ask the boys the questions, "Who is the one person in your life that you will turn to?"

JESUS IS BETTER THAN...ESTHER



The Big Idea

Esther took a great risk by going to the King to protect her people and was willing to die to try and keep them safe. Jesus is greater because He actually died so that we could live and have eternal life.



Bible Reference

Esther 4:11-5:2, 8:1-8

RESOURCES

- ▶ Saving Private Ryan
- ▶ Which Hand is it in?
- ▶ Thailand Football Team Cave Rescue



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.



Introduction

Many people love the excitement of taking a risk, but that looks different to everyone. For some risk means sky diving and for others they get the same thrill from the second loop the loop on a roller-coaster. For others it is something simple as asking someone if you can pray for them. Lots of us seem to get a thrill from taking risks. Life is full of risks, and some people take large risks like Esther did to try and help others.

One person who knows all about this is Maud Kells, a missionary from Cookstown. Late one night in early January 2015 two bandits, armed with a rifle, knocked on the door of

her house in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Over the years she has been in danger many times, but this was the closest she came to death. Thankfully she survived and continued this dangerous work because she knows it is God's will for her, and because she knows that many other lives are being saved through her service. This woman has risked everything so that many people can be saved.

But what about you? How good are you when it comes to taking risks? Are you willing to take a risk to help others or is it all about the thrill of the second loop the loop?





Lesson

Begin by setting the scene for the young people helping them to understand the culture of the time and how Esther would not have been able to just walk in and see the King. Explain that Esther had heard about Haman's plan to destroy the Jewish people through Mordecai (Esther 2:19–3:15) she wanted to help and protect them but needed to take a big risk to do so.

Discuss how sometimes in life we need to be courageous and do things that carry a risk. In this part of the story how was Mordecai courageous and what could have been the impact of his actions?

Read together Esther 4:11 – 5:2.

Highlight the key points from the passage, including how both Mordecai and Esther were taking a great risk and showing courage to help protect others.

Discuss what the young people would have done if they were in Mordecai or Esther's positions. Ask them how they think they would have felt.

Ask & Discuss: What are some risks that you have taken or that others you know have taken? Was the risk worth it or did it have a negative effect?

Highlight to the young people that Esther did not know if going to the King would cost her, her life or save the lives of all the Jewish people, but she knew that it was a risk worth taking. She knew there were two outcomes and she was willing to take the risk to protect her people.

Ask: Do you think you would be willing to do

this if you were Esther? Why?

Outline to the young people how Esther's risk paid off and the people were saved and Haman lost his life for what he had planned for the Jewish people (Esther 7). Esther's risk paid off.

Read together Esther 8:1-8

Discuss: How did the risk Esther and Mordecai took work out for them? What did they get for their risk and sacrifice?

Link the sacrifice and risk Esther took for her people to the sacrifice Jesus paid for us. Esther knew that she had to take the risk for there to be any chance of saving her people. She did not know if it would work but she knew she had to try. When Jesus went to the cross for us, He knew His sacrifice for us would work out.

Mention that even though God is not mentioned anywhere in the book of Esther it is clear that God was with Esther throughout her life. It was God's plan and timing for Esther, along with her bravery, that saved the whole nation.

Discuss: What can we learn from the sacrifice of both Esther and Jesus and how can we use that in our lives today?



Application

Many people throughout the world take great risks to help others, many of them knowing that it is for the greater good. Esther knew that she was putting her own life in danger by going to the King but she knew that if it paid off her risk was worth it if it saved her people.

Esther was great but Jesus is greater.

While Esther's sacrifice saved her people from death, Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross did so much more. It saved the world from sin and death, for eternity.

Jesus not only risked His life so that we could have life He actually GAVE His life for US.

Jesus died a horrific death for us, and took every sin and punishment that was meant for us upon Himself. Unlike Esther, Jesus knew His sacrifice would pay off and that through it we would be able to have life and life to the full. In John 10:10, Jesus tells us, **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."**

Jesus was greater because He came to give us the best kind of life, how can we respond to that through how we live out our lives?



Questions

We can all think of people in the world or maybe in our own lives who take risks to save others and keep them safe.

1. Think about some of these people (Fire Fighters, Army, Lifeguards, Aid Workers) and discuss why you think they are willing to sacrifice their lives for others, usually those they do not know.
2. Imagine you were in a situation where you might come to harm trying to help someone. Do you think you could do it? What would be going through your head?
3. How can we follow Esther's example in our own lives and do you think Christians do enough to help those in danger?

RESOURCES

Saving Private Ryan

Type of Activity: Video

Aim of Activity: What one man is willing to give up

Instructions/Rule: Play the last screen of Saving Private Ryan: <https://youtu.be/IZgoufN99n8>

Which Hand is it in?

Type of Activity: Game

Aim of Activity: What are you willing to risk to lose, one, two or three sweets.

Instructions/Rules: Have a pack of sweets and ask one boy to please one in his hand, then place it behind his back, the other boy has to guess which hand it is in. If the boy gets it wrong then the boy holding the sweet can keep them.

Thailand Football Team Cave Rescue

Type of Activity: Video

Aim of Activity: Think about some of these people (Fire Fighters, Army, Lifeguards, Aid Workers) and discuss why you think they are willing to sacrifice their lives for others, usually those they do not know.

Instructions/Rules: Show: https://youtu.be/-mzqQ_vNiKg 23min

MEMORY VERSES

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.



Romans 5:19

For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.



John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.



1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

