

The Story of the Bible

Part 1

This is a resource with 12 sessions to provide a background and understanding to the overarching story through the Bible to help young people to understand and contextualise scripture.

- Session 1 - Introduction
- Session 2 - Law and DisOrder?
- Session 3 - An Israelite History
- Session 4 - Poetic License
- Session 5 - Prophets: major key?
- Session 6 - Prophets: minor key?
- Session 7 - Life and Times of Jesus
- Session 8 - A Church History
- Session 9 - Dear Church, from Paul
- Session 10 - Dear you, from Paul
- Session 11 - Dear all, from me
- Session 12 - All Together Now

The resource will provide a range of optional activities and teaching tools for each session. Please tailor this to suit your group and the young people attending. Many of the ideas will be repeated or continued through the 12 week sessions including craft, scripture memorisation and discussion questions.


If you would like any further resources developed or have any questions about this resource, please contact Christina on christinabaillie@connordiocese.org.

The Story of The Bible

Session 1: Introduction

The Purpose of the Session: is to explain the theme of the sessions to young people and begin group tasks.

Games



Tic Tac Toe Relay - 4+ players - shows it can be difficult to make decisions when we need time to take in the whole picture, otherwise we can easily make a mistake. Get 9 hoops or use masking tape to make a grid for 3 squares by 3 squares, like you would use for Tic Tac Toe. You need 6 items, 3 of the same colour and another 3 of a different colour. You could use bean bags or tshirts. Divide your group into 2 teams and give the first three players in the teams the items, each team has the same colour for each player. The first player runs the length of the room and places their items in a square. They tag the second person who runs and places their second item. Then the third person goes. The aim is to get three in a row, but to also stop your competing team from getting three in a row too! Once the three items are down, the following team members can move one of their items to try make three in a row. This continues until one team gets three in a row!

Cupsid Down - 6+ players - you need to focus on each cup at a time to get the big picture win. What do you need: a load of plastic cups, preferably big & sturdy. Divide your young people into two teams. Give each team half of the cups you have. Allow them to strategically place them around the room, they can spread them or place them in clumps. One group is aiming to have all their cups the correct way up, the other team is aiming to have all the cups turned down. Let them have a minute to set up the game and then commence! After a set amount of time, whoever has the most their way is the winner.

The Story of The Bible

Session 1: Introduction

Craft Project:

An idea to develop one craft over the 12 sessions which would culminate in one item, either for each young person to take away or added to one piece which would stay in your youth room or parish for display. It could be adding part of the story of God's people or depicting a symbol of this aspect of the Bible as part of a larger picture.

Suggestions for this include:

- A Quilt for each young person: this could involve creating something by developing a square for each of your sessions and with extra time to get caught up! Young people could choose different symbols or pictures to express the different styles in the Bible or their favourite things they have learnt.
- A large wooden storybook: why not have someone come and help them design one, take part in carving aspects of it and then gift it to the church to be held as a reminder of their project.
- A Group Storybook: each week why not record a few favourite things the young people have learnt and get them to paint some pictures. Keep all of this and at the end get them printed into A4 Booklets for each of your young people to display what they have learnt.
- Stained Glass collage: similar to the quilt choosing a symbol and adding each week with each young people getting a Mason Jar each and using stained glass paints to create a memory of all they have learnt. You could put a candle inside once it is completed!
- Jigsaw of the pieces of God's story coming together: you could get blank jigsaws for your young people & have them colour in a segment about each aspect of the Bible which adds towards a bigger picture when the jigsaw is made.
- Maps showing God's people moving throughout the world: you might have some geographers amongst your group so why not print out maps and have them collage maps together, showing points of interest. This is a great way to make a big wall canvas for your youth room as well as showing the places in the Bible match up to places in our world now.

The Story of The Bible

Session 1: Introduction

Memorising Scripture:

It is really important to help young people continue to memorise and learn scripture, but your young people might ask why? I would suggest three simple answers to encourage this practice with your young people, that it will help them win over sin as they have biblical truth stored in their memory, that it will help them become more like Christ as they consider his promises and finally it will help them share the gospel as they learn the basics of the faith. Therefore I will be including a few suggestions for a verse or two to learn each week as a group. For Session 1, the suggested scripture is John 1v1-2.



I have included some tools or resources to help memorising scripture on your own or together as a group here. Personally my favourite is writing the first letter of each word onto my hand so that it acts as a reminder to the words of the verse. For example John 3v16 would become FGSLTW THGHOS TWBIH SNPBHEL. I love this approach because it helps me in those little moments throughout the day to remind myself of a Bible verse and commit it to memory.

Memory Cards: using paper flash cards to write down the verses and have ones with less details on them to help you as you learn. The website memorizenow.com is a helpful online version of this tool.

Music: you could try doing this yourself and setting a verse to a song in the charts! Alternatively there is a great website called theversesproject.com which has Bible verses set to music composed specifically.

In her book 'This Changes Everything' by Jaquelle Crowe she offers some top tips as a fellow teenager to bible memorisation.

'Jaquelle Crowe's Top Tips'
Memorise with someone else
Be held accountable
Choose passages that have special meaning to you
Start small
Challenge yourself more and more
Set realistic but specific goals
Get creative

The Story of The Bible

Session 1: Introduction

Game

My Chair - 8+ players - if you have a few new people attending your group, this is a great one to help learn names. Make a circle of chairs with enough chairs for every player. Everyone gets a chair and sits in a circle except for one person who stands in the middle of circle. The aim for the person in the middle is to find a seat to sit down. When there is a spare chair, the person with the empty chair on their right has to, touch the chair & say 'My Chair!' as they move and sit on the chair. This becomes 'their' chair and stops the person in the middle sitting down. The second person does the same, touching the chair and saying 'My Chair!' However when it gets to the third person's turn in a row, they have to touch the chair and name someone else in the group eg, 'Christina's Chair!' This becomes Christina's chair, so the person in the middle cannot sit in it once this has been shouted, but Christina must move to sit in the chair. It means Christina's previous chair is free and the process of three must start again. If anyone sitting makes a mistake, then they move into the middle.

Players make a mistake if they:

- Can't think of a name before the person in the middle takes a seat
- Saying 'My Chair' when they should say someone's chair
- Having an empty chair on their right and not realizing to start again before the middle person sits down
- Saying their own name when they are the third person
- Saying the name of the person in the middle when they are the third person

Once the group gets used to the rules, it is a great quick game!



The Story of The Bible

Session 1: Introduction

Teaching Points



- We are so good at telling stories at Church and in our faith as Christians. We tell stories to kids to help them learn about God's people. We tell stories about our own life and our experience of God. We tell stories of other followers of God across the world to partner with those in different situations from us but united by our faith.

- We see the value of reading the Bible - it is the inspired, authoritative, Word of God. But do we see the value in reading the Bible as part of one larger story? As our story? As part of God's people being redeemed by God's son? Do we get caught up in the detail, and beauty of the pieces, but miss the big picture?

- In the next few weeks, we are going to learn about how the Bible is put together, what types of stories there are, what it all teaches us about God and his people. As well as not only what we should believe about faith but HOW we can understand our faith as fellow believers. This might sometimes look like an RE lesson, but it will always be so much more. We want each of you to learn how to understand the Bible, put it into context, to see it as part of a bigger story that allow us to love God in the fullness of his character. It helps us to claim faith in Jesus as our own, maybe moving past a belief of disconnected stories, to radical discipleship with the whole picture of an amazing Bible gifted to us by a glorious God.

Prayer



Father God, thank you for the Bible. You showed who you were by giving human people words to write down for us to read together. It shows us who you are, how you created us, loved us and provide for us each day. We are excited to find out more about your Word and through your Holy Spirit please help us understand. Bless our conversations and our questions as we learn together. In Jesus Name, Amen.

The Story of The Bible

Session 1: Introduction

Activity - 60 Drama



Get your young people into groups of at least 4. Ask them to come up with a drama no longer than 60 seconds. They need to summarise as much of the Bible as they can in this time. Once they are finished, get them to perform them to each other!

Activity - Seeing Jesus



For this activity you need a hula hoop, lots of wool in 11 different colours, strong string and a stick or bamboo cane. The purpose of this activity is to build up the idea that we can see pictures that point to Jesus, images of Him in other biblical people or connections in the rest of the Bible which show us Jesus. You can start it off in week one and it is meant to be continued in each session that you do.

To set this up, you want to get the string and tie so that the stick is held taut in the centre of the hula hoop. You will want to have the string tied at four points around the circle. In the first session why not explain the idea and you could even see if they have any suggestions about connections that they are aware of already.

Each week you need to pick a colour of wool. Ask the young people to think of a way that the section of the Bible which they have been considering shows them something about Jesus. Once they have something they can take a piece of the coloured wool, tying it to the edge of the hula hoop, circling the stick in the centre and returning to be tied to the edge of the hula hoop. This can be done repeatedly to build up a section of that colour.

As the sessions progress, you will show the build up of several sections of colours for each type of Biblical writing. At the last week you should have a full hula hoop with lots of different colours across it. You might want to pray together to thank God for what you have learnt about Jesus through the whole of the Bible.

The Story of The Bible

Session 1: Introduction

Videos:

1. 'What is the Bible?' by The Bible Project available on YouTube

This video provides a historical basis to the Bible and shows the division of books etc.

2. 'The story of the Bible' by The Bible Project available on YouTube

Showing the overarching story of good versus evil.

3. 'God wrote a book' by Desiring God available on YouTube

This is written with John Piper showing the importance of the Bible.

4. 'Literary Style in the Bible' by The Bible Project available on YouTube. Shows the diversity of literature in the Bible and how knowing this helps us understand it.



Work Sheet

On this page is the full text with bible references. On the following page is one which can be printed out for each of your young people to complete themselves or in small groups, using their own knowledge or looking up the Bible passages. They might come up with variations to the 'answers' on this page but it is more about the process than correct words.



The Bible is inspired (2 Timothy 3v16) and the Word of God (2 Peter 1v21). The Old Testament is just as much God's word to us as the New Testament and Jesus himself said that he came to fulfil the law and the prophets (Matthew 5v17). Our church comes from the history of the church outlined in the book of Acts, like them we eat together & pray together (Acts 2v42) share a common purpose (Acts 2v46) and give money to those who need it (Acts 2v45). Paul (Ephesians 1v1) wrote letters to churches like Ephesians but also to individuals like Timothy (1 Timothy 1v2), he did this to show how the life of Jesus Christ relates to the Old Testament and how to continue to live in faith.



The Story of The Bible

The Bible is _____ (2 Timothy 3v16) and the _____ (2 Peter 1v21). The Old Testament is just as much God's word to us as the New Testament and Jesus himself said that he came to _____ the _____ and the _____ (Matthew 5v17). Our church comes from the history of the church outlined in the book of Acts, like them we _____ & _____ together (Acts 2v42) share a _____ (Acts 2v46) and give _____ (Acts 2v45). _____ (Ephesians 1v1) wrote letters to churches like Ephesians but also to individuals like _____ (1 Timothy 1v2), he did this to show how the life of Jesus Christ relates to the Old Testament and how to continue to live in faith.

The Story of The Bible

Session 2: Law and Disorder

The purpose of this session: is to consider the books described as the 'law' books, their purpose, how we can read them and how it relates to our young people.

Kahoot

Kahoot is an online quiz resource which has existing quizzes or you can create your own. For this resource I have created a few accompanying quizzes to be used in sessions. To use kahoot, if you are leading the session, you will need your own account and it is free and quick to sign up. When you present the quiz, I would choose team mode and divide your young people into small groups. Each group needs a phone or tablet and will go to the web address directed and enter their Game PIN. They will enter their team name and use the phone/tablet as their key pad to play. You can then run through the questions and will give you updates for which team is ahead. The quiz for session 2 is available here: <https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/1011faa8-4a95-4964-bae5-be2dc1a1aa19>. Or you can search in Kahoot for the quiz entitled 'The Story of the Bible: Session 2'.



Memorising Scripture

Suggested passages: Matthew 5v17-18 or Matthew 22v36-40



Video

'The Law' by The Bible Project. This video is great and you could use it within a couple of sessions depending on your plan. It gives an overview of the Law books and their connection to the Prophets. As well as showing the law books through the perspective of Jesus' life.



Craft Project:

Once you have decided what to do, why not try to start this week? You could enlist some help from other members of the parish or encourage the young people to lead the delegation of the project.



The Story of The Bible

Session 2: Law and Disorder

Games

- Fluxx - 2+ players - it's a card game where you get to change the rules!
You can borrow this from the Diocesan Youth Office if you don't have a copy.
- Dodgeball/Volleyball/Any game you regularly play - 6+ players
- change the rules dramatically and see how successful it is!



Discussion Questions Bookmark

For each of the sessions, you can use the additional resource of these consistent discussion questions. I have created a bookmark which could be printed off for each young person or you could spend some time decorating your own! Be creative in how you use this time, you might want to have them spend time on their own writing answers to each of these questions into a journal each week and have some feedback or question time. You might want to just chat about each question over hot chocolate to finish your session. As you consistently use the same questions over the sessions, the young people will expect this part and hopefully will develop their thinking throughout the teaching to prepare them for the discussion.

1. What do these books tell us about God?
2. What do they tell us about God's people?
3. What does it mean to my faith?
4. In the context of the whole Bible, I would say the purpose of these books is...

Prayer

Lord God, we thank you that you created us to live in your world. Thank you for the laws you included and gave to your people throughout the Bible. God, sometimes we struggle to understand all the laws you set out for us and how to honour you in our lives today. We look on the law given to your people as they lived then, laws to keep them healthy and create a stable way to live together. Help us to understand the laws you have given us to live in a way which allows us to flourish, but also to live reflecting on the gift of grace and forgiveness we have because of what Jesus did in dying on the cross for us. We praise you. In Jesus Name, Amen.



The Story of The Bible

Session 2: Law and Disorder

Activity



For this activity, have one end of the room labelled True, the other False. This game is about possible laws in the UK, ask the young people if they think it's true or false. Get the young people to tally up how many they get right?

It is illegal to watch live television without a licence having been purchased for the address. **True**

It is illegal to drive a car containing a dog that is not restrained using a safety harness, unless it is held in the arms of a passenger. **False**

A gentleman must remove his top hat when boarding and travelling on a London Underground train. **False**

It is illegal in the city of Shrewsbury not to hold a door open for someone who is approaching the door and is less than 8 yards away. **False.**

It is illegal to capture an alligator, an alligator's skin or any part of an alligator, dead or alive. **False**

It is illegal to gamble in a library. **True**

Any whale or great Sturgeon caught in the UK becomes the property of the Queen. **True**

It is illegal to enter the Tower of London wearing a kilt or carrying bagpipes. **False**

It is illegal to erect a washing line across any street. **True**

All English males over the age of 14 are to carry out two hours of longbow practice every week, supervised by the local clergy. **True**

London taxi drivers must ask all passengers if they have smallpox or the plague. **True**

It is illegal to enter the hull of the RMS Titanic without permission from the Secretary of State. **True**

It is illegal to eat mince pies on Christmas day in England. **False**

Seeing Jesus Activity



Using some coloured wool, encourage the young people to see connections between the law and how Jesus acted, who he was. You could encourage them to read Matthew 5:17-20 and ask them to explain what they think the passage is saying.

The Story of The Bible

Session 2: Law and Disorder

Teaching Points



But what? Books of law? Is this anything like our lawyers or crime dramas?

So there are 5 of our biblical books in this law section - anyone know what they are called? Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy. Also together they are known as the 'Pentateuch' which in Greek describes the 5 books or known as the 'Torah' which comes from the Jewish tradition as these 5 books are the first 5 books of their scriptures which are together known as the 'TaNaKh' - which is an acronym.

So who? We can see from Exodus 19v1-8 about God telling the Israelites that he chooses them. Why not take a moment to read this passage together?

So why? Why are these books called law books? Why did God feel it was important to give these to his people? They are called the books of the law because they contain laws and instructions given to Moses by God for God's people to flourish and glorify Him.

So we know who God's chosen people are, but specifically what laws did he give to them? Anyone know the main set of laws given to God's people? The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20v1-17). But there are loads of other laws in these first five books - there are 613. The other laws can be really really specific and you can mainly find them in Exodus 21-23 and Deuteronomy 12-26. A lot of these laws were helpful so that the people could live healthy and fair lives, though they wouldn't all apply to our lives now. Although the Ten Commandments were written in stone to indicate their permanent value to people.

The purpose of this is not just for God to make a huge load of rules and regulations to make life difficult for his people, but in these books he only gives these commands to his Chosen People, the people of Israel. The families descended from Abraham. The families who were in slavery in Egypt. The families who wandered around in the desert awaiting their life in the Promised Land.

The Story of The Bible

Session 2: Law and DisOrder

Teaching Points Continued

The families who wanted to praise God. The families who often found themselves doubting or challenging God. These people are his Chosen People. Yes we see a huge load of rules for living given by God to the leaders, but we want to understand why. What else does it tell us about God and his people then and now?

So we know what - the laws and commands to help a flourishing and safe society. We know who - God's people, chosen by Him, the Israelites, given the commands through Moses. We know why - to allow for God's people to live in obedience to him and flourish together. But what does this mean today? We want to look at the big picture to see how we understand these books of the Bible today. What commands should we obey today? Are they all irrelevant to us? We look to Matthew 22v35-40 when Jesus was asked what the most important commandment was and he said 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind' and the second most important is, 'Love your neighbour the same as you love yourself.' But then he said, "All of the law and the writings of the prophets take their meaning from these two commands".

How interesting for us considering the laws given by God through this lens of what Jesus says about them here. But were the commands not just for the Israelites wandering around in the desert? Except that through Jesus coming to save all peoples, not just the Israelites, we are God's chosen people. Colossians 3v11-12 helps us to understand that it is not just the religious people or from a certain family line which are chosen by God, but through belief in Jesus and living an obedient life we become part of God's chosen people. So then why do we need laws for our time now? Even the best christian you know will still struggle with living a fully obedient life to God. Therefore the 10 commandments and other biblical responses give us a guide in living a life that points to the goodness and grace of God.

The Story of The Bible

Session 3: An Israelite History

The purpose of this session: is to explore the historical books and what value it has to read the narratives of God's people.



Video:
There are videos from the Bible Project for each of the individual books in this sections so you might want to encourage your young people to watch one each and report on their book when you meet together. Alternatively you could watch their video on the books of Chronicles as a summary of some of the narrative in the Old Testament.

Games:
Consequences - 3+ players.
Each player starts with a piece of paper each sitting in a circle with the whole group. The group will take their turn in writing at the top of the page following the first command, folding over to conceal what they have written and then passing the page onto the next person. Once all the commands have been written and the page passed around the group, the individuals open up the page they have received and read out the story to the group in turn. Suggested sequence of commands as follows:



1. A man's name
2. An action
- 3, A women's name
4. An adjective for the women
5. What time is was
6. Where they met
7. What he wore
8. What she said to him
9. What they have with them
10. The consequence

You could mix it up with the commands and include animals or favourite hobbies!

The Story of The Bible

Session 3: An Israelite History

Family History Activity



Get your young people to search for the History of their Family. You might want to use online sources like www.houseofnames.com to show long lost relatives or background of the extended family. You could ask the young people to find out one really interesting fact about their own family history. Use this to explain these passages in the Bible help us to see that the history included in this part of the Bible is the history of the family of God.

Seeing Jesus Activity



Ask the young people to continue to add wool to the hoop to show the connections to Jesus. You could look together at Luke 3:23-38 and consider what to consider from this passage.

Activity:



Why not spend 5 minutes trying as a group to come up with as many stories and characters you know from this part of the Bible. There are some easy ones with character names in the book names.

Craft Project:

Keep going at your chosen project.



Memorising Scripture:

Psalm 9v1-2 (A Psalm written by David)



The Story of The Bible

Session 3: An Israelite History

Game

Ladders - 8+ players

Have all your group pair up and sit on the ground with their legs outstretched opposite their pair. Get each pair to space out enough so that there is about 2ft space between each pair. Now the pairs are competing against each other and the teams are each side of the ladder. Depending on your story, give each pair a word or phrase that is for them both. When the word/phrase is said they must run down the ladder and round to their place. The first person out of the pair back to their seat, wins a point for their side. You could use this for fun, having a story about a zoo with each pair being a different animal. Alternatively you could tell stories from the Bible with each pair being a character or item.



Kahoot:

The 10 question quiz is available here: <https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/a4f1b60a-a4c7-4195-ade1-a76977f7f32c> or if you search for The Story of the Bible Session 3 in Kahoot.



Discussion Questions

Using the discussion questions, consider how the history books in the Bible tell us more about who God is and what it means for us as his people.



The Story of The Bible

Session 3: An Israelite History

Teaching:

There is so much included in these books we have to study for this session. From Joshua to Esther there is lots of narrative and stories about God and his people as they learn and live. The purpose of these books is mainly to chronicle, so to write down everything that happened and to teach God's people. By keeping a history of what happened to God's people, the authors want to help the people understand where they have come from, what significance their family history has and as a result learning how best to live a life that honours God.



Some of the best known stories in these books circle around David, his early life and becoming King. There were many different Kings during this time who led the people, judging over difficult situations and guiding them. This gives us one of the 4 main themes of these books: **Kingship**. In 1 Samuel we see the establishment of the monarchy, not without its criticisms as they thought the Lord God would be their King, yet we see a purposeful use of King David to lead God's people in devotion to God. Even though David's morality was not always perfect, he points towards the Messiah King who is coming. The core of the theme comes from 2 Samuel 7 when Nathan the Prophet tells David about God's promises not only to him but his family line, 'A family of Kings!'.

Just in the passage in 2 Samuel we meet Nathan who brings us onto the second main theme of these books, **Prophecy**. The books show the influential, powerful and godly role the prophets had in advising Kings. They heard God's word and communicated it to others. They gave direction and guidance, sometimes very literally and sometimes more generally to guide God's people. We will go into more detail about the role of the prophets in further sessions as we look at books that our specifically focused on the prophets.

Within these books we see the change from the Tabernacle, along with the Ark of the Covenant, being the centre piece in God's dwelling amongst his people to pursuit of the established **Temple**, as the third theme.

The Story of The Bible

Session 3: An Israelite History

Teaching continued:

While God's people were walking around in the desert following the Exodus, awaiting going into the Promised Land, they ensured the development and construction of the Tabernacle, a very complex tent. The glory of the Lord was experienced by his people in the Tabernacle. So once David is King he desires to build a more permanent home for the Ark of the Covenant and the Temple was completed in Solomon's time.

Finally, the fourth theme is that of **Worship**. This was a way the author's reflect on the success of the Kingship throughout these books, did the King worship God in purity and devotion? Did the King allow other idolatrous influences during their reign? In 2 Kings 17v39, we read "Rather, worship the LORD your God; it is he who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies." We see the call to worship God for his power and deliverance. To finish why not spend a few minutes reading 1 Chronicles 16v23-31. Reflect on its power and it's meaning.

Prayer Activity:

Why not have your room set up with 4 stations to mirror the four main themes of these books: **Kingship**, **Prophecy**, **Temple**, **Worship**. Have a question or reflection for each of these to guide the young people in their thinking and connecting the themes to their own lives now. For example:

1. **Kingship**. Take some time to thank Jesus for being the King of Kings. Think about what it means for Jesus to be King over your life. Think about what it means for Jesus to be King over this world. Think about what it means for Jesus to be King over all the situations you encountered this week.
2. **Prophecy**. Spend a moment listening. Listening to hear God speak to you. You might not hear anything or you might be reminded of a truth about God from the Bible.
3. **Temple**. God is present here by His Holy Spirit. Thank God for his willingness to dwell with His people.
4. **Worship**. Praise God for his character. Why not read through 1 Chronicles 29v10-20 and pray this from your perspective.



The Story of The Bible

Session 4: Poetic License

The purpose of this session: is to discover the value and advise in reading through the poetry and wisdom books in the Old Testament.

Craft Project:

Keep adding more to your project!



Memorising Scripture:

Why not learn Psalm 19v1 or Psalm 54v1-2.



Testimony Activity

Why not ask a leader in your group or a parish member to choose a Psalm and explain when and why it was an encouragement to them, whether it was helping to understand God's people can call out to Him in distress or feeling abandoned by God.



Activity:

Get your young people to rewrite Psalm 19 in their own words. For the more creative they might want to take one image that they think of when reading this, and draw it.



Discussion Questions:

Spend some time using the discussion questions to discuss this part of the Bible.



Application:

You might want to take some time and listen to this short Podcast:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-to-pray-the-psalms>. It is with Tim Keller on the Desiring God website and talks about Keller's own personal journey through understanding the Psalms and how to study them more.



Seeing Jesus Activity

Ask the young people to continue to add wool to the hoop to show the connections to Jesus. Why not ask the young people to look up where Jesus' death is referenced throughout the Psalms? Psalm 22 could give a good starting place.



The Story of The Bible

Session 4: Poetic License

Games:

Pictionary - 4+ players - have a list of Bible ideas which can be drawn by the young people while the others try to guess!

Question Game - 6+ players.

Get two equally numbered teams of young people and leaders. Get each team to stand in a line opposite the other team. The purpose of the game is to continually ask questions! Team 1 starts and asks any member of Team 2 a question. For example, "Sarah, where did you go to school?" Then Sarah will ask a question to someone on Team 1, "Pete, how much time do you take to do your hair?"

If you break any of the rules, you are out! Your team will vary in numbers and keeps going until there is a winning team. The rules are:

- You cannot repeat a question that has already been asked and each question needs to be on a different topic than the question previously.
- You can only ask a question to a member of the opposite team and you must start with saying their name.
- You cannot answer the question!!
- You cannot pause! As a leader, this one is up to you for how long they are allowed. Ideally you want the game to mean continuous questions and no pauses but it depends on their age and familiarity with the game.
- No rude or offensive questions.

Teaching:

The Road Not Taken. The Daffodils. Shall I compare you to a summer's day?

Well this part of the Bible isn't quite like Shakespeare or Robert Frost or Wordsworth's complete works. Although we do call this part of the Bible the poetry section. What do you think is good about poetry? Any idea why the Bible would include it? It takes a slightly different form than maybe we are used to writing poems in school, using reiteration, rhythm and painting a picture for readers using words. C S Lewis says, "The psalms are poems, and poems intended to be sung' not doctrinal treatises, nor even sermons... They must be read as poems if they are to be understood... Otherwise we shall miss what is in them and think we see what is not".



The Story of The Bible

Session 4: Poetic License

Teaching Continued:

The poetry in the Bible uses descriptive language to help us understand the experience and emotions of those writing. It becomes more than a detached narrative, it becomes someone's real life experience of God.

Secondly, it shows us a reflection of how the author worships God. We love to worship God and sing His praises in church through singing and music but there can be many aspects of God character we neglect to worship.

Thirdly, an incredible aspect of the Psalms in particular, but all of the poetry books is that it gives us words when we don't know what to say. Have you experienced a time in your life when you have been lost for words? Especially lost for something to say to God? Maybe you have been hurt by friends and feel like God should have protected you from this. Maybe you have been abandoned by family and feel like God isn't a good Heavenly Father. Maybe you have made a mistake and hurt someone you care about and feel like you are too worthless to even be a Christian. Throughout the Psalms, we see poems and reflections on similar experiences.

Also included in this big Poetry section are the wisdom books, generally known as Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Why not take a moment to turn in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs and even look at how the book is laid out? We see the purpose of these books is to teach us about God but not as cold commands, instead through the voice of those in the midst of an experience. For example, Job's experience of suffering helps us understand God in our struggles. Proverbs, as you can see, is formed out of sayings or short verses of wisdom. We can begin with the fear of the Lord being the essence of all true human wisdom. What do you think that means? So fear of the Lord meaning reverence rather than being afraid of.

Why not pray together to help us to see the significance in the poetry and wisdom parts of the Bible?

The Story of The Bible

Session 4: Poetic License

Activity:



You could focus on the wisdom and create your own 'Words of Wisdom' Board game! Play by copying out each of the verses below. The Bible reference will always be on the ending of the Proverb which will help young people distinguish between them and search in their Bibles to help them complete the activity. You start having all the pages facing down on the ground, mixed up. Divide the group into two teams. The aim is to make a matching pair of the start and end of a Proverb. The teams take it in turns to turn over 2 pages. They can see if they match, they can use their Bibles and if they don't match the pages are turned back over. The teams want to remember where certain pages are so that as the game progresses they are more likely to make a pair! The team with the most pairs at the end of the game wins!

1. Turn to the Lord for help in everything you do...
...and you will be successful. Proverbs 16v3
2. Don't trust in your own wisdom...
...but fear and respect the Lord and stay away from evil. Proverbs 3v7
3. Above all, be careful what you think...
...because your thoughts control your life. Proverbs 4v23
4. As one piece of iron sharpens another...
...so friends keep each other sharp. Proverbs 27v17
5. Be friends with those who are wise, and you will become wise...
...Choose fools to be your friends, and you will have trouble. Proverbs 13v20
6. The rich and the poor are the same...
...The Lord made them all. Proverbs 22v2
7. The name of the Lord is like a strong tower...
...Those who do what is right can run to him for protection. Proverbs 18v10
8. Knowledge begins with fear and respect for the Lord, but...
...stubborn fools hate wisdom and refuse to learn. Proverbs 1v7.
9. Kind words are like honey...
...they are easy to accept and good for your health. Proverbs 16v24

The Story of The Bible

Session 5: Prophets Major key?

The purpose of the session: is to give background on the role of the prophets and how we can read the prophetic books and apply God's truth to our lives.

Games:

Chinese Whispers - 4+ players - helpful to illustrate that sometimes listening can be difficult. Gather all your young people in a group. Ask one person to think of a phrase, they whisper it to the person beside them, and this gets passed around the circle. The last person says what they think they heard.

Movie Game - 8+ players

Get all your group on chairs, sitting in a circle. Each player needs a stack of paper roughly A7 size, with enough pieces for all the players. For example if you have 11 people playing the game, each player needs 11 pieces of paper, a total of 121 pieces of paper. The game starts with every player writing down the name of a movie. It can be anything but encourage them to go with more popular films, especially to start with. Everyone then passes their whole pile onto the next person. Each player receives their new pile with a film on top. They put the film name to the bottom of their pile and use the second bit of paper to draw that film! They can't use words or numbers. Once completed, everyone simultaneously passes their whole pile on to the next person. Each player receives a drawing and has to guess the title of the movie. They place the drawing to the bottom of the pile and uses the third bit of paper to write their guess of the film title on. You keep repeating this until all the bits of paper are used, and it should work out that it is returned to it's original owner. Take a moment to check through your own pile and then go around the group and share what happened to your movie and if it stayed the same the whole way through!

Discussion Questions:

Use the consistent discussion questions to help guide your young people through talking about these books together.

The Story of The Bible

Session 5: Prophets Major key?

Seeing Jesus Activity

Ask the young people to continue to add wool to the hoop to show the connections to Jesus. You could encourage them to look up Jeremiah 23:5-6.



Videos:

1. Whiteboard Bible 7 - The Prophets available on YouTube
2. God's Story: The Prophets by Crossroads Kids Club available on YouTube

Both of these videos are helpful in describing the basics of information about the prophets, both major and minor.



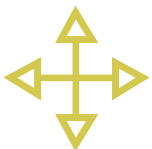
Memorising Scriptures:

Why not learn Isaiah 43v1?



Craft Project:

Continue adding to your craft project!



Prayer:

Why not get some of your young people to pray with each other or write down prayers on post-it notes? You could ask them to reflect on:

- Thanking God for speaking to us today through the Bible
- Asking the Holy Spirit to show us what we need to change
- Praising God for the faith of the people in the Old Testament & for us being able to see through the lens of knowing Jesus as the Messianic King

Kahoot:

You can find the Kahoot for this session at: <https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/a37afbc5-f7aa-4776-9163-5e22ec5a2a66> or by searching in Kahoot for The Story of the Bible: Session 5.



The Story of The Bible

Session 5: Prophets Major key?

Teaching:

What is the most important message you've ever delivered? What is the most important message you have ever received? What did it feel like to receive such an important message? Maybe it was your results or a note to say you have won something!



Prophets mean messengers of God. So we see the value of God communicating with his people through his people! God spoke to those who loved Him and shared with them his promises or rebukes. True prophets were sometimes hard to come by! Often there would be people who were known as false prophets as they pretended to be bringing a message from God but were not. So the people had to learn how to discern between the real prophets and the false prophets. Often prophets' behaviour could be erratic but they were known by their action of 'standing in the council of the Lord' as stated in Jeremiah 23:18-22. Three ways to know if a prophet was genuine. You could look up these verses to find the three ways: 1. 1 Samuel 3:4 2. Isaiah 1:1 3. Exodus 32:11 The first is that they were called by God, secondly they truly received a message from God and finally they spoke to God through prayer. So the people could test what they knew about the prophet with these three things to check.

There are 5 main themes, taken from The Lion Handbook to the Bible, through the major and minor prophets are:

1. God is ruler of all history
2. Need to 'get right' with God
3. Religion and right living
4. Judgement and hope
5. The Messianic Kingdom

God as ruler over all history helps us look at any period of time and think about God's role in this time, the role of his people and how he responds. In Isaiah we see the prophets being willing to depict other empires as tools that God used for his glory.

The Story of The Bible

Session 5: Prophets Major key?

Teaching continued: Habakkuk struggles with our holy, perfect God using imperfect structures and empires for his glory and good. Have you ever thought that like Habakkuk? That surely our perfect, all knowing God would have a better way rather than using flawed people in a flawed system. The Bible responds by re-affirming God's sovereignty over the world. He has control over all even if it doesn't look like that from our perspective!

The need to get right with God. I think we have all experienced this at some point in our lives when we have been convicted that we need to do something to help our standing in front of our God. What we learn through the prophets is the continual message from God of encouraging us to follow Him, not in a legalistic or points based way-we cannot earn our righteousness. We can look upon this message in the Prophets and see if from the perspective of living post-Jesus with such joy as we understand the rescue plan of sending a Messiah to help us get right with God through faith.

Religion and right living is another theme of the prophets as God's people lived in light of the commandments given and God's word to his people around how to worship and live. In the prophets we see messages from God rebuking his people for how they have fallen short of living lives that glorify God. This must have been really difficult for his people and difficult for the prophets to communicate this message.

Judgement and Hope is the fourth theme which provides us with examples of how God spoke to his people, often with the condemnation of their behaviour or ignorance of God's place, yet followed by hope and an opportunity to be redeemed as God's people again. The prophets were able to share this and provide a way out for the Jews to pursue God.

The Messianic Kingdom is the final theme and a really remarkable one! We see lots of evidence in these books with prophets describing Jesus, a Saviour, a Messiah for God's people. You might even have read some of the prophet's words in your Christmas celebrations as we see the prophetic words become real through Jesus' life. Amazing!

The Story of The Bible

Session 6: Prophets Minor Key?

The purpose of this session: is to consider the messages given by the prophets to God's people in this time. We are going to suggest doing a more in-depth study into one of the Minor Prophets, Amos for this session. You might want to recap or explore more of the role of the prophets carrying on from the previous week.

Craft Project:

Keep going, it will be starting to take shape now!



Memorising Scripture:

Learn Amos 5:24 together.



Games:

Animals Assemble - 8+ players: Choose a few animals, as many animals as groups you want, so if you want 2 groups, just have 2 animals. Write out the animal name on a small piece of paper, have enough so that each person gets a piece and divide them evenly so you should get equal teams. When you want to run the game, shout 'Animals Assemble!' Each person then looks at their piece of paper and makes the animal noise as loud as they can while trying to hear and seek out the other similar animals. They should keep making their animal noises even once they have found their other team members to make it difficult for anyone still looking to join their team. The game is finished once you have your equal teams ready.



Prayer:

The Church of England provides this prayer specifically around Justice, available here: www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/topical-prayers/prayers-for-personal-situations.aspx



Why not print or write this out and say it together as a group?

Living God, deliver us from a world without justice and a future without mercy; in your mercy, establish justice, and in your justice, remember the mercy revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Story of The Bible

Session 6: Prophets Minor Key?

Activity:

Why not consider a response for your group around the issue of justice and living out the mercy of God that we experience. Is there an identifiable need in your parish area? Could your youth group support a practical ministry that is already running in your church that the young people could support? Have a conversation with your young people and create a plan to actively respond to the needs.



Kahoot:

The Kahoot is available here: <https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/f4d91c09-cd41-4be4-bf49-cbd887d9227e> or by searching for The Story of the Bible: Session 6. I would recommend watching the video or having the teaching before the quiz.



Videos:

'Amos' by The Bible Project is available on YouTube

This video gives an in depth summary of the whole book, the historical context as well as the importance of the Prophet's message to us now. Why not get your group to take some notes while watching this video?



Activity

Christian Aid have some simulation games for youth groups to get young people to think about what it would be like to live in a different situation. Available online here: <http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/YouthLeaderResources/ResourceOverview/simulation.aspx> under Secondary School Resources.



Seeing Jesus Activity

Ask the young people to continue to add wool to the hoop and discussing the connections. You could consider what Amos is teaching us about God and looking specifically at Amos 8v9.



Discussion Questions:

Keep using the discussion questions to chat about the prophets in the Bible.



The Story of The Bible

Session 6: Prophets Minor Key?

Teaching



What is the biggest injustice you have ever experienced?

Injustice has a way of making us feel and it is awful! We feel like the whole world is working against us. We can feel like no-one else understands or fully appreciates us. We can feel invisible and overlooked. We can feel worthless and angry. There are a lot of injustices we can see across our world, our country and even within our family and friends. Often when we love people, an injustice against them can hurt us just as much. Or maybe you can get emotional when you hear stories on the news about more oppression or difficulty for other human beings.

This fight against injustice within us, comes from being made in the image of God. When we feel frustrated, just imagine how God feels? The book of Amos helps us understand our reflection of God's character in the pursuit of justice. Amos shares God's message to the people of Israel, showing God's judgement on them for worshipping idols, ignoring the poor and ensuring God's people knew they were not immune from his judgement. Amos saw visions from God about what would happen to the people and in conclusion he tells them that the Day of the Lord is coming. We might think that would be a good thing to his followers, but Amos said this would be a time where God would judge his people too. We see justice and acting with mercy is more important than false worship as the people were doing to try and impress God. Amos tells them that God's judgement will include the people being scattered, as in Amos 9:8-9 which we know happened when the Assyrian army came and took them into exile.

But right at the end of Amos we see HOPE! Amos shares this picture of God repairing a tent and a great time of blessing coming. How great it is to look back on these records of God's people with the understanding of Jesus coming and what he did for us. We then can be encouraged to live lives of justice that point to God and mirror God's heart for his people.