



ANSWERS

TO BIG QUESTIONS

A 9-week
Curriculum for your
Children's Ministry (including
Easter) to help show kids
that their faith is based on
something true that they can
trust, that questions are good
to deepen our faith and
understanding, and to
be prepared to defend
their faith when
needed.

Why
Christians
Believe



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Shining Lights Trust

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INTRODUCTION

This 9-week series for a children's church includes lessons written by C3 City Church, Tauranga, New Zealand — with special thanks to Sheryl Wilson, Sue Hardgrave, and Niky Hardgrave. At the end of each lesson there is also a brief lesson suiting the under 5s.

The series was built out of the logic of the 'Why Christians believe Christianity to be true' video and booklet series — which is free online in entirety at the URL below.

To intentionally grow your leaders

To grow their teachers, C3 City Church Tauranga got every teacher to read that week's relevant booklet prior to the weekend.

- This positioned the leader to speak out of knowledge rather than ignorance.
- This resourced the leader to confidently and wisely answer other questions children might ask.
- The booklets are concise (approx. 6000 words each) and very informative — and free as PDFs.

For the booklets and videos: <https://WhyChristiansBelieve.nz>

We broke the 7 booklets in this series into 9 lessons for your Children's Church / Sunday School.

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'Why Christians believe' video episodes / Booklet titles

1. **Did God really create?** *The evidence that we are not alone*
Find booklet URL to text message / email to your teachers via WhyChristiansBelieve.nz
Ask leaders to read this prior to Week 2.
2. **The world's most reliable ancient document.** *If the history is wrong the claim is wrong*
Find booklet URL to text message / email to your teachers via WhyChristiansBelieve.nz
Ask leaders to read this prior to Week 3.
3. **The world's most prophetic book.** *The evidence you never heard*
Find booklet URL to text message / email to your teachers via WhyChristiansBelieve.nz
Ask leaders to read this prior to Week 4.
4. **A seemingly crazy claim.** *Did God visit Earth?*
Find booklet URL to text message / email to your teachers via WhyChristiansBelieve.nz
Ask leaders to read this prior to Week 5.
5. **A seemingly arrogant claim.** *Could Jesus be the only way?*
Find booklet URL to text message / email to your teachers via WhyChristiansBelieve.nz
Ask leaders to read this prior to Week 6.
6. **An explanation that makes sense.** *Can the human race fix its own problems?*
Find booklet URL to text message / email to your teachers via WhyChristiansBelieve.nz
Ask leaders to read this prior to Week 7.
7. **A faith that works.** *The proof of the pudding is in the eating.*
Find booklet URL to text message / email to your teachers via WhyChristiansBelieve.nz
Ask leaders to read this prior to Week 9 / the last programme.

ANSWERS

THEME	ANSWERS
AIM	To show kids that their faith is based on something true that they can trust, that questions are good to deepen our faith and understanding, and to be prepared to defend our faith when needed.
MEMORY VERSE	But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect. <i>1 Peter 3:15 NIRV</i>

Week	Topic	Page
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2	Were we created?	10
3	Is the Bible true?	18
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?	26
5	Did Jesus really come?	34
6	Is Jesus the only way?	43
7	Can we fix our own problems?	51
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?	60
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?	69
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Notes	<p>Allow space each session for questions. We want to encourage kids to ask questions about their faith to help them learn to dig deeper. You can try to answer questions yourself or tell them if we are covering it in a later week, or if you don't have an answer say you'll have to go away and look into it and come back later with an answer (just make sure you do come back to it later!).</p> <p>To note what this series does NOT cover: It doesn't cover most of the 'experiential evidences' in booklet 7. This is because the church that wrote this was doing a series on 'miracles in our lives' the following term on those areas.</p>
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WEEK ONE

Why do we need to defend our faith



Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Week One – Why do we need to defend our faith

INTRO	<p>Asking questions is important: Sometimes we have lots of big questions or don't really understand how things work. Asking questions can help us understand more and this is especially important for the things we believe in. We need to know that our faith is based on something we can trust because it is true.</p> <p>Introducing our new series: This term our theme is called ANSWERS and we're going to look at some really BIG faith questions, and how we can answer them so that you can defend your beliefs if they are ever questioned!</p>
BIBLE	<p>Being prepared is important: Sometimes we don't have answers for questions we have or are asked, so it's good to be prepared so that you have an answer ready. Being prepared is an important part of growing and maturing as a Christian. There is someone in the Bible that you may have heard of who did something amazing, but he had to be prepared first. That person is David. Who can tell me his story?</p> <p>Briefly recount David's story from 1 Samuel 16 then read the story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:32-50</p> <p>Although young, David was prepared: David said in verses 34-37 that he has fought against a lion and a bear before. David wasn't just some small kid who stumbled into a battle against Goliath. He had learned to fight back in dangerous situations before that! He had practiced to become really good with his slingshot and then used it to defend his father's sheep a few times before. David already had the skills ready before facing Goliath.</p> <p>David knew what was right and true for himself: When the king tried to get David to wear his armour, he knew it wasn't the right thing for him so took it off. He was not only prepared, but he removed the things that weren't right for his battle. David was prepared with his skills, with the equipment he needed, and prepared by removing things that got in the way.</p> <p>The result: Because of his preparation, God used him to beat Goliath and defend the Israelites.</p> <p>For us: We also need to remove things that are wrong for us, and be prepared to stand up for our faith and what is right whenever we are called on!</p>
ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON	<p>Illustration: Ask for two volunteers but hand only one of them a piece of paper and a pen. Tell them they each have to race to write out the whole alphabet as fast as they can when you say go. One will be able to, but the other one who isn't prepared will have to rush around to find pen/paper before they can start.</p> <p>Alternative / additional illustration: Show them objects you need to prepare to do something, e.g. goggles and flippers before swimming.</p> <p>The point of our new series: We also need to be prepared, and ready to go at any time, to explain why we believe our faith to be true!</p>
HOLY SPIRIT	<p>Activity, prayer and discussion: Get kids to write down questions they have for their faith. Pray over them, thanking God for the wisdom He shares with us. Try answering some of their questions or telling kids if we are going to be answering them in another week.</p>

CRAFT	Magnifying Glass
GAME	20 Questions Fortress
MEMORY VERSE	Fill the Gap
UNDER 5s	David and Goliath

BIBLE

1 Samuel 17:32-50 Nlrv

³² David said to Saul, “Don’t let anyone lose hope because of that Philistine. I’ll go out and fight him.”

³³ Saul replied, “You aren’t able to go out there and fight that Philistine. You are too young. He’s been a warrior ever since he was a boy.”

³⁴ But David said to Saul, “I’ve been taking care of my father’s sheep. Sometimes a lion or a bear would come and carry off a sheep from the flock. ³⁵ Then I would go after it and hit it. I would save the sheep it was carrying in its mouth. If it turned around to attack me, I would grab its hair. I would strike it down and kill it. ³⁶ In fact, I’ve killed both a lion and a bear. I’ll do the same thing to this Philistine. He isn’t even circumcised. He has dared the armies of the living God to fight him. ³⁷ The LORD saved me from the paw of the lion. He saved me from the paw of the bear. And he’ll save me from the powerful hand of this Philistine too.”

Saul said to David, “Go. And may the LORD be with you.”

³⁸ Then Saul dressed David in his own military clothes. He put a coat of armour on him. He put a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹ David put on Saul’s sword over his clothes. He walked around for a while in all that armour because he wasn’t used to it.

“I can’t go out there in all this armour,” he said to Saul. “I’m not used to it.” So he took it off. ⁴⁰ Then David picked up his wooden staff. He went down to a stream and chose five smooth stones. He put them in the pocket of his shepherd’s bag. Then he took his sling in his hand and approached Goliath.

⁴¹ At that same time, the Philistine kept coming closer to David. The man carrying Goliath’s shield walked along in front of him. ⁴² Goliath looked David over. He saw how young he was. He also saw how healthy and handsome he was. And he hated him. ⁴³ He said to David, “Why are you coming at me with sticks? Do you think I’m only a dog?” The Philistine cursed David in the name of his gods. ⁴⁴ “Come over here,” he said. “I’ll feed your body to the birds and wild animals!”

⁴⁵ David said to Goliath, “You are coming to fight against me with a sword, a spear and a javelin. But I’m coming against you in the name of the LORD who rules over all. He is the God of the armies of Israel. He’s the one you have dared to fight against. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will give me the victory over you. I’ll strike you down. I’ll cut your head off. This day I’ll feed the bodies of the Philistine army to the birds and wild animals. Then the whole world will know there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ The LORD doesn’t rescue people by using a sword or a spear. And everyone here will know it. The battle belongs to the LORD. He will hand all of you over to us.”

⁴⁸ As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet him. ⁴⁹ He reached into his bag. He took out a stone. He put it in his sling. He slung it at Goliath. The stone hit him on the forehead and sank into it. He fell to the ground on his face.

⁵⁰ So David won the fight against Goliath with a sling and a stone. He struck down the Philistine and killed him. He did it without even using a sword.

Alphabet Race

Need Paper

Pen

Ask for two volunteers and hand one of them a piece of paper and a pen.

Tell them they each have to race to write out the whole alphabet as fast as they can when you say go. One will be able to, but the other one who isn't prepared will have to rush around to find pen/paper before they can start.

If we are prepared, then we are ready to go at any time and when people have questions, we already have an answer for them!

Objects Needed

Need Various objects for a specific task

E.g. Goggles, flippers, floaties, togs, etc.

Show them objects you need to prepare to do something, e.g. goggles and flippers before swimming, and dress someone up as you go. (Togs or other clothing goes on top of what they're already wearing).

If we don't have everything we need, it's going to be a bit hard for us! But if we have what we need before we need it, we are ready to go!

HOLY SPIRIT TIME – My Questions

Need Pen/Paper for each kid

In smaller group, ask kids to write down any questions they have for their faith or about the Bible or God and put them all in the middle or in a box.

Pray over the questions first, thanking God for giving us a mind to ask questions, and for His wisdom that He shares with us. Pray that God would reveal Himself and his truth to us in the questions we ask.

Try answering some of their questions or telling kids if they are a subject we're covering in another week; let them know when that will be.

If you are unsure how to answer any, tell them! It's good to show that we don't always know everything. But we are wise to go away and find out and come back to them. We then make a note, to make sure we do come back to it on another week!

CRAFT – Magnifying Glass

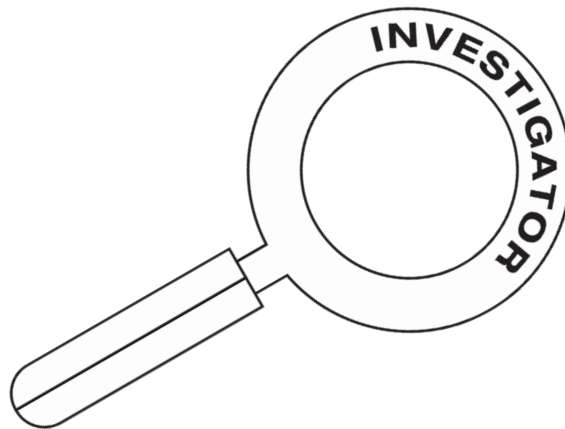


Need Pre-printed template
Clear sheet of plastic (e.g. OHP sheets)
Scissors
Glue
Colouring pens/pencils/felts

Get kids to cut out the magnifying glass template and then cut out a circle of clear plastic to fit and glue them together.

Use the colouring pens/pencils to decorate their magnifying glass.

They can use their magnifying glass to investigate their Bible throughout the series!



MEMORY VERSE – Fill the Gap

Say the memory verse all together as a group. Then say it again but stop at various points and ask kids to fill in the next word. Go through it a few times, missing different words each time.

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.
Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.
Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.
1 Peter 3:15 NIV



20 Questions

Ask for a volunteer and have them come to the front. They have to choose an object, place, or person and tell the leader but not anyone else (This is so the leader can help them if they are unsure of any answers).

The rest of the kids will ask questions to try and figure out what the person up front is thinking of, but they can only answer yes or no, and they only have 20 questions to try and figure out the answer!

Asking questions is a great practice to get into!

Hint: You can use the game HeadBandz as an alternative to this or even just use the cards for the person up front.

Fortress

Need Jenga block or something that can stand upright

Small plastic balls

Various objects

Split the kids into teams and each team will have to use various items from around the room to build a fortress around their Jenga block (or whatever item you use to stand upright).

Once they are done, the other team(s) get 5 small plastic balls each that they will throw at the opposing fortress to try and knock it down. If they knock down the Jenga block, they win.

Try again as many times as you like.

In the same way, by being prepared, we have a strong defence against anything that seeks to attack our faith.

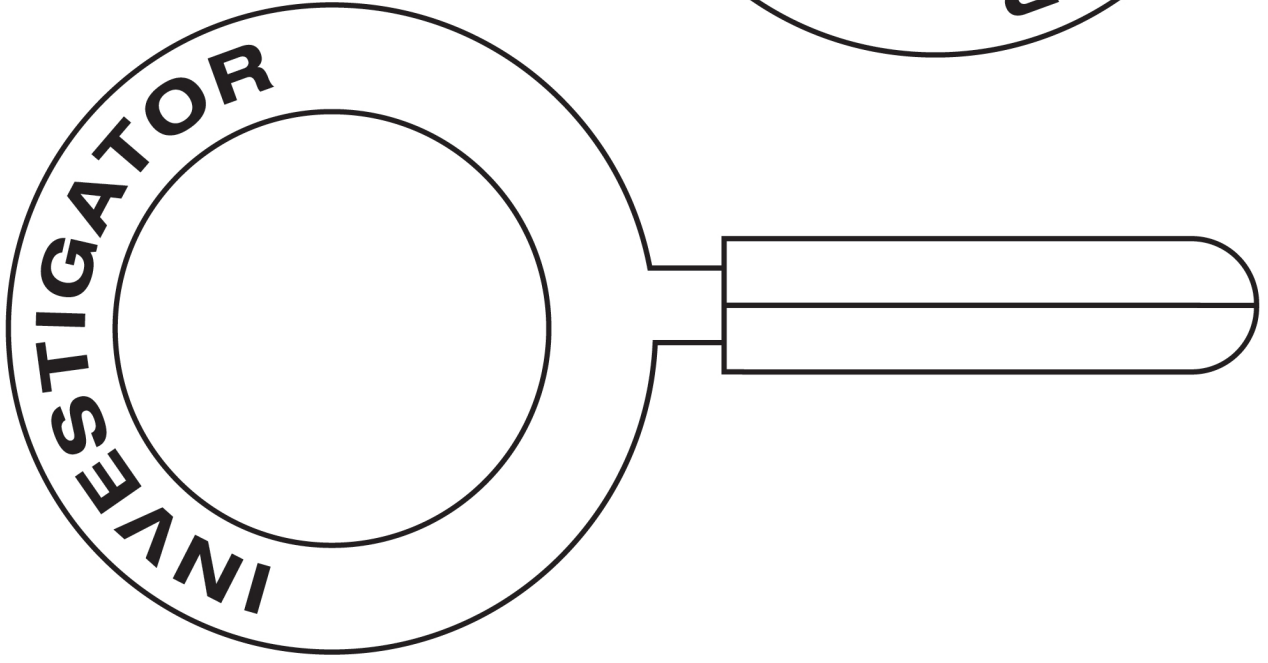
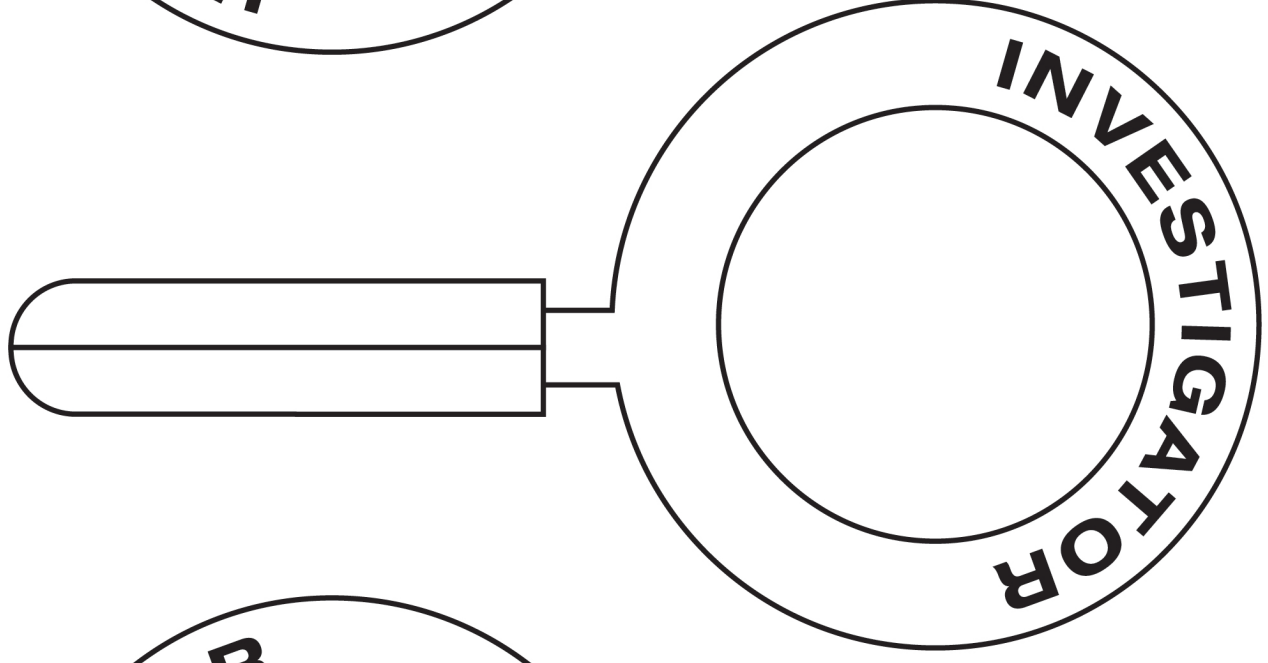
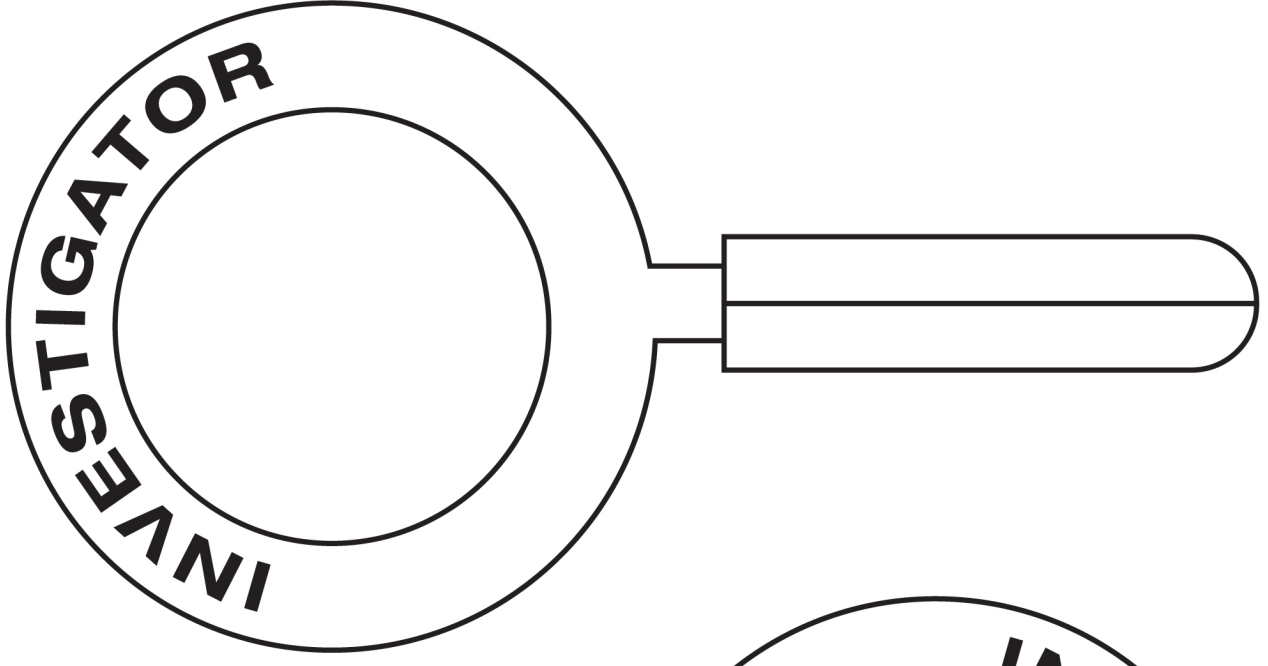
UNDER 5s – David and Goliath

In the Bible is a story about a boy called David. Now David was not a big grown up, but he knew that God would give him the courage to do the right thing even when it was very difficult. We are going to watch a little bit about his story.

WATCH: Slapstick Theatre (David and Goliath) by Saddleback Kids (3:10)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuedVFB8-7Y>

Isn't that amazing that God could use a young boy like David to stand up against people doing the wrong thing? Goliath was saying bad things about God and His people. David knew this wasn't right and he had faith that God would help him to win the battle. Because of stories like this, we know we can stand up for what is right with the confidence that God is there fighting with us.





WEEK TWO

Were we created?

Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Preparation: Read booklet #1 / View video #1. WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Week Two – Were we created?

INTRO	<p>Our new series: We often come across some big questions in life, and questions are SO good for helping us learn more about ourselves and our faith. For this term, we're looking at some big questions we may have and how we can answer them so that we have the evidence and proof we need to know that what we believe is true!</p> <p>Our first topic: The first one we want to look at is, "How do we know that God really created us and our world?" It's a big question! Does anyone have any answers they want to share?</p> <p>The simple answer to this question is YES, God really did create us and our world. Let me tell you how we know this is true.</p>
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ANSWER + BIBLE + OBJECT LESSON	<i>This lesson includes two points, each with their own Bible passage and object lesson.</i>
	Part 1: Creation is too complex to be an accident
	Part 2: Existence of moral truth (then an extra illustration about evolution).

HOLY SPIRIT	Prayer: There is a purpose to creation, and to find the purpose you need to go back to the Creator. Pray over the kids, thanking God for creating us and the world we live in.
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CRAFT	Handprint
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GAME	Guess the Picture Balance
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MEMORY VERSE	Repetition
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UNDER 5s	Creation Reveals the Glory of God
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PART ONE – Creation is too complex to be an accident



Scientists have found the creation to be very complex: Scientists have been studying life on our planet for a very long time, and the more they discover, the more complicated they find everything is. Who can explain how your eye works?

Example – eyes: First, we know that we have eyes that we see with.

- Then we find out, there are actually 12 different parts in each eye to make it work. That's a lot, right?
- But wait! Scientists now know that each eye has over TWO MILLION moving parts... WOAHH!

Example – cells: Our bodies are made up of millions of cells, but if you look even closer, inside those cells is like a whole city working together just to make that one cell function.

- They have machines that do specific jobs, other machines that make parts for those machines, and even more machines that help put everything together and fix anything that may be broken.
- Possibly share the example of the Kinesin from Video #1 – or of the 'bacterial flagellum' (speed boat motor) from Booklet #1.
- There are many things working together just to make one cell work, and we have millions of these cells!

The need for multiple complex things at once – working together: These things that make up our bodies and our planet have to be in perfect balance to work. If something is out by just a little bit, it could all fall down.

- **Example – fine-tuning:** Did you know that if we were just a little bit closer to the sun, our planet would be too hot to live on, but if we were a little bit further away from the sun, it'd be too cold for us to live on?! The miracle is that we orbit in an almost perfect circle, at just the right distance.

Conclusion: Everything has come together perfectly to allow us to live and breathe and function as people. Lots of scientists who maybe don't believe in God actually admit that there is too much evidence pointing towards there being a designer for creation, and that everything happening by chance is too unlikely. You can't have something out of nothing.

OBJECT LESSON

Need Lego sculpture

Container that can be closed completely

Use a pre-built Lego sculpture and get someone to pull it apart piece by piece and put those pieces in a container. Then ask someone to shake the container until it all puts itself back together again. It won't work, will it? Because only someone intelligent and creative can put all the blocks together to create what they intended.

A man called Sir Fred Hoyle said, "The chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this way is comparable to the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junkyard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein".

Creation is too complex to happen on its own, it needs a Creator. So what does the Bible say?

BIBLE - Nehemiah 9:5B-6 NIrV

So, the people said, "LORD, may your glorious name be praised. May it be lifted high above every other name that is blessed and praised. ⁶You are the one and only LORD. You made the heavens. You made even the highest heavens. You created all the stars in the sky. You created the earth and everything on it. And you made the oceans and everything in them. You give life to everything. Every living being in heaven worships you.

PART TWO – The existence of moral truth



Illustration: Like with a computer or smartphone, the evidence that we were created is not just in how we are put together (the hardware), but in who we are as people (the software).

- Our personal experiences with God and the fact that we have free-will to make our own choices show that we aren't just a bunch of cells, but a fully formed person with a heart and mind to think for ourselves.
- And importantly, there is the existence of moral truth. Let me explain...

If God didn't exist, there would be no reason to say something is right or wrong. You would instead go by what other people tell you is right or wrong, and this could be entirely different for different families and communities and countries. Who gets to be the one who decides for everyone? And what if they're wrong?

- **Illustration:** What if every teacher in a classroom made up their own rules? Imagine - how different would their rules be? Would that be fair? In comparison, if the Principal makes up the rules, the same rules would be true for all classrooms and students. The School Principal is like having a God above us.

The point: Just as design needs a designer, if there are fixed moral laws about what is right and wrong for our whole planet – there needs to be a moral law giver.

OBJECT LESSON

Need Pen/Paper

Ask for a volunteer to draw a cat and they draw a cat.

Now ask them to draw an animal you just made up in your mind with a weird name (Like a “Gonglyloopert”) but don't explain the animal. How will they know what to draw? They won't!

Unless you have something to refer to, you can't know what it's meant to look like. In the same way, we won't truly know truth, love, sacrifice, right or wrong, without having the example God gave us, and we couldn't have that example if there wasn't a God who created us in the first place. We use God as our example to teach us how to live.

BIBLE - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIrV

¹⁶God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. ¹⁷By using Scripture, the servant of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.

OPTIONAL EXTRA – Evolution (The implication of Parts One and Two)



If you think the kids will want to discuss this or will respond well (you might also have a group of older kids who would be interested) here is an optional additional part to discuss.

The concept of Evolution is also one that people use to say there is no God.

Where all agree: Adaptation, natural selection, and survival of the fittest are all words connected with the idea of evolution, and we know all these things happen. Animals and people adapt to their circumstances, the strongest and best animals are often the ones that reproduce more so are naturally selected to carry on over weaker slower animals. We know these things are true.

What doesn't make sense: However, if someone is talking about evolution where something evolves from nothing, and then develops all of the systems it needs all by itself as the result of a series of accidents, and then can reproduce as well... this has never been proven and is often regarded as doubtful science. When something mutates, a mutation involves the loss of something or duplication of something, not adding something new that is clever. There is no proof anywhere that something came from nothing.

Illustration: Ask for a volunteer to come up and then ask them to bake a cake right then. They can't! Because they don't have the ingredients or equipment. In the same way, you can't create life from nothing. There has to be something to start and that can only come from the creator.

That brings us back to the Bible passage from Part One as the only logical conclusion:

BIBLE - Nehemiah 9:5B-6 NIV

So the people said, "LORD, may your glorious name be praised. May it be lifted high above every other name that is blessed and praised. ⁶You are the one and only LORD. You made the heavens. You made even the highest heavens. You created all the stars in the sky. You created the earth and everything on it. And you made the oceans and everything in them. You give life to everything. Every living being in heaven worships you.

HOLY SPIRIT TIME

(We have just talked about the complicated 'mechanics' of how our bodies and planet work. What we haven't yet considered is their purpose – which is about WHY were these things created.)

Illustration: If you are watching TV and use your remote to change the channel, what changed the channel? You or the remote? The answer is both!

The point: With science we can explain how the channel was changed, but we can't figure out WHY it was changed. The person in control is the one who knows why. To know WHY we need to know the person who is in control of this Creation. Science is a truly wonderful thing. We can discover how amazing God's creation is. But only God himself can show us the purpose for it. (We need to and can know God!)

Pray: Pray over the kids, asking God to reveal Himself to us through our questions, so that we can see his design and purpose. Then pray over the kids, acknowledging God as our Creator and thanking Him for creating each of us and the world we live in.

Alternative:

Play a slideshow of pictures of earth and creation (Or a video) with worship music in the background and let the kids spend some time in reflection, taking time to be in awe of God and His creation.

OR go outside and lie on the grass looking up at the trees or clouds to reflect on what is amazing.

MEMORY VERSE - Repetition



Say the memory verse and get kids to repeat it back, then try and repeat it back without prompting. See how many of them can repeat the whole thing or as much of it as they can.

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.

Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.

Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

1 Peter 3:15 NIV

CRAFT

Need Paints

Tray for each paint colour

Paint brush for each colour

Wipes

Pre-printed template or blank paper

Using the paint brushes, paint a colour onto each kid's hand and then press their hand onto the template above the empty stem so their handprint becomes the big flower at the top.

Carefully clean their hands before they walk away!

Alternatively, have them do their handprint on a blank piece of paper and once it is dry, use pens to turn those handprints into animals.



For this and similar craft ideas see messylittlemonster.com

Guess the Picture

Ask the kids to get into pairs and one person from each pair has to come up front to get a picture from the leader. They then have to go back to their pair and draw that picture on their partner's back using their finger. The partner has to guess the picture. First one to guess wins!

Picture ideas: House, flower, cat, dog, sun, car, giraffe, bird etc.

The person drawing knows what picture they are creating on their partner's back while their partner cannot see it but can feel the hand of its creator. This is just like how we can see God's hand in creation, even if we didn't see Him create it in the first place. An intelligent drawing would not be drawn on your back by itself. The evidence of design proves that there is a designer!

Balance

Need Balls

Rulers or strips of strong cardboard

Multiple small items per person or team

Each person or team has to try and balance the ruler or strip of cardboard on top of their ball. Once they have done this, they can start to add the small items on top but keep it balanced.

How many things can each team balance? Try it when they can balance in the middle and then again when they have to balance it on the ends and see how they get on.

So many things in creation have to be in balance to work as they do, only God could make this happen!

UNDER 5s – Creation Reveals the Glory of God

Look at examples of God's amazing creation. Explore together how carefully and wonderfully these things were made. What do they tell us about God?

Octopus - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vQnKO_2kKk

Tiger – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OmRW4em_vA

Owl – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifXMpuNk9RA>

Kangaroo – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nQzs_4WhO0

Monarch Butterfly - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b87rwtXGzA>



DESIGNED
and
CREATED
by
GOD!



WEEK THREE

Is the Bible true?

Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Preparation: Read booklet #2 / View video #2. WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Week Three – Is the Bible true?

<p>INTRO</p>	<p>Facts about the Bible: The Bible was written over 1500 years and has more than 40 authors which include kings, military leaders, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, scholars, and shepherds. But it tells one single story when you read it all as one.</p> <p>The Bible is the world's best seller and most printed book ever as well as the most translated, given, purchased, read, and stolen book of all time! Because the Bible is so important to our faith, a lot of people have tried to attack it and say we cannot trust it. But we know that we can trust the Bible, and this is why.</p>
<p>LESSON</p>	<p>We can trust it because it has been accurately preserved: The more original copies you can find of something, the more reliable you can say it is. Some ancient documents have hundreds of copies so we know we can trust the copies to be reliable. BUT, there are more copies of the ancient Bible manuscripts than any other ancient documents ever found... over 25,000 copies which you can compare to know what you have is reliable.</p> <p>We can trust it because eyewitnesses wrote it: All of the books were written by people who were alive at the time the things happened so they weren't just a story someone heard from their grandma who heard it from their grandma. They were accurately recorded by people who were there at the time; what they wrote could be checked and verified by other eyewitnesses, so there isn't really any room for people to exaggerate!</p> <p>Scholars have shown it to be very reliable: There is no longer any of the original Bible left, but we have these thousands of early copies to refer back to. To see how reliable the copies are, there has to be around 90% accuracy between the different copies for us to call it a reliable document, but the Bible has over 99% accuracy between the different copies with nearly all the differences only affecting spelling or grammar. It is a VERY reliable book!</p> <p>An illustration: Even if we ignored those copies, we can still re-write the whole New Testament because of the HUGE number of New Testament quotes found in the writings of the early Christian writers. Even if we only had their quotes of the New Testament, we could use those alone to reconstruct all except just 11 verses of it. That definitely backs up the accuracy of the Bible!</p> <p>Non-Christians from Jesus' time said the same things: BUT, how do we know it wasn't just made up by the believers of Jesus? We look at other people from that time who didn't believe that Jesus was anything other than a man and wrote about him. There were two well-known writings at this time called the Jewish Talmud and a writer named Josepheus, who recorded history for the Romans. Both of them confirm that Jesus lived, performed miracles, was crucified, and that his disciples not only believed he rose from the dead, but that they were willing to die for their belief which is pretty strong evidence for the truth! If those who aren't Christians are saying the Christians are telling the truth, that's some pretty good evidence!</p> <p>Archaeology also confirms its record of history is true: We also have archaeologists whose job it is to uncover the past. Many have tried to prove the Bible as false, but they keep finding more and more evidence that proves the Bible true, like where things happened, when they happened, what the culture and people were like, and so much more!</p> <p>Conclusion: All these things work together to PROVE that the Bible is true and can be trusted.</p>

BIBLE	If we know that the Bible is true and we can trust it based on the evidence, what does the Bible itself say about it?
	READ Romans 15:4-8 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17
	Because God is behind the Bible it is a book that can give us strength to go on. It encourages us and gives us hope. It teaches us that God is true. Since we know that God is true and the Bible is true, it also helps us to know without a doubt, that God will keep the promises He made. Which is a pretty incredible thing!

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON	Chinese Whispers with a long line of people, then with only two people, then with only one reading the sentence out loud. How much do you trust that the end sentence is accurate for each attempt? You trust the one that only goes through one other person, or comes directly from the first person. The Bible was written by people who were there when it happened, or by people who spoke to eye-witnesses who were there, so we can trust that it's accurate!
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HOLY SPIRIT	Ask the kids to get into a comfortable position, maybe lying on their back, and close their eyes. Read some affirmations and Biblical promises over them while they listen. Pray over them that they would always know the truth of what God has said about each of us.
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CRAFT	Bookmarks
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GAME	Two Truths and a Lie Trust Falls
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MEMORY VERSE	Puzzle Pieces
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UNDER 5s	Noah's Ark
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Romans 15:4-8 NlrV

⁴ Everything written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They encourage us and give us hope.

⁵ Our God is a God who strengthens and encourages you. May he give you the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had. ⁶ Then you can give glory to God with one mind and voice. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Christ has accepted you. So accept one another in order to bring praise to God. ⁸ I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews. He teaches us that God is true. He shows us that God will keep the promises he made to the founders of our nation.

2 Timothy 3:16-14 NlrV

¹⁶ God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. ¹⁷ By using Scripture, the servant of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON

Have a line of kids do Chinese whispers with a long sentence. The longer the line, the better!

I saw a man with a can of soup and a basket of twigs running to market to buy a pig and have a coffee on the front lawn of his brother's house.

You read it to the first person, who whispers it to the second, who whispers it to the third, and so on.

The last person will say the sentence out loud - How close to the original do they get?

Now tell one person and get them to repeat it back... how accurate was that?

Now just read the sentence out loud. We know that one will be completely accurate as it comes right from the main person!

In the same way, it was people who were there or who spoke to people who were there that wrote the New Testament, so we can trust it's accurate. It hasn't been re-told enough times to change so it must be what really happened!

Ask the kids to get into a comfortable position, maybe lying on their back, and close their eyes. You can put some worship music on in the background to set the atmosphere.

Read some affirmations and Biblical promises over them while they listen:

Affirmation/Promise	Reference
God will strengthen you and help you	Isaiah 41:10
God will never leave you or desert you	Deuteronomy 31:8
God will give us rest when we are burdened	Matthew 11:28
God is strong when we are weak	2 Corinthians 12:10
God gives us peace when we come to Him	Philippians 4:7
God will fight for you	Exodus 14:14
God gives strength to us when we are tired	Isaiah 40:29
God will be with you in hard times	Isaiah 43:2
God will give us wisdom when we ask	James 1:5
God will forgive us when we confess our sins	1 John 1:9
God will be with us where we go	Joshua 1:9
God is near us when we pray to Him	Deuteronomy 4:7
God created us for a purpose	Ephesians 2:10
God loves us no matter what	Romans 8:38-39
God has a plan for your life	Jeremiah 29:11
God is near to us when we are sad	Psalms 34:18
God hears us when we talk to Him	Jeremiah 29:12

Pray over them that they would always know the truth of what God has said about each of us, and that nothing would ever cause us to doubt God's truth in our lives.

MEMORY VERSE



Need Pre-printed and pre-cut up memory verse (multiple if you want to have different teams).

Hand out the pre-cut pieces of the memory verse and get the kids to work together to piece them together, or have teams race each other to see who can do it the fastest.

When we piece together all the evidence, we finally get the big picture just like how all the evidence of the Bible points to the fact that it is true!

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.
Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.
Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.
1 Peter 3:15 NIV

CRAFT

Need Pre-printed template on card

Hole punch

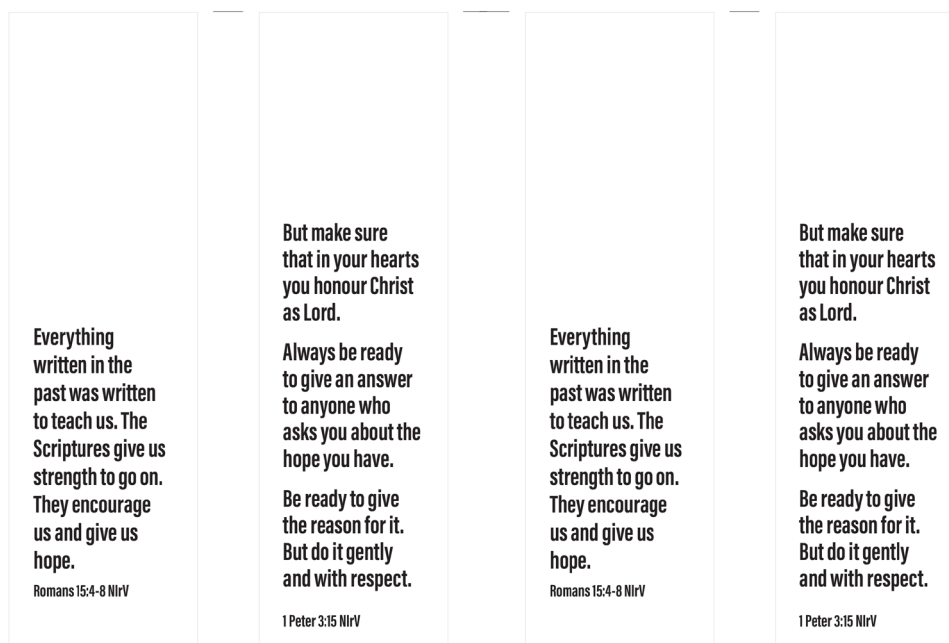
Ribbon or string

Colouring pens/pencils/crayons etc.

Kids can choose a bookmark and draw pictures on it – feel free to draw on both sides!

Punch a hole in the top of each bookmark and thread through some string or ribbon and tie it so it won't come undone.

Suggestion: You could laminate the bookmarks before punching a hole in them to make sure they last!



Two Truths and a Lie

Ask for a volunteer to come up and tell everyone two true things about themselves and one lie.

Everyone then has to guess which one is the lie.

Repeat as many times as you like with as many people as you like!

Thankfully we don't have to try and figure out if the Bible is true, we already know it is! And that means that we can trust everything God has said in it.

Trust Falls

Sometimes we are unsure if something is going to go well, or how we'll make it through certain situations. With God though, we know that he is always with us, always for us, and always on our side.

Let's see how much we trust each other though!

Ask for a volunteer and get them to stand and close their eyes. You count down from 3 and they fall backwards where you catch them. Make sure you catch them!

Ask if anyone else wants to give it a try!

UNDER 5s – Noah's Ark

The Rainbow as a Promise

Did you know that in the Bible God promises many good things to His people? Some promises from God we have seen come true. Did you know that a long time before Jesus was born, God promised that Jesus would come to the earth and live with us?

We are going to watch a story about one of the promises that God gave to us. Sometimes we see a reminder of this promise in the sky after it has rained. This reminder has lots of colours. Do you know what it might be? A Rainbow!

WATCH: Noah's Ark by Saddleback Kids (3:38)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzYjy6lhRag>

God has kept that promise hasn't he? We all get to live with all these beautiful animals and with each other because God promised not to flood the whole earth ever again. When we see God's promises in the Bible coming true, it reassure us that what the Bible says is true. God won't ever lie to us.

**But make sure
that in your hearts
you honour Christ
as Lord.**

**Always be ready
to give an answer
to anyone who
asks you about the
hope you have.**

**Be ready to give
the reason for it.
But do it gently
and with respect.**

1 Peter 3:15 NIrV

**Everything
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past was written
to teach us. The
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They encourage
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1 Peter 3:15 NIrV



WEEK FOUR

Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?

Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Preparation: Read booklet #3 / View video #3. WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Week Four – Can we trust the Bible’s prophecies?

INTRO	<p>Introducing the Bible’s predictions: The Bible is the world’s most predictive book. Over a quarter of it contains a prophecy of some kind. This is important because last week we looked at how we can trust the Bible to be an accurate historical book, but it’s so much more than that.</p>
LESSON	<p>Why they are important: The prophecies in the Bible matter because they give us a way to test it, and they are proof of God’s promises. We can test if a prophecy is real or fake by asking two questions – Did someone change the words later on to make it look like they prophesied for something to happen? Or did they change the story of what happened to match the prophecy?</p> <p>How we can know the predictions weren’t faked: If we look at the prophecies in the Old Testament that talk about a Saviour coming to Earth, some have suggested that someone went back and changed them after Jesus came, to make it look like He has fulfilled all the prophecies. No, that’s not true! We know this because there are too many copies of the Old Testament dated back to BEFORE Jesus came, so they can’t have been changed AFTER He came.</p> <p>So then maybe people changed the story of Jesus to match the prophecies? That’s not true either! The stories of Jesus are confirmed by the different Gospels for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the hundreds of eye-witnesses who were there. The disciples were willing to die for this truth as well, which is not something you’d do if you knew it was a lie!</p> <p>The predictions are unique: No other religious books (such as a Koran, the Book of Mormon, or the Hindu Veda) have prophecies in them like the Bible does. And the Bible not only has prophecies, it has hundreds that have been proven to be true.</p> <p>Give an example: Briefly explain an example or two from the booklet of some of the fulfilled predictions that amaze you. One list of predictions is on Pg 19.</p> <p>Why do some not believe the fulfilled predictions are miracles – even though they happened? Some people don’t want to believe in miracles because they don’t want to believe in God. So, even if everything points to a miracle, they still refuse to believe it. The prophecies in the Bible that have been fulfilled are all miracles, and it’s hard for some people to get their heads around that.</p> <p>The point: These prophecies prove that the Bible is trustworthy and that there is a supernatural author working with the writers of each book in the Bible. That is the only possible explanation for these prophecies that have all come true. It shows us that we can trust what God is saying and His promises to us.</p>
BIBLE	<p>The Bible itself backs this up and gives us the answer of whether we can trust these prophecies in the Bible.</p>
	<p>READ 2 Peter 1:16-21 NIV</p>
	<p>Prophecy didn’t come from the people. Instead, the Holy Spirit spoke through them. It’s such an amazing thing to see how the Holy Spirit has been speaking to people for thousands of years, guiding us and leading us, and we can trust Him.</p>

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON	Tell everyone you are going to guess a dice roll outcome, and then roll the dice without saying your guess. Now tell them you were right! Did they believe you? No! because they can't be sure what you were predicting first. Now ask someone to make a prediction and then place the dice down to match. It's a miracle! No, it's not, because we made the outcome match. Only if we were to predict for real and roll for real would we trust the process. Thankfully, we CAN trust the predictions in the Bible because we know they came from God.
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HOLY SPIRIT	We know that the Bible is the only book we have from God, and that means it is a very special and DIVINE book. Share some favourite verses or promises that have stood out to each person, then pray together thanking God for His Word.
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CRAFT	Lantern
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GAME	Hopscotch Rock/Paper/Scissors The Right Number
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MEMORY VERSE	One After Another
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UNDER 5s	Walls of Jericho
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2 Peter 1:16-21 NIrV

¹⁶ We told you about the time our Lord Jesus Christ came with power. But we didn't make up clever stories when we told you about it. With our own eyes we saw him in all his majesty. ¹⁷ God the Father gave him honour and glory. The voice of the Majestic Glory came to him. It said, "This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him." (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35) ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven. We were with him on the sacred mountain.

¹⁹ We also have the message of the prophets. This message can be trusted completely. You must pay attention to it. The message is like a light shining in a dark place. It will shine until the day Jesus comes. Then the Morning Star will rise in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, here is what you must understand. No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet's own understanding of things. ²¹ Prophecy never came simply because a prophet wanted it to. Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So, although prophets are human, prophecy comes from God.

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON – Roll the Dice

Need Dice

Have a dice ready to go and ask someone to predict what number it's going to land on (but keep that number to themselves). When you roll the dice, they can say they were right, but how much do we trust that is actually the number they predicted? We can't trust it because they could be lying about what was predicted and we couldn't check it beforehand.

Now get someone to make a prediction and put the dice down to match their prediction. Is that a miracle? No it's not, because we made the outcome match the prediction.

How accurate were those predictions? Can we actually trust either of them? No! But if we do it for real (get someone to call out a number and roll the dice properly to see if it matches) then we know that it is accurate, whether they got it right or not.

The prophecies in the Bible were like someone calling the number and rolling the dice to get that number HUNDREDS of times in a row. It's not possible for us, but it IS possible for God.

We know that the Bible is the only book we have that has come from God and that means it is a very special DIVINE book. Who knows what divine means? It means coming directly from God and is something that is extremely good and wonderful.

Our God is extremely good and wonderful, and we can see this through His Word. When we read the Word of God, He can speak to us and highlight certain verses or stories that connect with us.

Ask if anyone wants to share a favourite verse or promise from the Bible and why it stands out to them? Share one or two of your own and why they spoke to you.

Pray with the kids, that when they read the Word of God, that it would speak to them and their lives, that there would be a hunger in their hearts for God's Word. Thank God for His truth and wisdom.

GAMES

Hopscotch Rock/Paper/Scissors

Need At least 10 x Hoops

Place the hoops down on the floor in a long line and split the kids into two teams with one team standing at each end. When you say "Go", one person from each team will hop on one foot through the hoops towards the other end. When they meet someone from the other team, they both stop and play rock/paper/scissors.

The person who loses has to run back to their team while someone else from their team begins hopping forward to meet the winner. The new person and the winner from the previous round also stop when they meet each other to play rock/paper/scissors, and the game repeats until every member of one team makes it to the other end.

Little steps help us to reach the end, and small things can add up together to equal a big win. Just like how in the Bible, some small prophecies add up to the big conclusion that the **whole** Bible is from God and we can trust Him and His word.

The Right Number

Need Numbers 1-6 printed individually on card

Dice

Winning tokens

Place the six numbers around the room, spaced apart (Use blue-tac/Sellotape or place on the floor).

Kids have 10 seconds to choose a number and go stand in that spot.

Once everyone has chosen a spot, roll the dice and whoever is at the same place as the dice wins one point (give them one token to hold on to until the end or keep a record of points).

Play as many times as you like and at the end, tally up who has the most points to find your winner.

It's hard to predict the outcome every time, thankfully we know that God can! We can always trust God to complete His promises.

Need Pre-printed lantern template
Colouring pens/pencils/crayons etc.
Cellophane or thin tissue paper in various colours
Scissors
Laminating pouches
Laminator

Cut out the lantern and colour it in.

Cut out pieces of cellophane to be the centre of the lantern and place into a laminating pouch.

A leader can laminate each lantern to keep it all together and trim the edges.

You can stick your lantern on your window at home so the light shines through it and reminds us that God's Word is like a light shining in a dark place for us!



MEMORY VERSE – One After Another



Have the kids sit in a circle and go around the circle to say the memory verse but each person only says one word, then the next person says the next word, and so on until you go through the whole memory verse.

Try going faster and faster to see how quickly you can do it!

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.
Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.
Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.
1 Peter 3:15 NIV

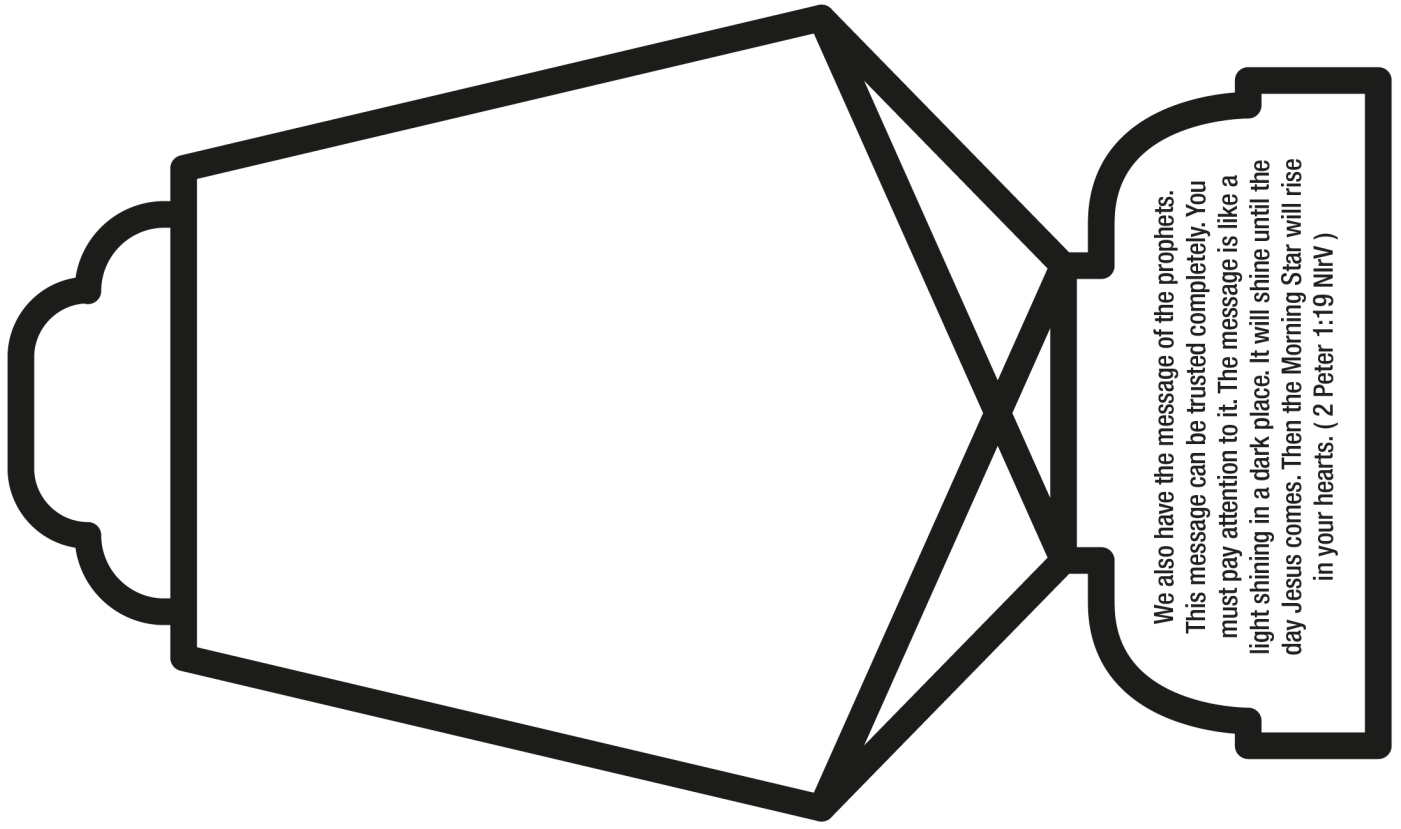
UNDER 5s – Walls of Jericho

Today we are looking at a story about how God told the Israelites that one day they would live in this wonderful home that they called the Promised Land. When they got there, they found it hard to trust in God's promise... But God had a plan!

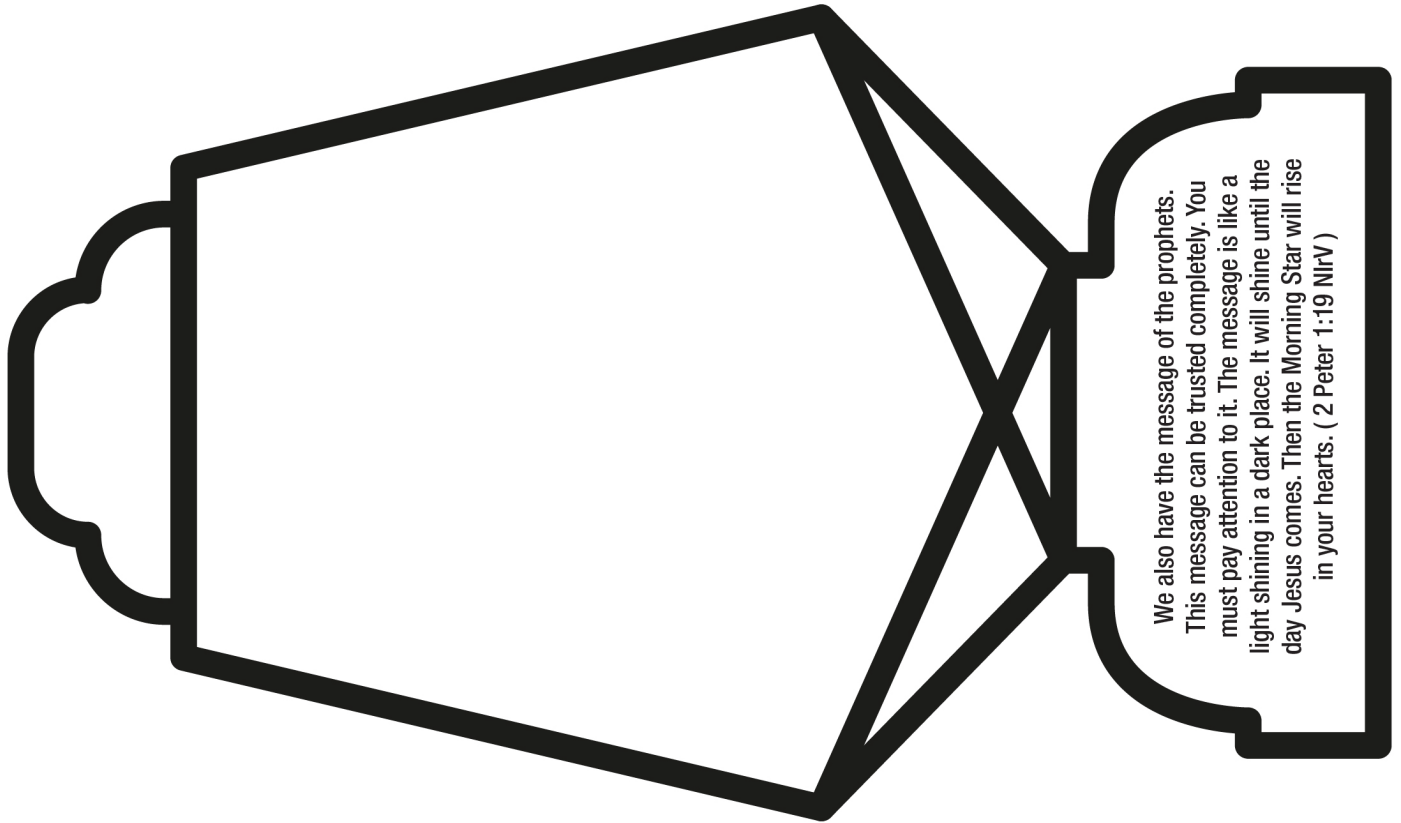
WATCH: The Walls of Jericho – Stories of the Bible by Saddleback Kids (3:15)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAv9rZl2U5g>

It's amazing that even when we can't see how God will give us the things He promises, we can trust that He has a way. That He doesn't lie to us. When God says He is going to do something He does it. Sometimes just not in the way we might imagine it.



We also have the message of the prophets.
This message can be trusted completely. You must pay attention to it. The message is like a light shining in a dark place. It will shine until the day Jesus comes. Then the Morning Star will rise in your hearts. (2 Peter 1:19 NIV)



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WEEK FIVE

Did Jesus really come?

Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Preparation: Read booklet #4 / View video #4. WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Week Five – Did Jesus really come?

INTRO	Who was Jesus? Some people say that Jesus is just a man who lived on Earth and not someone we should be following, but we know that Jesus is the Son of God and part of God's miraculous plan to save us. But how do we know this?
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LESSON	<p>Was Jesus divine? Jesus showed us in many ways that He was divine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He announced it at the beginning of His ministry by telling people that scripture had been fulfilled (a prophecy came true) that day. - He allowed people to worship Him when he performed miracles. - He claimed to forgive sin (which is something only God can do). - He claimed to have more authority than the law (He would say things like, "It was said to you... but now I say to you..."). - He performed miracles. He called God His father. - Eventually, He even told people He was "I Am" which is a name given to God in the Old Testament. <p>So, we know that Jesus' claim to be from God was clear, but all of this means nothing without the resurrection.</p> <p>Why is the resurrection important? When Jesus died, He took all of our sins and blame on himself so we wouldn't have to suffer the consequences. But He had to come back to life to beat death and to win back authority, to finish the job. If He didn't, that means that death is still in charge. So the big question is, did Jesus really come back to life and defeat death? We know the answer is yes, but let's look at why.</p> <p>How can we know Jesus came back to life? Some people thought that maybe Jesus wasn't fully dead and just recovered. Some others think that the women got the wrong tomb and that's why they found it empty. And others say that the disciples stole Jesus' body to make up the story of Jesus coming back to life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He was dead: We know for a fact that Jesus did die and was buried in the personal tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. How? This was confirmed by many people. They could all also confirm that a soldier put a spear in Jesus' side to confirm He was dead. Do you think you could pretend to be dead while someone sticks a knife in you as far as your heart? I don't think so! - No one got the wrong tomb: We know the women didn't get the wrong tomb, because the Roman guards and Jewish leaders of the day both agree that the correct tomb that did have Jesus inside it was now empty. - He was seen alive again by many: We also know that multiple people and groups met with Jesus over a number of weeks following His resurrection, and with so many eye-witness accounts it couldn't be faked. - Those who knew Him best confirmed it really was Him: Most importantly, Jesus' disciples themselves, who had spent so much time with Him before His death, all confirmed that Jesus really did return to them in the flesh (as a real person) with holes in His feet, hands, and side still on His body. Jesus' return turned His followers into fearless preachers who would even die for their beliefs. - People don't willingly die for things they know are not true: Hundreds, then thousands (then millions) of people went on to spread the good news of Jesus and His resurrection – even at the risk of their own lives. Tradition says that all except one of the remaining 11 disciples was killed because of their preaching about Jesus. Nothing less than a powerful encounter with God would have motivated them to do that at the risk of their own lives.
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BIBLE	What if Jesus hadn't risen? The Bible talks about what it would mean if Jesus hadn't risen from the dead. If He hadn't, everything we believe could be questioned. Our faith would mean nothing.
	READ 1 Corinthians 15:12-20
	The evidence says Christ really was raised from the dead – and that means something: That means that our faith DOES mean something, our sins HAVE been forgiven, others who believe in Jesus are not lost but FOUND. Because Jesus was resurrected, we have hope and an eternity with God before us. That is definitely something to celebrate!

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON	Make a cup of water disappear by drinking it when the kids aren't watching. Then tell them it disappeared on its own... will they believe you? No! The evidence of hearing you drink, seeing you wipe your mouth, or maybe even of one or two who peeked... will show them that you just drank the water. The evidence helps prove what really happened. Just like the evidence of Jesus the eye-witnesses told us about helps us prove what really happened – that Jesus did in fact die for our sins and was resurrected!
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HOLY SPIRIT	1 Cor 15:17 <i>"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith doesn't mean anything. Your sins have not been forgiven"</i> But because Jesus really was raised from the dead, our sins HAVE been forgiven! Have communion together to thank God for what He has done for us.
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CRAFT	Empty Tomb
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GAME	In the Tomb, Out of the Tomb Jesus is Coming
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MEMORY VERSE	Leap frog
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UNDER 5s	Jesus as a Child
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1 Corinthians 15:12-20 NIV

¹² We have preached that Christ has been raised from the dead. So how can some of you say that no one rises from the dead? ¹³ If no one rises from the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, what we preach doesn't mean anything. Your faith doesn't mean anything either. ¹⁵ More than that, we would be lying about God. We are witnesses that God raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith doesn't mean anything. Your sins have not been forgiven. ¹⁸ Those who have died believing in Christ are also lost. ¹⁹ Do we have hope in Christ only for this life? Then people should pity us more than anyone else.

²⁰ But Christ really has been raised from the dead.

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON – It's a Miracle!

Need Water

Cup

Fill a cup with water then tell everyone you are going to make the water disappear. Have them to close their eyes then drink the water loudly. Get them to open their eyes and see the water is gone. Tell them it's a miracle that it disappeared on its own! The kids will know you're lying and that you drank the water.

Ask them how they know? Some might have heard you, or seen you wiping your mouth afterwards, or maybe some didn't close their eyes at all. They are looking at the EVIDENCE to prove their conclusion.

Now get one person to close their eyes but everyone else watch and do it again. Afterwards, tell that one person that the water mysteriously disappeared and see if they believe you, or the kids who watched? They'll believe the ones who saw it happen!

In the same way, we look at the evidence for Jesus and listen to all of the people who were there to know that Jesus did in fact die for our sins, and was resurrected!

Need Communion

1 Corinthians 15:17 says,

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith doesn't mean anything. Your sins have not been forgiven."

Because Jesus really was raised from the dead that means our sins HAVE been forgiven. This is a pretty incredible thing and not something to take lightly.

Pass out communion to everyone and ask them to hold it until you say it's time to have it.

Communion is a way to remember and honour Jesus for what He has done for us. It represents the sacrifice He made. The juice represents the blood He spilled on the cross, dying in our place for our sins. The bread/cracker represent His body that was broken for us. He had to go through beatings and torture and being nailed to a cross instead of us. That is a very hard thing to do for another person, especially for people that haven't even chosen to follow Him yet. But Jesus did it **while we were still sinners** because He loved us too much to leave us in sin.

We are going to drink and eat our communion together, and while you are doing it think about how Jesus made this sacrifice for YOU and how much He must've loved you to do that. Quietly, and in your own way, thank Him for His love and sacrifice.

Ask the kids to close their eyes. Then, if there is anyone who has not yet asked Jesus to come into their hearts and be their Saviour and wants to do that now, ask that they raise their hand or lift their head to look at you as a sign they want to become a Christian.

Get everyone to do a repeat-after-me prayer where you say one line and they repeat it back:

Dear Jesus

I'm sorry for all the wrong things I have done.

Please forgive me for not living your way.

I believe that you died for my sins and rose again

So I can be part of God's family.

I give my life to you.

Please come into my heart and help me to live your way.

Amen

If any kids respond to the salvation moment, take them aside when there is an appropriate moment to do so and congratulate them on such a great decision! Give them a Bible if they need one and pray for them. Talk to their parent/guardian after church to let them know, and encourage them to celebrate together and talk about it at home.

CRAFT – Empty Tomb

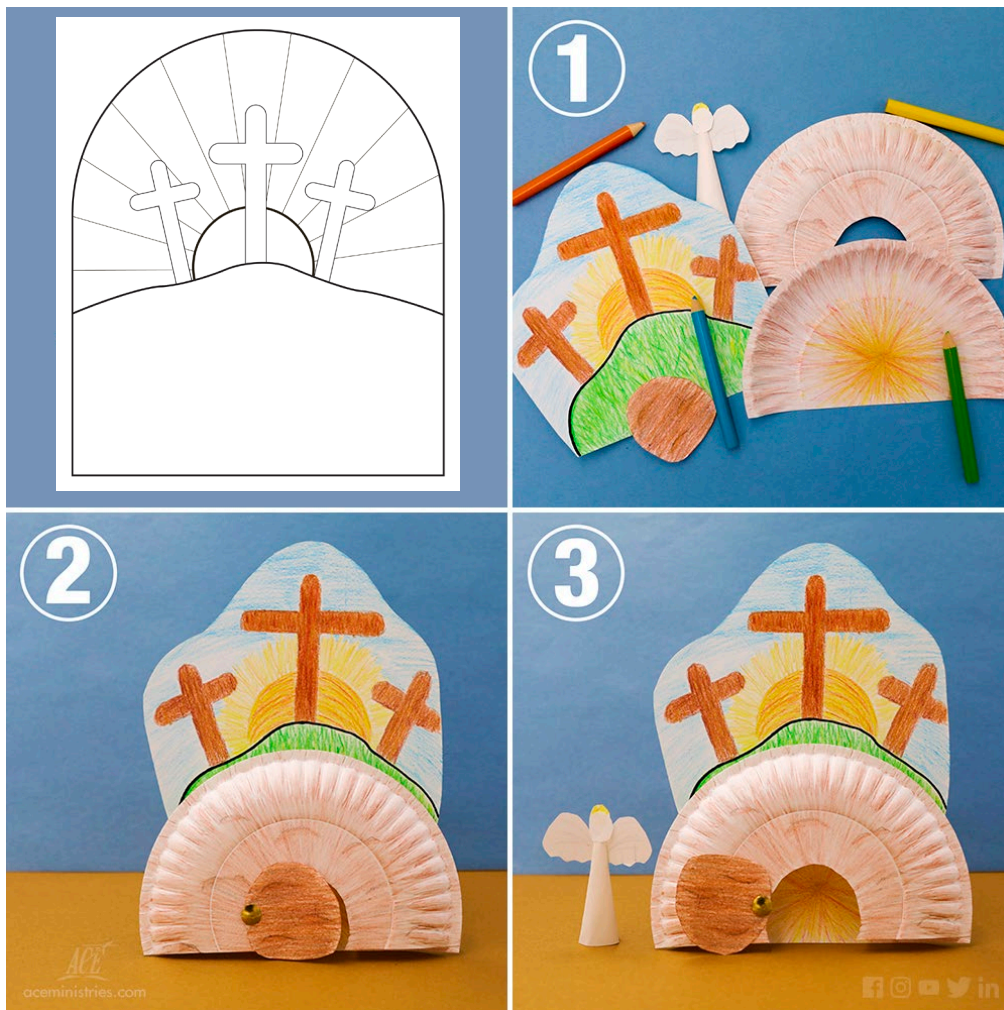
Need Pre-printed template
Paper plates
Paper fastener (Split pins)
Scissors
Stapler / Sellotape
Coloured pens/pencils/crayons etc

Cut the bottom third of 2 x paper plates and then cut a stone out of one of them (as per pictures below).

Colour in the template and the paper plates (back of the cut-out plate and front of the other).

Staple or Sellotape the plates together with the template in the middle so it is showing above the tomb but connected to it.

Use the paper fastener to attach the stone to the front paper plate as a stone that can then be rolled away.



For this and other similar resurrection craft ideas see aceschooloftomorrow.com/news/mar3023

In the Tomb, out of the Tomb

Need Masking Tape

'In the Tomb' and 'Out of the Tomb' paper/card signs.

Place a long line of tape down the middle of the floor and ask the kids to stand along the line looking at you up front. Stick the 'In the Tomb' and 'Out of the Tomb' signs to opposite side walls.

One side of the line will be "In the Tomb" and the other side will be "Out of the Tomb" – tell kids which side is which.

When you call out "In the Tomb" or "Out of the Tomb", kids should jump to whichever side you have called. If they don't jump, or jump to the wrong side, they are out. Make it challenging by picking up the pace and calling out the same side several times before switching. You could even point to one side while calling out the other!

Last one standing wins.

Jesus is Coming

A variant of Captain's Coming where kids have to walk around the room and then perform certain actions you call out as you call them out. If they do the wrong action or don't do it at all, they are out.

Bethlehem – Right side of the room

Nazareth – Left side of the room

In the Tomb – Lie down on their back

On the cross – Standing tall with arms out-stretched

Roll the stone – In a ball on the floor

Out of the Tomb – Yell out, "He's alive!" with arms up

Add others commands as you see fit.

MEMORY VERSE – Leap Frog



Have the memory verse displayed somewhere as a helping aid to the kids and then play a game of leap frog, where kids crouch down in a line and the back person leaps over each person until they reach the front of the line. Then the new end person starts leaping forward and so on.

However, each time they leap over anyone, they must call out one word of the memory verse. If they have to leap over 5 people, they would call out 5 words (One for each leap). The person at the back needs to keep an ear out to keep track of where they are at.

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.

Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.

Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

1 Peter 3:15 NIV

UNDER 5s – Jesus as a Child

Need Whiteboard + pen

Did you know that Jesus was once a child just like you all are?

Jesus grew up with his mother, Mary, and his father Joseph (*Draw these characters on the whiteboard*).

But that wasn't all, did you know Jesus also had brothers and sisters (*Draw some of these also*).

Every year Jesus and his family and all his community would go on a special holiday that they called Passover. This was to celebrate when God brought the Jewish people out of slavery from Egypt.

One year, when Jesus was about 12 years old, His mother and father and brothers and sisters all got ready to leave on this special celebration. They all packed up and started on their journey to visit the temple in Jerusalem (*Draw a temple that the characters are visiting*).

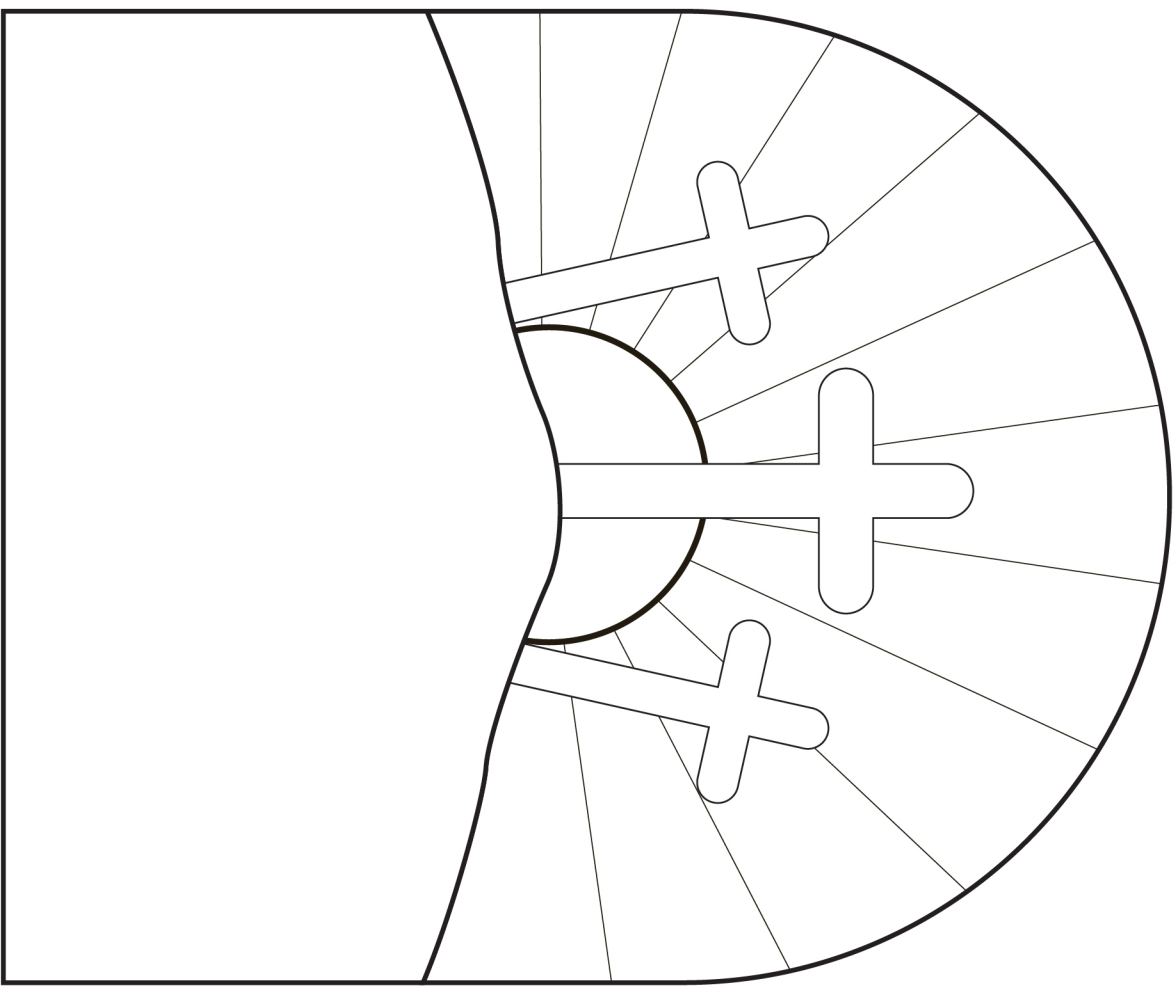
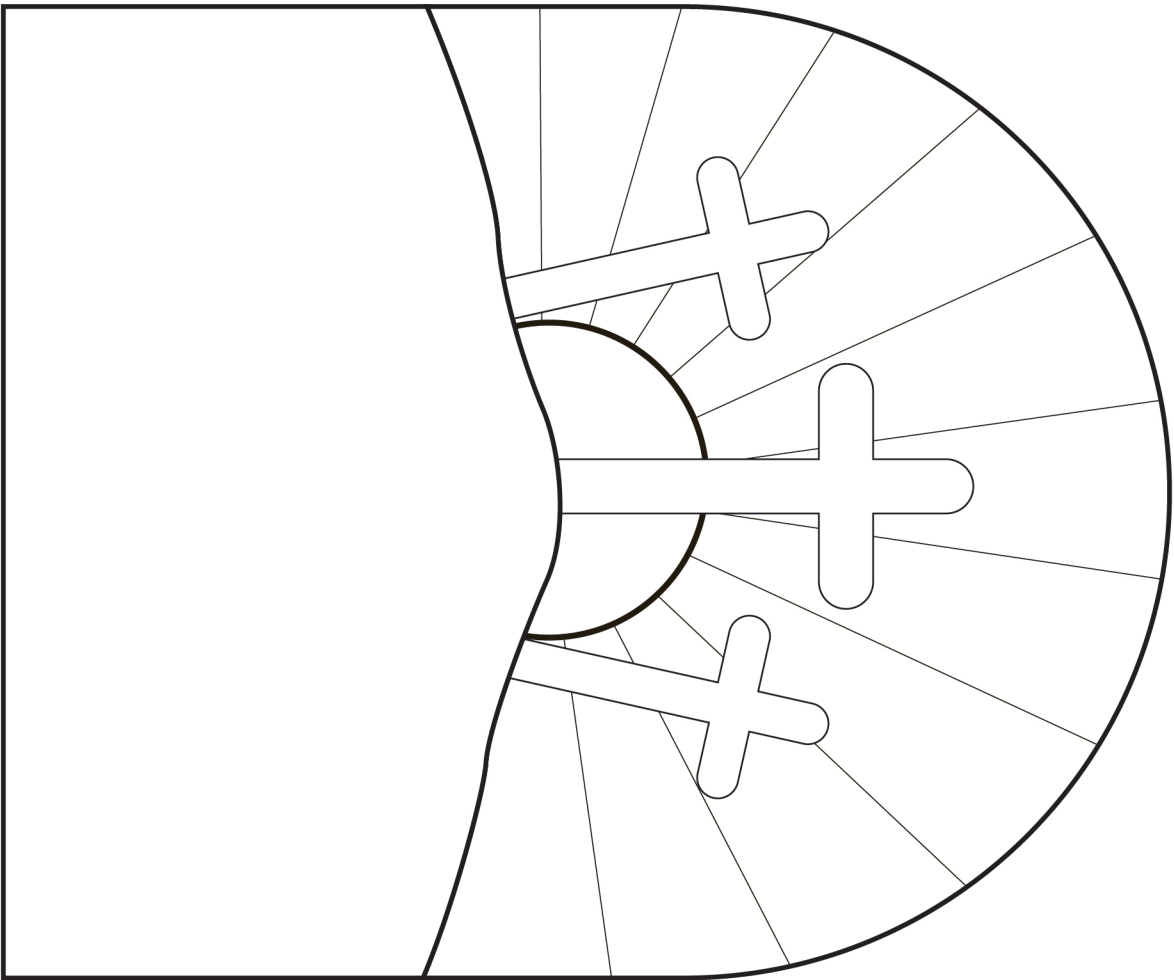
After the celebration had finished Mary and Joseph and their children started on their journey home (*Draw all the characters except Jesus leaving the temple*).

But then they noticed something... What do you think they noticed? (*Indicate towards the Jesus left in the Temple*) they were missing Jesus! So they turned around and went back to find Jesus.

When they got there they found Jesus talking with the Bible teachers and asking lots of questions. Everyone was impressed and amazed at Jesus's understanding and the questions and answers He had.

Mary, Jesus's mum, thought this was very special and kept this memory special in her heart.

This story today reminds us that Jesus wasn't just a cute baby in a manger or a big man who performed amazing miracles. Jesus was also a child like you. Jesus knows what it is like to have a mum and a dad and brothers or sisters. And did you know that your curiosity and desire to learn is special and important!





WEEK SIX

Is Jesus the only way?

Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Preparation: Read booklet #5 / View video #5. WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Week Six – Is Jesus the only way?

INTRO

All roads don't lead to my house: Some people believe that all religions basically say the same thing, but they're actually all very different in every area that's important. For example, one religion might say God doesn't exist, and another one does.... They can't both be true!

We need to show respect for other people and can show respect even when we disagree. So what exactly do we believe that is different? Let's talk about how Christianity is different from other religions.

LESSON

To be clear – the question isn't whether Christians are better: All people sin and need God's forgiveness. The question is about how the religions are different, because we want to work out what is true.

For some examples of differences if we compare the religions...

- **His claims** - Jesus is the only major religious leader to claim to BE God. That is a big claim and it is either true or it is not.
- **Predictions** - Jesus is the only one to have ever fulfilled multiple predictions that were made many hundreds of years earlier.
- **Miracles** - Jesus' miracles were also unique. There is no claim anywhere than any other individual has done similar.
- **Teachings** - Jesus' teachings are also unique in the world – for example teaching that the way we should respond to an enemy is to love them, that we forgive those who hurt us no matter what, and that the greatest person in God's eyes isn't the most powerful one, but instead the one who serves the interests of others.
- **Grace** - Christianity is also the only religion where you can't earn your way to God by being good. This is the biggest difference. Most religions are about what we have to do to get **to God** – while Christianity is about what God has done to get **to us**. It's not about what we DO, but about what God has DONE.

So how can we know Jesus is the *only* way to God? Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:16). There are only three options. Either Jesus was a liar. Or He was crazy. Or He really is God's son. It has to be one of those three!

- **Let's consider: Could he have been a liar, and made it all up?** We know that's not true because Jesus was the same everywhere He went, always right, always making the right calls, doing the right thing, fulfilling prophecies and doing lots of miracles - and you can't do that for 3 years straight, surrounded by people every day without slipping up. If you hated doing a job, then had to do that job every single day for 3 years (and it was an impossible job to do) do you think maybe at some point you might let it slip that you didn't like it?! Of course you would, but Jesus continued to live right, and love others every day, fulfilling prophecies and doing miracles, and He couldn't do that if He was lying.
- **Might Jesus have been crazy?** Some people thought He was! In John 10:20-21 it says they thought He was, but he couldn't be if He was actually performing miracles. That meant he was right!

²⁰ Many of them said, "He is controlled by a demon. He has gone crazy! Why should we listen to him?" ²¹ But others said, "A person controlled by a demon does not say things like this. Can a demon open the eyes of someone who is blind?"

	<p>In all of the stories of Jesus, we can see that He was mature and orderly in everything He did and said. That would not be true if He was crazy, so our only conclusion is that He wasn't.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What then is the third option? If He wasn't a liar and He wasn't crazy, the only option is that He was telling the truth, and He really is God's son who came to Earth to save us and lead us back to God. <p>Illustration: A person can't just claim something without evidence: For example you can't just claim to be a king. You'd have to show us your crown, your royal court, your guards, and your palace before we would believe you. In the same way Jesus didn't just claim to be God. Jesus performed miracles no one else could do. Jesus fulfilled predictions no one else ever has. Jesus was also full of wisdom and ultimately rose from the dead. His claim was backed up by His actions so we KNOW what He was saying was true. Jesus was the Son of God!</p>
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BIBLE	We have already looked at why we know we can trust the Bible. What does the Bible say about how we can know God?
	READ John 14:1-7 NIV
	Jesus is the way to God, and no one can get to God without Him. When we ask Jesus to forgive our sins and come in to our hearts, then we are made right with God and can have relationship with Him. By knowing Jesus, we can know God and that's pretty amazing!

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON	Have multiple boxes with half of them full and half empty. Put out one of each but don't tell the kids which one is which. Get one kid to choose one to jump on and jump on the box. If it's empty, it will crumple, if it's not, they'll be able to stand on it. In the same way, if Jesus wasn't made of the right stuff, if He wasn't really God, then He would've crumpled to scrutiny. But He was God, and we can stand on that!
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HOLY SPIRIT	<p>There's nothing we could do to make God love us less or more because He loves us regardless. It's not about DOING things, but about accepting what Jesus has DONE.</p> <p>Have a quiet reflective moment to sit and consider what God might want to say to you today. He wants to come to you, and for you to trust He is with you.</p> <p>Pray together, thanking God for what He has done for us.</p>
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CRAFT	A-maze-ing
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GAME	<p>Where Am I?</p> <p>Crossing The Bridge</p>
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MEMORY VERSE	Which Way?
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UNDER 5s	Saul's Encounter
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John 14:1-7 NIV

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God. Believe in me also. ² There are many rooms in my Father’s house. If this were not true, would I have told you that I am going there? Would I have told you that I would prepare a place for you there? ³ If I go and do that, I will come back. And I will take you to be with me. Then you will also be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Jesus is the Way to the Father

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. So how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father also. From now on, you do know him. And you have seen him.”

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON

Need Boxes – Half of them full with something (so you can stand on them) and half of them empty

e.g. Soda can boxes, some full of full cans, and some empty

Place one full and one empty box on the ground next to each other, but don’t let the kids know which one is which. Ask for a volunteer to come up and choose which box they think is full and which one is empty.

Once they’ve told everyone their choice, they have to actually jump onto the box they think is full. If it’s empty, it will crumble but if it’s full, they’ll be able to stand on it.

In the same way, if Jesus wasn’t made of the right stuff, if He wasn’t really God, He would’ve crumpled to scrutiny, but He was God, and we can stand on that!

There's nothing we could do to make God love us less or more because he loves us regardless. It's not about DOING things, but about accepting what Jesus has DONE. We then obey God because we love Him!

Ask the kids to find a spot by themselves and play some worship music in the background. Ask the kids to have a quiet reflective moment to consider what they think God might want to say to them. Remember that He wants to come to you, and for you to trust that he is with you.

After some time, pray over the kids, thanking God for what He has done for each of us and for making a way for us to have a relationship with God.

Then, while their eyes are still closed, ask if there is anyone who has not yet asked Jesus to come into their hearts and be their Saviour. They can raise their hand or lift their head to look at you as a sign they want to become a Christian.

Get everyone to do a repeat-after-me prayer where you say one line and they repeat it back:

Dear Jesus

I'm sorry for all the wrong things I have done.

Please forgive me for not living your way.

I believe that you died for my sins and rose again

So I can be part of God's family.

I give my life to you.

Please come into my heart and help me to live your way.

Amen

If any kids respond to the salvation moment, take them aside when there is an appropriate moment to do so and congratulate them on such a great decision! Give them a Bible if they need one and pray for them. Talk to their parent/guardian after church to let them know, and encourage them to celebrate together and talk about it at home.

CRAFT – A-Maze-ing

Need Paper plates
Straws
Glue
Scissors
Pens/pencils/crayons etc.
Round beads

Cut the straws into smaller pieces and glue them onto the plate to make a maze.

Write 'Start' at one end and 'End' at the other, then use the colouring pens/pencils/crayons to decorate.

Use the small round bead to roll between the straw pieces and try to make it through your maze!

Sometimes life can feel like a maze, and some beliefs can lead to a dead-end. When we follow God, we can trust Him to lead us through and to God.



For this and similar craft ideas see kidsactivitiesblog.com

Where Am I?

Ask for a volunteer and have them leave the room or cover their ears so they cannot hear. Everyone else chooses one place (e.g. A country or a well-known place in your country).

The first person comes back in and can ask different people questions to find out the place they have chosen. People can answer yes/no or give clues until the first person guesses the place right.

Whoever gives the game away becomes the next person in.

It's so much easier for the person who knows the place they are trying to guess as the clues will make sense to them. In the same way, when we know the clues or evidence about God and why we are here on Earth, we can see that Jesus is the right answer every time!

Crossing the Bridge

Need 20 chairs or cushions or spots to stand on

Place the chairs (or other items) in pairs in a line (2, then 2, then 2, then 2... etc.) to make a bridge from one side of the room to the other. Kids have to get from one end to the other. However only one chair of each pair is the right choice where they are safe. The other chair in each pair is the wrong choice and they will be out if they choose it. They won't know which one is right or wrong until they make that choice.

The first person comes up to the first pair and chooses the left or right chair. Once they have moved on to their choice, reveal if it is safe or if they're out.

If they're safe They stay on that chair and Person 2 moves past them to make the choice for the next set of chairs. Once Person 2 makes their choice, then you reveal if they're safe or if they're out.

Then Person 3 moves past both of them to make the third choice and so on.

If they're out Remove that chair and that person has to go to the back of the line

Keep going until the whole team makes it across the bridge. Thankfully we don't have to move through our lives without help. We have Jesus on our side, leading us through to reach God.

Use the below plans to help you determine which chairs are safe or out.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Start	Safe	Safe	Out	Safe	Out	Out	Safe	Safe	Out	Safe	End
	Out	Out	Safe	Out	Safe	Safe	Out	Out	Safe	Out	

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Start	Safe	Out	Out	Safe	Safe	Out	Safe	Out	Safe	Safe	End
	Out	Safe	Safe	Out	Out	Safe	Out	Safe	Out	Out	

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Start	Out	Out	Out	Safe	Out	Safe	Safe	Out	Out	Safe	End
	Safe	Safe	Safe	Out	Safe	Out	Out	Safe	Safe	Out	

MEMORY VERSE – Which Way?

Stand everyone in a circle. One person will say the first word, then clap towards their left or right. Whichever person they clap towards, that is the next person who will say the next word as they clap towards their left or right to keep it going. The memory verse will keep going around the circle with one person saying one word at a time, but the direction it goes around the circle can change at any time if someone decides to clap back the other way.

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.

Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.

Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

1 Peter 3:15 NIV

UNDER 5s – Saul’s Encounter

Did you know there was a man called Saul who didn’t believe that Jesus was the true Son of God?

One day he had an encounter with God that changed his mind. After that he went all over the world sharing the good news of Jesus, the Son of God. Let's read his story.

Read the story from page 150 from the ‘Pray & Play Bible’

Or alternatively **WATCH:** Paul’s Ministry by Saddleback Kids (3:05)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIXFy3zjH4>



WEEK SEVEN

Can we fix our own problems?

Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Preparation: Read booklet #6 / View video #6. WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Week Seven – Can we fix our own problems?

INTRO

We all know that the world has problems, and lots of different people have different ideas about how they can fix things. If we could fix all of our problems ourselves, then we don't really need God do we?

Well it turns out that we do need God, so let's look at why!

LESSON

Can we be good without God?: If we are looking at the question 'Can we be good without God', the first thing we need to decide is – What is good?

- Who can tell me some good things in life?
- How do you know if you're being good?
- What are some things you would say are bad?

How do we define what is good? Different people and cultures can define what is good and right in their own society, families and communities. Has anyone ever gone to someone else's house and they do things differently to the way you do at home? That is because people define what is normal and right for themselves.

- So how do we know what is really good?
- We need something to measure against, so that everyone can measure against the same thing.
- Put photos (Ant, Leader when they were the similar age to the children, Giraffe, Cruise ship, Mount Everest) in order of height.
- Are you tall? Compared to what? An ant? A giraffe?
- Is a giraffe tall? Compared to what? You? The Cruise ship? Mount Everest?
- We have to know what we are comparing something to when we decide if it is tall or short, or good or bad.
- There needs to be something that is absolutely true and good for us to compare other things to and see if they measure up as good. For Christians, this is God.

What then is truly good? God is completely good, there is no bad thing in Him. We can measure things up against God to see if they are good because He is the only one who hasn't been broken by sin. It also helps us to find out what is evil, because if something doesn't measure up against God, we know it's NOT good.

So, is the problem inside us or outside us? Some people say all the problems are from things outside us, like the government, the economy, our parents etc. and that if we can just fix those problems, that will fix the world. But actually, our real problems are caused by things inside us like selfishness.

What has God put inside us? We were created by God to have *free will* to make choices. We're not just animals who learnt a few tricks and just react. We can feel and think for ourselves. This also means that we often make bad choices because of the sin inside us. Even if we make a hundred good choices, we will never be good enough to overcome every sin and we can't fix the world when we are broken ourselves.

Story (French Revolution / Nazi Germany / Russian Communism are examples in the support resources): A very bad man from World War 2 called Hitler said, if we could just fix the problem of the Jews, and then control the world ourselves, the world would be better. We know that's not true and the real problem was his pride and greed inside. It wasn't the problem he saw outside, but a problem with his heart – believing we can fix all of our problems without God. When we look at our hearts, we may not be committing genocide by killing people, but sin still affects us and the choices we make.

From sin to hope: If you measure us against God, we are nowhere near good enough. We also know that there has to be a consequence for sin, and that consequence is death. But

	<p>remember, God didn't want us to perish, so He sent Jesus to save us from the consequence of sin and make us like new by removing the sin from our hearts and lives.</p> <p>The result in this world: What is inside our hearts and minds comes out. Because God is in us, many problems in the world can be gradually fixed! If we are choosing to think and make decisions like God wants us to, the goodness of God will come out of us! Examples: Christians stopped 18th Century slave trade and slavery, started the first hospitals, started the women's rights movement, started the idea of education for all, promoted systems of just Governments that protect rather than the Government using its power over the people for its own benefit, broke through centuries of corruption in business to enable societies in which everyone became prosperous (by comparison with most of history) – and have led the way in charity throughout history – caring for the poor.</p> <p>Summary: Can we fix our own problems? No. There is selfishness in our hearts – and if we try to fix the world without admitting this, we might end up making it worse! But if we will recognise God exists and ask His help to overcome our selfishness – we become better – and then the world becomes better through us! And history shows us this is true!</p>
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BIBLE	The Bible talks about this a lot, how we are all sinners and cannot be made right with God just by doing the right things.
	READ Romans 3:9-26 NIV
	Isn't that amazing? We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus. He did this to prove that what He does is right. We can trust Him to make things right, and to help us fix our own hearts which will help to fix the problems of the world!
ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON	Have a jug of water then add juice sachet and mix. Now ask someone to separate it again. They can't! The juice sachet is like sin ingrained in our hearts. If we get knocked, that's what comes out of our jug. We can dilute it with good things (water) but it will still be juice. Only someone OUTSIDE of the cup, can remove the sin (tip out juice) and fill us with His Spirit (pour in water) to make us new.

HOLY SPIRIT	<p>Hand out paper and pens to everyone and ask them to write down things from their lives they want to hand over to God. This could be a sin such as lying, being mean to someone etc. or something they are really struggling with, such as being worried about something or finding it hard to make friends etc.</p> <p>Once everyone has written something, they can fold it and screw it up, or they could go and attach it to the cross, or place it in a basket at the bottom of the cross.</p> <p>Then spend some time thanking God for taking our sin from us through Jesus.</p>
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CRAFT	Complete the Puzzle
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GAME	God Says Stuck in the Mud
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MEMORY VERSE	Put Together
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UNDER 5s	Jesus and the Children
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Romans 3:9-26 NIrV

No One Is Right With God

⁹ What should we say then? Do we Jews have any advantage? Not at all! We have already claimed that Jews and Gentiles are sinners. Everyone is under the power of sin. ¹⁰ It is written,

“No one is right with God, no one at all.

¹¹ No one understands.

No one trusts in God.

¹² All of them have turned away.

They have all become worthless.

No one does anything good,

no one at all.” (Psalms [14:1–3](#); [53:1–3](#); [Ecclesiastes 7:20](#))

¹³ “Their throats are like open graves.

With their tongues they tell lies.” (Psalm [5:9](#))

“The words from their lips are like the poison of a snake.” (Psalm [140:3](#))

¹⁴ “Their mouths are full of curses and bitterness.” (Psalm [10:7](#))

¹⁵ “They run quickly to commit murder.

¹⁶ They leave a trail of harmful actions.

¹⁷ They do not know how to live in peace.” (Isaiah [59:7,8](#))

¹⁸ “They don’t have any respect for God.” (Psalm [36:1](#))

¹⁹ What the law says, it says to those who are ruled by the law. Its purpose is to shut every mouth and make the whole world accountable to God. ²⁰ So no one will be considered right with God by obeying the law. Instead, the law makes us more aware of our sin.

Becoming Right With God by Faith

²¹ But now God has shown us his saving power without the help of the law. But the Law and the Prophets tell us about this. ²² We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. This happens to all who believe. It is no different for the Jews than for the Gentiles. ²³ Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God’s glory. ²⁴ The free gift of God’s grace makes us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free. ²⁵ God gave Christ as a sacrifice to pay for sins through the spilling of his blood. So God forgives the sins of those who have faith. God did all this to prove that he does what is right. He is a God of mercy. So he did not punish for their sins the people who lived before Jesus lived. ²⁶ God did all this to prove in our own time that he does what is right. He also makes right with himself those who believe in Jesus.

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON – Fresh Water



Need A jug of water

A container to empty liquid into

Juice sachet

Spoon for mixing

Bottle of water

Show everyone the jug of water and ask for a volunteer to pour in the juice sachet and mix it up so it is now a jug of juice. Now ask them to separate it back out so it is just water in the jug again. They can't!

The juice sachet is like the sin in our hearts and lives. If you were to knock this jug over, what comes out? It's juice. What is in us, is what comes out of us when we are faced with difficult times.

We can dilute it with good things (add some water into the jug), but it is still juice – just not as strong. On our own, we can try to become good people, but it's just like weak juice. It is always tainted by the sin in our hearts or the juice in the jug.

Only someone OUTSIDE the jug can remove the sin (tip out the juice) and make us new by filling us with His Spirit (Pour in the rest of the water). Only God can forgive our sin and make us new again; it is not something we can do on our own.

HOLY SPIRIT TIME

Need Paper/pen for everyone

Cross

Basket (optional)

If we want to remove the sin, we need to hand it over to God, confess it, and ask for forgiveness. Only God can get rid of it. Rather than holding on to it ourselves we should be running to God to give it to Him!

Hand out paper and pens to everyone and ask them to write down things from their lives they want to hand over to God. This could be a sin such as lying, being mean to someone etc. or something they are really struggling with such as being worried about something or finding it hard to make friends etc. This is private and they do not have to share this with anyone as it's just between them and God.

Play some worship music while they are writing, and once everyone has written something they can fold it or screw it up and attach it to the cross or place it in a basket at the bottom of the cross.

Then find a place on their own to quietly thank God for taking this from them.

Read Romans 3:24 out loud and then pray over all of the kids, thanking God for what He has done to put things right and for making us new again so we can have a relationship with Him.

Romans 3:24 NIV says,

"The free gift of God's grace makes us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free."

CRAFT – Complete the Puzzle

Need Pre-printed template

Scissors

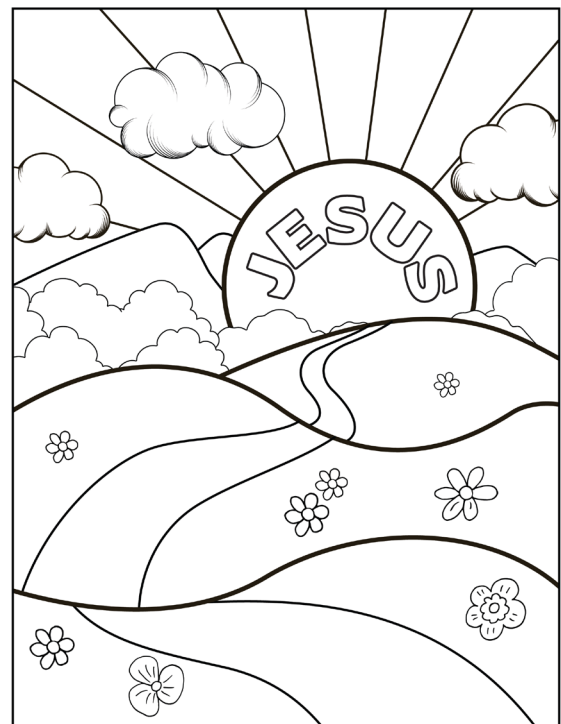
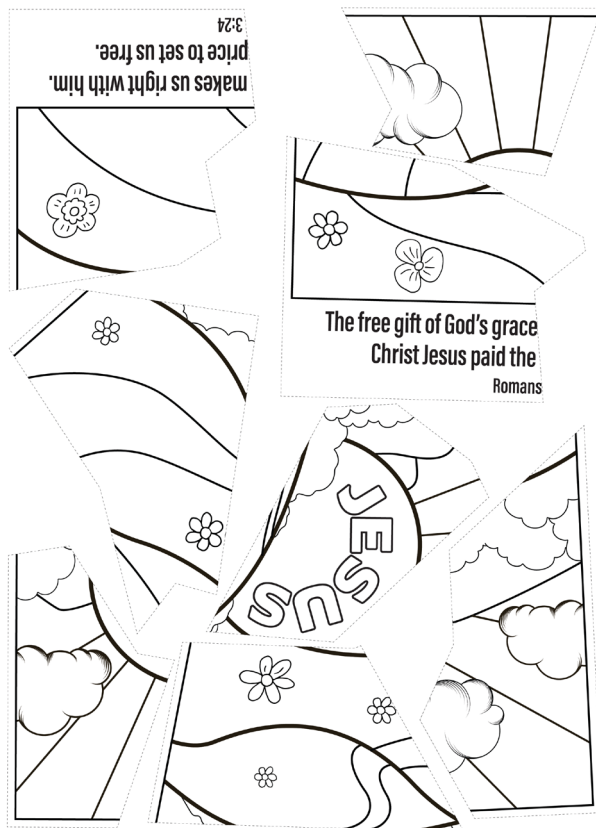
Glue

Coloured paper (backing sheet)

Coloured pens/pencils/crayons etc

We can try to make a beautiful life on our own and it can be pretty good. But it is not really complete without God, and the way to get to God is through Jesus. We need Jesus to complete the picture!

Cut out the different parts of the puzzle and glue them together in the right order onto the coloured backing sheet. The middle piece is Jesus to illustrate that if we have Him at the centre of our lives, it completes the beautiful masterpiece!



The free gift of God's grace makes us right with him.
Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free.
Romans 3:24

God Says

(Just like Simon Says) Choose one person to be up front. They give an instruction for everyone else to follow by saying, “God says...”, then the instruction. Everyone has to follow them.

If they just give an instruction without saying, “God says” first, then no one should follow that. If anyone does, they are out. See how many rounds people can do without getting out, and change the person leading regularly.

This is a great reminder that if we just do everything we think we should do, it doesn’t necessarily work out for us. But if we do what God tells us to do, it leads to the best prize of all... Jesus!

Stuck in the Mud

One person is chosen to be in. They have to run around and tag as many people as they can. When someone is tagged, they have to freeze with their arms and legs apart as they are ‘stuck in the mud’.

The only way to be freed is for someone who hasn’t been tagged to crawl through their legs; then they can both run free.

Keep the game going as long as you like.

Just like this game, we also need someone to come and help us, that person is Jesus! When we accept His help, we can also be free!

MEMORY VERSE – Put Together

Need Memory verse cut up into smaller portions (one word per child or for smaller groups, one chunk of the memory verse for each child).

Give each kid a word or part of the memory verse and get them to put themselves together in a line so the memory verse makes sense. Only by looking at what has come before can we help decide what needs to come next. In the same way, only by looking at God who came before us, can we make the right decisions of where to go next.

Try it again but they have to do it without speaking!

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.

Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.

Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

1 Peter 3:15 NIV

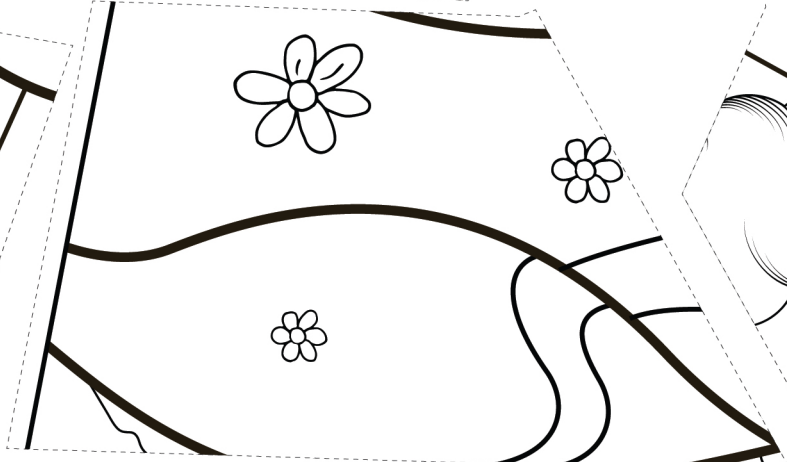
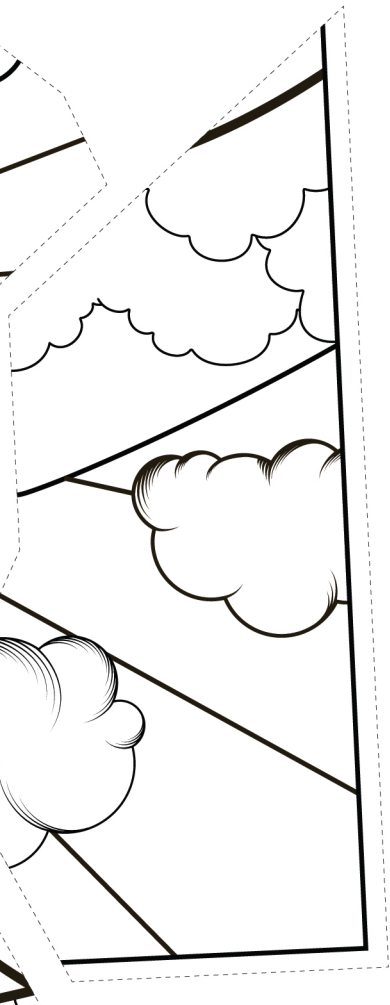
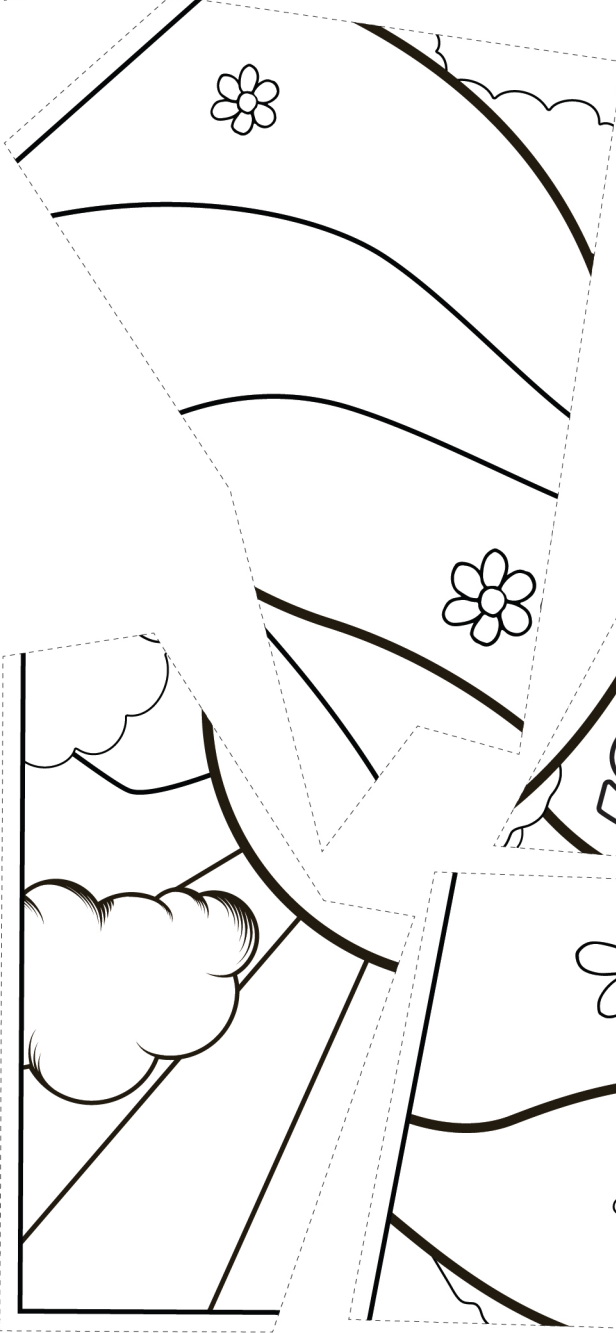
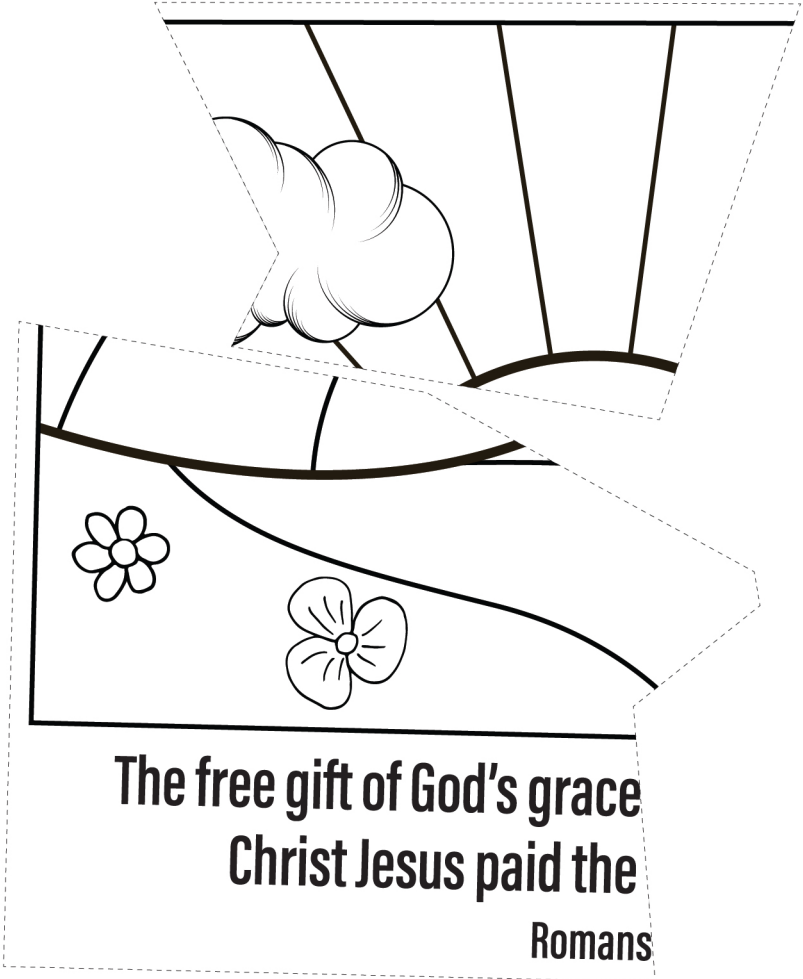
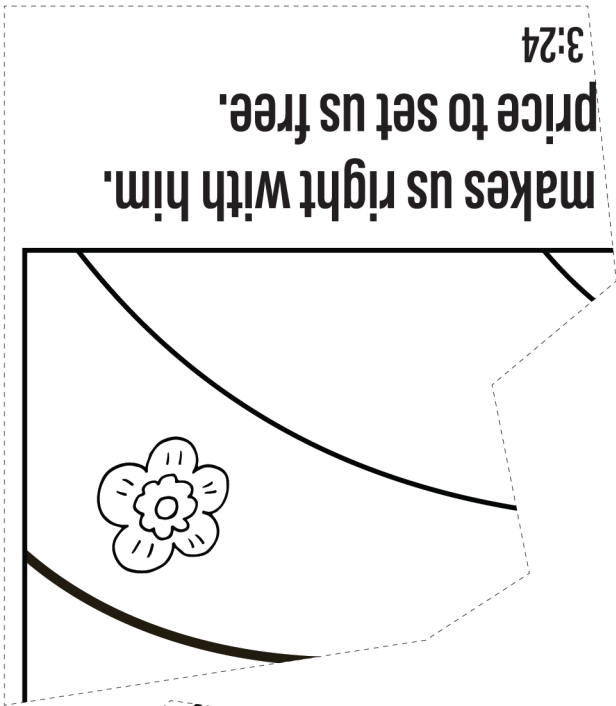
UNDER 5s – Jesus and the Children



WATCH: Jesus and the Children by saddleback Kids (1:17)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPUMDVBO7dY>

Did you know that Jesus loves children like all of you. He thought children were special. You are just as important to him as any adult. He wants you to know that you can talk to him about your thoughts and feelings. Talk to Him about what makes you feel scared or happy or angry or excited. He is always ready to listen to you!





WEEK EIGHT

Why is there pain/hurt in the world?



Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Preparation: Content in booklet / video #6 and #7 is relevant to this lesson. WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Week Eight – Why is there pain/hurt in the world?

<p>INTRO</p>	<p>We all know that life is so much better when we have Jesus living in our hearts, as compared to doing life alone. We can feel joy and love and peace, and look for the good in everyone and every situation. Sounds like the perfect life right?</p> <p>Let me ask you a questions: Has anyone here every injured themselves before? Did it hurt?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes! Has anyone here ever been sick before? Did it make you feel good? No! <p>If life is so much better with Jesus in it (which it is!) and if God really is good (which He is!) then why are we still getting hurt or sick, and why are bad things happening in the world?</p>
<p>LESSON</p>	<p>Free will vs robots: When humans were created by God, He gave us free will which means that we can choose whether we want to have a relationship with God or not. If He didn't give us free will, we'd just be like robots. God knew that love can only be real if it's a choice you make.</p> <p>Illustration – a cat: Who has ever tried to cuddle a cat when it is trying to get away? It's not easy, and as soon as you let go, the cat takes off! That's not real love. You are forcing the cat to act like it loves you! But if that cat comes up to you on its own, jumps into your lap for a cuddle and purrs his little heart out – you know that he loves you!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free will requires a choice. You have to choose between options to really choose love. <p>Illustration – no doors: If this room had no doors or windows and I say you can go anywhere you like... is that free will? No, because you're restricted to this room. Even if it was AMAZING in here, that doesn't mean you have chosen to stay. There has to be a way out. Then you can choose to go or to stay. That's a real choice.</p> <p>Illustration – Eden: In the Garden of Eden, it was the same for them. There was one tree in the entire garden that they were told to stay away from. Only one tree! They could choose to stay in this beautiful garden that had everything they would ever need, or they could choose to disobey God and eat from a tree that He had warned them not to eat from or bad things would happen. He could have taken the tree away, but that would have taken away their choice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is love and love can only be given freely (not forced). <p>But freedom means that there is both a choice and a responsibility.</p> <p>Adam and Eve made the choice to eat from the tree, and that made them responsible for choosing to give authority to the devil and not God. That meant that sin entered our world and broke it. And now today, all these years later, we still live in that broken world.</p> <p>A broken world means that bad things happen because the world is broken.</p> <p>God didn't give someone cancer, cause that earthquake, or a pandemic! These things happened because our world is broken.</p> <p>We also still have free will.</p> <p>Some people use their free will to make bad choices that can be selfish or hurt other people. Should God take away their free will? That goes against God's character of loving us and giving us the ability to make a choice.</p>

	<p>What if someone makes a bad decision that could hurt someone? Should God step in and stop them?</p> <p>If He did that, He would be taking away their choice. People make their own choices and then have to face the consequences of those choices. If I choose to steal an ice cream from one of you, should God step in and stop me? Or is it better if I have to face those consequences which could mean losing a friend, or being told off, or whatever the consequence may be!</p> <p>But then you have to ask – if God doesn't stop injustice here on earth, where is his justice?</p> <p>The great thing about the Christian faith is that there is an eternity beyond this life. While God doesn't overrule free will in this life – He can put every wrong right in the next life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use the same illustration, you may have lost your ice cream, but He can give you a million ice creams in heaven! • Any suffering here is temporary. The reward for living as God calls us to is eternal. <p>So for now God doesn't take away our choice, and bad things still happen.</p> <p>We can choose to follow Him or not. But if we do, He promises to use even our bad experiences to strengthen us and He can reward us in eternity for choosing to trust and obey Him too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God can help us when we face pain and suffering. • He can give us strength. • He can grow us (and teach us) through our experiences - good and bad. • And he can put everything that is left unfair in this life right in the next life, and many times over. <p>And why is this an evidence to the truth of the Christian faith?</p> <p>The Christian view of life makes sense of the reality of our experience of living as conscious beings with free will and rationality who experience suffering, who believe evil, right and wrong exist – and that a thing called 'justice' should exist (because we can and do make <i>real</i> moral choices with our free will). The way this faith makes unique sense of the reality of our lived experience is yet another evidence it is true. [The illustration of the sports car at the end of booklet 7 is relevant here].</p>
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BIBLE	The Bible talks about how the world is broken, like it is groaning, but we have the Holy Spirit to help us. Even when we're upset or worried and don't know what to pray, He will help us!
	READ Romans 8:22-39 (NirV)
	Nothing can ever separate us from God's love – no pain or suffering, no consequence of bad choices. Nothing!

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON	<p>Small paper cup full of water is doing what it is supposed to do. If we poke a bunch of holes in it, it no longer holds water the way it's designed to. It's not functioning how it's supposed to. We can try to fix it on our own (wrap with tape to make mostly water-tight) but it hasn't really fixed the problem. HOWEVER, we know that one day Jesus will come back and make everything new (replace with new cup). But for now, we have to remember that the world is broken and is not functioning how it's supposed to so we need Jesus to help us walk through this.</p>
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HOLY SPIRIT	Pray for current news stories or for those we know who are hurt/suffering.
CRAFT	Mosaic Heart
GAME	Protect Me! Upside Downside Cups
MEMORY VERSE	Do You Remember?
UNDER 5s	Jesus Saves Us From Sin

BIBLE

Romans 8:22-39 Nlrv

²² We know that all that God created has been groaning. It is in pain as if it were giving birth to a child. The created world continues to groan even now. ²³ And that's not all. We have the Holy Spirit as the promise of future blessing. But we also groan inside ourselves. We do this as we look forward to the time when God adopts us as full members of his family. Then he will give us everything he has for us. He will raise our bodies and give glory to them. ²⁴ That's the hope we had when we were saved. But hope that can be seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ We hope for what we don't have yet. So we are patient as we wait for it.

²⁶ In the same way, the Holy Spirit helps us when we are weak. We don't know what we should pray for. But the Spirit himself prays for us. He prays through groans too deep for words. ²⁷ God, who looks into our hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit. And the Spirit prays for God's people just as God wants him to pray.

²⁸ We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose. ²⁹ God planned that those he had chosen would become like his Son. In that way, Christ will be the first and most honoured among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those God has planned for, he has also appointed to be saved. Those he has appointed, he has made right with himself. To those he has made right with himself, he has given his glory.

We Are More Than Winners

³¹ What should we say then? Since God is on our side, who can be against us? ³² God did not spare his own Son. He gave him up for us all. Then won't he also freely give us everything else? ³³ Who can bring any charge against God's chosen ones? God makes us right with himself. ³⁴ Then who can sentence us to death? No one. Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God and is also praying for us. He died. More than that, he was raised to life. ³⁵ Who can separate us from Christ's love? Can trouble or hard times or harm or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? ³⁶ It is written,
"Because of you, we face death all day long.

We are considered as sheep to be killed." ([Psalm 44:22](#))

³⁷ No! In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us. ³⁸ I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can separate us. ³⁹ Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can separate us. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love. That's because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON



Need Paper/polystyrene cups
Container to catch water
Water
Sharp pencil or sharpened stick to poke holes
Tape

Hold up a paper/polystyrene cup over a larger container and fill it with water. Nothing spills! The cup is doing what it's supposed to do.

Now take the sharp pencil or stick and poke some holes in the cup (something bigger than a needle so the water loss is more noticeable). Now it no longer holds water the way it is designed to – it's not functioning how it's supposed to!

We can try to fix it on our own – wrap the tape around the holes in the cup and add more water. It might help, but it hasn't really fixed the problem, has it?

As Christians, we know that one day Jesus will return and make everything new again (replace the cup with a new one and add water).

Until that day, we have to remember that the world is broken, and the pain and suffering caused either by our broken world or by the choices of people, is something we have to deal with.

We need Jesus to help us walk through the hard times, to be with us and comfort us, and to help us patch the holes in our own hearts.

HOLY SPIRIT TIME

Ask the kids if they know of some things that are happening in our world, causing pain and suffering. Write them down. They could be current news stories, or even people we know that are hurt/suffering.

Break up into smaller groups to pray for these things. (Group similar ones together e.g. sick family members).

Then come together into one big group. Standing in a circle with our hands on our neighbour's shoulders, pray together as a group, thanking God that He is with us in our suffering. Pray that He would help us to make good choices, and to show love to others who are hurting so they would feel God's love flowing through us.

CRAFT – Mosaic Heart

Need Pre-printed template
Coloured paper cut into small pieces
Glue

Using the glue, stick coloured paper on to your heart template in any pattern you like. Make it bright and colourful!



MEMORY VERSE



Need Small prizes such as lollipops or small fidgets

We are faced with a lot of choices in life, and one really good choice to make is reading and learning our Bible so that when we go through hard times, we can remember the things God has said.

Ask if anyone has learnt the whole memory verse and wants to recite it. If they do, they get a prize! Get them to partner with one or two others and help them to learn it too. If anyone thinks they have it and wants to recite it to you, if they are right, they get a prize too!

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.
Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.
Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

1 Peter 3:15 NIV

GAMES

Protect Me!

Need A piece of material like a scarf

In smaller groups, have everyone stand in a circle and hold hands. One person will step out of the circle to be 'it'. Someone on the other side of the circle will tuck a piece of material into the back of their waistband so it hangs behind them.

The person who is 'it' has to run around the circle and grab the piece of material from the person who has it, BUT the circle of kids can move around to keep the person who is 'it' from getting to the piece of material. The circle has to protect the kid who has the material stuck in their waistband as long as they possibly can. The game ends when the person who is 'it' finally grabs it.

The person who is 'it' is doing whatever they can to win, and their choices affect how the circle of kids will react. We can't tell them what choice to make. We can only deal with the outcome. This is just like how we can often only deal with the outcome of other people's choices. It's important we work together to help each other face the consequences of others' choices.

Upside Downside Cups

Need A lot of cups!

Split everyone up into two teams and have them stand on either side of the room. One side is 'Up' and the other side is 'Down'.

Throw all the cups into the middle of the floor between them.

When you say go, each team runs into the middle and moves the cups so they are facing up or facing down, depending on which team they're from.

Give them a certain amount of time and then call stop. Count the number of cups that are face up vs how many are face down to determine a winning team.

This reminds us that even if we want a certain outcome, other people might want a different outcome. They are allowed to choose just as we are, that's free will!

UNDER 5s – Jesus Saves Us From Sin

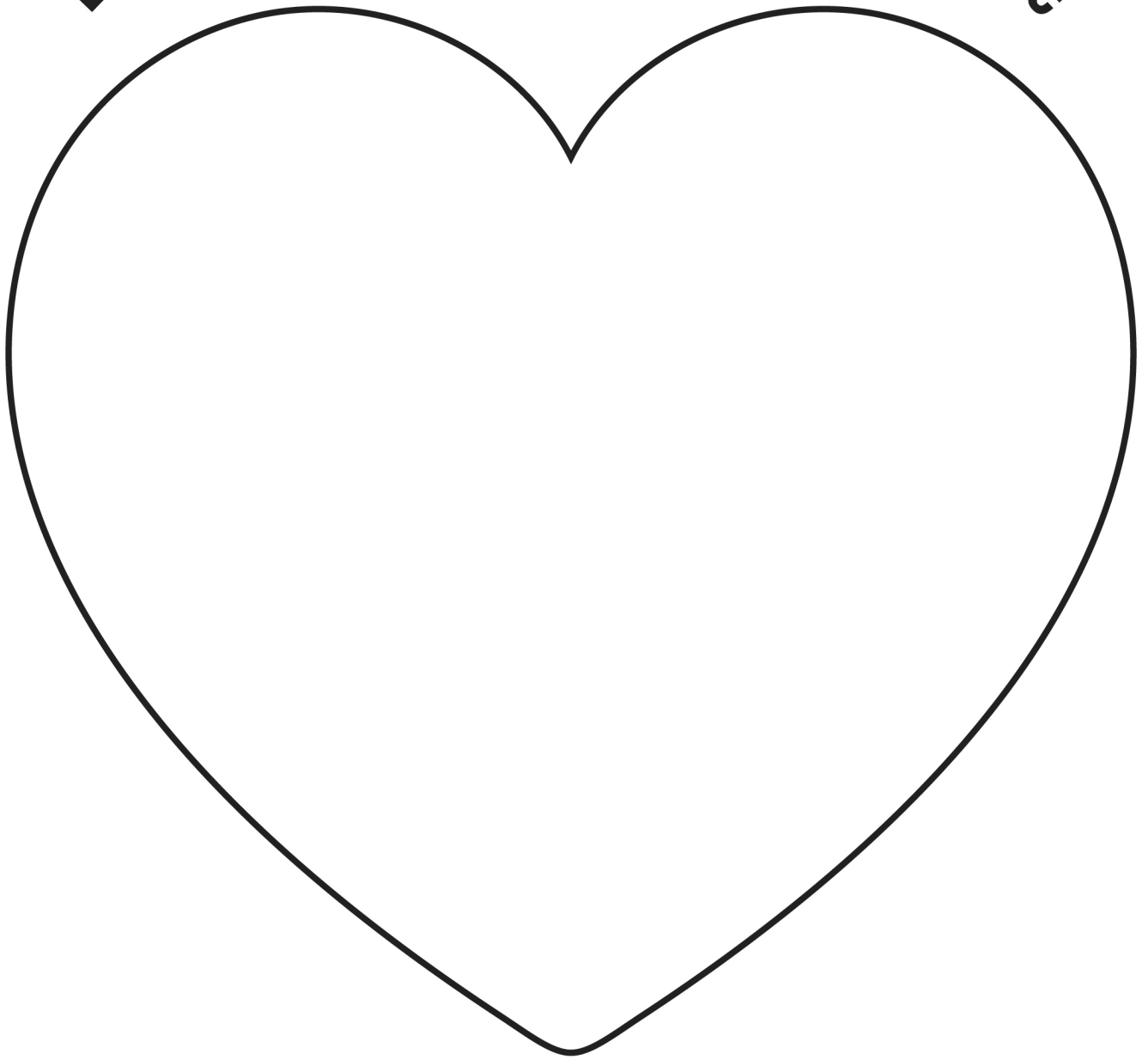
Who knows what we will be celebrating soon? Did you know next weekend we are celebrating Easter? What do we do at Easter? Let's watch a video about why we celebrate Easter.

WATCH: The Story of Easter Jesus' Sacrifice to save us from our sins (5:21)

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

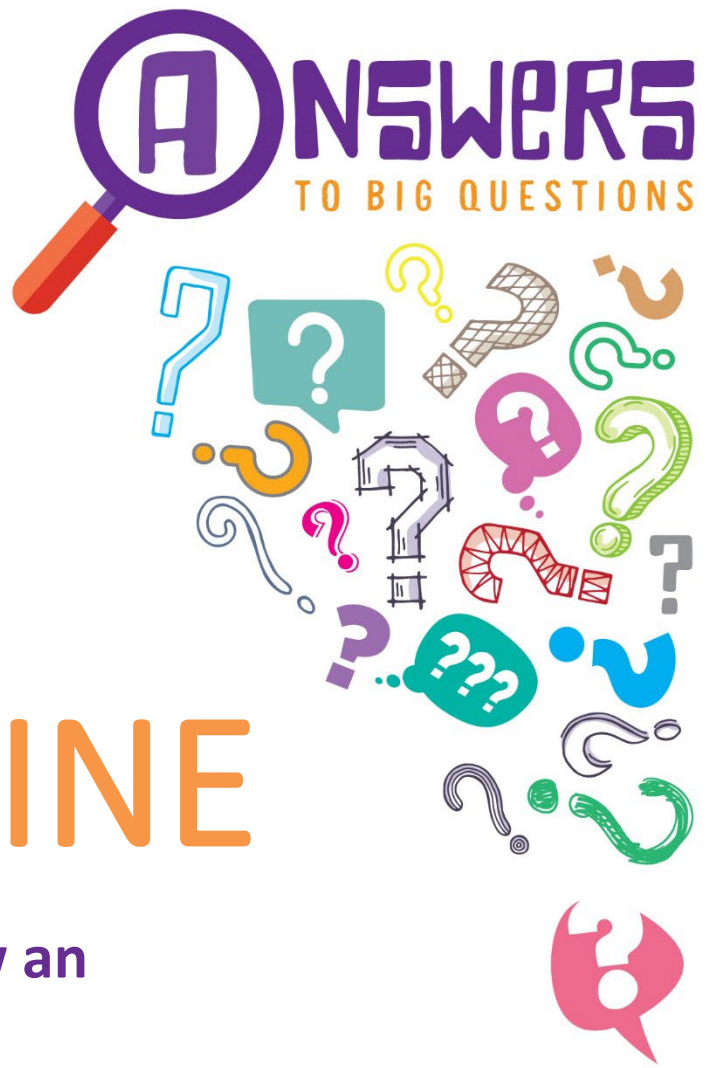
Jesus is the Saviour of the world because He died on the cross and rose again to save the world from sin.

Even broken pieces create a masterpiece



**We know that in all things God works
for the good of those who love him.**

Romans 8:28



WEEK NINE

How do we get to know an
unseeable God?

Week	Topic
1	Why do we need to defend our faith?
2	Were we created?
3	Is the Bible true?
4	Can we trust the Bible's prophecies?
5	Did Jesus really come?
6	Is Jesus the only way?
7	Can we fix our own problems?
8	Why is there pain/hurt in the world?
9	How do we get to know an unseeable God?

Preparation: Read booklet #7 / View video #7. WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Week Nine – How do we get to know an unseeable God?

INTRO

Intro: Despite the evidence we still cannot physically see God

We have heard a lot evidences for God existing, for why we trust the Bible's history, and for why we all need Jesus in our lives. The more we learn about God, the more amazing we see He is.

But there something that can still be hard for some people. While it is logical that God is there – we still can't see Him with our eyes. How can we get to know and get close to a God we cannot see with our eyes?

LESSON

God was seen in Jesus – but cannot be physically seen currently

God did come to Earth as Jesus over 2000 years ago, but when He was raised to life again, He went to heaven to prepare a place for us. We know that one day He will return for us, but in the meantime, we don't have the physical Jesus here that we can see and touch.

If we can't see God in person, how else might we see Him?

We can see the effects of Him!

- **We can see evidence of God all around us in creation:** Everything was made by God, and when we spend time in creation it is like being in His presence. When you watch the wind blowing through the trees, it is like seeing the breath of God. When we feel the sun warm our faces, it is like feeling His joy. When we hear thunder and lightning, it is like seeing His power.
- (As evidence...) When we see the complexity of life, the human cell and the universe – design needs a designer, information an author and beauty an artist. We can see God everywhere in creation.

2. We can also get to know His nature and instructions through His Word: We know that the Bible is not only a reliable record of history. It was also inspired by the Holy Spirit. God Himself directed the writing of it. The fulfilled predictions we talked about prove God's hand is in this book.

- The Bible reveals so much about who God is, and when we spend time reading it, He can reveal things to us through those words. It's like hearing from God Himself!

3. Finally, we can spend time in His presence to get to know His heart: When we are still with God, we might sense His presence in our hearts. When we pray, we might begin to see a pattern of miraculously answered prayers. When we are feeling scared or upset and pray to him, we might even feel a peace inside us that is amazing. As we journey through life with God things can start to make sense – and our experiences become another evidence.

The more time we spend with someone, the more we get to know them, and the closer we are: The same goes for God. The more time we spend with God, the more we understand who He is and what He wants – even though we cannot physically see him. This is how we get to know Him... with time.

- Time in His creation,
- Time in His Word the Bible,
- Time in His presence, as we pray and trust him through our experiences.

The Bible says: 'Taste and see that the Lord is good'. (Psalm 34:8).

And this has been my experience too... (Share a brief story from your own experience of God that affirmed the truth of what the Bible says to you).

BIBLE	The Bible sums it up perfectly, that in all things, we need to have faith that we are seeing God, without seeing His face.
	READ Hebrews 11:1-3 NIV
	By faith, we are sure that we can know God, and know Him well. That our belief is in something concrete and true, even without seeing the face of God.

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON	Ask everyone to find a place to sit on the floor and space themselves out. Place a ball or other object in the middle of the room. Then blindfold one person and tell them you are going to lead them to the object by giving them instructions to follow. Once they are blindfolded, ask everyone to move to a new position so the person who is blindfolded doesn't know where people are and can't move based on what they saw beforehand. Lead them to the object using verbal instructions only. If we build a relationship with someone, we know we can trust them even when we are unsure if things will work out. It is because we know them, that we know we can trust what they say.
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HOLY SPIRIT	<p>Create a space for kids to spend time in God's presence (maybe sitting briefly by themselves with some worship music playing) reflecting on experiences they have had that showed them God was real and with them (aka, testimony).</p> <p>Ask them to consider what they think God might want to say to them – based on what they know about God from creation and the Bible.</p>
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CRAFT	Pinwheels
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GAME	Blindfolded Obstacle Course Best Friends
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MEMORY VERSE	Recital
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UNDER 5s	Jesus Appears to His Followers
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Hebrews 11:1-3 NlrV

¹Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see. ²That is what the people of long ago were praised for.

³We have faith. So we understand that everything was made when God commanded it. That's why we believe that what we see was not made out of what could be seen.

ACTIVITY / OBJECT LESSON

Need Blindfold

Object – Can be a ball or a toy or anything that can be easily picked up

Ask everyone to find a space around the room, making sure they are all spaced out. Then place an object in the middle of the room.

Ask for a volunteer to come up and blindfold them. Make sure they can't see. Their job is to pick up the object in the middle of the room. Now ask everyone to move and find a new space. The blindfolded person can't rely on what they saw before, because now everything has changed!

Ask for another volunteer to come up and give the blindfolded person instructions to get to the object, while avoiding the others spaced around the room. E.g. Take two steps forward, or two steps to the left or right.

When they arrive at the object, have them bend down to pick it up. Once they have it, their blindfold can come off.

Repeat as many times as you like with different volunteers.

Sometimes we think we know what will happen in life; sometimes we have no idea; and sometimes, everything changes on us! If we build a relationship with someone, we know we can trust them even when we are unsure how things will work out. It is because we know them, that we know we can trust what they say.

As we grow our relationship with God, the more we learn about Him and the more time we spend with Him and in His word, we can follow His guidance and trust that He will help show us the way.

HOLY SPIRIT TIME - Presence



Create a space for kids to spend time in God's presence and maybe ask Him for some guidance or a special word. Ask them to find a space on their own and play some worship music in the background or take them outside and get them to lie on the grass.

Ask them to consider what they think God might want to say to them – based on what they know about God from creation and the Bible.

Ask if anyone wants to share any of their thoughts and reflections from this time they've spent with God.

CRAFT - Pinwheels

Another example people use is the wind. We can't see the wind, but we can see what it does and we can feel it. We can see the effects of the wind, just like we can see the effects of God in our lives. You can measure the wind, even though you can't see it. We can also measure the impact of God's presence in our lives as God helps us to change and become more like Jesus.

Let's make a pinwheel that can show us the effect of wind, and let it remind us of God's effect on us.

Need Pre-printed template

Scissors

Hole punch

Paper fasteners

Straws

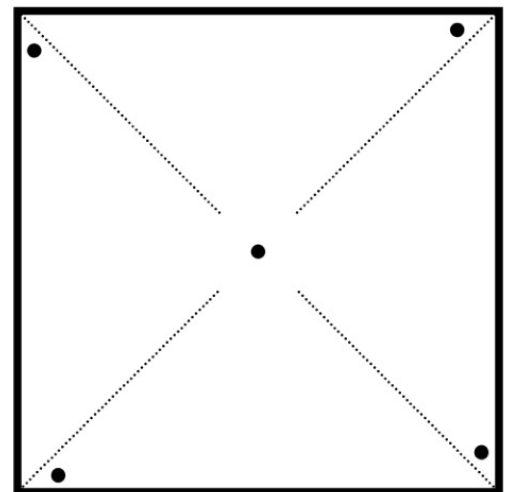
Colouring pens/pencils/crayons etc.

Cut out the square template and colour it in (both sides!) and then use the scissors to cut along each dotted line (but not to the centre).

Punch a hole in the black dots.

Fold the corners with the dots to the centre and push a paper fastener through them.

Punch a hole through the top of the straw and push the paper fastener through and secure loosely, so that the pinwheel can spin.



Blindfolded Obstacle Course

Need Blindfolds

Various objects to place around the room

Split the kids up into teams and elect one team leader for each team. Their job is to guide everyone through the obstacle course.

Line each team up at one end then place various objects all throughout the room.

One at a time, a person from each team will be blindfolded and the team leader will guide them through the obstacles using only their voice. Once they reach the other end, the team leader runs back with the blindfold to blindfold the next person and go again. They keep going until their whole team has made it across the room.

Keep moving objects around in the room so people can't plot their course before they're blindfolded.

We don't have to see the team leader to know they are there guiding us, just like how we don't have to see God to know He is there for us too!

Best Friends

Need Paper/pen for each pair

Ask for some volunteers to come up the front with a friend who they think they know really well.

One person out of each pair will be the guesser, and their job is to guess the answers about the second person.

Ask various questions and have the second person write down their answers on a piece of paper. Then ask the guessers to guess the answer. If they are right, they stay in for the next round. If not, they are out.

Keep going to see who knows their friend the best!

The closer we are to someone, the more we know them. If we are close to God – by spending time with Him and in His Word – we can know Him really well.

Questions:

Favourite colour / movie / food / thing to eat for breakfast / What school do they go to / What is their bedtime / Do they prefer strawberry or chocolate milk etc?

MEMORY VERSE – Recital



Recite the memory verse together, then recite it together very fast, then very slow. Ask for any volunteers who want to recite it on their own. Try doing it very quietly and then very loud. Recite it a LOT of times to make sure it has stuck!

But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord.

Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have.

Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

1 Peter 3:15 NIV

UNDER 5s – Jesus Appears to His Followers

Read from page 138 from the book 'Pray & Play Bible'

Discuss how even though we can't see Jesus, we can feel his presence just like Jesus' friends could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

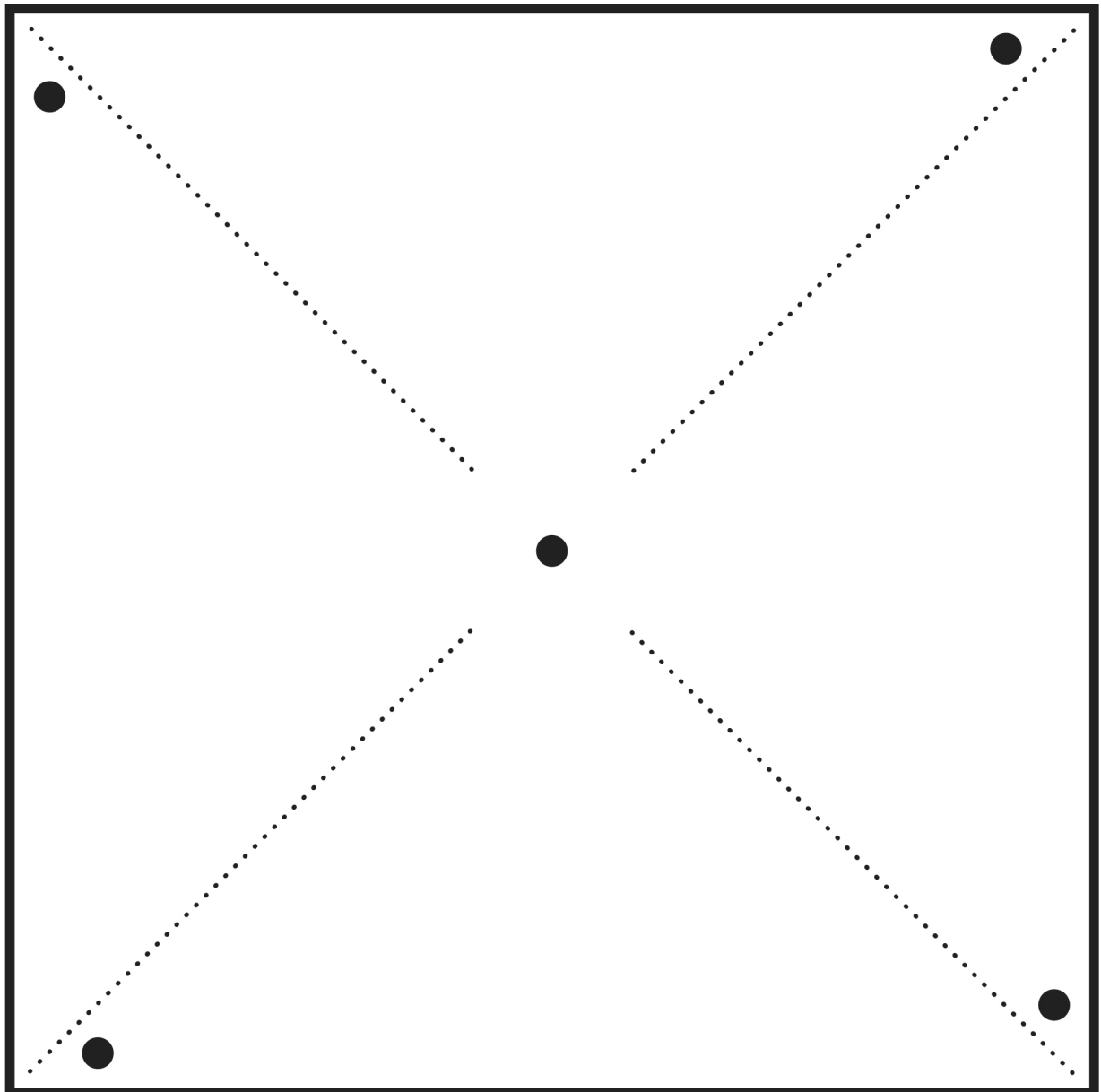
Or alternatively **WATCH:** God Sends the Holy Spirit by Saddleback Kids (3:29)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMQKy1Mx49M>

Pinwheel

We can't see the wind, but we can see what it does and we can feel it. We can see the effects of the wind, just like we can see the effects of God in our lives. You can measure the wind, even though you can't see it, but we can also measure the impact of God's presence in our lives. Let's make a pinwheel that can show us the effect of wind, and let it remind us of God's effect on us.

1. Cut out the square template and colour it in (both sides!)
2. Use the scissors to cut along each dotted line (but not to the centre).
3. Punch a hole in the black dots
4. Fold the corners with the dots to the centre and push a paper fastener through them.
5. Punch a hole through the top of the straw and push the paper fastener through and secure loosely, so that the pinwheel can spin.



GRAPHICS

TITLE



MEMORY VERSE



But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

1 Peter 3:15 NlrV



But make sure that in your hearts you honour Christ as Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

1 Peter 3:15 NlrV



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