

Start ▶

For those new to the Christian faith

God, Jesus and the journey
of life in six sessions

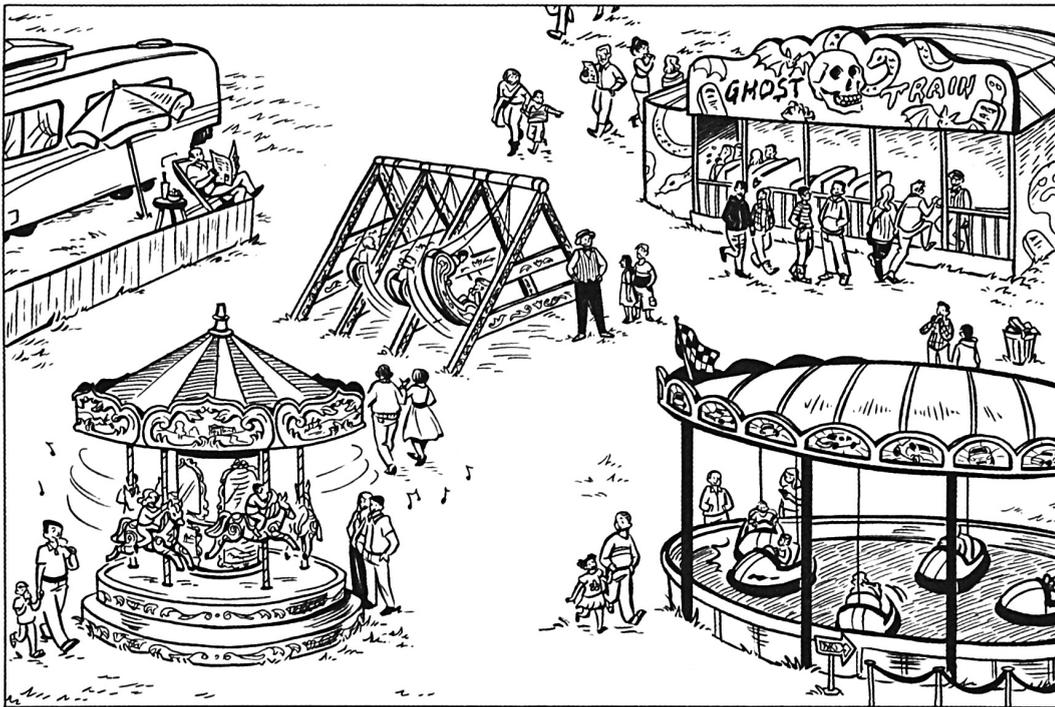
Members' Notes

Session 1

What's life all about?
Where am I going?
And what's the
point of it all?

Life

The journey of life



Lifelines

Draw a lifeline to represent your life so far. Make sure that you include the key moments of your life, both good and bad.

Use ✓ or 😊 for good experiences, and ✗ or ☹️ for bad times.

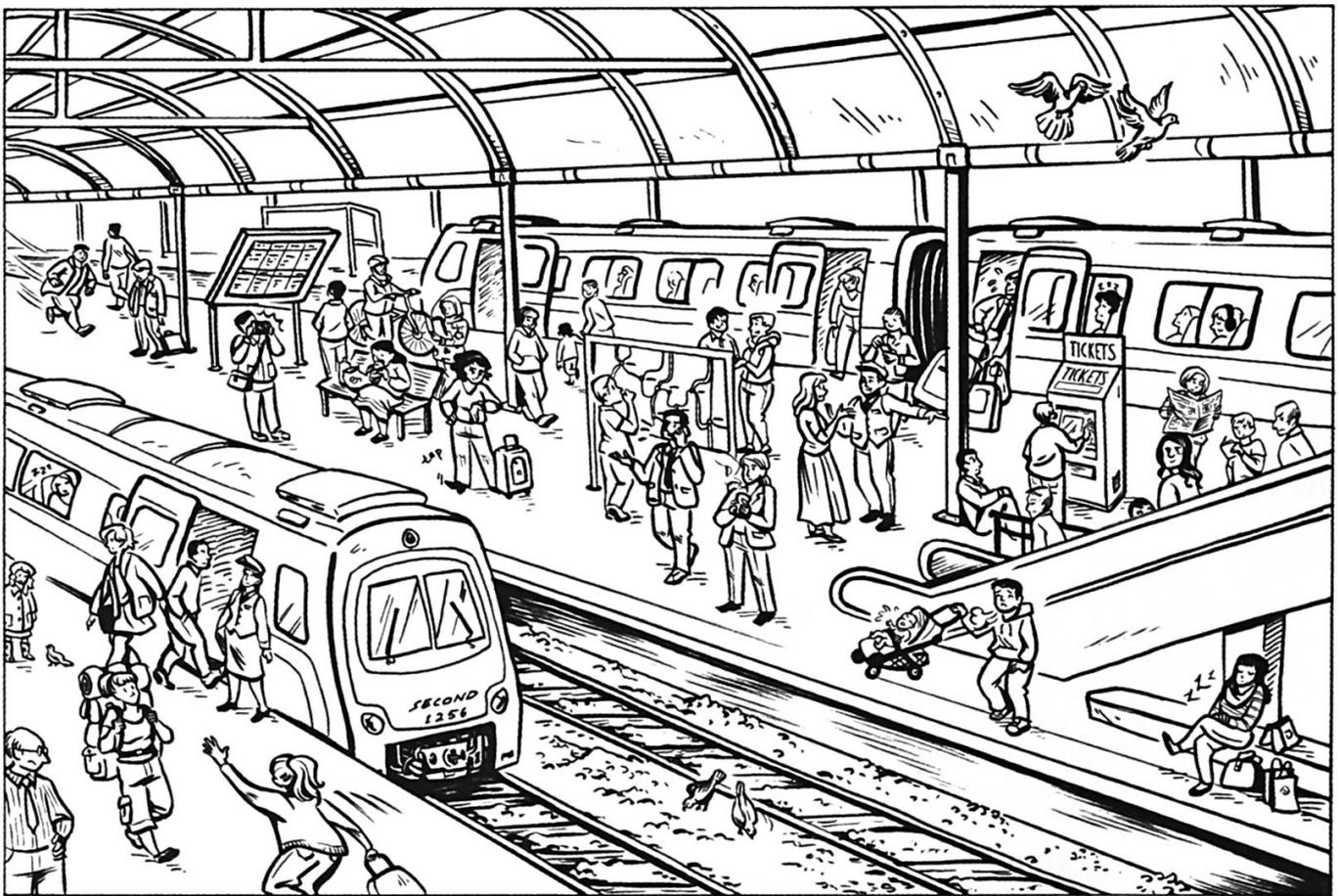
A large dashed rectangular box intended for drawing a lifeline.

Life Goals

My life goals...

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Job satisfaction | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | New car | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Latest gadgets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lots of money | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Great holidays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Nice house | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Happiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Inner peace | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lots of hobbies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loyal friends | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Happy children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | No worries | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Debt free |

On Track



Take it away

1. Weekly prayer

Dear Lord God,
this is my life,
lived year by year,
and day by day,
May you help me to find the path,
the true path
that leads to true living.
Amen.

2. Psalm 139.1-3; 13-16

O Lord, you have examined my heart
and know everything about me.
You know when I sit down or stand up.
You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.
You see me when I travel
and when I rest at home.
You know everything I do.
You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.
Thank you for making me so wonderfully
complex!
Your workmanship is marvellous - how well I
know it.
You watched me as I was being formed in utter
seclusion,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.
You saw me before I was born.
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.
Every moment was laid out before a single day
had passed.

3. Make time during the week to look at the above passage.

Find a quiet place where you won't get
disturbed, and perhaps light a candle to help
give focus.

Read the passage through a couple of times,
taking the time to dwell on each statement
and what it tells us about the smallness of
our lives alongside a very big God. We will be
thinking more about God in Session 2.

Think about these questions:

- How does it make me feel that there is
someone out there who 'knows everything
about me'?
- Is my life just a series of random events, or
could there be some sort of purpose to
everything that is happening?

You can also find some awesome videos - both
spoken and musical - based on Psalm 139 on
YouTube. Simply search on 'Psalm 139' to get
started.

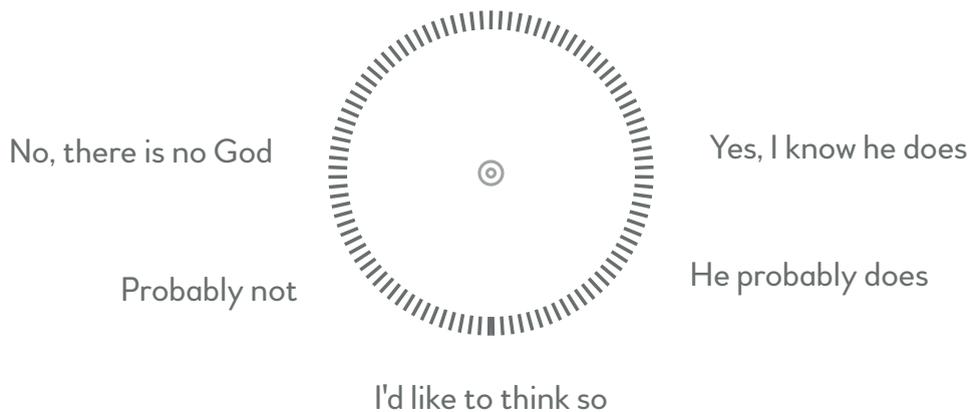
Session 2

God

Swingometer

Most people today still have faith in some sort of God. But is there really a 'God'. And if there is, what is he like?

Does God exist?



Welcome home

Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

"When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have

food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."

"So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son'

"But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

You're an amazing God

Leave me alone

Cool, I can do what I like, God will forgive me

It's too good to be true

I'm not good enough for this

Thank you God!

What? I don't need forgiveness

I've found what I've been looking for

I feel humble and unworthy

Take it away

1. Weekly prayer

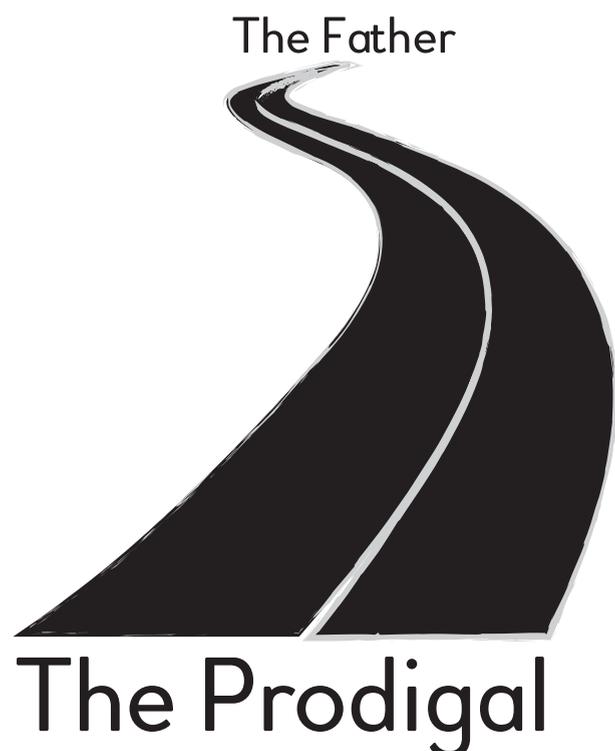
Heavenly Father,
Shepherd of the sheep.
You are the one who created all things,
and cares for us every day.
Help me to draw close to you,
to find faith in you,
and to live with you.
Amen.

2. The Prodigal

Read the story of the prodigal son (printed on previous page) during the week and spend a few minutes pondering this question: Does the picture of the loving father in this story match how I feel about God?

3. Consider the image below

Where do I feel I am right now on the path towards God?

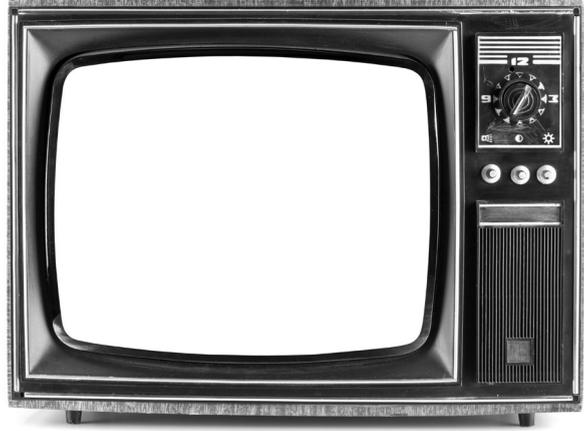
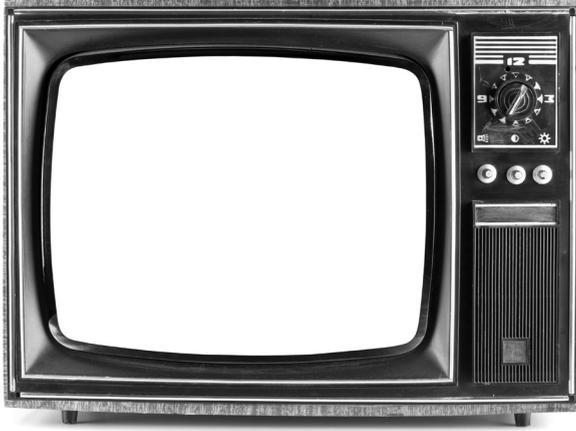


Session 3

Mess

Good news/Bad news

If we are honest, we all know deep down that there is something badly wrong with this world, and with ourselves. What has gone wrong, and what can be done to help?



What a mess



Lack of forgiveness



Selfishness



Lust



Bitterness



Greed



Lying



Jealousy



Hard-heartedness

Casting the first stone



Take it away

1. Weekly prayer

Dear Lord and heavenly Father,
we thank you for all
that is good in our life.
For people, for our daily bread,
for joys and satisfactions.
But we have to confess
that which is not good.
Words spoken, deeds done,
love forgotten,
Hurts done to us,
Hurts that we have done to others.
May you help us to find a new
and better way to live.
Amen.

2. Psalm 51.10-12, 15-17

Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.
Unseal my lips, O Lord,
that my mouth may praise you.
You do not desire a sacrifice,
or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.
The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and
repentant heart, O God.

3. Read over these words from Psalm 51 over the course of this week

You could repeat these words each day as a prayer of longing towards God.

Or you could put on some quiet music and reflect on how your life is going. Look again at the 'What a mess' exercise from this week. Is there one aspect that you could work on this week? Jot down a couple of practical steps you could take this week to start to move one or more of those aspects of your life up the scale.

Session 4

Jesus

Away with the manger

Even though he lived 2,000 years ago, people still seem fascinated by this person called Jesus of Nazareth. But who was he? What was he really like? And can he really have any relevance to my life today?



I am

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Bread of Life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The Light of the World | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The Gate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The Good Shepherd | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The Resurrection + Life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The Vine | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The Way, Truth + Life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Take it away

1. Weekly prayer

Jesus,
the way, the truth and the life,
the light, the bread, the vine
the gateway and the Good Shepherd.
Help us to see you more clearly,
follow you more nearly,
and love you more dearly,
every day.
Amen.

2. 'I am' sayings

— **I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again.**

I am the spiritual food and drink you have been seeking. Believe in me, and the hunger and thirst inside you will be satisfied.

— **I am the light of the world.**

I am the light that drives away the darkness, helping you to clearly see the path ahead.

— **I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved.**

I am the gate to life. As you live in me and I live in you, your life will be transformed, changed, renewed.

— **I am the good shepherd.**

A good shepherd finds his flock food and shelter, a good shepherd even gives his life for his sheep. You can trust the good shepherd. You can trust me.

—

— **I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live forever.**

I conquered death when I rose from the grave. To join with me is to join in my resurrection and my victory over death!

— **I am the true vine, you are the branches.**

I am like a grapevine that bears a harvest of good fruit. If you become a branch on my vine, then you will also bear much fruit. Fruit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and goodness.

— **I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.**

I was at the start of time, I will be there at its end. I am the way to God, the way to truth, the way to life.

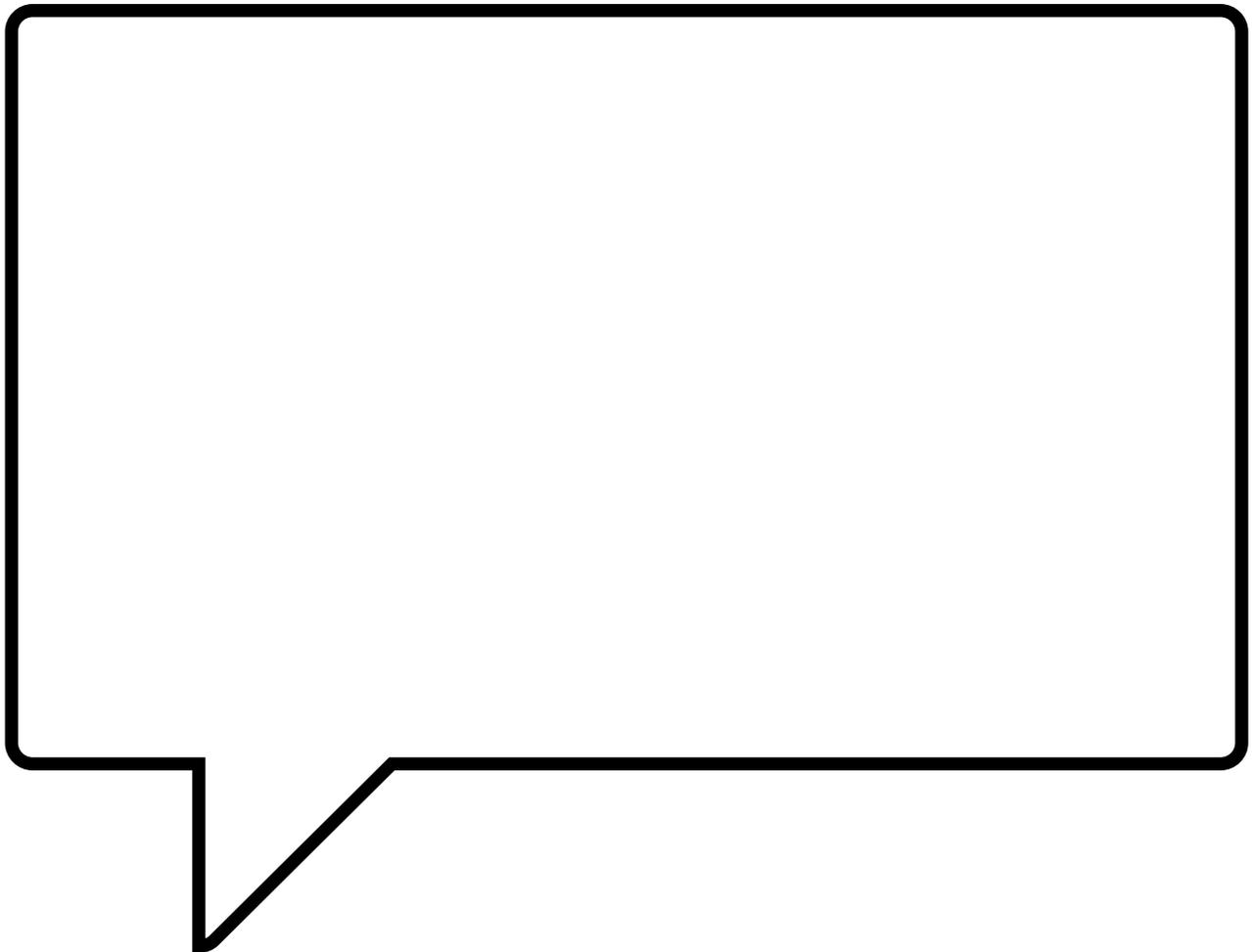
Is there one of these sayings which particularly speaks to you right now? Why not write down the 'I am' on a small card and keep it in your wallet or purse this week for encouragement as you go about your daily business?

3. Think about how Jesus sees you right now

He is realistic about how things really are - just like with the woman caught in adultery we looked at last week. But he overflows with grace, mercy and love towards each one of us.

If Jesus were sitting here with you now, what would you want to say to him?

Write it in this speech bubble:



4. There are many resources on the internet that will help you to find out more about Jesus and his life, if you feel you need to know more about him

For example, you can find the full version of 'The Miracle Maker', which we will show part of next week. Just search for 'Miracle Maker' on YouTube. You can also find a full version of the film 'Jesus of Nazareth', the 1977 movie version by Franco Zeffirelli and starring Robert Powell.

In different ways, both 'versions' shine a light on the figure of Jesus. There are lots more resources about Jesus on the internet.

Session 5

Cross

To the limit

So much for Jesus' life, he's remembered most often today for the manner of his death on that first Good Friday. But how can the death of a preacher from Palestine almost 2,000 years ago make any difference to me today?

Physical Pain - [Progress bar] +

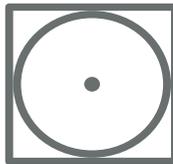
Mocking + Insults - [Progress bar] +

Seperation from God - [Progress bar] +

Washed clean



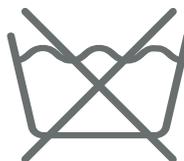
I'm ready to be washed clean



It all seems very confusing at the moment



I don't know yet, I'm just feeling my way



I don't feel I'm ready to be made clean yet



I've got some questions to iron out



I want to be clean, but it's going to need some strong bleach

The Two Thieves

"Aren't you the Christ?
Save yourself and us."



"Jesus, remember me when
you come into your Kingdom."

One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself - and us, too, while you're at it!" But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:39-43)

Take it away

1. Weekly prayer

Lord Jesus,
when I survey the wondrous cross
I see you.
I see pain.
I see love.
I see painful love reaching out to me.
Help me to kneel before your cross,
to gaze in wonder
and to accept.
Amen.

2. Make sure to keep hold of the song worksheet that you used in the 'Cross Worship' exercise in this session

Spend some time this week thinking about how those words apply to your specific situation. Continue to circle any phrases that seem relevant.

You could search on YouTube for a version of that song, and play it each day as a reminder and refresher on what you have been thinking about.

3. Read these words from Luke 23.34-36 and reflect on the questions that follow

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. "He saved others," they said, "let him save himself if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One." The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. They called out to him, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"

- What does Jesus' cry of 'Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing' mean to us today?
- Why do you think that Jesus refused to save himself, even though presumably he could have done?

Session 6

Onwards

On the boat

This course has been all about a journey. But where do we go next? As we come to the end of the course, let's have a think about where we go next in our journey with God...



Leaving the nets

- My workaholic lifestyle
- My self-centeredness
- My love of money
- My bad habits
- My envy towards others
- My bitterness over the past
- Something else

What do I need to leave behind?

Take the plunge

Am I ready to get in the water?

-  No
-  Maybe
-  Yes

Take it away

1. Weekly prayer

Heavenly Father,
you were there when I started this life.
Be there now as I start afresh,
as I say sorry for all my sin,
Yes to Jesus,
Hello to my new brothers and sisters.
As I start a new life
With you, and for you and following you.
Amen.

2. Read and reflect on the calling of the first disciples from Mark 1:16-20

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living.

Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him.

A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.

3. Next Steps

Why not take a few minutes this week to tick the next steps that you want to take?



Start getting involved at church

See about a follow up course

Make a bit of time each day to pray

Find answers to my questions

Think more about these big issues

Get a Bible + start reading it

Find some Christian friends

Do the course all over again

Declaration

You may have decided that you want to make the biggest step of all and start following Jesus. You may want to declare that here:

I, _____

have decided that I will follow Jesus and be a member of His church.

Signed _____

Date _____