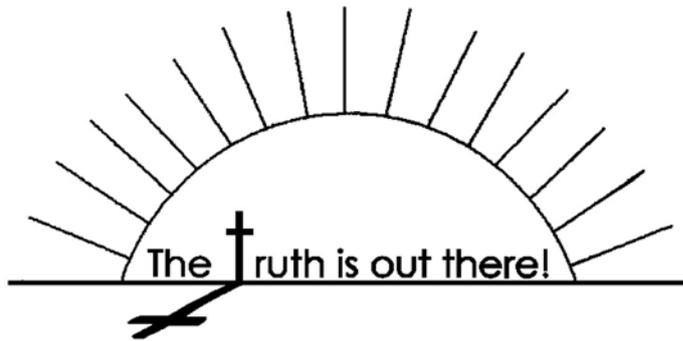
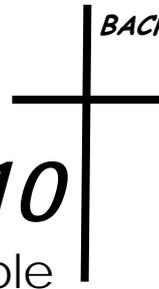




BACKPACKERS 2010

A Christian Adventure for Young People

BACKPACKERS 2010

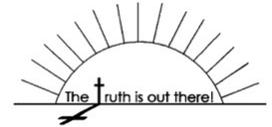


TEACHING MATERIAL

Name:

*Scriptures quoted from the International Children's Bible,
New Century Version (Anglicised Edition)
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The Truth is Out There!



Introduction to this year's theme

This year we are going to be looking at the earth from the moon! Up-front will be based on a space station on the moon showing the American flag planted there from when they landed on the moon. The week will have a general space theme as we explore how God said:

"The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the sea is full of water." Isaiah 11:9.

From the theme of 'space' comes the opportunity to consider that God didn't just make the amazing world we live in but the entire universe – God is amazing! In fact a major theme of the week is that 'God is amazing!'

The four days cover material from across the whole Bible including God as Creator, the Tower of Babel, the birth of Jesus the King, the great commission and the wonderful world to come. So that we can see that no-one can stop God doing what he intends to do and that God wants His 'flag' planted all over the planet.

It is always helpful for group leaders and assistants to cover more ground than the children will, so do look carefully at all the passages including those that will be covered by the up-front team. The notes here are limited to helping you think through the passages to be used in group times. However, the children may have questions about the content taught from up-front as well as it being part of the 'flow' of the material used so it's important you take time to read and study those passages.

Aim: For the children to understand that God wants the whole earth to know Him and to acknowledge Jesus as the King of Kings.

Up Front Sessions

The first up front session of the morning will be an introduction to the day. This session will 'set the scene'. The Bible passages covered will be different from those that follow in the group teaching sessions. They will 'fill in the gaps' between the materials used by groups each day.

The second session will be fun and games designed to reinforce the key concepts of the up front teaching and the overall theme to the week's teaching. (Deep Blues will be having their own session at this time enabling the older children to explore at greater depth).

The end of afternoon session will be a summary of the day's teaching covering the central points and setting the scene for the next day.

Groups should focus on the key teaching points in the morning teaching session. The resources under 'Way In' and 'Bible' can be used for this. The afternoon session should focus mainly on 'Response', i.e. application, though there may be a need to reinforce/continue the teaching of the key points. Do try to pray with your group, particularly in the short time you have together after the final up front session. There are suggestions and resource sheets for prayer each day. When the children arrive in the morning you may want them to do an activity sheet from the previous day to get them thinking about the teaching again. Another good use of this time is to see if they have remembered the memory verse. (Obviously Day 1 will be used for 'getting to know you'.)

A note on layout and headings used:

- ✦ **Aim:** This statement summarises what we want the children to understand each day. It is provided to give us all a common teaching point to aim for. How far this can be met may vary according to the age, personality and background of the children in your group.
- ✦ **Today's passage:** The passage for each day is printed in full from the International Children's Bible. Please always use this version in your preparation for teaching the children so there is no confusion for them. Do note that the New Century Version (NCV) available on-line from www.biblegateway.com is not the same as NCV International Children's Bible. You will be able to get an electronic copy of these notes, and so the bible passage, from the Backpackers' web site. [Where another version is quoted in these notes the version is included in brackets at the end of the quote.]
- ✦ **Bible Notes:** Following the passages are some notes for you to use to help you 'get to grips' with the bible before you plan your times with the children.
- ✦ **Background detail:** The notes under these sections are there to give you, the Group leaders, some interesting bits of information – some will be more important to understanding the passage than others. They are intended for you mainly, to aid your understanding before you teach the children. Some may be suitable to use with your groups.
- ✦ **Black Holes:** Sometimes it is easy to lose track of what we are trying to get across to the children by being distracted by detail. The notes under this heading are to alert you to possible 'black holes' where your group could disappear and no longer be part of the day's mission.
- ✦ **How to go about it:** A suggestion of what to cover in each of your teaching sessions. This is only meant as a helpful guide for new leaders or those who feel unsure. Do, please, teach what you feel is right for your group. It would be helpful to look at the passage and help the children to understand it in the morning session, though, even if you can't cover all of it. Do please try to get the children to apply what they have learnt to their own lives.
- ✦ **Resources:** Then you will find a list of the teaching resources that are included in your Resource pack. This gives an indication of when they could be useful and which age range they are likely to suit. Don't be constrained by these suggestions! The age range in each colour group will mean, for example, that sheets shown as possibly suitable for Red groups are actually only suitable for the oldest children. You may be more aware than I of the ability and interests of children of your group's age. The resources are divided into 'Way In', 'Bible', 'Response', 'Memory Verse' and 'Prayer' to help with your planning but there's bound to be some overlap. Please don't be overwhelmed by the amount of material, we are providing a choice. It's up to you to select which to use or indeed to choose to use none.

The Truth is Out There! – setting the scene

The stage for 'up-front' will use the idea of being on a space station on the moon looking down at earth and surrounded by all the stars and planets. The American flag will be on the moon from when they landed there. Group Zones will each have the name of a planet (which to be decided) and images from space will be projected, etc. to add to the atmosphere. It would be best to be sure to keep to factual space adventure rather than fictional so as not to cause the children to think all of what we teach is fiction.

During the week teaching from up front and the group times should help the children to understand that God is the creator of all things and loves the people on earth. They will learn of God's grace and justice as he deals with mankind's rebellion against him. Then they will think about how Jesus came as our King and what that means for each of us. We then think about how Jesus died to take the punishment for that rebellion and then rose from the dead to conquer death. So he is now alive with God the Father in heaven.

Mankind wasn't left alone though, the Holy Spirit came in power to help us live as God would want us to. Finally, the children will think about Jesus saying we must tell others about him and that Jesus' flag needs to be planted all over the earth.

Each day will have a main passage for use with the children but there will sometimes also be other passages and verses that can be used according to the group – age, ability, pre-knowledge, etc. This means the Group Leader has scope to go deeper or wider if they and their group are up for it.

Black Holes:

- ✦ With passages from Genesis, Matthew, Acts and a memory verse from Isaiah you'll realise that a lot of the Bible has been left out of the teaching for our four days together. Group leaders will benefit from knowing more about the context of the passages and how they fit into the Bible, etc. to be able to answer questions that come from the children and keep the days connected. Try not to go too far from the main aim (mission for the day) though.
- ✦ The space theme should add to the fun for the children at Backpackers but we will need to make sure it doesn't take over. The focus is God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and we need to keep that in mind
- ✦ Do avoid the children bringing in space fiction they enjoy as we don't want to confuse the fiction with the fact of God's saving grace through Jesus.
- ✦ Avoid getting bogged down in considering issues that only one or two children in your group are concerned about. Make use of the Encouragers for these times or the rest of your group will lose interest.

Open Door - Getting to know you:

Your group may consist of pairs of friends, children who know one another well and those who don't know anyone else. It is unlikely the whole group will know one another and you need to get to know them. As the children arrive on day one try to take time to speak to them individually asking their names and one or two other questions. On day one it's a good idea to use the Open Door time, and perhaps the first few minutes of the first teaching session, for ice-breaker games to help the children get to know one another and the Group leaders, assistants and any helpers. Some groups may need something like this at the start of each day.

The colouring sheets in the resource pack are also useful for this time as the children arrive one by one (some of the older children will still want to colour). On days 2 to 4 you may have things to complete from the day before but it is a good idea to always have some spare sheets, especially for the quieter children (there are some!). They will often open up more when their hands are busy.

Resources are listed for each day as they follow the theme but there are also lists of space themed activities, ice-breakers, memory verse ideas and prayer suggestions at the end that could be used on any day. Some of these could be helpful if your group finish lunch quickly and are at a loose end.

Memory verse activity suggestions for this year's memory verse are grouped together each day (with general ones at the end of the Teaching material). They probably come better in the afternoon as part of 'Response'.

Memory verse:

The memory verse for the week is:

'The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the sea is full of water. '

Isaiah 11:9b

This is the verse we want all the children to learn during the week, it will be used 'up-front' and there are resource sheets to help learn it. You may, however, want your group to learn other key verses as the week goes by, please don't feel you cannot do that in addition to this verse. As the week goes on do explain to the children that this is a prophecy from Isaiah, a promise from God. It may be good to read Isaiah 11:1-9 with the older children, but do notice it will be used up-front on Day 4.

Teaching Material Team:

If you need further assistance in understanding these notes or the resource sheets do speak to one of the team:

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------|------------------------------|
| Coordinator / notes: | Margaret Gingell | 785981 | marg.gingell@btinternet.com |
| Resources: | | | |
| Lower age group | Becky & Gareth Davies | 792722 | children@cheshamchurch.co.uk |
| Middle age group: | Gill McNab | 774970 | gillmcnab@aol.com |
| | Claire Aisthorpe | 774286 | caisthorpe@cheshamprep.co.uk |
| Older age Group: | Heather Pugsley | 771455 | hpugsley@btinternet.com |

Day 1 – Wrong Again!

The all-seeing, holy God - who created the whole of 'space' - is utterly committed to his plan for *this* planet, and therefore responds to sin in human hearts with justice *and* grace.

UP FRONT

Creation, the fall and beyond

Bible Passages: Whistle stop tour of Genesis 1-10

Aim:

- To understand that God created everything, including humans, for *his* glory.
- To understand human sin as rebellious self-promotion / seeking *own* glory.
- To believe that God sees into human hearts and is right to punish sin.

This was covered very thoroughly last year but does need to be understood and accepted so I'm sure it won't matter that's there's a bit of repetition, especially as the approach will be different and there will be children who were not there last year. In fact last year should be referred back to, explaining briefly the creation and fall that we looked at last year BUT people didn't learn, they still rebelled against God and hence the flood.

Earth rise will be seen on the screen as the up-front team ponder that earth looks so beautiful from 'up here' but get closer and it's such a mess. What was God doing making a planet like that? If only could go back in time to find out – but how?

The time will end with teaching that God gave an instruction for the people to move out and fill the earth.

Today's Group Passage: Genesis 11:1-9

¹At this time the whole world spoke one language. Everyone used the same words. ²As people moved from the East, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia. They settled there to live

³They said to each other, "Let's make bricks and bake them to make them hard." So they used bricks instead of stones, and tar instead of mortar. ⁴Then they said to each other, "Let's build for ourselves a city and a tower. And let's make the top of the tower reach high into the sky. We will become famous. If we do this, we will not be scattered over all the earth."

⁵The LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the people had built. ⁶The

LORD said, "Now, these people are united. They all speak the same language. This is only the beginning of what they will do. They will be able to do anything they want. ⁷Come, let us go down and confuse their language. Then they will not be able to understand each other."

⁸So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is where the LORD confused the language of the whole world. So the place is called Babel. So the LORD caused them to spread out from there over the whole world.

Group Teaching Aims:

- To be convicted of sinfulness of own heart
- To see need for a) forgiveness of sins and b) changed heart

Bible Notes:

As survivors of the flood and their descendants the people should have remembered the lesson given then. Yet God had told them to fill the earth [Genesis 9:1 (should be taught in first up-front session)] and here they were stopping where they wanted to!

They want to build the tower for their own glory, they want to make a name for themselves, (v4) rather than scattering over the whole earth as God instructed. This is rebellion against God, they were sinning.

The people's plans were egotistical and proud. They were, in effect, making an idol of their own abilities, planning, skills, power, etc.; idols of themselves.

Verse 6 looks difficult on first reading. It sounds as if God wants to limit the people, as if he doesn't want people to achieve very much. We know for elsewhere in the Bible and our own experience that this is not the case. The verse is actually saying that if the whole human race remained united in its pride attempting to take its destiny into its own hands then there would be no limit to the rebellion there would be against God. Mankind would exclude the kingdom of God. This is not what God wants for mankind.

God scattered the people because of their common pride. Even the greatest human powers cannot defy God and succeed indefinitely. Without a common language, joint efforts to rebel against God would be much harder.

In the situation at Babel God, in his wisdom, knew that if the people couldn't understand each other they wouldn't be able to co-operate and work together in the same way. This would stop the building, they would no longer focus on the building and were more likely to stop rebelling against God. The people had been seeking security and strength from one another, their common language and location. They should have been looking to God for security and strength and obeying his instruction to fill the earth.

In fact this is an example of God's grace because he could have destroyed them again as he did in the flood but he spared them. However, God's righteousness and justice means there must be a consequence for this rebellion and idolatry.

Even nowadays difficulties are cause by the lack of communication because of different languages or even within our own language. How many times have you misunderstood or been misunderstood because of the word(s) used or the way something is phrased? Think how much friction this can cause.

People will only be together again without dividing languages and seas when Jesus comes in glory and we enter that promised eternal life.

We want to help the children to see that travel to different countries, learning to speak different languages is fun – different cultures, going across oceans all seems normal and OK but this is not what God wants. He wants everyone living together in harmony. We can see what problems different cultures can cause today – misunderstanding, hatred even. God wants **his** people in **his** country and in **his** culture.

The main problem here is that the people weren't obeying God and looking to him, they wanted to prove what they could do on their own.

The Americans achieved an amazing thing by travelling to the moon in man's quest to explore the universe. Yet the moon is **so** near earth compared to much of the universe – God knows the whole universe – he made it!

Background detail:

- ✦ 'Whole world' in verse 1 refers to the survivors of the flood and their descendants
- ✦ The Tower: They were in Mesopotamia where they had temple-towers that were square at the base and had a sloping, stepped side with a small shrine at the top. These were called ziggurats.

Black Holes:

✚ Some children may want to brag about how many languages they can understand or could learn. Try not to let this go too far and explain that it takes work, time and effort to learn other languages so it is much harder to develop a good relationship with people who speak a different language. Ideally God wants everyone to have a good relationship with everyone else but when we put ourselves at the centre where God should be we get very selfish.

How to go about it:

Morning Session

You will need to spend some of the morning session getting to know the children. Playing 'ice-breaker' games will help them relax with one another and you. Some of the 'Way In' activities listed below will be useful for this as well.

Do get onto looking at the passage, though, making sure the children realise it's from the Bible. This is the session to help them understand what it is teaching about God.

Afternoon Session

The afternoon can be used to think through how what God has taught through this passage applies to the children. The memory verse should also be introduced. You may want to ask the children to think about what they would like to pray about ready for the final time together at the end of the day.

Resources for Day 1:

See end of Teaching Material for 'Getting to know you' suggestions.

Way in:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| Decorate cover for Space Log (folder will be provided) | -- | All |
| Decorate group area e.g. create or draw spaceships, planets, stars, etc | -- | All |
| Colouring sheet -Genesis | 1A | All |
| Colouring sheet -God makes the world | 1B | All |
| Activity sheet - Duck dot to dot | 1C | Y,R |
| Activity sheet - Flower dot to dot | 1D | Y,R |
| Activity sheet - Space Log 1 - Personal Fact file | 1E | All |
| Activity sheet -Word Search - Creation, Fall, Flood & Babel | 1F | R,G,B |
| Activity sheet - Word search - In the beginning ... | 1G | R,G |
| Activity sheet - Word search for younger children - In the beginning ... | 1H | Y,R |
| Site Tour - Animal Game Children each choose an animal and then follow their leader around the site pretending to be that animal (i.e. moving as that animal would and maybe making that animals noise) | -- | Y,R,G |
| Site tour - The astronauts tried different ways of walking on the moon, including kangaroo hops, but settled on a loping action which was most comfortable. Try different ways to move around the site. | | All |
| Creation Game 1 - Go through the alphabet, asking the children to think of an animal for each letter. | -- | All |
| Creation Game 2 - Place children in a circle and stand in the middle, then mention a subject regarding something God has created (Type of weather, animal, drink etc...) and when you throw the ball to a child, they have to think of something under that heading (for weather, they could say rain, sun, etc...) | -- | All |
| Creation Game 3 -As above but, say the name of an animal and throw the ball at a child, they have to make the noise of the animal. The catch is that if you say God and throw the ball, they have to say wow! (Because he is amazing!) | -- | All |

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| Get to know you game - Share out equally some small sweets (Mars Planets would be perfect but anything will do, including grapes if you'd rather not give out sweets). Person A says something about them self which they think will be different from anyone else in the group (e.g. somewhere they have been, something they have done). If anyone else has done that thing, Person A has to give that person a sweet. The winner is the one who ends up with the most sweets. You may need to discuss trust! At the end, encourage the winner to share anyway. | -- | G,B |
| Tangle. Group stands close together in a circle. Everyone shuts their eyes and reaches out to grab 2 random hands across the circle. They then open their eyes and try to untangle themselves without releasing hands. Play this twice. The second time have one of the group on the outside, giving instructions. Talk about how we can get into a worse tangle trying to do things our own way. It's much better to listen to one voice. | -- | G,B |

Bible:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Read the story from the Bible (International Children's Bible but for yellow groups you could use the Lion First Bible) | -- | All |
| Create tall tower from junk while telling story. Alternatively (with care re any allergies) a tower could be built from big marshmallows using frosting to "glue" the marshmallows together. Or use sugar cubes, biscuits, etc. (This could be a competition to see who can build the highest tower or a race where each member of a team has to collect the 'bricks'.) | -- | All |
| See how tall the group can build a tower out of blocks before it falls over. Another idea is to time them to see how many they can put on top of each other in a minute | -- | All |
| Lunar Link. As Apollo 11 was landing on the moon, there was a small problem and a computer engineer in Houston had to consult the manual and make the decision to continue. The men inside the lunar module were astronauts, not engineers. They had to rely on other people knowing how things worked and what to do when things went wrong. The Bible is our manual for life and we need to study it so that we understand God's plan and know where to look for help when life goes wrong. Read today's bible story. | -- | G,B |
| Activity sheet – Code breaker – Tower of Babel | 1I | R,G,B |
| Activity sheet – Hello: What Language? (<i>2 per A4 sheet</i>) (Answers: 1h, 2g, 3i, 4f, 5b, 6j, 7e, 8d,9l,10c,11m,12k,13a) | 1J | R,G B |
| Colouring sheet – Tower of Babel | 1K | Y,R,G |
| Colouring sheet – Confused Languages | 1L | Y,R,G |
| Activity sheet – Building the tower | 1M | Y,R |
| Activity sheet – Tower maze | 1N | Y,R,G |
| Bible Study Leaflet | BS1 | G, B |

Response:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| Try a simulation to let the children see how it must have been when everyone started speaking other languages. Let them speak garble to each other so that only they know what they are saying. It will seem like chaos. Talk about what it must have been like for the people. Share how this is why we have so many languages now. Because of this, people scattered all over the world speaking their new languages | -- | R,G,B |
| Limitations - Try a variety of activities which show that humans have limitations: balance a tennis ball on your head; try to sing one note for 30 seconds; touch your nose with your tongue etc). | -- | G,B |

| | | |
|---|----|-----|
| God is our foundation. Ask what are the things which might distract us from following God's command today. What do we worship or focus attention on in today's society? (fame, celebrities, money, possessions, hobbies) Write ideas on brick shapes (an A4 piece of paper cut into 4 pieces). Discuss how important the group feels these are. Lay them out one above the other, like a tower. Ask whether they think being part of God's crew means having to give these things up. Then produce another, slightly larger, "brick" with the word "God" on it. Place this underneath the tower and explain that the important thing is for God to be the foundation of our lives. | -- | G,B |
| Space Log - Today - the children can write or draw what they've learnt and done in response to the prompts | 10 | All |

Memory Verse:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Activity sheet - Code Breaker - Memory Verse (2 per A4 sheet) | M1 | R,G,B |
| Make a Solar System Banner - On a large piece of thick paper or piece of material draw the planets of the solar system (see sheet M2 - Planet Size Guide). Get children to colour the planets. Add the memory verse. | M2 | All |
| Earth Medallion with Memory Verse - Children can colour the earth and stick the memory verse on the back. A ribbon can be added to make a medallion. (Needs to be printed on card.) | M3 | All |
| Build the verse - Write separate words on Duplo bricks (or small cereal boxes or labels to be stuck on ziggurat picture). Can children build the words up into a tower in the correct order (top to bottom or bottom to top) | -- | G,B |

Prayer:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| Prayer Bricks - Cut out some brick shapes from coloured paper. Each day the children can write (or draw) their prayers on the bricks. The bricks can then be stuck on a tall piece of card to make a tower. | -- | All |
| Cut out some star shapes (resource sheet P1, printed on thin card). Each day the children can write (or draw) their prayers on the stars. The stars can then be added to the Solar System Banner. (2 per A4 sheet) The children's individual prayers could then be used to form a group prayer for the end of the day. The STOP Acrostic could be used for prayers using one letter per day i.e. Sorry, Thanks, Others, Please. | P1 | All |
| Prayer Stones. The people would have had to make their own bricks to build the tower of Babel. Give each child a small stone or pebble. Notice how different they are. Compare to modern man-made bricks which are all exactly the same. Are they smooth or jagged? Thank God for making us all different. Ask God to smooth our jagged edges and shape us into what he wants us to be. | -- | B |

Day 2 – Another Chance

When he sent Jesus into the world, God kept his amazing promise to Abram, and carried forward his great plan of building a people, with people from all over the world.

UP FRONT

Promises to Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3; 15:5-6

Aims:

- To understand that God chose Abram and his family to be his special crew.
- To see that nothing (even age, barrenness) can get in the way of what God's wants.

God scattered the people over the world as a punishment for their sin at Babel. He does still want his own people though, (his 'special crew'), so how will he do that when everyone's rebelling against Him? He chose a man called Abram and promised him that his family would be God's 'special crew'. Despite Abram and his wife Sarai being very old and having no children, God promised that one day the whole earth would be full of his children; as many children as the stars. Abram's name would be made great by God not by his own efforts like the people at Babel tried to achieve.

Today's Group Passage: Matthew 1:16-18; 2:1-12

¹⁶Jacob was the father of Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus. Jesus is called the Christ.

¹⁷So there were 14 generations from Abraham to David. There were 14 generations from David until the time when the people were taken to Babylon. And there were 14 generations from the time when the people were taken to Babylon until Christ was born.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

¹⁸The mother of Jesus Christ was Mary. And this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, she learned that she was going to have a baby. She was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 2

¹Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. ²They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We have come to worship him."

³When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. ⁴Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law.

He asked them where the Christ would be born. ⁵They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures:

⁶"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are important among the rulers of Judah.

A ruler will come from you.

He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.' " — *Micah 5:2*

⁷Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. ⁸Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, "Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come and tell me. Then I can go and worship him too."

⁹The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshipped the child. They opened the gifts they had brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.

Group Teaching Aims:

- To understand that Jesus is at the centre of God's planet-plan.
- To see that nothing (even murderous tyrants) can stop what God's wants to happen.
- To believe that God sent Jesus to be *our* King.

Bible Notes:

Today we look at the birth of Jesus but perhaps not from the most expected passages. The main emphasis from this passage is that Jesus is a king, in fact Jesus is **the** King. The verses from Matthew chapter 1 link this teaching to the up-front session on the promises to Abram.

God kept his promises to Abram and his wife Sarah. Against all expectations at their great age they had children. Their children had children so that their family of children, grand children, great grandchildren ... became a nation – God's people, Israel. 1800 years after that promise was made a special baby was born - Jesus not only the great, great, great ... grandson of Abraham but also the Son of God.

This passage concentrates on the fulfilment of the Old Testament scriptures about God's Messiah. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea which showed that Jesus came from the line of Davidic kings. He was born in David's city. He was God's true King.

The question is who is really the king of the Jews, - Herod or this baby just born in Bethlehem? When the Magi make enquiries in Herod's royal city they naturally cause panic. Herod can see his rule is under threat. Verse 3 says Herod was troubled, as were all the people of Jerusalem. Herod seems to make the connection with the prophecies of the Christ (the Messiah) when he calls that meeting of the leading priests and teachers. His assertion that he wants to go and worship him too doesn't fit with meeting the wise men in secret. Later in the chapter (2:13-18) that becomes evident when Herod murders all the young boys.

Herod apparently had authority which he used to plot and scheme whereas Jesus, who has God's authority as King, was unable to do anything. This is another example of God's plans **not** being thwarted by human cunning and planning. King Herod was extremely powerful but he could not prevent God's plan going ahead. God can use extraordinary means such as guiding stars and dreams to make sure his will is done.

This passage also shows another fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham. The Magi were from the east and returned to their own country. They were not Jews and yet they are the ones here who recognise Jesus as 'King of the Jews'. God's promised that Abraham's people would be a source of blessing to all nations. This links with the teaching of the Great Commission on day 4.

To link with our theme of space and the planets this week you may want to mention the Star of Bethlehem – God created the stars and can use them for his purposes.

At the end of the afternoon teaching session or in your time together at the end of the day round up by talking to the children of how Jesus grew to be a man and do amazing things (miracles – sin-free, etc.) How was he to build a 'loyal crew' for God when all humans rebel against God and deserve punishment? Encourage them to come back tomorrow to hear more.

Background Detail:

- ✦ Verse 6 – prophecy from Micah given 7 centuries earlier. Matthew, from 1:18 to end of chapter 2 is relating episodes which show fulfilment of OT prophecies.
- ✦ King Herod was not a Jew. He was appointed by the Roman Senate. He was ruthless – just like many rulers of his day.

- ✦ The Magi were Gentiles as the phrase “King of the Jews” indicates. Matthew is emphasising that people of all nations acknowledged Jesus as “King of the Jews” and came to worship him as Lord.

Black Holes:

- ✦ Although the Bible passage being used today is about Jesus being born, don’t get stuck on the ‘baby Jesus’. Make sure you get across that this baby is God’s King.

How to go about it:

Morning Session

In the morning it would be good to think carefully about the passage and how it shows that Jesus is God’s true King. The children will be familiar with the birth of Jesus and even of the coming of the wise men but they may well not have thought about the significance of these passages at all. Even with the youngest of the children you could emphasise the teaching about Jesus being King and a much better King than Herod or any other earthly King. The older children may enjoy a few more facts about the clues that point to Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies.

Afternoon Session

This session could be used to emphasise that Jesus is King for everyone, wherever they live. It doesn’t matter what type of family you belong to or what country you were born in. Try to encourage the children to think about this personally. Do they want Jesus to be their King?

Resources for Day 2:

Way in:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| Colouring sheet – Wise Men | 2A | All |
| Colouring sheet – Jesus is born | 2B | Y,R |
| Activity sheet – Code breaker Genesis 15:5 (2 per A4 sheet) | 2C | R,G,B |
| Activity sheet – Pairs – Find the matching stars (2 per A4 sheet) | 2D | R,G,B |
| Activity sheet – Count the Stars – Easy | 2E | Y |
| Activity sheet – Count the Stars – Medium | 2F | R,G |
| Activity sheet – Count the Stars – Hard | 2G | G,B |
| Activity sheet – Word Search – Easy | 2H | Y,R |
| Activity sheet – Word Search – Hard | 2I | R,G,B |
| Activity sheet – Maze – Abraham and Sarah | 2J | R,G |
| <p>Follow the Leader. Group members stand in a line holding hands. The person at the head of the line starts running, pulling the rest of the line behind him/her. The more the leader changes direction the more difficult it is for the players at the end of the line to follow without breaking off. Give everyone a turn at the head.</p> <p>Later, (as a response) you could discuss how difficult it was to follow a leader when you were not close to him/her. Remind them how Abraham had a close relationship with God. Jesus came down to earth so that we too can have that close relationship.</p> | -- | R,G,B |

Bible:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Read the story from the Bible (International Children’s Bible but for yellow groups you could use the Lion First Bible) | -- | All |
| Use glow in the dark stars, the children could take them home to use in | | All |

| | | |
|--|-----|-------|
| their rooms so that they are reminded of today's teaching. Talk about how the bright star led the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. | -- | |
| Make a trail using masking tape (or make a map to follow). Have fun following the trail to a special surprise. Now explain how the wise men followed the special star to find Jesus. | -- | All |
| Make sweet smelling "incense." Bring Epsom salts and little sample perfume bottles. Mix a little perfume into the salts. Place in zipper bags or similar for the children | -- | R,G,B |
| Make and decorate crowns with glitter glue and act out the story of the wise men. | -- | Y,R |
| Make treasure boxes like the wise men brought to Jesus. Find little cardboard boxes and decorate with sequins and glitter. | -- | All |
| Activity sheet - Maze (Help the wise men find their way) | 2K | R,G,B |
| Activity sheet - Circle the answer (Jesus' Birth & the Visit of the Wise Men) (2 per A4 sheet) | 2L | R,G,B |
| Game - Get all the children in a circle, and then get one child to leave the circle and turn with their back to it. (They are a wise man). Then tap one child in the circle on the shoulder (they become Herod). The aim of the game is for the wise man to try and avoid Herod. They pick 3 children in the circle, but if they pick Herod then they lose. | -- | R,G,B |
| Bible Study Leaflet | BS2 | G, B |

Response:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Game - Spread the children out, and then call out a number. The children need to get into groups of that number. At the end, say "everyone together" and let them get into one big group. Then explain that God loves us all and wants us all to be in his 'crew'. | -- | All |
| Craft Activity - 3D star (to be copied onto card) | 2M | All |
| Role Play. Get the group into pairs. One person takes the role of one of the wise men and talks about how they are feeling as they follow the star to the new born king. The other person takes the role of Herod and talks about how they would have felt when strangers arrived looking for a new king. Feedback thoughts to the whole group. Did either of them really know what sort of king Jesus would be? Write an agony aunt style letter telling Herod why he doesn't have to worry about Jesus taking his job. | -- | B |
| Space Log - Today - the children can write or draw what they've learnt and done in response to the prompts | 2N | All |

Memory Verse:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Quiz - Our Solar System: True or False? - Split the children into two groups. Ask the groups in turn to answer a question. It may be necessary for them to guess! If they get the answer right they get a piece of their memory verse. The winners are the first group to complete their memory verse. (Sheet M5b is a Memory Verse sheet for you to cut up) | M4a | G,B |
| Memory verse in large print | M4b | All |

Prayer:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Prayer Bricks or Stars STOP - Thank you prayers | P1 | All |
| Chain Prayer - Write general prayers on strips of coloured paper and link together to make paper chain. Remind the group of the link from Abraham to Jesus. This could be added to during the next 2 days. | -- | G,B |

Day 3 – Amazing New Start!

The death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God, and his pouring out of the Holy Spirit, lead to the creation of a forgiven, loyal and international crew, in line with God's great planet-plan.

UP FRONT

Resurrection

Bible Passages: Luke 23, esp. v44-46 and Luke 24:1-12

Aim:

- To trust that Jesus died to take the punishment we deserve for our sin.
- To trust that Jesus was raised back to life.

Why is Jesus' death **Good News**?

The resurrection, and its implications, will be explained:

- Jesus was raised back to life by his Father (as he/the OT had promised).
- for about 40 days he showed himself to his disciples (incl. over 500 at one time).
- he wasn't just a ghost: he had a real, physical body; he ate, was touched etc.
- his disciples saw him going up into Heaven.
- he's there *now*: at the God's right hand.

Today's Group passage: (Acts1:1-11) Acts 2:1-12, 22-24, 32-33, 36-41

¹To Theophilus.

The first book I wrote was about everything Jesus did and taught. ² I wrote about the whole life of Jesus, from the beginning until the day he was taken up into heaven. Before this, Jesus talked to the apostles he had chosen. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told them what they should do. ³After his death, he showed himself to them and proved in many ways that he was alive. The apostles saw Jesus during the 40 days after he was raised from death. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. ⁴Once when he was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. He said, "The Father has made you a promise which I told you about before. Wait here to receive this promise. ⁵John baptised people with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus Is Taken Up into Heaven

⁶When the apostles were all together, they asked Jesus, "Lord, are you at this time going to give the kingdom back to Israel?"

⁷Jesus said to them, "The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. These things are not for you to know. ⁸ But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world."

⁹After he said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up. A cloud hid him from their

sight. ¹⁰As he was going, they were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men wearing white clothes stood beside them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus taken away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go."

Acts 2

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a noise came from heaven. It sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw something that looked like flames of fire. The flames were separated and stood over each person there. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak different languages. The Holy Spirit was giving them the power to speak these languages.

⁵There were some religious Jews staying in Jerusalem who were from every country in the world. ⁶When they heard this noise, a crowd came together. They were all surprised, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷They were completely amazed at this. They said, "Look! Aren't all these men that we hear speaking from Galilee? ⁸But each of us hears them in his own language. How is this possible? We are from different

places:⁹ Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the areas of Libya near Cyrene, Rome ¹¹(both Jews and those who had become Jews), Crete, and Arabia. But we hear them telling in our own languages about the great things God has done!" ¹²They were all amazed and confused. They asked each other, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2:22-24

²² "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you by the miracles, wonders, and signs God did through him. You all know this, because it happened right here among you. ²³Jesus was given to you, and you killed him. With the help of evil men you nailed him to a cross. But God knew all this would happen. This was God's plan which he had made long ago. ²⁴God raised Jesus from death. God set him free from the pain of death. Death could not hold him.

Acts 2:32-33

³²So Jesus is the One whom God raised from death! And we are all witnesses to this. ³³Jesus was lifted up to heaven and is

now at God's right side. The Father has given the Holy Spirit to Jesus as he promised. So now Jesus has poured out that Spirit. This is what you see and hear.

Acts 2:36-41

³⁶"So, all the people of Israel should know this truly: God has made Jesus—both Lord and Christ. He is the man you nailed to the cross!"

³⁷When the people heard this they were sick at heart. They asked Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do?"

³⁸Peter said to them, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptised, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹This promise is for you. It is also for your children and for all who are far away. It is for everyone the Lord our God calls to himself."

⁴⁰Peter warned them with many other words. He begged them, "Save yourselves from the evil of today's people!" ⁴¹Then those people who accepted what Peter said were baptised. About three thousand people were added to the number of believers that day.

Group Teaching Aims:

- To understand the Holy Spirit is at work in God's people as Jesus promised
- To trust that Jesus is **now** in charge – is at God's right-hand
- To join God's 'crew': turn from sin and start following Jesus!

Bible Notes:

You may be tempted not to use all of the Acts chapter 2 passages but they do teach about the opportunity for the new start fully so do try to cover them all. You may want to 'tell' the first passage in particular instead of reading it. Some of this passage will be used up-front to explain the proof for the resurrection but the point for groups is really that Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise he had told them that God had made to be fulfilled. They were to stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit gave them the power and impetus to proclaim the good news throughout this planet. Remember how the Holy Spirit came on Jesus at the beginning of his ministry.

The apostles are to be witnesses first locally, in Jerusalem, then further afield, in all Judea and Samaria, and then 'in every part of the world'.

The main teaching in groups today should be of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the immediate outcome for the apostles and what that means for us.

The believers were all together when 'suddenly' – three natural things occurred, wind, fire and speech. Yet they were not natural. The noise only sounded like wind, it wasn't wind. The flames were not fire and the speech was not ordinary because it was not in their normal language. It has been suggested that the noise like wind symbolized power, the sight like fire purity and the speech in other languages the universality of Christianity. The

passage focuses on the speech. The speakers were Galileans who were considered uncultured and they 'swallowed' syllables when speaking and had difficulty pronouncing gutturals. They were 'looked down on' by the people of Jerusalem. No wonder the crowd was confused when each person could hear these people talking about God in their own native language.

Luke emphasizes the cosmopolitan nature of the crowd and the events on the day of Pentecost symbolize a new unity in the Spirit which transcends racial, national and linguistic barriers. So we can confidently tell the children that the good news is for everyone, wherever they live, whatever their language.

The next two passages from Luke chapter 2 are key points from Peter's speech. Peter – the uneducated disciple who was so scared he denied knowing Jesus at the time of the crucifixion can now, with the Spirit's power, stand up and address a huge crowd explaining clearly who Jesus is.

He explains that the things Jesus did during his ministry on earth were God showing us just who Jesus is. Peter makes it clear that it was God's intention that Jesus should die. He knew it would happen because it was part of his plan that is written of throughout the Bible. God defeated death though and raised Jesus from the dead. (The death and resurrection will have been part of the morning's up-front' session but do use these words of Peter to reinforce this important part of what we want the children to know properly for themselves).

The final passage tells of the reaction of the crowd and Peter's response to that. In the morning there were 120 followers of Jesus by evening there were 3000 more.

Explain to the children that they too can have their sins forgiven and have the Holy Spirit come into their life and change their heart – they can change from being a rebel to being a loyal member of God's special crew.

Background Detail:

- ✦ Pentecost was the Jewish festival, Feast of Weeks (first fruits of the wheat harvest). It took place 50 days after the Passover (when Jesus died and rose again). This festival brought many Jews from different lands to gather in Jerusalem speaking different languages. They were converts who lived in countries that were far apart so they would not have known each others languages.
- ✦ Both Hebrew and Greek use the same word for 'wind' and 'Spirit'

Black Holes:

- ✦ Don't spend too much time on the phenomena at the time of the coming of the Holy Spirit. It's the change and power of his coming that is important to the teaching today.
- ✦ The children do need to understand that they can't expect the same things to happen when they become Christians and yet they need to know that they will experience the power of the Holy Spirit at work in their lives. This was a 'one-off'. The wind and fire were specific to that first coming of the Holy Spirit and not the way they should expect to experience it now. The Holy Spirit comes into our lives when we repent and make Jesus our Lord and King.
- ✦ Don't confuse many languages with 'tongues' as spoken by some Christians today and referred to elsewhere in the Bible. This was speaking in actual languages not a spiritual language that needs translation. The people from other lands could understand what was said because they heard it in their own language. This could provoke a lot of discussion amongst us adults but we mustn't let it distract us from the significance of these different languages, *glossolalia*, on the day of Pentecost.

How to go about it:

Morning Session

Go through all the passages in a way that is appropriate for your group. For the younger children this will probably mean telling some of the content in your own words but do make sure you get across the content of the passages. You'll probably want to spend most of your time on Acts 2:1-12 but do, at least, cover what the other three passages from chapter 2 say.

Afternoon Session

This may be when you want to think a bit more about the passages from Peter's speech and the crowd's reaction to them if you didn't get time in the morning.

Do spend time thinking about what the Holy Spirit means to Christians now. How his power in our lives helps us we try to live Christ-like lives and to tell others about Jesus.

Resources for Day 3:

Way in:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| Activity Sheet - Crossword (Jesus' Trial, Crucifixion & Resurrection) | 3A | G,B |
| Activity Sheet - Maze – help disciples find the tomb 1 | 3B | Y,R |
| Activity Sheet - Maze – help disciples find the tomb 2 | 3C | R,G |
| Activity Sheet - Hidden Message - Resurrection | 3D | R,G,B |
| Activity Sheet - Word Search - Resurrection | 3E | G,B |
| Colouring sheet – Jesus is risen! | 3F | Y,R |
| Game - "I can't believe what's in there" . The leader gets a box, and for every go hides an object in there. The leader then looks in the box and says "I can't believe what's in there". The children have to ask questions to try and work out what is in there. (There is a disappearing link, and represents when the Angels were found in the tomb instead of Jesus). | -- | |
| Colouring sheet – Thomas sees Jesus | 3G | All |
| Activity Sheet - Word Search – Jesus appears to his followers | 3H | G,B |
| Colouring sheet – Jesus appears to his followers | 3I | All |
| Activity - Jesus rising from the dead/going up to heaven - You get a collection of objects. For each child's turn, you take 6 of the objects and show them to the child. Then you hide one, and the child has to tell you which one has disappeared (the disappearing factor is the link to the teaching). | -- | |
| Colouring sheet – Ascension Day | 3J | Y,R |
| Colouring sheet – Jesus goes to heaven | 3K | R,G,B |
| Activity Sheet - Word Search – Acts 1& 2 | 3L | G,B |
| Colouring sheet – Ascension and Pentecost | 3M | All |
| Balloon Volleyball. Get the group into 2 teams either side of a line (skipping rope or scarf will do) and tell them they are going to play balloon volleyball. Give them a balloon which has not been blown up and wait for their reactions. Explain that after Jesus left the disciples, they felt deflated. They were not much use. Then they were filled with the breath of the Holy Spirit. Play a quick game of volleyball with a blown up balloon. | | |

Bible:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Read the story from the Bible (International Children’s Bible but for yellow groups you could use the Lion First Bible) | -- | All |
| Interactive Reading. Get the group to come up with actions to create an interactive version of the Coming of the Holy Spirit (e.g. wind, fire, languages). | -- | All |
| Colouring Sheet –Pentecost | 3N | All |
| Activity Sheet – Rearrange the story in the correct order. (Trial, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension & Pentecost) Cut up the verses and divide amongst the group. For the younger children you could recount the story and get them to put up their hand when their verse is mentioned. (The correct order is i,q,e,k,h,m,o,a,g,d,r,j,b,p,l,n,c,f.) | 3O | G,B |
| On the map. Look at maps of Bible lands and find the places mentioned in Acts to show where the people in the crowd (Acts 2 vv 9-11) came from. Have any of them been to the modern day countries? | -- | G,B |
| Bible Study Leaflet | BS3 | G, B |

Response:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Activity Sheet - Maze – Stop doubting and believe | 3P | R,G,B |
| Activity Sheet - Spot the difference. (Flames) Relate it to the difference in the disciples after Pentecost. Ask if they would like to be different (or noticed they were different if already believers) (2 per A4 sheet) | 3Q | R,G,B |
| Activity Sheet - Flame Head Bands (needs to be copied on card) | 3R | All |
| Activity Sheet - Which are names of Disciples? Do they want to be a Disciple? | 3S | Y,R |
| Role Play. Working in 3s or 4s, create a scene involving people who were in the crowd and one person who wasn't and wants to find out what happened. Mention the theme of Peter's sermon and the result of it. | -- | B |
| Space Log – Today - the children can write or draw what they've learnt and done in response to the prompts | 3T | All |

Memory Verse:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| See previous suggestions and ones at end | -- | All |

Prayer:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| Prayer Bricks or Stars STOP – Prayers for Others. Get the older ones to think wider than their own families and friends. Perhaps those running Backpackers, those who live in lands where there is poverty, violence, etc. | P1 | All |
| Prayer Bubbles. Pass round a bottle of bubbles. Each child to pray (aloud or silently) for someone else and then to blow a bubble. | -- | All |

Day 4 – In the meantime ...

In obedience to Jesus' commands, Believers (loyal crew members) must tell the rest of the world about his return, because on that day, God's great planet-plan (involving final judgment on sin) will finally come to completion in the New Creation.

UP FRONT

Bible Passages: Isaiah 11:1-9 with reference to Revelation 21:1-5, 2, 2Peter 3:3-13

Aims:

- To look forward to the perfection of God's planet-plan in the New Creation.

We began the week by thinking about how the world is actually a real mess... So, is this it? Well, no; in fact, God's got much, much bigger plans for the planet still...

Today's Group Passage: Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶The 11 followers went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷On the mountain they saw Jesus and worshipped him, but some of them did not believe it was really Jesus. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All power in heaven and on earth is given to me.¹⁹ So go and make followers of all people in

the world. Baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Teach them to obey everything that I have told you. You can be sure that I will be with you always. I will continue with you until the end of the world."

Group Teaching Aims

- To resolve to obey everything Jesus says (in the Bible).
- To get involved in telling people about Jesus (making new crew members who are loyal to Jesus).

Bible Notes:

Be sure to make clear this happened *after* the Resurrection but *before* Pentecost.

The 11 followers, i.e. the Disciples, went where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Jesus they *worshipped* him (v17) - they realise he's actually God! Jesus tells them God has given him all power in heaven and earth i.e. put him in charge of everything (*all* of space) (v18). The disciples are followers of Jesus (crew members) and they have a job to do. They are to go and make more followers of Jesus and they are all, those first disciples **and** all followers, to obey *all* his orders.

But these words are not just for the disciples back then – the orders come with a promise 'to the very end of the age'. So the words apply to us too, if we're members of God's family, Jesus' crew.

We each need to decide if we are in Jesus' 'crew' and if we are we have a job to do – telling all nations about Jesus.

We will have a celebration of the 20th Backpackers on Friday and during it children will plant Jesus' flags on some sort of mock up of the earth's surface. More details will be given at the training and Team meetings.

Background Detail:

- ✚ Telling others about Jesus is possibly more daunting for adults than children. Try not to pass on your own concerns and inhibitions.

Black Holes:

✦ Children may get concerned about non-Christian parents and friends. Encourage them to try to get their parents to come to the Backpackers service Sunday. There will be details of all the children's groups at churches in Chesham for them to take home on Day 4 so encourage them to invite friends to those – some are mid-week.

How to go about it:

Morning Session

Try to get through the bulk of the teaching on this passage this morning as the final afternoon always goes in a rush and there could be less time in groups as we want to celebrate the Backpacker birthday.

Afternoon Session

The length of this may be different today but the main thing to be sure to include is a challenge as to whether they are serious about following Jesus. If they already go to a church encourage them to take the group meetings there seriously so they can learn how to obey Jesus. Encourage them to talk to their friends who don't know Jesus about what they've learnt this week and to invite them to the groups they got to. For those who are not involved in a church do make sure they realise there are groups they could go to, including mid-week ones, and encourage them to ask their parents if they could start going in September. You may need to explain about the need for a polite request! Encourage them to make a note so they can ask again nearer September.

Resources for Day 4:

Way in:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| Colouring sheet – The Great Commission | 4A | All |
| Activity Sheet - Match the Country (2 per A4 sheet) | 4B | R,G,B |
| Activity Sheet – How many mountains can you see? (could also be used as a response – thinking about how far the word needs to go out, how many people need to hear) | 4C | Y,R,G |
| Yes/No game. Give each person 3 pennies. The challenge is to talk to as many people in the group as possible and ask random questions (e.g. Do you have brown hair?) People must answer without saying yes or no (e.g. I do). If they say yes or no they have to hand over a penny. The winner is the one with the most coins at the end. Afterwards, ask if we find it easy to say yes or no to what God wants us to do. | -- | G,B |

Bible:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Read the story from the Bible or act it out | -- | All |
| Activity sheet - Fill in the missing words (The Great Commission) (2 per A4 sheet) | 4D | R,G,B |
| Bible Study Leaflet | BS4 | G, B |

Response:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| Activity sheet – Messages in Code | 4E | G,B |
| Activity sheet – Maze – Help Thomas Believe (use to discuss helping friends to believe) | 4F | R,G,B |
| Whole Week Quiz (with questions on all the stories we have looked at this week). Divide the children into two groups. For each group you will need a set of nine planets (you could use circles of card or paper plates with the planet names written on). Ask the groups in turn to answer a question. If they get the answer right they get a planet. The winners are the first group to assemble a set of nine planets in the correct order. | 4G | R,G,B |

| | | |
|---|----|-------|
| Variation on above quiz – 2 leaders with quiz questions; divide into 2 teams; sit them some distance from the 2 leaders. Each person takes it in turn to run to their designated leader for a question. If they answer correctly, they run back to their team and the next person goes. If they can't answer they can run back to their team and confer but they must run back to the leader to answer. First team sitting back in their space having answered all questions correctly wins. | 4G | G,B |
| Variation on above quiz - Spaghetti quiz. You will need a saucepan with a lid and some wool. Cut wool into pieces of varying lengths 10 cm to 2m and place in saucepan with a few centimetres of each piece hanging over the edge. Put the lid on. Divide your group into 2. Read the quiz questions. The team which answers the question gets to pull out a piece of wool. Each time they get a piece they should tie it onto the previous one. At the end of the quiz, the team with longest piece of wool wins. | 4G | G,B |
| Game - Chinese whispers – Can the message get round. Try to persuade the children to really try to get the correct message round rather than immediately confusing it. | -- | R,G,B |
| Game - Obeying games (such as Simon says, captain's coming, follow the leader etc....) | -- | All |
| Make a Flag -Children decorate a flag to be used to symbolise God's word going out, probably during a celebration of the 20 th Backpackers. You'll hear at training sessions what materials will be provided. The flags can be decorated with slogans such as "Jesus is Great"; "Jesus is the Boss"; "Trust Jesus or you'll miss out on God's planet plan"; etc. | -- | All |
| Colouring sheet – Happy 20 th Birthday Backpackers [<i>I know – 20th year is maybe 19th birthday but BPs wasn't born, nor was it a baby in the first year –you could argue to include the planning! Let's just call it 20th birthday!</i>] Use to talk about Backpackers being one way of telling people about Jesus. Maybe they could invite a friend to join them next year? Or they could invite friends to the Sunday or mid-week groups they attend. | 4H | All |
| Space Log – Today – the children can write or draw what they've learnt and done in response to the prompts | 4I | All |
| Everyone's important to the mission – Jesus asks us to go out and tell others about him. This is not always easy. On Apollo 11's journey home, Buzz Aldrin accidentally broke a circuit breaker needed for take off from the moon. He managed to fix it with a felt tip pen! (Do you think felt tips were on their packing list?) As they were coming back into earth's orbit, communication equipment failed and could only be fixed by the small hands of the 10 year old son of a tracking station worker. Remind the group that it doesn't matter how young we are or how unimportant we think we are, we never know when our contribution will be needed. | -- | G,B |
| Fillw me ;-) Encourage your friends to follow Jesus by writing a text message (maximum 120 characters). | -- | B |
| Poster - Design a group poster/collage to tell people about Backpackers and its mission. Discuss first what might be important to include. | -- | G,B |

Memory Verse:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|--|--------|---------|
| See previous suggestions and ones at end | -- | All |

Prayer:

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Prayer Bricks or Stars STOP - Please Prayers | P1 | All |
| Star Prayers - Each person could make a prayer card and stick gold/silver stars onto black paper to represent all the prayers made. If you can get fluorescent stars, these will light up at night to remind them of Backpackers and all they have learnt. You could make them in the shape of the Southern Cross constellation. | -- | R,G,B |
| Prayer of Commitment. For children who decide they want to start following Jesus. (4 per A4 sheet) | P2 | All |

The Space Theme and General Games

A few resource sheets and activities on the week's theme that you may want to use to create atmosphere in your group area or at lunch-time or to encourage a reluctant child.

| | Sheet: | Groups: |
|---|--------|---------|
| Colouring sheet – Astronaut | SP1 | All |
| Colouring sheet – Moon landing | SP2 | All |
| Colouring sheet – Space Rocket | SP3 | All |
| Colouring sheet – Spaceman | SP4 | All |
| Activity sheet – Space dot to dot | SP5 | All |
| Activity sheet – Word search (younger) | SP6 | Y,R |
| Activity sheet – Word search (older) | SP7 | R,G,B |
| Moon, Mars, Mercury. Children sit in a circle. Allocate names around the circle (moon, mars, mercury). When the leader calls "moon", all children so named run round the circle and back to their place. | -- | R,G,B |
| I went to the moon and I packed. Group sits in a circle. First person says, "I went to the moon and I packed (they say an item)". The next person repeats what was said and adds another item and so on round the circle. | -- | G,B |
| Comets. Everyone has 3 pieces of wool or crepe paper to tuck into belts/waistbands. Establish the boundaries of a playing area. Children to chase each other and try to take the comet "tails" (one at a time). Once they've lost 3 tails they are out. | -- | G,B |
| Obstacle Race. To illustrate that nothing gets in God's way. | -- | All |
| Drawing on backs. Have a series of simple line drawings (a house, a cat, a rocket etc). Sit the children in a line one behind the other. Show one picture to the child at the back of the line. They "draw" the picture on the back of the person in front of them. This passes up the line. The person at the front has to draw what they felt on a piece of paper. Compare this to the original drawing. Put new people at the front and back for the next picture. Illustrates the difficulty of communication. | -- | R,G,B |
| Building. For those who have access to Duplo/Lego bricks: You need 3 volunteers. Person A and Person B sit back to back. Give each person an identical set of bricks. Person A builds something with the bricks. Person C describes what Person A is doing and Person B tries to build an identical construction. Discuss how difficult this was and how much more difficult it would be if you couldn't speak the same language | -- | G,B |

Some suggestions:

Getting to know you:

1. To fit the theme of investigation use a plan to enable a site tour to take place.
2. Animal Game – children each choose an animal and then follow their leader around the site pretending to be that animal. (i.e. moving as that animal would and maybe making that animal's noise.)
3. Lay a trail of breadcrumbs for the children to follow to key points on the site.
4. Stand in circle. Leader in middle. Throw ball round circle. As person catches ball they say own name. After a few times, change so that leader calls name as she throws ball and that person has to catch it.
5. One step forward. All stand in a line. Leader calls out stuff like: Who had cornflakes for breakfast? Those who did, take a step forward. Include questions about being at Backpackers before/belonging to a church
6. Get into a line without talking:
 - o in alphabetical order of names
 - o in birthday order
7. In pairs with someone you don't already know. In 2 minutes, find out as much as you can about them. Later introduce them to everyone else.
8. Body dice - (variation on Twister) 2 teams. 2 large dice - one regular, one with body parts on. Both dice rolled and number and body part called out (e.g. 1 - elbow). Then roll again (e.g. 4 - foot). Number 1 has to connect elbow with number 4's foot.
9. Spider's web - In circle, everyone crosses arms and grabs someone's hand across circle. Aim is to untangle into complete circle with joined hands without letting go.
10. Sharks - like musical chairs only with sheets of newspaper. Ends up with everyone on a small piece of paper.

Energetic Games

1. Grab

In 2 teams. Number 1-5 from opposite ends . Place ball at x

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1 2 3 4 5
      x
5 4 3 2 1
    
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Call out numbers. Both players try to grab the ball and get back to seat without being tagged by the other one

2. **Disciples** (aka fishes) - name children round circle (Simon, Andrew, James, John) Call Simon, all Simons have to stand up, run round circle and back to own place.

Quiet Games

1. **Backpackers ABC** - think of words about Backpackers beginning with each letter of the alphabet
2. **Storyboards** - can be used as fillers any time

Memory Verse Activities

1. **Pairs game.** For this you will need some small (business card size) pieces of paper or card. Write each word of the memory verse on a separate card (use lower case letters). Make two sets. Place the cards face down on the table or blanket. Each child takes it in turn to turn over 2 cards. If the cards match, they keep the pair. At the end put one set into the correct order to reinforce the memory verse.
2. **Bookmark.** Make a bookmark with the words of memory verse on. Try to use a shape which is relevant to the bible story.
3. **Spinners.** Cut a circle each about 10cm in diameter out of thick card. Decorate the circle on both sides with a bright and colourful design and write the words of the memory verse on one side. Make 2 small holes in the centre of the circle, approx 2 cm apart. Thread about 60cm of thin string or embroidery thread through the holes and tie the ends together to make a loop.

Hold the end loops of the thread around your index fingers and twirl the spinner so that the thread becomes twisted. Then pull the thread taut and watch the spinner unwind at speed.

4. **Balloons.** For older groups. Write each word of the memory verse on a slip of paper, roll each one up and put each in a balloon before blowing up the balloon. Children have to burst the balloons, retrieve the bits of paper and lay out the words in order.
5. **Washing line.** Write each word on an A5 piece of paper. Tie a length of string between 2 chairs and have enough clothes pegs ready to attach words to the line. You now have 3 choices of activity:
 - a. Give each child a couple of words and ask them to peg them up in the right place.
 - b. You peg all the words in the wrong order and they have to rearrange.
 - c. You peg every other word and ask the children to fill in the gaps.
 - i. Once the verse has been pegged out correctly, get them to repeat several times, taking away some of the words each time so that they end up reciting from memory.
6. **Quiz.** Divide into 2 teams. Ask questions about the day's bible story. The prize for a correct answer is a word (or sequence of words) from the memory verse. The ultimate winner is the team with the whole memory verse.
7. **Relay.** Divide into 2 teams. Put the words at one end of your area and the children at the other. They take it in turns to run up and collect the words, one at a time. The rest of the group puts the words in order. First team to finish with words in correct order wins.

Prayer:

1. Star Prayer. Everyone lies down on their stomachs with their bodies forming a star shape – heads into the middle. This way you can pray quietly and everyone can hear.
2. Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. **STOP** Sorry, Thanks, **O**thers, **P**lease or **ACTS** Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication or **PRAY** Praise, Repent, Ask for someone else, Your own needs.